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leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
Today, you may feel caught between the devil and the deep blue sea: while you must please your beloved, you can't afford to annoy your boss. It's okay once in while to walk the tight rope, smiles Ganesha. Life only gives you what you can handle.

TAURUS
Stress might take its toll on you today. Ganesha foresees a demanding and difficult day. There may be a need for solitude to spend time with yourself. In relationships, you will look for a common ground to live and let live, says Ganesha.

GEMINI
A fantastic day to enter into all kinds of partnerships, open joint accounts, strike deals, and make future plans, says Ganesha. Though your relationship with your spouse has been under some strains, today, you are likely to start working towards resolving those issues.

CANCER
You may make a switch to a new job or get a job offer that you don't want to deny, predicts Ganesha. You are likely to go on a shopping spree and spend lavishly. In the evening, you will be spending your time and money on your loved ones.

LEO
Professionalism always impresses, no matter who you are or what you do. Remember this, and adopt the professional attitude that is, in a way, intrinsic to you. It shall go a long way in helping you impress new business partners. Also, expect a few concessions from your seniors at work. You have earned them, so use them wisely.

VIRGO
Domestic troubles brewing for some time now might be sorted today. But put in extra efforts, says Ganesha. Plans may be to open a joint account or start a venture in partnership. Evening may be spent in socialising, says Ganesha.

LIBRA
When it comes to your children, no pain is too much. Today seems to justify that statement as you may indeed take pains to improve your children's welfare. But it's all worth the effort in the end. Afternoon brings with it the possibility of happiness and success. You may make worthwhile material progress today.

SCORPIO
Your beloved will pulsate with pangs of passion, and even you won't remain unaffected for long, says Ganesha. Your skills in negotiating will help you save a huge chunk of money. Some quiet and prosperity at home will help you relax. Ganesha expects you to turn up with fantastic new ideas to fight your way out of sticky situations.

SAGITTARIUS
Love life and your sweet-heart are likely to occupy your day. You may build castles in the air! You would like to give your wardrobe a makeover. To sum it up, you and your friends set out on a shopping spree and splurge big time! Make the most of the benevolent day, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN
Check if you have enough energy in store, as the day brings a slew of activities that will demand your participation and keep you pleasantly occupied for major part of the day, says Ganesha. On the career front, you may find the day to be encouraging as it will provide opportunities to take up new ventures, especially for those engaged in freelancing.

AQUARIUS
It's a day of cheer and sunshine! Things go well and you're inspired to begin some educational course, or enhance your professional expertise. A good day for entrepreneurs and those dealing in finance. You will remain busy, albeit happily busy, says Ganesha.

PISCES
Keeping a tab on your expenses ought to be a priority today. Learning to distinguish between your needs and your wants will be vital if you wish to avoid unnecessary extravagances, which you will invariably end up regretting later, says Ganesha.

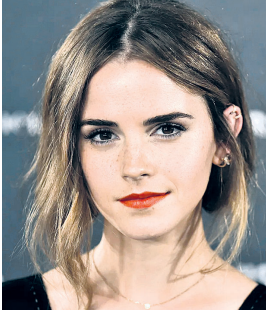


ARONOFSKY IN NEGOTIATIONS TO DIRECT *BREAKTHROUGH*

Filmmaker Darren Aronofsky is in early talks to direct an upcoming feature, *Breakthrough*, starring Dwayne Johnson in a supporting role. The film from A24 studio has the script penned by Zeke Goodman and is set in Southern California at the turn of the millennium.

EMMA WATSON TURNS ATHLETE

Emma Watson, best known for playing Hermione Granger in the *Harry Potter* series, has showcased her athletic prowess by competing in Oxford University's Summer Eights rowing regatta. Her team won one out of four races in the intercollegiate competition.

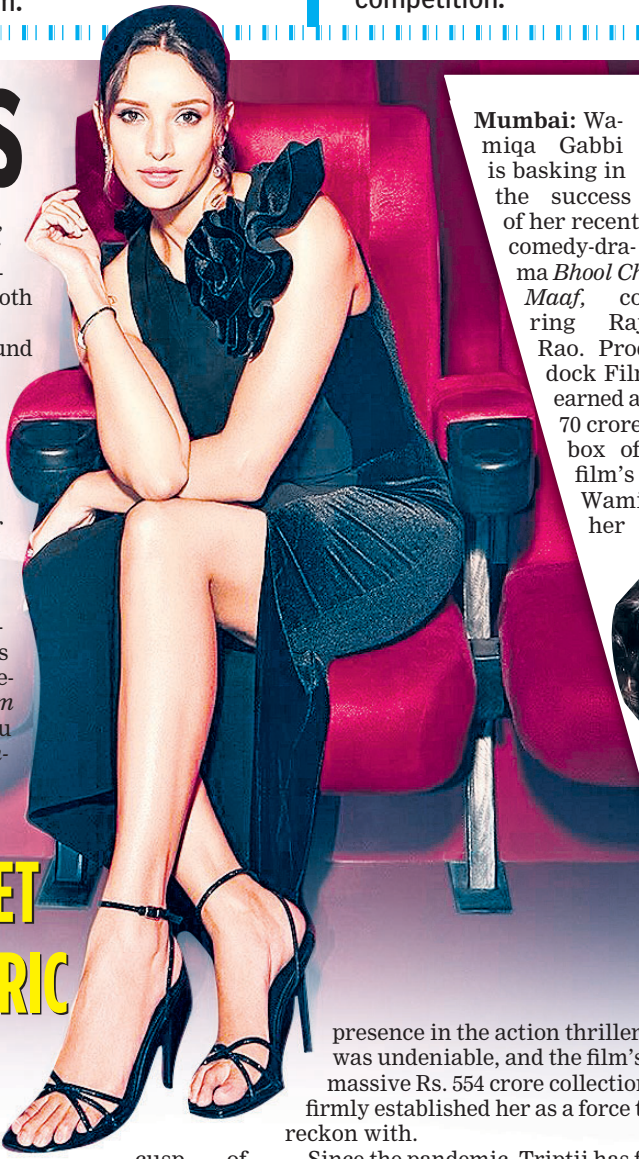


SAM'S IDEA OF SUCCESS

Mumbai: Samantha Ruth Prabhu recently reflected on her transformative journey in the entertainment industry, particularly after taking a two-year hiatus from acting. *The Citadel: Honey Bunny* star shared that her idea of success has evolved significantly. "Today, my definition of success is freedom — the freedom to take a break, to grow, evolve, and not be confined to labels," she said in a candid conversation. After wrapping her 2023 film *Kushi* with Vijay Deverakonda, Samantha took time off to rediscover herself. Her return with the action-packed series *Citadel: Honey*

Bunny, co-starring Varun Dhawan, was met with widespread acclaim. Her portrayal of a fierce spy and her dedication to high-octane action scenes won both critics and fans over. During her time away, Samantha found clarity and a deeper sense of purpose. While some may not consider her as commercially successful as before, she feels more fulfilled than ever, focusing only on what truly resonates with her. She is now gearing up for her upcoming series *Rakt Brahmand: The Bloody Kingdom*, alongside Aditya Roy Kapur and Wamiqa Gabbi. Samantha also made her debut as a producer with the well-received Telugu film *Subham* and is set to return to Telugu cinema with *Maa Inti Bangaram*.

AGENCIES



Mumbai: Wamiqa Gabbi is basking in the success of her recent comedy-drama *Bhool Chuk Maaf*, co-starring RajKummar Rao. Produced by Mad-dock Films, the film has earned an impressive Rs. 70 crore at the domestic box office. Amid the film's successful run, Wamiqa reflected on her early ca-

Wamiqa on early career hustle

reer hustle in a candid interview. She revealed working 38-hour stretches across three shifts in her initial days. "I worked a morning shift on one project, then another at night. I did it happily because I was enthusiastic and free of major responsibilities. Whatever I earned was enough to support myself and my loved ones," she shared.

Wamiqa fondly recalled juggling *Modern Love Mumbai* with Vishal Bhardwaj and *Jubilee* with Vikramaditya Motwane, admitting she never informed either director about the overlapping schedules to avoid changes. "Do you think I wouldn't be thrilled to switch between Vishal Sir and Vikram Sir?" she said. In another memory, she spoke of agreeing instantly to a jungle shoot without a vanity van or AC. "I was excited. These are the experiences that help me grow," she said.

Wamiqa's upcoming films include *Bhoot Bangla* with Akshay Kumar and *Dil Ka Darwaaza Khol Na Darling* with Siddhant Chaturvedi and Jaya Bachchan.

AGENCIES



TRIPTII SET FOR HISTORIC FEAT

Mumbai: Triptii Dimri is on the cusp of creating history in Bollywood. With just Rs. 56 crores more at the Indian box office, she is set to become the second Bollywood actress after Deepika Padukone to cross the coveted Rs. 1000 crore mark in the post-Covid era. This remarkable achievement places her in an elite league of Indian cinema's top box office performers.

Triptii's rise has been nothing short of meteoric. While she first gained attention with *Laila Majnu*, it was her role in *Animal* alongside Ranbir Kapoor that catapulted her into the spotlight. Though not the lead, her screen

presence in the action thriller was undeniable, and the film's massive Rs. 554 crore collection firmly established her as a force to reckon with.

Since the pandemic, Triptii has featured in four films, two of which were box office hits. Her total post-Covid box office earnings now stand at Rs. 944.04 crores. Adding to her momentum, she recently replaced Deepika Padukone in *Spirit*, following reports of creative differences between the *Kalki 2898 AD* star and director Sandeep Reddy Vanga.

Once she hits the Rs. 1000 crore mark, Triptii will join Deepika and Rashmika Mandanna as the only Indian actresses to reach this milestone in the post-Covid era.

AGENCIES

The unseen side of Raaj Kumar

Mumbai: Before he became one of Bollywood's most enigmatic actors, Raaj Kumar led a very different life. In the late 1940s, he served as a Sub-Inspector with the Mumbai Police, stationed at Mahim Police Station. His cinematic journey began unexpectedly when filmmaker Sohrab Modi spotted him while on duty at Metro Cinema. Though Raaj Kumar initially declined Modi's film offer, destiny had other plans, and he eventually transitioned into acting, bringing

his signature style to the silver screen.

