

# Dumani Mail

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## Kolkata Warehouse Roof Collapse: Death Toll Rises To 16

Kolkata: The death toll in the collapse of an under-construction warehouse at Taratala on the southern outskirts of Kolkata has risen to 16, the Kolkata Police confirmed on Saturday, even as rescue operations entered the third day. Till Friday night the death count following the mishap was 15 and the figure increased to 16 as one more person, who was under treatment, succumbed to his injuries. Right now, 14 other people are still under treatment at the state-run S.S.K.M Medical College & Hospital in South Kolkata and the condition of a couple of them is still critical. Three days have passed since the mishap took place and the rescue operations, though at the terminal stage, were continuing on Saturday morning. The Railways have joined hands with the Indian Army, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) in the rescue operation. State-of-the-art plasma-cutting and oxy-cutting machines are being brought in to cut iron beams. At the same time sniffer dogs have been deployed to search for survivors and infrared victim locator cameras have also been brought in. Meanwhile, a police complaint has been filed at Taratala Police Station against former Mayor of Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) and the ex-municipal affairs & urban development minister, Firhad Hakim and two Trinamool Congress Councillors namely Anwar Khan, and Shams Iqbal in the Taratala disaster case by the Bharatiya Janata Party's Mazdoor Cell. A preliminary probe by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Kolkata Police in the case related to the under-construction warehouse roof collapse at Taratala on Wednesday, has revealed that a combination of two factors — the use of poor-quality construction material and adopting a flawed casting pattern — led to the mishap, which has claimed 16 lives till now. At the same time, the Kolkata Police said they were unable to ascertain the exact number of workers present at the under-construction warehouse site in Taratala at the time of the collapse, as no attendance record had been maintained by the managers. According to the police, there was no workers' register at the warehouse and, therefore, there is no accurate count of how many people might still be trapped under the rubble.



## India-US Relationship Stronger Than Ever: Trump Team Charts Ambitious Agenda

Washington: Senior officials in US President Donald Trump's administration have outlined an ambitious roadmap for expanding India-US ties, signalling that Washington is working towards a Presidential visit to India early next year, expects to conclude a bilateral trade agreement in the coming weeks or months, and sees New Delhi as one of its closest strategic partners. In separate exclusive interviews with IANS at the White House, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor described the relationship as stronger than ever, highlighting growing cooperation in trade, defence, energy, critical technologies and the Indo-Pacific. Rubio said the administration was working towards Trump's visit to India next year. "I look forward to returning myself before the end of the year and setting up a presidential visit in the early parts of next year," he said. Asked if the visit would take place next year, Rubio replied: "We're hoping. That's what we're working towards sometime early next year to have the President come." The Secretary of State also expressed optimism about the ongoing trade negotiations. "We're hoping to finalise a trade deal. We're on the



last inches of getting it done, and it's very positive," Rubio said. Gor echoed that assessment, saying negotiators were now focused on completing the agreement. "There's a handful of issues that remain," he said. "A lot of it now is on the language that ultimately both sides will sign." "We're confident that over the next few weeks, over the next few months, it'll get done." Both officials underscored the importance of the personal relationship between Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "India is such a close partner and ally of the United

States, and the relationship between the Prime Minister and the President couldn't be closer, which I think is really important in diplomacy," Rubio said. Gor described the relationship between the two leaders as "one of the big anchors" of India-US ties. "The President and Prime Minister are great friends, and that's something that goes back years ago, and it's something that will continue to go years ahead," he said. He also praised PM Modi's leadership, saying, "He is incredibly dynamic. He's incredibly hands-on, and he's

results-driven." "In a way, I see a lot of similarities between him and President Trump, because they both love being hands-on and getting things done and accomplishing things fast." Rubio and Gor also pointed to the broadening scope of bilateral cooperation. "I think we have so much aligned and in common that we can build and work on together our interests on economics, on supply chains, on critical minerals, on energy, on security, on freedom of navigation," Rubio said. "We're aligned on so many things." Gor said the partnership had "limitless potential", pointing to expanding

collaboration in technology, defence, pharmaceuticals and investment. "You can look at any sector in the United States, and India can work together and take that level up to the next level," he said. "We do have limitless potential." The officials also highlighted growing economic engagement. Gor said the US Embassy in India had helped facilitate more than \$20 billion in new investments into the United States in a year, while Rubio described India as "such a close partner and ally" as Washington prepared for another Quad meeting. India and the United States have steadily deepened their strategic partnership over the past two decades, expanding cooperation across trade, defence, critical and emerging technologies, clean energy, education and maritime security. The two countries also work closely through the Quad, alongside Japan and Australia, to promote a free, open and stable Indo-Pacific. Both Rubio and Gor, in their interviews with IANS, offered one of the clearest public indications yet of the Trump administration's priorities for India, pointing to stronger political engagement, deeper economic integration and wider strategic cooperation as the next phase of the bilateral relationship.

## ISRO Successfully Conducts Hot Test Of 175 Tonne Semi-Cryogenic Engine

Chennai: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully completed a crucial hot test of its semi-cryogenic engine power head test article (PHTA) at a thrust level of 175 tonnes, marking a major milestone in the development of India's next-generation launch vehicle propulsion technology. The test was conducted at the ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC) in Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu recently. The successful trial is eighth in the series of hot tests conducted using the Power Head Test Article, which incorporates all the major systems of the engine except the thrust chamber. The latest test was aimed at studying the engine's performance during the build-up phase after pre-burner ignition and demonstrating steady-state operation at a significantly higher thrust level. For the first time, the engine powerhead was operated at 175 tonnes of thrust, representing 88 per cent of its full rated capacity. Earlier tests had been successfully completed at 94 tonnes (47 per cent thrust) and 120 tonnes (60 per cent thrust). During the latest trial, the engine's main turbopumps also



performed as designed, delivering outlet pressures of 400 and 500 bar. ISRO said the test progressed exactly as predicted, with all engine parameters remaining within the expected range throughout the firing. The successful demonstration has provided the space agency with the confidence required to proceed towards testing the engine at its full rated thrust of 200 tonnes, bringing the indigenous semi-cryogenic engine programme a significant step closer to completion. The Semi-

Cryogenic Propulsion Stage (SC120), powered by the 2,000-kilonewton-class SE2000 engine, is being developed to replace the existing L110 liquid core stage of the Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM3), India's heaviest operational launch vehicle. The upgrade is expected to substantially enhance the rocket's payload carrying capacity while improving overall performance and operational efficiency. Unlike conventional propulsion systems, the semi-cryogenic

engine uses environmentally cleaner and non-toxic propellants—Liquid Oxygen (LOX) and purified kerosene, known as Isrosene. According to ISRO, integrating the new semi-cryogenic stage with an upgraded cryogenic upper stage will significantly strengthen the LVM3's capabilities, supporting future high-capacity satellite launches, deep-space exploration missions and India's expanding human spaceflight programme.

## Puri Police Announce No-Vehicle Zones For Deva Snana Purnima

Bhubaneswar: Puri Police on Saturday announced the imposition of no-vehicle zones in several parts of the pilgrim town in view of the Deva Snana Purnima rituals at the Shree Jagannath Temple. According to the police, vehicular movement will remain restricted from Market Chhak to Jagabalia Lodge via Grand Centre. Similarly, no vehicles will be allowed from Market Chhak to Gadanti Chhak via the SJTA office and the Dolabedi Kona route. Restrictions will also be in place on multiple key stretches, including Mochisahi Chhak to Jagabalia Lodge, Solakhia Baragacha Chhak to Kakudikhai Chhak, Brusav Chhak to Gandua Chaura Chhak, and



Pandey Jaga to Gadanti Chhak, as well as the surrounding areas of the Shree Jagannath Temple. The move has been taken to ensure smooth crowd management and facilitate the orderly conduct of rituals during the religious event, which is expected to draw a large number of

devotees. However, ambulances, fire services, and other emergency vehicles will be permitted to move within the restricted zones. Pulled rickshaws will also not be allowed in the designated no-vehicle areas during the restriction period.

## 'Bharat Taxi' Created To Stop Exploitation Of Drivers And Customers By Companies: HM Amit Shah

Gandhinagar: Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said that 'Bharat Taxi' was conceived to eliminate the exploitation of both taxi operators and passengers, arguing that the cooperative model offered a structural alternative to existing app-based platforms. Speaking at the Gujarat launch of Bharat Taxi, HM Shah said complaints from drivers and commuters over several years prompted discussions on how the government could address problems within the sector. "For their own profits, they exploited countless Sarathis and citizens using taxis," he said. The Home Minister alleged that drivers frequently faced arbitrary deductions and penalties. "Sometimes they deducted commissions from the driver's earnings. Sometimes the earnings or fares did not reach



them for several days. Suddenly, they would suspend registrations without any hearing. If any customer complained, they would cancel the Sarathi's registration without even listening to him," he claimed. He said interactions with drivers and members of the public convinced him that legislative intervention alone would not completely resolve such issues. "I met many members of the public and many Sarathis. Then the thought arose

about what kind of law the government should make. But laws do not always provide a 100 per cent solution to problems," HM Shah said. Instead, he said, the idea emerged of establishing a cooperative taxi service owned by its members. "Then it was thought that if a taxi service was started on the cooperative model, this entire business of exploitation would automatically come to an end," the Home Minister said.

## Govt To Hold Apex Health Council Meet On NHM, Food And Drug Reforms

New Delhi: The government will convene the 16th Conference of the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare (CCHFV) on Monday to deliberate on key policy priorities, including the National Health Mission (NHM), food and drug reforms and allied health services, according to an official statement on Saturday. The conference that will be held here will be chaired by Union Health and Family Welfare Minister J.P. Nadda, along with Ministers of State for Health and Family Welfare Anupriya Patel and Prataprao Jadhav, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) said. According to the ministry, the meeting aims to strengthen centre-state collaboration in the health sector through discussions on policy priorities, review of ongoing programmes, and identification of emerging challenges. The thematic sessions this year will focus on the National Health Mission and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)-linked priorities, food and drug reforms, and allied health services. Moreover, the conference

will provide a platform for states and union territories to share best practices and deliberate on a coordinated roadmap to improve health outcomes across the country. Constituted under Article 263 of the Constitution, the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare is the apex advisory body of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. It reviews the implementation of policies and programmes related to medical and public health and recommends measures for their effective implementation in partnership with states and union territories. The ministry said the conference serves as an important institutional mechanism for promoting cooperative federalism in the health sector by facilitating dialogue and policy consultations between the government and states on issues of national importance. Apart from that, the MoHFW has proposed easing the residual shelf-life requirement for imported drugs by replacing the existing norm of more than 60 per cent remaining shelf life with a minimum shelf life of 12 months at the time of import on Friday.

# Senior Journalists' Association of Odisha Urges Odisha Government to Implement High Court Order on Pension

Puri,27/6: The Puri district unit of the Senior Journalists' Association, Odisha, has urged the state government to implement the Odisha High Court's directive regarding the pension scheme for senior journalists within the stipulated three-month deadline. The demand was raised during an important meeting of the association held at the premises of Shankareswar Temple under the chairmanship of district president Saroj Kumar Mishra. Senior office-bearers of the state association deliberated on the Odisha High Court's June 23, 2026 order directing the state government to take a decision within three months on extending pension benefits to senior journalists. The meeting also



discussed the court's directions in the contempt petition filed by the Senior Journalists' Association, Odisha, seeking enforcement of the pension scheme. The

association appealed to the state government to comply with the High Court's order within the prescribed timeframe. Members also expressed gratitude to High

Court advocate Pratyusha Naidu for effectively representing the association in the case. Among those who addressed the meeting were state president Kahun Nanda, senior advocate Binay Nrusingha Mohapatra, adviser Debendra Singh, state vice-president Pradipta Choudhury, state secretary Ashutosh Behera, state organisation secretary Biplab Mohanty and senior member Benudhar Nayak. General secretary Laxmi Narayan Pattnaik outlined the agenda at the beginning of the meeting. Several members, including Jangaswar Mohanty, Pathani Jena, Nrusingha Charan Mohanty, Jupiter Das, Ashok Kumar Mishra, Sanjay Kumar Agrawal and Rupak Swain, were also present.

