

# Dumani Mail

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## ISKCON violates established religious traditions of Jagannath Rath Yatra

**Odisha Forum Seeks Government Intervention and UNESCO Recognition**

**New Delhi :** As millions of devotees across the world prepare to celebrate the annual Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath at Puri, Odisha Forum, a leading think tank of the Odia community in Delhi-NCR, has expressed concern over the observance of Rath Yatra by several overseas centres of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) on dates different from the sacred tithis prescribed in the scriptures and traditionally observed at the Shree Jagannath Temple, Puri.

Expressing concern over the issue, Gokul Patnaik, President of Odisha Forum, said:

"The observance of Rath Yatra on dates other than those prescribed by the sacred scriptures and followed at Shree Jagannath Dham, Puri, represents a departure from centuries-old religious tradition. A festival of such profound spiritual significance should not be reduced to a matter of convenience. We appeal to all organisations associated with Lord Jagannath's worship to uphold the sanctity and scriptural foundations of this sacred observance."

Lord Jagannath occupies a unique position in the Hindu tradition and is revered as Purushottama, Paramatma and Parameshwara. The Shree Jagannath Temple, Puri, regarded as His Moola Peetha, has followed the rituals prescribed in the Skanda Purana, Brahma Purana, Padma Purana and other sacred texts for centuries. According to these scriptures, Snana Yatra is observed on Jyeshtha Purnima, while Rath Yatra commences on Asadha Shukla Dwitiya and continues for nine days.

According to Odisha Forum, discussions between the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) and ISKCON headquarters at Mayapur led to an understanding that Rath Yatra in India would be observed during the prescribed period. However, several ISKCON centres outside India continue to



organise Rath Yatra on dates determined by local convenience, citing administrative permissions and weekend participation.

The Forum stated that after examining ISKCON's submissions, a panel of scholars appointed by SJTA concluded in its opinion dated 2 September 2025 that celebration of Snana Yatra and Rath Yatra on dates other than the prescribed tithis is inconsistent with the sacred scriptures, divine command and long-established religious tradition.

The practice has also been criticised by Jagadguru Shankaracharya Swami Nischalananda Saraswati of Govardhan Peeth, Puri, who has consistently advocated adherence to the traditional calendar. Similar views have reportedly been expressed by the Jagadguru Shankaracharyas of Sringeri and Kanchipuram, who have advised devotees to follow the practices observed at Shree Jagannath Dham, Puri.

The issue gained international attention after ISKCON New York organised Rath Yatra on 13 June, more than a month before the traditional observance according to the Puri calendar. The event drew objections from several devotees in the United States.

In his representation, Dr. Debananda Pal of Houston stated: "Untimely observance of Shree Jagannath Rath Yatra deeply hurts the religious sentiments of countless devotees."

## In Just Three Years: Centurion University's Meteoric Rise from the 801-1000 Band to the Global Top 200 in the Times Higher Education Sustainability Impact Ratings 2026

**Bhubaneswar :** Centurion University of Technology and Management (Centurion University) has achieved a landmark milestone in global higher education, securing a place in the 101-200 global band of the Times Higher Education (THE) Sustainability Impact Ratings 2026 and earning the distinction of being ranked No. 4 in India overall. Recognised worldwide as the leading measure of how universities contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the rankings place Centurion University

among a select group of institutions demonstrating measurable impact on society, the economy and the environment. The achievement represents one of the most remarkable rises in the rankings in recent years. In 2023, Centurion University was placed in the 801-1000 global band. It advanced to the 601-800 band in 2024 and entered the 301-400 band in 2025. In 2026, the university has broken into the global Top 200, marking a rise of nearly 800 places in just three years. More than a story of rankings, this

journey reflects a sustained commitment to transforming lives through education, skilling, innovation, entrepreneurship and community engagement. The breadth of Centurion University's performance across the Sustainable Development Goals is equally impressive. The university secured a place among the world's Top 30 institutions for two of the most pressing global priorities, ranking 26th globally for SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and 27th globally for SDG 13 (Climate Action).

## PM Modi announces Rs 2 lakh ex-gratia for families of deceased in Taratala godown shed collapse, Rs 50,000 for injured

**New Delhi :** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday announced ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh each for the families of the eight deceased in the collapse of an under-construction godown shed in Kolkata's Taratala area.

According to the PMO, the 20 people injured in the mishap will receive Rs 50,000 from the Centre.

In a statement on X, the PMO said that the state government is working to provide assistance to the people affected by the shed collapse.

PMO stated, "The mishap in Kolkata yesterday is saddening. An ex-gratia of Rs. 2 lakh each will be given from PMNRF to the next of kin of those who lost their lives in the mishap. The injured would be given Rs. 50,000. The state government is working round the clock to ensure that those affected receive all possible assistance: PM Narendra Modi."

According to Kolkata Police, the death toll in the incident has gone up to eight. All eight victims were declared brought dead at the SSKM Hospital. A total of 20 people were injured in the incident.

The incident occurred at



around 12:07 pm on Wednesday. The Indian Army and the NDRF are carrying out the rescue operation at the site of the accident.

Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari had visited the hospital on Wednesday. Adhikari told reporters that of the 20 injured, 18 were said to be out of danger.

Three individuals, including a building supervisor and two labour suppliers, have been arrested in connection with the collapse.

The West Bengal government has constituted a Special

Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the mishap.

According to the official release, the SIT will be headed by Assistant Commissioner of Police Joysurja Mukherjee. The team includes Inspector Debasish Dutta, Officer-in-Charge of the Homicide Squad (DD); Inspector Hiral Dalapati (DD), who will serve as the new Investigating Officer (IO) of the case; Inspector Sarfaraz Ahmed of the Anti-Rowdy Squad (DD); and Sub-Inspectors Manas Bhattacharya and Kushal Mondal from the Taratala Police Station.

PMO stated, "The mishap in Kolkata yesterday is saddening. An ex-gratia of Rs. 2 lakh each will be given from PMNRF to the next of kin of those who lost their lives in the mishap. The injured would be given Rs. 50,000. The state government is working round the clock to ensure that those affected receive all possible assistance: PM Narendra Modi." According to Kolkata Police, the death toll in the incident has gone up to eight. All eight victims were declared brought dead at the SSKM Hospital. A total of 20 people were injured in the incident.

## NIT Rourkela Hosts National Symposium on Building Resilient and Sustainable Highway Infrastructure

**Rourkela :** The Department of Civil Engineering, National Institute of Technology Rourkela inaugurated the three-day National Symposium on Building Resilient and Sustainable Highway Infrastructure (BRSHI-2026) on Friday. The symposium has brought together researchers, academicians, industry professionals and policymakers to deliberate on innovative solutions for developing resilient, sustainable and future-ready highway infrastructure.

The inaugural session was graced by Prof. K. Umamaheshwar Rao, Director, NIT Rourkela, as the Chief Guest. Prof. Manoranjan Parida, Former President of the Indian Roads Congress (IRC), Former Director of CSIR-Central Road Research Institute (CSIR-CRRI), and Professor at IIT Roorkee, and Mr. Pankaj Agrawal, Chief Engineer (Standards & Research), Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), Government of India, attended as distinguished speakers.

Welcoming the participants, Prof. Gaurav Saha, Convener of BRSHI-2026, said the



symposium aims to provide a collaborative platform for researchers, industry experts and policymakers to address the challenges of climate change, growing traffic demand, sustainable construction materials and emerging technologies in highway infrastructure.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. K. Umamaheshwar Rao emphasised the need for research that addresses India's unique transportation challenges.

"Our research should focus on solving the real problems faced by Indian highways. The true impact of engineering research lies in developing practical solutions that make our roads safer, more resilient and

sustainable for Indian conditions," he said.

Delivering the keynote address, Prof. Manoranjan Parida stressed that meaningful collaborations are essential for translating research into practice.

"India's transportation challenges require Indian solutions. Strong partnerships among academia, industry, research organisations and government agencies are vital to develop technologies and standards that can improve our road infrastructure," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Pankaj Agrawal highlighted the Ministry's efforts in supporting research on pavement performance, climate resilience and road safety.

"The Ministry is committed to supporting impactful research that addresses the country's infrastructure needs. Institutions like NIT Rourkela have an important role in developing innovative and sustainable solutions through collaborative research," he said.

Prof. S. P. Singh, Head of the Department of Civil Engineering, highlighted the department's contributions to engineering education, research and consultancy, while Prof. Mahavir Panda, Chairman of BRSHI-2026, encouraged participants to actively exchange ideas and build collaborations that contribute to the advancement of highway engineering in the country.

The symposium will feature keynote lectures, invited talks and technical sessions focusing on resilient pavement systems, sustainable construction materials, climate-resilient infrastructure, transportation safety and smart highway technologies. The deliberations are expected to contribute towards developing innovative solutions for India's rapidly expanding transportation network.

## FTII and NTWB hosts the All-Odisha Business Summit, UTKARSH 2026

**Bhubaneswar :** The All-Odisha Business Summit - "UTKARSH 2026", jointly organized by the Federation of Trade and Industry of India (FTII) in association with the National Traders' Welfare Board (NTWB), Government of India, was successfully held today at Hotel Lemon Tree Premier, Bhubaneswar.

The summit was graced by Hon'ble Chief Guest Shri Sunil J. Singh, Chairman, National Traders' Welfare Board (NTWB), Government of India, Guest of Honours Dr. Sanjay Bansal, National President, FTII; Dr. Prabodh Mohanty, Managing Director, SNM Group; Shri Ajay Agarwal, Chairman & Managing Director, Eestella Logmin LLP; Shri Raj Kumar Khandelwal; and Shri Saket Aggarwal, along with representatives from trade bodies, chambers of commerce, industry associations, entrepreneurs, MSME owners, and officials of the National Traders Welfare Board.

Highlighting the Government of India's continued efforts to create a business-friendly environment through policy reforms and simplification of rules, Sunil J. Singh, Chairman, National Traders' Welfare Board (NTWB), Government of India, said, "Utkarsh symbolises progress and growth, and I am confident that this conclave will make a meaningful contribution to India's holistic development. Simultaneously, the government is fostering a supportive ecosystem for traders, entrepreneurs, and businesses through progressive policies, improved access to finance, and proactive measures to address their concerns. I appreciate FTII for its commitment to empowering the trading community and urge all stakeholders to work together to drive economic growth and realise the vision of a developed India."

The summit was also attended by Ajay Agarwal, Chairman & Managing Director, Eestella Logmin



LLP, said, "Shri Sunil J. Singh has consistently been a strong voice for traders, serving as a vital bridge between the trading community and the government. We are grateful to Shri 6Singhi and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for creating a dedicated platform where traders can raise their concerns. The objective of this conclave is to create awareness among grassroots traders

about their rights and their crucial role in India's development. Let us join hands and work together towards building a stronger and more prosperous nation."

Dr. Sanjay Bansal, National President, FTII, said, "I congratulate Shri Sunil J. Singh, Chairman of the National Traders' Welfare Board, for his dedicated efforts towards the welfare of traders. The Board has

played a significant role in addressing traders' concerns and advancing their interests. At FTII, we remain committed to strengthening and empowering traders through collective efforts. Therefore, I urge traders to join hands with FTII and work together for the sector's growth and empowerment."

Dr. Prabodh Mohanty,

Managing Director, SNM Group said, "Odisha has emerged as a key driver of India's growth. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Viksit Odisha for Viksit Bharat 2047' aims to transform the state into a USD 1.5 trillion economy by 2047. Realising this vision requires collective efforts from not just traders, but every sector. Platforms like Utkarsh Odisha play a vital role in attracting investors, traders, and entrepreneurs, making Odisha a preferred destination for investment and sustainable economic growth."

During the summit, experts explained recent regulatory reforms aimed at simplifying compliance procedures, reducing transaction costs, and making it easier for businesses to operate and expand. Participants were also provided practical guidance on how traders, SMEs, and industry associations can take advantage of the new government initiatives and incentives. The interactive sessions encouraged open discussions

between government representatives and business leaders on the challenges faced in implementing policies at the local level. Participants shared their suggestions and experiences, helping identify practical solutions to improve the business ecosystem in Odisha.

The summit also served as an important networking platform, enabling entrepreneurs, traders, industry experts, and policymakers to exchange ideas and build partnerships for future growth. Participants expressed confidence that the knowledge shared during the event would help businesses adapt to the changing regulatory environment and contribute to the state's economic development.

Through UTKARSH 2026, the organizers and the representatives reaffirmed their commitment to supporting trade and industry through awareness, collaboration, and continuous engagement with stakeholders.

## Traffic Restrictions at Brahmagiri's Alarnath Shrine from June 30 to July 13



Puri: In view of the annual pilgrimage to the Alarnath Temple following Debasnana Purnima, the district administration has imposed temporary restrictions on the movement of heavy vehicles and announced elaborate arrangements to manage the expected rush of devotees.

