

Dumani Mail

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PM Modi welcomes Amazon's investment of 48 billion dollars in India

New Delhi: Amazon has announced plans to invest \$48 billion in India between 2026 and 2030, marking one of the largest investment commitments by a multinational company in the country. The announcement came after Amazon CEO Andy Jassy met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Thursday.

Welcoming the investment, PM Modi said in a post on X, "A great meeting with Mr. Andy Jassy. I welcome Amazon's record \$48 billion investment in India. This will create new opportunities for our youth. At the same time, it shows the growing interest across the world to invest in India."

expanding Amazon's operations across e-commerce, cloud computing, artificial intelligence (AI), logistics and digital services in India over the next five years.

Following the meeting, Jassy highlighted Amazon's long-term commitment to India and outlined the company's ambitious plans for the country.

"Really enjoyed my meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi about what's ahead for Amazon in India. We've been serving customers, sellers, developers, startups, and enterprises in India for more than a decade and are just getting started," Jassy said in a post on X.

He revealed that Amazon plans to invest more than \$21



billion in AI and cloud infrastructure as part of the overall investment package, strengthening the company's technological footprint in one of its fastest-growing markets.

By 2030, Amazon aims to support 3.8 million jobs across its ecosystem, facilitate \$80 billion in cumulative e-commerce exports, and extend the benefits of AI to 15 million small businesses and 4 million government school students.

Jassy expressed optimism about Amazon's future in India, saying the company remains excited about the opportunities ahead and is committed to contributing to the country's growth story in the years to come.

Centre Reviews Over 7,700 km of National Highway Projects Across Three Regions

New Delhi: Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari reviewed the quality, maintenance and progress of National Highway projects in Telangana, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh during separate meetings held in New Delhi on Wednesday.

Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways Harsh Malhotra was also present during the review meetings.

According to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), the review covered National Highway projects spanning 4,931 km in Telangana, 2,035 km in Jammu & Kashmir, and 804 km in Ladakh.

The meetings were conducted based on feedback received through media reports, social media platforms and inputs from officials of MoRTH, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), the National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL), and project contractors.

During the review, the Minister assessed the status of ongoing projects, maintenance works and measures being taken to ensure the delivery of safe, efficient and durable highway infrastructure. He directed officials and executing agencies to

expedite project implementation while maintaining high standards of quality and accountability.

Gadkari also instructed officials to strengthen monitoring mechanisms, ensure timely completion of projects and adopt advanced construction technologies and best engineering practices to improve the



durability, riding comfort and long-term performance of National Highway corridors.

Highlighting the importance of well-maintained highways, the Minister said robust road infrastructure plays a key role in improving regional connectivity, facilitating economic growth, promoting tourism and enhancing commuter convenience.

Reviewing preparedness for the upcoming monsoon season, Gadkari directed officials to undertake preventive and mitigation measures across all project stretches. These include effective drainage management, slope stabilisation and protection works, along with the deployment of rapid-response systems to minimise weather-related disruptions.

Centre Launches AIR SUVIDHA 2.0 Portal for Ebola Screening of International Travellers

New Delhi: Ministry of Civil Aviation, in collaboration with Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), on Thursday launched AIR SUVIDHA 2.0, an upgraded contactless Passenger Health Self-Declaration Portal to strengthen public health surveillance at Points of Entry across India amid the ongoing Ebola outbreak.

The upgraded portal has been developed in collaboration with the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, following the World Health Organization's declaration of the Ebola/Bundibugyo virus disease outbreak in the

Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on May 17, 2026, under the International Health Regulations (IHR) 2005.

According to the government, the current outbreak has been confirmed as Bundibugyo virus disease (BVD), with neighbouring countries, including South Sudan, assessed by the WHO as being at high risk of transmission.

Under AIR SUVIDHA 2.0, international passengers arriving in India will be required to submit an online Health Self-Declaration before immigration clearance.



The declaration includes details of the passenger's 21-day travel history, exposure history and any related symptoms.

The portal enables real-time sharing of information with the Airport Health Officer, Bureau

of Immigration, Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) and State Surveillance Officers, allowing authorities to quickly identify and refer at-risk travellers while ensuring a seamless, contactless

arrival process without the need for physical forms.

Passengers can complete the Self-Declaration Form (SDF) up to 24 hours before arriving in India. The Ministry has advised travellers to fill in the form before boarding or during web check-in and carry the downloaded SDF for verification at the International Travel Health Desk or the Immigration counter upon arrival.

The Ministry has urged all international travellers to submit accurate health declarations in advance to facilitate faster clearance and strengthen public health safety measures.

NCERT book lauds Election Commission for 'impartial' polls despite fake news, misinformation

New Delhi: The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has praised the Election Commission of India (ECI) in its new Class IX Social Science textbook, describing India's electoral exercise as "unparalleled" and saying the constitutional body tries to ensure elections are conducted "impartially" despite challenges such as "misinformation, fake news and intimidation".

The chapter, Elections, in the newly introduced Understanding Society: India and Beyond - Part I textbook, expected to reach students in the coming days, highlights the scale of India's electoral process and the Election Commission's role in conducting elections across the country.

"India's electoral exercise is unparalleled, and distinct from those in other parts of the world,

with over 96.8 crore eligible voters spread across diverse regions and terrains. The ECI manages this exercise autonomously, ensuring free and fair elections nationwide," the book reads.

"Despite numerous challenges to conducting free and fair elections, the ECI tries to ensure that elections at multiple levels are carried out impartially," it added.

The textbook further states that the Election Commission performs a wide range of responsibilities beyond polling.

"To carry out its functions, such as updating electoral rolls, candidate nominations, regulating campaigns, law enforcement coordination among states, extensive security arrangements, counting of votes, declaration of election results, and dispute resolution, the ECI makes

extensive use of information and communication technologies, and e-governance."

While praising the Election Commission's functioning, the chapter also underlines the challenges involved in conducting elections in the world's largest democracy.

A dedicated section titled "Challenges to Free and Fair Elections" said, "In India, conducting elections for over 96.8 crore (in 2024) voters with thousands of polling stations and hundreds of political parties, spread across diverse regions and socio-economic realities, is a challenging task."

The book specifically identifies misinformation, fake news and intimidation as major challenges faced during elections.

"For challenges such as

misinformation, fake news, intimidation, etc., the ECI addresses them through RPA 1950 and 1951, the Model Code of Conduct, EVMs, Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT), voters' awareness campaigns, and other measures."

It concludes by stressing that public participation is equally important. "With constant vigilance and active citizen participation, elections can become more representative and the democracy more robust." The textbook also highlights the Election Commission's efforts to make elections more inclusive under the theme "No Voter to Be Left Behind." It mentions Braille-enabled Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), home voting for eligible senior citizens, and several digital platforms developed

by the Commission.

Among the initiatives listed are the Saksham App for persons with disabilities, the Voter Helpline App, cVIGIL for reporting Model Code of Conduct violations, ETPBS for service voters, Suvidha for candidates, ERONET, and Sugam.

Students are also asked to identify reforms introduced by the Election Commission for persons with disabilities, service voters, senior citizens, prisoners and those under preventive detention.

The chapter describes political parties as playing a "fundamental role" in democracy by presenting diverse programmes and policies, enabling voters to make informed choices. Students are also asked to study coalition politics by identifying the alliances that won the Lok Sabha elections in 1977, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019 and 2024.

Three juveniles held for murder of 60-year-old man during robbery in Delhi's Rohini

New Delhi: Delhi Police has apprehended three juveniles for allegedly stabbing a 60-year-old factory worker to death during a robbery in Delhi's Rohini, officials said on Thursday.

The victim, identified as Rajesh, a resident of Shahbad Dairy, was found lying unconscious and bleeding on Pansali Road on June 23.

Police said a PCR call was received regarding a man lying injured on the road stretch between Prem Aadhar Hospital and Pansali Chowk. He was shifted to Dr BSA Hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead.

20 years in prison for rapist of minor girl

Keonjhar: Keonjhar Additional District Judge (Fast Track) Vijay Kumar Mishra today sentenced a 25-year-old to 20 years in prison and a fine of Rs 10,000 in the rape case of a 15-year-old minor girl. He also sentenced him to one year in prison for failing to pay the fine. The accused is Ratan Lohar, a resident of Kainsi village under Sadar police station. According to the sources the incident took place between February 13 and February 16, 2025. The accused Ratan kidnapped his niece at 9 pm on February 13 and raped her. Later, the minor girl informed her family by phone, the family members rescued her from a person's house in Badneuli village. After a complaint was filed at the Sadar police station on the 16th, the police registered a case under the POCSO Act and various sections of the ST/SC Act. SI Suryanarayan Rautray investigated the incident and submitted the charge sheet on 17th April 2025. Based on the 18 witnesses and the police investigation report, the fast track court passed the above sentence. In addition, the state administration was ordered to pay Rs 5 lakh as compensation to the victim. Similarly, it was ordered to pay the fine to the victim. Special Public Prosecutor Patitapaban Nath was handling the case on behalf of the government.

Delhi Cyber Police bust fake export call centre, 18 held

New Delhi: The Cyber Police Station of New Delhi District has busted a fake export consultancy call centre, apprehending 18 persons, including the alleged mastermind, for cheating exporters on the pretext of securing overseas buyers and export certifications.

According to officials, the racket was exposed during the investigation of multiple NCRP cyber fraud complaints received from different parts of the country.

The complainants alleged that they were contacted by individuals posing as

representatives of the firm, who promised assistance in obtaining export orders from international buyers. Victims were initially induced to pay a registration and token amount of Rs 5,000. They were subsequently made to transfer additional sums of Rs 19,780 towards export service packages and Rs 41,300 for purported Global GAP/Trust Certification and other export-related formalities.

To establish credibility, the accused allegedly used international WhatsApp numbers and impersonated foreign buyers from various



countries. Victims were shown fabricated communications and

were assured that export orders were in process. However, after

receiving payments, the accused either stopped responding or avoided further communication, thereby causing wrongful loss to the complainants.

Based on technical analysis, digital evidence and sustained investigation, a raid was conducted by a dedicated team of Cyber Police Station, New Delhi District, under the supervision of the SHO/Cyber Police Station and ACP/Connaught Place at a premises in Delhi. During the operation, a fake call centre engaged in cyber fraud activities was unearthed and subsequently busted.

Police apprehended the alleged mastermind and owner of the call centre, identified as Pradeep Kumar, along with 18 persons engaged in tele-calling and related fraudulent operations. Another accused, Sammi Kumar Giri, along with 16 telecallers (14 females and 2 males), has been bound down under Section 35(3) of BNSS.

Recoveries made during the raid include 20 mobile phones, 35 SIM cards, 6 laptops, 9 CPUs and one debit card. The seized electronic devices and digital evidence are currently under analysis to identify additional

victims, associates and linked cyber fraud cases.

Officials stated that so far, 19 cyber fraud complaints involving a total cheated amount of Rs 10,57,780 have been linked to the syndicate.

Further investigation is underway to trace other members of the network and the proceeds of crime, and to determine the full extent of the fraud.

Efforts are underway to identify other members of the network, trace the proceeds of crime and ascertain the total amount cheated from victims. Investigation is in progress.

world-class makeover; convention hall with 1,000-plus capacity planned

Puri: Odisha's Housing and Urban Development Department on Thursday launched the State-Level Urban Public Relations and Citizen Engagement Programme 2026 at the Puri Municipal Corporation. Organised under the theme "Vikas Ki Dhara, Odisha Sara", the event showcased major development initiatives and citizen-centric schemes implemented across urban areas of the state over the past two years.