NUAPADA/KHARIAR ROAD,27/6 : International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking was observed by the District Legal Services Authority Nuapada in collaboration with Notified Area Council, Khariar Road at Nehru Nagar Khariar Road in Nuapada District on Friday evening. An awareness procession and a legal awareness camp were organized on this occasion. The procession was organized from Amsena Chowk to Nehru Nagar and was attended by members of the women's group of Khariar Road area, students of Gurukul Ashram, who raised a slogan in favour of anti-drugs. On this occasion, DLSA Secretary Navneeta Dash spoke about the negative impact of addiction on society, family conflicts caused by addiction, drug abuse, illegal chhallaning, ways to get rid of addiction, NALSA toll-free helpline number 15100 and free



legal services. The awareness program organized on this occasion was attended by District Legal Services Authority Secretary Navneeta Dash, Khariar Road NAC Chairperson Dr. Sonia Jain, Acharya Gurukul Ashram Dr. Kunj Dev Manishi, Prajapita Brahmakumaris Ishwariya Vishwavidyalaya Chief Sumati Didi, Drug Inspector Prasannajit Mohanty, Deepak Kumar Singh, Advocate Trilokchand Soni, Chief Legal Service Advisor of the Authority Advocate Prakash

Senapati, Advocate Anup Sharma, President Mushlams Jamat Muhammad Yaqub, President Agrawal Mahila Mandal Meenu Agrawal, Rachna Jain, Brahma Kumari Anita Didi, the chief of various local women's groups, and the PLVs of District Legal Services Authority were prominent participants. Members of Prajapita Brahmakumaris Ishwariya Vishwavidyalaya performed a short play titled 'Nasha Mukta Bharat' to create awareness among the public.

## Paradip bomb attack case: Police clamps notice at main accused residence over non-compliance

Paradip, (DMS): - Paradip Model Police on Friday put up a proclamation notice at the residence of Bapu Parida, the main accused and the close associate of so-called leader Bapi Sarkhel, in the bomb attack on Paradip Municipality Chairperson's residence that took place last month. The action was initiated after Parida reportedly failed to comply with an Orissa High Court directive instructing him to cooperate with the active investigation. He had reportedly received interim protection from arrest nearly a week ago. A police team visited Parida's residence located at the Housing Board Colony in Paradip to formally deliver the summons. However, after his family members refused to accept the official document, officers pasted the notice directly onto the wall of the house before returning. The notice explicitly instructs Parida to appear before the investigating officer at the Paradip Model Police Station at 10:00 am on June 30 for questioning. This stems from an incident on May 30, when a targeted bomb attack was executed at the private residence



of Paradip Municipality Chairperson Basanta Biswal while his family members were inside. While three co-accused individuals were subsequently arrested and forwarded to court, police records continue to list Parida as absconding. Notably, Orissa High Court had previously adjudicated on the matter, issuing a conditional interim order that protected Parida from immediate arrest. The judicial protection, however, remained strictly contingent upon his compliance with administrative mandates. Under the specific terms laid down by the High Court, Parida was legally bound

to cooperate fully with the local police, appear before the investigating officer whenever summoned, and refrain from threatening or harassing the complainant or the complainant's family members. According to sources, Parida's failure to present himself at the station during the six days following the judicial decree constituted formal non-cooperation, necessitating the public pasting of the summons. Potential Property Attachment Parallel to the tracking of the primary suspect, the ongoing prosecutions saw development at the regional judiciary level. The Kujang Court officially rejected the bail applications submitted by the three previously arrested co-accused individuals, remanding them further into custody. Local sources indicated that if Parida fails to report to the station by the June 30 deadline, the police may file for additional punitive warrants. Continued non-compliance could also prompt the police to initiate the formal attachment of Parida's properties or seek a judicial revocation of his interim protection to facilitate a custodial arrest.

## H&UD Addl. Chief Secretary reviews key development projects in Paradip Municipality

Paradip, (DMS):- Additional Chief Secretary of Odisha Housing & Urban Development Department, Smt. Usha Padhee, on Friday, undertook a comprehensive field visit to Paradip Municipality to review the progress of key infrastructure and public welfare projects being implemented in the town. The visit was aimed at accelerating urban development and further strengthening the delivery of civic services. As part of the inspection, Smt. Padhee visited the municipal Waste Management Centre, where she reviewed the city's solid waste management system, waste processing operations, and environmentally sustainable disposal practices. She advised officials to leverage modern technologies and best practices to further improve sanitation and transform Paradip into a cleaner, greener, and healthier urban centre. She also inspected the site earmarked for the proposed Convention Centre and held detailed discussions with departmental officials on the project's design, infrastructure



requirements, and implementation schedule. Stressing the importance of timely execution, she directed that the project be completed within the stipulated timeframe without compromising on quality standards. In a notable gesture, the Additional Chief Secretary visited the Aahar Centre, where she had lunch along with the public. She personally assessed the quality of food, cleanliness, hygiene, and service delivery at the centre. Expressing satisfaction over the

affordable and nutritious meals being served under the Aahar initiative, she instructed officials to consistently maintain high standards of food quality, sanitation, and customer service. Later, during a review meeting with officials, Smt. Padhee assessed the progress of various ongoing development projects in Paradip Municipality jurisdiction. She directed all concerned departments to ensure efficient, transparent, and citizen-centric delivery of civic services while

adhering to the highest standards of quality and accountability. She further instructed officials to expedite all ongoing works and complete them within the prescribed timelines. Among others J. Sonal, DM, Jagatsinghpur, Niranjan Behera, ADM, Paradip, Basant Biswal, Chairman, Paradip Municipality, Abhisek Panda, EO, Paradip Municipality, senior officers of the Housing & Urban Development Department, engineers, and other municipal officials were present during the visit.

## Sorrow of Migrated Labour grief

Keonjhar (DMS) : The tragic deaths of five Juanga youths from Banspal, Telkoi and Sadar blocks of Keonjhar district, who had gone to Tamil Nadu as migrated labour, have created a stir all around the areas. They are identified as Phulmani Juanga of Kodipasa village in Banspal block, Shivani Juang and Geeta Juang of Dubanali Tangiri village of Telkoi block and Gumani Juang of Rangamatia village of Telkoi block, Chamabati Juang of Telachampe village of Sadar block. Their age is between 19 and 25 years. Sources said they are poor and living in distress. Unable to find any work, they went to Tamil Nadu to work and earn to support their family. Villagers mourned Monday morning after learning about the accident that killed five people, all from the Keonjhar district.

## NLCIL 's Talabira II & III OCP Conducts Swachhata Awareness Walkathon & Cleaning Drive at Sambalpur

Sambalpur- 27/06 (DMS) As part of Swachhata Pakhwada-2026 under the Swachh Bharat Mission, NLC India Limited (NLCIL), Talabira II & III OCP, organized a Swachhata Awareness Walkathon and Mass Cleaning Drive at Sambalpur today (June 27, 2026). The programme was commenced this morning at Project Office, Sambalpur, with enthusiastic participation from employees, executives, family members. The awareness rally proceeded to the Sambalpur City Railway Station, spreading the message of cleanliness, environmental protection and responsible civic participation through slogans and placards. A mass cleaning drive was subsequently carried out at the



railway station, promoting proper waste disposal and cleaner public spaces. The programme was conducted under the guidance of Shri Jagadish Chandra Mazumdar, Executive Director & Project Head, and Shri Raghunath Behera, CGM (Land). Senior officials including Shri Tamil Selvam P. GM (Mines), Shri Ravi Shankar V., GM (E&M), Shri Subrata

Kumar Biswal, Head of HR, along with executives, employees and their families actively participated in the campaign.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Jagadish Chandra Mazumdar emphasized that cleanliness is a shared responsibility and urged everyone to adopt it as a way of life to build a cleaner, greener and

healthier India. The walkathon is part of the ongoing Swachhata Pakhwada-2026, which began on 16 June with the Swachhata Pledge and office cleanliness drive. Over the past two weeks, NLCIL has organized several awareness and community activities, including mass cleaning at Sambalpur, R&R Colony, Landupalli, distribution of cloth/jute bags and dustbins, installation of Plastic-Free and Spitting-Free Zone boards, awareness programmes in schools, cleaning of public facilities, employee quiz competitions and drawing competitions for students. Further activities, including tree plantation and sapling distribution, will continue in the coming days as part of the campaign.

## Awareness against drug abuse & smuggling

Jajpur,27/6(DMS) : District Excise Department Jajpur has celebrated this year International Drug Abuse and Smuggling Awareness Day. On this occasion, an awareness rally was held from Ram Mandir and ended at Gautam Buddha Sanskriti Bhawan, Jajpur on this Friday. A large number of students, voluntary organizations and employees of the Excise Department were participated. Placards, slogans and songs against drug abuse and adulterated and poisonous drugs were made by the students. The program was organized under the supervision of District Excise Superintendent Ajay Kumar Behera, Deputy Superintendent Anita Ojha, Excise Inspector Sasmita Hota and employees of the Excise Department.



## HC asks Odisha govt to decide on pension for senior journalists in 3 months

Puri, (DMS):: The Orissa High Court has directed the state government to take a decision within three months on extending a pension scheme to senior journalists after considering all administrative, financial and other relevant aspects. The direction was issued by the bench of Justice Sanjeeb Kumar Panigrahi while hearing a contempt petition filed by the Senior Journalists' Association of Odisha (SJA). The court observed that if the government fails to take a decision within the stipulated period, the petitioner would be at liberty to revive the contempt proceedings. During the hearing, the petitioner's counsel submitted that senior journalists in the state have so far been deprived of pension benefits despite repeated demands. The state government informed the court that the proposal to include senior journalists under a pension scheme is under active consideration and sought three months to complete the decision-making process. Appearing for the petitioner, advocate Pratyusha Nayak argued the case before the court. The High Court's direction has raised hopes among senior journalists that the long-pending demand for a pension scheme may finally receive the government's approval.

## VCT holds Awareness program on International Day Against Drug Abuse & Illicit Trafficking

Paradip, (DMS): - The International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking is observed globally to strengthen action and cooperation in achieving a world free of drug abuse. Organizations and institutions typically commemorate this day by hosting anti-drug awareness rallies, seminars, and pledge-taking ceremonies designed to

educate communities about the dangers of substance abuse. In this connection, the leading social organization Vaneedhara Charitable Trust (VCT) is carrying out the War Against Drugs Abuse (WADA) campaign in Jagatsinghpur district and the entire state. In this context, various awareness program are being organized among the youth to stay away from drugs and addiction.

On the occasion of International Drug Abuse Day on June 26, Friday, the Trust conducted an awareness rally in the port city of Paradip. In the evening, an anti-drug awareness meeting was held at the Jaydev Sadan premises. On the occasion, Jagatsinghpur MP Dr. Bibhu Prasad Tarai attended the event as the chief guest, while the keynote speaker was Dr. Sujata Hota, principal,

SVM College, Jagatsinghpur and the guest of honor was High Court Assistant Solicitor General Prasanna Kumar Padhi, Paradip Municipality Chairman Basant Biswal, Additional Superintendent of Police Ajinkya Baburao Mane, Captain Premanand Rout, Advisor of Vaneedhara Charitable Trust, and coordinator Gitakrishna Satapathy contributed prominently and

advised the youth to abstain from drug addiction. Meanwhile, Trust Coordinator Gitakrishna's War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) campaign were highly appreciated by all the guests present. The meeting was coordinated by Trust member Pabitra Kumar Swain, while at the end, Journalist Sarat Rout, one of the Trust's advisors, proposed the vote of thanks.

CORDET organised Farmer's Training & Visit program at IFFCO

Paradip,(DMS) :- A One-Day Farmers' Training & visit Programme was organised by Cooperative Rural Development Trust (CORDET), an organization of IFFCO on Friday at the Swarnajayanti Sabhagar (Choupad) on the premises of the IFFCO Paradip Unit. Around 75 progressive farmers from Mahakalapada and Marshaghai Blocks of Kendrapada district participated in the programme. The programme was inaugurated by Kulamani Majhi, Principal, CORDET, Paradip. Among the distinguished guests were Aravinda Kumar Sahu, Agriculture Export of Nischintakoili Block, Jayanta Jena, Administrative Officer, IFFCO Paradip,



Arakhita Sahoo, Krusi Mitra from Bhutamundi Gram Panchayat and Avro Dey, Officer, Bio-fertiliser Plant, IFFCO Paradip. Addressing the participants,

the dignitaries highlighted the importance of adopting modern agricultural practices, advanced technologies. They emphasised the role of Nano Fertilisers in enhancing crop

productivity and stressed the need for efficient nutrient management in the context of prevailing global uncertainties affecting the fertiliser sector. An interactive session

provided farmers with an opportunity to discuss various agricultural challenges and receive expert guidance on soil health management, scientific fertiliser application, and improved crop production practices. As part of the programme, Bio-fertiliser liquid Consortia were distributed among the participating farmers to encourage the adoption of eco-friendly and sustainable agricultural inputs. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks and a reaffirmed commitment to organising more such capacity-building initiatives for the benefit of the farming community.