As part of the preparations, police personnel will be deployed to ensure orderly darshan during the 15-day Anasara period. Authorities have also planned uninterrupted power supply throughout the festival, CCTV surveillance, parking facilities at three designated locations, a separate bhoga mandap near the shrine of Lord Ganesh for offering food, a medical camp with doctors on duty, fire safety measures, drinking water facilities, and temporary toilets. Reviewing the arrangements, the District Collector directed all departments to remain on high alert.

According to decisions taken at the Debasnana Purnima preparatory meeting, Puri District Collector and District Magistrate Divya Jyoti Parida has issued an order temporarily prohibiting the movement of heavy goods vehicles during the festival.

The restrictions will remain in force from June 30 to July 13, 2026, every day between 6 am and 10 pm.

Heavy vehicles will not be allowed on the Mangala Ghat-Satapada road and the Khajuria-Brahmagiri Market Chhak stretch during the notified hours.

The order has been issued under Section 115 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, and Rule 173 of the Odisha Motor Vehicles Rules, 1993. The Regional Transport Office has appealed to transporters and heavy vehicle operators to use alternative routes during the restricted period and cooperate with the administration to ensure smooth movement of pilgrims.

## Puri gears up for Snana Yatra; Snana Mandap ready, 79 police platoons to be deployed

PURI: Preparations for the annual Snana Yatra of Lord Jagannath have been completed, with the temple, district and police administrations finalising arrangements to ensure the smooth conduct of the festival.

At a joint review meeting, officials said all religious rituals would be carried out according to the prescribed schedule, with strict adherence to traditional temple practices (Nitikanti). Regular darshan at the Jagannath Temple has been suspended for a few hours from today to facilitate special rituals, including the Senapata Lagi ceremony.

As per the schedule, the

ceremonial Pahandi procession of the deities will take place between 5 am and 7 am, followed by other rituals. The ceremonial Chhera Pahanra, during which the Gajapati Maharaja sweeps the chariots as a mark of humility, is scheduled between 3 pm and 3.30 pm.

The deities will then be adorned in the traditional Hati Besha (elephant attire) from 4 pm to 5 pm. Public darshan (Sahana Mela) will be open from 7 pm to 9.30 pm. After the completion of the Hati Besha, the deities will return to the temple through the Bahuda Pahandi ritual.

To facilitate devotees, a special



ramp has been constructed in front of the Snana Mandap. General devotees will be allowed to enter

only through the Singhadwara (Lion's Gate) to have darshan at the Snana Mandap and exit

through the other three gates. Ticket holders will be permitted entry exclusively through the South Gate.

Elaborate security arrangements have been put in place for the festival. As many as 79 platoons of police personnel, along with senior police officers, will be deployed to maintain law and order and manage the expected rush of devotees.

The administration has appealed to devotees to cooperate with officials and follow the prescribed arrangements to ensure the smooth conduct of the festival.

## Dev Snana Purnima: No-vehicle zone around Srimandir

Puri: Elaborate security and traffic arrangements have been put in place for the annual Dev Snana Purnima of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra on June 29, with the area around the Jagannath Temple being declared a no-vehicle zone to manage the expected influx of lakhs of devotees.

During the festival, the sibling deities will be ceremonially taken from the Ratna Singhasan to the Snana Mandap, where they will be bathed with water from 108 sacred pitchers. Following the ritual bath, the deities will be adorned in the traditional Gajanana (Hati Besha) attire for public darshan.

Superintendent of Police Prateek Singh said ensuring the safety of devotees and facilitating smooth darshan remain the administration's top priorities. As part of the arrangements, vehicular movement around the temple will remain prohibited from midnight of June 28 until late night on June 29.

The restriction will be enforced on roads stretching from Market Chhak to Singhadwara, Mochisahi Chhak to Dolamandap Sahi, Solakhia Banyan to Kakudikhai Chhak, Shandha Jaga Chhak to Ganduachaura Chhak, and Pandu Jaga to Ganduachaura Chhak.

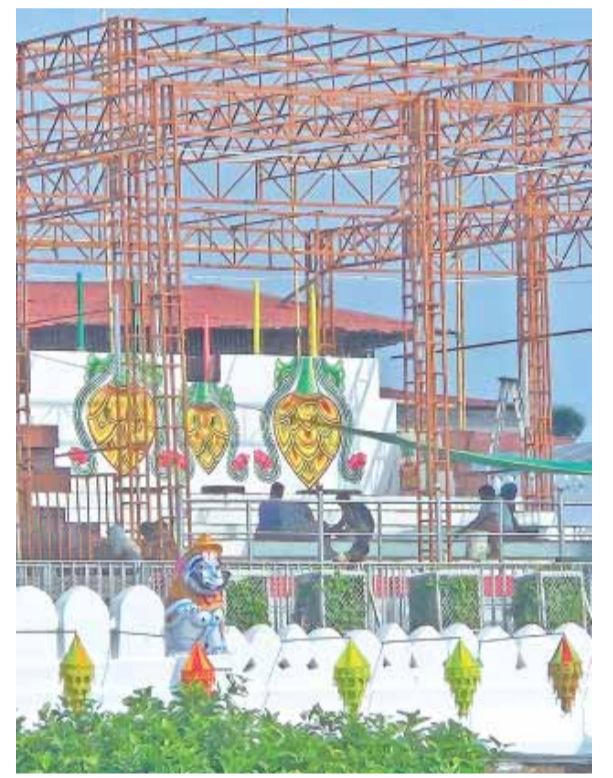
Devotees coming for Hati Besha darshan will be guided through barricaded queues from Market Chhak to Singhadwara. They will enter the temple through the Lion's Gate, proceed to the Snana Mandap via the Baisi Pahacha (22 steps), and exit through the North Gate. Entry to the temple will be permitted only through Singhadwara.

To ensure convenience for pilgrims, the administration has provided shaded queue lines, drinking water facilities, footwear stands and other basic amenities. Fourteen sectors have been created inside the temple premises, with police officers and personnel deployed to regulate crowd

movement and maintain order.

Apart from the police, volunteers, fire services personnel and NCC cadets will be stationed outside the temple to assist devotees and manage crowds. Separate parking facilities have been earmarked for tourist buses, regular buses, light motor vehicles and two-wheelers.

The entire event will be monitored through CCTV cameras from a central control room. In view of Dev Snana Purnima and the upcoming Rath Yatra, senior officers and police personnel have also undergone special training at the Reserve Ground. Additional Director General of Police (Rath Yatra) Soumendra Priyadarshi, Central Range IG Dr Satyajit Nayak and SP Prateek Singh attended the training session. A total of 79 platoons of police force will be deployed during the festival to ensure peaceful and orderly celebrations.



## Keonjhar migrated workers return from Tamil Nadu

Naresh Chandra Pattanayak Keonjhar: Fifty Eight male and female workers of Keonjhar district returned home safely from Tamil Nadu today. After the death of 11 workers in the Prawn factory tragedy in Tamil Nadu, the state government has brought back all the Odia workers employed there. After reaching Bhubaneswar by train, they were brought to Keonjhar district today in a special bus and safely sent to their homes with the help of the local block administration.



and middlemen.

According to the sources total 58 workers of Keonjhar district who were working in Tamil Nadu as migrated labours have returned today. District Planning Committee Chairman and Telkoi MLA Dr. Fakirmohan Nayak said, "After receiving [the aid/support/etc.], the people were sent to their homes in Keonjhar with the help of the block administration. Action will be taken against the middle man who took them to Tamil Nadu. Sources alleged that most of the individuals are minors. Hence, the labour department failed to get information about them and urged strict action against the officials

Out of the migrated reached at their home, 10 are from Harichandanpur block, 31 from Banspal block, 2 from Ghatgaon block, and 15 from Telkoi block. So far, the labor department has not taken any action against the brokers in this incident, but everyone is waiting to see what action they will take in the coming days. "Srikanta Juang from that area has taken them to Tamil Nadu. "About ten people from his village went to work. "We will not go outside for work again," said Sumant Juang of Rangamatiya village, after returning.

Naku Juang, who has been working in the said Chingudi factory for four months, said "There was a gas cylinder placed

near where the female workers were sleeping. Many workers were died and seriously injured due to the gas leaked from that cylinder. Four workers from her village are still undergoing treatment".

Minti Juang of Kodipasa said that '16 young people from Kodipasha village had gone to work. They went to work out of state due to poor financial problems and a lack of work".

The Chief Minister has already announced compassionate assistance of Rs 10 lakh for the families of the deceased. Since most of the dead and injured were child laborers, a big question arises regarding how they were employed in hazardous work.

## Newborn baby boy rescued from a bush in a bloody state.

Naresh Chandra Pattanayak Keonjhar: A newborn baby boy was rescued from a bush on Saturday morning in Raghunath Pur village of Saharpada block of Keonjhar district.

Hearing the sound of a baby boy crying from a bush local people informed the police and local ASHA workers. The boy was crying with severe pain due to bitten by ant.

After rescuing the baby boy, the local Anganwadi worker and ASHA worker admitted him to



Udaypur Health Center with the help of 108 ambulance.

Local people said that it is not yet clear who and why the newborn baby boy was left like this. It is not also clear whether the baby boy was born out of wedlock or from a virgin mother.

The boy sustained wounds injury in many places in his body, due to ants bitten.

"After rescue, the baby was shifted to Keonjhar District Head Hospital for more treatment, said Dr. Binod Jena, incharge of Community health center.

## Daitapati servitors enter Shree Jagannath Temple as preparations gather pace for Snana Purnima.

Puri: Preparations for the annual Snana Purnima (Snana Yatra), scheduled to be held on June 29, gathered momentum on Saturday with the ceremonial entry of the Daitapati servitors into the Shree Jagannath Temple, in keeping with centuries-old tradition.

The Daitapati servitors offered prayers before the deities and formally assumed charge of the special rituals associated with the festival. As per tradition, they will remain engaged in the service of Lord Jagannath and His siblings until Niladri Bije, the concluding ritual of the Rath Yatra festivities.

Regarded as the traditional custodians of the deities' physical well-being, the Daitapati servitors perform several key rituals during the annual festival cycle. Their responsibilities include conducting the sacred ceremonies from Snana Purnima through Anasara, Nabajaubana Darshan, Gundicha Yatra, Bahuda Yatra, Suna Besha, Adhara Pana, and finally Niladri Bije.

On Saturday, coinciding with Trayodashi tithi, the servitors entered the temple before the Mangala Alati, marking the formal commencement of their ritual duties for the upcoming festivities.

Following their entry, Sunday's rituals will include covering the faces of the four deities with the ceremonial Shrimukha Khandua after the Badasinghara Bhoga and Pahuda rituals. The Daitapati servitors



will then perform the Bahutakanta Niti, while the Kotha Suansia servitors will enter the sanctum sanctorum to tie the sacred supports around the Ratna Singhasana. Subsequently, the Daitapatis will carry out the traditional Senapata Bandha ritual.

On Snana Purnima, Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sudarshan will be ceremonially brought to the Snana Bedi (bathing altar), where they will give devotees the much-awaited public darshan before the sacred bathing ceremony, drawing thousands of pilgrims to Puri.

## Vedanta Contributes Nearly 5 Lakh Crore to Exchequer Over Decade

Bhubaneswar :: Vedanta Limited (BSE: 500295 and NSE: VEDL), India's leading diversified natural resources company, has contributed ₹62,722 crore in FY26 to the exchequer as per the company's 11th Tax Transparency Report. The report reinforces Vedanta's steadfast commitment to nation-building and transparent governance. The contribution represents 36% of the company's consolidated revenue from operations, playing a pivotal role in India's economic development.

This marks a 13.3% increase

in contributions compared to the previous year, bringing Vedanta's cumulative contribution to the exchequer over the past ten years to ₹4,83,034 crore. The company has demonstrated unwavering focus on fiscal discipline, nation-building, and support for the Viksit Bharat mission. The Group ranks among India's top 3\* private-sector contributors to the national exchequer.

This contribution to the exchequer was on the back of Vedanta's historic-best financial performance in FY26. Revenue grew 15% to ₹1,74,075 crore - the highest

in the company's history - while EBITDA grew 29% to ₹55,976 crore and Profit After Tax (PAT) rose 22% to ₹25,096 crore. The balance sheet strengthened significantly, with Net Debt to EBITDA improving to 0.95x from 1.22x - its best level in 14 quarters.

The strong financial performance was driven by robust operational performance across Vedanta's diversified portfolio spanning zinc-lead-silver, aluminium, copper, iron ore, steel, power, nickel, chrome and oil and gas.

Zinc remained the largest contributor at ₹19,053 crore, followed by Aluminium (now listed as Vedanta Aluminium) at ₹15,788 crore and Oil & Gas (now listed as Vedanta Oil & Gas) at ₹11,697 crore - a reflection of the breadth and diversification of Vedanta's portfolio across critical minerals and energy.