Known for his magnetic voice and piercing screen presence, Raaj Kumar was also famous for his eccentricities and blunt nature. A widely shared anecdote recounts how he rejected *Zanjeer*, the film that launched Amitabh Bachchan's stardom, supposedly because he didn't like the director's face or his choice of hair oil. Whether fact or folklore, his refusal significantly shaped the course of Bol-

lywood.

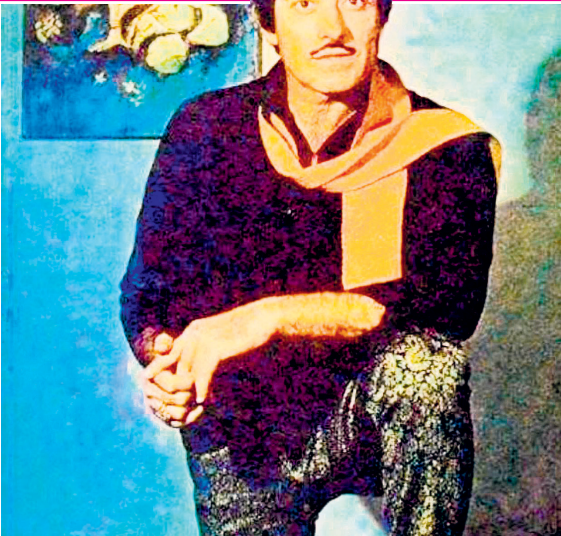
Raaj Kumar shared the screen with Dilip Kumar in *Paigham* (1959) and reunited with him three decades later in *Saudagar* (1991). Despite the hype around their pairing, it's well-documented that the two rarely spoke off-camera due to their strong personalities and differing approaches to work.

Deeply loyal, Raaj Kumar retained the same driver, tailor, hairstylist, and even his beloved Plymouth car for over 40 years.

A fan of horse riding and golf, he also had a curious fondness for polished shoes.

True to his private nature, even in death, he left instructions for a quiet farewell—his cremation was to be done swiftly at Shivaji Park electric crematorium without informing the film fraternity. July 3, 1996, Raaj Kumar passed away due to throat cancer, leaving behind a legacy as unforgettable as the man himself.

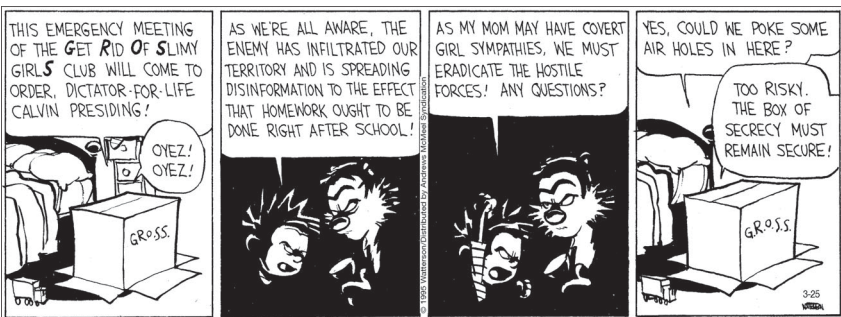
AGENCIES



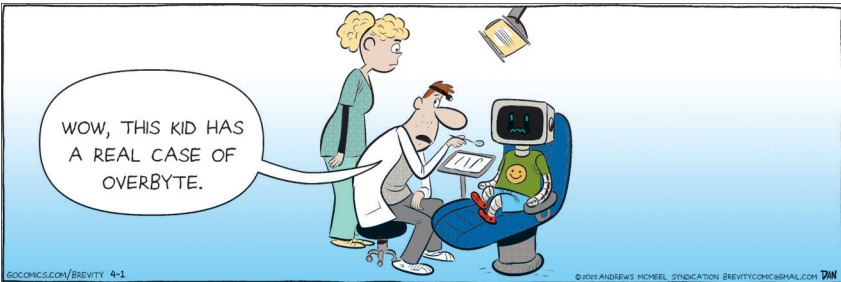
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

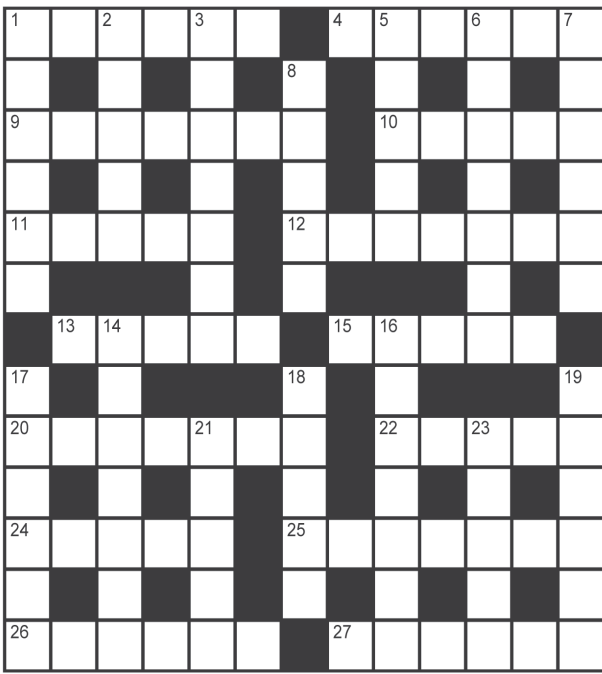


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across

- Jean Arp, e.g.
- Talk foolishly
- Circus item
- Fatuous
- After bar or pie
- Earthquake follower, at times
- Length measurement
- Goa, e.g.

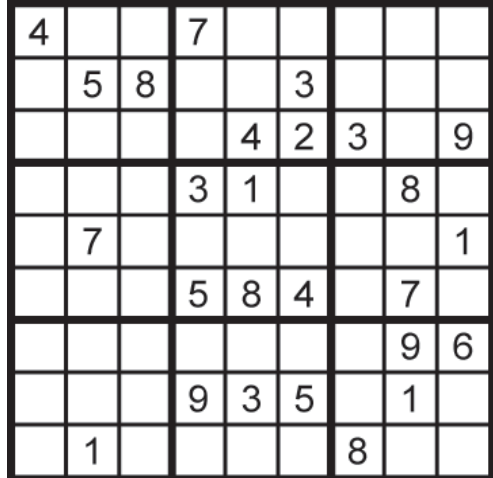
Down

- Capers
- Queen topper
- Cardigan
- Swiss cheese
- Distressed
- True heath
- Old World
- crocus
- Movie parts
- Curative

- Word of farewell
- Barefaced
- Cilia's place
- Melee (3-2)
- Learned
- Prized fungus
- Acquiesces
- Bakery supply
- Tight
- Delete
- Twilled fabric

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

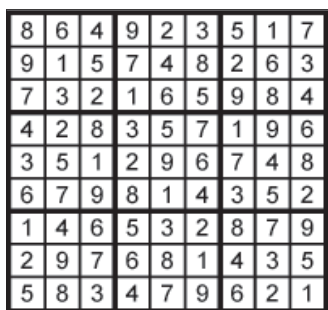


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



DNA tests identify 80

Three days after the tragic crash of Air India flight in Gujarat, hospital authorities confirm Sunday the identification of 80 bodies

NATIONAL | P7



Parade amid protests

Donald Trump's long-sought military parade rolls through the streets of downtown Washington Saturday

INTERNATIONAL | P8



AIF investments surge

Alternative Investment Fund reaches ₹5.38 lakh crore, a surge of 32 per cent from the year earlier

BUSINESS | P9



India lose again

The Indian men's hockey team's wretched run in the European leg of the FIH Pro League continues as it endured sixth defeat in a row

SPORTS | BACK PAGE

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BHUBANESWAR | MONDAY | JUNE 16, 2025

****P1

4 dead, 18 injured in Pune bridge collapse

AGENCIES

Pune, June 15: Four persons died and 18 were seriously injured after an old iron bridge on Indrayani river collapsed Sunday afternoon in Pune's Maval tehsil, officials said.

While two persons succumbed to injuries during treatment after being rescued, the bodies of two persons were recovered from underneath the collapsed portion of the bridge, officials said.

“While two bodies were recovered from beneath the structure, we suspect one person is trapped there. Efforts are underway to locate and rescue the person,” Talegaon Dabhade police station Senior Inspector Pradeep Rayannawar said late evening.

The incident took place at 3:30pm in Kundamala area, which has been seeing heavy rains over the past few days, giving the river a steady flow, another official said. It was not raining when the bridge collapsed in the presence of at least 100 picnickers, he added.

“In the mishap, so far 38 people have been rescued of which 18 sustained serious injuries and they are currently under treatment in three different hospitals. During treatment, two people succumbed to injuries,” a statement from the district administration informed.

Sonia Gandhi hospitalised

New Delhi: Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi was admitted to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital here Sunday due to stomach-related problems, sources said. Gandhi, 78, was admitted to the gastroenterology department around 9 pm, the hospital sources said. They said Gandhi's condition is stable and she is under the observation of a team of doctors. On June 9, the former Congress president underwent a medical check-up at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital. Two days before the check-up, she underwent some tests at Indira Gandhi Medical College Hospital in Shimla after she complained of high blood pressure.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

We recovered the black box. It only says: It was an accident... and accidents can't be avoided

Israeli strikes kill over 400 in Iran

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, June 15: Israel unleashed airstrikes across Iran for a third day Sunday and threatened even greater force as some Iranian missiles evaded Israeli air defences to strike buildings in the heart of the country. Planned talks on Iran's nuclear programme, which could provide an off-ramp, were cancelled.

Israel's strikes have killed at least 406 people in Iran and wounded another 654, according to a human rights group that has long tracked the country, Washington-based Human Rights Activists. Iran's government has not offered overall casualty figures.

The region braced for a protracted conflict after Israel's surprise bombardment Friday

TRAGEDY STRIKES: People stand near an iron bridge over the Indrayani river after it collapsed in Pune district of Maharashtra, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

Another Char Dham disaster

Just days after an Air India flight crash in Ahmedabad claimed 274 lives, a helicopter carrying pilgrims from Kedarnath crashed in Uttarakhand, killing all seven on board. This tragic incident highlights growing concerns over air safety standards in India, particularly on the Char Dham pilgrimage routes where helicopter crashes and emergency landings have become alarmingly frequent. On May 8, a chopper en route to Gangotri crashed in Uttarkashi, killing six. On May 12, a helicopter from Badrinath made an emergency landing due to poor visibility. Another crash-landing occurred near Kedarnath May 17 involving a heli ambulance. On June 7, a chopper made an emergency landing in Rudraprayag district due to technical issues. Opposition leaders and activists blame the government's lack of oversight, alleging that profit-driven private aviation firms are compromising safety for financial gain. These incidents underscore the urgent need for stricter regulation and better safety protocols on pilgrimage routes.

