

Dumani Mail

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Binoy George appointed as next Indian Ambassador to Uruguay

New Delhi : Binoy George has been appointed as India's next Ambassador to Uruguay, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Wednesday.

In an official statement, the MEA said that George, who is presently Joint Secretary in the Ministry, is expected to take up charge soon.

"Dr. Binoy George appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Oriental Republic of Uruguay. Dr. Binoy George (IFS: 2006), presently Joint Secretary in the Ministry, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Oriental Republic of Uruguay. He is expected to take up the assignment shortly," MEA said on Wednesday.

As India and Uruguay continue to deepen ties, Alberto Antonio Guani Amarilla, Ambassador of Uruguay to India, said on Wednesday, welcomed India's decision to open an embassy in Uruguay next month, describing it as an important step in strengthening bilateral ties. Amarilla said Uruguay hopes External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will attend the inauguration.

"We are now very much



expecting the fact that India is going to open an embassy in Uruguay next month. We hope that Minister Jaishankar will be able to be the chief guest there," he said.

He also called for greater high-level engagement between the two countries, saying Uruguay would be pleased to host Prime Minister Narendra Modi and would also like to see the President of Uruguay visit India.

He said Latin America expects to remain a strong partner as India advances towards becoming a developed

economy, adding that there is significant scope to expand cooperation across productive sectors.

Guani Amarilla said Latin America has increasingly emerged as an important partner for India and stressed the need to further deepen economic engagement between the two regions.

He said India and Uruguay should continue identifying areas of complementarity and collaboration to create mutually beneficial opportunities and expand engagement across sectors.

CITIZEN-CENTRIC URBAN GOVERNANCE REFORMS STRENGTHEN HOUSING, PLANNING AND LAND ADMINISTRATION IN ODISHA

Bhubaneswar: Reinforcing its commitment to transparent, citizen-centric and future-ready urban governance, the Housing & Urban Development Department has undertaken a series of landmark reforms aimed at strengthening the urban housing, planning and land administration ecosystem in Odisha. "Over the past few months, the State has introduced key policy and regulatory measures to streamline apartment ownership and registration, safeguard the interests of homebuyers, enhance accountability among developers, simplify planning and development regulations and create a modern legal framework for rental housing." "A major milestone in this reform journey has been the implementation of the Odisha Apartment (Ownership and Management) Act, 2023. To facilitate its effective implementation, the Government has issued a series of Special Orders and operational guidelines addressing long-standing challenges faced by apartment owners, developers and regulatory authorities." "Recognising the difficulties faced by owners of pre-RERA apartments, the Department

issued Special Order No. 29259 in December 2025 to simplify the registration of resale transactions involving apartments whose first sale deeds were registered prior to October 5, 2016. Building upon this initiative, another Special Order was issued in June 2026 enabling registration of unsold apartment inventory in projects completed before the implementation of RERA, subject to prescribed safeguards and conditions. These measures have addressed legacy issues affecting thousands of apartment owners and homebuyers across the State." "Further strengthening the regulatory framework, the Housing & Urban Development Department has also notified a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for apartment registration. The SOP establishes a uniform and transparent mechanism for registration of residential, commercial and mixed-use apartment projects while clearly defining the responsibilities of developers, apartment associations, competent authorities and registration officials. The framework ensures compliance with the Odisha Apartment (Ownership and Management) Act, 2023 and RERA provisions, bringing greater clarity and predictability to apartment

transactions. "The SOP also introduces a structured process for scrutiny and certification by designated Competent Authorities before registration of apartment transfer deeds. Digital transmission of documents through the registration system and integration with the SUJOG platform will further improve efficiency, transparency and service delivery." "As part of its broader urban reform agenda under PMAY-U 2.0, the Housing & Urban Development Department has also initiated the process for adoption of a modern tenancy framework in Odisha. A draft legislation based on the Model Tenancy Act has been placed in the public domain as the proposed Odisha Urban Area Rent Control Act, 2026. The proposed legislation seeks to establish a balanced and transparent framework governing landlord-tenant relationships, facilitate fair rent agreements, promote rental housing availability and provide efficient mechanisms for dispute resolution. Public suggestions and stakeholder feedback have been invited before finalisation of the legislation." "The Department has simultaneously undertaken significant reforms in planning and development

regulations. Through amendments to the Odisha Development Authorities (Planning and Building Standards) Rules and the Odisha Town Planning and Improvement Trusts (Planning and Building Standards) Rules, the Government has deregulated part-plot sales and simplified subdivision procedures for citizens. "The amended provisions exempt family subdivisions from layout approval requirements and provide one-time exemptions for subdivision of plots below 500 square metres, subject to prescribed conditions. Similar relaxations have been extended to co-sharers and eligible pre-existing plots recorded prior to notification of the Rules. Agricultural plots that continue to be used exclusively for agricultural purposes have also been exempted. These reforms are expected to reduce procedural barriers, facilitate inheritance-related transactions and improve ease of property ownership and transfer for thousands of citizens." "The Department has also introduced key amendments to planning and building regulations aimed at simplifying development processes and improving ease of doing business.

BJP, Congress demand Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann's resignation amid row over viral video

New Delhi : The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Congress leaders have demanded that Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann step down from the post amid the row over the purported video allegedly showing the desecration of Sikh Guru's photos.

BJP National General Secretary Tarun Chugh on Wednesday slammed Bhagwant Mann after Haryana Police apprehended two individuals accused of fabricating a report, stating that the viral video was fake. The BJP leader called Mann "intoxicated with power."

Chugh said, "When Shri Akal Takht Sahib had called him over the disrespectful video, he had denied it and said that this video is fake, created by AI. Bhagwant Mann is intoxicated with power. He challenged the Akal Takht Sahib and has come up with a false report. Bhagwant Mann has been declared a traitor...he has no moral right to remain CM of Punjab."

Punjab Congress president Amrinder Singh Raja Warring also

called for his resignation and a public apology.

He said, "The Congress party demands the resignation of Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann for acting against the interests of the Guru. He must apologise to the people of Punjab for this transgression. The fact that his officials held a meeting at a hotel in Gurugram and had the report prepared to suit their own agenda confirms the validity of the Akal Takht's verdict labelling him as 'Guru dokhi' (someone who has acted against the Guru)."

This comes after the Gurugram Police apprehended two accused for allegedly fabricating the forensic report in the viral video case allegedly linked to Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Gurugram Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Crime, Naveen Sharma said.

According to the police officials, the accused received Rs 10 lakh from Punjab officials for allegedly fabricating the video.

ACP Naveen Sharma told the

reporters on Tuesday, "The Gurgaon Police received a complaint. We have taken two individuals into custody; an interrogation is currently underway. One suspect has been identified as Ankit, a cyber-expert working with the NIA on a contract basis; the other individual is named Arun. The complaint pertains to a viral video that they had fraudulently created and circulated. They did not operate out of any government-recognised laboratory. They fabricated a video featuring the Chief Minister of our neighbouring state. We have detained them for this act, and the investigation is ongoing." "They stated that they were given Rs 10 lakh for this task, and indicated that certain officials from the neighbouring state were also involved. Whatever further details emerge from the ongoing investigation will be discussed and verified with a forensic expert," the police officer added. Meanwhile, Bhagwant Mann has maintained that the video was fake.

Delhi Minister Ashish Sood initiates strict measures against illegal electricity connections

New Delhi : Under the direct instructions of Delhi Power Minister Ashish Sood, a major crackdown on electricity theft has been launched across the national capital. The initiative has already delivered a significant turnaround in Kamruddin Nagar, one of Delhi's most notorious high-loss areas.

Kamruddin Nagar, located in the Mundka Division of West Delhi, had witnessed power losses rising to an alarming 56.4 per cent. This widespread electricity theft was causing an estimated annual financial loss of Rs 24.4 crore.

The primary offenders were illegal commercial and industrial units that had been secretly drawing electricity through unauthorised connections from overhead power lines. To address the issue, Power Minister Ashish Sood directed discoms and enforcement agencies to take strict and decisive action against power theft.

As part of the drive, a major

enforcement raid was conducted. This action alone has successfully prevented the theft of more than 10 million units (kWh) of electricity.

The impact was immediate and substantial. Electricity theft at the targeted locations has already declined by approximately 34,000 units per day.

To ensure that these gains are sustained, the government has ordered the complete replacement of vulnerable power lines with secure, theft-resistant armoured cables.

Following the success of the operation in Kamruddin Nagar, the Delhi Government is implementing similar enforcement measures in other high-loss areas across the city. Authorities are deploying additional police personnel for confidential raids and leveraging advanced data analytics to identify and act against electricity theft in other divisions.

This rampant electricity theft

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measures despite repeated warnings. By turning a blind eye to these illegal commercial operations, the previous administration allowed substantial financial losses to accumulate year after year, placing an unnecessary burden on the public exchequer.

This administrative failure amounted to a betrayal of the interests of Delhi's honest taxpayers. While law-abiding consumers paid their electricity bills diligently, large-scale power theft was allowed to continue unchecked.

The Delhi Government reiterates its commitment to providing reliable, affordable, and uninterrupted 24x7 power to honest consumers. Power Minister Ashish Sood has warned that illegal commercial establishments involved in electricity theft will face immediate disconnection of power supply, stringent penalties, and sealing of their premises.

Delhi govt to protect the health of 2.70 lakh construction workers and their families in the capital

New Delhi: The Delhi Government has taken a significant step towards safeguarding the health of workers and their families in the national capital, an official release said.

At a Cabinet meeting chaired by Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday, approval was granted to the 'Delhi Building and Construction Workers Health Scheme' for the health protection of registered building and construction workers and their families in Delhi.

The scheme is expected to benefit around 2.70 lakh registered construction workers and their families, covering nearly 10 lakh people.

Besides annual health check-ups for workers and their families, a range of medical

services will be provided free of cost. The entire treatment process will be cashless, ensuring that workers and their families do not have to bear any financial burden.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said that the Delhi Government is working with full sensitivity and commitment for the welfare of every section of society, particularly the poor, workers and underprivileged families.

She said construction workers are the foundation of the capital's development and strengthening their health and social security remains a key priority of the government. It is with this objective that the Cabinet has approved this important health scheme.

She said construction workers are routinely exposed to

stone-cutting dust, chemicals, excessive noise, heavy machinery, general dust and physically demanding working conditions. As a result, they remain vulnerable to silicosis (a lung disease), respiratory ailments, skin disorders and other serious health problems.

She noted that a comprehensive health protection scheme for this section had long been lacking, and the present initiative has been designed to address that gap. The Chief Minister said that under the scheme, registered construction workers and their eligible family members, including spouses, children and parents, will receive free and quality healthcare services through empanelled hospitals and mobile health units. Each registered worker will



be entitled to treatment of up to ?2 lakh at empanelled hospitals, while the limit for a family will be up to ?10 lakh. The entire treatment process will be cashless, eliminating any

financial burden on workers and their families.

The scheme will also provide annual health check-ups for registered workers and their spouses. In addition,

beneficiaries will have access to free OPD and IPD services, diagnostic and laboratory facilities, emergency medical assistance and referral services. Healthcare services will also be delivered through Mobile Medical Units at construction sites and in areas with a high concentration of workers.

According to the Chief Minister, digital health records of beneficiaries will be created under the scheme, and a modern beneficiary tracking system will be developed to ensure effective monitoring and transparency in service delivery. A 24x7 toll-free helpline will also be set up to assist workers.

She further said that the scheme is not limited to providing healthcare alone, but represents a broader social security

initiative aimed at improving the quality of life of workers and their families. The government expects to spend approximately Rs 200 crore annually on the scheme.

The Chief Minister said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Central Government has consistently accorded the highest priority to the welfare of the poor, workers and those employed in the unorganised sector.

Through initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat, the e-Shram Portal and the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana, sustained efforts have been made to provide social and economic security to workers. She said the Delhi Government is committed to carrying forward the same spirit and bringing positive change to the lives of workers.

Odia University Marks International Yoga Day with Two-Day Celebration



Puri: Odia University celebrated the International Day of Yoga with a two-day programme marked by enthusiastic participation from students, faculty members and staff.

The celebrations commenced with a mass yoga session conducted by National Service Scheme (NSS) volunteers at the university's academic block. Later, a yoga camp was formally inaugurated in the administrative block premises in the presence of Vice-Chancellor Prof. (Dr.) Satyanarayan Acharya.