Key Highlights from the Vedanta Ltd Tax Transparency Report:

The 11th edition of the report offers a comprehensive breakdown of Vedanta's tax contributions for FY 2025-26.

## International Engineering Alliance Meeting at Cape Town Strengthens India's Position in Global Accreditation

New Delhi/ Bhubaneswar : The International Engineering Alliance (IEA) Meeting was held at Cape Town, South Africa, from 7 to 12 June 2026, bringing together representatives from various member countries to deliberate on matters relating to international accreditation and engineering education standards. "During the meeting, the agendas presented by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA), India, concerning the Washington Accord and Dublin Accord were taken up for consideration and were viewed favourably, marking another significant step towards strengthening India's global standing in engineering and technical education accreditation. "Prof. Shyam Sundar Pattnaik, Vice-Chancellor of Odisha State Open University (OSOU), was part of the four-member delegation nominated by the

Ministry of Education, Government of India, which represented the country at the prestigious international forum. "The participation of Prof. Pattnaik in the high-level deliberations reflects the growing contribution of Indian academia towards enhancing quality assurance and fostering international cooperation in engineering education.



## Mahanadi Water Dispute: Final Decision on July 11 Questions Raised as Technical Committee Meets 20 Times Without Outcome.

Sambalpur (By Ramakanta Biswal) : The long-standing dispute between Odisha and Chhattisgarh over the sharing of Mahanadi river water has turned into a matter of serious concern, with questions being raised over the delay in resolution. Despite repeated hearings before the Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal, no concrete solution has emerged so far.

The next hearing, which was expected on Saturday, has now been deferred to July 11. Critics argue that repeated postponements are only prolonging the issue rather than providing a solution. Environmentalists and intellectuals have questioned the effectiveness of the process and blamed the Odisha government for failing to protect the state's interests. The technical

committee formed in connection with the dispute has already held 20 meetings, but the outcome remains zero. Questions are being raised over whether these meetings are merely becoming a financial burden on the state exchequer without delivering any result.

Observers say that if 20 rounds of discussions have failed to resolve the matter and crores of rupees have already been spent, the government should take stronger and more effective steps. They have questioned whether such meetings are only meant to continue the proceedings and waste public money.

While Chhattisgarh has developed several dams and projects to control the flow of the Mahanadi upstream, concerns have been



expressed over Odisha's legal and administrative preparedness. Critics have alleged that Odisha's interests are repeatedly being ignored in the dispute.

During the recent hearing, Odisha Advocate General Pitambar Acharya

and Chhattisgarh Advocate General Vivek Sharma presented their respective arguments. However, critics said that the proceedings appeared to be a mere legal formality, as the riverbed of Mahanadi continues to face water scarcity.

According to official sources, the water level at Hirakud Dam currently stands at around 600.81 feet. However, it is estimated that silt accumulation of nearly seven feet has reduced the actual storage capacity, raising concerns about the real water availability.

The Mahanadi issue is not just a water-sharing dispute anymore but has become a major administrative and political challenge for Odisha. Many believe that the tribunal process has failed to bring a timely resolution and that the state's water security needs immediate attention.

With the next hearing scheduled for July 11, all eyes are now on whether the tribunal will finally deliver a decisive outcome or whether the dispute will continue with further delays.

### Udyami Odisha MSME Karyakram grand failure

Jagatsinghpur : Yesterday Udyami Odisha MSME Karyakram organised by DIC, Jagatsinghpur in front of Saraladas Das Sanskruti Bhawan. The Karyakram inaugurated at afternoon by MP, Jagatsinghpur Bibhu Prasad Tarai. But Industry Minister Sampad Kumar Swain was absent in his own district. General Manager, DIC, Jagatsinghpur presided over the meeting and Zilla Parishad President Manoj Bhoi and Police Inspector was present as guest and address the gathering. MP, Bibhu Prasad Tarai in his address encourage the aspirant Entrepreneurs and said them to avail all facilities provided by Govt. Successful Entrepreneurs felicitated by guests. But all most all stalls of Exhibition was vacant after meeting. As no arrangement for Udyogi was made so, the exhibition stall were vacant. The Exhibition organised for four days but on second day out of 16 stalls 8 exhibition stall were vacant. Local people alleged that the effort by State Govt. and DIC proved as grand failure.

## Journalist's Letter Becomes a Talking Point, Helps Resolve Temple-Mosque Dispute.

Temple committee members meet journalist to express gratitude.

Sambalpur-28/06(DMS) : A letter has emerged as a major support in resolving a temple-mosque dispute, becoming a subject of discussion in Sambalpur. The temple committee members met the writer of the letter and expressed their gratitude.

According to reports, a detailed letter written by senior journalist and noted letter-writer Prafulla Kumar Panda played an important role during the dispute over Devi Saraswati Temple and Maula Mosque. Temple Management Board member Basant Gupta met Prafulla at his residence in Sambalpur, thanked him,



and discussed the facts related to the dispute.

The matter relates to the Bhojshala Temple in Dhar city of Madhya Pradesh, where Goddess Saraswati is worshipped. Members of the Muslim community had claimed that the land belonged to the Maula Mosque. Following the

dispute, in 2003, the Archaeological Survey of India intervened and allowed members of the Muslim community to offer prayers at the premises, leading the matter to reach the Madhya Pradesh High Court.

After years of proceedings, the court ruled

that only members of the Hindu community could perform worship at the temple premises and that Namaz could not be offered there. The court also directed the government to provide alternative land for construction of a mosque. The decision to bring back the ancient idol of Goddess Saraswati, currently kept at the British Museum in London, and reinstall it at Bhojshala Temple further brought joy among devotees, who welcomed the verdict.

It is reported that on January 6, 2007, Prafulla Kumar Panda had visited Dhar and offered prayers at the Saraswati Temple. During his

stay near the mosque area with two friends, he claimed to have had a divine vision of Goddess Saraswati in a dream. He later informed the temple trust about the experience through a letter.

The temple committee reportedly presented this letter before the court along with other documents as an example of faith and historical connection.

A letter written years ago about a spiritual experience becoming part of a legal dispute resolution process and being presented before the court has surprised many. The incident has once again highlighted the influence and power of the written word.

## Kalinga Literary Festival Donates 1,000 Books to Establish Sarwanam Library in Nepal

Reaffirming its commitment to promoting literature, nurturing reading culture, and strengthening cultural ties across South Asia, the Kalinga Literary Festival (KLF) has supported the establishment of the Sarwanam Library at Sarwanam Theatre in Kathmandu, Nepal, through the donation of 1,000 bestselling and critically acclaimed English and Hindi books. The library was inaugurated on June 8, 2026, marking a significant milestone in literary and cultural collaboration between India and Nepal.

Sarwanam Theatre, one of Nepal's leading theatre institutions established in 1982, inaugurated the library in the presence of Prof. Jatindra Kumar Nayak, eminent literary critic, translator and scholar from Odisha, and Dr. Upendra Nath Behera, retired IAS officer of the Odisha cadre and former Chairman of the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission (OERC). They were joined by Rashmi Ranjan Parida, Founder and Director of the Kalinga Literary Festival, said, "Books have the power to connect people across cultures and generations. At KLF, we are committed to fostering a strong reading culture, especially among young people, and creating greater access to quality literature. We hope this initiative inspires many more libraries and literary spaces across Nepal while strengthening the literary and cultural bond between India and Nepal."

The newly established library houses a carefully curated collection of bestselling novels, literary classics and critically acclaimed contemporary



works, providing readers, students, writers, theatre practitioners and literature enthusiasts with access to quality literature from around the world. The initiative reflects KLF's continued efforts to make quality books more accessible while encouraging a culture of reading beyond geographical boundaries.

Speaking on the occasion, Rashmi Ranjan Parida, Founder and Director of the Kalinga Literary Festival, said, "Books have the power to connect people across cultures and generations. At KLF, we are committed to fostering a strong reading culture, especially among young people, and creating greater access to quality literature. We hope this initiative inspires many more libraries and literary spaces across Nepal while strengthening the literary and cultural bond between India and Nepal."

Welcoming the initiative, Ashesh Malla, Founder and Director of Sarwanam Theatre, said, "The Sarwanam Library marks the beginning of a long-term literary partnership with the

Kalinga Literary Festival. Together, we plan to launch a book club and organise regular book discussions, author interactions and literary events, creating a vibrant space for readers, writers and young literary enthusiasts."

The collaboration between the Kalinga Literary Festival and Sarwanam Theatre reflects a shared vision of strengthening literary and cultural exchange between India and Nepal. Beyond the donation of books, the partnership aims to create sustained platforms for dialogue, learning and creative collaboration through literary events, reader engagement programmes and cultural initiatives.

Through initiatives such as the Sarwanam Library, the Kalinga Literary Festival continues to expand its mission of promoting literature, supporting libraries, and building vibrant reading communities across borders. The library is expected to emerge as an important centre for reading, research, literary dialogue and creative engagement, serving generations of readers and contributing to the cultural landscape of Nepal.

## 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, S V M 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. In the conclusion, a drug awareness Odia play 'Srota' was performed.

## Toilet Remains Closed for Months; Commuters, Shopkeepers and Residents Suffer as Questions Mount Over Municipal Council Inaction



Khordha-27/6- Access to clean and functional public toilets is considered one of the most basic civic amenities that every urban local body is expected to provide. However, the prolonged closure of the toilet at the Old Bus Stand in Khordha has turned into a major inconvenience for thousands of daily commuters, local traders and residents, raising serious concerns over the alleged apathy of the municipal administration.

The Old Bus Stand is one of the busiest public transit points in Khordha, witnessing heavy footfall from early morning until late evening. Every day, thousands of passengers from nearby villages and surrounding areas arrive here to board buses or conduct their daily business in the town. Students, office-goers,

women, senior citizens, street vendors and visitors depend on the bus stand for transportation. Despite the continuous movement of people, the public toilet located within the premises has reportedly remained closed for a long time, leaving commuters with no access to a basic sanitation facility.

Passengers say the absence of a functional toilet has created immense hardship, particularly during long waiting hours. Women, elderly persons and children are said to be the worst affected, often facing embarrassment and discomfort due to the lack of proper sanitation facilities. Many travellers have expressed disappointment that such an essential public utility remains unavailable at one of the town's busiest locations. The problem has also severely affected

shopkeepers and small business owners operating around the Old Bus Stand. Traders who spend the entire day at their establishments say they are forced to travel considerable distances whenever they need to use a toilet. According to them, this not only wastes valuable business hours but also causes financial losses and unnecessary inconvenience. Several local vendors alleged that they have repeatedly drawn the attention of the municipal authorities to the issue, but no concrete steps have been taken to restore the facility. Residents claim that due to the closure of the public toilet, some people are left with no option but to relieve themselves in open spaces or nearby secluded areas. Such practices, they say, are creating unhygienic conditions, polluting the surroundings and increasing

the risk of the spread of infectious diseases. The situation, they argue, runs contrary to the objectives of the Swachh Bharat Mission and the government's repeated emphasis on maintaining clean and hygienic urban spaces. The issue has sparked criticism among citizens, who question how a key public facility in a prominent transport hub can remain non-functional for such a prolonged period. Local intellectuals and social activists believe that the continued closure reflects not only administrative negligence but also a lack of sensitivity towards the basic needs and dignity of the public. They pointed out that ensuring regular cleaning, water supply, maintenance and uninterrupted operation of public toilets should be among the foremost responsibilities

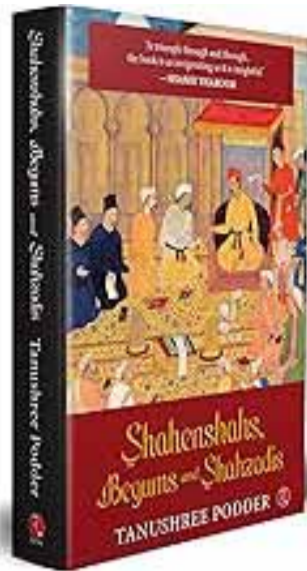
of any municipal body. Citizens

further argue that public sanitation is directly linked to public health. They warn that neglecting such essential infrastructure could lead to environmental pollution, unpleasant surroundings and potential health hazards, especially during the monsoon season when unhygienic conditions can contribute to the spread of waterborne and communicable diseases. Members

of local business associations and daily commuters have urged the Khordha Municipal Council authority to intervene immediately and restore the facility without further delay. They have demanded that the closed toilet be repaired, reopened for public use and maintained regularly to ensure that such inconvenience does

not recur in the future. For many residents, the issue is no longer just about a locked toilet—it has become a symbol of the gap between civic promises and ground realities. While cleanliness campaigns continue to receive widespread publicity, people believe that lasting success can only be achieved when essential public amenities are properly maintained and made accessible to everyone. As public frustration continues to grow, all eyes are now on the Khordha municipal administration. Whether the authorities respond promptly to the long-pending demand or allow the problem to persist remains to be seen. Until then, thousands of commuters, traders and local residents will continue to struggle without one of the most fundamental civic facilities at one of the town's busiest public locations.