PNN & AGENCIES

Rudraprayag (Uttarakhand), June 15: A helicopter carrying

pilgrims from the Kedarnath shrine crashed early Sunday in the forests of Gaurikund amid poor visibility, killing all seven people on board, the fifth helicopter accident on the Chardham Yatra route since the pilgrimage started April 30. The Civil Aviation Ministry suspended the operations of the helicopter operator and issued a slew of safety directions after the tragedy, which came just days after one of the deadliest air disasters where an Air India flight to London crashed in Ahmedabad just after take-off, killing 274 people on board and on ground.

The seven people on board the Bell 407 helicopter, operated by private firm Aryan Aviation Pvt Ltd, included a two-year-old child and the pilot. They hailed from Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

The Civil Aviation Ministry said it has suspended the operations of Aryan Aviation for

the Char Dham Yatra and has directed the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to immediately post officers from airworthiness, safety and operations to actively oversee all helicopter activity in the Kedarnath Valley.

Preliminary indications suggest that the probable cause may be Controlled Flight into Terrain (CFIT), with the helicopter reportedly airborne despite poor visibility and extensive clouding at the valley entry area, the ministry said in a statement.

The exact cause will be determined through a detailed investigation by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB), it added. CFIT occurs when an airworthy aircraft under the complete control of the pilot is inadvertently flown into terrain, water or an obstacle.

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami also ordered a high-level inquiry and suspension of helicopter operations on the Chardham Yatra route for two days. Rudraprayag District Disaster Management Officer Nandan Singh Rajwar said zero visibility caused by bad weather apparently led the helicopter to crash between Gaurikund and Trijuginarayan in Kedarghati and catch fire.

Jajpur: 3 more diarrhoea deaths; toll rises to 16

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, June 15: Three more persons, including a woman, died of diarrhoea in Jajpur district Sunday, while the infection reportedly showed signs of decline.

The deceased were identified as Jatadhari Sahu, 75, of Kamalpur village under Dasarathpur block; Madanmohan Sahu, 62, of the Jajpur Municipality area and Jayanti Sahu, 50, of Khairabad village - also under the civic body area. With these three deaths, the toll from the infection has reportedly risen to 16.

However, Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO) Bijay Kumar Mishra refuted claims that the three deaths were caused by diarrhoea. “The deaths were due to other medical conditions, not diarrhoea,” he maintained. Meanwhile, special teams from MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur and SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack reached Jajpur Sunday. They collected 17 samples for cholera testing.

Earlier, 13 deaths had been attributed to diarrhoea in the district. The district Health department, however, officially confirmed only five.

Take urgent steps: CM

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Sunday directed the Health department to take urgent measures to prevent the spread of diarrhoea from Jajpur to neighbouring districts. According to a CMO statement, all health facilities in the affected districts have been placed on high alert.

P2

State Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling visited the district Sunday, touring community health centers in Barchana, Dharmasala, Madhuban, Rasulpur, Jajpur Road and the Jajpur DHH. He interacted with patients, assessed treatment conditions, and directed officials to resolve issues related to contaminated water and food.

Later, the minister attended a review meeting with District Collector P Anvesha Reddy at the Collectorate conference hall. Also present were Jajpur MP Rabindra Narayan Behera, Korei MLA Akash Das Nayak, Dharmasala MLA Himanshu Sekhar Sahu, Barchana MLA Amar Nayak, several district and Health officials, and members of a 14-member Central team.

Man held for beating pregnant wife to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Tihidi, June 15: A pregnant woman reportedly died after being brutally assaulted by her husband in Talapada village, under Tihidi police limits in Bhadrak district.

The deceased, Monalisa Jena, 26, succumbed to her injuries late Saturday night. Police have registered a case (211/25) and arrested her husband, Shankarshan Jena, Sunday.

Monalisa's father, Panchanan Jena in his complaint said his daughter was murdered over dowry. Panchanan alleged that Shankarshan, son of Tera Jena from the same village, had married Monalisa five years ago. At the time of the wedding, dowry demands were met as per the groom's side's wishes. However, they continued to demand more, and Monalisa was repeatedly tortured both physically and mentally by her husband and in-laws.

Panchanan said Saturday night he learned that Monalisa had been tied up and severely beaten by Shankarshan and others in the house. She was allegedly kicked on the stomach by her husband in an attempt to terminate her pregnancy. Monalisa was declared dead by doctors at Bhadrak DHH.

Sun comes to aid of heat-stressed cheetah cubs in Kuno

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 15: A solar-powered water lift system has emerged as a lifeline for the cheetah cubs born in Kuno National Park this summer, helping them survive extremely hot and harsh conditions.

Temperatures soared to the high 40s across northwest and central India this June, putting immense pressure on water resources.

In May 2023, three cubs born to Namibian cheetah Jwala died due to extreme heat in the national park in Madhya Pradesh.

Learning from that experience, authorities have installed a solar-powered system to pump water from the Kuno river and

transport it through an 8.6-km-long pipeline to sprinklers and water saucers at more than 15 locations inside the park.

“Lifting water from Kuno river, taking it kilometres away, using sprinklers extensively to create green spaces, and improving water availability, especially for mother and newborn cubs in a planned way, have proved quite successful,” according to video posted on X by Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Cheetah Project Director, Utam Kumar Sharma.

“The importance of water is felt only in its absence and it is nowhere as pronounced as in Kuno during peak summer. Under the incessant pummelling of hot winds called 'loo' and tem-

peratures bordering 48 degrees Celsius, life becomes very difficult for wildlife, particularly the young ones,” it said.

South African cheetah Veera gave birth to two cubs in February 2025, while another South

African cheetah, Nirva, gave birth to five cubs in April.

Two of Nirva's cubs died, but officials said the rest are doing well.

The officials said the cubs were experiencing such harsh

conditions for the first time and both the mothers and their offspring were regularly using the water points, indicating the success of the initiative.

Launched in September 2022, 70 years after the species was declared extinct in the country, India's cheetah reintroduction project is among the most ambitious conservation efforts in recent history.

As part of the project, 20 African cheetahs were brought to Kuno: eight from Namibia in September 2022 and 12 from South Africa in February 2023.

Since then, 26 cheetah cubs have been born in India. Of these, 17 survived.

Eleven cubs are roaming free in the wild, while the others are in enclosures at Kuno.

CM: Take urgent steps to curb spread of diarrhoea



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 15: Amidst an outbreak of diarrhoea in some areas of Jajpur and Keonjhar districts, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Sunday directed the Health department to take urgent measures to prevent its spread to neighbouring districts.

According to a statement from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), all health facilities in the affected districts have been placed on high alert.

"Neighbouring districts have also been advised to remain vigilant. Disinfection of drinking water sources has begun in Jajpur, alongside a temporary ban on street food sales and intensified food safety inspections," the statement added. Adequate supplies of medicines have been ensured and medical teams have been deployed to contain the outbreak, the CMO said.

Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling is monitoring the situation through regular meetings with medical officials and administrative officials.

A team from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has also arrived in Odisha to assist the state government in controlling the outbreak.

Sixteen people have died so far due to the outbreak in Jajpur

district, which was first reported June 9, Additional District Medical Officer (ADMO) Prakash Chandra Bal said.

Out of 1,750 people diagnosed with diarrhoea in the district, 1,500 of them have recovered and about 250 are under treatment, officials said. "The situation is yet to be brought under control. When no new patients are admitted to hospitals, we will be able to control it," Director of Public Health Nilakantha Mishra said.

Adding to the worries, 11 diarrhoea patients also tested positive to cholera, Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO) Bijay Mishra said. A 14-member central team visited the district Sunday to assess the ground situation. The team visited some hospitals where diarrhoea patients have been admitted and held a meeting with the district administration.

Mahaling also visited various hospitals in Jajpur district and Anandapur hospital in Keonjhar district during the day and interacted with patients and doctors.

"It is a matter of concern for us that cholera has been detected in Jajpur. A team from SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack has been deployed in the district. We are trying to bring the situation under control," he told reporters.

Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) teams are disinfecting drinking water sources in the district, while food inspectors and disease surveillance teams are also working to bring the situation under control, officials said.

ASHA and Anganwadi workers, and health workers have been supplied with halogen tablets and ORS packets for distribution among the people, they said. People have been advised to take precautionary measures, avoid having outside foods, and adhere to hygienic practices, they said. Diarrhoea cases have also been detected in parts of the Cuttack district, Astaranga area in Puri district and Bhuban NAC in Dhenkanal district, officials said. Over 50 people were diagnosed with diarrhoea in Gholapur village in Cuttack, and 20 people were affected in Puri's Astaranga.

Similarly, over 30 persons in Bhaban NAC have been affected with diarrhoea, they said.

In light of rising cases of diarrhoea, the Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department has directed all ULBs and district-level officials to initiate immediate preventive and response measures.

Department principal secretary Usha Padhee has called for enhanced vigilance and real-time monitoring to ensure the sanitisation and safety of all water sources, with particular attention to vulnerable urban pockets. Meanwhile, BJD president and Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik accused the state government of taking the cholera outbreak lightly.

He said cholera has taken a serious turn in the districts of Jajpur, Kendrapara, Bhadrak, Puri, Cuttack, and Keonjhar, and the outbreak appears to be spreading to other districts as well.



DIVINE RECIPE: Servitors prepare 'Anasara Pana', a delicious drink prepared for the deities who are in seclusion for 15 days after having grand bath during Shana Purnima, at the residence of Lord Balabhadra's Badagrahi in Puri, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Non-servitors banned from climbing chariots

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 15: The state government will take stringent legal action, including arrests, against any non-servitor found climbing the chariots during this year's Rath Yatra in Puri, Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan said Sunday.

He also asserted that use of mobile phones on the chariots will be strictly prohibited.

Speaking to reporters, Harichandan said, "No non-servitor will be allowed to climb the chariots. If any such person is found on the chariot, strong action including arrest will be taken. Also, servitors will not be allowed to carry mobile

phones onto the chariots."

To ensure the timely completion of rituals and maintain discipline during 'Pahandi Bije' (the ceremonial procession) of the deities, the government has requested a list of servitors designated to perform rituals on Rath Yatra day (June 27). "The final list will be enforced strictly," the minister said.