Addressing the gathering, Housing and Urban Development Minister Dr Krishna Chandra Mahapatra said the state government is committed to building clean, smart, inclusive and resilient cities. He said substantial investments are being made in urban infrastructure, housing, transportation, drinking water supply, sanitation and digital governance.

The minister announced that the inclusion of Puri in the Bhubaneswar-Cuttack-Puri-Paradip Economic Region (BCPPER) would accelerate the city's development. He said a modern convention hall with a seating capacity of more than 1,000 people would be constructed in Puri. He also announced that 50 urban centres across the state would be brought



under the Chief Minister's Smart City Scheme.

Mahapatra said extensive efforts would be undertaken to transform the Puri Municipal Corporation into a world-class urban centre. Given its cultural and religious significance, Puri is expected to emerge as a major hub for tourism, hospitality and coastal infrastructure development, further strengthening Odisha's economy, he added.

Puri MLA Sunil Kumar Mohanty was also present at the programme. Videos highlighting key government initiatives, including the Mukhyamantri Urban Development Scheme, PM SVANidhi, PM Awas Yojana (Urban), drinking water projects, Mission Shakti's Jalasathi programme, CRUT, Ama Bus,

Odisha Yatri, street lighting, solid waste management, Garima and Sahayog schemes, were screened during the event.

Beneficiaries of various schemes shared their experiences and spoke about the positive changes brought about by government support. Outstanding Jalasathi and Swachha Sathi workers were felicitated for their contributions.

Additional Chief Secretary of the Housing and Urban Development Department Usha Padhee said Odisha's urban transformation is being driven by a citizen-centric approach, placing people at the heart of the development process. She stressed the importance of technology-driven services and greater public participation in governance. A major highlight of

the event was the release of the department's Two-Year Achievement Review Report (2024-2026). The department also launched a state-level QR code-based grievance, suggestion and feedback platform, enabling citizens to directly register complaints and share suggestions. The programme concluded with the screening of a short film titled "Future Urban Odisha: Vision 2036 and 2047", outlining the state's long-term urban development roadmap.

Director of Municipal Administration Arindam Daku delivered the vote of thanks. Puri Municipal Commissioner Sneha Arugula, Special Secretary Vinay Kumar Das, Mission Shakti members, beneficiaries of various schemes and a large number of citizens attended the event.

SP Holds Meeting With Alarnath Temple Servitors Ahead of Anasara Darshan Rush

Puri: Anticipating a large influx of devotees during the upcoming Anasara period, Puri Superintendent of Police (SP) Prateek Singh on Wednesday held a meeting with representatives of Alarnath Temple servitors at his office to discuss crowd management, security arrangements and maintenance of law and order at Brahmagiri.

During the meeting, the SP reviewed preparations for ensuring the safety of devotees, traffic regulation, darshan management and overall security in and around the temple premises.

Every year, during the Anasara period when the deities of the Jagannath Temple remain unavailable for public darshan, thousands of devotees from across Odisha and other states

visit the Alarnath Temple at Brahmagiri to offer prayers. The period witnesses a significant surge in footfall, leading to heavy crowding in and around the temple.

Keeping this in view, Puri Police has decided to strengthen crowd-control measures and security arrangements. Servitor representatives shared their suggestions regarding devotee movement, entry and exit management, parking facilities, traffic regulation, crowd handling and other essential arrangements.

SP Prateek Singh assured the servitors that all necessary measures would be taken by the police to facilitate smooth and safe darshan for devotees.

According to police officials, adequate police personnel will be

deployed in and around the temple. Special arrangements for traffic management, designated parking zones, barricading, CCTV surveillance and public address systems will also be put in place to assist devotees and streamline movement.

"The safety and convenience of devotees remain our top priority. Police, temple administration and servitors will work in close coordination to ensure peaceful and orderly darshan during the Anasara period," the SP said.

Puri Police has appealed to devotees and the general public to cooperate with authorities and adhere to all guidelines issued by the police and administration during their visit to the Alarnath Temple.



Preparations on for Ratha Yatra at Delhi's Hauz Khas Temple

New Delhi, Dt: 25.06.: Hectic preparations are underway for celebrating the Annual Ratha Yatra Festival at Lord Jagannath Temple in Hauz Khas of New Delhi. Around one and half lakhs devotees are expected to take part in 48th edition of this Grand social, religious, spiritual and cultural fiesta. Several Odia and Non Odia dignitaries of New Delhi and National Capital Region are scheduled to congregate at the ceremony venue to witness and worship Lord of the Universe and His Siblings and seek their blessings. Being hosted by the Temple Management Committee Sree Neelachala Seva Sangha (SNSS), elaborate and upto date arrangements have been done to conduct the Ratha Yatra in a smooth and seamless manner, informed Secretary of SNSS Ravinder Nath Pradhan. The entire Temple complex is being renovated with the painting of attractive colours to wear a new and fresh look befitting to the auspicious occasion.

The festive session will commence from the hosting of Deba Snan Purnima on 29th June of this month. This will follow by Netrotsava and Nabajaubana Darshan on 14th July and Ratha



Yatra on 16th July 2026. Other related festivities like Bahuda Yatra on 24th, Suna Beshna on 25th and Niladri Bije on 27th July 2026 are going to be held as per vedic norms and religious practices, Shri Pradhan disclosed. The building of 18 feet height chariot having 10 wheels is being carried on rapidly, he added. The whole executive members team of Shree Neelachala Seva Sangha and around 700 volunteers have been assigned to oversee the maintenance of peace and discipline during the Car Festival, Shri Pradhan announced. Bhagirath Jha and Laxmi Narayan Beberta will present the Live proceedings of the Ratha Yatra.

Lieutenant Governor of Delhi Taranjit Singh Sandhu will grace the Festival this year as Chief Guest and shall perform the ritual of Chhera

Pahanra. The special attraction of this year's Ratha Yatra will be presentation of nine days long colourful cultural extravaganza entitled Ratha Yatra Mahotsava by SNSS. The discriminating art lovers will witness the recitals of dance and music, staging of Palas and dance dramas at Temple premises each evening starting from the day of Rathayatra till Bahuda Yatra and Sunabeshna. Nationally and Internationally acclaimed artistes like famous Bollywood music director Prem Anand, noted singer Susmita Das and celebrated dance exponent Saswat Joshi are expected to enthrall the audiences by their creative excellence and artistic acumen during this Festival. Ace anchor Swamaprava Pati will be compèring the cultural programme of the Mega Event.

Progress of Matiapada ROB reviewed Principal Secretary Directs for Expeditious Completion

Bhubaneswar, June 25, 2026: "As the famous Rath Yatra is approaching, a significant influx of pilgrims and tourists from within and outside the State is expected to visit Puri. In view of this, the Hon'ble Chief Minister and the Hon'ble Minister, Works Department have laid special emphasis on strengthening the road infrastructure and ensuring seamless connectivity to Puri town. In view of this, the Principal Secretary of Works Department, Shri Sanjay Kumar Singh, visited the construction site of the Matiapada Road Over Bridge (ROB) on NH-316 and reviewed the progress of the ongoing works. "During the inspection, he reviewed the progress of the Bow String Girder works and assessed the balance works required for completion of the project. He also directed the officials of the National Highways Wing and the work executing agency to expedite all remaining works, including the launching of the remaining two Bow String Girder spans immediately after the scheduled inspection by the Research Designs and Standards

Organisation (RDSO) on June 26, 2026, so as to facilitate early completion of the project. "He further instructed that all related works including casting of crash barriers, laying of bituminous and concrete pavement on both approach roads, installation of expansion joints, and other ancillary works, should be taken up simultaneously and completed in a time-bound manner. "The Works Department closely monitors the progress of this strategically important infrastructure project and is committed to ensuring its completion within the stipulated timeline for the interest of public. The Principal Secretary also directed the concerned officials to ensure that the service roads on both sides of the ROB are fully completed and made traffic-worthy before Rath Yatra, thereby facilitating smooth and hassle-free movement of pilgrims and other road users during the festival. "The Chief Engineer (National Highways), Superintending Engineer (National Highways) and representatives of the executing agency were present on the occasion.

KIIT Climbs to 4th Position in India in Times Higher Education Sustainability Impact Rankings 2026

Bhubaneswar, 24th June: Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology Deemed-To-Be-University (KIIT-DU) has securing an impressive 4th position in India among both government and private institutes in the Times Higher Education (THE) Sustainability Impact Rankings 2026, up from the 5th position last year. On a global scale, the University has been placed within the prestigious 101-200 cohort.

In this edition, KIIT was ranked across all 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Notably, the university clinched the 1st position in India for three distinct goals: SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). Furthermore, KIIT secured the 2nd position nationally for SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), while maintaining top-10 positions national ranking across all remaining SDGs.

KIIT's impressive performance, driven by its visionary leadership Dr Achyuta Samanta, underscores the underlying commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This achievement highlights the institution's dedication to moving beyond policy to ensure the tangible implementation, measurable advancement, and real-world impact of the SDGs.

"We are delighted that KIIT has once again performed strongly in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings. We have consistently maintained our standing while improving our performance year after year, reflecting our sustained commitment to excellence and sustainable development," said Dr Samanta. We are delighted that KIIT has once again performed strongly in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings. We have consistently maintained our standing while improving our performance year after year, reflecting our sustained commitment to excellence and sustainable development," said Dr Samanta.

Times Higher Education publishes rankings based on societal impact in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in addition to the World University Rankings.

First Mock Drill Held for Rath Yatra in Puri Ahead of Mega Festival

Puri, June 25: In preparation for the upcoming Rath Yatra, the first inter-departmental mock drill was conducted on Wednesday at the Town Police Station premises in Puri to ensure the smooth, safe and coordinated management of the annual festival.

Chairing the exercise, Puri Collector Divya Jyoti Parida said a significantly larger turnout of devotees is expected during this year's Rath Yatra, necessitating extensive arrangements for crowd management, pilgrim convenience and orderly darshan.

"We can successfully handle any situation through effective coordination and cooperation among all departments. The combined efforts of the police, NDRF, ODRAF, Fire Services, Health Department, volunteer organisations and Civil Defence teams will strengthen our service delivery during the festival," the Collector said.

Parida noted that mock drills help assess the preparedness and



efficiency of various agencies in responding to emergencies. "Such exercises enable us to identify gaps, improve response mechanisms and ensure quicker and more effective action during real-life situations," he said, adding that another mock drill is scheduled to be held on July 10.

Puri SP Prateek Singh said the exercise provided an opportunity to evaluate how swiftly and accurately agencies can respond

to incidents during the festival. "The mock drill enhances our capabilities and helps us gain valuable operational experience for managing large-scale events," he said.

OSDMA General Manager Sunil Kumar Sahu briefed participants on the objectives of the exercise and supervised the proceedings. Additional District Magistrate (Administration) Sarat Kumar Behera welcomed

the participants, while Deputy Collector Anushrava Gantayat proposed the vote of thanks.

Senior officials present included Additional District Magistrate (Protocol) Nilamadhav Bhoi, Chief District Medical and Public Health Officer Dr Akshaya Kumar Satapathy, PKDA Secretary Dillip Kumar Maharana, Sub-Collector Raj Kishore Jena, Jagannath Temple Security

Officer Hemant Kumar Padhi, Additional SPs Soumya Ranjan Mallik, Sachin Patil, Sushil Kumar Mishra, Devi Prasad Pratap, and NDRF Deputy Commandant Praveen Chauhan, among others.