Among those present were Registrar Rashmirekha Das, Chairman of the Postgraduate Council Dr. Pradyumna Kumar Mishra, Academic Officer Dr. Lipika Nayak, Student Welfare Officer Dr. Sangita Jena, Head of the Department of Odia Language and Literature Dr. Radhagobinda

Kuila, NSS Programme Officer Dr. Sharmista Mahapatra, along with faculty members, employees and students from various departments.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. Acharya said yoga is not only a part of Odisha's cultural identity but also an invaluable heritage of Indian culture and tradition. He highlighted the importance of regular yoga practice in improving both physical and mental well-being and encouraged students to adopt it as a way of life.

Registrar Rashmirekha Das stressed the need for daily yoga practice to maintain a healthy lifestyle and urged participants to make yoga an integral part of their daily routine.

As part of the celebrations, a morning yoga training camp was also organised on the university campus. The Vice-Chancellor's

presence and encouragement added to the enthusiasm of the participants.

Yoga instructor Prashant Kumar Biswal from Satyabadi and yoga guru Dr. Yogendra Nayak conducted training sessions on various yogasanas and techniques, guiding students on the benefits of regular practice.

Guest faculty members Dr. Jayant Kumar Parida and Dr. Shubhasmita Nayak, along with a large number of university employees and students, participated in the programme. Participants expressed their commitment to continuing regular yoga training after learning about its significance.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks to the guests and trainers, bringing the two-day International Yoga Day celebration to a successful close.

District-Level Consultation Workshop to Strengthen Child Protection System Under Mission Vatsalya.

Khordha : In a significant step towards ensuring the safety, care, development, and rights of children, a district-level consultation workshop on strengthening the child protection system was organized in Khordha on Wednesday under the Mission Vatsalya scheme. The workshop was jointly organized by the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) and Plan India at the conference hall of collectorate. The workshop aimed to reinforce child protection mechanisms across the district and promote a coordinated approach among government departments, child welfare institutions, and community stakeholders to safeguard children from various forms of vulnerability and exploitation.

Chairing the programme, ADM, Pratap Chandra Beura emphasized that child protection should not be viewed solely as a government responsibility but as a collective social obligation. He stated that creating a safe, nurturing, and healthy environment for children is essential for building a progressive and prosperous society. "A secure childhood lays the foundation for a stronger future. Every stakeholder in society has a role to play in protecting children and ensuring their well-being," he said. The workshop witnessed participation from representatives of the District Child Protection Unit, Child Welfare



Committee (CWC), Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), Education, Health, Women and Child Development Department, and various Child Care Institutions (CCIs). The presence of officials and experts from multiple sectors highlighted the importance of inter-departmental coordination in addressing child protection issues effectively. District Child Protection Officer, Ms. Banisree Pattnaik delivered the welcome address and outlined the objectives of the workshop. She stressed that children today face numerous social, economic, and familial challenges, making it imperative to strengthen the child protection framework. She underlined the need for a proactive and responsive system capable of addressing issues such as child abuse, neglect, exploitation, and other emerging risks. Plan India State Coordinator Pradyut Ranjan Rout made a detailed presentation on strengthening child protection systems through better coordination, awareness, and community

participation. He discussed various challenges affecting children, including child marriage, child labour, trafficking, abuse, and exploitation. Mr. Rout emphasized that effective child protection requires strong collaboration among government agencies, civil society organizations, and local communities. A notable feature of the workshop was the active participation of children, who shared their perspectives on the challenges affecting child safety and well-being in the district. Their suggestions and experiences added valuable insights to the discussions and highlighted the importance of including children's voices in policy-making and programme implementation.

Speakers at the event reiterated that the core objective of Mission Vatsalya is to create a safe, supportive, and child-friendly environment for every child. The scheme focuses on child care, family-based support, rehabilitation, protection, and the overall welfare of children, particularly those in vulnerable situations. Among

those who addressed the gathering were Khordha Child Welfare Committee Chairperson Kanta Mahanty, Additional Child Welfare Committee Chairperson Mamata Sahu, District Social Welfare Officer Kusum Praharaj, Juvenile Justice Board Member Jawahar Prasad Tripathy, Board Member Anjuram, and District Child Protection Unit Protection Officer (Institutional Care) Sachindra Nath Sahu. They stressed the need for effective implementation of child protection laws, increased public awareness, and stronger institutional mechanisms to safeguard children's rights. At the conclusion of the workshop, participants resolved to enhance coordination among all departments, institutions, and organizations working in the field of child protection. They also emphasized greater information sharing and active community engagement to build a robust and effective child protection ecosystem in Khordha district. The programme was successfully coordinated by the District Child Protection Unit team and Plan India District Coordinator Amita Singh. Participants expressed hope that the workshop would serve as an important platform for shaping future strategies and initiatives aimed at strengthening child protection and ensuring the rights and welfare of every child in the district.

Puri District Administration Launches 'Nirikshan' Program to Strengthen Rural Healthcare

Puri: In a significant step towards strengthening, digitising and expanding healthcare services in rural areas, the Odisha government has launched the 'Nirikshan' programme for ASHA workers at the Mangalpur Community Health Centre in Pipili. The initiative was inaugurated by Odisha's Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Parliamentary Affairs, Electronics and Information Technology, Mukesh Mahaling.

The programme aims to ensure better access to primary healthcare services for every household in rural communities. Through 'Nirikshan', high-risk health conditions among



pregnant women will be identified at an early stage, followed by regular monitoring and timely medical intervention. The initiative will leverage digital technology to enhance maternal and child healthcare services across the state.

According to officials, the programme is expected to play a key role in reducing maternal and infant mortality rates while ensuring the delivery of quality healthcare services at the grassroots level.

Among those present at the

launch were Ashrit Pattanayak, National Health Mission Director D. Brunda, Director of Health Services Mahesh Mohan Panda, Public Health Officer Akshaya Kumar Satpathy and District Project Officer Shyam Sundar Tripathy, along with

several senior health department officials. A large number of ASHA workers and healthcare personnel also attended the event. On the occasion, ASHA worker Manorama Das was felicitated by the Health Minister for her outstanding contribution to community healthcare.

The Odisha government views 'Nirikshan' as a forward-looking initiative aligned with its vision of a healthy and empowered Odisha. Officials said the programme would not only strengthen the role of ASHA workers but also help bring essential healthcare services closer to people's doorsteps.

Bikash Ra Dhara, Odisha Sara held in Sujanpur.

Jajpur (SURESH KAR): "Bikash Ra Dhara, Odisha Sara" Panchayat-level Programme held here in Sujanpur Panchayat Office under Jajpur Block on Wednesday marking two years of the state's government with a focus on grassroots development and women's empowerment.

Local Sarapanch Smt. Bishnupriya Mahakud joined as Chief Guest and highlighted different benefit schemes runned by the Government. In this regard Smt. Mahakud distributed Job Cards, New Stipends, Mukhyamti Amapurna Cards, Mobile phone to Anganwadi workers, Ayusman Cards to needy beneficiaries. Among others Panchayat PS Member Narayan Jena, ADEO Tapas Kumar Samal, PEO Sudhir Kumar Mohanty, AO Sagarika Sahoo, Naib Sarapanch Manorama Das, Bank Mitra were joined and coordinated.



Awareness camp on Fundamental Duties and Migrant Workers' Issues' held

NUAPADA/KHARIAR ROAD : A special awareness program was organized by the District Legal Services Authority Nuapada at the premises of Suklimundi Government Upper Primary School under Thikpali Gram Panchayat in Nuapada District. In this camp, there was a wide-ranging discussion mainly on the fundamental duties of

citizens, the Child Labour Abolition Act, and various problems and solutions of migrant workers.

District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Secretary Navneeta Dash and Nuapada Divisional Labour Commissioner Ravindra Barla participated in the event and educated the workers and local people about

their rights. The guests said that migrant workers must register with the government before going to work outside the state, so that they can get legal help in case of any danger. They also stated that it is the responsibility of every citizen to fulfill the 'fundamental duties' given by the Constitution.

There was a discussion on

preventing exploitation of workers abroad and how everyone can benefit from government welfare schemes for them.

The school students also took out a procession to raise awareness about the eradication of child labour. Finally, everyone participated in a plastic cleanup event and picked up about 130 kg. of plastic waste.

Show cause notice issued by Forest Department for roadside tree felling

Naresh Chandra Pattanayak

Keonjhar: On Monday, the Forest Department issued notices to Two persons regarding illegal tree cutting in the Avenue plantation alongside National Highway 49 (Bypass) near Dharanidhar Medical College and Hospital and a constructed road leading to plotted land. Keonjhar Sadar Range Officer Ajit Kumar Das issued show-cause notices to Debu Patnaik of Keonjhar old town and Sanjay Sahu of Keonjhar town, ordering them to submit a response within 3 days. According to sources, roadside afforestation was done along National Highway 49 for the protection of environment and safe movement of people with

government funds. However, the forest department found damage to the avenue plantation. During the inquiry, they found that 16 trees were uprooted for road construction on government land without the department's permission. They were asked to explain whose permission was granted and under what circumstances these trees were cut. Similarly, they have been asked to explain why steps will be taken under the Forest Protection Act and why compensation will not be charged for the destruction of afforestation. Sadar Ranger Ajit Kumar Das said that the Forest Department will file a case against them under forest laws and rules if a satisfactory answer is not found.

Excise Department Foils Major Cannabis Smuggling Bid; 21 Kg Ganja Seized, One Arrested in Khordha.

Khordha : In a significant breakthrough in the ongoing fight against narcotics trafficking in Odisha, the Khordha Excise Department successfully intercepted a vehicle carrying a large quantity of cannabis and arrested a young man allegedly involved in the illegal trade. Acting on a reliable intelligence input, excise officials seized 21 kilograms of ganja (cannabis) valued at approximately 2.10 lakh and took the accused into custody following a well-planned operation near Khordha town. The successful raid highlights the increasing vigilance of law enforcement agencies against drug trafficking networks that continue to use Odisha's highways and rural routes to transport narcotics from interior districts to urban markets. According

In-Charge Deputy Excise Superintendent Radhakanta Bhoi. A special patrolling team was conducting routine surveillance and vehicle checks in different parts of the district as part of the state's intensified anti-narcotics campaign. During

the patrol, officers received credible information from a confidential source that a substantial quantity of ganja was being transported from Kandhamal district towards Bhubaneswar in a vehicle. Realizing the seriousness of the tip-off, the excise team immediately swung into action and laid a trap near Batamangala Temple Road under the jurisdiction of Khordha Model Police Station.

Led by Khordha Excise Station Officer-in-Charge (OIC) Sujit Kumar Muduli, the team strategically positioned themselves along the route and kept a close watch on passing vehicles. After a brief wait, officials noticed a suspicious white Mahindra Bolero Pickup Van (Registration No. OD-23N-0174) approaching the area.



The vehicle matched the description received from the intelligence source. The excise personnel promptly intercepted the vehicle and conducted a thorough search. During the inspection, officers discovered a plastic sack concealed inside the pickup van. On opening the sack, they found 21 kilograms of ganja packed for transportation. The recovery immediately confirmed the intelligence input and exposed another attempt by traffickers to

move narcotics into the capital region.

Following the seizure, the driver of the vehicle was detained and questioned on the spot. During interrogation, the accused was identified as Sritam Mallik (23), a resident of Munisigaon village under Tikabali police limits in Kandhamal district. Preliminary investigation revealed that the contraband was being transported from Kandhamal towards Bhubaneswar, a route that has

frequently come under the scanner of enforcement agencies due to repeated instances of drug smuggling.

Officials suspect that the arrested youth may not have been acting alone and that a larger interstate or inter-district trafficking network could be operating behind the scenes. Investigators are now examining possible links to suppliers, transporters and receivers involved in the illegal trade.

Apart from the cannabis, the excise team also seized the Mahindra Bolero pickup vehicle used for transportation and a smartphone belonging to the accused. Authorities believe the mobile phone could contain crucial evidence regarding the trafficking operation, including communication records, contact details of associates and information about previous consignments.

A case has been registered at the Khordha Excise Police Station under Case No. 61/2025-26, and

legal proceedings have been initiated. After completion of the necessary formalities, the accused was produced before the Khordha court on Tuesday. Further investigation is currently underway to identify other individuals connected to the smuggling racket and to trace the intended destination of the seized contraband.