Meanwhile, Director General of Police (DGP) Yogesh Bahadur Khurania held a meeting here to review the security measures for the Rath Yatra.

The road connecting Uttara Square near Bhubaneswar to Puri will be under CCTV surveillance, and efforts are underway to install CCTV cameras along Puri-Konark road as well,

the DGP said.

For the first time, an integrated command and control centre will be set up at Puri Town police station to monitor crowd movement and traffic.

"AI-enabled CCTV cameras are being installed at key locations in Puri for real-time monitoring," he said.

Traffic advisories will be issued from the control room to guide pilgrims and visitors, he added.

Besides, a mobile app has been developed through which people will get information about the route through which they will have the convenience to visit Puri during the festival and park their vehicles, he informed.

Along with police personnel, rapid action force, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and specialised agencies will be deployed in Puri for the festival, he said, adding, "We have requested the authorities concerned for deployment of central forces."

Drones and an anti-drone system will also be deployed in Puri during the Car Festival, he added.

Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja visited Puri Sunday and took stock of the construction of chariots.

"Chariot construction is progressing as per schedule, and I am confident that it will be completed on time," he told reporters.

SEVEN INJURED AS BUS OVERTURNS IN KHURDA

Bhubaneswar: At least seven people have been injured after a bus they were travelling in overturned on the National Highway-16 in Khurda district Sunday afternoon, police said. The bus was traveling from Bhubaneswar to Aska in Ganjam district with more than 40 passengers when it overturned near Pitapalli, they said. According to the police, the driver lost control of the bus and it overturned on the road. The injured passengers, with the help of the locals, were rushed to Khurda district headquarters hospital (DHH) for treatment. No casualty was reported in the accident till the last report came in and an investigation has been started, the police added. Upon receiving the news, Industrial Police Station IIC Vasudev Ransing and Motor Vehicle Inspector Dharamendra Dehury arrived at the scene with their team. They provided immediate assistance, sending 5-7 slightly injured passengers to a nearby government hospital.



Aakash students shine in NEET UG; 9 in AIR 1000

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 15: Fifteen students from Odisha branch of Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL), the national leader in test preparatory services, secured top positions at NEET UG 2025 examination, announced the outfit Sunday, reaffirming its commitment to academic excellence and student success.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) declared the NEET UG 2025 results Saturday, with state's AESL centres delivering an impressive performance. Nine students secured positions within the top 1000 AIR,



led by Aditya Kiran Bal (AIR 128), followed by Ritesh Parija (AIR 204), Satwik Mahapatra (AIR 421), Anannya Padhy (AIR 466), Aditya Anshuman Rath (AIR 667), Pratyasha Das (AIR 679), Ashmit Mohapatra (AIR 797), Smarak Das (AIR 827), and Pratyush Kar (AIR

990). Additionally, 39 students secured ranks within the top 5000, underscoring the region's strong commitment.

All the achievers were enrolled in AESL's flagship classroom programme, meticulously designed to prepare aspirants for one of the

world's most competitive medical entrance exams. The students credited their success to AESL's expert faculty, structured curriculum, and personalised mentoring.

"We are extremely thankful to Aakash for guiding us throughout this journey. The structured content, expert teaching, and personal mentoring helped us master complex topics in a short time. Without AESL, this success would not have been possible," shared the successful students.

AESL regional director Ajay Bahadur Singh lauded the students' accomplishments and stated, "We are immensely proud of our students' stellar performance in NEET UG 2025. Scoring such good marks is no small feat, especially in an exam that sees participation from over 23 lakh students nationwide. These results reflect the students' hard work, the unwavering support of their parents, and the committed efforts of our academic team. We wish them all the best for their future medical careers."

AESL continues to set the benchmark in competitive exam preparation, providing a robust academic environment that empowers students across India to achieve their medical and engineering dreams.

GAHIRMATHA MARINE SANCTUARY

Fishermen ready to return to Bay as fishing ban lifted

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahakalapara, June 15: The annual marine fishing ban imposed at Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary of Kendrapara district ended Sunday, paving the way for thousands of local fishermen to return to the Bay of Bengal and resume operations.

The ban, which has been in effect for seven months and a half from November 1, last year to June 15 this year, was imposed to protect mass nesting of Olive Ridley sea turtles during their breeding season. With the turtles having returned to their natural habitats, the restriction will be lifted, officials said.

Around 10,000 fishermen from Batighar, Kharinasi, Ramnagar, Petachhela, Jambhu, Suniti, Tantiapal, and Bau-



lakani panchayats under the Mahakalapara block depend heavily on marine fishing for their livelihood. Many of them conducted traditional rituals of boat worship like 'Danga Manga Puja' before setting out to the sea with their boats and nets Saturday.

Gahirmatha, spanning over 1,435 sq km from the Mahanadi river mouth to the Dhamra river mouth, is India's first marine sanctuary. Though the seasonal fishing ban is lifted, permanent

restrictions remain in force within the sanctuary's core area, which stretches 20 km from the coast into the sea. Entry into this zone is prohibited year-round, and a buffer zone follows beyond the 20-km mark.

To enforce the restrictions, the Forest department has deployed 14 high-tech floating buoys to demarcate boundaries. Despite such measures, officials allege that some trawler owners continue to trespass into the protected zones to illegally catch high-value fish species, evading forest patrols.

Kapila Chandra Pradhan, range officer of the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary, warned that any unauthorised entry into the restricted areas after lifting of ban will be met with legal action.

Zain Foundation celebrates Raja



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 15: Zain Foundation marked the Raja festival Sunday at its PECS Caf  , bringing together over 40 autistic children for a joyful celebration. Since its establishment in 2015, the foundation has actively promoted autism awareness through workshops, rallies, and inclusive programmes.

A special event, 'Raja PECS', saw participation of children, alongside their parents prepare and sell traditional delicacies and curated a special menu which includ-

ed Poda Pitha, Manda Pitha, Arisa Pitha, Kakara Pitha, and Pakodas at the caf  .

The foundation premise was beautifully decked up with traditional 'doli' (swings) to mark the three-day celebration in traditional way, adding to the festive spirit.

Foundation's chief trustee Gargi Bhattacharya shared that the event was an initiative for the children and their families to enjoy the festival together. "The initiative aims to promote awareness, acceptance, and inclusion, while also showcasing the talents of children with autism," she said.

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	36.2°	36.2°	Partly cloudy sky with possibility of rain or thunderstorm
Min Temp	27.2°	26.4°	
Humidity	75%	79%	
Rainfall	TRACE	Nil	

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Acharya Vihar-DayalAgency-9437135727, **A.P. Tours and Travel**, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, **Aurobindo Market**-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, **Airport Road**-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, **Anish Infotech**- Tankapani Road-9861341488, **Bapuji Nagar**- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, **Baramunda Rental Colony**-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, **Baramunda Housing Board Colony**-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, **Cuttack Road**-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, **District Center (Chandrasekharpur)**-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, **Forest Park**-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, **IRC Village**-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, **Janpath**-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, **Jaydev Vihar**-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, **Jagannath Mobile Point**- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, **Kanan Vihar**-Auro Electronics-8260697560, **Khandagiri**- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, **KIIT Road**-Jugad Jn-9338545031, **Laxmi Sagar**-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, **Lewis Road**-Spider Web-7809186415, **Metro Satellite City**-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, **Madhusudan Nagar**-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, **Maa Santoshi travels**- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, **Nayapalli**- The Cake Room- 7873660137, **Near Mayfair Lagoon**-Cookiemann-9439491273, **Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels**-9668284823, **Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate**- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, **Net Square**- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, **Priyadarshini Market**-Astro Point-9938134346, **R.N. General Store**-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, **Sahid Nagar**- Maa Communication- 9437353424, **Sahini General Store**- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, **Satya Nagar**-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, **Samantapur**- Download Point-7504557743, **Sailashree Vihar**-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, **Saheed Nagar**-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, **Siripur**-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, **Sushree fashion**- Jagmara-9938714347, **Shree Vision**- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, **Unit-3**-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, **Unit-7**- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, **VSS Nagar**-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, **XIMB Square**-LD Books-9658061373.

Mastermind arrested in explosive loot case

PNN & AGENCIES

Rourkela, June 15: Police Sunday arrested the prime accused and mastermind behind the loot of five tonne of explosives by Maoists from a vehicle near a stone quarry in Sundargarh district May 27, an official said.

The arrested accused has been identified as George Munda alias Kulu (43) from Banko village under K Balang police station.

Munda was passing important information to the Maoists. He was the main conspirator from the beginning of the loot and actively passed information to the Maoists, said DIG (Western Range) Brijesh Rai.

During the investigation, George's complicity was found by the police. He was



living just opposite to the quarry and was objecting to it, which was closed down subsequently, Rai said.

He was very vocal against the quarry and he then took the issue to the Maoists. He met the Maoists multiple times and passed vital intelligence regarding the movement of explosive trucks, the DIG said.

It was he who had passed the information regarding the movement of the vehicle with explosives and ensured that the loot was carried out without

any problem, the police said.

On May 27, a group of armed Maoists intercepted the explosives van en route to Banko quarry from Itma and decamped with 200 packets of explosives.

The state police took the issue seriously with DGP YB Khurania flying to Rourkela and meeting with senior officials.

So far, 3.8 tonne of explosives have been recovered while search is still going on to recover the remaining explosives, they said.

Lightning strikes kill 4

Baripada/Bargarh/Keonjhar/Kendrapara: Four people were killed and several others critically injured in separate lightning strike incidents during thunderstorms Sunday, officials said. In Mayurbhanj district, a 26-year-old man died and another was injured after lightning struck while they were taking shelter under a tree during a Kalbaishakhi-induced storm. The deceased was identified as Bhima Marndi of Bhologadia village under Nishchinta panchayat. The injured, Jagannath Marndi, 40, is from Gohirapal village. In Bargarh district, Dhanasingh Chhatra, 43, died and two others were critically injured when lightning struck a banyan tree they were sheltering under near farmland at Barapalia village in Paikamal block. In Jagatsinghpur district, a 45-year-old house painter, Prasant Das, died and another laborer was seriously injured after lightning struck a passenger boat on the Mahanadi River near Paradip. They were returning to Mahakalapara in Kendrapara district after work in industrial units. In Keonjhar district, Shailendri Nayak, 54, died after being struck by lightning in the backyard of her home in Baunshuli village under Patana block. She was a supervisor with the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) in Harichandanpur.