# Readable Portrait of Mughal Life



**BhaskarParichha**  
The history of the Mughal Empire is usually narrated through its conquests, monumental architecture, and political achievements. In *Shahenshahs, Begums and Shahzadis*, TanushreePodder takes a refreshingly different approach by moving beyond the battlefield and into the private chambers of the imperial household. The result is an engaging work that humanises one of India's most celebrated dynasties and reveals how personal relationships often shaped the course of history as much as military victories.

Structured in three interconnected sections, the book presents a rich tapestry of personalities rather than a conventional chronological history. Podder examines the rulers from Babur to the later Mughals, not merely as monarchs but as individuals driven by ambition, affection, insecurity, and conviction. Their personal habits, emotional struggles, and private choices emerge as forces that influenced imperial governance and succession.

One of the book's strong points is its treatment of the women of the Mughal court. Far from being confined to the background, the begums and shahzadis are restored to their rightful place as influential participants in the empire's political and cultural life. Figures such as NurJahan, Jahanara Begum, and HamidaBanu are portrayed as women of remarkable intelligence, determination, and vision whose counsel often shaped imperial policy. Podder successfully demonstrates that the zenana was not merely a domestic space but an important centre of power.

The narrative is enriched by fascinating details that bring history vividly to life. Akbar's fondness for the fragrance of ambergris, Aurangzeb's austere lifestyle, NurJahan's influence on fashion, and Jahanara's charitable works reveal the rulers as complex human beings rather than distant historical icons. Equally compelling are the accounts of romance, rivalry, and family conflict that repeatedly altered the destiny of the empire. Podder's storytelling is supported by careful research drawn from memoirs, Persian chronicles, and travellers' accounts. Yet the scholarship never overwhelms the narrative. Her prose remains fluid and accessible, making the book appealing to both serious students of history and general readers who enjoy well-crafted historical narratives. Academic readers may wish for a deeper engagement with historical debates or more extensive citations. However, the book does not aspire to be a specialised scholarly monograph. Its strength lies in presenting a richly textured and highly readable portrait of Mughal life.

With forewords by shashiTharoor and Eric Chopra, *Shahenshahs, Begums and Shahzadis* - spanning almost 500 pages - is an absorbing exploration of the human dimensions of empire. By illuminating the lives, loves, ambitions, and conflicts hidden behind palace walls, bestselling author TanushreePodder offers readers a fresh and compelling perspective on Mughal history. It is an insightful work that reminds us that empires are ultimately shaped not only by armies and policies but also by the hearts and minds of those who rule.

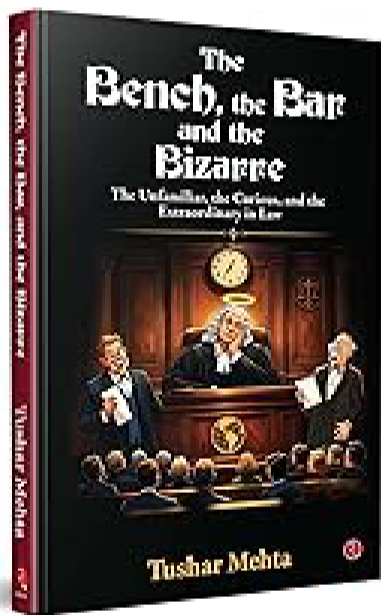
*Shahenshahs, Begums and Shahzadis*  
by TanushreePodder  
Rupa Publications  
New Delhi

## Irony, Eccentricity, and Humour

**Dharma Raj**

Law is generally perceived as a serious discipline governed by precedent, procedure, and solemnity. In *The Bench, the Bar, and the Bizarre*, Tushar Mehta overturns that conventional image by presenting a delightful collection of extraordinary courtroom episodes that reveal the law's curious, humorous, and deeply human side. The result is an engaging book that entertains while offering valuable insights into the personalities and peculiarities that shape the administration of justice.

Drawing from real cases and judicial



anecdotes from across the world, Mehta introduces readers to a gallery of eccentric litigants, outspoken judges, and courtroom incidents that often border on the unbelievable. There are lawsuits filed against demons, the Devil, and even God-not merely as acts of eccentricity but as legal arguments designed to test the boundaries of jurisprudence.

Elsewhere, judges spar over robes, wigs, mobile phones, and courtroom decorum, while others allow personal passions or social media habits to intrude upon judicial conduct. These stories expose the unexpected drama that unfolds behind the dignified façade of the legal system.

What distinguishes the book is its balance between humour and substance. Mehta does not treat these episodes as mere curiosities. Instead, each anecdote serves as a reminder that judges and lawyers, despite the authority they wield, remain profoundly human. Their wit, temper, prejudices, courage, and occasional lapses become part of the larger story of how justice is interpreted and delivered. The book demonstrates that the law is not an abstract institution but a living enterprise shaped by individuals with distinct personalities.

Mehta's writing is crisp, accessible, and free of unnecessary legal jargon. This makes the book equally enjoyable for practising lawyers, law students, and general readers with little knowledge of legal procedure. His ability to transform obscure legal incidents into compelling narratives ensures that the book remains engaging throughout.

The emphasis is on storytelling rather than detailed jurisprudential discussion. This is precisely the book's strength: it opens a window into the fascinating world of law without overwhelming readers with technicalities.

The book is an entertaining and enlightening read that celebrates the unpredictable dimensions of the legal profession. It reminds us that even within the gravest institutions, there is room for irony, eccentricity, and humour. For anyone curious about the human stories behind the courtroom, Tushar Mehta has produced a thoroughly enjoyable and memorable work.

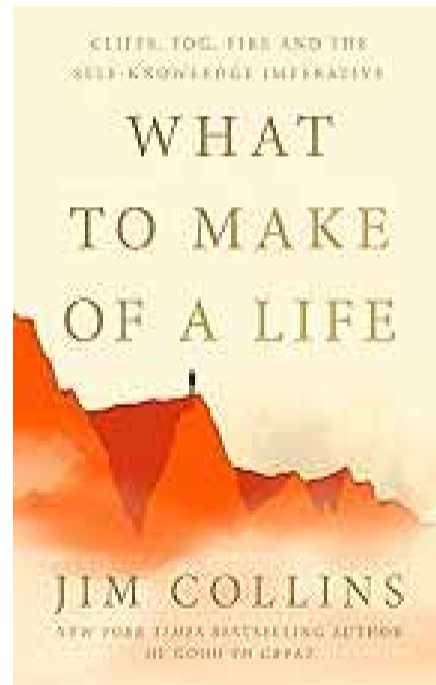
*The Bench, the Bar, and the Bizarre*  
Tushar Mehta  
Rupa Publications  
New Delhi

## The Imperative of Self-knowledge

**BhaskarParichha**

Jim Collins has long been recognised for his influential work on leadership and organisational excellence. In *What to Make of a Life: Cliffs, Fog, Fire and the Self-Knowledge Imperative*, he shifts his focus from institutions to individuals, exploring the universal question that confronts every human being: how does one build a meaningful life? The result is a thoughtful, deeply researched, and emotionally resonant work that combines rigorous analysis with personal reflection.

The book is built around the idea that every life is marked by "cliff moments"-critical transitions that abruptly alter the course of one's journey. Success, failure, retirement, scandal, bereavement, or the fulfilment of a long-cherished ambition can all become such cliffs, forcing individuals to redefine purpose and identity. Collins studies these turning points by comparing pairs of lives, examining how people facing similar circumstances often make dramatically different choices and achieve contrasting outcomes.



One of the book's strong points is its method. Rather than relying on motivational anecdotes or abstract theories, Collins conducts a decade-long investigation into the lives of writers, scientists, artists, political leaders, athletes, and entrepreneurs. His comparative approach reveals recurring patterns in resilience, adaptability, and self-discovery. The lessons emerge naturally from real lives rather than being imposed through simplistic formulas.

Central to Collins's argument is the imperative of self-knowledge. He suggests that fulfilment comes not merely from success but from discovering the work one is naturally "encoded" to do and having the courage to reinvent oneself when circumstances change. Equally compelling are his discussions on navigating uncertainty, making wise use of luck, maintaining personal momentum across decades, and creating financial independence to pursue one's deepest calling.

What makes the book especially engaging is Collins's willingness to turn the lens on himself. For the first time, he shares how the research transformed his own understanding of purpose,

ambition, and fulfilment. These personal reflections lend authenticity and emotional depth, preventing the narrative from becoming merely academic.

Collins writes with remarkable clarity, balancing philosophical inquiry with practical wisdom. His prose is accessible without sacrificing intellectual rigour, making the book valuable for readers at different stages of life-from young professionals searching for direction to those confronting career transitions or retirement. The emphasis on thoughtful inquiry rather than quick solutions is one of the book's enduring strengths.

The book is more than a self-help book; it is a profound meditation on purpose, resilience, and lifelong renewal. Rich in stories, insights, and humanity, it offers readers a compelling roadmap for navigating life's inevitable cliffs while keeping the inner fire alive.

*What to Make of a Life*  
Jim Collins  
Penguin Books  
Gurugram

## Neuroscience, Psychology, and Behavioral Science

**Arun Mishra**

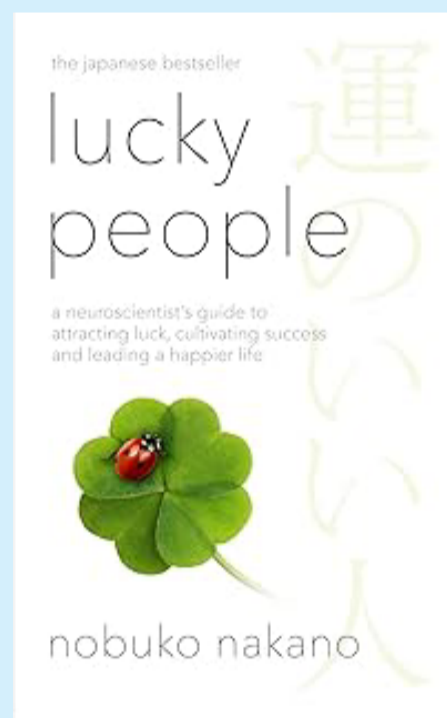
Can luck be cultivated, or is it simply a matter of chance? In *Lucky People*, Japanese neuroscientist Nobuko Nakano challenges one of our most enduring assumptions-that luck is an unpredictable force beyond human control. Drawing upon neuroscience, psychology, and behavioural science, she argues that what we commonly call "luck" is often the outcome of habits, attitudes, and choices that shape the way we perceive and respond to opportunities.

The book begins with an observation familiar to everyone. We all know people who seem effortlessly fortunate, while others appear to attract disappointment. Whether it is breezing through traffic lights, finding the fastest queue at the supermarket, or landing unexpected opportunities, luck often appears mysterious. Nakano's central argument is that these experiences are not entirely random. Instead, the brain can be trained to recognise opportunities, build meaningful connections, and make decisions that increase the probability of favourable outcomes.

Nakano introduces the concept of the "lucky brain"-a mindset developed through deliberate habits rather than wishful thinking. She explains how taking calculated risks, expanding one's social circle, maintaining curiosity, developing resilience, and even adopting simple routines such as waking up early can influence the brain's capacity to notice possibilities that others overlook. Rather than promising miraculous success, she presents luck as the cumulative effect of preparedness, optimism, and behavioural flexibility.

One of the book's greatest strengths is its accessible style. Nakano translates complex neuroscientific concepts into language that general readers can easily understand. Scientific explanations are blended with practical advice, making the book informative without becoming overly technical. The tone is encouraging rather than prescriptive, inviting readers to rethink their relationship with chance and personal responsibility.

Unlike many self-help books that rely on motivational slogans, *Lucky People* grounds



its arguments in scientific research. Nakano avoids magical thinking and instead demonstrates how the brain's adaptability can influence decision-making, confidence, and social interaction. This evidence-based approach lends credibility to ideas that might otherwise seem speculative. The scientific framework gives these everyday practices greater depth and coherence.

*Lucky People* is less about attracting miraculous good fortune than about cultivating habits that make fortunate outcomes more likely. Nobuko Nakano offers an optimistic yet realistic message: while we cannot control every event in our lives, we can shape the mindset and behaviours that improve our chances of success and happiness. Thoughtful, practical, and grounded in science, this is an engaging read for anyone seeking a fresh perspective on luck, resilience, and personal growth.

*Lucky People*  
Nobuko Nakano  
Simon & Schuster India  
New Delhi

## Timely, Erudite, and Deeply Humane

**BhaskarParichha**

What does it mean to be free? More importantly, how does a society sustain the idea of freedom after political independence has been won? In *Languages of Freedom*, distinguished political scientist NeeraChandhoke explores these enduring questions through an unusual yet compelling combination of political theory, Bombay cinema, and Progressive Urdu poetry. The result is a deeply thoughtful work that examines not only the evolution of the idea of freedom in India but also the cultural forces that continue to shape it.