11 workers' death case in Keonjhar filed in NHRC

Keonjhar,(DMS): The death toll of Odia workers in the ammonia gas tragedy in Tamil Nadu state has reached the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), New Delhi. A Koraput lawyer, Anup Kumar Patra, filed a case and the Commission today accepted the complaint and consider for hearing. According to his complaint letter regarding the death of Rita Juang from Telkoi area and others, he has sought help and protection for them. In his complaint letter he appealed to the commission

to direct the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police of Tamil Nadu to submit a detailed action taken report on the incident and the ongoing joint committee report to the Commission. He also appealed to the Commission to take legal action against the management of the seafood processing factory M/s St. Peter & Sea Food Export Pvt. Ltd. located in the Periyapalayam area of Tiruvallur district, Tamil Nadu, for employing minor girls in hazardous conditions. He also requested the

Commission to direct the Tamil Nadu government and the factory management to pay a compensation of Rs. 25 lakh to the families of the deceased and to bear the medical expenses of the injured and to direct the Odisha government to provide proper rehabilitation and facilities to the families of the victims in Keonjhar district. Similarly, he has requested the commission to order the Tamil Nadu government to conduct safety audits in 6,669 hazardous industries in Tamil Nadu. (EOM)

First-Ever 'Writer in Residence' Programme to Be Held in Odisha

Balasure,(DMS): Pen in Books, one of Odisha's leading publishing houses, is set to organize the State's first-ever 'Writer in Residence' programme, titled 'Writer in Residence 2026'. Known for introducing innovative literary initiatives, the organization will host this week-long residential workshop on the banks of Chilika Lake in July as part of its 21st anniversary celebrations. Ten young writers under the age of 25 have been selected to participate in the programme. According to a statement issued by Pen in Books, the programme received 143 applications from across the State. In the first stage, 30 applicants were shortlisted and asked to submit one chapter of a novel. Based on the quality of their submissions, ten young writers were selected for the final residential workshop. The selected participants are Dharmaraj Mahamallik (Bargarh), Biswajit Sahu (Dhenkanal), Pritikrishna Sahu and Shubhashree Das (Cuttack), Surajit Pradhan (Jagatsinghpur), Sanjay Roul (Jajpur), Badal Palei (Ganjam), Truptimayee Roul (Angul), Sasmita Behera (Bhadrak), and Jyotiranjan Das (Kendrapara). Noted fiction writers Subhransu Panda and Miyog Ranjan Patra will serve as mentors for the programme. The theme for this year's edition is 'Campus Novel'. Under the guidance of the mentors, each selected participant has already completed a novel over the past three months. During the seven-day residential workshop, the manuscripts will undergo detailed evaluation, followed by guidance on revision, editing, rewriting, and refinement. Several eminent fiction writers from Odisha will also participate as subject experts and conduct interactive sessions on the craft and techniques of novel writing. Following the workshop, the ten novels will be published in book form. They are scheduled to be formally released at a special literary event in Bhubaneswar in September, where all ten young authors will also be felicitated. The programme is entirely free for the selected participants. Pen in Books stated that Odia Media Private Limited will bear all expenses related to travel, accommodation, and other logistical arrangements for the young writers.

All-Party Meeting on SIR-2026: Khordha Administration Stresses Error-Free Electoral Roll, Holds Detailed Deliberations with Political Parties

Khordha,.(DMS):- With the objective of ensuring a transparent, accurate, and error-free electoral roll ahead of the upcoming elections, the Khordha district administration convened an important district-level all-party meeting to review the progress of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR)-2026 of the electoral roll. The meeting, chaired by the Additional District Magistrate (General)-cum-Additional District Election Officer, brought together representatives of various national and state political parties to discuss the ongoing revision process and future course of action. At the outset, officials of the District Election Office made a detailed PowerPoint presentation highlighting the progress of the SIR-2026 exercise. The presentation covered the distribution of Enumeration Forms, the number of forms collected so far, the pace of digitization,



and the roadmap for completing the revision process within the prescribed timeline. The administration also briefed the political representatives on every stage of the revision exercise, including the receipt of claims and objections, their impartial hearing and disposal, publication of the draft electoral roll, and preparation of the final voter list. During the meeting, officials emphasized that the entire process is being carried out with utmost transparency and in strict compliance with the guidelines of the Election Commission. Special focus is being given to ensure that no

eligible voter is left out of the electoral roll while, at the same time, preventing the inclusion of ineligible names. The administration reiterated its commitment to preparing a credible and error-free electoral database that reflects the actual electorate. Representatives of various political parties actively participated in the discussions and shared their suggestions for improving the revision process. They stressed the need for greater awareness among voters in both rural and urban areas so that all eligible citizens can submit the required documents and complete the enrolment process within the

stipulated period. The political parties also assured the administration of their full cooperation in reaching out to voters and facilitating smooth implementation of the revision programme. Several practical issues encountered during field-level implementation were also discussed, and possible solutions were explored through mutual consultation. Addressing the meeting, the Mr. Beura, stated that every stage of the revision exercise is being conducted in a fair, transparent, and impartial manner as per the directions of the Election Commission. He emphasized that the active participation of political parties, Booth Level Officers (BLOs), government officials, and the general public is essential for the successful completion of the exercise. He expressed confidence that collective efforts would help prepare a reliable, inclusive, and error-free electoral roll.

Odisha High Court directs State Government to decide on pension for journalists within three months

Jagatsinghpur,(DMS): The Odisha High Court, adjudicating a contempt petition on the subject of giving pension to journalists, directed the state government to take an appropriate decision for granting pension to the senior journalists within three months. Moreover, during the period of time stipulation granted by the Hon'ble Court, the government to study the issues about the proposed journalist's pension scheme and its overall administrative arrangements and resource feasibility, and other issues the Court observed. A single judge bench Justice Dr Sanjeev Panigrahi, heard the contempt petition filed by the Senior Journalists Association Odisha [SJAO]

who had moved to the High Court seeking a direction to the government to introduce a pension scheme for the state journalists. The writ petition of SJAO bearing number WC [P] 9991 of 2025 had disposed of by high court on April 30, 2025 with a direction to government to consider the SJAO claim within two months, but government non complied the order of the court as a consequences SJAO filed a contempt plea against Additional Chief Secretary and Director Information and Public Relations Department, Government of Odisha who had been purportedly disobeyed the hon'ble court direction.

International day against Drugs abuse & illicit trafficking



Jagatsinghpur,(DMS) To day district level International day against Drugs abuse & illicit trafficking organised at Adikavi Sarala das Sanskruti Bhawan. A grand rally consisting of 200 people move round the town to

create consciousness among people. Meeting and awareness programme presided by ADM, Jyoti Shankar Roy. Chief guest Manoj Bhoi said about misuse of drugs and youth generation lost the track and their aim. Even drugs is the

main route for crime. Besides that wo- men are involved in drugs trafficking & causing problem. Excise Inspector said about his experience and DSSO talk about bad impact of drugs upon human body. SDIPRO coordinate the programme.

Government of Odisha  
Office of the Superintending Engineer,  
Rural Works Division, Dhenkanal.

e-procurement Notice No. 05 / Road Works / 2026-27

1. Name of the work	: Road Works
2. Total No. of Works	: 15 Nos
3. Estimated Cost	: Rs. 5.08 to 31.78 lakh (approx.)
4. Class Contractor	: "D" "C" & "B" Class
5. Period of Completion	: 2 (two) Calender Month
6. EMD Required	: As mentioned in the Annexure at Column-04
7. online for bidding	: 30.06.2026 at 11.30 A.M to 14.07.2026 up to 5.00 P.M
8. Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	: 13.07.2026 upto 4.00 PM
9. Date & Time of opening of tender	: 15.07.2026 at 10.00 AM

Other Details can be seen from the website <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>.

25001/532/2627

Superintending Engineer  
R.W. Division, Dhenkanal.

International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking Observed in Khordha

Khordha--(DMS)- Calling upon young people to become the driving force behind a drug-free society, Khordha Sub-Collector, Sankalpa Swastik Sahu said that the nation's future depends on a healthy, responsible, and empowered youth. He urged the younger generation to stay away from substance abuse and actively contribute to building a healthier and more progressive India. The appeal was made during the observance of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking 2026, where a large-scale awareness rally and public outreach programme were organised at Haveli Ground in Khordha. The event was jointly hosted by the Department of Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, the District Administration,

and the Excise Department. The programme began with District Social Security Officer Dillip Hial welcoming the participants and highlighting the need for collective action against drug abuse. Sub-Collector Mr. Sahu inaugurated the awareness rally and a specially designed awareness vehicle by flagging them off, marking the beginning of the district-wide campaign against substance abuse. Addressing the gathering, the Sub-Collector said that drug addiction not only destroys an individual's health and future but also adversely affects families, communities, and society at large. He stressed that prevention through awareness and public participation is the most effective way to combat the growing menace of drug abuse. "Youth are the greatest



strength of our nation. If they adopt a drug-free lifestyle and inspire others to do the same, the dream of a healthy, strong, and developed India can become a reality," he said. He further urged every citizen to embrace the principle of "Change Yourself, Inspire Others", adding that collective efforts

are essential to build a drug-free Khordha, a drug-free Odisha, and ultimately a drug-free India. The awareness rally witnessed enthusiastic participation from hundreds of students, youth, women, members of voluntary organisations, social activists, intellectuals, and citizens from different

walks of life. Carrying placards and raising slogans against drug abuse, the participants spread awareness as the rally proceeded from Haveli Ground to the Collector's Office. At the concluding ceremony held at the Collectorate premises, the Sub-Collector

administered a pledge to all participants, reaffirming their commitment to building a drug-free India. He reiterated that the success of the anti-drug movement depends on active public participation, particularly from young people, and appealed to every citizen to support the campaign. Among those present were Excise Superintendent, Khordha, Sumiti Tripathy, I/C, Deputy Superintendent of Excise, Khordha, Radhakanta Bhoi, Block Development Officer Siddhartha Pattnaik, and District Information and Public Relations Officer Laxman Kumar Behera, who emphasised the importance of sustained awareness campaigns and community involvement in preventing drug abuse. As part of the programme, individuals who had made notable

contributions to anti-drug awareness initiatives were honoured with certificates of appreciation. A cultural programme carrying strong messages against substance abuse was also presented, reinforcing the importance of healthy living and social responsibility. Representatives of the Prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya, Khordha and Bhubaneswar branches, along with several voluntary organisations, social workers, and media representatives, actively participated in the event, demonstrating a collective commitment to creating a drug-free and healthier society. The programme concluded with a renewed resolve among participants to continue spreading awareness and encouraging people to reject substance abuse for the betterment of society.

# Delayed Justice

**C**INEMA does not create stereotypes, it amplifies lived experience. In the case of the judiciary, images and dialogue continue to lend familiarity to the systemic anomalies. The delay in the delivery of justice is now so normalised that only very unusual instances garner attention — minus the revulsion such absurdity should ideally trigger. In Bihar,



it took over 30 years to sentence an 85-year-old man to three years in jail in an attempt-to-murder case. He remembers little about the incident. In UP, after a 27-year trial for criminal intimidation, a wobbly 80-year-old was told to stand in court for a day as punishment. He faithfully attended the hearings. Confession and an appeal for mercy led to the verdict. In Mumbai, an 80-year-old will go to prison for a crime committed 13 years ago.

By 2025, the National Judicial Data Grid reported more than 5.1 crore pending cases, nearly 4.5 crore of these in subordinate courts. A speedy trial is a fundamental right, yet remains symbolic for most undertrials. They comprise over 70% of the prison population. Many have spent more years in jail than the punishment prescribed for their alleged crimes. Delay seems to be the default option of criminal procedure. Hurdles can be expected at every stage - from the FIR to investigations, filing of the chargesheet, framing of charges, the trial, and the appeal. The fix is known. Courts with the sanctioned strength, police reforms, technology integration, strong anti-corruption measures, hybrid courts, strengthening legal aid and more lok adalats are all doable. The sluggish clean-up adds to the crisis of credibility. A loss of trust in procedures opens a window for corruption.

The apex court has time and again expressed its dismay over the state of affairs. Institutional efficiency needs a more direct and determined intervention.