6 drown in separate incidents

POST NEWS NETWORK

Ersama/Baripada/Rourkela/Nandapur, June 15: At least six people drowned in separate incidents across the state Sunday, police said.

In Mayurbhanj district, two youths drowned while bathing in the Palpala River inside Similipal National Park. Police said seven friends from Baripada town had gone to the park when four entered the river. Two of them, identified as Ankit Bhujbal, 22, and Ayushman Nayak, 21, slipped into deep water and drowned. Fire services personnel recovered the bodies.

A case of unnatural death was registered, and post-mortems were conducted at PRM Medical College and Hospital in Baripada, said Baripada Sadar police inspector Aditya



Prasad Jena.

Similarly in Koraput district, a 15-year-old girl and a 17-year-old boy drowned in the Jolaput reservoir near Daleiput ghat under Nandapur block. The victims, Pushpa Bairagi and Debendra Kirshani, were from Banura village and had gone fishing. Pushpa slipped into the water, and Debendra drowned while trying to save her. Their bodies were recovered after a five-hour search by fire personnel. Separate unnatural death cases were registered.

In another incident, a youth drowned in the Brahmani River near Teterkela in Rourkela while bathing with friends. His companions escaped, but he was swept away by the current. His identity had not been confirmed as of Sunday evening.

Meanwhile, in Jagatsinghpur district, a 22-year-old man drowned after being swept away by tidal waves while bathing in the sea near Sial beach under Ersama police limits. The deceased, Deepti ranjan Parija of Begunia village in Titira panchayat, had gone to the beach with friends for the Raja festival. His body was found about 3km away near Ramtara beach after a two-hour search.

Police have registered unnatural death cases in all incidents and sent the bodies for autopsy. Investigations are ongoing.

CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797
Regd. Office: IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park, Road No. 16V, Plot No.B-23, Thane Industrial Area, Wagale Estate, Thane - 400604
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District Centre: **NABRANGPUR-NABRANGPUR GL - IIFL FINANCE LIMITED, 1ST FLOOR, MTPJL JUNCTION MAIN ROAD, NABRANGPUR, NEAR MTPJL JUNCTION, ODISHA, PIN -764059**

Branch Name: NABRANGPUR-NABRANGPUR GL, Taluka - NABARANGPUR
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL30520763, GL32603066, GL32612909.
Branch Name: UMERKOT-UMERKOT SOHO GL, Taluka - UMERKOTE
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL33487604, GL33517624, GL33727624, GL34024545, GL34048149, GL34061252, GL343128961, GL34138746, GL34273948, GL34292376, GL34392768, GL34482172.

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For detailed information, terms and conditions, contact the concerned branch office of IIFL Finance Limited.

Date: 16.06.2025
Place: NABARANGAPUR

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AUTHORISED SIGNATORY
IIFL FINANCE LIMITED

CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797
Regd. Office: IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park, Road No. 16V, Plot No.B-23, Thane Industrial Area, Wagale Estate, Thane - 400604
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District Centre: **KENDRAPARA-COLLEGE CHAK GL - IIFL FINANCE LTD, AT-BHRAMARADIA PATNA, COLLEGE CHAK, NEAR BPCL PETROL PUMP, PO+PS+DIST - KENDRAPARA, ODISHA, PIN - 754211**

Branch Name: KENDRAPARA-KAKAT CHHAK GL, Taluka - KENDRAPARA
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL30650344, GL32718286, GL32743777, GL33548192, GL34177607, GL34487441, GL34503986, GL345623078.

Branch Name: KENDRAPARA-COLLEGE CHAK GL, Taluka - KENDRAPARA
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL27039728, GL30842924, GL30849109, GL32318400, GL32343744, GL34370002, GL34384490, GL34404992.

Branch Name: PATTAMUNDALAI-GL - Taluka - PATTAMUNDALAI
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL34456508, GL34470937.

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For detailed information, terms and conditions, contact the concerned branch office of IIFL Finance Limited.

Date: 16.06.2025
Place: KENDRAPARA

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IIFL FINANCE LIMITED

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District Centre: **BOLANGIR-BANSITA COMPLEX GL - IIFL FINANCE LTD, BANSITA COMPLEX, GROUND FLOOR, RAMAI TAKIES ROAD INFRONT OF HOTEL RAJ MAHAL- 767001.**

Branch Name: BANGOMUNDA-BANGOMUNDA SOHO GL, Taluka - KANTABANJLI
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL34172646, GL34185506.
Branch Name: BOLANGIR-BANSITA COMPLEX GL, Taluka - BALANGIR
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL28100265, GL32116906, GL32731955, GL32746891, GL33979673, GL33994531, GL34340197, GL34340709, GL34359519, GL34402927, GL34443229, GL34482409, GL34501894.

Branch Name: PATNAGARH-PATNAGARH SOHO GL, Taluka - PATNAGARH
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL33833053, GL34093957, GL34109216, GL35515357.

Branch Name: TITILAGARH-TITILAGARH GL, Taluka - KANTABANJLI
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL26273812, GL32117142, GL32675113, GL32689829, GL33794011, GL33799481, GL33997672, GL34056743.

Branch Name: TUSURUA-TUSURUA SOHO GL, Taluka - TUSURA
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL33027939, GL33060661, GL33248706, GL33261892.

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Date: 16.06.2025
Place: BALANGIR

Sd/-
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IIFL FINANCE LIMITED

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PUBLIC NOTICE OF E-AUCTION OF GOLD ORNAMENTS

It is hereby notified to all concerned borrower(s) in specific and the public, in general, that we, IIFL Finance Limited ("IIFL") are auctioning gold ornaments of defaulted customers who neither regularized their loans nor paid the outstanding amount despite being informed through registered auction notices and repeated reminders. Public auction of the gold ornaments pledged in the following loan accounts will be conducted online through **Shriram Automall India Limited** on their online auction platform <https://gold.samil.in> on **23.06.2025 between 02:00 PM to 05:00 P.M.** Change in venue or date (if any) will be displayed at the auction center. If for any reason the E-Auction cannot be held on the date mentioned herein or the auction does not get completed on the same day, IIFL reserves the right to conduct or proceed with the said auction on any subsequent date on the auction platform and/or auction center with same terms and conditions. The unauctioned gold ornaments shall be auctioned on subsequent working days after displaying the details on auction platform and/or auction center. In case the auction at Branch level fails, the same will be re-auctioned on **10.07.2025** at the specified district centre. If for any reason, the district level auction cannot be held on the date mentioned herein or the auction does not get completed on the same day, IIFL reserves the right to conduct or proceed with the district level auction on any subsequent date with same terms and conditions. If the customer is deceased, then all the conditions pertaining to auction will be applicable to nominee/legal heir.

District Centre: **BHADRAK-GUPTA COMPLEX - IIFL FINANCE LTD, 1ST FLOOR, GUPTA COMPLEX, SALANDI BYPASS, BHADRAK-756100.**

Branch Name: BHADRAK-BASUDEVPUR GL, Taluka - BASUDEVPUR
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL33223658, GL33766570, GL33816820, GL33867252, GL33867913, GL33882485, GL33891078, GL33901205, GL33920379.

Branch Name: BHADRAK-DHAMANAGAR SOHO GL, Taluka - DHAMANAGAR
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL30832804, GL30847478, GL32009426, GL32109624, GL32125136, GL33948346, GL34116779, GL34139082, GL34254136.

Branch Name: BHADRAK-GUPTA COMPLEX, Taluka - BHADRAK RURAL
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL20774345, GL20792180.

Branch Name: BHADRAK-KACHERI BAZAAR GL, Taluka - BHADRAK RURAL
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL31826085, GL33153586, GL33158141, GL33586730, GL33959006, GL34439894.

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For detailed information, terms and conditions, contact the concerned branch office of IIFL Finance Limited.

Date: 16.06.2025
Place: BHADRAK

Sd/-
AUTHORISED SIGNATORY
IIFL FINANCE LIMITED

CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797
Regd. Office: IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park, Road No. 16V, Plot No.B-23, Thane Industrial Area, Wagale Estate, Thane - 400604
Tel: (91-22) 41035000 • Fax: (91-22) 25806654
E-mail: reach@iifl.com • Website: www.iifl.com

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District Centre: **BARGARH-GL - IIFL FINANCE LTD, 1ST FLOOR, KHAJUR TIKRA, WARD NO-8, INFRONT OF SWAYANSIDDHA BHAWAN,NH-6 BARGARH,ODISHA, PIN-768028**

Branch Name: Bargarh-GL, Taluka - Bargarh
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL23812211, GL31358706, GL33141695, GL33563429, GL33569976, GL33656505, GL33674182, GL33681351, GL33757768, GL33770744, GL33936548, GL33952878, GL33967930, GL33979805, GL33995340, GL34262075, GL34269333, GL34335093, GL34349833, GL34422516, GL34422674, GL34423175, GL34444637, GL335559491.

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District Centre: **ROURKELA-UDIT NAGAR GL - IIFL FINANCE LTD, AT- 1ST FLOOR, PANI MARKET COMPLEX, PLOT NO. 307, AMBEDKAR CHOWK, UDITNAGAR, ROURKELA, ODISHA, PIN-769012.**

Branch Name: RAJANGAPUR-PADMAVATI COMPLEX SOHO GL, Taluka - RAJANGAPUR
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL31657132, GL31680210, GL32844507.

Branch Name: ROURKELA-FERTILIZER TOWNSHIP GL, Taluka - RAURKELA INDUSTRIAL TOWNSHIP (ITS)
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL34424012.

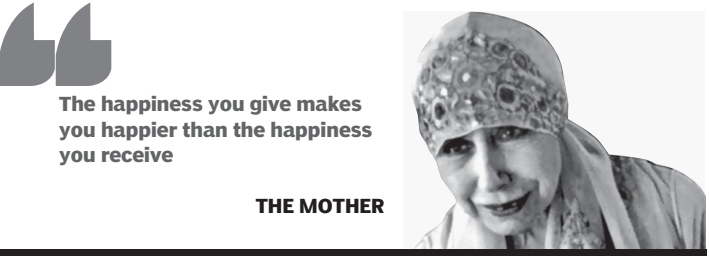
Branch Name: ROURKELA-KOEL NAGAR GL, Taluka - RAURKELA (M)
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL33490382, GL33517763, GL34040066, GL34045881, GL34055493, GL34103227, GL34103427, GL34110749, GL34112272, GL34274228, GL34291153.