The incident once again underscores the persistent challenge posed by narcotics trafficking in Odisha. Districts such as Kandhamal have often been identified as source regions for illegal cannabis cultivation and transportation, while major urban centres remain attractive destinations for traffickers seeking quick profits. To curb the menace, the Excise Department, Odisha Police and other enforcement agencies have been conducting frequent raids, vehicle checks and intelligence-based operations across the state. Officials stated that smugglers are constantly adopting new methods and routes to evade

detection, making coordinated enforcement efforts more crucial than ever. However, the latest seizure demonstrates that sustained surveillance and timely intelligence can effectively disrupt such illegal activities. The successful operation was carried out with the active participation of OIC Sujit Kumar Muduli, ASI Jitendra Kumar Behera, ASI Sanjaya Kumar Subudhi, Titu Sahu, Pranab Behera, and Chinmayee Sethi, among others. Their swift action and coordinated effort led to the seizure and arrest before the contraband could reach its destination. The operation has been widely appreciated by local residents, who view it as an important step in protecting society, particularly the youth, from the harmful effects of drug abuse. As the investigation progresses, authorities are hopeful that further leads will help dismantle the wider network involved in the illicit trade and strengthen the ongoing crackdown on narcotics across Odisha.

SIR review meeting held in Paradip

Paradip, (DMS) : - The review meeting on oversee the progress of the nationwide Special Intensive Revision (SIR)-2026 electoral roll update was held at the Additional District Magistrate (ADM) office premises on Tuesday. The meeting focused on ensuring a transparent and inclusive voter list by coordinating door-to-door enumeration, verifying eligible voters, and eliminating deceased, shifted or duplicate entries. Officials emphasized strengthening the coordination between Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and political party representatives during the house-to-door verification phase.

In this context, representatives of registered



and recognised political parties in Paradip were present at ERO and ADM Paradip Office on 23rd June 2026 at 4pm regarding the progress of ongoing SIR status of distribution and digitisation of Enumeration Forms / conduct of BLOs and BLAs MoM on 24.6.26 & 25.6.26 and on reasons for Uncollectable Forms in presence of ERO

and AEROs under 101, Paradip Assembly Constituency. The meeting was presided over by Niranjan Behera, ADM Paradip. Among others, Abhishek Panda, EO Paradip Municipality, Subrat Pradhan, councillor and BJP Town president, representatives of BJD, Congress, BSP and others were present.

Noida launches survey for City Logistics Plan

Noida: The Noida authority on Monday launched surveys to map logistics patterns in industrial clusters as part of preparations for a City Logistics Plan (CLP), officials aware of the matter said.

The CLP is a strategic framework to streamline urban freight movement in a sustainable and coordinated manner. Noida is among the cities selected under the Centre's National Logistics Policy (NLP), which aims to lower logistics costs and enhance supply chain efficiency, they added.

The exercise has gained urgency with the commencement of flight and cargo operations at the Noida International Airport.



Survey teams have started covering different areas, roads, and logistics infrastructure across the city. The objective is to streamline freight movement, reduce delivery time, cut logistics costs, and bring down emissions. The survey will continue for a week, following which a report will be submitted," said Vaibhav Gupta, senior manager, planning department, Noida authority.

The project is being steered by the ministry of commerce and industry

through its Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). Noida was selected for the project last year, with an emphasis on improving efficiency and climate-friendliness of urban freight, officials said. The authority has engaged Ernst & Young (EY) as the consultant for the project.

The survey will map freight traffic and truck movement, identify logistics and warehousing zones, and assess parking facilities. It will also focus on emission reduction and decongestion measures, besides stakeholder consultations with industries and transport operators, officials added.

Noida houses nearly 10,100 units across sectors 1-11, 57-68, 80-90, Phase 2 and other areas. The city is a key centre for electronics and mobile phone manufacturing, besides units producing electrical appliances, engineering goods, machinery, auto components, garments, textiles, paper products, IT hardware, and packaging materials.

Industry stakeholders said the plan is long overdue. "The City Logistics Plan is crucial for Noida as it will bring systemic efficiency, benefiting both the government and businesses," said Sudhir Srivastava, who runs an electronics firm in Sector 59.

Vipin Malhan, president of a Noida entrepreneurs' association, flagged the lack of designated truck parking. "Trucks carrying raw materials struggle to find parking space, forcing many to park on roadsides, leading to congestion and challans," he said.

He also pointed to the no-entry timing restrictions for trucks entering Delhi, which are prohibited between 7am-11am and 5pm-11pm. "This leads to long queues at the Noida-Delhi border, delaying goods movement to Delhi, Rajasthan, and Haryana. The Delhi and Uttar Pradesh governments should designate at least one day-use route for trucks," Malhan added.

Railway overbridge connecting Greater Noida West and East opens for traffic

GREATER NOIDA: A 1.6km-long, eight-lane railway overbridge (ROB) built to streamline connectivity between west and east Greater Noida was opened to traffic on Tuesday, officials said.

According to officials, the project is considered a crucial infrastructure link between the two regions.

Prabhat Shankar, senior manager of the Greater Noida Authority, said, "The ROB was opened for public use on Tuesday. This will facilitate commuting and help ease traffic congestion in the area."

People living in nearby residential societies such as Shivalik Homes Park, Ansal Housing, Paramount Golf Foreste and Migsun Green Mansion will get relief from traffic jams, officials said.

Constructed by the Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India



Limited (DFCCIL) along the 130-metre-wide road, also known as the Noida-Greater Noida Link Road, the ROB connects the villages of Makoda and Tilapta, officials said. The project started in 2020 with an initial completion target of 2022, but construction was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, officials said.

DFCCIL, under the Ministry of Railways, is developing the Dadr section of the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) in Greater Noida. Since the 130-metre-wide road falls within the project area, the corporation undertook the ROB's

construction, officials said.

The 130-metre road connects Gaur Chowk in Greater Noida west with sectors like Zeta 1, Eta 1, Delta 1, and the Greater Noida Authority office. The route also passes through several residential and industrial areas, officials said.

There is also an underpass beneath the ROB that reports frequent waterlogging during the monsoon season, officials said.

Reena Yadav, a resident of Supertech Eco Village, said, "This road is an important connection for people travelling to the Greater Noida Authority office, Surajpur court complex and various government and police offices in Greater Noida. With the ROB now operational, people will be able to travel across this stretch more smoothly and without disruption."

Employee plotted Rs. 1.5 crore heist in north Delhi days before wedding

Gurgaon: Thirteen days after two masked motorcycle-borne men robbed two employees of a real estate firm of ₹1.5 crore at gunpoint near the Zakhira flyover in north Delhi, police on Tuesday said they had cracked the case, alleging it was masterminded by one of the firm's employees to buy a house.

Six men, including the 26-year-old employee and a father-son duo, were arrested, while two minor boys were apprehended after an 11-day investigation covering around 4,000 km across Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. Police said nearly 500 CCTV cameras were scanned and ₹10,15,00,000 recovered.

The accused have been booked under Sections 309 (robbery), 311 (robbery with attempt to cause death or grievous hurt), 61 (criminal conspiracy) and 317 (dishonestly receiving or retaining stolen property) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, along with Sections 25 and 27 of the Arms Act, police said. Police alleged the employee conspired with his friends to orchestrate the robbery and shared the live location of the

cash with the assailants. "Interrogation of the main accused... revealed that he wanted to buy a house for himself before getting married... He agreed and played a crucial role in the robbery by sharing live locations of his movement with his fellow employee, with the cash to his accomplices on June 10," said an investigator, who requested anonymity. Police said the two employees left their Paschim Vihar office on June 10 with the cash in two bags on a scooter for delivery in Chandni Chowk when two masked motorcycle-borne men intercepted them near the Zakhira flyover and robbed them at gunpoint. Joint commissioner of police (central) Madhur Verma said CCTV analysis, route mapping and human intelligence led to the arrests. "We recovered ₹49.50 lakh... They disclosed that they had roped in two repeat offenders... Our teams travelled across eight states, covered nearly 4,000 kms and finally arrested them with ₹2 lakh on Monday while they were returning to Delhi from Jammu," he added. All six arrested accused were produced before a city court, which remanded them to judicial custody.

The golden girl who rode in the chariot

Keonjhar (Naresh Chandra Patnaik) The construction of the chariot for the Rath Yatra of Shri Baladevjiu is in full swing. The construction of the chariot under the supervision of the Devtor Department is almost half complete. Today, the world's tallest chariot construction work is underway. Under the leadership of Rath Maharana Nilamani Maharana, the artisans are leading the construction of the chariot to complete the work before the Rath Yatra begins.

Today, the golden naika was hoisted on the chariot. Nikhil, a member of Utkal Vishwakarma Samiti Keonjhar, was present. When this golden naika was hoisted, the Jai Jagannath chanting was heard. This golden naika is made up of four big poles which are placed upright on the chariot. On this, the para bhadi and other work will begin.

On this occasion, Assistant Collector of the Deity Department Prakash Sethi, Charakti Panchanan Sahu were present, while on behalf of the Vishwakarma Samiti, Coordinator Kirtan Bihari Ojha, President Professor Yadava Nanda Maharana, Vice President Sanatan Maharana, Manmoh Kumar Ojha, Bairagi Maharana, Gayadhar Maharana, Radheshyam Bindhani, Deepak Maharana and many other members and devotees were present and performed the work.

Congress Alleges "Poison Government" Instead of "Amrit Government"; Targets Centre and State Over NEET Paper Leak and Education Issues.

Khordha : Launching a sharp attack on both the Central and Odisha governments over the alleged NEET question paper leak, textbook errors, and irregularities in the education sector, the Khordha District Congress Committee on Wednesday organized a press conference at the district Congress office here. The press conference, presided over by District Congress President Rajib Pattnaik, witnessed strong criticism of the education policies and administrative functioning of both the Centre and the State. Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee spokesperson Debashish Bhuyan, who attended as the chief speaker, raised concerns over the alleged NEET examination paper leak and the errors reported in school textbooks from Classes I to VIII. Addressing the media, Bhuyan said that while the Central Government continues to promote the narrative of an "Amrit Kaal" for the nation, the reality in the education sector tells a different story. He alleged that repeated incidents of examination irregularities, uncertainty surrounding students' futures, and growing disorder in the education system have shattered the confidence of the country's youth. "The government claims that the country is passing through an era of progress and prosperity, but the education system is facing one crisis after another.



In such a situation, it would be more appropriate to call this a 'Poison Government' rather than an 'Amrit Government'," Bhuyan remarked. He further stated that the alleged question paper leak in a national-level examination like NEET has exposed serious weaknesses in the system and reflects the failure of the Central Government to ensure transparency and credibility in the examination process. According to him, lakhs of students are being subjected to mental stress and uncertainty due to the lack of accountability in educational administration. District Congress President Rajib Pattnaik also launched

a scathing attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government, alleging that the education sector has been handed over to middlemen and commercial interests. He blamed the Union Education Ministry for what he described as serious lapses in higher education policy and examination management. "The future of students is being compromised. Young people who work hard for competitive examinations deserve a fair and transparent system, but repeated irregularities are undermining their trust," Pattnaik said. Turning his attention to the Odisha Government, Pattnaik alleged that both the education and employment sectors

in the state are in a deteriorating condition. He claimed that despite acquiring higher qualifications, many youths are unable to secure employment opportunities within the state and are being forced to seek jobs elsewhere. Demanding comprehensive reforms in education and greater employment generation, he warned that the Congress party would launch a large-scale public movement in the coming days if the concerns of students and unemployed youth were not addressed. Odisha Pradesh Congress observer Bankanidhi Behera also criticized the prevailing education system, stating that education has increasingly become a commercial enterprise rather than a public service. He alleged that both the Central and State Governments are viewing education through a business-oriented lens, resulting in hardship for students and parents alike. Raising the issue of errors in school textbooks, Behera described the matter as highly sensitive and accused the government of failing to treat it with the seriousness it deserves. He further alleged that nearly 35 percent of students in Khordha district are yet to receive their textbooks on time, adversely affecting their academic progress. "This situation exposes the inefficiency of the education administration. Students should not be

made to suffer due to administrative negligence," he said. Behera also announced that the Congress party would constitute a dedicated monitoring team to keep watch on alleged exploitation of students by private schools, excessive fee collection, and violations of educational norms. The team, he said, would work to increase public awareness and put pressure on the government to take corrective measures. Among those present at the press conference were Khordha Assembly Constituency candidate Sonali Sahu, Chilika Assembly Constituency candidate Pradeep Swain, Swagatika Pattnaik, Ranjit Mohapatra, Sisir Parida, Jayashree Pattnaik, Subash Patra, Soumya Pattnaik, Ashok Mangaraj, Tapas Mishra, Pramod Swain, Jayant Das, Ramakanta Pattnaik, Sailendra Das, Subhranshu Sekhar Pattnaik, Shivaprasad Das, Youth Congress Working President Soumya Baral, Apsana Begum, Manwar Ali, Sadik Khan, Debi Das, and Shriya Sethi, among others. Through the press conference, the District Congress sought to bring issues relating to education, employment, and the future of the youth to the forefront of public and political discourse. Party leaders indicated that Congress would intensify its campaign and may take to the streets in the coming days to press for reforms and accountability in the education sector.