The integrated mock drill involved coordinated participation from the NDRF, ODRAF, Fire Services, Medical teams, Police, Transport Department, Ambulance Services, Municipal Administration and Information Department. The exercise was monitored and managed through the Integrated Control Room.

Officials demonstrated emergency response strategies and coordinated action plans to deal with potential incidents and accidents during Rath Yatra, highlighting the importance of rapid response, communication and inter-agency coordination to ensure the safety of lakhs of devotees expected to attend the festival.

67 Faculty Members from NIT Rourkela Featured in SciRank Global's World's Top 5% Scientists List

Bhubaneswar : SciRank evaluated around 10 million researchers and nearly 50 million scholarly publications globally.

This recognition highlights the institute's strong research ecosystem across engineering, sciences, and humanities.

Rourkela : Achieving a major global recognition, 67 faculty members of National Institute of Technology Rourkela (NIT Rourkela) have been featured in the prestigious SciRank Global World's Top 5% Scientists List.

Published annually by the Global Institute of Scientometrics, this Top 5% Scientists List recognises researchers from around the globe who have created outstanding scientific impact with their work. The latest edition of this list has covered more than 10 million active researcher profiles and assessed 50 million (approx.) scholarly publications worldwide.

Congratulating NIT Rourkela community on this achievement, Prof. K. Umamaheshwar Rao, Director, NIT Rourkela, said, "This recognition is a matter of immense pride for the entire NIT Rourkela community. Having 67 of our faculty

members featured among the world's top scientists is a testament to their unwavering commitment to research excellence, innovation, and the pursuit of knowledge. It reflects the strength of our research ecosystem, the interdisciplinary collaborations fostered at the institute, and our collective efforts to address real-world challenges through science and technology. I congratulate all the faculty members on this remarkable achievement and am confident that their contributions will continue to advance knowledge and create meaningful societal impact in the years to come." A unique factor of this evaluation is that it is not based on surveys or editorial panels. Rather, researchers are verified through field-normalised bibliometric data sourced from OpenAlex, the world's largest open research database. This makes the evaluation transparent and away from any institutional biases. From NIT Rourkela, researchers from the Department of Chemistry accounted for the highest number of entries in the list. This is followed by researchers from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Department of Life Science.

Vedanta Aluminium Launches Suryodhyam Initiative To Drive Holistic Rural Transformation In Jharsuguda

An MoU has been signed to develop model villages under company's new Suryodhyam initiative

Jharsuguda, Odisha, 25th June 2026: Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest aluminium producer, has closely coordinated with the district administration of Jharsuguda to launch Suryodhyam, a comprehensive rural development initiative aimed at transforming seven villages in the district into self-sustaining, community-centric ecosystems. The initiative is expected to benefit 8,000+ community members through focused interventions spanning infrastructure development, healthcare, education, livelihoods, and local governance.

As part of the Suryodhyam model village

initiative, a wide range of infrastructure interventions will be undertaken across the identified villages, including improving roads, drainage systems, street lighting, Primary Health Centers, anganwadis, schools, water bodies, and irrigation infrastructure. Alongside these efforts, the initiative will focus on enhancing access to healthcare, education, and livelihood opportunities while strengthening grassroots institutions such as youth clubs, Village Development Committees, Panchayat sub-committees and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to foster greater community participation in local governance and development planning.



Formalizing this collaborative vision, Vedanta Aluminium signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the presence of the Jharsuguda district administration reinforcing their continued collaboration

towards sustainable rural development. Uniquely, each of the seven villages will be 'adopted' by senior leaders from Vedanta Aluminium, Jharsuguda, who will be responsible for providing strategic oversight and active engagement to support the

successful implementation. Speaking on the occasion, C. Chandru, CEO - Vedanta Aluminium, Jharsuguda, said, "Through Suryodhyam, we are investing in stronger, more resilient communities in the vicinity of our operations by

strengthening rural infrastructure, expanding livelihood generation avenues, and enabling community-led development. Through this effort, we aim to build community ownership of progress and create scalable

models of village development that deliver lasting value for Jharsuguda district, while also supporting its long-term growth."

Shri Kunal Motiram Chavan, IAS, District Collector and District Magistrate, Jharsuguda, said, "Vedanta's Suryodhyam initiative, which is being implemented in close coordination with the Jharsuguda district administration, will complement our ongoing efforts to strengthen rural infrastructure, improve access to essential services, and enhance the quality of life in villages. We see this as an opportunity for enabling joint public-private efforts to

drive coordinated, outcome-oriented development and achieve inclusive rural transformation."

Suryodhyam aims to establish the seven villages as scalable and replicable models of integrated rural development. In FY26, Vedanta Aluminium's community development efforts in Jharsuguda positively impacted the lives of more than 7 lakh people across 61 villages, ensuring sustainable, inclusive growth through targeted interventions in education, healthcare, livelihoods, women's empowerment, rural infrastructure, and grassroots arts and sports, the company is working to improve the quality of life of local communities.

After Lucknow blaze, dozens of coaching centres sealed in Noida, Ghaziabad over fire safety norms

Noida: Around 60 establishments, a majority of their coaching centres, were sealed in Noida and Ghaziabad on Tuesday for flouting fire safety norms, as authorities across Delhi-NCR started inspections a day after a massive blaze at a coaching institute in Purnia of Aliganj in Lucknow left 15 people dead.

Officials said that while two illegal coaching centres were shut in Noida, 56 establishments, ranging from play schools to dispensaries, were sealed in Ghaziabad for failing to comply with fire safety norms. Ghaziabad Development Authority (GDA) officials said the specific number will have to be compiled from across eight zones.

GDA officials said they have compiled a list of 206 such establishments that lack fire no-objection certificates (NOCs). "During Tuesday's drive, 56 violating establishments were sealed because they could not produce a fire NOC. Furthermore, we are sending communication to the fire department to initiate action as per fire safety norms. We are only checking only fire NOCs," Rudresh Shukla, media coordinator of GDA, told to Media.

In Noida, while the Om Education coaching centre in Sector 149 was found operating without a registration or fire safety certificate, another establishment in Sector 49 was found operating without a valid licence. They were both sealed and issued notice to appear before the district inspector of schools (DIOS) with relevant records and documents within two days.

"If the records are not submitted within the stipulated period or the required statutory formalities are not found to be complete, sealing action will also be taken as per rules," an official statement from Gautam Budh Nagar administration said.

The management of Om Education centre was defiant, even after the sealing. When contacted, an official who answered the call, refusing to share his name or designation, said, "How many commercial buildings in Noida actually have a fire NOC? If you check markets such as Atta Market, you will find many establishments operating without one. Large brands, banks and other businesses are functioning from such premises. Why are only coaching institutes being targeted?"

Gautam Budh Nagar DIOS Chandra Shekhar said in a statement, "The campaign against coaching institutes operating without valid registration or mandatory safety standards will continue in the district."

Ghaziabad officials said the district administration will be recommended to initiate its action in case the coaching centres are found lacking in fire safety. In May, the fire department had initiated a drive to check violations in residential high-rises after a major fire at the Gaur Green Avenue high-rise in Indirapuram on April 29.

"Of the estimated 450 high-rise (over 15 metres in height) residential buildings, we have checked about 250 so far, and a total of 82 cases have been filed against violators in court. Checks at the high-rises will continue," Ghaziabad chief fire officer (CFO) Rahul Pal.

Ghaziabad officials said that sealing and enforcement were taken up in Raj Nagar, Raj Nagar District Centre, Rajendra Nagar, Lajpat Nagar, Satyam Enclave, Ambedkar Road, among others, under the provisions of the UP Urban Planning and Development Act, 1973.

Drinking Water project defunct at bus stop

Naresh Chandra Pattanayak Keonjhar: Four bus stops have now become makeshift stands, due to the lack of a private bus stand in mineral rich Keonjhar district headquarter town. They are Karanjia, Telkoi, Cuttack and Badabil bus stops. Passengers face many problems due to the lack of basic facilities at all these bus stops. Passengers are dissatisfied due to the lack of facilities like electricity, light, drinking water, toilets, rest rooms etc.

Among them, in the Karanjia bus stop several problems caused the passengers difficult. A pure drinking water project was launched to provide cold water to the passengers during the scorching heat and at other



times. Passengers also fill their own bottles with cold drinking water from it and take them away while travelling. But due to defunct of the project for over 10 days passengers faced

extreme hardship securing drinking water in the scorching heat. Bus employees complain that no one listens to them even after they report the issue. Sources said that hundreds of

buses ply to various cities and villages from this bus stop every day. Thousands of passengers wait for and board the bus there. However, since this project has stalled, people

have been wandering around the hotel looking for water. Many times, if they do not get water, they are forced to buy water at great expense, said Dilip Naik, a passenger. It is questionable why steps are not being taken to fix it even though there is a 'Swachha Sathi' shop there. Similarly, small shopkeepers and bus staff at the said bus stop are also being harassed for drinking water. Similarly, since there is no toilet here, people are forced to move around and defecate outside. Apart from this, people face many problems for hygiene, let alone bathing. As a result, the environment is polluted and disputes often arise. Sumati Naik, a woman passenger, asks why no arrangements are

being made for women to rest, especially when they are facing untold hardships. Apart from this, since buses ply at night, no security arrangements have been made for the passengers. As a result, the passengers feel unsafe at night. Similarly, there is a demand for bright lighting and security guards. Since the bus stop is on the roadside, many buses often stop in the road. As a result, the city residents who travel on the said road feel unsafe and there is a demand for action as accidents and deaths often occur. In this regard, Executive Officer Lalit Kumar Naik said that no one has complained about the water project being stalled. In that case, it will be arranged immediately. Similarly, a proposal will be made for a toilet.

WASSAN and IIT Bhubaneswar Host Dialogue to Mainstream Agroecological Food Systems in Odisha

Bhubaneswar: Leading academicians, policymakers, and food systems experts gathered today at the Lalitgiri Hall of Learning, IIT Bhubaneswar, for a transformative dialogue titled "Enabling Agroecological Transformation: Role of Academia in Mainstreaming Food Systems in Odisha". Organised by Watershed Support Services and Activities Network (WASSAN) in collaboration with IIT Bhubaneswar under the Green Evolution (GE) initiative, supported by Welthungerhilfe, the event aimed to define the critical role of higher education in building sustainable, resilient, and equitable food systems.

The inaugural session featured a welcome address by MV Ramachandradu, Director of WASSAN, followed by a virtual presentation on the evidence for agroecology by Dr. N. Ravisankar. Prof. Shreepad Karmalkar, Director of IIT Bhubaneswar, provided opening remarks, setting the stage for keynote addresses by distinguished experts including Dr. Sultan Ahmed Ismail, an internationally recognised soil biologist and Member of the

Tamilnadu Planning Commission, and Prof. Srijit Mishra from the University of Hyderabad. Dr. Aurobindo Behera (IAS Retd.), former Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of Odisha, delivered an address emphasising the strategic alignment of academia with state agricultural goals.