The book is organised as a series of interconnected essays that trace the many meanings of freedom across India's intellectual and artistic traditions. Chandhoke begins with nineteenth-century debates on nationalism and swaraj, examining the ideas of thinkers such as DadabhaiNaoroji, Mahatma Gandhi, and philosopher K.C. Bhattacharya. She argues that while the struggle against colonial rule sought to liberate the Indian mind, it also produced narratives that too often equated Indian culture exclusively with Hindu culture, overlooking



the country's pluralistic inheritance.

The discussion then shifts to the Progressive Writers' Movement, where poets such as Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Majaz, SahirLudhianvi, and MajroohSultanpuri expanded the meaning of freedom beyond political independence. Through their poetry, freedom became inseparable from social justice, equality, and human dignity. Chandhoke demonstrates how these writers gave emotional and moral depth to the anti-colonial movement while imagining a more inclusive future.

Equally illuminating is her analysis of Bombay cinema. By revisiting the films of V. Shantaram, Guru Dutt, and Bimal Roy, Chandhoke reveals how popular cinema questioned whether political freedom alone could satisfy a society burdened by poverty, inequality, and social discrimination. These filmmakers transformed cinema into a medium of ethical and political reflection, exposing the unfinished project of Indian democracy.

One of the book's greatest strengths is its interdisciplinary approach. Chandhoke moves effortlessly between philosophy, literature, and film, showing that ideas of freedom are

not confined to constitutional texts or political speeches. They are equally expressed through poetry, storytelling, and popular culture. Her scholarship is meticulous, yet her prose remains lucid and accessible, making complex political ideas engaging for both scholars and general readers.

At times, the essays demand careful attention, particularly from readers unfamiliar with political theory or the historical context. However, the intellectual rewards more than justify the effort.

*Languages of Freedom* is a significant contribution to contemporary discussions on democracy, nationalism, and cultural identity. NeeraChandhoke reminds us that freedom is never a settled achievement but an ongoing conversation-one that must continually engage philosophy, art, and public life. Timely, erudite, and deeply humane, this book deserves a wide readership among anyone interested in understanding the many voices that have shaped the idea of India.

*Languages of Freedom*  
NeeraChandhoke  
Speaking Tiger  
New Delhi

## Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan meets Bhutan's Education Minister Yeezang De Thapa

New Delhi,28/6: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan today met Bhutan's Education Minister Yeezang De Thapa. In a social media post, Mr Pradhan said that the discussions focused on training of teachers, skilling and employability, digital education and AI, sustainable tourism, traditional medicine and holistic well-being. The Minister said, there is immense potential for both countries to collaborate on larger platforms of learning, innovation and capacity building. He said that the India-Bhutan partnership is anchored in shared aspirations for the future and spiritual bonds. They emphasised India-Bhutan cooperation in education, skills and knowledge partnerships.

## EAM Dr S Jaishankar interacts with group of journalists from various European countries in New Delhi

New Delhi,28/6: External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar today interacted with a group of journalists from various European countries in New Delhi. The Minister spoke to them about the profound transformations underway in India, the current state of flux the world is in, and the growing convergences between India and Europe. Dr Jaishankar also expressed confidence that their engagements and travels in India will promote a deeper understanding of India and the potential of India-Europe partnership.

## Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan to visit Karnataka

New Delhi,28/6: Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan will be on a two-day visit to Karnataka from tomorrow. During the visit, the Vice President will attend the 517th birth anniversary celebrations of Nadaprabhu Sri Kempegowda in Bengaluru tomorrow. On Sunday, the Vice President will participate in the Nasha Mukta Bharat Conclave, which is being organised as part of the Foundation Day celebrations of the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences and the observance of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Bengaluru.

## PM Modi extends birthday wishes to Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan

New Delhi,28/6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday extended birthday greetings to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, praising his efforts in implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) and highlighting its role in transforming India into a global hub for knowledge, learning and innovation. In a post on X, the Prime Minister said, "Birthday wishes to Union Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan Ji. He is making commendable efforts towards the implementation of the National Education Policy, which seeks to make India a hub for knowledge, learning and

## HM Amit Shah calls for united war against drugs, says drug menace threatens national security & future of youth

New Delhi,28/9: Home Minister Amit Shah today called for a united war against drugs, saying that the drug menace threatens national security, social stability, economic interests and the future of youth and the country. He urged spiritual leaders, youth, and mothers to come together on a single platform to win this war. Mr. Shah made these remarks while addressing the 10th Apex-Level Meeting of the Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD) in New Delhi. He said that between 2004 and 2014, authorities seized around 2.6 million kilograms of synthetic drugs. In comparison, between 2014 and 2026, the quantity of synthetic drugs seized increased to 11.8 million

kilograms. He said the figures show that the government's campaign against drug trafficking is making steady progress. Speaking about the anti-narcotics efforts, Mr Shah said that the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has developed several online portals to facilitate the timely sharing of information related to drug crimes. He urged all Chief Secretaries and Directors General of Police to upload details of drug-related cases on these portals within a fixed timeline. He said that the timely sharing of information would help the government to monitor cases more effectively and provide states with necessary feedback and suggestions to improve

investigations and enforcement. He stressed that better coordination and the use of technology are essential for strengthening the country's campaign against drugs and drug trafficking networks. During the meeting, the Home Minister released the Vision Document on Narcotics Control 2026-2029, prepared through extensive consultations with various stakeholders. The document will provide a roadmap for tackling the drug menace through coordinated measures focusing on demand reduction, supply reduction, and rehabilitation. It will also outline strategies to address emerging challenges such as synthetic drugs and darknet-enabled trafficking,

while promoting greater awareness, treatment, and rehabilitation services. Home Minister Amit Shah also laid a detailed roadmap to achieve the vision of a drug-free India. The Meeting was organised by the Narcotics Control Bureau. During the meeting, Mr Shah launched the Vision Document on Narcotics Control (2026-2029). The Home Minister also launched a Drug Disposal Fortnight under which over two lakh nine thousand five hundred kilograms of seized narcotic substances, valued at around six thousand crore rupees, will be destroyed. The initiative will send a strong message to the drug cartels and play a crucial role in deterring drug trafficking.

## India sends humanitarian aid to Venezuela under Operation Amistad

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar announced Operation Amistad, under which two Indian Air Force C-17 aircraft took off for Venezuela carrying urgent humanitarian assistance to support post-earthquake relief efforts. Amistad means friendship in Spanish. In a social media post, Dr Jaishankar said the assistance includes an Indian Army Field Hospital Unit and over 35 tonnes of relief supplies, medicines and medical equipment, including two BHISHM Cubes. He said India is committed to supporting the government and people of Venezuela during this difficult time.

## BJP National President Nitin Nabin interacts with EU member countries under 'Know BJP initiative'

New Delhi ,28/6: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s National President Nitin Nabin interacted with the mission heads of European Union member countries under the party's ongoing KNOW BJP initiative on Friday. Representatives from several countries were present at the meeting. These included Slovakia, Romania, Portugal, Poland, the Netherlands, Ireland and EU Ambassador to India Herve Delphin, among others. Ahead of the interaction, the BJP said in a press statement that the interaction would aim at providing an opportunity to familiarise the diplomatic community with the BJP's journey, ideology, organisational structure, governance model and ongoing activities. Earlier in June, Nepal's ruling party, Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) President Rabi Lamichhane, arrived at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) headquarters in New Delhi to meet BJP National President Nitin Nabin. His visit, part of the 'Know BJP' initiative, aims to strengthen cross-border political understanding. In May, BJP National President Nitin Nabin interacted with representatives of 12 countries under the "KNOW BJP" initiative at the party headquarters. According to an official release, the heads of missions from the 12 nations joined the interaction with Nitin Nabin, his first engagement with foreign envoys since assuming charge as the BJP National President.

## Artist Raj Kishore Gupta explores memory, landscape in artworks rooted

New Delhi,28/6: Artist Raj Kishore Gupta's latest body of works transforms indigenous visual traditions into a deeply personal exploration of memory, landscape and material form. "Indigenous Accents", curated by Uma Nair and scheduled to open on July 2 at Bikaner House, has emerged out of Gupta's work with Warli, Gond, Phulkari, Pahadi, African, and Australian Aboriginal art, discovering distinct aesthetic languages "to record community histories, rituals, dreams, and encounters with nature", the organisers said. Created during the Covid pandemic, the exhibition unfolds through a visual vocabulary of butterflies, flowering forms, trees, animals, geometric structures, and ancestral motifs that come together across resin and wooden surfaces in layered compositions that move between abstraction and narrative.

## 'Proud Declaration Of India's Ascent': HM Shah Congratulates PM Modi On Seychellois Honour

New Delhi,28/6: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the latter was conferred with the 'Guardian of the Blue Horizon', Seychelles' highest distinction for leadership in environmental conservation and sustainable development. In a post on social media platform X, Union Minister Shah said: "New Horizons for India's Glory. Congratulations to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on being conferred with the 'Guardian of the Blue Horizon', the highest distinction for leadership in sustainable development and environmental protection, by the Government of Seychelles." "This honour is a proud declaration of India's ascent on the world order as a role model in revitalising natural ecosystems while leading the world in growth and sustainable development," he added. The award acknowledges PM Modi's long-standing push for sustainable growth and his green vision. Prime Minister Modi expressed gratitude to President Patrick Herminie for the warm



welcome and honouring him with the "Guardian of the Blue Horizon" award. "I humbly accept this title with honour and dedicate it to all other countries that are struggling against the challenges of climate change and that consider the protection of the environment their responsibility toward future generations. This is an urgent challenge that we need to overcome together," the Prime Minister said in a post on

X. Later, addressing a joint press meet with Seychelles President Herminie following their meeting, PM Modi added that the Indian Ocean's security, sustainability, and prosperity are shared responsibilities of nations, as he stressed that India's vision for it is to make it an "Ocean of Opportunity". "We believe the Indian Ocean is our shared home. Its security, sustainability and prosperity are our shared responsibility. This sentiment is the

basis of our MAHASAGAR vision," he said. The Seychellois honour is the latest in a series of global honours recognising Prime Minister Modi's work on climate action, sustainable development, and green growth. In May, PM Modi was conferred the 2026 Agricola Medal, the highest honour of the Food and Agriculture Organisation, during a ceremony held at the FAO Headquarters in Rome. PM Modi is currently on a three-day State visit to Seychelles.

## PM Modi Highlights Indigenous Defence Achievements in Mann Ki Baat

NEWDELHI,28/6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his monthly Mann Ki Baat broadcast on June 28, highlighted India's growing self-reliance in defence and technology. He cited the maiden flight of the made-in-India C-295 aircraft, successful indigenous missile tests, and the commissioning of locally built naval platforms as key achievements. Modi said the first C-295 military transport aircraft completed its maiden flight on June 10, strengthening India's aviation sector. The Indian Air Force is procuring 56 aircraft, with 40 being assembled in Vadodra by Tata Advanced Systems Limited in partnership with Airbus. He noted that the project boosts MSMEs and creates employment opportunities. The Prime Minister also mentioned the induction of INS Dunagiri, INS Shanshak, and INS Agrya into the Navy's fleet, all designed and manufactured indigenously. He added that the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully tested the Long-Range Land-Attack Cruise Missile (LRLACM) off Odisha's coast on June 15, underscoring India's technological progress. Modi emphasised that "from the seas to the skies, India is becoming increasingly secure and self-reliant." He also spoke about initiatives in agriculture, education, environment, and culture, including chemical-free farming, AI courses at Central Sanskrit University, conservation of Meghalaya's root bridges, and eco-brick projects in Madhya Pradesh.



## Delhi govt signs MoU to host international school badminton, wrestling events next year

New Delhi:28/6 The Delhi government on Friday signed a tripartite MoU with the School Games Federation of India (SGFI) and the International School Sport Federation (ISF) to host international school badminton and wrestling events next year. The MoU was signed between the Delhi government and the SGFI and the ISF during a ceremony attended by Education and Sports Minister Ashish Sood. Sood said the ISF World School Championships in 2027 -- which will feature both wrestling and badminton events -- will help Delhi build a stronger sports ecosystem and give young players an opportunity to compete at the international level.