## SC Observation

**R**ecent observations by the Supreme Court that consensual premarital relationships cannot be treated as a "blot on character" mark an important moment in India's evolving understanding of personal liberty. The court's message is simple yet profound: private choices made by consenting adults should not become grounds for social condemnation or institutional discrimination. The case before the court illustrates this principle vividly. The dispute arose from the cancellation of the candidature of a police constable aspirant who had disclosed, while applying for the post, that a criminal case had been registered against him by a woman with whom he had allegedly been in a relationship for nearly four years. The woman claimed that the appellant had promised to marry her but eventually married another woman. The authorities treated the mere existence of the relationship as evidence of questionable character. The SC rightly rejected this approach, observing that consensual premarital relationships cannot automatically amount to moral turpitude.

For far too long, the idea of "character" in India has been shaped by rigid moral codes, often applied unevenly and disproportionately to women. Employment opportunities and social acceptance have frequently been influenced by judgments about an individual's private life rather than professional competence or adherence to the law. By separating legality from morality, the court has reaffirmed a constitutional principle: the State cannot police the intimate choices of adults.

At the same time, the judiciary has emphasised the need to distinguish between consensual relationships and genuine cases of coercion or deception. Not every failed relationship warrants criminal prosecution. Laws meant to protect women must remain robust, but they should not become instruments for adjudicating private morality. A mature society safeguards dignity not through stigma and silence, but through respect for autonomy, informed dialogue and commitment to consent.

# The Rising Voice of Gen Z

Tejeswar Patnaik

India's demographic dividend is one of its greatest strengths. However, repeated institutional failures in education and employment-related systems are generating growing frustration among the country's youth, particularly Generation Z.

In recent weeks, incidents such as the NEET paper leak, discrepancies in the evaluation of CBSE Class XII answer sheets, and technical failures in the CUET examination have triggered strong resentment and anguish among lakhs of students, popularly referred to as Generation Z (Gen Z).

Incidents of student suicides in the aftermath of the NEET paper leaks have intensified public concern and discontent. Repeated examination irregularities have raised serious questions regarding the credibility and integrity of India's examination system. Moreover, Thousands of parents spend substantial portions of their savings on coaching and preparation for competitive examinations.

These developments have prompted millions of students to follow a social media platform called the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP), created by Shri Avijit Dipke. A controversial remark against India's unemployed youth by a judge of the Supreme Court triggered massive reactions from lakhs of India's Gen Z students on social media. What initially began as an online meme campaign has now evolved into a protest movement, culminating in a demonstration at Jantar Mantar on the 6th of this month and demanding the resignation of the Union Education Minister. Frequent paper leaks and examination fraud over the past decade across different states have eroded public confidence in the system. The Cockroach Movement has put up before the Government a five-point manifesto comprising educational reforms, judicial accountability, electoral



integrity, a fifty per cent reservation for women in Parliament and Cabinet positions, a twenty-year election ban on MLAs and MPs who defect from one party to another, and the cancellation of broadcast licences of large corporate groups owning media entities.

The CJP has reportedly given a seven-day ultimatum seeking the resignation of the Union Education Minister, holding him morally responsible for the recurring paper leaks. There is an urgent need for a leakage-proof and transparent system in all examination boards and testing agencies which conduct entrance examinations, professional tests, and government recruitment examinations. Failure to address these issues may adversely affect the credibility of Indian academic credentials abroad, tarnishing our country's image. The concerns of the youth must therefore be addressed with sincerity and commitment before their anger becomes more widespread and disruptive.

Generally, those born between 1997 and 2012 are categorized as Gen Z. (Source: The Pew Research Centre.) They generally fall within the age group of approximately 15 to 29 years. Gen Z is a smart, forward-looking,

and digitally savvy generation. It remains highly sensitive to flaws in systems and corruption in institutions while strongly believing in transparency, merit, and accountability.

India is currently leveraging its demographic dividend, with a median age of around 29 years for its population. This young workforce will be a pillar of strength for the country's agriculture, manufacturing, and services sectors over the next two decades and is likely to reshape India's economic and cultural landscape.

Gen Z holds immense significance in India's growth trajectory. According to a BCG report, India has the largest Gen Z population in the world, accounting for nearly 30 to 40 per cent of the country's total population while constituting about 25 per cent of the workforce. Furthermore, this generation contributes nearly 43 per cent of the country's household consumption, and its collective income is estimated at around \$200 billion.

Given its demographic strength and economic significance, Gen Z will play a seminal role in the next two decades. The Government should pay attention to Quality education in government schools, colleges, and vocational

institutions so that the vast majority of students can access meaningful learning opportunities. A substantial allocation in public expenditure on education, research, and development deserves serious consideration by both the Central and State Governments.

The country also faces the formidable challenge of creating adequate employment opportunities for millions entering the workforce every year. The recent Economic Survey has projected that India's working-age population will be around 98 crores by 2030. Therefore, creation of jobs for the youth is of paramount importance, as this large working-age population is both a national asset and a key driver of economic growth. According to CMIE estimates, the country's unemployment rate stood at around 6.85 per cent in May 2026, while youth unemployment remained significantly higher.

Political parties, irrespective of their ideological differences, must rise above partisan politics and address the concerns of Gen Z, which constitutes a substantial segment of the electorate. The movement has gained momentum within a very short period and succeeded in drawing national attention to the issues affecting students and unemployed youth. Viksit Bharat @2047 vision document seeks to transform India into a developed nation by 2047, with youth empowerment identified as one of its key pillars.

India's youth must therefore be empowered through quality education, skill development, institutional transparency, and employment-generation opportunities. The political leadership of the country must address the concerns of Gen Z and undertake meaningful reforms to restore their faith in public institutions. The growing anger among young Indians should be viewed not merely as a protest but as a call for accountability, fairness, and systemic reform.

## The Delusion of a Particle-Only Universe

Dr Vijay Garg

For centuries, science has sought to understand the fundamental nature of reality. From the ancient Greek concept of indivisible atoms to modern particle physics, humanity has often assumed that everything in the universe can be explained by smaller and smaller particles. This view has been enormously successful, leading to remarkable discoveries and technological advancements. Yet, an increasing number of scientists and philosophers argue that the idea of a purely particle-based universe may itself be an illusion.

The particle-centric worldview suggests that all matter, energy, life, and consciousness emerge from tiny building blocks interacting according to physical laws. The Standard Model of particle physics, one of the most successful theories ever developed, identifies fundamental particles such as quarks, electrons, and neutrinos as the constituents of matter. Discoveries like the Higgs boson have reinforced confidence in this framework.

However, modern physics has also revealed profound limitations to this perspective.

One challenge arises from quantum mechanics. At the quantum level, particles do not behave like miniature billiard balls. Instead, they often exist as probabilities rather than definite objects. Experiments show that particles can display wave-like properties, appear to be in multiple states simultaneously, and become entangled across vast distances. In many interpretations of quantum theory, the distinction between particles and waves becomes blurred, suggesting that particles may not be the ultimate reality but rather manifestations of deeper underlying phenomena.

The concept of quantum fields further complicates the particle-only picture. According to quantum field theory, fields—not particles—are the fundamental entities. Particles are merely excitations or vibrations within these fields. An electron, for example, is not a tiny solid object but a localized excitation of the electron field. In this view, the universe resembles a vast ocean of interacting fields, with particles appearing like temporary ripples on the surface.

Another challenge comes from the study of complex systems. Life, ecosystems, economies, and even the human brain exhibit properties that cannot be easily understood by examining individual particles alone. Emergent phenomena arise when simple components interact in large numbers, creating behaviors and structures that are absent at the microscopic level. A single water molecule is not "wet," yet billions of molecules together produce the familiar property of wetness. Similarly, consciousness may not be fully explained by reducing the brain to atoms and particles.

The mystery deepens when we consider information. Increasingly, physicists are recognizing information as a fundamental ingredient of reality. Some theories suggest that information may be more basic than matter itself. The famous phrase "It from Bit," proposed by physicist John Archibald Wheeler,

encapsulates the idea that physical reality may emerge from informational processes rather than from particles alone.

Cosmology also challenges reductionist assumptions. Ordinary matter—the particles we know and understand—accounts for only about five percent of the universe. The remainder consists of dark matter and dark energy, mysterious entities whose nature remains largely unknown. If most of the cosmos is composed of something beyond familiar particles, then our current understanding captures only a small fraction of reality.

Some cutting-edge theories push these ideas even further. Certain approaches to quantum gravity suggest that space and time themselves may not be fundamental. Instead, they could emerge from deeper structures involving information, geometry, or quantum entanglement. If space and time are emergent, then particles existing within space may also be secondary features rather than the universe's ultimate building blocks.

The particle-only worldview also influences how we think about ourselves. If humans are merely collections of particles, then concepts such as meaning, purpose, creativity, and consciousness may appear to be nothing more than accidental byproducts of matter. Yet human experience seems richer than such reductionist descriptions suggest. While science continues to investigate consciousness, many researchers acknowledge that understanding subjective experience remains one of the greatest unsolved problems.

This does not mean that particles are unimportant. They remain indispensable tools for explaining countless physical phenomena. The mistake lies not in studying particles but in assuming that particles alone provide a complete description of reality. History repeatedly shows that scientific understanding evolves when deeper layers of explanation are discovered beneath accepted models.

The universe may be composed not merely of particles but of fields, information, relationships, and emergent structures. Reality could be far more interconnected and dynamic than the particle-only perspective allows. As science advances, we are learning that reductionism, while powerful, has limits. The deepest truths of existence may lie not only in the smallest components of nature but also in the patterns, connections, and principles that bind them together.

The delusion of a particle-only universe is not that particles do not exist. Rather, it is the belief that they are the whole story. The unfolding journey of modern science suggests that reality is richer, stranger, and more profound than a collection of tiny objects moving through empty space. Understanding that complexity may be one of the greatest intellectual adventures of the twenty-first century.

Dr Vijay Garg Retired Principal? Educational columnist Eminent Educationist street kour Chand MHR Malout Punjab

## Everything begins with your thoughts

Utkalananda Ajaya Kumar Behera

Among all species on the planet, the human being is considered to be the most superior only because of his ability to think and discriminate. It is said that even after death, thoughts remain indelible — such is the power of thought. Among the many factors that influence and change a person's life, the foremost factor is thought. We say that a certain person changed due to this or that circumstance or incident. The truth, however, is that the changes come from his thoughts, and not only because of any external happening. A lot depends on how you think about a situation and the attitude with which you deal with it.

It has been proven that people under similar circumstances behave and respond very differently because of differences in their thinking; one may make himself miserable while the other may still remain joyous. Indeed, all the ups and downs, joys and sorrows in an individual's life begin with his thoughts. Thoughts are the kind of fire that can burn, as well as illumine. They can, like a needle and thread, bring diverse people together. Thoughts can divide, too. Even though man does not possess sharp claws or canine teeth, he is considered to be the most dangerous and violent being on the planet today because of his thoughts. He thinks up rules which he uses for his own aggrandisement and engages in destructive activity. On the other hand, he could well live a life of peace, non-violence, compassion and service on the basis of his thoughts.

All great sages and spiritual people have identified thought as the most potent strength of a human being. Just as fire heats up the environs, so too thoughts that have the power to transform the personality of the person who comes into contact with them. Thoughts transformed Arjun to face life's challenges. Thoughts turned the robber Ratnakar into Valmiki. Very subtle waves are emitted by thoughts. These waves set apart one person from another. Those who are obsessed with the body find that their thought waves are weak. Thought waves become strong and powerful when they are centred around intense ideas that are engaged in the quest for truth and moral rectitude. Such thinkers are able to influence innumerable people over time. That is why we need to cultivate the art of positive thinking rather than get entangled in negativities.

It is only because of revolutionary thinking that changes have been brought about in the field of religion, tradition, politics and society. If wisdom and clarity are not present in thoughts, then major problems get created. Misunderstanding and distrust are born. In one minute, all relationships change character. Misunderstandings can run so deep that they get carried over from one generation to the next. Not only that, the tight knot of hatred and anger that can never be unravelled, gets formed. So think wisely. Thoughts make words meaningful; in fact all human actions are made meaningful.