The first thematic roundtable, moderated by Ms. Nivedita Varshneya, Country Director for Welthungerhilfe (WHH) India, focused on integrating agroecology into higher education and extension systems. Experts including Prof. Gurmeet Singh (TDU Bangalore), Anshuman Das (WHH), and Prof. Niranjana Mishra (OUAT) discussed emerging models and shared institutional experiences to embed agroecological principles into university curricula. This was followed by a second roundtable chaired by Prof. Srijit Mishra, which addressed policy priorities and enabling mechanisms. This session featured insights from Dr. Sitakanta Panda (IIT Bhubaneswar), Ms. Neha Niharika (Indian School of Business), and Dr. Praveen Jhakar (ICAR-CIWA) on creating the institutional frameworks

necessary for a widespread transition.

The final roundtable of the day explored innovation, entrepreneurship, and incubation for food system transformation, moderated by Ratnakar Panigrahi, CEO, SDRC Consulting and Millet Entrepreneur. Mr. Panigrahi and Satyabrata Muni, Founder and CEO, MUNICCO, highlighted the role of startups and local entrepreneurs in scaling agroecological solutions.

This event is a key component of the broader Green Evolution programme, which operates across India, Nepal, and Bangladesh to support national strategies for sustainable food systems. By blending local knowledge with scientific innovation and influencing policy through multi-stakeholder cooperation, the initiative seeks to create food systems that are productive, environmentally friendly, and socially fair. The recommendations generated from today's discussions are expected to significantly strengthen the contribution of Odisha's academic institutions to the state's agroecological transition.

NSIC holds Awareness program on MSME TEAM

Paradip, (DMS):- The National Small Industries Corporation Limited (NSIC), under the Ministry of Micro Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India, in association with World Trade Centre Bhubaneswar, is organizing an Awareness Programme on MSME Trade Enablement And Marketing (TEAM) Initiative on International MSME Day, i.e. on 27th June 2026, at IFFCO

Community Hall in Paradip from 10.00 AM to 2.00 PM.

In this regard, a press meet was held at Hotel Empire on Thursday evening, to brief on the objectives, significance, and expected outcomes of this important initiative of the Government of India.

The MSME TEAM initiative, introduced under the World Bank-supported Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP)

Programme, aims to strengthen the digital and technological capabilities of MSMEs by enabling them to effectively access trade and marketing opportunities through e-commerce platforms, including Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC). The programme focuses on empowering MSMEs with digital tools, capacity building, and strategic guidance to expand their market reach, enhance competitiveness.

CSM Technologies Limited's (the "Company" or "Issuer") Initial Public Offering to open on Wednesday

Bhubaneswar: CSM Technologies Limited shall open its Bid / Issue in relation to its initial public offering of Equity Shares on Wednesday, June 24, 2026 and shall close on Monday, June 29, 2026. 3,87,02,472 Equity shares of face value ₹10 each are outstanding prior to the Issue and as on date.

The Issue comprises of a Fresh Issue of up to 1,29,01,000 Equity Shares of face value of ₹10 each.

The proceeds from the Fresh Issue will be utilised towards funding working capital requirements of the Company, prepayment or repayment of all or a portion of certain outstanding borrowings availed by the Company, achieving inorganic growth through unidentified acquisitions and other strategic initiatives, and general corporate purposes (collectively, the "Object of Issue"). Keynote Financial Services Limited is the book running lead manager to the Issue ("Book Running Lead Manager" or "BRLM").

KFin Technologies Limited

is the Registrar to the Issue ("Registrar to the Issue"). The Equity Shares are being issued through the red herring prospectus of the Company dated June 17, 2026 (the "RHP") filed with the Registrar of Companies, Orissa at Cuttack (the "RoC"), Securities and Exchange Board of India ("SEBI") along with corrigendum to the RHP dated June 19, 2026 and are proposed to be listed on BSE Limited ("BSE") and National Stock Exchange of India Limited ("NSE", collectively the "Stock Exchanges").

About the Company: Incorporated in 1998, the company is amongst the few IT solutions companies, who have delivered first-of-its-kind projects for government as well as for the private sector. The Company also specialises in providing GovTech solutions and digital transformation services.

It provides technology solutions across sectors such as mining and allied services, government & public

services, agriculture and allied services, industry and trade facilitation, education, healthcare and tourism (Source: CARE Report).

These solutions are aimed at streamlining operations, improving data-driven decision-making, and facilitating citizen-centric services. The Company also offers consulting and advisory services and also provides self-service technologies that enable government organisations and corporate clients to migrate, automate, and manage customer-facing business processes through self-service channels (Source: CARE Report). As of the date of the Red Herring Prospectus, the Company has executed projects across 20 cities in India and 14 countries internationally.

Also, the Company has executed multiple projects focused on the development of public digital infrastructure and implementation of scalable e-governance platforms across various economic and social sectors in India and other countries.

e-Procurement Notice for Building Works Identification No. 04/ SERW/JLS/2026-27

1. Procurement Officer	:- Superintending Engineer Rural Works Division, Jaleswar
2. Name of the Work	:- Buildings
3. Total No. of Works	:- 09 Nos
4. Estimated Cost	:- Approx. Estimated Cost ₹.51.69 Lakh to ₹.67.19 Lakh
5. Class of Contractor	:- B Class
6. Time of Completion	:- Six & Nine Calendar months (As per annexure)
7. Availability of tender On-line for bidding	:- From 30.06.2026 at 10.00 A.M. to 15.07.2026 upto 05.00 P.M.
8. Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	:- 14.07.2026 upto 05.00 P.M
9. Date & Time of Opening of tender in the office of the Superintending Engineer, R.W. Division, Jaleswar	:- Date & Time Opening of Technical & Financial bid -17.07.2026 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the web site- www.tendersodisha.gov.in

Monsoon

A weak southwest monsoon has exposed the fragility of India's agriculture sector, particularly in rainfed regions. With rainfall deficit hovering around 40-46 per cent and the Meteorological Department forecasting subdued monsoon activity till July 2, concerns over the kharif season are intensifying. The Centre's identification of 111 highly vulnerable districts across 12 states reflects the seriousness of the crisis. Agriculture remains heavily dependent on monsoon rains despite years of policy emphasis on irrigation expansion and climate resilience. A delayed or deficient monsoon directly impacts sowing activity, crop productivity, rural incomes and food inflation. If below-normal rainfall persists during the crucial July-August period, the consequences could be severe.

The government has drawn up state-wise and district-level contingency plans. It is also promoting drought-resistant crops and water conservation, besides making efforts to ensure an adequate supply of seeds and fertilisers. The focus on pulses, oilseeds and coarse cereals makes sense in view of their lower water requirements. The activation of the El Nino Monitoring Cell and real-time advisories through Krishi Vigyan Kendras are also positive steps. Preparedness is half the battle won, but it should go hand in hand with reform. India's recurring monsoon anxieties underline the urgent need to reduce dependence on rainfed agriculture. Expanding micro-irrigation, rejuvenating water bodies, improving groundwater management and incentivising climate-smart farming must become long-term national priorities rather than seasonal responses.

The urgency of protecting farmers from economic distress cannot be overemphasised. Crop insurance coverage remains uneven, and awareness of contingency measures is often limited at the grassroots level. India's food security may not face immediate danger due to healthy grain stocks and reservoir buffers, yet the livelihoods of millions of farmers remain at risk. Climate variability is no longer an occasional disruption but a recurring reality. The challenge for policymakers is to build a more climate-resilient agricultural system capable of withstanding future uncertainties.

Labour

THE rescue of 28 Soliga tribals, including children, from a brick-kiln in Mysuru is grim evidence that bonded labour remains a reality in India despite being outlawed nearly five decades ago. Families were trapped by small advances, years of underpaid labour and a cycle of debt that effectively robbed them of their freedom. What makes the episode particularly troubling is that it involved a vulnerable tribal community. Poverty, illiteracy, landlessness and lack of access to formal credit often leave such groups at the mercy of labour contractors. A modest advance meant to tide a family over difficult times can quickly become an instrument of coercion.

The Mysuru case is not isolated. Similar rescues have been reported from Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and other states in recent months. Brick-kilns, construction sites and small factories rely on informal labour arrangements that frequently evade scrutiny. The persistence of such practices exposes a serious



gap between legal protections and their implementation on the ground. India has a robust legal framework to combat bonded labour. Rescue operations are essential. But the deeper challenge lies in ensuring rehabilitation, livelihood support and access to social security so that vulnerable families are not forced back into the same conditions.

Equally important is stricter monitoring of high-risk industries and swift prosecution of offenders. Unless employers who profit from bonded labour face meaningful consequences, the practice will continue in new forms. The freedom of rescued workers must not end with their release. For a nation committed to Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and aspiring to become Viksit Bharat, the continued existence of debt bondage is a stark contradiction. Inclusive development must be judged by how effectively the most vulnerable citizens are protected from exploitation.

Heat Waves, Monsoon, and the Indian Economy

Suresh Chandra Sarangi

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

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

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

geographical spread are alarming. This is unusual.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Is the public representative above the law?

-Dr. Satyawan Saurabh

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

officials, respect for the law is also affected.

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

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

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

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

Several Bank Officials Under Lens Over Ram Temple Donation Theft, Action Likely After 'Revelations'

New Delhi, 26/6: As the First Information Report (FIR) in the Ram Temple donation controversy named eight persons, including a temple attendant, former bank staff and those engaged in cash counting, for alleged misappropriation of cash and offerings, several banking officials are likely to face the heat over 'collusion' in the alleged theft. All eight arrested accused, namely Avinash Shukla, Anukalp Mishra, Lavkush Mishra, Manish Kumar Yadav, Karunesh Pandey, Ramashankar Mishra, Subhash Srivastava and Ram Shankar Yadav alias Tinnu, are currently being grilled and will be produced in court. During the interrogation, Tinnu and Subhash are learnt to have made startling revelations about the modus operandi as well as the involvement of more people. They have also purportedly named several government bank officials who acted either as conduits or channels for misappropriation of



temple offerings. Notably, it was the State Bank of India (SBI) that was authorised to count cash, offerings and valuables at the temple. According to people privy to the probe, not just one but several banking officials are found to be involved in the embezzlement racket and are currently being scanned for their questionable conduct. Sources suggest that soon they could also face penal action for their alleged

role in facilitating multi-crore siphoning of temple donations. Investigation findings indicate that Tinnu Yadav and Subhash Srivastava played central roles in the planning and execution of the temple theft. Subhash allegedly recruited others into the operation and managed duty allocation to staff for counting cash offerings at the temple. Tinnu, former driver of Temple Trust's general secretary

Champat Rai, emerged as the biggest figure in the theft controversy, while Subhash is the ex-banking staff member among eight arrested. It was Subhash who monitored the cash-counting staff at the temple and allegedly acted as a key pivot in embezzling the donations. According to top sources, the alleged involvement of banking officials is seen as an 'organised crime', and soon there may be another SIT investigation to unravel the shady operations of the entire syndicate. About the modus operandi, the sources indicated that the bundles of cash were first stored in the bathroom to evade public eye and later moved out of the temple premises during the night. The stolen money was then segregated at separate locations and diverted to scamsters' accounts. The racket is believed to have been operating for 2-3 years.