## PoK 'PM' Faisal Mumtaz Rathore Hits Back at Khawaja Asif Over 'Not Proper Kashmiris' Remark

NEWDELHI, 28/6: Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, the self-styled "Prime Minister" of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), has criticised Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif over reported remarks questioning the identity of people from parts of the region. Rathore accused Asif of creating unnecessary divisions and said the people of Jammu and Kashmir do not require validation of their identity from any political leader. The controversy followed



media reports claiming that Khawaja Asif, during a

television interview, said residents of Rawalakot and

Mirpur were "not proper Kashmiris." The reported remarks triggered criticism from political leaders in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Responding on social media, Rathore said the identity of the people of Jammu and Kashmir should not be questioned. He alleged that senior political figures were creating divisions instead of promoting unity. Rathore also criticised Asif's subsequent clarification, in which the defence minister reportedly

linked Kashmiri identity to years of struggle and sacrifice while referring to governance issues in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. According to Rathore, Asif should apologise for his original remarks instead of shifting attention to administrative matters. India Responds Separately to Asif's Statements In a separate development earlier this week, India strongly criticised Khawaja Asif over his recent comments concerning bilateral tensions and water-related

issues. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Pakistan's statements were attempts to divert attention from its domestic challenges and alleged human rights concerns. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated that India rejected what he described as "fabricated claims" made by Pakistan. He also reiterated India's position that conditions in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir stem from Pakistan's long-standing policies in the region.

## Gurugram police arrest two for duping woman of Rs 16 lakh in investment fraud case

New Delhi:28/6 Gurugram police arrested two accused for duping a woman of around Rs 16.13 lakh in an investment cyber fraud case, police said on Friday. According to police, a woman lodged a complaint at the Cyber Crime Police Station (East), Gurugram, on March 8. She said she was added to a Telegram group and was duped of approximately Rs 16.13 lakh on the pretext of investment. Police said based on her complaint, a case was registered at the Cyber Crime Police Station (East) under the relevant provisions of law.

# India And Seychelles Meet As 'Old Friends' Due To Indian Ocean Connection: PM Modi

Victoria, 28/6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that the Indian Ocean connects India and Seychelles and thus the two nations do not meet as "strangers" but as old friends. Addressing the Seychelles National Assembly, PM Modi noted that the relations between the two nations did not start with the establishment of diplomatic ties, but when five Indians came to Seychelles in August 1770. He stated that the bond between two nations is built by people, nurtured by families and sustained by generations. This marked the 20th Parliament, which PM Modi has addressed. Earlier, PM Modi has addressed parliaments of several nations, including Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Australia, the US, Ghana, Ethiopia, and Israel. "Honourable Members, it is important to recall today that our friendship did not begin 50 years ago with the establishment of our diplomatic relations. It began much earlier, in August 1770, when there were five Indians among those who arrived on board the ship Telemaque on St Anne Island.

That voyage sowed the path to many more who followed. Over time, these stories became part of modern Seychelles." "It reminds us that the bonds between us were not created by governments alone. They were built by people, nurtured by families, and sustained by generations. The Indian Ocean made this possible. The Indian Ocean does not separate India and Seychelles; it connects us. That is why we meet not as strangers, we meet as old friends," he added. Praising Seychelles' vibrant diversity, he said: "The greatest strength of Seychelles lies in its people. Over generations, people from all parts of the world arrived here, they brought with them different languages, customs, beliefs, and traditions, and together they built a shared identity that is proudly Seychellois." He thanked Seychelles President Patrick Herminie for honouring him with 'Guardian of the Blue Horizon'. He also recalled his first visit to Seychelles in 2015, noting that it was the first nation he visited in the Indian Ocean after assuming office. "I also thank President



Herminie and the people of Seychelles for honouring me with the 'Guardian of the Blue Horizon' earlier today. It will encourage all those who are making sustained efforts for environmental conservation. I bring with me the warm greetings and best wishes of 1.4 billion Indians. The first country in the Indian Ocean region that I visited as Prime Minister was Seychelles

in 2015. It was also my first visit to Africa as Prime Minister. I came here because I believed that Seychelles occupies a special place in India's vision for the Indian Ocean. Today, as I return here after a decade, that conviction is stronger than ever. I am delighted to join you in celebrating 50 years of your independence. Congratulations to you and the people of Seychelles on this

special occasion." PM Modi recalled how Indian Naval Ship (INS) Nilgiri took part in Seychelles Independence Day celebrations in 1976 and mentioned the participation of INS Tarkash and INS Ikshak in the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Seychelles' 50th National Day. He stated that India deeply values the professionalism and dedication of the Seychelles

Defence Forces and the Seychelles Coast Guard. "As maritime neighbours, we recognise that the security of one adds to the security of the other, the prosperity of one supports the prosperity of the other, and the stability of the region benefits us all. This year offers a powerful reminder of the depth of our partnership. 50 years ago, at the dawn of your independence, an Indian naval ship, INS Nilgiri, was present in Port Victoria as a mark of friendship and solidarity." "And today INS Tarkash and INS Ikshak are docked at Port Victoria to celebrate the Golden Jubilee with you. The passage of 50 years has changed many things, but it has not changed our commitment to one another. For decades, our defence forces, coast guards, and maritime agencies have trained and worked closely together. India deeply values the professionalism and dedication of the Seychelles Defence Forces and the Seychelles Coast Guard. They play a vital role in safeguarding your own vast maritime domain as well as the wider Indian Ocean region," he added.

## 6.1-Magnitude Earthquake Strikes Off Japan's Iwate

Tokyo: An earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 6.1 struck off Iwate Prefecture in northeastern Japan early Sunday, the country's weather agency said. No tsunami warning was issued. The tremor occurred at 5:21 a.m. local time off Iwate's eastern coast at a depth of about 40 km, measuring lower 5 on Japan's seismic intensity scale of 7 in parts of Aomori and Iwate prefectures, reports Xinhua, quoting the Japan Meteorological Agency. No abnormalities were reported at the Higashidori nuclear power plant in Aomori or at the Onagawa nuclear power complex in Miyagi Prefecture, according to their operator. The quake's epicentre was located at a latitude of 40.2 degrees north and a longitude of 142.4 degrees east. A 7.2-magnitude earthquake jolted the same region on Thursday, injuring at least 10 people. Friday saw two quakes — a 5.6-magnitude and 5.8-magnitude — strike near Tokyo, with shaking clearly felt in the capital. At least 10 people were injured. At 11:49 a.m. on Friday, a 4.1-magnitude earthquake hit southern Ibaraki Prefecture, with tremors also clearly felt in the capital. Meanwhile, on Thursday, at least four people were injured after a 7.2-magnitude earthquake struck northeastern Japan. The tremor, revised up from a preliminary magnitude of 6.9, occurred at around 7:30 a.m. local time off the eastern coast of Iwate Prefecture at a depth of about 40 km. It measured upper 6, the second-highest level on Japan's seismic scale of 7, in Hashikami Town and lower 6 in Hachinohe City, both in Aomori Prefecture, the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) said. An intensity of lower 6 means it is difficult to remain standing, and unsecured objects like furniture may topple over, and windows may be damaged, reports Kyodo News, quoting the agency.

## India Sends Relief Assistance To Earthquake-Hit Venezuela Under 'Operation Amistad'

New Delhi, 28/6: India has dispatched urgent humanitarian assistance to earthquake-hit Venezuela under "Operation Amistad", as part of its disaster relief response efforts, following a series of powerful earthquakes that have caused widespread devastation in the South American nation. Announcing the development, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar posted on X, "Indian assistance reaches Venezuela. Confident that the Field Hospital Unit, relief supplies, medicines & medical equipment, will bolster ongoing post-earthquake relief efforts in the country. #OperationAmistad" The Indian Embassy in Côte d'Ivoire also detailed the scale of the mission in a post on X, stating that two Indian Air Force C-17 aircraft transited through Abidjan en route to Venezuela carrying relief materials and medical support. The embassy said, "Operation Amistad — Responding to the devastating earthquake that struck northern Venezuela, the two Indian Airforce C17s transited through Abidjan enroute to Venezuela carrying 35 T of relief equipment, an Indian Army Field Hospital contingent and two BHISHM cubes." "The contingent comprises 41 personnel, including nine medical officers, and is equipped to provide emergency medical care, trauma management, life-saving surgical support and other essential healthcare services to those affected by the earthquake," it added. The team is carrying approximately six tonnes of medical stores and humanitarian relief supplies provided by the Ministry of External Affairs. In addition, one of the two aircraft is transporting a BHISHM Cube (Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog, Hita & Maitri) under India's Aarogya Maitri Project. "The dispatch of the medical contingent under Operation Amistad reflects India's enduring commitment to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and its readiness to extend timely support to friendly nations in times of crisis," the embassy stated. Venezuela was struck by two major earthquakes within seconds of each other, earlier on Wednesday. The US Geological Survey (USGS) reported a magnitude 7.1 quake at 2204 GMT, followed just one minute later by an even stronger magnitude 7.5 tremor. Both struck near the coastal town of Moron, about 160 km west of Caracas. The quakes were shallow with a depth of 10 km, which could intensify their destructive impact. The death toll from the earthquakes that struck Venezuela on Saturday has risen to 1,430, Venezuelan National Assembly President Jorge Rodríguez said. Rodríguez said on state television that 3,238 people have been injured and 3,142 families affected by the disaster. After the two powerful magnitude 7.2 and 7.5 earthquakes, Venezuela has recorded 430 light to moderate aftershocks, Rodríguez said in the latest government update on the national emergency.

## India, Seychelles Sign Pacts To Strengthen Trade, Digital Payments, Farm Ties

New Delhi, 28/6: India and Seychelles on Sunday signed agreements to strengthen bilateral ties across trade, digital technology and agriculture following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Seychelles President Patrick Herminie during the Indian Prime Minister's three-day State Visit to the Indian Ocean nation. The two countries agreed on several major initiatives, including the umbrella line of credit agreement for Rs 1,250 crore between the Export-Import Bank of India and the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning, Trade and Investment of Seychelles, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). "President Herminie and Prime Minister Modi held bilateral talks at the State House in Victoria in Seychelles, which included development cooperation, clean energy, creative industries and health," the statement said. Prime Minister Modi reaffirmed India's commitment to deepening the relationship, proposing direct shipping links, increased trade in local currencies, and greater connectivity to promote trade and tourism. He announced the gifting of six ambulances, access to affordable medicines under the Janaushadhi Scheme, and training for Seychellois medical personnel. India also committed to sports training, youth exchange, and promoting Seychelles as a



creative and filming destination. Both leaders participated in the virtual groundbreaking of the India-assisted Professional and Technical Education Centre and inaugurated three solar water pumping systems under the International Solar Alliance. They also jointly unveiled the commemorative logo marking 50 years of diplomatic relations. Additional agreements covered cooperation in agricultural research and education, mutual recognition of training and certification for seafarers serving on Seychelles-flagged vessels, and collaboration in the peaceful exploration of outer space. The two sides agreed to begin preliminary work on

establishing a new Seychelles National Hospital. New Delhi also extended humanitarian and development assistance by supplying 500 metric tonnes of rice and 8,500 metric tonnes of cement. President Herminie reaffirmed progress in implementing the Joint Vision for Sustainability, Economic Growth and Security through Enhanced Linkages (SESEL), adopted in February this year. The Seychelles President expressed appreciation for India's Special Economic Package of \$175 million, comprising \$125 million in a rupee-denominated Line of Credit and \$50 million in grant assistance, to support priority projects in social housing, e-mobility, vocational training,

health, defence, and maritime security. He also highlighted food security, parliamentary cooperation, and the strengthening of historic ties between the two nations as key areas of discussion. The wide-ranging agreements reflect the deepening partnership between the two countries in connectivity, capacity building and sustainable development. The outcomes were announced during PM Modi's State Visit, which coincides with the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Seychelles. Prime Minister Modi is visiting Seychelles at the invitation of President Herminie and will attend the country's National Day celebrations as the Guest of Honour.

## India Cautions Its Citizens Against Undertaking Kailash Mansarovar Yatra With Incomplete Documents

New Delhi, 28/6: India has issued an advisory for its citizens planning to undertake the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra through private tour operators, urging pilgrims not to begin their journey unless they have secured all the mandatory travel documents, including the required permits and visas for entering China. The advisory comes after the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) received several requests for assistance from Indian nationals who became stranded in Nepal while attempting to undertake the pilgrimage without the necessary entry permits and Chinese visas. According to the MEA, many of the affected pilgrims had opted for tours organised by private travel operators. In its statement, the Ministry cautioned travellers against commencing their journey based on the expectation that the required documents would be arranged later. "Citizens are advised not to commence their journey from India until all required travel documents have been obtained for undertaking the complete journey. Commencing travel without confirmed documentation or in anticipation of obtaining the necessary documentation increases the likelihood of being stranded," the MEA said. The Ministry also advised prospective pilgrims to carefully verify the credentials of private tour operators before making travel arrangements.