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## SC Flags Delay In Lakhimpur Kheri Trial, Directs Trial Court To Ensure Witness Presence

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday expressed disappointment over the slow pace of trial in the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence case and directed the trial court to take lawful measures to secure the presence of witnesses while ensuring compliance with the witness protection scheme. A Bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi highlighted with concern that no prosecution witness had been examined during the last two months despite the issuance of bailable and non-bailable warrants. "We are disappointed to note that the so-called status report does not assign any reason for the non-production of witnesses on previous dates. No witness appears to have been examined for two months," the CJI-led bench observed. During the hearing, the state government informed the apex court that in the principal trial relating to the deaths of protesting farmers, 44 prosecution witnesses have been examined and 15 witnesses discharged, while 72 witnesses still remain to be examined. In the connected trial relating to the subsequent mob violence, 26 out of 35 witnesses had already deposed, and nine witnesses remained pending for examination. Senior advocate



Siddharth Dave, appearing for Ashish Mishra — the prime accused in the case and son of former Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra Teni — submitted that no witness examination had taken place in the recent past despite coercive processes being issued by the trial court. "No witness has been examined for the last two months. Bailable warrants issued, even non-bailable warrants issued, but no one has appeared," he told the top court. Questioning the prosecution over the delay, the bench remarked: "What have you done from March till today? Instead of summoning three-four witnesses, summon seven-eight witnesses. At least those who are present can be examined." Referring to an earlier status report, the apex court

recorded that despite a witness appearing before the trial court on one occasion, the prosecution chose not to examine the witness, resulting in further delay. Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the victims' families, alleged before the Supreme Court that witnesses were being intimidated. "Police are threatening witnesses before the date of hearing, that is why they are not coming," Bhushan submitted. Recording its dissatisfaction with the status report filed by the state authorities, the apex court directed the presiding judge conducting both trials to take lawful measures for securing witness attendance and to ensure compliance with the witness protection mechanism. It further directed the trial court to

endeavour to conclude both criminal trials in a time-bound manner. The apex court also took note of the third connected criminal proceeding concerning allegations of witness intimidation. Referring to the status report stating that the investigation against one accused was still pending despite the filing of the charge sheet, the bench directed the investigating officer to conclude the remaining probe and submit the final report before the competent trial court within four weeks. In its earlier orders, the apex court had flagged the slow pace of the trial, asking the prosecution to drop unnecessary formal witnesses to expedite proceedings.

It had also considered a status report from the Lakhimpur Kheri police regarding an FIR lodged against Mishra and his father for alleged witness intimidation, directing that the matter be probed by an officer of DSP rank. In October 2021, eight people were killed in Lakhimpur Kheri District's Tikunia in violence that erupted when farmers were protesting against UP Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya's visit to the area. According to the UP Police FIR, four farmers were mowed down by an SUV, in which Ashish Mishra was seated.

## Ashok Kumar Lahiri Takes Charge As NITI Aayog Vice Chairman

New Delhi, 8/5: Ashok Kumar Lahiri has taken charge as Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog, the government think tank said on Friday. Lahiri brings extensive experience in economic policy and public finance, having previously served as Chief Economic Adviser to the government and as a member of the 15th Finance Commission. According to NITI Aayog, his experience across academia, public institutions and international organisations will further strengthen its efforts towards evidence-based policymaking and economic transformation. The think tank said it looks forward to his contributions in advancing India's development agenda and supporting strategic policy initiatives across sectors. Lahiri, a BJP MLA from West Bengal and noted economist, had earlier been appointed to the post following approval from Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He succeeds Suman Bery, who served as Vice Chairman since May 2022. Earlier in April, PM Modi said that NITI Aayog has emerged as a vital pillar in India's policy-making architecture, strengthening



cooperative federalism, advancing reforms and improving 'Ease of Living'. He congratulated Lahiri and other newly appointed full-time members, saying the reconstituted NITI Aayog would serve as a dynamic platform for innovation and long-term strategic thinking across sectors. "My best wishes to Ashok Kumar Lahiri on becoming the Vice Chairman. My best wishes also to Rajiv Gauba, Prof. K. V. Raju, Prof. Gobardhan Das, Prof. Abhay Karandikar and Dr. M. Srinivas on becoming Full Time Members of NITI Aayog. Wishing all of them a productive and impactful tenure ahead," PM Modi said. PM Modi also met Lahiri and congratulated him on

his appointment, expressing confidence that his experience in economics and public policy would strengthen India's reform journey and contribute to the vision of 'Viksit Bharat'. Lahiri, who represents Balurghat in the West Bengal Assembly, has had a distinguished career spanning academia, policymaking and financial institutions. Moreover, he has served as Chief Economic Adviser, worked with institutions such as the Delhi School of Economics, Asian Development Bank, Bandhan Bank and the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, and has also been associated with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

## Google Explores AI Infrastructure, Server And Drone Manufacturing Investments In India: Ashwini Vaishnaw

New Delhi, 8/5: Alphabet-owned Google is exploring fresh investments in India focused on artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure and the local manufacturing of servers and drones, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Friday. Sharing details of his meeting with Google executives on social media platform X, Vaishnaw said the company is evaluating opportunities across AI infrastructure development as well as electronics manufacturing in India. "Google is exploring investments in India across AI infrastructure and the manufacturing of servers and drones," he said. The development comes amid increasing global investments in AI capabilities and data centre expansion. The minister's remarks also come shortly after Google CEO Sundar Pichai announced that the company would raise its total capital expenditure to \$185 billion this



year, largely driven by aggressive investments in AI infrastructure. Speaking at the Google Cloud Next 2026 summit last month, Pichai said more than half of Google's machine learning computing resources would now be allocated to its cloud business. Google has already unveiled a massive \$15 billion investment plan in Andhra

Pradesh to build what is described as a 'gigawatt-scale AI ecosystem' in Visakhapatnam. As part of the initiative, the company in April began work on its India AI Hub project in partnership with AdaniConneX and Xtra by Airtel. Google had termed the project its "largest investment in India's digital future to date." The initiative includes India's

first gigawatt-scale AI hub spread across three data centre campuses and will also feature a 1 GW hyperscale AI data centre. The Andhra Pradesh government has allocated nearly 600 acres of land in Turluvada, Rambilli and Advivaram for the ambitious AI infrastructure project. Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony on April 28, Vaishnaw had said India is well positioned to become a trusted global partner in electronics manufacturing and supply chains, supported by strong policy initiatives and expanding technological capabilities. The minister also urged global technology companies, including Google, to scale up local production of servers, graphics processing units (GPUs) and semiconductor chips in India, underlining the government's push to strengthen domestic electronics manufacturing.

New Delhi, 8/5: The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Friday published the index cards and statistical reports for the elections to the Legislative Assemblies and bye-elections 2026 within a record 72 hours of the declaration of results. The data release covers all 830 Assembly constituencies where the election process concluded on May 6. Digital updating and faster publication of the index cards and statistical reports are among the over 30 initiatives taken in the last one year by the Election Commission, the ECI said in a statement on Friday. The poll panel noted that prior to the introduction of the ECINET platform, the process of compiling this data manually through field officials typically took several weeks or even months. The index cards contain comprehensive data across multiple dimensions, including candidate details, electors, votes polled, and party-wise performance. These records are now accessible to the public via the ECINET App and the official ECI website. In a concurrent



move, the Commission released a set of 14 statistical reports. This is the first time such reports have been made available within three days of the poll results. The reports provide an exhaustive breakdown of variables, including assembly constituency-wise voter turnout, gender-wise participation, and constituency-wise detailed results. The ECI described the publication as a "suo-moto initiative" aimed at promoting transparency for stakeholders, including researchers and the public. While the reports are prepared from

secondary data, the Commission clarified that the primary data remains in the statutory forms maintained by Returning Officers, which are considered final. Additionally, the Commission announced that a re-poll has been scheduled for the Falta Assembly constituency in West Bengal, set to take place on May 21. A re-poll was ordered in all the polling stations of the Falta seat after complaints during the voting in the second and final phase of polling on April 29. The results will be announced on May 24.

## India Targets Big Boost To MSME Ties Under 2026 BRICS Chairship

New Delhi, 8/5: As Chair of BRICS in 2026, India is spearheading a renewed agenda for MSME (micro, small and medium enterprises) cooperation under the BRICS Partnership on the New Industrial Revolution (Part-NIR). During India's Chairship, the Ministry of MSME is mandated to convene three SME working group meetings and the inaugural BRICS MSME Forum. The first SME Working Group Meeting was successfully convened online on 24th April 2026 with a specialised focus on "Access to Finance for MSMEs". The deliberations among BRICS Member Countries centred on the themes of "Bridging the MSME Credit Gap through Financial Inclusion, Literacy and Credit Readiness" and "Fintech-Driven Ecosystems: Expanding SME Credit and Seamless Global Trade Payments". The webinar witnessed active participation from BRICS Member Countries and served as an important platform for exchanging experiences and best practices on MSME financing challenges and



opportunities. Discussions highlighted the critical role of MSMEs as key drivers of economic growth, employment generation, innovation, and inclusive development, and underscored the persistent challenges relating to timely and adequate access to credit. The deliberations emphasised the need for a multi-pronged approach to bridge the credit gap through financial inclusion and improved financial literacy and strengthening credit capacities of MSMEs. The meeting further emphasised the importance of

enhanced collaboration among BRICS economies to strengthen institutional capacities, promote innovative financing mechanisms, and build a supportive ecosystem for MSME finance. The discussions also facilitated valuable policy exchange among BRICS Member Countries facing similar developmental challenges and reaffirmed the shared commitment towards fostering resilient, inclusive, and globally competitive MSME sectors across BRICS economies.

## Delhi Crime Branch Busts Two Illegal Factories Making Fake Cement; One Arrested

New Delhi, 8/5: The Delhi Police Crime Branch has busted two illegal factories allegedly involved in manufacturing and packaging counterfeit UltraTech Cement in northeast Delhi, recovering a huge quantity of fake cement bags, adulterated material and machinery used in the operation. According to a press release issued by the Crime Branch on Friday, the raids were carried out in Mandoli Industrial Area and Jawahar Nagar Industrial Area following a complaint from UltraTech Cement Ltd. One accused, identified as Rizwan, was arrested during the operation. The Crime Branch stated that the accused were allegedly preparing duplicate cement by crushing damaged cement and mixing it with clinker material before packing it in counterfeit UltraTech-branded bags for sale in the market. "Staff of ER-II/ Crime Branch showed promptness and professionalism by busting two illegal factories involved in manufacturing and



packaging duplicate/counterfeit cement," the press release said. Police said the action began after Kamal Singh, authorised representative of UltraTech Cement Ltd., informed authorities that fake cement was being manufactured on a large scale during night hours using counterfeit packaging material. Following the complaint, a special raiding team was constituted under the leadership of Inspector Sunil Kundu and under the overall supervision of ACP Narender Singh, ER-II/

Crime. The team included SI Arjun Singh, ASI Upender, ASI Satender, HC Prince, HC Mohit, HC Rajeev and HC Vikas. During the first raid at New Mandoli Industrial Area, police found accused Rizwan allegedly supervising the illegal manufacturing process. "During interrogation, he disclosed that damaged cement was being crushed and mixed with clinker material for preparation of duplicate/counterfeit cement, which was then packed in fake UltraTech branded bags," the

Crime Branch said. A second raid at Jawahar Nagar Industrial Area led to the detection of another illegal unit involved in similar activities. Police recovered 2,725 empty counterfeit UltraTech cement bags of different variants, 341 filled fake cement bags, nearly 1,780 bags of damaged cement, and 420 bags containing clinker material allegedly used in producing counterfeit cement. Large quantities of loose, adulterated cement were also seized. Both factory premises, along with the machinery and materials used in the operation, have been sealed by the police. The arrested accused, Rizwan, 25, is a resident of Amroha district in Uttar Pradesh and was allegedly working as a supervisor at the units. Delhi Police said an FIR has been registered under relevant Sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Copyright Act at the Crime Branch police station. Further investigation into the racket is currently underway with the search on to find the big fish behind the operation.