Govt's ASPIRE Scheme Supports Rural Entrepreneurs With 109 Incubators

New Delhi, 26/6: Ministry of MSME's ASPIRE programme has approved 109 Livelihood Business Incubators (LBI) across 27 States and Union Territories, trained over 1.23 lakh beneficiaries, an official statement said on Friday. Since systematic tracking of the program began in FY 2022-23, ASPIRE-supported incubators have also facilitated the establishment of more than 1,200 micro-enterprises across the country. ASPIRE has reached over 8,700 SC beneficiaries, above 9,600 ST beneficiaries and more than 17,600 OBC beneficiaries, helping make entrepreneurship more inclusive and accessible. The Ministry of MSME launched the ASPIRE Scheme in 2015 to promote entrepreneurship and employment generation, particularly in rural and agro-based sectors. ASPIRE is

centred around a growing network of Livelihood Business Incubators (LBIs) that help individuals move from skill acquisition to enterprise creation. LBIs are supporting enterprises in areas such as food processing, honey production, bamboo products, mushroom cultivation, spice processing, handicrafts and coir products. By providing training, mentoring and incubation support, ASPIRE enables aspiring entrepreneurs in agro-rural sectors and promotes innovations for strengthening the competitiveness in the MSME sector. These incubators provide access to modern equipment, business mentoring and technology support. Entrepreneurs are also assisted with product development, branding, accreditation, regulatory compliance, market linkages and access to finance, helping them navigate the journey from idea to

enterprise. The scheme operates through a three-tier architecture comprising the Scheme Steering Committee, designated Mentor Institutes and Host Institutions that operate the LBIs. Mentor Institutes play a crucial role in identifying incubators, preparing project plans, designing incubation programmes, strengthening implementation and monitoring outcomes. The incubation ecosystem brings together institutes such as Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Guwahati, agricultural universities, technical institutes and premier institutions such as IIT Jodhpur. The government cited the example of Banshailang Marbanian of Mawsynram, Meghalaya, who used training from IIE Guwahati to start a food-processing enterprise and later attended Republic Day celebrations as one of ten North-East entrepreneurs invited to Kartavya Path.

CBSE Class VII-IX students with two foreign languages can retain subject combination till Class 10

New Delhi, 26/6: In a relief for CBSE students, those currently studying in Classes VII, VIII and IX who have opted for two foreign languages under the three-language policy will be allowed to continue with the same subject combination till Class X, sources in the Ministry of Education told ANI. The clarification comes weeks after a CBSE circular issued in May mandated that, from July 1, students entering Class IX must study three languages, with at least two being Indian languages, in line with the National Curriculum Framework (NCF). The circular had triggered protests from students and parents, with several petitioners approaching the Supreme Court challenging the move. According to the sources, the requirement of studying at least two Indian languages will be implemented prospectively from Class VI and will not apply retrospectively to students already studying in Classes VII, VIII and IX. "The requirement of studying at least two Indian languages as part of the three-language policy will be implemented prospectively from Class VI and will not apply retrospectively to students already studying in Classes VII, VIII and IX," the sources said. The government, however, rejected suggestions that the latest clarification amounted to a rollback of the policy. "It is not backtracking. This provision was already there; it just wasn't explicit enough. There wasn't sufficient clarity, and this is simply meant to provide that clarity," a senior Ministry of Education source said. Explaining the rationale, the source said that nearly 24 lakh students appear for the CBSE Class X examinations every year, of whom only around 30,000 opt for foreign languages. "About 98.5 per cent of CBSE students already follow the three-language formula. The issue concerns a very small group of students, largely in urban and metropolitan areas, some of whom had opted for two foreign languages. We are making an exception for these particular cases," the source said. Formal orders incorporating the clarification are expected to be issued shortly. The clarification comes over a week after the Supreme Court refused to grant interim relief on petitions challenging the implementation of the CBSE's three-language policy for Class IX students from the 2026-27 academic session. A Bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice V Mohana declined to stay the policy and directed that the plea be tagged with similar petitions already pending before the court. The controversy stemmed from the CBSE's May circular implementing the language provisions of the National Curriculum Framework, under which students entering Class IX from the 2026-27 academic session were required to study three languages, including at least two Indian languages.

India Sends Two IAF Planes With Relief Support To Quake-Hit Venezuela Under Operation Amistad

New Delhi, 26/6: India on Friday launched 'Operation Amistad' to support earthquake-hit Venezuela, dispatching two Indian Air Force (IAF) planes carrying field hospital unit and more than 35 tons of relief supplies, medicines and medical equipment. Announcing the launch of Operation Amistad on X, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar expressed India's commitment to support the people of Venezuela in this difficult time. "Operation Amistad underway! Two IAF C17s took-off today for Venezuela with urgent assistance to support their post-earthquake relief efforts. The assistance contains an Indian Army Field Hospital Unit and over 35 tons of relief supplies, medicines and medical equipment, including two BHISHM Cubes. India is committed to support the Government and people of Venezuela in this difficult time," he posted on X. The BHISHM Cube is a state-of-the-art, indigenous, rapidly deployable modular medical facility designed specifically for disaster and humanitarian response. Comprising compact, self-contained medical modules, it can be quickly assembled into a fully functional field hospital capable of delivering advanced



trauma care, emergency surgeries, intensive care support and essential medical treatment for up to 200 patients. Equipped with portable ventilators, patient monitors, diagnostic equipment, surgical instruments, power generation and oxygen support systems, the BHISHM Cube significantly enhances India's capability to provide swift and effective medical assistance during humanitarian crises anywhere in the world. Earlier, the Defence Ministry said that the Indian Army has dispatched a specialised medical contingent to Venezuela to assist in humanitarian relief

efforts. "The medical team from 60 Para Field Hospital departed in the afternoon of June 26 from Hindon Air Force Station and is currently en route to Venezuela aboard two Indian Air Force aircraft," a Ministry of Defence spokesperson said. The aircraft being used are C-17 Globemasters of the Indian Air Force. The aerial distance between India and Venezuela is about 14,300 km. The range of the Globemaster is about 4,400 km. While these aircraft can be refuelled in the air, India doesn't have the refuellers required, and the aircraft will be landing at friendly countries

midway for refuelling, sources said. The contingent comprises 41 personnel, including nine medical officers, and is equipped to provide emergency medical care, trauma management, life-saving surgical support and other essential healthcare services to those affected by the earthquake. The team is carrying nearly six tonnes of medical stores and humanitarian relief supplies provided by the Ministry of External Affairs. Venezuela is racing against time to rescue hundreds believed trapped beneath collapsed buildings after twin powerful earthquakes left

more than 200 people dead and many injured, while authorities warned the toll could rise further as rescuers struggled to reach the worst-hit areas. Venezuela's Health Ministry raised the death toll to at least 235 on Thursday evening after two powerful earthquakes struck the country. The shallow earthquakes, measuring magnitudes of 7.2 and 7.5 and striking just 40 seconds apart on Wednesday, were the strongest to hit the South American country in more than a century and the deadliest in decades, Xinhua news agency reported. The two strong shocks struck less than a minute apart, while repeated aftershocks have increased the risk of secondary building collapses. They devastated parts of Venezuela's central coast and the capital Caracas, triggering widespread building collapses, power and communications outages, while raising fears of further destruction from continuing aftershocks. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday expressed distress over the devastation caused by earthquakes and reaffirmed India's support during the difficult time, saying "it stands ready to extend all possible assistance".

Centre Launches India's 1st 'Easy Connect' Flight From Varanasi

New Delhi: Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu on Friday launched India's first 'Easy Connect' flight from Varanasi, marking the rollout of the government's new hub-and-spoke aviation model aimed at providing seamless international connectivity to passengers from Tier-II and Tier-III cities. The initiative is expected to strengthen India's ambitions of becoming a global aviation hub while making overseas travel easier for passengers beginning their journeys from smaller cities. The inaugural service was launched from Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport in Varanasi, marking a significant milestone in the government's efforts to transform air travel accessibility for passengers residing in Tier-II and Tier-III cities. Speaking at the launch event, Naidu said the initiative represents a major step towards



building a future-ready and globally competitive aviation ecosystem. He said the new model would enable passengers from smaller cities to begin their international journeys from their home airports, making overseas travel more convenient and efficient. "Today we take a major step forward towards realising our vision of making air travel more accessible and building a future-ready, self-

reliant Indian aviation industry that is efficient, inclusive and globally competitive," the minister said. Under the newly introduced hub-and-spoke model, international passengers can complete check-in, immigration and customs formalities at their originating airport itself. Passengers departing from Varanasi, for instance, will complete all departure procedures before

boarding a domestic flight to a designated hub airport such as Delhi, from where they will connect to international services without repeating the formalities. The government said the 'Easy Connect' initiative is designed to make India the preferred aviation hub for Indian travellers by 2030 and a global aviation hub by 2047. The strategy is also expected to boost trade, tourism, investment and regional economic growth by improving international connectivity from non-metro cities. According to estimates by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, aviation hub development could generate nearly 0.4 million direct and indirect jobs and contribute an additional \$30 billion to India's GDP by 2030. By 2047, the cumulative economic impact is projected to support around 16 million jobs and add nearly \$1.4 trillion to the economy.

PM Modi pays homage to Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay on his jayanti

New Delhi, 26/6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday paid tributes to "Vande Mataram" composer Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay on his Jayanti, remembering him as a towering literary luminary whose writings ignited the spirit of patriotism and cultural pride among generations of Indians. Highlighting the significance of the year, Modi noted that India is commemorating the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram. He remarked that through Vande Mataram, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay gifted the Indian freedom movement and the nation one of its most enduring sources of inspiration. In a post on X, PM Modi wrote, "Tributes to the great Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay on his Jayanti. A towering literary luminary, his writings awakened a spirit of patriotism and cultural pride among generations of Indians. His rich literary work continues to



illuminate minds and strengthen our collective resolve towards nation-building. This is a time when we are marking the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram. Through Vande Mataram, he gifted the freedom movement and our nation one of its most enduring inspirations." Union Home Minister Amit Shah also paid tribute to Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay saying, "On the birth anniversary of the great

litterateur and pioneer of cultural nationalism, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay ji, I remember him and pay my respects. Through his immortal work 'Anandamath', Bankimchandra ji conveyed the message of devotion, sacrifice, and national consciousness towards the motherland. By composing 'Vande Mataram', he provided new energy, inspiration, and ideological foundation to the Indian freedom struggle.