Branch Name: ROURKELA-SRIRAM COMPLEX, Taluka - ROURKELA STEEL CITY
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL23908601, GL32160817, GL32175605, GL34399075, GL34396973, GL34452158, GL344530293.

Branch Name: ROURKELA-UDIT NAGAR GL, Taluka - RAURKELA INDUSTRIAL TOWNSHIP (ITS)
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL25453814, GL32752803, GL32775754, GL33555057

Branch Name: SUNDERGARH-AAMBA TOWER GL, Taluka - SUNDERGARH
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL32356217, GL33109643, GL33518841, GL33544387, GL33755893, GL3394706, GL33996853, GL34154389, GL34201279, GL34227676, GL34549982, GL34269169, GL34389890, GL34483176, GL34487614, GL34502854, GL34504361, GL34512795, GL34522627, GL34525310, GL34530494, GL33595682, GL33767381, GL337761312.

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Mid East Great Again

For decades, current Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been warning about the “existential threat” that a nuclear-armed Iran poses to his country, asserting that military action is the only reliable means to counter it. Throughout the various terms in his long 17-year tenure as the prime minister, Netanyahu has considered, debated, and planned an all-out strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities, but never executed until the early hours of 13 June, 2025 when Israel struck Iran’s nuclear and military facilities which resulted in the deaths of several high-ranking generals and nuclear scientists. It is clear why Netanyahu has chosen to act now. His recent statements drew on the darkest moments of Jewish history to emphasize that Israel will never allow itself to be vulnerable to a “nuclear holocaust.” His arch rival and former PM Yael Lapid has, on 15 June 2025, said that though he opposes Netanyahu on many issues, his recent decision to strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities is totally justified and timely.

Additionally, the timing is influenced by the current strategic weakness of the Iranian regime. Tehran’s influence in the region has historically depended on its allies and proxies, creating a “ring of fire” around its adversary, Israel. This network included the Assad regime in Syria, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Gaza, and the Houthis in Yemen. However, with Assad no longer in power and Syria’s new leader gaining favour with US President Donald Trump, Syria’s focus has shifted from Tehran to Washington. Meanwhile, the Houthis have reached an agreement with the US, Hezbollah is struggling without a leader and still recovering from last year’s Israeli attacks, and Hamas has suffered significant losses, with its leadership decimated and Gaza destroyed. Consequently, there has never been a more opportune time for Tel Aviv to take on its sworn enemy.

On the other hand, the extent of the attacks, the targets selected by Israel, and the statements from its politicians indicate that, in addition to severely crippling Tehran’s nuclear weapons programme, there is another goal: the overthrow of the Islamic regime. In a video message shortly after Israeli fighter jets launched strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities and air defence systems, Netanyahu, addressing the Iranian people directly, said: “The Islamic regime, which has oppressed you for almost 50 years, threatens to destroy our country, the State of Israel.” Israel’s objective was to remove the nuclear and ballistic missile threat, he said, but added: “As we achieve our objective, we are also clearing the path for you to achieve your freedom. The regime does not know what hit them, or what will hit them. It has never been weaker. This is your opportunity to stand up and let your voices be heard.”

It will be naive to think that Israel’s actions were unilateral, as stated by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio or as claimed by Trump himself that the US had “no involvement in the attack on Iran.” For, it is a well known fact that Israel is a proxy of the US in the Middle East and therefore any action that it takes in the region has America’s clear approval. With the post-Assad Syria under its fold, a decimated Iran will only strengthen the US position in the region vis-a-vis Russia.

Iran, on its part, counts on allies like Russia and China, who are reluctant to see the country humiliated. However, neither of these countries is willing to engage in the present conflict, and Iran’s proxies -- Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis -- are badly beaten and forced to remain on the sidelines. As a result, Tehran could now be finding itself in a spot on how to respond to the situation.

Meanwhile, Trump, remaining true to his unpredictability, on 15 June, called for a truce between Israel and Iran. He posted on his Truth Social platform that “Iran and Israel should make a deal, and will make a deal, just like I got India and Pakistan to make, in that case by using TRADE with the United States to bring reason, cohesion and sanity into the talks with two excellent leaders who were able to quickly make a decision and STOP!” He went on to add: “Likewise, we will have PEACE, soon, between Israel and Iran! Many calls and meetings now taking place. I do a lot, and never get credit for anything, but that’s OK, the PEOPLE understand. MAKE THE MIDDLE EAST GREAT AGAIN!”

If Trump succeeds in making a deal between the two warring countries like he did in the India-Pakistan scene, not just the Middle East, the world at large can heave a sigh of relief.

WISDOM CORNER

Be like the bird who, pausing in her flight awhile on boughs too slight, feels them give way beneath her, and yet sings, knowing she hath wings

VICTOR HUGO

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR

There are only two kinds of men: the righteous who think they are sinners and the sinners who think they are righteous

BLAISE PASCAL

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1903:** The Ford Motor Company was founded by Henry Ford and 11 associate investors.
- 1911:** International Business Machines Corporation (IBM), a leading American computer manufacturer, was incorporated.
- 1960:** Alfred Hitchcock’s film Psycho is premiered. The horror-thriller starring Anthony Perkins and Vera Miles has become one of the classics of the genre. The shower scene is one of the best-known murder scenes in the history of film.
- 1963:** Valentina Tereshkova becomes the first woman in space. The Soviet cosmonaut completed 48 orbits on board the spaceship “Vostok 6” before returning safely to Earth. The former textile worker was declared “Hero of the Soviet Union” and received the United Nations Gold Medal of Peace.
- 1967:** The Monterey Pop Festival opens. The three-day concert event featured historic performances by Jimi Hendrix, The Who, Ravi Shankar, and Janis Joplin.
- 1976:** South African police kill hundreds of protesting schoolchildren. An estimated 20,000 youth were protesting against the introduction of Afrikaans as the languages of instruction in their schools when police officers started firing into the crowd. The “Soweto uprising” is today commemorated on Youth Day each year.

power post

FOCUS WARFARE

THE AGE OF DRONES

Ukraine’s 1 June assault on airbases across Russia has already ushered in a new conventional wisdom: the expensive, human-crewed weapons (tanks, planes, ships) that have long defined the world’s “advanced” militaries have been rendered obsolete by inexpensive drones. But this view is incomplete, and perhaps dangerously misleading. Today’s drone warfare offers sobering lessons that go far beyond the vulnerability of expensive legacy weapons; and the looming integration of AI into drone warfare will make the current situation look positively quaint.

Consider the lessons of the Ukraine war so far. First, the impact of drones goes far beyond legacy weapons. Drones have indeed rendered tanks and armored personnel carriers extremely vulnerable, so Russian ground assaults now frequently use troops on foot, motorcycles, or all-terrain vehicles. But this hasn’t helped, because drones are terrifyingly effective against people as well. Casualties are as high as ever – but now, drones inflict over 70% of casualties on both sides.

Drones are also effective against almost everything else. Ukraine has used drones to destroy Russian targets as varied as weapons factories, moving trains, ammunition stores, oil refineries, ships, and ports. It could be worse; in fact, Ukraine has shown great restraint, considering Russia’s barbaric conduct. Two additional sobering lessons from Ukraine concern how drone warfare depends on its industrial base. First, speed and responsiveness are critical. Drone technology, weapons, and tactics now evolve at a blinding pace. A new drone will be useful for only 2-6 months. The other side develops countermeasures, requiring the development of new products, against which new countermeasures are developed, and so on.

At first, the drones used in Ukraine were crude weapons, radio-controlled by a pilot who needed to be nearby. As drones became more sophisticated and lethal, jamming was used to



Although few people realize it, the US and NATO now desperately need Ukraine for its drone expertise

block their radio signals, which led to frequency changes and then frequency hopping, which was then countered by multi-frequency jammers, which then engendered drones that attack jamming equipment. Then Russia developed drones controlled via fiber-optic cable – impervious to jamming. Ukraine tries to track the cable to its source and kill the pilots (with drones). Now Ukraine has fiber-optic drones, too. Guidance is ever more sophisticated, so that drones can evade radar by flying very low or using stealth technology. But drone detection and tracking systems have also advanced, employing networks of cellphones and microphones connected to audio analysis software, as well as using Lidar, radar, and cameras.

In this ferocious environment, falling even a month behind is fatal. Normal defense industry procedures are totally inadequate, and most US drones and drone producers have proved to be hopelessly slow, expensive, and unusable. In response, however, Ukraine’s drone industry and military developed a revolutionary model of weapons research and development, production, and deployment, based on direct, continuous communication between front-line units and drone producers. Ukraine’s military command and Ministry of Digital Transformation have even developed a points-based system that publishes continuously updated rankings of military units’ performance based on verified drone kills. Here, Ukraine bene-

fited from having a strong startup ecosystem, which supports a weapons industry (with hundreds of companies) capable of designing, producing, and fielding a new weapon in a matter of weeks. This year, Ukraine will produce more than four million drones, most of them models that did not exist even a year ago. Unfortunately, Russia has adapted as well, also relying heavily on private startups.

Ukraine evolved its own drone industry because the US and NATO had almost none of their own, much less one with the speed and flexibility required, and because China has gradually tightened supplies to Ukraine in favor of Russia. Some 80% of the electronics used in Russian drones are sourced from China. While Ukraine was initially highly dependent on China, it has reduced its reliance to perhaps 20%, most of that obtained covertly.

Yet US and European defense R&D and procurement remain slow and uncompetitive, which cripples their ability to defend against drones, as well as their ability to use them. Although few people realize it, the US and NATO now desperately need Ukraine for its drone expertise. Ukraine is now the only country that could possibly match Chinese and/or Russian technology and reaction time in a war. Without Ukraine, and without modernizing their own forces, NATO and the US would suffer horrific casualties in a war with Russia or China – and might even lose.

Moreover, AI will change everything. Ukraine’s 1 June

operation used 117 drones, each controlled by a skilled operator, and reports suggest that something like half were defeated by Russian defenses – jamming, mainly – because the drones needed to be in radio communication with their controllers. Had they been autonomous, there could have been a thousand of them. And with AI, there is no need for pilot communication, and thus no effective jamming, greatly increasing drone range and lethality. Five years from now, it will be terrifyingly easy to launch preemptive strikes on conventional targets. AI also increases the lethality and precision of drones used against people. Chinese researchers have already demonstrated drone swarms navigating through a forest and then re-forming as a swarm after passing through. This is not just about warfare; it also works for terrorist attacks.