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate Sambalpur, dated 25.06.2026 I Sourav Nayak, aged about 24 years, S/o Ramakanta Nayak, Resident of Pandit Laxmi Narayan Lane, Gayatri Bhawan, G.M College Road, P.S: Town and P.O/ District: Sambalpur, Odisha declared that I have changed my name from Sourav Kumar Nayak to Sourav Nayak Henceforth I shall be Known as Sourav Nayak for all purpose.
Sourav Nayak

Raisuan College President Ratindra Parida bids farewell amid emotional atmosphere

Naresh Chandra Pattanatak Keonjhar : Ratindra Kumar Parida, Principal of the Higher Secondary School at Raisuan in Keonjhar Sadar Block, who retired last month was felicitated on Wednesday amidst emotional atmosphere. Shri Parida was teaching as a history professor since the establishment of Raisuan College and later retired as the Principal after a long tenure.

He expressed his gratitude to the Raisuan community, college, management committee, staff, students and villagers. A meeting was

organized on behalf of the college on Wednesday in the college conference hall under the chairmanship of incharge principal Bipin Bihari Sahu. Shri Sahu praised the outgoing President Shri Parida for the progress made in the college during his tenure. In the program.

The founding secretary of the college, Padmanabh Khanda, founding member Prafulla Ghosh, retired professor Ashish Raut, +3 college president Dhanalakshmi Bishnupriya, college management committee member Sarat Chandra Das,



librarian Ajay Kumar Sahu, retired president of Keonjhar Higher Secondary School Dr. Khirod Mishra, president of Jhumpura College Debabrat Mishra wished the outgoing president Shri Parida a long and

prosperous life. The chief guest of the program and Additional superintendent of Police (DIB) of Keonjhar, Jyotirmay Bhukta, praised the outgoing president Shri Parida and expressed his feelings

about his work style in the college, which is familiar to students, teachers, staff and parents. At the beginning, a silent prayer was offered by the college management committee members and students. Professor Sujata Mohapatra conducted the meeting and introduced the guests. After presenting the outgoing president with bouquets, certificates and gifts on behalf of the college, the students and staff played the drums and bid farewell to their beloved president from the college in an emotional atmosphere.



GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
DHENKANAL (R&B) DIVISION, DHENKANAL

Letter No. 4132 Dt: 22.06.2026
Email ID: eedklpnd@gmail.com

Cancellation of Bid Identification- SEDKL-No.36 of 2025-26

The tender received for the following 2 Nos work in response to E-Procurement Notice No-36 /2025-26 with Bid Identification No- SEDKL-No.36 of 2025-26 is hereby cancelled.

The cancellation is due to rejection of the lowest bid in accordance with Clause No.1(VI) of office Memorandum No. 173/W dated 03.01.2026 of the Works Department, as the quoted bid price was found abnormally low and the bidder failed to justify the same. Hence, the tender called vide Tender Call Notice No. 36 of 2025-26 is hereby cancelled and fresh tender will be invited.

- 1- Construction of 1 Nos. E type quarter at Mahidharpur Section Office under Dhenkanal (R&B) Division in the District of Dhenkanal for the year 2025-26
- 2- Construction of 1 Nos. E type quarter at Odapada Section Office under Dhenkanal (R&B) Division in the District of Dhenkanal for the year 2025-26

34001/388/2627

Superintending Engineer
Dhenkanal (R&B) Division, Dhenkanal

Lucknow Tragedy

Two major fire tragedies in just three weeks have shocked and saddened the nation. First New Delhi, then Lucknow — which city will be next? Is there no escape from such a death trap for hapless citizens across the country? The Lucknow blaze that snuffed out 15 lives was ignited by criminal negligence and corruption. Students chasing careers and dreams died inside a building that had no business functioning as a commercial establishment. The details are chilling: a three-storey premises operating with a single entry and exit point; no emergency staircase; no smoke ventilation system; flammable material crammed into lower floors; a biometric locking system that jammed during the power failure, trapping victims inside a



smoke chamber.

All this was not unforeseeable. In 2016, the authorities had issued a demolition order against the building for illegal construction — but it was suspiciously revoked within weeks. That U-turn became a death warrant signed years in advance. The fresh demolition notice issued on Tuesday is nothing but a belated admission of administrative failure. This tragedy is even more unforgivable because it comes on the heels of Delhi's Malviya Nagar guesthouse fire, which revealed the same deadly pattern of illegal commercial operations and blatant disregard for fire safety. Every disaster is followed by raids, suspensions, inquiries and the grant of compensation. Then the outrage dies down, files gather dust and it's back to business as usual.

The rot runs deep in urban India — the nexus between builders and officials turns residential neighbourhoods into hazardous commercial hubs. Rules exist on paper; accountability is conspicuous by its absence. Suspending a few officials and arresting the owners will not be enough unless criminal liability becomes the norm. What's direly needed is a system that values human life over convenience, profit and bureaucratic compromise. Until that happens, India's cities will remain ticking time bombs.

Competition Law

Most consumers have little reason to think about competition law. Yet its impact is felt every day — in the prices we pay, the choices we have and the services we receive. When companies collude to keep prices high, restrict consumer options or use their market dominance unfairly, it is ordinary citizens who ultimately bear the cost. That is why the Competition Commission of India (CCI) has become increasingly important. Over the years, it has taken action against cement companies accused of working together to influence prices, automobile manufacturers that limited access to spare parts and repair services, and technology giants such as Google and Meta over concerns related to market dominance and consumer choice.

The government's decision to allow the CCI to calculate penalties on the basis of a company's global turnover rather than just in India reflects a growing concern that existing fines may not be enough to deter large multinational corporations. A penalty that seems substantial in India may barely register for a company earning billions of dollars worldwide. The logic is understandable. Rules have little value if violating them is cheaper than following them. Companies with enormous resources should not be able to treat penalties as a routine business expense.

At the same time, regulation must be guided by fairness. Businesses need a predictable environment in which to invest and grow. Penalties should be linked to the seriousness of the violation and not create the impression that success itself is being punished. Therefore, there is a need to find the right balance. India must have strong companies to create jobs and drive growth, but it also needs strong institutions to ensure that markets remain competitive and consumers are protected.

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Decoding the US -Iran MOU

Tejeswar Patnaik

Recent diplomatic developments between the United States and Iran have attracted global attention and generated cautious optimism across diplomatic and economic circles. The emerging understanding is being viewed as a possible turning point that could reduce tensions in West Asia and create space for a broader regional settlement.

The world witnessed a major diplomatic breakthrough with the United States and Iran signing a historic 14-point Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) last week. The deal, largely brokered by Pakistan and Qatar, resulted in an immediate ceasefire across multiple fronts and opened the way for negotiations toward a comprehensive peace agreement within 60 days. Oil prices also declined following the announcement.

The preliminary agreement, signed by US President Donald Trump and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, took effect immediately and established a 60-day negotiation period to work toward a final settlement. US Vice President J.D. Vance has been appointed to lead the American technical team in direct talks with the Iranian delegation headed by Mr Bagher Ghalibaf in Geneva, Switzerland, and discussions have already begun.

The negotiations have also included coordination concerning Lebanon. However, continued clashes in southern Lebanon between Iran-backed Hezbollah and Israel remain a major challenge to the peace process. The US administration continues to maintain regular contact with Israel, although its ally is not formally part of the negotiations.

The 14-point Memorandum of Understanding marks an important diplomatic development after months of conflict and uncertainty in West Asia. The framework broadly addresses military de-escalation, economic relief, maritime security and nuclear commitments within



a time-bound process.

The immediate priority under the agreement is the cessation of military operations across conflict zones, including Lebanon. Both sides have agreed to avoid direct hostilities and actions that could undermine regional stability. The framework also includes a commitment to respect Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The MoU further affirms mutual respect for sovereignty and non-interference in Iran's internal affairs. At the same time, some provisions have attracted criticism within the United States, where sections of opinion continue to favour stronger external pressure on Iran's domestic and regional policies.

The agreement allows a 60-day negotiation window, with provisions for extension by mutual consent if additional time is required to finalise a broader peace arrangement.

Security-related provisions include the phased easing of maritime restrictions around Iran. According to the MoU, the United States would reduce its military deployment near Iran after the final agreement. Within 30 days of signing the final settlement, Washington has committed to withdrawing forces from areas in proximity to Iran.

Another significant component is the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most strategic energy corridors. Iran has agreed to permit uninterrupted commercial navigation through the strait, helping restore confidence in global energy markets. Discussions are also underway on future cooperation with Gulf countries, including Oman, to establish a long-term maritime security framework.

The MoU also outlines a reconstruction and economic development package for Iran valued at at least \$300 billion (£224 billion). The initiative is expected to receive support from regional partners and international financial arrangements. However, the United States has clarified that it will not directly finance reconstruction and that any funding mechanism will depend on future approvals.

In addition, the United States has agreed to ease economic sanctions imposed on Iran, including restrictions linked to UN Security Council measures and unilateral US actions. However, sanctions relief is expected to occur in phases, and the implementation timeline remains uncertain.

On the nuclear issue, Iran has reaffirmed that it will not pursue the

development of nuclear weapons. Existing enriched uranium stockpiles will remain under international supervision and monitoring. The easing of sanctions will remain linked to Iran's compliance with its non-proliferation commitments.

The agreement also proposes a phased release of Iran's frozen financial assets. Some funds may be released during the negotiation period as an incentive tied to compliance with various provisions of the understanding.

At the same time, the United States has indicated that it will not impose additional sanctions and may provide temporary waivers to facilitate Iranian exports of oil and petroleum products along with related banking and transportation services.

To ensure implementation, a joint monitoring mechanism involving both countries is expected to supervise compliance and address disputes. The MoU also proposes that any final agreement receive endorsement through a United Nations Security Council resolution.

Global markets responded positively to the announcement. Oil prices moderated and investor sentiment improved amid expectations that energy supply disruptions could ease if tensions continue to decline. However, several analysts of West Asian geopolitics remain cautious about whether the final agreement can ultimately be concluded.

The ongoing US-Iran meeting in Switzerland is an important diplomatic opening rather than a final peace settlement. Its success will depend on both countries honouring ceasefire commitments, creating credible economic incentives and maintaining safeguards on nuclear activities. Whether this understanding develops into a durable agreement will ultimately depend on sustained political commitment, mutual trust and cooperation from countries across West Asia.

Sri Patnaik is a columnist.

The Brain Economy: Growth's Next Frontier

Raghunath Mahapatra

Traditional economics explains prosperity through land, labour, capital, and technology, with governments carefully measuring physical output and investment. However, human cognition, which has become increasingly central to modern growth, remains largely underestimated. In many advanced economies, nearly nine-tenths of corporate market value now resides in intangible assets. This shift highlights a growing disconnect between traditional economic metrics and modern wealth creation. The OECD similarly observes that economic value is increasingly concentrated in knowledge-intensive activities and intangible capital. Patents, algorithms, and ideas do not generate themselves; they originate from human cognition. Yet current metrics measure innovation's outputs while largely ignoring the productive capacity of the human mind.

To address this critical blind spot, global experts are turning to the "brain economy". The "Brain Economy" and its sister term, "Brain Capital" emerged around 2020 through a cross-disciplinary collaboration of neuroscientists, economists, and policymakers. Co-authored by pioneers like Harris A. Eyre, William Hynes, and Muhammad Yunus, the framework was institutionalized through the OECD, EMEA, and the Brain Capital Alliance. It reimagines global economic output by treating collective cognitive health and neurological well-being as foundational financial assets. It shifts the focus from manual labour and manufacturing to imagination, complex problem-solving and resilience, making cognitive and emotional skills as valuable societal assets. The proposition is less revolutionary than it appears. Classical economists recognised the value of skills; human-capital theory treated education and health as investments; and modern growth theory emphasised knowledge and innovation. The Brain Economy extends that logic by focusing on the cognitive foundations from which those capabilities arise.