India, Seychelles Looking To Introduce New Areas Of Cooperation: Indian Envoy Ahead Of PM Modi's Visit

Victoria, 26/6: Hailing ties between India and Seychelles as "dynamic and excellent", India's High Commissioner to Seychelles, Rohit Rathish, on Friday, stated that both nations are looking to introduce new areas of cooperation like Artificial Intelligence (AI), cyberspace, cybersecurity, marine sciences and conservation and blue economy. In an interview with IANS, Rathish said that India and Seychelles are expected to sign a number of outcomes and agreements across all sectors during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visit to Seychelles. He recalled Seychelles President Patrick Herminie's visit to India in February and Vice President CP Radhakrishnan's visit to Seychelles in October last year. On ties between India and Seychelles, he said: "The current state of the partnership is dynamic, it's excellent. Recently, in the past nine months, the relationship has intensified, has received new energy and momentum under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. You would recall



that Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan visited Seychelles to attend the swearing-in ceremony of President Dr Patrick Herminie late last year. There was a state visit by the President to Seychelles in February this year, and now we have the Prime Minister's visit, which caps an intense period of bilateral relations which has deepened political trust and strengthened and expanded our bilateral cooperation across various areas. There will be a number of outcomes and agreements across all the sectors

that I've described, and we are also looking to introduce new areas of cooperation, like I said, in AI, cyberspace, cybersecurity, marine sciences and conservation, blue economy, and of course, strengthen our defence and security ties to a large extent." PM Modi is set to travel to Seychelles for a State visit from June 27-29 at the invitation of Seychelles President Herminie. During his visit, PM Modi will hold talks with President Herminie to review the full spectrum of bilateral cooperation and exchange views on regional and international

issues of mutual interest. He will also address the National Assembly of Seychelles and interact with members of the Indian diaspora. Asked about the role Seychelles plays in India's vision for the Indian Ocean region, the High Commissioner said: "We share this region. Both countries share this region. Both countries depend on the Indian Ocean for our economic security, for our maritime security, et cetera. And we are also culturally tied to this region for centuries. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had enunciated Vision Mahasagar a few years ago. Now, Vision Mahasagar encompasses trade, capacity building, maritime security and a number of areas and advocates for collective stewardship of the Indian Ocean region by the regional partners." "So, our approach to the region is to strengthen the capacities of our partner countries, be a first responder in case of need, and work together to tackle the threats that the region faces, that all the countries in the region face, particularly in

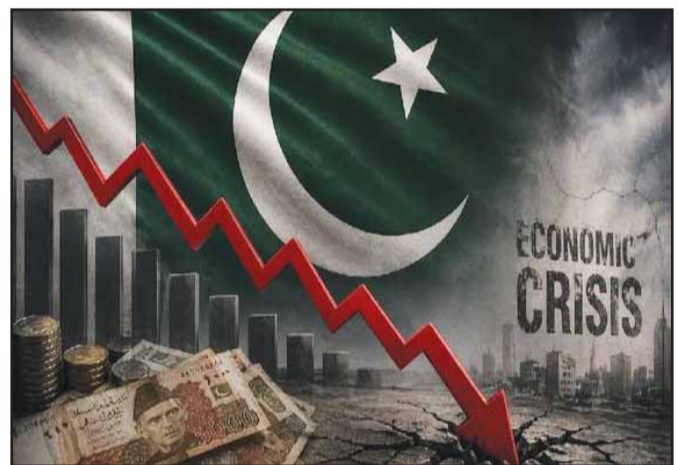
the areas of drug trafficking, human trafficking, and illegal fishing. Our defence and security ties with Seychelles, I must underline, are better than ever. We work together on numerous fronts. We have assisted Seychelles in the past with the gifting of Donier aircraft, patrol ships, etc. A number of Seychelles defence forces personnel are training in India. We exchange real-time information with the Seychelles defence forces to tackle the threats that they face. And we will see forward movement under the guidance of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in this particular sphere as well," he added. Rohit Rathish stated that India and Seychelles will continue to work on marine spatial planning, coastal management and marine conservation. He stated that PM Modi's discussions with President Herminie will advance joint research avenues and marine expedition prospects so that both countries can work together to safeguard and preserve the Indian Ocean and its biodiversity.

Pakistan: Three-Year-Old Girl Raped And Murdered In Karachi, Body Dumped Outside Toddler's House

Islamabad: In a horrific incident, a three-year-old girl was found dead inside a sack near her home after being sexually assaulted and murdered in Quaidabad area of Malir district in Pakistan's Karachi, local media reported. The victim, identified as 'K', went missing while playing outside her house. Her father said that the family searched for her in the neighbourhood after which they ultimately found her body in a sack at the street near their residence. Police took the body of the girl to a hospital for medico-legal formalities. Police Surgeon Dr Sumaiya confirmed that the girl was sexually assaulted and said that the exact cause of her death would be determined upon receipt of the chemical examination report, Pakistan-based daily The Express Tribune reported. Sindh's Home Minister Ziaul Hassan Lanjar has ordered the police to use modern scientific methods to ensure the perpetrators are brought to book. Police sources suggested that the sexual assault and murder likely happened near the victim's residence. Police have carried out search in some homes in the street and gathered the credentials of residents for further investigation. A police personnel, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said that the sack and the body's location indicate that the suspect is likely an individual who is familiar with the area, as per the report. Authorities said that several suspects have been detained and blood samples along with other specimens are being collected to help determine the facts about the incident. Earlier in May, the latest statistics by the Police Women and Child Protection Cell revealed that at least 388 adults and 10 minors faced domestic violence, harassment, abuse, and related crimes in Pakistan's Karachi from January-April this year. The report showcases how abuse unfolded behind closed doors in Karachi, with domestic violence being the most widely reported issue. Authorities have received 297 complaints about domestic abuse from January-April. Among these, 190 complaints were resolved while nearly 100 cases remain pending, demonstrating delays in providing relief to victims, The Express Tribune reported. Police lodged three formal cases in domestic violence incidents.

Pakistan's Central Government Debt Hits Record Rs 81.9 Trillion

New Delhi, 26/6: Pakistan's central government debt has climbed to a record Rs 81.93 trillion after rising by Rs 1.4 trillion in April alone, underscoring mounting fiscal pressures and the country's continued dependence on borrowing to finance its expenditure, according to a report. The report published in Business Recorder said the latest debt figures reflect deep-rooted structural weaknesses in Pakistan's public finances despite repeated warnings over fiscal sustainability and rising debt levels. Central government debt increased by more than Rs 4 trillion (Pakistani rupee) during the first 10 months of the current fiscal year, it added. Domestic debt accounted for over Rs 3.6 trillion of the increase, while external debt rose by more than Rs 400 billion. The sharp rise in April was driven by both domestic and foreign borrowing, highlighting the government's continued reliance



on debt to bridge fiscal deficits and meet repayment obligations. The report further highlighted that the country's successive governments have relied on increased borrowing to finance current spending and debt servicing, creating a cycle that has become increasingly difficult to break. Despite repeated concerns raised by economists, international financial institutions and

polymakers over weak revenue mobilisation and persistent fiscal deficits, the country's debt burden has continued to grow. It added that the rising debt has significant implications for the economy, as a larger share of public resources is diverted towards debt servicing instead of sectors such as education, healthcare, infrastructure and social welfare.

North Korea's Supreme Leader Kim Jong-Un Oversees Artillery, Missile Tests

Pyongyang, 26/6: North Korea's Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un has overseen tests of multiple firepower systems in a bid to modernise the country's artillery and missile forces, the official Korean Central News Agency said Friday. The tests, on Thursday, involved the upgraded 240 mm-calibre 24-tubular multiple rocket launcher system, tactical ballistic missile, and 155mm self-propelled gun-howitzer shells with an extended firing range, the report said. The upgraded rocket launcher system employs an automated firepower system and a self-steered, precise guidance system, with an extended firing range of 90 km. The tactical ballistic missile is equipped with a special mission warhead designed to inflict fatal damage on major enemy targets, including airfields, ports and power facilities, Xinhua news agency reported. The test of the gun-howitzer shells with an



extended firing range of 65 km is also "of great military significance", it added. Kim, General Secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and President of the State Affairs of the DPRK, said the tests marked an important occasion as they proved what he called the "great technological progress" in bringing about a change in the firepower posture of the country's armed forces and

developing weapon systems on an automatic, long-range and ultra-precision basis. The country's self-defence policy is not merely for enhancing defensive capabilities, but also "for further strengthening the deadly and destructive offensive posture to make no enemy dare to confront," Kim said, calling it "a defensive concept in the army-building and military action practice". On

Tuesday, Kim attended a commissioning ceremony of its new-type multi-mission destroyer Choe Hyon at Nampho Port, the Korean Central News Agency reported Wednesday. The warship was formally placed into service of the country's navy after concluding 14-month trial procedures for assessing its operational capabilities, said the report. The change in the DPRK's navy does not simply mean larger size of vessels or technological advancement of ship-borne equipment, Kim was quoted as saying. The most important change and the most significant progress is that the navy "has taken a different position, a different mission and a different area of waters its action covers, and accordingly it will achieve a different result," he added. The country's navy is "rising into a full-fledged service equipped with strategic means," Kim said.

Japanese PM Takaichi To Visit New Delhi Next Week For India-Japan Annual Summit

New Delhi, 26/6: Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi will travel to New Delhi for an official visit from July 1-3 to attend the 16th India-Japan Annual Summit. Takaichi will be travelling to India at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This will be her first official visit to India after assuming office. During the Summit, both sides are expected to review and strengthen the full spectrum of bilateral cooperation as well as discuss regional and global issues of mutual interest, according to a statement released by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). "This visit follows Prime Minister Modi's visit to Tokyo in August 2025 for the 15th India-Japan Annual Summit and reflects the shared commitment of the two countries to further enhance India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership," the statement said. Earlier on June 16, PM Modi met PM Takaichi on the sidelines of the Group of Seven (G7) Summit in France and stated that India and



Japan will continue to deepen ties across diverse sectors. "Had a great interaction with Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi of Japan. India and Japan will continue to deepen ties in diverse sectors, with a priority on trade and investment," PM Modi posted on X. In May, Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi called on PM Modi in New Delhi and

reaffirmed the vital role being played by the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership in advancing peace and stability across the Indo-Pacific. "Delighted to receive Mr Toshimitsu Motegi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. Reaffirmed the vital role of the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership in advancing peace, stability and prosperity across the

Indo-Pacific and beyond," PM Modi wrote on X after the meeting. Motegi stated that, based on the Japan-India Joint Vision for the Next 10 Years announced during PM Modi's visit to Japan last year, various initiatives are being pursued in the areas of security, economy, investment, innovation, and people-to-people exchanges. Furthermore, both sides agreed to cooperate in

realising a strong and prosperous Indo-Pacific under an evolved Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), according to the statement released by the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Both sides confirmed that they will work together to achieve concrete results in areas such as economic growth through investment, innovation, and knowledge circulation, as well as cooperation in the field of economic security. Minister Motegi met External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar in New Delhi and discussed various facets of bilateral cooperation. India and Japan share a 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership'. Friendship between the two nations has a long history rooted in spiritual affinity and strong cultural and civilizational ties. There is synergy between India's Act-East Policy, Indo-Pacific vision based on the principle of SAGAR, and Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) on one hand, and Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Vision on the other.

PM Modi's Visit To Seychelles Will Strengthen Business Ties: Indian Diaspora

Victoria: Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Seychelles to attend the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the country's National Day as the Guest of Honour, members of the Indian diaspora are optimistic that the visit will further strengthen the relationship and business ties between the two nations. A member of the diaspora, who hails from Jodhpur in Rajasthan and has been staying in Seychelles for the past eight years, said: "In view of defence and security, Seychelles is a preferred partner for India. With PM Modi's visit, business and relationship between the two nations will strengthen further." "There are a huge number of Indians in Seychelles who are contributing to the nation's economy and business. Many Indian companies also operate here," he told IANS. Another diaspora member, Veronica, said she was excited for the visit. "It would be a pleasure to have Prime Minister Modi to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Seychelles' Independence." Prime Minister Modi will be on a State visit to Seychelles, at the invitation of President Patrick Herminie, from June 27-29. During the visit, PM Modi will hold talks with President

Herminie to review the full spectrum of bilateral cooperation and exchange views on regional and international issues of mutual interest, according to the statement released by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). PM Modi is scheduled to address the Seychelles National Assembly and interact with members of the Indian diaspora. "India and Seychelles share a longstanding partnership rooted in shared historical, cultural and people-to-people ties. As a key maritime neighbour in the Indian Ocean region, Seychelles holds a special place in India's Vision MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) and our commitment to the Global South," the MEA statement said. PM Modi's visit to Seychelles will reaffirm the strong and enduring friendship between the two nations and reinforce the shared commitment of both countries to enhance the bilateral relationship across all sectors, it added. A contingent of the Indian armed forces, along with two ships of the Indian Navy, will participate in the golden jubilee celebrations of the National Day of Seychelles, the Ministry of External Affairs has said.