Stuart Russell, an AI specialist at the University of California, Berkeley, has long argued for an arms-control treaty to prevent the spread of small, mass produced, AI-controlled drone weapons. He even underwrote the production of a short film, Slaughterbots, which dramatizes the risks these drones could pose in the wrong hands. At a dinner years ago, he told me that it would soon be easy to target individuals using facial recognition or, say, everyone wearing a cross, a yarmulke, or any other religious or political symbol.

Since any meaningful treaty is unlikely in the current geopolitical environment, we must prepare for a world that probably will contain such weapons. But the Western defense establishment increasingly looks like the typical “legacy” company that has been caught off guard by technological disruption. In markets, legacy resistance can be costly, but the costs are purely monetary. In warfare, they can and will be deadly.

The writer, AI Editor at Project Syndicate, is the director of multiple documentary films, including the Oscar-winning Inside Job.

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SPECTRUM COMMERCE

Disruption in India’s retail landscape



Bhaskar Nath Biswal

QUICK COMMERCE PLATFORMS HAVE LAUNCHED A FORMIDABLE ASSAULT ON TRADITIONAL RETAIL BY WEAPONISING TWO CRITICAL ADVANTAGES: HYPER-SPEED AND FRICTIONLESS CONVENIENCE

Kirana stores, the small neighbourhood shops, have traditionally been the go-to source for groceries and daily essentials for millions of Indian households. They dominate India’s retail landscape, contributing to over 85% of grocery sales. However, the swift emergence of quick commerce platforms is disrupting this ecosystem, putting significant pressure on thousands of local kirana stores. The All India Consumer Products Distributors Federation (AICPDF) reports that around 200,000 kirana stores closed in the past year, with 45% of closures in metro cities, 30% in Tier-1 cities, and 25% in Tier-2/3 cities.

Quick commerce platforms have launched a formidable assault on traditional retail by weaponising two critical advantages: hyper-speed and frictionless convenience. Their promise of delivering groceries and essentials in minutes appeals to busy urban consumers. Compound-

ing this disruption is aggressive discounting, subsidized by venture capital funding, which has accelerated a seismic shift in spending habits away from conventional stores. This dual strategy of instant gratification and price arbitrage now threatens the very survival of neighbourhood retailers struggling to match these capital-fueled efficiencies.

While there is no single, official government census for them, the most widely cited and accepted estimates from various market research firms and industry bodies place the number of kirana stores in India between 12 to 15 million. The vast majority of these stores operate in the unorganised sector. Many are unregistered, family-run businesses, making it incredibly difficult to conduct a precise count. The number is also dynamic, with stores opening and closing continuously.

Quick commerce is disrupting kirana stores, particular-

ly in urban centers, leading to significant closures and reduced sales. However, despite the rapid growth of e-commerce and quick commerce, kirana stores still remain the primary shopping destination for the vast majority of Indian households due to their convenience, accessibility, and deep-rooted community trust. Of the total number, over 10 million of these stores are situated in Tier-2 and smaller cities, highlighting their deep penetration into the heart of the country. The cordial personal relationships with customers, the extension of credit and the intimate understanding of local needs and preferences are significant advantages for kirana stores. This social fabric of trust and familiarity has been the bedrock of their existence for generations. The human touch of kirana shops acts as a powerful defense system against quick commerce.

The future of retail in India will likely be a hybrid mod-

el where technology-driven convenience and traditional, relationship-based commerce coexist. However, to compete with the quick commerce, kiranas in the Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities have to adapt and integrate technology to counter the onslaught. Many of them are now accepting online payments, receiving orders online and streamlining their inventory management. Quick commerce’s impact is largely urban, with minimal penetration in rural areas where kirana stores remain dominant due to limited digital infrastructure and consumer preference for local, credit-based shopping. The kiranas with their inherent strengths will not only survive but may also find new avenues for growth in this dynamic new era of Indian retail. The battle is on, but the final bell for the ubiquitous Indian kirana store has certainly not rung.

The writer is a former Principal of Nabarangpur College.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate,
Bhubaneswar-751010



Debatable move

Sir, The government’s proposal to make it mandatory for air conditioners across India to operate between 20°C and 28°C has sparked off a debate. The rationale behind this restriction is to reduce power consumption. In an overpopulated country with very high power consumption, the government’s move is justified. At the same time, it must be taken into account that in a tropical country like India with sizzling summer days, people have personal preference for AC usage. While the government’s move has long term advantages, the way of implementation raises questions about people’s right to their comfort. In fact, by restricting the operating temperature of ACs, the government will be able to power millions of homes by using the saved electricity. True, heatwaves during summer season make life uncomfortable in several states. On the other hand, the overall benefits of the step need to be reckoned with. While the public outcry over the proposal is understandable, the ultimate aim of the move must not be overlooked..

Venu GS, KOLLAM

Long-awaited win

Sir, The World Test Championship 2025 has gone to the right captain and his resilient team. As South African captain Temba Bavuma holds the championship mace it depicts a true story of a skipper whose grit, guts and determination led his team to achieve the greatest of ICC crown. The wait was too long. The Proteas last kissed an ICC trophy way back in 1998. The very popular team was ‘unpopular’ for missing so many cups in the past and Bavuma has broken that jinx. The win is truly special as the Proteas have defeated the mighty Aussies who are known for whisking away trophies in the finals. The captain led from the front as dashing batsman Markram, pace bowler Rabada and everyone in the team came out with their brilliant tactics and skills helping the team to lay it’s hand on the mace on the fourth day itself. The big win will not only boost them but shall inspire the captain and his team to be confident to win many more in future.

M Pradyu, KANNUR


AUTHORIS
WITH THE



Segregating dreams from scrap

India's E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022, was designed to tighten controls, making producers more responsible through extended producer responsibility. But the system still falls short

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 15: In the winding, congested alleyways of New Seelampur, a 500-foot stretch tucked deep inside east Delhi, life hums with the quiet rustle of wires, metal scraps, and fraying hopes.

Every household here seems tied to the business of e-waste – a world where old computers, phones, fridges, and their innards are torn down, stripped, sorted, and sold.

But the story is no longer what it once was.

As India's e-waste policy evolves and the gaze of enforcement agencies intensifies, the epicentre of one of the world's largest informal e-waste markets has quietly dispersed, not collapsed, but fragmented and slipped into the shadows.

The business hasn't ended, it has just moved -- to Loni, Muradabad, Meerut and smaller towns where it thrives away from the eyes of the regulators, the media, and digital scrutiny.

"The volumes have not really reduced. The business is still alive, but just not visible in Delhi anymore," says Vinod, programme officer at Toxics Link, an environmental NGO.

During a recent visit to the New Seelampur slum, PTI witnessed how this once-bustling hub has morphed into a quieter but deeply embedded network.



A resident of New Seelampur slum, segregates e-waste outside her home

PTI PHOTO

As the reporter walked through the slum's narrow lanes, nearly every doorway opened into a home where families were engaged in e-waste segregation.

In a dimly-lit 6x6 feet room, 50-year-old Saleema sat hunched over a knee-high mound of cables. Her fingers, bent with arthritis, sort wires from morning to night, guided only by a low-watt bulb dangling from the tin roof. For 10 kg of wires, she earns ₹50 -- slightly more if she finds slivers of copper. A single mother

-- her alcoholic husband vanished into irrelevance years ago -- Saleema supports her three children. Her eldest son has been lodged in Tihar Jail for over a year on theft charges, still awaiting trial.

Next door, 19-year-old Shahheda sits outside her one-room home, her hands still hennaed from her wedding barely a month ago. Married into this community from Muradabad, she's no stranger to the trade. After making breakfast for her family, she joins her husband and in-laws, segregating

wires.

Nearby, Sajid Khan's family of five is also neck-deep in dismantling old electronics. His daughter attends school in the morning and returns to help in the evening -- a pattern repeated in many homes here.

Twelve-year-old Sharmila (name changed) wants to become a doctor -- and not just any doctor, but one who treats her neighbours, many of whom suffer from chronic ailments linked to toxic exposure. "After school, I help my father," she says shyly, as

she picks apart an old mobile charger. Her father, who did not wish to be named, is saving every rupee in the hope of breaking the cycle. For ₹80, a technician will strip an old phone into saleable pieces. In the makeshift shanties, traders examine CRTs from old monitors, polishing the glass to resell in rural markets. Impure copper sells for ₹600 per kg; pure fetches up to ₹800.

Each house is a microcosm of labour -- families bent over wires, children washing dismantled parts, mothers selling components to traders who come knocking. Yet, the total daily income rarely crosses ₹500-Rs 1,000 per household.

"How laws are made is not very important but how implementation takes place is the key, and that is where the gap is between implementation and the role of the informal sector -- these are two serious gaps," says Satish Sinha, associate director, Toxics Link, which works closely in the sector.

Only about 500,000 tonnes of e-waste were formally collected in 2021-22 -- out of more than 3 million tonnes generated.

The Chinese-made wire stripping machines have replaced some manual labour, but not all. The actual dismantling -- sorting, stripping, burning -- is still largely done by hand. The traders now operate via phone calls, with less visibility.

UTTARAKHAND CHOPPER CRASH

Pilot, who served Army for 15 years, killed



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, June 15: Rajveer Singh Chauhan, the pilot of the helicopter that crashed in Uttarakhand early Sunday killing all seven on board, had served in the Indian Army for over 15 years and had vast experience of flying missions over different terrains.

Chauhan (37), a resident of Jaipur's Shastri Nagar, was working as a pilot with Ary-an Aviation Private Ltd since October 2024. He was the captain of Bell 407 helicopter that crashed near Gaurikund in Uttarakhand Sunday morning. Besides him, six people were killed in the accident.

"I got information about the crash from his colleague," said Chauhan's father Govind Singh. Singh said that his daughter-in-law and Rajveer's wife is a Lieutenant Colonel in the Indian Army and they became parents four months ago. "His wife gave birth to twins four months ago," he said.

Having worked in the Indian Army, Chauhan had a vast experience of flying missions

over different terrains, over-seeing aerial operations and had been trained in different types of helicopters and their maintenance, according to his LinkedIn profile. As soon as the news about his death broke, Chauhan's relatives and friends started reaching his residence in Shastri Nagar to console the family.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma, former chief minister Ashok Gehlot and other leaders expressed sorrow over the demise of seven people.