Brain Capital combines brain health, the foundation of productive participation and skills: such as analytical reasoning, creativity, adaptability, scientific capability and problem-solving. As the World Economic Forum notes, these are among the most sought-after capabilities in the future labour market. In knowledge-intensive economies, value creation increasingly depends on the capacity to generate



Economists routinely account for the depreciation of physical assets. Yet societies rarely apply a similar framework to cognitive capacity, an omission carrying substantial economic consequences. A landmark Harvard School of Public Health-World Economic Forum study estimated that mental disorders could impose cumulative global economic losses of approximately \$16 trillion between 2011 and 2030. However, this drain extends beyond diagnosed illnesses. It is heavily driven by everyday underperformance, chronic stress, burnout, and cognitive fatigue, which quietly lowers productivity and decision-making. When clinical neurological conditions are added, the crisis deepens: The Lancet Neurology reported these alone affected 3.4 billion people (43.1%) in 2021, making them the leading contributor to global disease burden.

ideas, interpret complexity and adapt to change. Brains no longer merely participate in growth; they increasingly generate it.

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Neurology reported these alone affected 3.4 billion people (43.1%) in 2021, making them the leading contributor to global disease burden.

As economies become more dependent on knowledge work, the cost of impaired cognition rises. Yet Brain Capital is not merely about avoiding losses. Research by the McKinsey Health Institute and the World Economic Forum suggests a brain-positive economy could unlock up to US\$26 trillion in long-term global value through stronger productivity, innovation and performance. The challenge, therefore, is not simply to reduce cognitive decline but to expand cognitive potential.

The significance of Brain Capital becomes even clearer in the age of artificial intelligence. Though AI is often portrayed as a substitute for human intelligence, its widespread adoption has not translated into widespread value

creation. McKinsey and BCG surveys show that while organisations deploy AI at scale, only a minority have generated substantial business value. If AI were a straightforward substitute for cognition, productivity gains would already be evident. Instead, the adoption-value gap suggests the scarce factor is not computational power but human capability. Organisations still require people to identify opportunities, redesign workflows, exercise judgement and interpret outcomes.

Recent experience reinforces this. Gartner forecasts that by 2027, half of the companies that reduced customer-service staffing because of AI will rehire employees for similar functions. Klarna's renewed investment in human support after an aggressive AI deployment reflects the same reality. MIT research further suggests many technically automatable tasks remain economically unattractive for full automation. AI may be increasingly abundant, but human judgement remains scarce. Rather than diminishing brains, AI reveals their economic importance more clearly. The more powerful the tools become, the greater the premium on the brains capable of deploying them wisely.

For India, this carries particular significance. The country's demographic dividend will generate prosperity only if it evolves into a cognitive dividend. India's Human Capital Index stands at approximately 0.49, implying a child born today can expect to achieve only about half his/her potential productivity by age 18. Gross R&D expenditure remains around 0.65% of GDP, well below innovation-driven economies.

The implications are clear. Educational success must be measured not merely through enrolment but through learning outcomes. Brain health should be viewed as economic policy as much as social policy. Research intensity, lifelong learning and reskilling must become central pillars of development strategy. Most importantly, India should pursue human-AI complementarity rather than a narrow quest for labour substitution.

The great growth story of the twentieth century was physical capital. The twenty-first may belong to economies that combine physical and cognitive capital most effectively.

The writer is Former Senior Project Associate HSS Department, IIT Kanpur

NHRC Seeks Reports From CBSE, Maharashtra Officials Over Allegation Of Extremist Content At School Event

New Delhi, 24/6: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought action taken reports from the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), the Jalna district administration and the Maharashtra Police over allegations that minor children were made to perform to an extremist Pakistani song during an annual day function at a school in Maharashtra's Jalna district.

Acting on a complaint, a Bench of the NHRC presided over by Member Priyank Kanoongo took cognisance of the matter under Section 12 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, and directed the authorities to inquire into the allegations and submit reports within two weeks. As per a communication issued by the NHRC's Law Division on Wednesday, notices have been issued to the Chairman, CBSE, the District Magistrate, Jalna, and the Superintendent of Police,



Jalna. According to the complaint placed before the apex human rights body, the incident allegedly occurred during an annual day event at Kids World English School in Partur, Jalna district. The complainant alleged that "minor children were made to perform to an extremist Pakistani song promoting violence, accompanied by a background display of terrorist Mumtaz Qadri." The complaint alleged that

after he raised the issue in his capacity as a journalist, the school administration and the Jalna Police launched a retaliatory campaign against him. "The complainant further alleged that following his journalistic whistleblowing to alert authorities, both the school administration and the Jalna police have launched a retaliatory campaign, issuing formal takedown notices to X and

threatening him with criminal cases to suppress the investigation," the NHRC said. Seeking intervention by the apex human rights body, the complainant requested a formal cognisance of the alleged extremist content displayed during the school function, an independent inquiry into the alleged administrative intimidation, and protection for investigative journalists from retaliatory law enforcement action. Taking note of the allegations, the NHRC observed that the "prima facie seem to be violations of the human rights of the victims". It directed the CBSE Chairman, the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police, Jalna, "to get the allegations made in the complaint inquired into and to submit an Action Taken Report within two weeks for perusal of the Commission."

NHAI Identifies Nearly 600 Illegal Parking Hotspots On National Highways

New Delhi, 24/6: The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has intensified efforts to curb unauthorised parking and encroachments along National Highway corridors, identifying 595 critical locations across the country as part of a nationwide road safety drive, the government said on Wednesday. The initiative is being undertaken in compliance with directions of the Supreme Court and is aimed at ensuring safer and obstruction-free movement on National Highways, according to an official statement by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways. Unauthorised parking of vehicles, roadside encroachments and unregulated activities along highways pose significant risks to road users and adversely affect traffic flow and safety, according to the ministry. To address the issue, the authority has identified 595

critical locations of unauthorised parking across various states and is working in coordination with state governments, district administrations and enforcement agencies to remove such obstructions from National Highways. In addition, the highways authority has stepped up efforts to remove encroachments under the provisions of the Control of National Highways (Land and Traffic) Act, 2002. As part of the initiative, NHAI is working with state governments to establish District Highway Safety Task Forces and appoint nodal officers to improve coordination among agencies and strengthen enforcement mechanisms. The authority said these measures would help ensure timely action and facilitate continuous monitoring of safety-related issues across the National Highway network. Moreover, NHAI has directed its field offices to conduct immediate audits of all Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS) installations to ensure that key components — including traffic monitoring cameras, video incident detection systems, variable message signboards and emergency call boxes — remain fully operational. Additionally, the authority is prioritising the deployment of ambulances and recovery vehicles, enhanced highway patrolling, integration of ATMS alerts with enforcement agencies and proactive maintenance of safety infrastructure. According to NHAI, the initiative reflects its commitment to improving road safety and ensuring seamless passenger and freight movement across the country's National Highway network.

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Display Boards Showing Offerings Must Be Installed: SP, Cong Amid Ram Mandir Donation Row

New Delhi, 24/6: Samajwadi Party (SP) and Congress leaders on Wednesday raised concerns over the alleged Ram Mandir donation irregularities and demanded greater transparency, accountability, and a thorough investigation into the matter. Speaking to IANS, SP MP Neeraj Kushwaha said that the report prepared by the three-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) should be carefully examined by the government and made public. "Whatever report has been prepared by the SIT should be thoroughly reviewed by the government. A proper disclosure should be made, and those responsible for managing the system should be removed immediately if any wrongdoing is found. Lord Ram is worshipped by millions of people in this country, and if there has been any misuse or looting of donations offered in the name of faith, it

deeply hurts the sentiments of people across the nation," Kushwaha said. He further stated that people across the country were distressed by the allegations. Referring to media reports, he claimed that members of the Sindh community had donated silver bricks weighing around 200 kg, but questions were now being raised regarding their whereabouts. "I would also like to urge the government to ensure complete transparency regarding temple offerings. There should be display boards showing the amount of donations received every day and details of how that money is being utilised," he added. Congress leader Rudra Daman Singh also demanded immediate legal action. "After donations were collected for the Ram Temple, allegations of a land scam surfaced. Now, there are allegations of misappropriation involving offerings worth

thousands of crores. Despite this, no police case has been registered so far. We demand that an FIR be lodged immediately and that the matter be investigated under the supervision of a sitting High Court judge," he said. Congress leader Amit Tyagi described the allegations as extremely serious, saying the Ayodhya Ram Temple in Uttar Pradesh, is closely linked to the faith of Hindus across the country and worldwide. "The issue that has come to light is known to everyone. The alleged theft involving temple offerings and donations is a matter of grave concern. Every time a Special Investigation Team is constituted, but what are the outcomes? We demand that the government make public the findings of all SITs that have been constituted so far," Tyagi said. Earlier on Tuesday, the SIT submitted a report on its initial findings to the Uttar Pradesh government on the donation row.

SC Treats Mason's Leg Amputation As 100 Pc Functional Disability, Raises Compensation To Rs 40.29 Lakh

New Delhi, 24/6: The Supreme Court has enhanced compensation payable to a Tamil Nadu mason who lost his right leg in a road accident, holding that courts must assess "functional disability" and not merely the percentage of physical disability while determining loss of earning capacity in motor accident claims. A bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and N.V. Anjaria increased the compensation awarded to claimant M. Paramesh from Rs 29.01 lakh, as fixed by the Madras High Court, to Rs 40.29 lakh, observing that the amputation of his right leg above the knee had effectively rendered him incapable of continuing his profession as a mason. Allowing the appeal in part, the apex court held that although the claimant's permanent physical disability had been assessed at 70 per cent, his functional disability for the purpose of earning a livelihood



was 100 per cent. "The amputation of the right leg above the knee has not merely caused physical disability to the appellant but has rendered him incapable of effectively carrying on the manual and physical work which constituted his only source of livelihood," the Justice Mishra-led Bench said. "In such

circumstances, restricting the loss of earning capacity to 70 per cent merely on the basis of physical disability would not be justified," it added. The case arose from an accident that occurred on April 18, 2017, on the Namakkal-Salem National Highway in Tamil Nadu when a lorry hit the claimant's bicycle from behind.

The accident caused grievous injuries to his head, jaw, eye and right leg, eventually leading to amputation of the right leg above the knee. The claimant, who was around 30 years old at the time and worked as a mason, had approached the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT) seeking compensation of Rs 25 lakh, contending that he had lost his ability to continue his occupation due to the permanent disability suffered in the accident. The MACT awarded compensation of Rs 10.84 lakh in 2019 by assessing his monthly income at Rs 6,000 and calculating loss of earning capacity on the basis of 70 per cent disability. On appeal, the Madras High Court enhanced the compensation to Rs 23.86 lakh by increasing the monthly income to Rs 12,000 and granting a 40 per cent addition towards future prospects.

Amit Shah to Hold Narco-Coordination Centre Meeting on Friday

New Delhi, 24/6: Union Home Minister Amit Shah is set to chair the 10th apex-level meeting of the Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD) on Friday, focusing on strengthening India's fight against drug trafficking and substance abuse. The meeting will address emerging challenges such as the growing menace of synthetic drugs, the use of the darknet for narcotics trafficking, and measures to expand the network of rehabilitation centres for drug users over the next three years. Senior officials from 44 central ministries and departments, along with 108 representatives from state governments and drug law enforcement agencies, will participate in the hybrid-format meeting. Discussions will centre on enhancing coordination among stakeholders and advancing the government's mission of creating a drug-free India. During the event, Shah will also unveil the Vision Document on Narcotics Control (2026-2029). The roadmap has been developed through extensive consultations with central government agencies, enforcement bodies, and other key stakeholders, and is expected to guide the country's anti-narcotics strategy over the coming years.

Security Agencies Flag Use Of Live-Feed Drones By Pakistan-Based Smugglers

New Delhi: As India continues to crack down on narcotic syndicates, drug smugglers from across the border are increasingly focussing on the Punjab border. Worryingly, smugglers are now sending in narcotics using drones that can provide them real-time feed. The India-Pakistan border in Punjab has always been a concern when it comes to smuggling of narcotics, arms and ammunition. However, the new worry is the massive enhancement in technology that is being noticed by the Indian security agencies. Smugglers are sending in narcotic and arms using drones which have the capability of providing them real-time feed of the operation. This enhancement has been made after the Indian security agencies have shot down or chased back several drones being used by the smugglers, an official said. The new drones which are being launched into Punjab have the capabilities of providing live videos of the operation. This helps smugglers keep an eye on the movement of the Indian security forces. Moreover they can manoeuvre the drones in such a manner that detection can be avoided, an official said. Another feature found on these new drones is that they are satellite enabled. This added feature helps smugglers penetrate deep into Indian territory while also reducing the risk of being intercepted. An Intelligence Bureau official said that the use of satellite enabled drones clearly points towards the involvement of the Pakistani establishment.