## IWT: Pakistan Needs To Credibly, Irrevocably Renounce Support For Cross-Border Terrorism

Jerusalem, 8/5: India's decision to place the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance following last year's April 22 Pahalgam terror attack carried out by a Pakistan-based terror group is "principled, proportionate, conditional, and reversible". The move is not an attempt to weaponize water, but a decision to suspend cooperation with a party that has long weaponised terrorism from its territory, a report has detailed. According to a report in The Jerusalem Post, Islamabad's response was rhetorical from the onset, portraying the abeyance "as an act of war, branded water weaponization" given Pakistan's heavy reliance on the Indus water system - one of the world's largest river basins. It highlighted that a year after the Pahalgam terror attack, Pakistan brought the issue before the United Nations Security Council, calling on India to "restore full implementation" of the treaty and warning of potential "grave humanitarian consequences". Although the UN



Security Council bears primary responsibility for international peace and security, the report said, it is "not a treaty-interpretation body, nor a tribunal" over the performance of a 1960 bilateral instrument. Referring to Article 26 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT), it argued that parties are obligated to implement treaties in good faith, a standard that cannot be met through selective compliance while the underlying conditions of peaceful coexistence are

eroded. India's position, the report said, that "sustained Pakistani sponsorship of cross-border terrorism", culminating in the Pahalgam attack, has shattered the very foundation of bilateral cooperation - which "is not a creative interpretation" but the "black-letter application of pacta sunt servanda (treaties must be performed in good faith)". The report noted that Pakistan must "credibly and irrevocably" renounce support for cross-border terrorism. This requirement is purposive and

grounded in the customary international obligation, reinforced by Security Council Resolution - that "every state prevents the use of its territory for terrorist acts against others". It added that Pakistan's claim of "weaponization" conflates the treaty's "cooperative scaffolding with its physical entitlements". India, the report stressed, has not "diverted, dammed, or interdicted Pakistani waters" in violation of the provisions of the agreement but has suspended the cooperative apparatus: "data exchange, commission engagement, and treaty-level dispute mechanisms". Highlighting India's principled and consistent stance while continuing the abeyance, the report said, "The path back to the treaty is open. It runs through Pakistan's credible, irrevocable, and verifiable abandonment of cross-border terrorism through no other forum and certainly not the Security Council."

## Operation Sindoor: Pakistan's Fake Victory Spectacle Couldn't Hide Crisis Within Terror Groups

New Delhi, 8/5i: For Pakistan, 'Operation Sindoor' resulted in a loss of face. After terror infrastructure was hit hard by the Indian armed forces who were avenging the Pahalgam terror attack, Pakistan set out a fake narrative of emerging victorious. Rallies and processions were taken out to create an impression that the Pakistan Army had hit back and won the battle. While the perception was created, the reality was something different. An official said that events were strategically planned across Pakistan to commemorate fake victory. On the other hand, social media handles run by Pakistanis worked overtime to put out false narratives. Following the conclusion of 'Operation Sindoor', Pakistan's Army chief instructed the Shehbaz Sharif government to release Rs 500 crore. This money was then distributed evenly to federal governments, business and religious groups. All were asked to organise massive rallies across Pakistan. The

programme mandate by the Pakistan Army was titled 'Ashra-e-Tashakur Fateh-E-Muneeb,' which means ten days of gratitude for a decisive victory. To cement the fake claim further, Asim Munir even pressured the Sharif government to make him Field Marshal. An Intelligence Bureau official said that while these rallies took place on a grand scale for ten days, something more serious was brewing within. Some of the rallies even focussed on thanking the Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Tayiba for the so-called victory. However, within the ranks of these two terror groups something serious was simmering. Both Hafiz Saeed and Masood Azhar had started to question the Pakistan Army and the ISI. They wanted to know what happened to the guarantees and protection that they had been assured. These groups have been operating with ease only due to the funds and protection that the Army and the ISI offer them. During 'Operation Sindoor', the Jaish-e-

Mohammad lost its Bahawalpur headquarters. Its chief Masood Azhar even lost most of his family members and several other cadres. The Muridke camp, which is the Lashkar-e-Tayiba's primary training facility was blown to pieces during the Indian operation. Both these terror groups, which have wrecked havoc in India, had not witnessed such a huge hit. There have been encounters and terrorists have been killed on Indian soil. However never have they been struck so hard and that, too, deep inside Pakistan. Another official said that the impression that the Pakistan establishment sought to create in the aftermath of the operation worked among a few people, but clearly their proxies were not impressed. They knew what they had lost and the fact that the Army could not even defend them is what left them completely disgruntled. The official also said that many cadres, too, had started questioning their own leadership.

## US, Iran Clash Again While US Says No Intention Of Escalation

Tehran, 8/5: Iran's main military command, Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters has said that the US army attacked two Iranian vessels near the Strait of Hormuz and concurrently carried out airstrikes on civilian areas in southern Iran in cooperation with some regional states. The attacks by the US "aggressive and terrorist" army violated the ceasefire between Iran and the United States, said Ebrahim Zolfaghari, the headquarters' spokesman, according to Iranian media. One of the targeted vessels was an oil tanker sailing from Iran's territorial waters near Jask toward the Strait of Hormuz, while the other was entering the waterway near Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates, Zolfaghari said, adding that the targeted civilian areas included Bandar-e Khamir and Sirik, both in Hormozgan province, Xinhua news agency reported. He noted that Iran's armed forces immediately



retaliated by attacking US military vessels east of the Strait of Hormuz and south of Iran's Chabahar port, causing significant damage. He warned that Iran would give a crushing response to any aggression without any hesitation. Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps Navy said early Friday that Iranian forces carried out a "large-scale and precise combined operation" using ballistic missiles, anti-ship

cruise missiles and explosive drones targeting US destroyers. It added that intelligence assessments indicated "significant damage" to US vessels, prompting three destroyers to retreat from the Strait of Hormuz area. US Central Command (CENTCOM) said in a statement that US forces intercepted "unprovoked Iranian attacks" and responded with self-defence strikes as their Navy ships passed through the Strait of Hormuz. CENTCOM added that

it "does not seek escalation but remains positioned and ready to protect American forces." President Donald Trump said on Thursday that no damage was done to the three world-class American destroyers that just transited out of the Strait of Hormuz. In a Truth Social post, Trump said Iran suffered great damage and threatened that future attacks would be "a lot harder, and a lot more violent." Meanwhile, Fox News correspondent Jennifer Griffin quoted a senior US official saying that the US military carried out strikes on Iran's Qeshm Port and Bandar Abbas, but added that it was not a restarting of the war or an end to the ceasefire, Xinhua news agency reported. Earlier, Trump announced that Project Freedom, the US military operation to guide commercial ships out of the Strait of Hormuz, would be paused to see whether a peace deal could be reached with Tehran.

## Italy Parliamentary Committee To Probe Chinese Tech Investments

New Delhi: Italy's parliamentary intelligence committee, Copasir, is preparing a new inquiry into Chinese investment in the Italian economy, primarily focusing on strategic assets and high tech start ups, a report has said. The probe that is expected to begin in May will comprise long hearings with experts, economists, business representatives and signals renewed concern in Rome over Beijing's economic footprint, Italy-based media house Decode 39 said in a report. Copasir had done a similar investigation seven years back that concentrated on China's role in mobile networks and 5G infrastructure, and the new investigation will be of a wider scope. Under new committee chair Lorenzo



Guerini, Copasir plans to deliver a detailed report to Parliament within a few months, people familiar with the matter told the media house. "Chinese stakes in key

sectors of the Italian economy remain a source of national security concern, especially where infrastructure, technology and access to sensitive markets are involved,"

the report said. The report said that Rome is increasingly concerned about small, high-potential technology startups being exposed to predatory investment strategies that target know-how, patents and industrial secrets of these companies. "Several high-profile files have helped push the China question back to the top of the security agenda," the report said. Italian tyre manufacturer Pirelli has recently been in news for adjusting its operational structure in the US market, following Italian government's "golden power" restrictions that impacted the influence of its largest shareholder, Sinochem, a state-owned Chinese company.

## MoS Kirti Vardhan Singh Holds 'Productive Meeting' With UN Chief Guterres On IMRF Sidelines

United Nations: India's Minister of State of External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh has met with Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on the sidelines of International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) to discuss issues of mutual concern. After the meeting, Singh took to social media platform X and wrote: "Had a productive meeting with Secretary General of United Nations HE Mr. Antonio Guterres on the sidelines of the IMRF." Singh is in New York to attend the UN's Second International Migration Review Forum. He hosted a reception at India's UN mission for the heads of delegations to the meeting on

Thursday after addressing the plenary meeting of the forum. Singh led a commemoration of Operation Sindoor that gave a resounding blow to Pakistan for defending and aiding terrorists. India's resolve to fight terrorism remained as strong as ever, he said on Thursday. The meeting commemorating the first anniversary of Operation Sindoor paid tributes to India's UN Mission to "the bravery and professionalism of our armed forces, which is unparalleled". Singh met several leaders for bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the forum. Earlier on Monday, he and the Philippines Secretary for Migrant Workers, Hans Leo Cacadac, discussed

collaboration on the shared issues of mobility and migration, according to an X post by India's UN mission. Ecuador's Deputy Minister of Human Mobility, Saul Pacurucu, discussed with him "strengthening cooperation on safe, orderly and regular migration, mobility partnerships, and bilateral issues of mutual interest". At his meeting on Tuesday with the European Union's Migration Commissioner Magnus Brunner, they "took stock of multiple meetings of the India-EU comprehensive framework on cooperation in mobility and the recently launched Legal Gateway Office in ICT (information communications technology) Sector", Singh tweeted.

## India's Holistic Approach To Emigration Backed By Digital Innovation: Kirti Vardhan Singh

United Nations, 8/5: India's holistic approach to emigration is backed by digital innovation to cover all aspects of employment abroad, from hiring, preparation for departure, proper employment and return, according to Kirti Vardhan Singh, the Minister of State for External Affairs. India's eMigrate platform shows how "digital technologies are no longer just enablers, they are reshaping governance itself", he said on Thursday at an event organised by India's

mission. Held on the sidelines of the Second International Migration Review Forum, the event on "Leveraging Digital Innovation in Migration Governance" showcased India's eMigrate system. India's holistic approach, he said, "recognises that migration is not merely a movement of people, but a continuum that spans pre-departure preparation, safe transit, dignified employment, and eventual return and reintegration". Singh said that eMigrate starts with vetting

employers and recruiters, bringing transparency to the process of hiring by allowing prospective employees to verify them and avoid fraud. "Currently, we have around 2,98,000 registered foreign employers and 2,457 active recruiting agents registered on the eMigrate portal", he said. They can also recruit through the portal. The platform serves workers by also integrating with platforms for skilling, employment, documentation, service delivery, multilingual

interfaces, as well as online grievance redressal and payment transfer at no cost. India's Permanent Representative P. Harish said that India was making available to everyone the digital tools it has developed, like eMigrate, because of the nation's commitment to South-South cooperation. "We have not patented these digital public platforms. We have made it available for free, put it on the net in an open source format, made available to our friends and partners so that they can adapt

it according to their needs and requirements," he said. "This is very much a part not only of our bilateral but also of our UN-mediated South-South cooperation frameworks that we have in assisting our friends and partners in the Global South", he added. Harish said that the distinction between refugees and migrants must be kept. Ecuador's Vice Minister of Human Mobility, Saul Pacurucu, said that his country has put 100 per cent of its consular services online and would learn from

India's experience in coordinating interoperability of digital platforms across the labour migration cycle. International Organisation for Migration's Senior Director Kim Eling said, "India is demonstrating how technology can be used, not simply to modernise systems, but to better protect people". He said the scale of eMigrate operations is "amazing". Saudi Arabia's Permanent Representative Abdulaziz Alwasil said, "As a major

destination country hosting a large and diverse expatriate population, with over 10 million foreign workers contributing to its labour market, the Kingdom recognises both the opportunities and the responsibilities associated with labour mobility". "Saudi Arabia has undertaken a wide range of reforms under its ongoing national transformation efforts to mobilise its labour market and strengthen migration governance frameworks," he said.



London, 8/7: Two British nationals have been confirmed to have contracted hantavirus, with a third suspected of infection, on the South Atlantic island of Tristan da Cunha, the UK Health Security Agency said on Friday. None of the British citizens on board the cruise ship MV Hondius is currently reporting symptoms, but they are being closely monitored, said the agency, adding that all British passengers and crew onboard will be asked to isolate for 45 days upon returning to Britain. British government staff will be on site to support British nationals disembarking when the ship docks in Spain's Tenerife on Sunday, Xinhua news agency reported. The agency is aware that seven British nationals disembarked the ship at St Helena, a South Atlantic island, on April 24. Two of them have returned to Britain and are isolating at home and have not reported symptoms of infection. Four of them remain in St Helena, and the seventh has been traced outside Britain. On Thursday,

the World Health Organisation (WHO) said that five of the eight cases reported on board the cruise ship MV Hondius had been confirmed as hantavirus infections, while the other three were considered suspected cases. The WHO denied that the deadly hantavirus outbreak on the cruise ship was "the start of a COVID pandemic," saying its risk to the public remained low. Meanwhile, the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention has classified the hantavirus outbreak as a "level 3" emergency, the lowest, ABC

News reported on Thursday. This means a low risk to public health, but the situation is being actively monitored by the health agency, said the report. On Thursday, the WHO said that five of the eight cases reported on board the cruise ship MV Hondius had been confirmed as hantavirus infections, while the other three were considered suspected cases. The WHO denied that the deadly hantavirus outbreak on the cruise ship was "the start of a COVID pandemic," saying its risk to the public remained low.