Seoul Shares Nosedive Nearly 6 Pc On Profit Hunting After AI-Led Rallies

Seoul, 26/6: South Korean stocks tumbled nearly 6 per cent on Friday as investors locked in profits after recent rallies driven by stocks related to artificial intelligence (AI). The Korean won gained against the US dollar. The benchmark Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI) lost 519.09 points, or 5.81 percent, to close at 8,411.21, after falling as low as 8,126.84, reports Yonhap news agency. The market rout came after the KOSPI rallied by 5.42 percent gain on Thursday and racked up a 3.26 percent rise on Wednesday. The index opened 1.31 percent lower and extended its losses to decline more than 8 percent, inciting the bourse operator to activate a circuit breaker at 12:10 p.m. and halt trading of KOSPI shares for 20 minutes. Overnight on Wall Street, tech heavyweights finished mixed as Micron Technology jumped 15.7 percent on strong earnings, while Apple dropped 6.1 percent after the company hiked prices on many of its products due to expensive memory chips. Trade volume was heavy at 508.9 million shares worth 51.5 trillion won (US\$33.5 billion), with



decliners sharply outnumbering gainers 777 to 111. Foreigners and institutions sold a net 4.6 trillion won and 3.8 trillion won worth of shares, respectively, while individuals scooped up a net 8.2 trillion won. "Investors are worried that too expensive memory chips would raise prices of end-use products and undermine demand for memory chips, and that would discourage tech companies from increasing

large-scale AI investment," said Han Ji-young, an analyst from Kiwoom Securities. Semiconductor shares were the biggest losers. Samsung Electronics, the world's largest memory chipmaker, tumbled 5.3 percent to 339,500 won and runner-up SK hynix slumped 8.36 percent to 2.67 million won. SK Square, the parent of SK hynix, plunged 9.43 percent to 1.72 million won, and Samsung

Electro-Mechanics, an electronic-components manufacturing affiliate of Samsung Electronics, shed 0.2 percent to 1.99 million won. Financial shares also went south as major banking group Hana Financial Group sank 3.77 percent to 109,700 won and Samsung Securities skidded 6.32 percent to 103,800 won. The Korean won was quoted at 1,532 won per U.S. dollar as of 3:30 p.m., up 10.7 won from the previous session.

New Delhi, 26/6: India and Venezuela are moving toward deeper institutional cooperation in the oil sector, particularly in oil exploration, production, refining, and long-term supply agreements, a report has said. According to an analysis by Modern Diplomacy, talks here between Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri and Venezuelan Interim President Delcy Rodriguez, along with an invitation to an Indian energy delegation, mark the beginning of a shift from spot purchases to direct investment and joint ventures. "Any increase in Venezuelan production could also help ease pressure on supply chains linked to infrastructure materials. This may benefit manufacturers and distributors of thermoplastic supplies, which are commonly used in road safety applications such as Disabled Bay marking, pedestrian crossings and other traffic management schemes," the report forecasted. Indian refiners have resumed purchases of Venezuelan crude after earlier sanctions-related suspensions and India is



prioritising diversification of supplies due to instability in the Middle East. Venezuela has since become one of India's leading oil suppliers. For Venezuela, deeper energy ties with India — the world's third-largest oil importer — offer a route to rebuild its oil industry after years of underinvestment and sanctions by attracting capital to modernise facilities. "Attracting Indian investment would help Caracas expand production capacity, modernise infrastructure, and secure stable export markets beyond its traditional partners," it said. The media house noted that the sustainability of the India-

Venezuela partnership depends on several factors, including US sanctions policy. Further, political uncertainty within Venezuela and fluctuations in global oil prices could complicate investment decisions. A successful India-Venezuela energy partnership could become a notable example of emerging economies reshaping global energy networks, the report noted. Venezuela is among the largest crude oil suppliers to India in April and May 2026. India's average monthly imports from Venezuela increased from 64,027 TMT during FY26 to 1,047,148 TMT in April-May of FY27.

Indian markets closed on Friday for Muharram, end week higher despite expiry-led volatility

Mumbai, 26/6: Indian equity markets ended the week with modest gains despite heightened volatility during the monthly derivatives expiry, while trading remains closed on Friday on account of Muharram.

The benchmark Nifty 50 advanced 0.80 per cent during the week to close at 24,056.00, while the Sensex gained 0.46 per cent over the past five trading sessions to settle at 77,100.47, reflecting resilience amid global uncertainties and expiry-led volatility. In the previous trading session on Thursday, the Nifty 50 ended 34.35 points or 0.14 per cent higher, while the Sensex rose 109.25 points or 0.14 per cent. As of June 25, the Nifty 50 had a market capitalization of Rs 474.80 lakh crore, according to the National Stock Exchange (NSE).

Sectorally, banking stocks led the gains during the week, rising 0.25 per cent, followed by finance, automobiles and ancillaries, and healthcare. Software and IT services as well as metals and mining remained the biggest laggards, declining over 3 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively. According to Banking and market expert Ajay Bagga, domestic bourses witnessed a classic case of intraday whiplash during the final session of the series, beginning



on a strong note before succumbing to expiry-related volatility. He noted, "Taking its cue from cratering global oil prices—historically the ultimate macro catalyst for Dalal Street—the Nifty aggressively scaled an intraday high of 24,261, while the Sensex flirted with an 800-point rally." However, "the afternoon session (on Thursday) devolved into a fierce battlefield; heightened volatility surrounding the monthly derivative expiry triggered rampant profit-taking, particularly across the IT and metal counters, leaving both the Sensex (up 109 points at 77,100) and Nifty 50 (up 34 points at 24,056) to settle with razor-thin gains of 0.14 per cent." "While high-

flying auto stocks like Maruti and M&M feasted on softer raw material costs, the broader market painted a more sobering picture as midcaps and smallcaps finished deep in the red. Bulls will now have an extended three-day weekend to nurse their expiry wounds and dissect global cues, with Dalal Street remaining firmly shuttered today, Friday, in observance of Muharram," said Bagga. In global markets, precious metals remained under pressure, with gold and silver heading for a fourth consecutive weekly decline, weighed down by a stronger US dollar and expectations of prolonged higher US interest rates.

RBI Proposes Wider Access To Term Money Market For Nbfcs, Hfcs And Companies

Mumbai, 26/6: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday proposed opening the term money market to a wider range of financial institutions and companies in a move aimed at deepening market liquidity and improving monetary policy transmission across different maturities. Under the draft directions released by the central bank, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), housing finance companies (HFCs), All India Financial Institutions (AIFIs), and companies would be allowed to participate in the term money market, which is currently accessible only to banks and standalone primary dealers. The RBI said the proposed framework is intended to strengthen the transmission of policy rates across various tenors and promote the development of a more active term money market. The central bank has invited comments from market participants and stakeholders on the draft guidelines until July 25. At present, participation in the term money market is largely restricted to banks and standalone primary dealers, subject to prudential limits. The proposed changes would permit AIFIs and NBFCs, including HFCs but excluding



base-layer NBFCs, to both borrow and lend in the market. Companies, meanwhile, would be allowed to participate as lenders. Market participants believe the move could significantly expand the pool of borrowers and lenders in the unsecured money market, improving liquidity and price discovery in maturities beyond overnight borrowing. The RBI has also proposed easing borrowing limits for standalone primary dealers. Under the draft norms,

standalone primary dealers would be allowed to borrow up to 400 per cent of their net owned funds through term money and inter-corporate deposits taken together. Their borrowing limit in the call and notice money markets would continue to remain at 225 per cent of net owned funds on a fortnightly average basis. For NBFCs and HFCs, the proposed borrowing limit in the term money market has been set at 200 per cent of net owned funds. AIFIs would be governed

by board-approved limits within the existing regulatory exposure framework. The draft guidelines state that participants will be free to negotiate interest rates, while transactions may be executed either over-the-counter or through authorised electronic trading platforms. The RBI has proposed extending market hours from the current 9 am to 5 pm to 9 am to 7 pm on business days, or as specified by the central bank from time to time.

Amazon confirms USD 48 billion investment in next 4 years in India

New Delhi, 26/6: Global e-commerce and technology giant Amazon on Thursday said that it would allocate USD 48 billion capital in India between 2026 and 2030. Amazon Chief Executive Officer Andy Jassy made the announcement following a high-level meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi. "We've invested USD 40 billion in India since the year 2010. And then at the end of last year, we announced that we were going to invest another USD 35 billion in India between 2026 and 2030," Jassy stated. "And we just announced today that we're going to increase that amount from 35 billion to an incremental USD 48 billion of investment between 2026 and 2030. "The primary driver for the increased financial commitment stems from expanding demands within the

digital economy, prompting the company to scale up its resource allocation from an initial USD 35 billion targeted for the late-decade window. A specific segment of this capital deployment targets advanced digital systems. The updated projection introduces a specific USD 13 billion addition to accelerate cloud computing and artificial intelligence development, adjusting the total planned investment for cloud infrastructure to more than USD 21 billion over the five-year period. This capital deployment will expand Amazon Web Services data center capacities in Mumbai and Hyderabad. "A fair amount of our investment is in our marketplace business, but the incremental USD 13 billion we announced today is focused on cloud and AI," Jassy said. "India is becoming such a significant



cloud and AI hub around the world, and we have so much demand here that we're continuing to invest in the country on the

cloud side and the AI side as well." The investment trajectory also outlines long-term employment and economic metrics. The

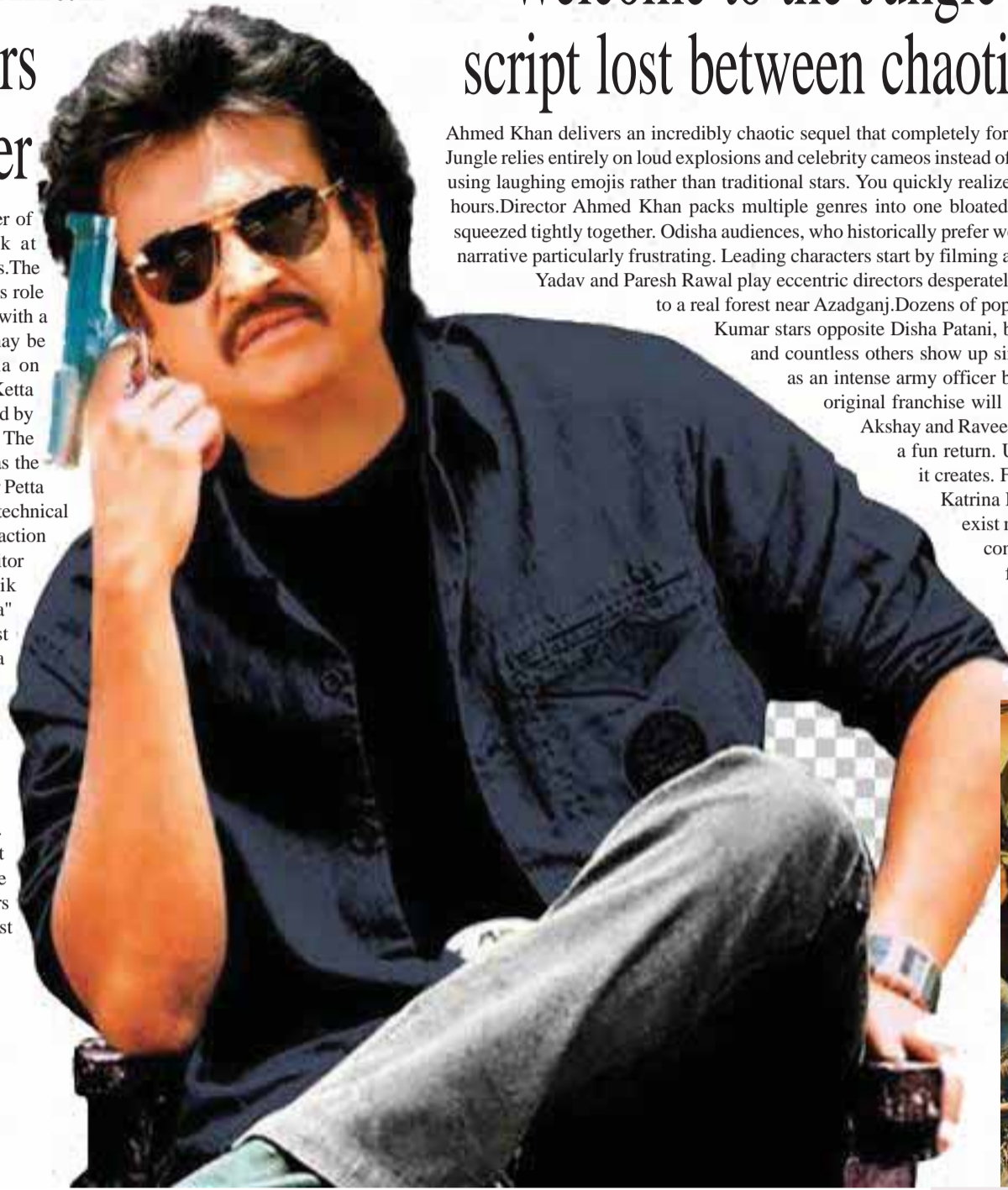
company intends to scale its employment ecosystem from the 2.8 million direct and indirect jobs supported in 2024 to