Illegal Eateries Along Highways To Be Demolished; NHAI To Curb Unauthorised Parking On SC Orders

Kolkata, 24/6: Illegal dhabas and eateries along the National Highways will be evicted soon to prevent the parking of trucks outside. This comes at a time when the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) took a major initiative to curb unauthorised parking and encroachments along National Highways to enhance safety and ensure obstruction-free movement. This comes after the Supreme Court issued structures against parking of trucks along National Highway stretches, except at designated bye-lanes, to prevent accidents. "Unauthorised parking of vehicles, roadside encroachments and unregulated activities along National Highways pose significant risks to road users and adversely impact traffic flow and safety. To address these challenges, NHAI has identified 595 critical locations of unauthorised parking (along with longitude and latitude details) across different states and is



working in close coordination with state governments, district administrations and enforcement agencies for removal of unauthorised parking from National Highways," the Ministry of Road Transport and

Highways has said in a statement. NHAI has also undertaken concerted efforts for the removal of encroachments from National Highway corridors under the provisions of the Control of National Highways

(Land and Traffic) Act, 2002. "To further strengthen institutional coordination, NHAI is working closely with state governments for the establishment of District Highway Safety Task Forces and nomination of nodal officers to

monitor compliance and facilitate inter-agency coordination. These mechanisms will support timely enforcement action and enable continuous monitoring of safety-related issues along National Highway network," the statement said. The Authority has also directed its field offices to undertake immediate audits of all Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS) installations and ensure that components such as traffic monitoring cameras, video incident detection systems, variable speed detection systems, variable message signboards and emergency call boxes are fully operational. Deployment of ambulances and recovery vehicles, enhanced highway patrolling, integration of ATMS alerts with enforcement agencies and proactive maintenance of safety infrastructure are being prioritised to enable faster incident response, improved enforcement and safer travel for national highway users across the country.

Hoodie During Lohagad Fort Trek In Searing Heat: Vital CCTV Clue That Solved Pune Man's Murder By Fiancée

New Delhi: A case that initially appeared to be a tragic trekking accident at Lohagad Fort near Pune but later emerged as a chilling murder conspiracy was solved with the help of crucial CCTV footage. Investigators credit an unusual detail seen in the CCTV footage, a man wearing a hoodie in 33-degree Celsius temperature

during a challenging trek, for helping them crack the case. Ketan Agarwal's death was first reported as an accidental fall during a trek at the historic fort on June 18. However, as investigators examined CCTV footage from the area, they noticed something that immediately raised suspicions. According to NDTV, the

footage showed Ketan walking with his fiancée, Siya Goyal, while a man dressed in shorts and a hoodie followed them from a distance of about 20 to 30 feet. The individual had his face covered by the hood and was also wearing a headset. Another CCTV clip further deepened police suspicions. In the footage, Siya is seen

suddenly turning around and looking towards the hooded man. Almost instantly, the man sat down, apparently attempting to avoid drawing attention to himself. What stood out most to investigators was the weather. Police noted that temperatures in the area were around 33 degrees Celsius at the time.

Chinese FM Wang Yi Meets PM Modi, Says India And China Should Deepen Cooperation

New Delhi, 24/6: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met Prime Minister Narendra Modi here and expressed his country's readiness to work with India to implement the important consensus reached between leaders of the two nations, continuously enhance trust and dispel doubts, properly handle sensitive issues, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, maintain the positive momentum of bilateral ties, and jointly advance their respective modernisation processes. During the meeting, Wang stated that China and India should play an exemplary role in promoting solidarity and self-reliance among Global South nations. Sharing details regarding the meeting, China's Ambassador to India, Xu Feihong, in a post on X, wrote: "Wang Yi, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi. Wang said China and India, as the two largest developing countries and important members of the Global South, should play an



exemplary role in promoting solidarity and self-reliance among Global South countries. China will continue to support India in fulfilling its responsibilities as the BRICS rotating chair and work with India to promote solid progress in BRICS cooperation. "China is ready to work with India to implement the important consensus reached between the leaders of the two countries, continuously enhance trust and dispel doubts, properly handle sensitive issues, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation,

maintain the positive momentum of China-India relations, and jointly advance their respective modernisation processes. This fully serves the fundamental interests of the two peoples and conforms to the common expectations of the international community," he added. On Monday, the Chinese Foreign Minister held a meeting with National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval on the sidelines of the BRICS National Security Advisors Meeting. During their discussions, both sides reviewed

recent developments in bilateral relations and noted the progress towards gradual normalisation. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, Ambassador Xu, and other officials were present during the meeting. According to the statement released by the Chinese envoy on X, Wang said that India and China, as the two economies with the largest populations, should not only view bilateral relations from a long-term perspective, but also promote cooperation between the two countries from a global

perspective. The two nations should take concrete actions to implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of India and China, promote their respective development and revitalisation through cooperation, and accelerate the modernisation process of the Global South. During the meeting with NSA Doval, Wang expressed China's support for India in fulfilling its responsibilities as the rotating chair of the BRICS and expressed readiness to join hands with India in promoting the development and growth of the BRICS mechanism. "It is imperative to respect each other's core interests, properly handle sensitive issues, and place the China-India border issue in an appropriate position, so that it doesn't affect the overall situation of bilateral relations. The two sides should also actively guide all sectors of society to form a correct understanding, and lay a solid public opinion and social foundation for improving bilateral relations," he said, as per the Chinese Ambassador's X post.

Another Civilian Killed By Pakistani Forces In Balochistan As Cycle Of Persecution Continues

Quetta, 24/6: Another Baloch civilian was extrajudicially killed by Pakistani forces in Balochistan, a leading human rights organisation alleged on Wednesday. This latest incident comes against the backdrop of a growing wave of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances across the province. Human rights body Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) said that the mutilated body of a 24-year-old labourer, Rahmdil, was found dumped near the Banuk-e-Chadae area in the Kech district on June 20, after he had been missing for nearly five months. According to the BYC, he was forcibly disappeared in January this year after being summoned by Pakistani forces to the Hoshap camp. The rights body said that Rahmdil's family had spent months demanding his safe return. On January 20, the family staged a protest by blocking the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Road at Tajaban in Balochistan, calling for his recovery. The BYC said that the protest was eventually called off after Pakistani authorities assured the family that efforts would be made to secure his release. However, it said, those assurances failed to materialise, and after months of anguish, Rahmdil's mutilated body was found. "The killing of Rahmdil has added to the grief and suffering experienced by many families across Balochistan who continue to search for loved ones who have been forcibly disappeared. Many families wait for months, only to be confronted with devastating news later. These incidents have contributed to a climate of fear, while affected families continue to struggle for justice throughout their lives," the BYC stated. "The broader human rights situation in Balochistan requires urgent attention. Families of disappeared persons and human rights defenders have repeatedly called on national and international organisations to hold Pakistan accountable for these atrocities in Balochistan," it added. Last week, the Baloch Voice for Justice expressed grave concern over the continuing pattern of enforced disappearances in Panjgur district, alleging that four civilians were forcibly disappeared by Pakistani forces between June 10 and 20.

Pakistan Caught In Web Of Diplomatic Tangles In Its Mediation Attempts Between US, Iran

New Delhi, 24/6: Pakistan's attempts at mediating between the US and Iran initially boosted its diplomatic profile, but has also exposed Islamabad to risks such as the alienation of allies like Saudi Arabia, raising suspicions in Washington and Tehran, as well as its dependence on countries like China and Qatar to actually steer the talks. The exercise has unsettled Saudi Arabia because it appeared to tilt Islamabad closer to Tehran at a time when Riyadh expected Pakistan's alignment with Gulf security priorities. While Pakistan tried to balance consultations with Saudi Arabia, its visible embrace of Iran and military-led diplomacy raised doubts in Riyadh about Islamabad's reliability. Saudi Arabia has long viewed Pakistan as a strategic partner, reinforced by the 2025 Strategic Defence and Military Agreement (SDMA). Riyadh thus expected Islamabad to remain firmly in the Gulf camp. "Although it appears that Riyadh has been on board with regard to Pakistan's diplomatic initiative with Iran, if



Iranian attacks restart against Saudi Arabia, Riyadh will expect Pakistan to actively contribute to its defence under their security agreement," observed an article on the website of the American thinktank Stimson. "Moreover, Pakistan's relationship with the United Arab Emirates has already been affected by this conflict, with the UAE demanding repayment of a major loan. If the fragile US-Iran ceasefire falters, Pakistan's balancing act among the U.S., Iran, and Saudi Arabia will likely become untenable," warned the article. An opinion piece in Al

Jazeera this March had also stated, "Now the pact is being tested under conditions neither side anticipated." Al Jazeera, which calls itself the first independent news channel in the Arab world, is funded in part by the Qatari government. It noted that when Iranian drones and missiles hit Gulf targets, Pakistan condemned both US-Israel on the killing of Ayatollah Khamenei and Iran's retaliatory strikes, trying to appear balanced. Pakistan Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar engaged in "shuttle communication" between Tehran

Greek Lawmaker Raises Concerns Over Greece-China Underwater Heritage Pact, Questions Reciprocity: Report

Athens: Greek MP Spyros Tsironis strongly criticised the Greece-China agreement on underwater cultural heritage, raising concerns over what he described as its "vague and non-binding" provisions, according to media reports. Speaking during a parliamentary debate on the ratification of the cooperation pact between Greece's Ministry of Culture and China's National Administration of Cultural Heritage, the lawmaker from the Niki party argued that Greece should not present itself as a "weak partner" in engaging with Beijing, a report in Greek City Times stated. He said the deal resembled "a simple declaration of intentions rather than a substantive step forward", citing the lack of concrete short-term objectives and offering only broad long-term projections. According to the report, Tsironis voiced strong reservations over the potential establishment of a Chinese archaeological institute in Greece. Questioning the lack of reciprocity in the arrangement, he asked why Greece should cover operational costs for a foreign institution without a corresponding Greek institute in China. "Where is the mutual cooperation, and what is the tangible benefit for Greek interests?" he said, as per the Greek City Times report. "The Niki MP challenged the allocation of dedicated space in the new Museum of Underwater Antiquities in Piraeus for Chinese underwater antiquities, demanding clarity on what Greece receives in return, such as a permanent exhibit of Greek heritage in a Chinese museum," the report noted. Tsironis reportedly tied the agreement to broader concerns within Greece's Ministry of Culture, noting that the budget for the Underwater Antiquities Museum has risen from an initial 77 million euros to 105 million euros amid "delays and risks of losing European funding". He argued that committing public space to a foreign institution before the project's completion was premature. The report highlighted that Tsironis concluded by stating that his party backs international cultural exchanges only when they are based on transparent terms that safeguard Greece's interests. "We refuse to co-sign blind agreements that portray our country as the weak or subordinate partner," he asserted.

and Riyadh, securing assurances that Saudi soil would not be used against Iran, which briefly limited Iranian strikes, it added. Now, Pakistan's neutral posture is under severe strain; its defence pact ties it to Saudi Arabia, but geography and sectarian dynamics bind it to Iran. "Islamabad likely never expected to find itself caught between Tehran and Riyadh, particularly after the China-brokered rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran in 2023," the opinion piece stated further. If the region's volatility is not contained soon, Pakistan will find it difficult to balance itself, the opinion piece said, quoting analysts. Apart from such observations, hosting Iranian delegations in Islamabad and giving Tehran's leadership a platform made Saudi Arabia uneasy, as it suggested Pakistan was legitimising Iran's position. Incidentally, Pakistan's Army Chief Asim Munir projected himself as personally driving negotiations with Iran's Revolutionary Guards. This

military-heavy mediation raised concerns in Riyadh that Pakistan was prioritising Iran's trust over Gulf sensitivities. It has also caught wide attention that despite projecting itself as the negotiator, Pakistan has heavily depended on other nations' support. As the Stimson article mentioned that the March 31 joint statement by Pakistan and China and their proposal for a five-point plan to end the war on Iran recognised "Pakistan's limitations as a mediator and the need for a major global actor to underpin its diplomatic efforts". And as widely reported recently, the latest attempt in Switzerland for a truce had Qatar steering it, though quietly. Several reports have suggested that the Iranian media has generally downplayed Pakistan's mediation role in US-Iran talks while highlighting Qatar as the more credible and effective broker. The coverage appeared to highlight Iran's own diplomatic initiatives or Qatar's mediation, while Pakistan's role being held as limited or supportive.