## Bringing Classrooms Closer: Vedanta Supports Ekal Vidyalayas in Rayagada and Kalahandi

Bhubaneswar, 8/5 (DMS): In India's development journey, education plays a critical role. However, given the vastness and diversity of our landscape, the last-mile delivery of this constitutionally enshrined right has been a recurring challenge, especially in rapidly growing states like Odisha. This is most visible in tribal regions, where geography, dispersed settlements and socio-economic barriers hinder access to essential services. In districts like Rayagada and Kalahandi, the gap is particularly evident in the early years of learning. For many tribal children, formal education often begins in a language unfamiliar to them, within systems that do not reflect their lived reality. Recognising this need, Ekal Vidyalayas have adopted a decentralised, community-based model, bringing learning into villages and delivering it in local dialects. Vedanta Aluminium has been extensively supporting this unique model's expansion in the region with nearly 400 such schools in Kalahandi and



Rayagada supported by the company, taking the project's transformational impact beyond classrooms and into communities. The company's efforts go beyond financial support and extend to onboarding teachers, providing learning materials and linking classroom education with practical awareness sessions through its wider community programmes. Each of the Ekal

Vidyalayas is designed to eliminate access barriers as far as possible, helping ensure that children in the 6-10 age group have access to foundational learning opportunities. Classes are held within the village, often in open or shared spaces, led by a teacher/Acharya, drawn from the same or nearby community. This ensures familiarity, language alignment and continuity. Alongside this, the

company's additional interventions in sanitation, health and nutrition further augment the ecosystem within which these schools operate. The model is simple but deliberate. Teaching methods rely on storytelling, songs and local references, ensuring comprehension in the early years. The focus remains on retention and foundational learning, rather than just enrolment.

## Gold, Silver Rally Up To 1 Pc As West Asia Tensions Escalate

Mumbai, 8/5: Gold and silver prices traded higher on Friday amid renewed geopolitical tensions between the US and Iran, with precious metals surging up to 1 per cent. On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures (June 5) opened at Rs 1,52,672 per 10 grams, up Rs 411 from the previous close of Rs 1,52,261. At around 12:20 pm, the yellow metal was trading Rs 592 or 0.38 per cent higher at Rs 1,52,853 per 10 grams. During the session so far, it touched an intraday high of Rs 1,53,103, rising Rs 842 or 0.55 per cent. Meanwhile, silver futures (July 3) opened at Rs 2,59,999 per kg against the previous close of Rs 2,58,540, a gain of Rs 1,459 or 0.56 per cent. The white metal was trading Rs 3,126 or 1.21 per cent higher at Rs 2,61,666 per kg. Silver touched an intraday high of Rs 2,62,723, up Rs 4,183 or 1.61 per cent. The commodity market experts said MCX gold continues to show improving momentum after opening firmly above the Rs 1,52,000 level. Analysts noted that a sustained move above Rs 1,53,000 could strengthen bullish sentiment and push prices towards the Rs 1,55,000-Rs 1,56,000 range. Immediate support for gold is seen between



Rs 1,52,000 and Rs 1,51,600, with stronger buying support emerging near Rs 1,50,000 levels. For silver, analysts said prices remained firm after opening with a gap-up above the Rs 2,60,000 mark. A decisive breakout above the Rs 2,64,000-Rs 2,66,000 resistance zone could extend the rally towards Rs 2,72,000-Rs 2,75,000 levels, while support is placed around Rs 2,56,000. Precious metals also witnessed gains in international markets. COMEX gold was trading 0.28 per cent higher at \$4,725 per ounce, while COMEX silver rose 0.17 per cent to \$80.30 per ounce. The rally in precious metals followed renewed tensions

in West Asia after Iran accused the United States of violating the month-long ceasefire agreement, while Washington defended its actions as retaliatory following alleged attacks on American naval vessels in the Strait on Thursday. Iran's military claimed that US forces struck an Iranian oil tanker, another vessel and civilian locations in the Strait as well as on the Iranian mainland. Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump said the ceasefire remained in effect and that Washington was awaiting Tehran's response to its latest peace proposal. Moreover, Brent crude rose 2.82 per cent to \$102.89 per barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude gained 4 per cent to \$98.64 per barrel.

## India At Forefront Of Global Space Transformation: Nidhi Khare

New Delhi: India is at the forefront of global space transformation and is steadily emerging as a major hub for innovation and private sector participation in the space industry, Nidhi Khare, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, has said, it was announced on Friday. Addressing the opening plenary of the 35th ISO TC 20/SC 14 meeting on 'Space Systems and Operations' here, Khare has highlighted that the importance of international collaboration in developing global standards for the space ecosystem, according to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution. "It is a matter of immense pride for India to host this meeting as we stand at the forefront of global space transformation," she said. Khare noted that major policy reforms and the establishment of the Indian National Space Promotion and

Authorization Centre (IN-SPACE) have laid the foundation for India's emergence as a global space hub. According to her, the reforms have created opportunities for startups as well as established industries to expand their participation in the country's rapidly growing space sector. She added that standards developed through international collaboration and shared expertise would play a crucial role in ensuring that space activities remain safe, sustainable and inclusive. The international meeting hosted by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the national standards body of India, has brought together delegates from several countries, including representatives from national standards bodies, international space agencies, industry and academia. BIS Director General Sanjay Garg underlined the importance of standardisation

in strengthening quality, safety and global competitiveness in India's expanding space industry. He said BIS is working to align Indian standards with international frameworks to support the evolving needs of the sector and help Indian private companies compete globally. According to Garg, hosting the ISO meeting in India would also enable Indian experts to participate directly in the global standardisation process, strengthening both domestic capabilities and international cooperation. IN-SPACE Chairman Pawan Goenka said India's space ecosystem is witnessing transformative growth driven by policy reforms and increasing private sector participation. He stressed the importance of robust global standards in supporting innovation, building industry confidence and helping India integrate more deeply into the global space economy.

## Sensex, Nifty End Lower As US-Iran Tensions Weigh On Market Sentiment

Mumbai, 8/5: Indian benchmark indices ended lower on Friday as renewed tensions between the United States and Iran dampened investor sentiment and triggered caution across sectors. The selloff was largely led by banking stocks, while gains in IT shares helped limit the downside. The Nifty ended 150.50 points or 0.62 per cent down at 24,176.15 and the Sensex ended 516.33 points or 0.66 per cent down at 77,328.19. Commenting on Nifty technical outlook, experts said that the 24,250-24,300 level continues to act as an immediate resistance zone, and a sustained breakout above this mark could strengthen momentum further toward the broader hurdle near the 24,400-24,500 levels. "On the downside, the 24,100-24,000 region remains a crucial support area, which will be important to maintain the current market structure," an analyst stated. Among the top gainers on the Nifty index were Titan, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise and Asian Paints, which managed to buck the broader market



weakness. However, SBI, Coal India, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank and Bajaj Finance were among top laggards. On the sectoral front, banking counters witnessed heavy pressure. The Nifty PSU Bank, Nifty Private Bank, and Nifty Bank indices emerged as the worst-performing sectoral gauges during the session as investors trimmed exposure to financial stocks amid rising global uncertainty. In contrast, the Nifty IT index outperformed other sectors, supported by defensive buying and expectations of stable demand for technology

services. Meanwhile, oil prices moved higher as hopes for a near-term resolution to the conflict in West Asia faded. Brent crude futures rose 0.66 per cent to \$100.72 per barrel on the Intercontinental Exchange, adding to concerns over inflation and potential pressure on economies dependent on oil imports, including India. "Renewed hostilities between US and Iranian forces near the Strait of Hormuz triggered a sharp unwinding of optimism across global markets and risk assets, after Iran claimed the US had violated the ceasefire agreement," an expert stated

## Economists Don't Expect RBI To Exhibit Any Urgency To Tighten Policy Rate

New Delhi, 8/5: Economists on Friday said they do not expect the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) monetary policy committee to exhibit any urgency to tighten policy as yet amid fast-evolving geopolitical situation. RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said last month that Central Bank is closely monitoring the fallout from the West Asia conflict and will not make firm commitments on the future path of policy rates. He signalled that the central bank was in no hurry to move on rates. "We are in a wait-and-watch mode," he said. According to Radhika Rao, Senior Economist and Executive Director, DBS Bank, India's April inflation is expected to rise to 3.9 per cent YoY from 3.4 per cent in the previous month, edging closer to the mid-point of the target range, versus a benign 2.1 per cent in FY26. Food



inflation is likely to have edged up towards 4.5 per cent from 3.7 per cent, reversing last year's weak momentum, driven by selected perishables such as tomatoes and eggs, along with cereals and edible oils, and further exacerbated by untimely rains in some regions. "Core inflation, however, is expected to remain stable and modest at 3.4 per cent, helped by a pullback in precious

metal prices. Signs of an updraft should also be captured in transport inflation due to ATF prices and services in the restaurant and hospitality sector (commercial cooking gas price adjustments)," said Rao. The broader impact of high global oil prices is yet to percolate through retail inflation, as pump fuel prices remain unchanged. Markets will also monitor El Nino

developments and their impact on monsoon strength. Meanwhile, the jump in imported costs on account of elevated commodity prices and a weak rupee is likely to be more apparent in the WPI gauge, which had already outpaced retail inflation in March and is expected to extend the uptrend in April as well, said the economist. In its April meeting, the RBI kept repo rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent with a neutral stance. ASSOCHAM had appreciated the "calibrated step aimed at strengthening stability in the macroeconomic environment", adding that it helps sustain growth momentum and ensure price stability. Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda, indicated dimmed likelihood of any further rate cuts as the RBI has flagged El Nino as a risk to inflation, too, and projected a GDP growth at 6.9 per cent and inflation at 4.6 per cent.

## Indian Stock Market Slumps As Middle East Tensions Hit Investor Sentiment Hard On Friday

New Delhi, 8/5: Benchmark equity indices plummeted on Friday as escalating military activity near the Strait of Hormuz rattled global investors. Selling pressure intensified throughout the session, causing the BSE Sensex to drop 516.33 points, finishing at 77,328.19. Simultaneously, the Nifty 50 gave up 150.50 points to settle at 24,176.15. This sudden downturn reflects deep anxiety over energy supply routes, as the Strait remains a vital artery for global oil shipments. Renewed military friction between the United States and Iran has stalled expectations for a regional ceasefire. Market analysts noted that these developments forced a "risk-off" mood, where traders liquidate stocks to move into safer assets. Historically, the Indian market has remained sensitive to West Asian instability because the country imports over 80 per cent of its crude oil requirements. While Brent crude hovered near the USD 100 mark, the threat of further escalation prompted widespread profit booking. Public sector banks bore the brunt of the sell-off, with the Nifty PSU Bank index crashing by more than 3 per cent. Metal and auto stocks also faced significant headwinds. Conversely, the IT sector provided a silver lining as the Nifty IT index climbed 1.21 per cent.