## Trump Warns Iran After Fresh US Air Strikes Over Strait Of Hormuz Attack

Washington, 28/6: US President Donald Trump said on Saturday that the United States had launched fresh air strikes on Iranian military targets after accusing Tehran of again violating the ceasefire agreement by attacking a commercial oil tanker near the Strait of Hormuz, warning that the Islamic Republic "will no longer exist" if the attacks continue. The US Central Command (CENTCOM) said the strikes were carried out at the President's direction after Iran allegedly launched a one-way attack drone that hit the Panama-flagged tanker

M/T Kiku at 4:30 a.m. ET. The tanker was transiting near the Strait of Hormuz carrying more than two million barrels of crude oil. In a Truth Social post, Trump said US aircraft had struck Iranian missile and drone storage locations as well as coastal radar sites. "United States aircraft just struck Iranian missile and drone storage locations, and coastal radar sites, for violating the Cease Fire Agreement, AGAIN! It is very possible that they will never learn!" "There may come a point when we are no longer able to be reasonable, and will be forced to militarily



complete the job that we very successfully started. If that happens, the Islamic Republic of Iran will no longer exist!" the President

wrote. CENTCOM said Iran had been given an opportunity to comply with the ceasefire after Friday's US strikes in

response to the attack on M/V Ever Lovely. "After yesterday's US strikes in response to the Iranian attack on M/V Ever Lovely, Iran was given a chance to honor the ceasefire agreement but elected not to when its forces launched a one-way attack drone that hit M/T Kiku this morning at 4:30 a.m. ET," the military command said. It said US forces launched the latest operation "in direct response to continued Iranian aggression against commercial shipping." According to CENTCOM, US military aircraft targeted Iranian

military surveillance infrastructure, communication systems, air defence sites, drone storage facilities and minelayer capabilities. "Commercial vessel transits through the Strait of Hormuz continue. US forces remain vigilant, lethal, and ready," CENTCOM said. The latest strikes marked another escalation despite the ceasefire agreement announced earlier this week following days of military confrontation between the United States and Iran. Washington has repeatedly accused Tehran of targeting commercial shipping in and around the Strait of Hormuz.

## International MSME Day Celebrated at Paradip; MSME TEAM Initiative Promoted to Accelerate Digital Trade and Market Access

Paradip,(DMS):- The International Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Day 2026 was celebrated with great enthusiasm at the IFFCO Community Hall, Paradip, through an Awareness Programme on the MSME TEAM (Trade Enablement & Marketing) Initiative, jointly organised by the National Small Industries Corporation Ltd. (NSIC), Ministry of MSME, Government of India, in association with the World Trade Centre Bhubaneswar. The programme witnessed the participation of a large number of MSME entrepreneurs, industry representatives, bankers, women entrepreneurs, government officials and other stakeholders from across the region. Sampad Chandra Swain, Hon'ble Minister for Industries, Skill Development & Technical Education, Government of



Odisha, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The dignitaries present on the dais included Manoj Mohan Sinha, Zonal General Manager, NSIC, Bhubaneswar, Kamal Lochan Nayak, Deputy General Manager, NSIC, Bhubaneswar, Subhash Chhetri, State Director, Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), Bhubaneswar, P.K. Mahapatra, Unit Head, IFFCO, Paradip,

Monaranjan Bisoi, General Manager, District Industries Centre (DIC), Jagatsinghpur, Dr. Rina Routray, Advisor, Women's Forum, World Trade Centre Bhubaneswar & Chairperson, Mahila Atmanirbhar Abhiyan, Odisha, S. K. Shaha, Chief Manager, NSIC, Ms. A. Rajyalaxmi, Regional Director, World Trade Centre Bhubaneswar, Ms. Varsha Rana, Head World Trade

Institute, Mumbai, B.K. Parida, DGM, IFFCO. The programme commenced with the traditional lighting of the ceremonial lamp followed by the National Anthem. Addressing the gathering, Sampad Chandra Swain, Hon'ble Minister for Industries, Skill Development & Technical Education, Government of Odisha, stated that the MSME sector makes a significant contribution to India's Gross Domestic Product, exports and employment generation. He appreciated the MSME TEAM Initiative as a progressive and innovative concept that will enable MSMEs to leverage digital commerce and expand their market reach. The Hon'ble Minister stressed that widespread awareness and active participation are essential to ensure that entrepreneurs, particularly those from rural and

semi-urban areas, derive maximum benefit from the initiative.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri P. K. Mohapatra, Unit Head & Senior General Manager, IFFCO Paradip, highlighted the immense business potential for local enterprises. He informed that IFFCO is presently associated with nearly 2,400 Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises MSME vendors, of which only about 200 vendors are from Odisha. He urged entrepreneurs from the State to strengthen their capabilities, improve quality standards and actively participate in industrial supply chains to increase Odisha's representation. The programme also witnessed the participation of women entrepreneurs from Pandua Village, who are engaged in the production of eco-friendly coir products.

## Prakash Jena & Nagendra Rout elected as president & secretary of PTOA

Paradip,(DMS):- A general body meeting of Paradip Trailer and Gas Tanker Owners Association was held at the conference hall of Hotel Golden Anchor on Sunday. Under the supervision of Prakash



Tripathy, Chairman, trailer Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) and trade union leader, the election of the association was conducted in a formal manner in the meeting. Prakash Kumar Jena was unanimously elected as the president, Karmeswar Swain as the working president, Ashutosh Swain as the vice president, Nagendra Rout as the secretary, Satyajit Pradhan as the Asst. Secretary, Manmohan Nayak as the joint secretary, and Trupti Ranjan Prusti. The newly elected office-bearers were administered the oath. It is noted that as the Port Authority has decided to transport cargo through containers, the containers will be transported through trailers. So, more trailers will be required in Paradip Port in the coming days. Since the number of trailers in Paradip is low and keeping in mind the need for more trailers, a decision was taken by the committee to recruit new members to provide new trailers.

## Paradip Port Chairman launches Pulse Polio campaign at Port Hospital

Paradip,(DMS):- The nationwide Pulse Polio Vaccination Campaign is being actively conducted from June 28 to June 30, 2026. The campaign is dedicated to administering life-saving Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) drops to all children below the age of five years to maintain India's polio-free status. Reaffirming the commitment to a polio-free India, Paradip Port Authority (PPA) Chairman P.L. Haranadh administered pulse polio drops to a child as part of the Pulse Polio Programme 2026 at the Port Hospital on Sunday. The programme was attended by department heads, senior officers of Paradip Port Authority, doctors and healthcare staff who actively supported this



important national vaccination campaign. Dr. Runu Singh, Dr. Laxmidhar Padhuria, Dr. Geetanjali, health staff Prashant Kumar Lenka and all the doctors and staff of the hospital assisted in the polio campaign organised

under the supervision of Dr. Bibhuti Bhushan Das, Chief Medical Officer of the Port. A total of 103 children were administered polio drops on the first day of the three-day campaign.

## Tax Changes, Policy Support To Sustain Domestic Equity Inflows: JP Morgan

New Delhi,28/6: A series of tax and policy measures introduced in recent years has enhanced the attractiveness of equity investments in India, creating favourable conditions for sustained domestic inflows into the stock market despite relatively subdued returns over the past two years, according to a report by JP Morgan. The global investment bank said recent changes in the taxation of long-term capital gains, debt mutual funds and insurance products have significantly improved the relative appeal of equities, further encouraging the shift of household savings toward financial assets. JP Morgan noted that equities are currently subject to a 12.5 per



cent long-term capital gains tax, while policy changes such as the removal of indexation benefits, taxation of certain insurance proceeds and slab-rate taxation for debt mutual funds have altered the risk-reward dynamics in favour of equity

investments. The brokerage said these tax and regulatory changes, combined with rising participation through Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs), are expected to continue supporting a steady flow of domestic money into equity

markets. According to the report, domestic investors have remained resilient even as foreign portfolio investors reduced their exposure to Indian equities during FY25 and FY26. Despite modest returns from benchmark indices during the period, retail investors continued to invest through SIPs, indicating a structural shift in investment behaviour rather than a response to short-term market movements. JP Morgan said consistent participation by domestic investors has emerged as an important stabilising force for Indian equities, helping offset volatility arising from foreign fund outflows and periods of global risk aversion.

## Gold Declined Over 4 Pc This Week Over Stronger US Dollar, High Treasury Yields

New Delhi,28/6: Gold prices dipped 4.63 per cent during the week, marking the fourth consecutive weekly decline amid a stronger dollar and persistent expectations of higher US interest rates. On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures (August) gained 0.75 per cent on Friday, while silver futures (July) surged more than 1 per cent after US inflation data tempered immediate concerns about a Federal Reserve rate hike. Currently, gold futures stand at Rs 1,44,199 and silver futures at Rs 2,22,100 per kg. The price of 10 grams of 24-carat gold was at Rs 1,39,878 on Thursday down from Rs 1,46,664 seen on Monday market opening, according to data published by the India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA). The rebound towards the end of the week comes after bullion slumped to its lowest since November 2025, earlier this week. Volatility in technology stocks and concerns around artificial intelligence prompted some investors to seek safe haven assets, supporting yellow metal's rebound. Elevated Treasury yields have reduced the appeal of non-yielding assets such as gold and silver. Despite the rebound, gold has lost roughly 29 per cent from its record high of \$5,594.82 seen on January 29, 2026. COMEX Gold continues to trade with a corrective bias with prices currently hovering above \$4,000 support area. Immediate resistance is placed at \$4,200 to \$4,240, followed by \$4,360 to \$4,400, analysts said. Immediate resistance for MCX Gold is placed at Rs 1,46,000 to Rs 1,47,000, followed by Rs 1,49,000 to Rs 1,50,000. On the downside, Rs 1,40,000-Rs 1,39,000 remains the immediate support. Immediate resistance for MCX Silver is placed at Rs 2,30,000 to Rs 2,32,000, while a break below Rs 2,10,000 level could extend the decline toward Rs 2,00,000 to Rs 1,98,000

## India Inc Gives Thumbs Up As GST Turns 10

New Delhi,28/6: As GST, considered the biggest tax reform since India's independence, completes 9 years on July 1, it has also gained near-universal acceptance among businesses as a simple and trusted digital ecosystem, according to the latest Deloitte Survey. The next phase, GST 2.0, will move beyond digitalisation to an intelligent, predictive and integrated framework, with businesses seeking AI-driven compliance, data-led dispute reduction and a seamless, unified taxpayer experience, the report stated. GST continues to enjoy strong and growing confidence across India Inc., with more than 99 per cent of businesses reporting a positive and neutral experience and negative sentiment dropping to near zero, down significantly from 5 per cent in 2025 and 10 per cent in 2022. This trust is driven by key improvements such as digitalisation of compliance (69



per cent), automation of tax processes (54 per cent) and the stabilisation of e-invoicing and e-way bill systems (48 per cent), alongside greater transparency, consistency and ease of doing business, the report observed. MSMEs are increasingly embracing quarterly return filing, considering this as the top GST initiative, which is evidenced by a sharp increase in positive response for implementation of the scheme from 12 per cent in

2023 to 67 per cent in 2026, the report states. Thus, it is evident that technology-led administration is pivotal, as organisations increasingly depend on digital systems for enhanced accuracy, speed and predictability. The impact of rate rationalisation is strongest in consumer (64 per cent) and life sciences and healthcare (58 per cent), but remains structurally driven, with few sectors reporting no change in consumption.

Overall, despite sector-specific nuances, expectations converge on a more simplified, intelligent GST system, the report pointed out. GST replaced as many as 17 central and state taxes, along with 13 cesses, with a unified indirect tax system designed to create a common national market across India and eliminate double taxation. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has pointed out that the roll-out of Goods and Services Tax (GST) 2.0 with rate cuts across the board has injected fresh momentum into India's growth story by enhancing household purchasing power, easing business operations, and simplifying tax administration. "By rationalising slabs and lowering rates across a range of consumer goods, the reform has delivered tangible savings for households, freeing up disposable income and helping stimulate demand," she remarked. After beginning with

multiple slabs of 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent, along with a cess on luxury and demerit goods, the government introduced a revamped two-tier framework from September 22, 2025. Under the new structure, most goods and services fall under either the 5 per cent or 18 per cent slab, while a separate 40 per cent rate has been retained only for luxury and 'sin goods' such as sugary drinks. The number of registered taxpayers has more than doubled over the past nine years, rising from 66.5 lakh at launch to around 1.6 crore in 2026, reflecting greater formalisation of the economy. Average monthly GST collections have also nearly doubled from Rs 89,700 crore in 2017-18 to Rs 1.85 lakh crore in FY26, with annual revenues surging to Rs 22.27 lakh crore, which represents an over 8 per cent jump over the previous year.