EAM Jaishankar, South Korea's National Security Director Wi Sung-Lac Hold Talks

Seoul, 26/6: External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar held a meeting with South Korea's National Security Director Wi Sung-lac on Wednesday. During the meeting, EAM Jaishankar and Wi Sung-lac shared their strategic assessments on global developments and the Indo-Pacific. "Glad to meet Wi Sung-lac, Director of National Security of the ROK this evening. Had a useful exchange of strategic assessments on global developments and the Indo-Pacific," EAM Jaishankar posted on X. Earlier in the day, EAM Jaishankar held a meeting with his South Korean counterpart Cho Hyun in Seoul and reviewed cooperation across shipbuilding, trade, investments, defence, technology, clean energy, culture and P2P domains. Following their meeting, EAM Jaishankar in a post on X wrote, "Pleased to meet FM Cho Hyun of RoK in Seoul today. Our discussions followed upon the outcomes of



recent visit of President Lee Jae Myung to India. We reviewed our cooperation across political, shipbuilding, trade, investments, defence, technology, clean energy, culture and P2P domains. As well as opportunities in startups, fintech and multilateral fora. Also exchanged views on development in our respective regions and around the world." Cho Hyun noted that South Korean President Lee Jae Myung's State visit to India in April last year provided the momentum to elevate South

Korea-India ties to a new level. Cho Hyun said he and EAM Jaishankar assessed the swift progress on follow-up measures in areas like trade, investment, and finance, as agreed during last April's summit, and discussed ways to advance them further. "This week, the Prime Minister's Office of India is hosting 'Korea Week', fulfilling Prime Minister Modi's commitment made during the summit to directly explore solutions to the challenges faced by our companies in India. While

expressing my gratitude for India's full support, I also conveyed that we will soon hold a similar roundtable for Indian companies entering the Korean market," Cho Hyun posted on X. "Over the subsequent lunch, Minister Jaishankar and I engaged in an in-depth discussion on the rapidly changing global situation. Our two countries also agreed to maintain close communication in responding to the economic ripple effects stemming from changes in the Middle East situation. Minister Jaishankar and I are scheduled to meet again tomorrow at the Jeju Forum. I look forward to his sharp perspective and profound insights on bilateral relations and the international landscape shining through once more," he added. EAM Jaishankar arrived in South Korea after concluding his two-day visit to Mongolia. During his visit to South Korea, he is scheduled to deliver keynote speech at the Jeju Forum for Peace and Prosperity in Jeju on Thursday.

'Look Forward To Building On Our Strategic Partnership': Ethiopian PM Thanks PM Modi For Wishes

Addis Ababa, 24/6: Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali on Wednesday thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his wishes on his election triumph and stated that he is looking forward to building on the Strategic Partnership. Describing the Prime Minister as a "trusted friend and elder brother", PM Abiy Ahmed Ali said PM Modi's historic mandate speaks to the enduring democratic strength of the world's largest democracy. "Thank you, Your Excellency Prime Minister Narendra Modi trusted friend and elder brother whose historic mandate speaks to the enduring democratic strength of the world's largest democracy. Ethiopia and India share bonds rooted in history, partnership, and shared ambition for our peoples. We look forward to building on our Strategic Partnership and continuing this journey together! Namaste," Abiy Ahmed Ali posted on X. Ali made the statement in response to PM Modi's congratulatory message on X on

the former's decisive victory in Ethiopia's parliamentary elections. PM Modi on Tuesday congratulated Abiy Ahmed Ali and his Prosperity Party on their win in Ethiopia's parliamentary elections and stated that India cherishes its historic, multifaceted and deep-rooted ties with Ethiopia. "Heartiest congratulations to my friend, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali and the Prosperity Party for a decisive victory in the Ethiopian parliamentary elections," PM Modi wrote on X. "India greatly cherishes its historic, multifaceted and deep-rooted ties with Ethiopia. I fondly recall my visit to Ethiopia last year and look forward to working closely together to further strengthen our Strategic Partnership and the bonds of friendship between our peoples," he added. PM Modi's congratulatory message came after the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) on Sunday declared the ruling Prosperity Party as the winner of the country's seventh General Election. Announcing the

official results in Addis Ababa, the NEBE said the PP secured 438 of the 486 contested seats in the House of Peoples' Representatives (HoPR), the lower chamber of Ethiopia's Parliament, in the June 1 General Election. Under Ethiopia's Constitution, the political party or coalition that wins a majority in the HoPR is mandated to form the government and nominate the Prime Minister. In December last year, PM Modi was on a two-day visit to Ethiopia. During his visit, PM Modi and PM Abiy Ahmed Ali held detailed discussions covering a wide range of issues, including political cooperation, economic engagement and strategic partnership. They planted saplings at the Ethiopian House of People's Representatives, as part of 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' and Ethiopia's 'Green Legacy' initiatives. PM Modi also addressed a Joint Session of Ethiopian Parliament which was a special honour accorded to him on his first bilateral visit to the country.

'BRICS Space Economy' Next Frontier Of Global Growth: Minister

New Delhi, 24/6: Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh on Wednesday pitched for "BRICS Space Economy" as the next frontier of global growth and called for collective action among member nations to unlock new opportunities in innovation, investment, entrepreneurship and sustainable development. Addressing the BRICS Heads of Space Agencies (HOSA) meeting in Bengaluru, Dr Singh said BRICS countries possess the scale, scientific capabilities, technological strengths and industrial capacity required to emerge as a major force in the rapidly expanding global space economy. "The future of the space economy will not be shaped by nations working in isolation. It will be shaped by partnerships, shared innovation and collective ambition. BRICS countries have the potential to become one of the strongest pillars of this emerging global space ecosystem," he told the gathering. The minister reaffirmed



India's commitment to working closely with all BRICS partners to transform shared aspirations into concrete outcomes and to ensure that space continues to serve as a powerful force for development, resilience, innovation, sustainability and international cooperation. Hosted by the

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) under India's BRICS Chairship 2026, the two-day meeting brought together Heads of Space Agencies and senior officials from Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates. It

reviewed progress in BRICS space cooperation and deliberated on key issues including space sustainability, debris-free missions, strengthening the BRICS Remote Sensing Satellite Constellation (RSSC), expanding participation of new BRICS members in existing

cooperation mechanisms, and advancing discussions on the proposed BRICS Space Council. Dr Singh said that space technology has emerged as one of the most powerful drivers of economic transformation and societal progress, enabling countries to strengthen communication networks, navigation systems, disaster preparedness, agriculture, healthcare, education and environmental monitoring. Referring to the growing role of BRICS in the global space landscape, the minister said the grouping represents a significant share of the world's population, economic output, scientific expertise and technological capabilities. He said deeper cooperation among BRICS countries can create new opportunities for innovation, industrial partnerships, technology transfer, investment and economic growth while addressing common developmental priorities.

Gold, Silver Trade Nearly 2 Pct Lower Amid Global Interest Rates Concerns

New Delhi, 24/6: Gold and silver prices traded almost 2 per cent lower on Wednesday amid concerns that higher global interest rates could weigh on demand for precious metals. On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures (August) opened at Rs 1,45,000 per 10 grams, down Rs 1,528 or 1.04 per cent from the previous close of Rs 1,46,529. At around 12:10 pm, the yellow metal was trading at Rs 1,45,216, lower by Rs 1,313 or 0.9 per cent. During the session so far, it touched an intraday low of Rs 1,44,114, a decrease of 1.64 per cent or Rs 2,415 and a high of Rs 1,45,480. Meanwhile, silver futures (July) also remained under pressure. The white metal opened at Rs 2,22,579 per kg on the exchange, down Rs 3,255 or 1.44 per cent from the previous close of Rs 2,25,834. At the last count, it declined as much as 1.84 per cent or Rs 4,176 to Rs 2,21,658. Weakness in precious metals was also visible in international markets. Spot gold was trading at \$4,092.39 per ounce, down 0.4 per cent, while silver was at \$61.82, a decrease of 0.33 per cent. According to commodity market experts, immediate resistance for gold is seen in the Rs 1.45 lakh-Rs 1.46 lakh range. A sustained move above this zone could trigger a recovery towards Rs 1.47 lakh and eventually Rs 1.48 lakh. On the downside, a breach of the Rs 1.43 lakh level may intensify selling pressure and drag prices towards the Rs 1.40 lakh-Rs 1.39 lakh zone. For silver, the experts said immediate resistance is placed in the Rs 2.25 lakh-Rs 2.26 lakh range, while a break below the Rs 2.20 lakh level could push prices towards Rs 2.15 lakh and lower. Overall, they maintain a cautiously negative near-term outlook on both precious metals, citing persistent selling pressure and the need for prices to reclaim key resistance levels to improve momentum. Moreover, the dollar index — which measures the greenback's performance against a basket of six major currencies — rose to 101.265. The dollar index tracks the US currency against the euro, Japanese yen, British pound, Canadian dollar, Swedish krona and Swiss franc.

Crude Oil Prices Hover Near Four-Month Lows As Supply Concerns Ease

New Delhi, 24/6: Global crude oil prices remained under pressure on Wednesday, with benchmarks hovering near four-month lows after easing geopolitical tensions in West Asia and progress in US-Iran peace talks reduced concerns over potential supply disruptions. International oil benchmark Brent crude was trading over 1 per cent lower at near \$76 per barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) hovered around \$72 per barrel, a decrease of 1.5 per cent. Over the past month, both benchmarks have seen a sharp decline of more than 20 per cent after concerns about a prolonged disruption to oil supplies from the Strait of Hormuz eased. Market sentiment improved as signs emerged that



oil tankers stranded in the Gulf since the onset of the Iran conflict were preparing to resume movement through the strategically important waterway. In addition, diplomatic efforts involving the US, Iran and regional stakeholders have also helped ease supply concerns. The decline in crude prices is being

viewed as a positive development for India, one of the world's largest oil-importing nations. "This excessive volatility is favourable to India, which is growing at a steady pace. The crash in Brent crude has removed the macro headwinds for India. The rupee has stabilised and FII selling appears to have tapered off.

Markets Remain Range-Bound In Early Trade; IT Stocks Outperform

Mumbai, 24/6: Indian equity benchmarks traded in a narrow range on Wednesday morning for a second consecutive session amid decline in crude oil prices. Sensex was trading at 76,348.95, up over 100 points or 0.19 per cent in early deals, while Nifty was at 23,853.75, higher by 30 points or 0.12 per cent. Sector-wise, Nifty IT led the gains, rising nearly 1 per cent, followed by Nifty MidSmall IT & Telecom (0.72 per cent), Nifty Pharma (0.68 per cent), Nifty Healthcare (0.57 per cent) and Nifty Realty (0.3 per cent). Financial and banking stocks also remained in positive territory, with Nifty Private Bank and Nifty PSU Bank advancing 0.23 per cent and 0.21 per cent, respectively. On the



downside, metal and auto stocks witnessed selling pressure, with Nifty Metal declining 0.23 per cent and Nifty Auto slipping 0.21 per cent. "The crash in Brent crude has removed the macro headwinds for India. The rupee

has stabilised and FII selling appears to have tapered off," analysts said, adding that these developments are positive for the market. However, they cautioned that a weak monsoon remains a concern. Rainfall has

been deficient by 43 per cent so far, raising fears of a marginal impact on economic growth and corporate earnings. The analysts advised investors to align their portfolios with the emerging risks, noting that sectors such as FMCG and entry-level two-wheelers could be affected by lower rural incomes. "Pharmaceutical stocks, with their relatively inelastic demand profile, are likely to remain resilient and could even outperform in a monsoon-deficient environment," they said. On the commodities front, international benchmark Brent crude fell more than 1 per cent to around \$76 a barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude declined 1.5 per cent to about \$72 a barrel.