## India-UAE Ties Deepen Across Defence, Trade And Technology: Report

New Delhi, 8/5: India-UAE ties are deepening across defence, trade, investment and emerging technologies, which reflects a broad-based strategic partnership that continues to expand beyond traditional areas of cooperation, a report has said. The report by The Secretariat noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's



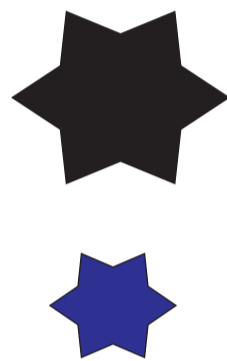
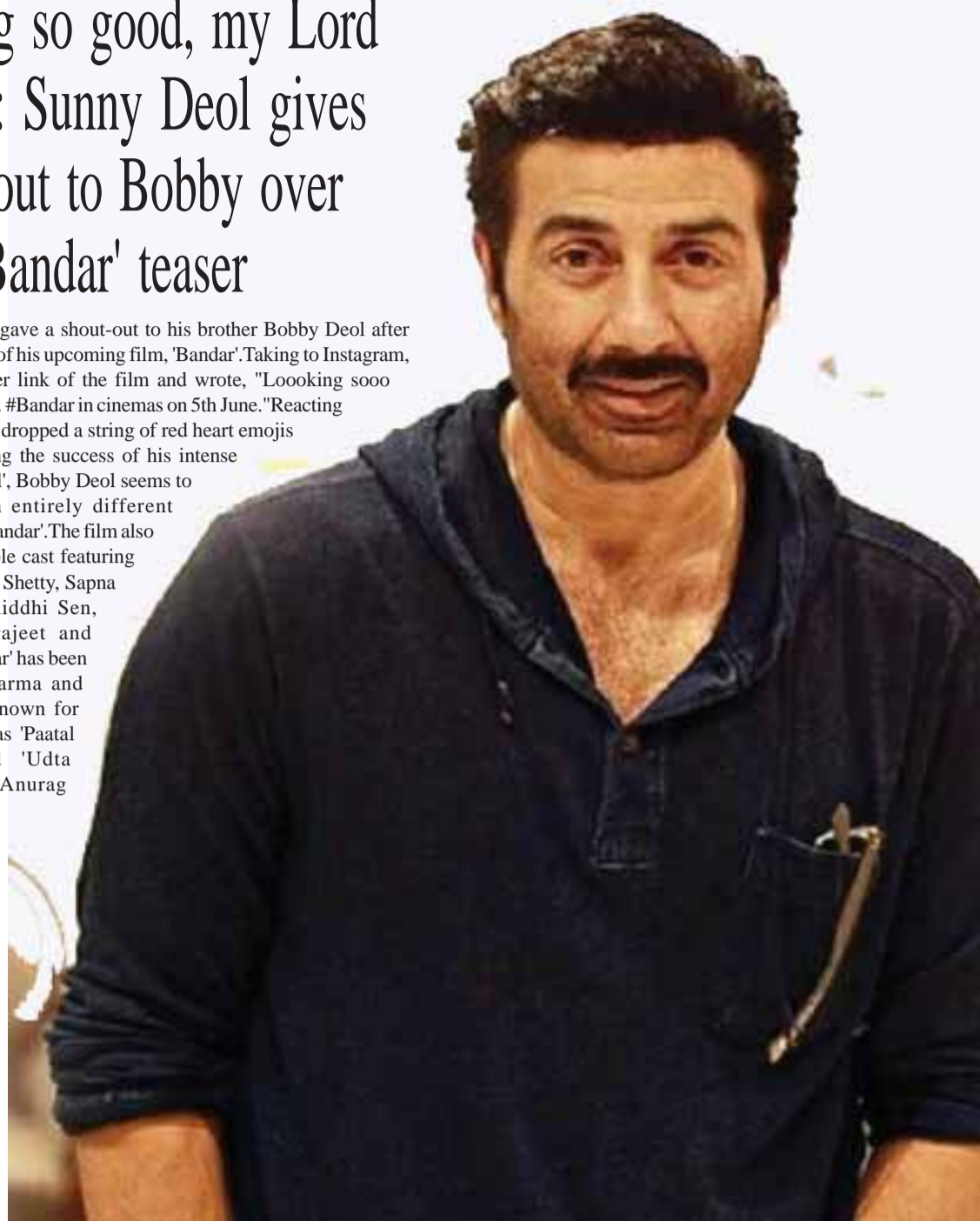
proposed stopover in the United Arab Emirates en route to Europe in May underscores the growing importance of the bilateral relationship, particularly at a time of heightened geopolitical tensions in West Asia. "During the visit of UAE President Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan in January, India and the UAE signed a Letter of Intent for finalising a Strategic Defence Partnership (SDP) framework to strengthen the defence partnership," the report said. It further stated that the visit is not only a reflection of India's engagement with the Gulf leadership amid ongoing regional instability, but also highlights the strategic convergence between the two countries in sectors ranging from energy security to investments and diaspora linkages. According to the report,

India and the UAE are now increasingly aligned as strategic partners, with cooperation extending to defence manufacturing, maritime security and counter-terror coordination. The report outlined that the Indian diaspora in the UAE has also become a major pillar of the relationship, contributing significantly to the Gulf nation's economy while strengthening India's global outreach. It highlighted that defence cooperation between the two countries has expanded in recent years, moving beyond a buyer-seller dynamic to structured engagement through institutional mechanisms such as the Joint Defence Co-operation Committee (JDCC). It pointed out the growing interest in joint ventures and industry partnerships in the defence

sector. On the economic front, bilateral trade has crossed significant milestones following the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), making the UAE India's third-largest trading partner and a major export destination. Investment flows, including sovereign wealth fund participation, have also increased substantially, it said. The report added that both countries are now exploring collaboration in artificial intelligence, supercomputing, digital public infrastructure and energy transition technologies, signalling a shift towards a high-tech strategic partnership. However, it cautioned that India must carefully balance its broader West Asia engagements while deepening ties with the UAE.

## "Looking so good, my Lord Bobby": Sunny Deol gives shout out to Bobby over 'Bandar' teaser

Sunny Deol on Friday gave a shout-out to his brother Bobby Deol after the release of the teaser of his upcoming film, 'Bandar'. Taking to Instagram, Sunny posted the teaser link of the film and wrote, "Looking sooo goood my Lord Bobby. #Bandar in cinemas on 5th June." Reacting to Sunny's post, Bobby dropped a string of red heart emojis in the section. Following the success of his intense performance in 'Animal', Bobby Deol seems to be venturing into an entirely different cinematic space with 'Bandar'. The film also boasts a strong ensemble cast featuring Sanya Malhotra, Raj B Shetty, Sapna Pabbi, Saba Azad, Riddhi Sen, Jitendra Joshi, Indrajeet and Nagesh Bhonsle. 'Bandar' has been penned by Sudip Sharma and Abhishek Banerjee, known for acclaimed titles such as 'Paatal Lok', 'Kohrra' and 'Udta Punjab'. Directed by Anurag



## Shakira returns to football stage with new 2026 FIFA World Cup anthem Dai Dai

Shakira returns to football stage with new 2026 FIFA World Cup anthem Dai Dai. Shakira has officially returned to the football spotlight by revealing a teaser for 'Dai Dai', her newest anthem for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. This upcoming track features Nigerian superstar Burna Boy and is scheduled for a full release on May 14. Fans received a first look through a one-minute video filmed at the historic Maracana Stadium in Brazil, signaling the singer's first official tournament song since her 2010 global sensation. Teaming up with Burna Boy brings an Afrobeats influence to the tournament, reflecting the diverse culture of the host nations. This partnership follows her legendary success with 'Waka Waka (This Time for Africa)', which dominated music charts for nearly a year. While she has performed at multiple closing ceremonies, this marks her formal return as the voice of the world's biggest sporting event. Hosting duties for 2026 will be shared across the United States, Canada, and Mexico, making it the most geographically vast competition in football history. With 104 matches scheduled, the energy of 'Dai Dai' will need to resonate across sixteen different host cities. Historically, World Cup anthems serve as vital cultural bridges, often becoming more memorable than the matches themselves, much like the 1998 hit by Ricky Martin. Opening ceremonies begin in Mexico City, while the final showdown will take place in New Jersey. Fans are already drawing parallels between this new rhythmic teaser and her previous record-breaking hits, hoping for another melody that unites stadiums worldwide.



## SPORTS

### Global Chess League Returns To India For Season 4

New Delhi, 8/9: The Global Chess League (GCL) and FIDE on Friday announced that season 4 will take place in India, a country where chess is not just played, but lived, followed, and celebrated like never before, with the host city to be announced in the coming days. The last edition of the Global Chess League took place in Mumbai in December 2025. Alpine SG Pipers won the title after a strong campaign. Since it started, the league has aimed to change the game with a fast-paced franchise-based format. It features rapid matches and mixed-gender teams, hoping to make chess a popular spectator sport worldwide. Across previous seasons, India has delivered packed arenas, electric fan zones, and a surge of digital engagement that has reshaped how chess connects with audiences. Season 4 will once again bring together the world's leading players in a team-based format that blends elite competition with high-intensity storytelling. Arkady Dvorkovich,



president, FIDE, said, "India continues to play a defining role in the global growth of chess, both through its exceptional talent and the passion of its fans. The Global Chess League has introduced a new energy to the sport by combining world-class competition with an engaging team format that appeals to new

and existing audiences alike. We are excited to bring Season 4 to India and look forward to celebrating the game with millions of fans who are helping shape the future of chess worldwide." Gourav Rakshit, Commissioner, Tech Mahindra Global Chess League, said, "The Global Chess League has played

a pivotal role in transforming chess into a more dynamic and spectator-friendly sport. India's passion for the game and its rapidly growing chess ecosystem make it a natural destination for the league. We look forward to another exciting season that brings together the world's best players and a global fanbase."

### Shakti Kapoor calls viral death rumours "not good," assures fans he is safe

Veteran actor Shakti Kapoor has reacted strongly after fake reports about his death started circulating online. The actor called the rumours "completely fake" and said he is "healthy and happy." In a video message shared on his Instagram account, Shakti Kapoor called rumours "not good." The veteran actor said he plans to take legal action and file a cyber complaint against those spreading the false news. Addressing his fans and followers, Kapoor said, "Hello everyone, the news of my death is completely fake. I am healthy and happy. Please ignore it. I am going to cyber complain about it. But this is not good. That's not good." Shakti Kapoor is one of Bollywood's most popular character actors and is known for playing both comic and villainous roles. Over the years, he has appeared in more than 700 films and became especially famous during the 1980s and 1990s. Some of his well-known films include 'Raja Babu', 'Andaz Apna Apna', 'ChaalBaaz', 'Coolie No. 1', 'Judwaa', 'Satte Pe Satta' and 'Bol Radha Bol'. The actor was last seen in 'Mere Husband Ki Biwi', directed by Mudassar Aziz. The film starred Arjun



Kapoor, Rakul Preet Singh and Bhumi Pednekar in lead roles. Before that, he also appeared in Sandeep Reddy Vanga's Animal alongside Ranbir Kapoor, Anil Kapoor and Rashmika Mandanna

### New Rules Are Introduced To Maintain The IPL's Transparency: BCCI Vice President Rajeev Shukla

Lucknow 8/9: BCCI vice president Rajeev Shukla said the governing body is rolling out stricter regulations for all IPL players to improve transparency and strengthen security arrangements during the tournament. Shukla stated that fans and outsiders will no longer be allowed to meet players inside team hotels or buses, with the new rules expected to be implemented in the coming days to ensure tighter protocols and better protection for cricketers throughout the league. "New rules are in the works, and, according to the news directives, player access will be



regulated. Unauthorised individuals will not be allowed to approach players, whether at the hotel or on the team bus.

These rules are expected to be implemented within the next few days to ensure that the transparency of the IPL is

maintained completely," Shukla said. Earlier on Friday, the BCCI issued seven pages of guidelines for the 10 IPL franchises, warning them about the potential dangers of targeted honey-trapping during the league. The board said it will conduct unannounced "surprise checks" to ensure strict adherence to the league's extensive regulatory framework and operational guidelines. According to the directive, Saikia noted that no one is permitted to enter a team member's room, regardless of their relationship with the player or official, without the prior knowledge and approval of the team manager.

### Neetu Kapoor Delivers Emotional Masterclass in Family Comedy Daadi Ki Shaadi

Neetu Kapoor brings a rare blend of grace and vulnerability to her role as Vimla Ahuja in the newly released drama, Daadi Ki Shaadi. Set against the scenic, mist-covered backdrop of Shimla, the plot centers on a widow whose life turns upside down after a social media post about her desire to remarry goes viral. While the movie introduces a refreshing conversation about elderly companionship, it often struggles to maintain its momentum over a lengthy runtime. Vimla's sudden digital announcement serves as a wake-up call for her three adult children, who return to their ancestral home out of social

anxiety rather than genuine concern. Joining this family reunion is Tony Kalra, portrayed by Kapil Sharma, who acts as a comedic bridge between the clashing generations. Sharma's natural timing provides essential levity during the first half, making the friction between the Ahuja and Kalra families feel both relatable and humorous. Riddhima Kapoor Sahni enters the acting world at 45, playing Vimla's daughter with a grounded sense of realism. Her performance adds a layer of authenticity to the sibling dynamics, reflecting a modern family's struggle with guilt and

responsibility. Viewers in regions like Odisha, where traditional family structures are highly valued, will likely find the film's focus on the isolation of the elderly particularly moving. However, the second half of the story falters as the screenplay transitions into heavy melodrama. The narrative loses its light-hearted charm and begins to resemble older, lecture-heavy films that focus more on shaming children than exploring the parents' emotional needs. Instead of diving deeper into Vimla's personal growth, the script relies on repetitive arguments and predictable emotional cues.