## Adani Group Targets 50GW Renewable Energy Capacity By 2030, Nuclear Portfolio Of 10 GW By 2035

London/New Delhi: The Adani Group is building one of the world's largest renewable energy portfolios, targeting 50GW by 2030, and a substantial nuclear portfolio of 10 GW by 2035, Sagar Adani, Executive Director of Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) has said. Speaking at the inaugural Adani Green Energy Dialogue, hosted by Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) in partnership with the Energy Transitions Commission (ETC) at the Science Museum, London, he said that "we are investing in large-

scale energy storage including pumped hydro and utility-scale batteries, expanding transmission networks to move power efficiently across the country and developing green hydrogen ecosystems". "We are doing it all, at a scale and speed the world has rarely seen. Because incremental change will not cut it," Sagar Adani told the gathering. He said that the events of the past three months have left every nation thinking. "Today, all countries - developed or developing - are

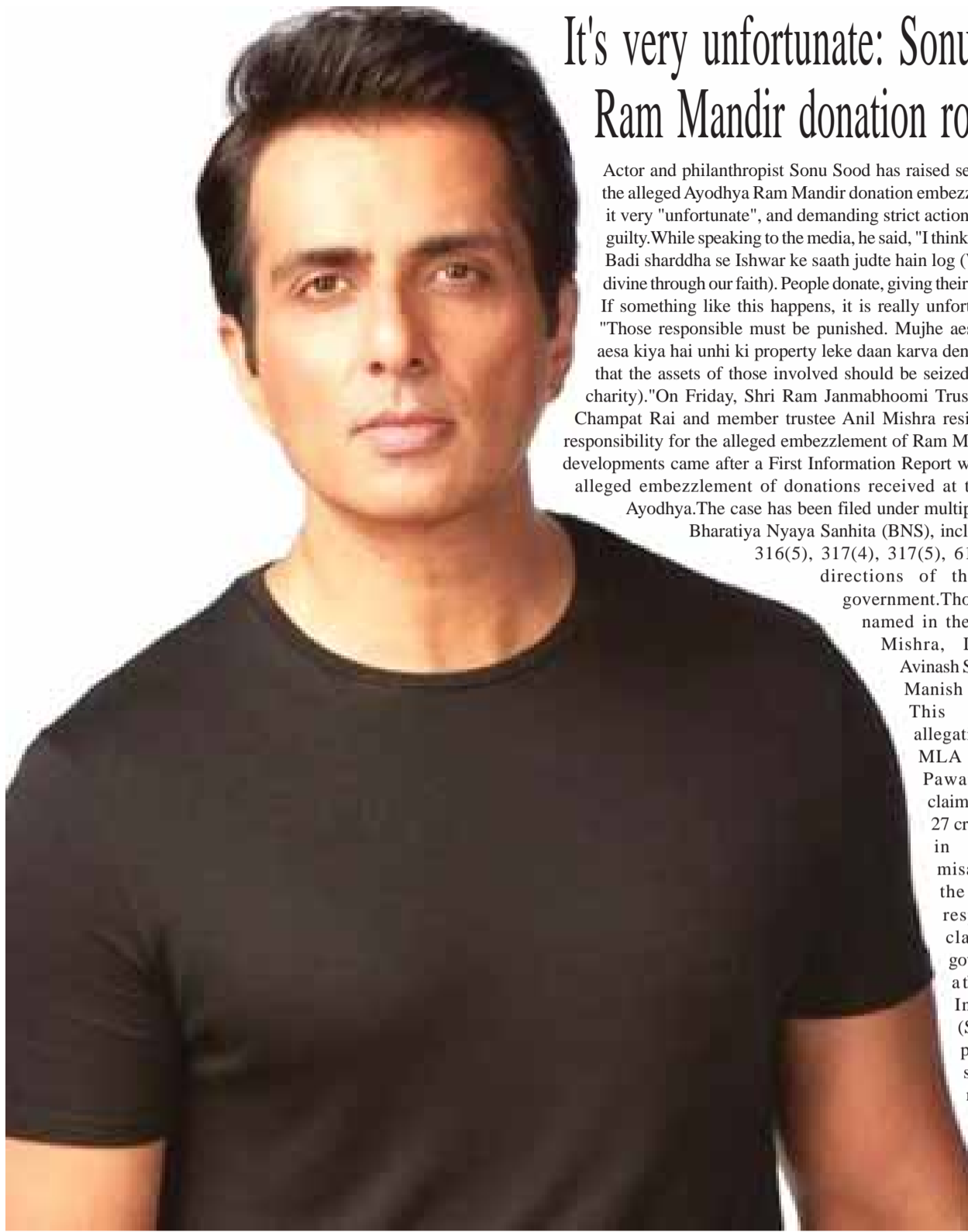
being forced to come to terms with what it means to futureproof their economies against relentless geopolitical shocks. At the same time, for most of the developing world, where hundreds of millions of people are rising into the middle class and are increasing their energy consumption for a better quality of life, affordability of energy continues to remain a fundamental necessity," Sagar Adani mentioned. These constant geopolitical disruptions have turned this

necessity into a monumental battle for survival. "Energy Security, Energy Affordability, and Energy Sustainability - this is the ultimate global trifecta," he noted. Nowhere is electrification more critical and even challenging, than in India. "It is helpful to consider India's electricity demand and supply in the broader context of the country's final energy consumption. In 2024, India consumed about 10,000 Terawatt-hours across all sources - coal, oil, gas, nuclear

and renewables," he informed. "Let's put the scale of India's challenge into perspective. We are talking about a structural leap, adding nearly 2,000 gigawatts of new capacity over the next two decades. All while ensuring that this energy remains affordable, accessible, and increasingly clean. That is the scale of the opportunity. And that is India's defining challenge," Sagar Adani highlighted. For India, the path forward is clear. "We must electrify everything, reducing

structural dependence on imported energy. We must build an energy backbone anchored in resources that are available within the country. And this is where we must be pragmatic, leveraging every energy source available to us. Renewables. Hydro. Efficient thermal. And nuclear. Because without firm, scalable baseload power, the math simply does not work," he elaborated. Over the past decade, India's leadership has played an exceptional role in cutting red tape, getting rid of unnecessary

and outdated regulations, revitalizing public undertakings and encouraging private investments. "Countless macro and micro policy changes by the government have resulted in an environment where business can grow, flourish and prosper. From accelerating infrastructure development, to expanding renewable capacity, strengthening transmission networks, and enabling long-term investments, there has been both clarity of intent and continuity of action. And that continuity is a critical enabler of resilience," he added.



## It's very unfortunate: Sonu Sood on Ram Mandir donation row

Actor and philanthropist Sonu Sood has raised serious concerns over the alleged Ayodhya Ram Mandir donation embezzlement case, calling it very "unfortunate", and demanding strict action against those found guilty. While speaking to the media, he said, "I think it's very unfortunate. Badi sharddha se Ishwar ke saath judte hain log (We connect with the divine through our faith). People donate, giving their hard-earned savings. If something like this happens, it is really unfortunate." Sood added, "Those responsible must be punished. Mujhe aesa lagta hai jinhone aesa kiya hai unhi ki property leke daan karva deni chahiye (I believe that the assets of those involved should be seized and given away as charity)." On Friday, Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Trust General Secretary Champat Rai and member trustee Anil Mishra resigned, taking moral responsibility for the alleged embezzlement of Ram Mandir donations. The developments came after a First Information Report was registered on the alleged embezzlement of donations received at the Ram temple in Ayodhya. The case has been filed under multiple provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), including Sections 306, 316(5), 317(4), 317(5), 61 and 3(5), on the directions of the Uttar Pradesh government. Those who have been named in the FIR are Anukalp Mishra, Lavkush Mishra, Avinash Shukla, Tinnu Yadav, Manish Yadav and others. This action followed allegations by former SP MLA from Ayodhya, Pawan Pandey, who claimed that between Rs 27 crore and Rs 7.5 crore in donations were misappropriated from the Ram Mandir. In response to these claims, the state government constituted a three-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) on June 14 to probe the alleged scam, acting on a request from the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi

## Akshay Kumar, Saif Ali Khan's 'Haiwaan' to be released on Sept 11

Actors Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali Khan's starrer 'Haiwaan' has finally got a release date. The upcoming thriller, directed by Priyadarshan, is set to release in cinemas on September 11, 2026. The exciting news was announced by KVN Productions on Instagram along with a new poster. Sharing the announcement, the production house wrote, "In cinemas, 11th September 2026. 60 blockbusters. One master storyteller. A film by Priyadarshan, 'Haiwaan'. The film has already completed shooting. In December last year, director Priyadarshan shared pictures from the wrap-up celebrations on Instagram. The photos showed Saif Ali Khan cutting a cake with the cast and crew, while another picture featured the actor posing with the filmmaker and the team. 'Haiwaan' marks Akshay Kumar's and Saif Ali Khan's reunion after 17 years. The duo, who previously worked together in films such as 'Main Khiladi Tu Anari', 'Yeh Dillagi', and 'Aarzo', will be seen sharing screen space once again after 17 long years. They were last seen together in Vijay Krishna Acharya's directorial 'Tashan', which was released in 2008. Actress Sayami Kher will also play a key role in the film.



## SPORTS

### England crush New Zealand as Wyatt-Hodge breaks record in Women's T20 World Cup

NEWDELHI: England ended New Zealand's Women's T20 World Cup title defence with a commanding chase at The Oval, reaching 164/1 in 17.2 overs after restricting the White Ferns to 163/6. Danni Wyatt-Hodge led England's charge with an unbeaten 89 off 53 balls, smashing 15 fours and a six. Her partnership of 128 runs with Sophia Dunkley, who scored 49\*, sealed England's fifth straight win in the group stage. New Zealand, needing victory to qualify, fell short despite a strong start. Wyatt-Hodge's innings broke Beth Mooney's 2020 record for most runs in a single Women's T20 World Cup, taking her tally to 282. She now holds two fifties and a century in this edition, underlining her dominance. The 128-run stand also became the highest partnership in a Women's T20 World Cup chase. The match marked emotional farewells for



New Zealand legends Sophie Devine, Suzie Bates, and Lea Tahuhu, who retired after the defeat. The trio, with nearly 900 international appearances combined, received a guard of

honour from both teams. Amelia Kerr hailed them as "three legends who shaped New Zealand cricket." New Zealand's campaign unravelled after early losses to the West Indies and Sri Lanka.

Despite Devine and Bates lifting their side to 163, England's clinical batting ended their hopes. England now face Ghana in the Round of 32, while Portugal meet Croatia.

### Ancy Sojan Breaks Anju Bobby George's 22-Year Record

NEWDELHI: Ancy Sojan created history at the National Inter-State Athletics Championships in Bhubaneswar by breaking Anju Bobby George's 22-year-old national long jump record. The 25-year-old athlete leapt 6.88m, surpassing Anju's 6.83m mark set at the 2004 Athens Olympics. Her performance electrified the crowd at Kalinga Stadium and confirmed her place at the upcoming Asian Games. In men's high jump, Sarvesh Kushare also rewrote history with a 2.31m



leap, eclipsing Tejaswin Shankar's previous record of

2.29m. The championships, held from June 24 to 28, witnessed several athletes securing Asian Games qualifications. Dev Meena excelled in pole vault, Jyothi Yarraji dominated the 100m hurdles, Anushka Yadav impressed in hammer throw, and Mohammed Afsal clinched his spot in the 800m. Ancy credited her success to strong infrastructure and support from Reliance Foundation Sports. She highlighted the role of nutrition, training facilities, and international exposure in shaping her journey.

### 'Fast and Furious' star Tyrese Gibson opens up about finding peace during spiritual journey in India

Hollywood actor and singer Tyrese Gibson has described his latest visit to India as a "life-changing" spiritual journey, sharing an emotional message from Mumbai about meditation, gratitude and the enduring influence of Mahatma Gandhi on Dr Martin Luther King Jr. In a social media post shared on June 27, the 'Fast and Furious' star said he returned to India not as a tourist but in search of inner peace and personal growth. The actor shared a carousel of pictures and videos from his visit to a temple in Mumbai. In the videos, he could be seen offering aarti and milk to the shivalingam at the temple. Drawing a historical parallel with Dr Martin Luther King Jr's 1959 visit to India, Gibson reflected on Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolent resistance. "In 1959, Dr Martin Luther King Jr came to India as a pilgrim, not a tourist. He came to study the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, whose philosophy of nonviolent resistance forever shaped the Civil Rights Movement. Dr King would later say that Jesus showed him the spirit of love, but Gandhi showed him the method. That journey changed history," Gibson wrote. The actor said his own visit



is centred on learning meditation and embracing stillness to improve his mental well-being. "I've always wanted to learn how to meditate to practice stillness, quiet the racing thoughts that sometimes bring anxiety, and

pursue genuine peace of the mind, body, and spirit. That's a lifelong journey," he wrote. Gibson also thanked "AMA" for the hospitality he received during his stay, calling the experience "truly life-changing."

### Prajakta Koli turns 33, thanks fans for their warm wishes



Marking her special day, she posted a sweet post through which she conveyed her thanks to her loved ones and fans for their "cute wishes". "33 (Cake emoji) Thank you for all your cute wishes yaar," she captioned the post. Prajakta also shared adorable pictures surrounded by birthday flowers and a "33"-shaped balloon. "are number balloons still a thing? 33 is making me overthink everything," she quipped. Reacting to the post, Prajakta's best friend and actor Mithila Palkar wrote, "Yayyy! Happy Birthdaaaay, cutie!" Prajakta is an actor, author, and content creator who rose to fame with the popular series Mismatched, where she played the role of Dimple. She was recently seen in the Netflix series Single Papa.