Sensex, Nifty End Higher As IT, Banking Stocks Lead Rally

Mumbai, 24/6: Indian benchmark equity indices ended sharply higher on Wednesday, supported by strong buying in information technology, banking, financial, and realty stocks. The Sensex climbed 790.54 points, or 1.04 per cent, to close at 76,991.22, while the Nifty advanced 197.55 points, or 0.83 per cent, to settle at 24,021.65. Commenting on Nifty technical outlook, experts said that the 24,100 region continues to act as the immediate resistance zone. "A sustained breakout above this level would reinforce bullish momentum and could pave the way for a move towards the 24,200 level, followed by the 24,400 region, which remains the next significant upside target," an analyst stated. "On the downside, the 24,000 psychological mark now serves as an immediate support level, followed by the



23,900-23,800 support zone," an analyst mentioned. Market sentiment remained positive throughout the session as investors accumulated shares in key sectors, particularly IT and financial services, helping the benchmarks register solid gains. Among the top performers in the Nifty pack were InterGlobe

Aviation, Adani Enterprises, and Trent, which witnessed strong buying interest and emerged as the session's biggest gainers. Broader markets also ended in positive territory, although gains remained relatively modest. The Nifty MidCap index rose 0.10 per cent, while the Nifty SmallCap index added 0.39 per cent by the close

of trade. Sectoral indices largely reflected the upbeat market mood. The Nifty IT and Nifty Realty indices outperformed the broader market, each gaining more than 2 per cent during the session. Banking stocks also remained in focus, with the Nifty Bank and Nifty Private Bank indices posting healthy advances. However, not all sectors participated in the rally. The Nifty Auto and Nifty Metal indices ended lower, making them the worst-performing sectors of the day amid profit-booking and subdued investor interest. Experts said that the strong performance in IT, banking, and real estate stocks helped offset weakness in select sectors, allowing the benchmark indices to end the session with significant gains and reinforcing positive sentiment in the domestic equity markets.

AI Coding Costs Likely To Exceed Average Developer Salaries By 2028: Report

New Delhi, 24/6: AI coding costs could exceed the average developer's salary by 2028 due to rising large language model (LLM) token consumption and the shift to consumption-based licensing models, a report said on Wednesday. The report from Gartner Inc. said organisations moving from experimentation to scaled deployment of AI coding agents risk steep cost escalation. AI tokens are the units of data processed by generative AI models. Token consumption directly impacts the cost of AI coding tools, particularly under consumption-based pricing structures. "Organisations are rapidly moving from experimentation to scaled deployment of AI coding agents, but many are underestimating the financial impact of rising token consumption," said Nitish Tyagi, Sr. Principal Analyst at Gartner. "Token discipline will not emerge through developer choice alone, as developers tend to optimise for speed and convenience over cost efficiency. Without a governed engineering operating model, costs can escalate faster than the productivity gains these tools are designed to deliver,"



he added. The shift from seat-based licensing to consumption-based pricing among AI coding agent vendors is introducing highly variable cost structures for software engineering workloads. Many vendors lack transparency into how token consumption is calculated and billed, limiting enterprises' ability to accurately forecast and control costs. Without clear visibility into token usage across development tasks, organisations risk budget overruns and reduced ability to track cost-to-value outcomes. Tyagi said that most organisations still lack the maturity and frameworks to effectively measure cost

versus business impact. "Software engineering leaders are increasingly concerned as token-driven AI spend becomes harder to justify, with budgets often being depleted earlier than expected," he added. The report flagged that unguided autonomy in agent-driven workflows, bloated context windows and the absence of structured feedback mechanisms to optimize usage may drive overspending. The report urged leaders to establish a use-case-driven decision framework; align model selection with task complexity; mandate context engineering practices and to implement governance and cost controls

Value of India's top 10 companies falls by Rs 11 lakh crore in 2026: Report

Mumbai, 24/6: The combined value of India's top 10 most valuable non-state-run companies declined by Rs 11 lakh crore in 2026 compared to the previous year, according to the fifth edition of the '500 Most Valuable Non-State-Run Companies in India' report released

by Axis Bank's Burgundy Private and Hurun India. The report said the combined value of the top 10 companies stood at Rs 97 lakh crore a year earlier, which now declined to Rs 86 lakh crore. Despite the decline, the report also added that the value of these companies remains significant,

accounting for almost one-fourth of India's GDP and 27 per cent of the total value of the 2025 Burgundy Private Hurun India 500 list. It stated "The combined value of the top 10 companies decreased by Rs 11 lakh crore to Rs 86 lakh crore." The report noted that Reliance Industries retained

its position as India's most valuable company for the fifth consecutive year. It also emerged as the biggest value creator in absolute terms, adding more than Rs 1.8 lakh crore in value during the year. Bajaj Finance was the highest value creator in percentage terms and was valued at Rs 5.8 lakh crore.

TV Actor Aman Jaiswal Dies in a Tragic Road Accident

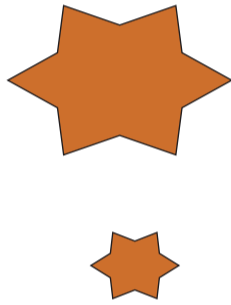
The entertainment industry mourned the loss of promising young actor Aman Jaiswal, who tragically passed away in a road accident today, January 17th. Jaiswal was only 23 years old known for his role in the TV show Dharti Putra Nandini, was only 23 years old.

According to the last update, Jaiswal was riding his bike on Jogeshwari Highway when a truck struck him. His friend, Abhinav Mishra, shared the news.



Despite being rushed to Cama Hospital, Jaiswal succumbed to his injuries. Director Dhiraj Mishra, who had worked with Jaiswal, expressed his grief. Jaiswal's untimely death has left his friends, family, and fans in deep sorrow. He was reportedly on his way to an audition when the tragic accident occurred.

His commitment to work and his vibrant personality made him a beloved figure on sets. The entertainment industry is in a shock, as he was just beginning his career. Aman Jaiswal's talent and potential was undeniable. He had a bright future ahead of him, and his loss is deeply felt by those who knew and admired him for acting.



Shraddha Kapoor's Stree 2 super-duper hit, will Ajay Devgn's 'Singham Again' trump over?

Already in October. This Diwali will see release of two big bang films – Singham Again and Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3. Both the films are made with a hefty budget. But can they rob the crown of Shraddha Kapoor? These two big franchise films are hitting the screens on October 31 – Kartik Aaryan starred Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 and Ajay Devgn's Singham Again. The gossip in the B-Town is will they trump the box office bulge of Stree 2? The heavy star cast is surely to go through the roof. Ajay Devgn in dashing cop style has a thrill genre. From Gangajal to Singham, the star actor has carved an incomparable niche. Real cops do take inspiration from this star cop. The film is expected to have a blast during its theatrical run, this looks sure. But as the two big franchises are going to clash on the big screen this Diwali, trade pundits don't see Singham Again breaking Stree 2 records. The reason availability of limited screen as it clashes with another big brand movie. As per the Bollywood trade reports available, Stree 2 is the most profitable Indian (not Bollywood alone) film of 2024. The ROI (Return on Investment) is a Himalayan for Stree 2. ROI is estimated at 788.33%. Such a monstrous ROI is attributed to the meagre film budget of Rs 50 cr. The movie Stree 2 has eclipsed the Kerala Story's record of most profitable film in 2023. The ROI of The Kerala Story in 2023 had been 694.23%. In 2023, though Shah Rukh Khan's Jawan and Pathan were in top 3 in box office collections, the films were a mere hit for scoring a ROI of only 113 and 117 %, respectively. The prime reason behind record collection but low ROI is attributed to high budget. The SRK movies Jawan and Pathan were made with a budget of 300 cr and 250 cr. SINGHAM AGAIN: The budget of Singham Again has been Rs 250 cr. Even if it collects Rs 650 crore, then, too, the ROI will hover below 115%. And based on ROI, it will be declared a HIT only.



Kajol Unveils New Poster for Supernatural Thriller 'Maa' Ahead of Release



Anticipation Builds for Kajol's Supernatural Thriller 'Maa' The excitement surrounding Kajol's upcoming supernatural thriller, Maa, is intensifying as its June 27 release date approaches. A coordinated promotional push, led by the film's star and its producer, Ajay Devgn, has successfully generated significant buzz online, offering tantalizing glimpses into the eerie world of the film. Kajol recently shared a new poster on social media, featuring a poignant image of her with her on-screen daughter. The poster was released with a caption that warns of the demon "Daitya," setting a chilling tone for the film's narrative. This was amplified by Ajay Devgn, who posted a spine-chilling video clip showcasing the Daitya character—a terrifying figure trapped within a tree—which quickly went viral and heightened interest in the film's horror elements. Directed by Vishal Furia, Maa is poised to be a gripping thriller centered on a mother's courageous battle against powerful evil forces to protect her daughter. The film promises to explore the depths of maternal strength in the face of supernatural terror. In addition to Kajol's central performance, the film also features Ronit Roy and Indraneil Sengupta in key roles. Adding to the film's appeal, a song teaser has revealed a collaboration with the legendary singer Usha Uthup, promising a powerful and soul-stirring musical element to complement the on-screen tension. As the marketing campaign continues to unfold, Maa is shaping up to be a must-watch event for fans of the supernatural thriller genre.

SPORTS

Hockey India Names Junior Women's Squad For UK Tour

New Delhi, 24/6: Hockey India has announced the 24-member junior women's squad for the exposure tour of the United Kingdom, scheduled from July 5 to 14. Under its new coach Tim White, the team will play seven matches across Scotland and England as part of its preparations for upcoming international competitions, including the Junior Asia Cup. The young squad will be led by captain Khaidem Shileima Chanu, with Nidhi and Engil Harsha Rani Minz as the two goalkeepers. The defensive unit comprises Pooja Sahoo, Supriya, Madhu, F. Lalbi Akshami, Lalneihpuii and Parwati Topno. The midfield features captain Chanu, Tanuja Toppo, Supriya Kujur, Pooja Malik, Binima Dhan, Geeta Yadav, Roshni Aind and Tanushree Dinesh Kadu. The forward line includes Sukhvveer Kaur, Shashi Khasa, Lalrinpuii, Nisha Minj, Purnima Yadav, Kajal, Sanika Chandrakant Mane and Krishna Sharma. The nine-day exposure tour will begin with two matches against the Scotland Senior



Women's Team at the University of Edinburgh, followed by games against fellow junior sides from the United States, England and Belgium at the Lilleshall National Sports Centre. Through this competitive experience, coach White will look to fine-tune combinations and strategies to prepare for the tournaments ahead. "The tour to the UK is an important part of

the development process for our junior squad. We have selected an exciting young group, many of whom have not had exposure to foreign teams, so it will be a great learning opportunity for individuals and for the group as a team," said White, commenting on the squad and the significance of the tour. "As we will be playing against highly-competitive opposition, we

expect to be challenged. However, we will take every game as a learning opportunity while also implementing the way of play we have been working on for the last 10 weeks. I'm certain this will be great preparation for the upcoming Asia Cup as we will use this tour to confirm our strengths as a team and also the key areas we need to improve," the coach added to conclude.

Netherlands Women Crowned Champions, Secure LA28 Olympic Ticket

Mumbai, 24/6: Defending champions Netherlands women's team has virtually secured the FIH Hockey Pro League 2025-26 title, thus becoming the first confirmed qualifier, alongside the hosts, for the Olympic Games Los Angeles 2028. With this, the Netherlands women's team has continued its absolute ascendancy over the sport, adding the latest Pro League title to the five Olympic Games gold medallists and nine World Cup titles it has won over the years. Under the new Pro League framework, the champions of the 2025-26 and 2026-27 seasons earn automatic qualification for the upcoming Olympic Games, alongside the continental qualification routes, and the Dutch securing their sixth Pro League title in seven seasons of the competition now ensures the reigning champions will be in the United States to defend their crown. The Netherlands team's march to the 2025-26 crown has been typical of their modern era: precise, relentless, and devastatingly efficient. Taking on the world's absolute elite

over a grueling multi-stage global calendar, the Oranje established a commanding lead at the top of the standings that their closest rivals simply could not match, winning all 11 of their matches played thus far, while one abandoned match against Argentina due to weather conditions also secured three points for them, based on the competition rules. While the rest of the chasing pack — including Argentina and Belgium — traded blows and dropped crucial points across the season's stages, the Dutch outfit turned their fixtures into a masterclass of tactical versatility and ruthlessness on both sides of the ball. FIH President Tayyab Ikram led the global congratulations, praising the team's unparalleled standard of play, and said, "On behalf of the International Hockey Federation, I extend my warmest congratulations to the reigning women's Olympic Hockey Champions, the Netherlands, for capturing another FIH Hockey Pro League title.