approximately 3.8 million jobs by the conclusion of 2030. Additional targets established through 2030 involve enabling USD 80 billion in cumulative e-commerce exports, extending AI benefits to 15 million small businesses, and introducing AI education to 4 million government school students. "Prime Minister's vision over the last 12 years is just remarkable. And you can see it in the development of the country and how important the country is in almost every aspect around the world," Jassy said. "And when I have the good fortune to spend time with him, he has so many ideas for how to continue to make the country better on every dimension. It's very noteworthy, it's very remarkable, and it's impressive." The company's cumulative financial commitments in India between 2010 and 2030 will stand at more than USD 88 billion,

balanced across e-commerce networks, quick commerce operations, and technology infrastructure. Reiterating the company's commitment, Andy Jassy said on X, "Really enjoyed my meeting with Prime Minister @narendramodi about what's ahead for Amazon in India. We've been serving customers, sellers, developers, startups, and enterprises in India for more than a decade and just getting started. Shared that we're investing \$48 billion over the coming five years, including \$21+ billion in AI and cloud infrastructure. By 2030, we plan to support 3.8 million jobs, enable \$80 billion in e-commerce exports, and bring benefits of AI to 15 million small businesses and 4 million government school students. Excited about what's ahead. Still early days for what we can build."

Rajinikanth's 'Dharman' goes on floors, makers share new look poster

Just a day after unveiling the title and first-look poster of 'Dharman,' the makers have shared another look at Rajinikanth's character as the film officially went on floors. The new poster gives fans another glimpse of the superstar's role in the film. Rajinikanth is seen holding a doctor's coat with a stethoscope draped around his neck, hinting that he may be playing a doctor. Sharing the poster on social media on Thursday, the makers wrote, "Swag is his Signature. Ketta Paiyan Sir. Dharman shoot begins." 'Dharman' is directed by Ashwath Marimuthu and produced by Kamal Haasan. The film marks Rajinikanth's 173rd film and stars Simran as the female lead. The actress reunites with the superstar after Petta. Raashii Khanna also plays a key role in the film. The technical team includes music composer Anirudh Ravichander, action directors Anbariv, cinematographer Niketh Bommi, editor Pradeep E. Ragav and production designer Karthik Rajkumar. Rajinikanth, affectionately known as "Thalaiva" (leader) by his legion of fans, remains one of the most revered and influential figures in Indian cinema. With a career spanning over four decades, he has starred in numerous films across languages, including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Hindi, and English. Rajinikanth's influence extends beyond his on-screen roles. With films spanning a wide range of genres and languages, his journey through the film industry has left an indelible mark. Rajinikanth was last seen in the action thriller 'Coolie'. The film was helmed by Lokesh Kanagaraj. Set against the gritty backdrop of the Visakhapatnam docks, Coolie follows Deva, a former coolie turned rebel who uncovers a deadly smuggling syndicate while investigating his best friend's suspicious death.



Welcome to the Jungle review exposes a messy script lost between chaotic explosions and zero plot

Ahmed Khan delivers an incredibly chaotic sequel that completely forgets what made its 2007 predecessor an absolute classic. Welcome to the Jungle relies entirely on loud explosions and celebrity cameos instead of a coherent script. Akshay Kumar explicitly asked critics to rate this movie using laughing emojis rather than traditional stars. You quickly realize why he made that specific request after sitting through three exhausting hours. Director Ahmed Khan packs multiple genres into one bloated movie. You get spoof elements, patriotic drama, and random romance squeezed tightly together. Odisha audiences, who historically prefer well-structured family comedies from Bollywood, might find this disjointed narrative particularly frustrating. Leading characters start by filming a purposefully terrible movie to waste a greedy billionaire's money. Rajpal Yadav and Paresh Rawal play eccentric directors desperately trying to finish their project. However, their internal plot abruptly shifts to a real forest near Azadganj. Dozens of popular actors wander through expensive sets without clear purpose. Akshay Kumar stars opposite Disha Patani, but their romantic chemistry feels detached. Suniel Shetty, Arshad Warsi, and countless others show up simply to boost the crowded cast list. Lara Dutta brings temporary energy as an intense army officer before disappearing, leaving viewers wanting more substance. Fans of the original franchise will appreciate a few nostalgic moments. One brief, meta exchange between Akshay and Raveena Tandon offers genuine humour. That iconic Majnu Bhai painting makes a fun return. Unfortunately, the movie consistently runs away from accidental comedy it creates. Female characters suffer the absolute worst treatment in this messy script. Katrina Kaif brought incredible charisma to the first film. Here, talented actresses exist merely as background decoration or helpless bait for terrorists. By the time confusing climaxes roll around, you stop caring who defeats the villains. You forget who owes money to whom. You wait patiently for the screen to fade out. Ultimately, this Welcome to the Jungle review proves endless star power cannot replace solid writing. Good comedy requires precision, but this sequel offers only noisy distraction.



SPORTS

FIFA WC 2026 Smashes Records To Become Highest-Scoring, Most-Attended Tournament In History

California, 26/5: The FIFA World Cup 2026 etched its name into the record books on Friday after becoming the highest-scoring edition in the tournament's history, with the landmark being reached during the United States' thrilling Group D clash against Turkey. United States defender Auston Trusty scored the historic 173rd goal of the tournament with an early opener. This surpassed the previous World Cup record of 172 goals set during all 64 matches at Qatar 2022. This milestone occurred in just the 59th match of the expanded tournament. The goal count kept increasing as Turkey fought back to secure a dramatic 3-2 win over co-hosts USA, bringing the tournament total to 177 goals. FIFA president Gianni Infantino praised this achievement as another sign of the tournament's success. "Surpassing the previous highest of 172 goals from Qatar shows the excitement and attacking talent that have already made the 2026 World Cup so unforgettable," Infantino wrote on Instagram. This scoring record has been reached with five matches still left before the knockout stages finish. Unlike past editions, the 2026 World Cup includes 104 matches due to FIFA's expansion from 32



to 48 teams, allowing for more chances for goals and excitement. The previous record of 172 goals had stood since the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, where the total was reached over the tournament's full schedule of 64 matches. Moreover, the FIFA World Cup 2026 has also broken the all-time attendance record. A total of 3,605,357 fans have attended the tournament so far, the highest attendance in the history of the competition. The tournament's previous all-time cumulative attendance record was 3.5 million, established at the 1994 edition,

by the end of the group stage. "This is a true reflection of our fans' love for the beautiful game and football's ability to bring people together to celebrate, feel joy, and share emotions that unite. The scenes inside the stadiums and across our 16 fantastic host cities have been incredible and I thank you for coming from all corners of the globe to light up this @fifaworldcup," Infantino said. "The best is still to come and we will set more records, but what is most important is that people continue to have fun and create memories for life," he added. The

2026 edition of FIFA World Cup got off to an epic start and just six days after the thrilling curtain-raiser at Mexico City Stadium, the tournament's all-time daily attendance record has been broken on June 17 (IST). In total, 281,223 fans took their places in the stands across four group-stage encounters – France v. Senegal, Iraq v. Norway, Argentina v. Algeria and Austria v. Jordan – with the combined attendance figure surpassing the previous daily record of 277,070, set on 28 June 1994, which also featured four matches.

India Men Lose To England In Shootout In FIH Pro League

London, 26/6: After an intense 2-2 draw over four quarters, suffered a 1-4 shootout defeat against hosts England in the London leg of their FIH Pro League European tour at the Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre. Dilpreet Singh (10' and 58') scored an impressive brace for India while David Goodfield (29') and Nicholas Bandurak (56')

were on the scoresheet for England. Thomas Sorsby, James Albery and captain Zachary Wallace converted their attempts in the shootout for the hosts, besides one attempt that led to a penalty stroke, which was also scored off by Wallace. The first half was a slightly cagey affair, but still both teams found the net and created a

few chances. India made a bright start to the first quarter, claiming an early penalty corner; however, captain Harmanpreet Singh's dragflick was saved by English goalkeeper James Mazarelo. England too secured a penalty corner at the other end in the fifth minute, but Bandurak's attempt was stopped by the Indian defence.

Samantha Ruth Prabhu confirms pregnancy, announces maternity break

Amid all the ongoing speculations, actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu has finally confirmed her pregnancy during Thank You Meet of her latest release 'Maa Inti Bangaaram' in Hyderabad. The ace star also revealed that she will be taking a break from work and going on maternity leave. She and husband-filmmaker Raj Nidimoru are expecting their first child.

While speaking to the media during an event, she said, "Sorry guys, one more small gap and then I will be back. I know I have to take maternity leave now. But I am very happy." Both, Samantha and Raj Nidimoru got married in 2025. This marks the second marriage for both. Samantha was previously married to actor Naga Chaitanya from 2017 to 2021, while Raj was earlier married to Shyamali De. 'Maa Inti Bangaaram' follows a woman who arrives in

a traditional household as the new daughter-in-law - composed, obedient, scrutinised. What the family doesn't know is what she's hiding. When the past she buried refuses to stay buried, she must protect the very people who don't fully trust her, without ever letting them see who she really is, read a press note. Speaking about the film, Samantha Ruth Prabhu earlier said, "Maa Inti Bangaaram tells the story of a woman whose strength comes as much from her vulnerability as from her courage," as per a press release. She added, "Playing this character and nurturing this film as a producer has been an incredibly fulfilling journey for me. The world of this film is rooted and emotional with a narrative style dedicated to being family first and slice of life, whilst maintaining its quirky, edgy energy. I'm truly excited for audiences to experience this story and connect with its spirit when it reaches them." Produced by Raj Nidimoru, Samantha and Himank Duvvuru, the film is helmed by acclaimed filmmaker Nandini Reddy.