"The news of the loss of life of a pilot from Rajasthan and other devotees due to a helicopter crash in Kedarnath is extremely sad. May Baba Kedar grant a place in his lotus feet to the departed souls and give strength to the bereaved families to bear this blow," Sharma said. Gehlot said the "death of seven people, including Jaipur resident pilot Rajveer Singh Chauhan, in the helicopter crash near Kedarnath is extremely sad".

"My deepest condolences are with the bereaved families in this difficult time," he said in a social media post.

Khejri tree rampantly felled at solar sites

Known as the 'Pride of Rajasthan' and 'Kalp Vriksha' of the desert, khejri has long been struggling for survival due to root borer and fungal infections forcing it to dry up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



the indiscriminate felling of the tree, claimed to have satellite images validating their claim that thousands of bighas of land have been cleared to accommodate solar plants in Jaisalmer, Phalodi, Jodhpur and Bikaner districts.

Earlier this week, a similar demonstration was reported from Osian, a temple town and emerging solar plant site near Jodhpur, where about 150 khejri trees were cut along with other species such as rohida, the flower of which enjoys the status of state flower in Rajasthan.

Om Prakash Lol, organising secretary of the Bishnoi Tiger Force, an organisation comprising predominantly members from the Bishnoi community known for its pro-environment and wildlife stance, said that if no action is taken against the

"killers" of the tree, they will launch a fierce movement.

Such demonstrations and warnings have become common with the increasing acreage of solar plants in the region, but they have failed to bring a check on indiscriminate and unabated felling of the trees.

Last year, Jaymalsar village in Bikaner district witnessed a 34-day sit-in against the felling of khejri trees, but it ended with an assurance of action that never came to be.

The absence of a stringent law to penalise the felling of khejri has acted as immunity to the owners of the land or the solar companies.

They are demanding that the fine be increased to ₹2 lakh per tree and a minimum punishment of three years be mandated.

Alleging connivance between the companies and the administration, Bhawad claimed they dry up the tree either by pouring acid in its roots or by burning its base.

To avoid any legal implication, the solar companies in most of the cases ask the farmers or the owners of the land they are taking on lease to set up plants to clear the land of entire vegetation before taking possession of the same in lure of money. Phalodi District Collector Harji Lal Atal said permission for clearing the land of any vegetation is given by the concerned tehsildar, who is also supposed to keep a watch on the activities.

Taking a serious note of the indiscriminate felling of khejri trees, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) had directed AMP Energy Green Four Pvt Ltd to plant 2,500 trees, 10 times of the trees uprooted from the allotted land measuring 3,200 bighas, besides slapping a cash penalty of ₹2 lakh in October 2022.

In April last year, the high court also sought affidavits from the secretaries of revenue, forest and energy departments on illegal felling of trees and damage caused to environment and wildlife due to solar plants at seven villages in Bikaner district.



A pigeon cools off in a water-filled tub during a summer morning in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

4 students from Kota institute in top-10

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kota (Rajasthan) June 15: Four students of Allen Career Institute, a training centre for various competitive exams in Rajasthan's coaching hub of Kota, have secured top-10 ranks in NEET-UG 2025, the results of which were declared by the National Testing Agency Saturday.

A total of 39 students from the institute have been ranked in the top-100 of the National El-

igibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) for admissions into medical colleges, Nitin Kukreja, CEO, Allen Career Institute, said.

NEET-UG RESULTS

Mrinal Jha of Allen Career Institute has bagged the all-India fourth rank, while Aashi Singh has secured the second position in the female toppers' list. The two other students from the in-

stitute in the top-10 list are Keshav Mittal (7th), who studies in Allen's Ahmedabad branch, and Bhavya Chirag Jha (8th).

Allen has 19 students in the top-50 and 39 in the top-100, including 30 from the classroom programme, and nine from distance learning and online test series programmes, Kukreja said. Another coaching institute in Kota, Motion Education, said seven of its students have been placed in the top-100 list.

IIIT-Delhi's Chartr app simplifies bus travel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 15: Startups emerging from the academic institutions are increasingly shaping real-world solutions, with public transport in the national capital witnessing a notable example as a technology developed at the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology Delhi (IIIT-Delhi) is now powering digital ticketing and live tracking for DTC and cluster buses, making daily commuters more efficient and commuter-friendly.

In a rare and exemplary instance of academic research translating into real-world innovation, Chartr, a startup incubated at IIIT-Delhi, has successfully completed the full transfer of technology developed at the institute.

The startup has commercialized products based on deep research and completed all formal licensing processes with the institute -- a milestone that is among very few of its kind in the Indian higher education ecosystem.

Delhi to get relief from heatwave as IMD predicts storm

The India Meteorological Department has predicted a severe thunderstorm and strong wind for the city, warning residents in Delhi and the National Capital Region to stay indoors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 15: After prolonged spell of scorching temperatures for several days, people in the national capital received a gradual respite from heatwave conditions early Sunday, as several parts of the city experienced light rainfall thunderstorm and strong winds.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted a severe thunderstorm and strong wind for the city, warning residents in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR) to stay indoors.

According to the IMD, "moderate to intense spell of rainfall

with thunderstorms and lightning, and squally winds reaching speeds of 80-100 kmph" swept through the capital during the early Sunday hours.

Two thundersqualls along with hailstorm activity were recorded at Safdarjung between 0348 to 0350 hrs IST and 0358 to 0400 hrs IST.

The first squall saw gusty winds reaching 82 kmph, while the second saw a peak wind speed of 104 kmph, the IMD said. The weather department urged residents to take precautions.

"Stay indoors and avoid travel unless necessary," the IMD advisory said, as flying debris and low visibility posed risks



on the roads. The Safdarjung observatory, Delhi's official weather station, recorded a maximum temperature of 41.2 degrees Celsius Friday -- a dip of 2.7 degrees from Thursday, but still 1.3 degrees Celsius above normal. The minimum temperature remained high at 31.0 degrees Celsius, marking a departure of 3 degrees Celsius from the seasonal average. Humidity levels oscillated between

51 per cent and 69 per cent, making conditions hot and uncomfortable throughout the day.

According to IMD officials, the national capital is set to witness generally cloudy skies with very light to moderate rainfall, thunderstorms, dust storms, and lightning till June 19. Gusty winds are also expected during thunderstorms.

This comes after a red alert - a severe warning level - was

issued for Delhi, as the capital experienced extreme heatwave conditions. Daytime temperatures climbed to between 41°C and 45°C, while the minimum temperature reached 31°C, marking a rise of four degrees above the seasonal average.

The weather department has predicted partly cloudy skies with a chance of a thunderstorm and rain early Sunday morning, potentially bringing some relief from the intense heat.

The IMD, in its extended range forecast, has said that the southwest monsoon is likely to advance over the remaining parts of central and eastern India, along with some areas in northwest India, between June 12 and 18. It is further expected to reach most parts of northwest India, including Delhi, between June 19 and 25. The normal date for the monsoon to arrive in Delhi is around June 30.

This year, it arrived in Kerala May 24 -- well ahead of the

usual onset date of 1 June -- and reached Mumbai by May 26, which is 16 days earlier than normal.

According to IMD data, the monsoon reached Delhi June 28 last year, and on June 26 in 2023.

In previous years, it arrived June 30 (2022), July 13 (2021), and June 25 (2020). After a nearly 10-day pause, the monsoon has picked up pace again, especially over southern India. Since Wednesday, several parts of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Konkan, and Maharashtra have been receiving heavy to very heavy rainfall. This renewed activity marks a strong push northwards, indicating rapid progress of the monsoon across the country.

The IMD has also said the second phase of the monsoon is expected to spread across eastern India, bringing rainfall to West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, and eastern Uttar Pradesh within the next week.

Sd/-
TORY
ITED

of the day

quote

Linearity to circularity is one shift we are making.... you will see in the next 10-15 years, 10-15 million tonnes of Tata Steel's production will be through the recycling route

T V NARENDRA | CEO, TATA STEEL

I guess the future lies in the UV-SUV segment...I believe the future lies there. We want to emphasise this entire investment in that direction

SAMIR GUPTA | MD, CONTINENTAL TIRES INDIA

The security-sensitive telecom equipment segment is already being infested from imported products, which is mitigating growth of indigenous production under telecom PLI scheme

PARITOSH PRAJAPATI | CEO, GX GROUP

SHORT TAKES

Hero FinCorp raises ₹260 cr

New Delhi: Hero FinCorp, the financial services division of two-wheeler manufacturer Hero MotoCorp, has raised ₹260 crore in a pre-IPO placement round. This fund mobilisation led to a reduction in fresh issue size to ₹1,840 crore from the earlier planned ₹2,100 crore. The total IPO size now stands at ₹3,408 crore, which includes a ₹1,568 crore offer-for-sale (OFS) by existing investors. This marks a reduction from the earlier planned ₹3,668 crore. Those selling shares in the OFS are -- AHVF II Holdings Singapore II Pte. Ltd, Apis Growth II (Hibiscus) Pte. Ltd, Link Investment Trust (through Vikas Srivastava) and Otter Ltd. In the pre-IPO round executed on June 5, Hero FinCorp entered into investment agreements with 12 investors, allotting 18.57 lakh shares at ₹1,400 per share on June 13, raising ₹259.99 crore, according to a public announcement by the company. Under this, the company allotted shares worth ₹69 crore to Shahi Exports, RVG Jatrophia Plantation (₹50 crore), Mohan Exports (₹25 crore), and AP Properties (₹22 crore).

JV Voltbek's revenue rises

New Delhi: Voltbek Home Appliances, a joint venture between Voltas and Turkish firm Arçelik, narrowed its losses to ₹241.89 crore in FY25 while its revenue from operations rose 39.5 per cent to ₹2,235.53 crore. According to the latest annual report of the Tata Group firm, Voltbek also achieved robust volume growth of 57 per cent on a year-on-year basis, outperforming the industry, which experienced single-digit growth in key categories. In the preceding financial year ended March 2024, the joint venture had recorded revenue from operations at ₹1,602.87 crore and a loss of ₹267.09 crore. Moreover, in FY25, Voltas invested ₹102.41 crore in the share capital of Voltbek Home Appliances Private which was established in 2017 by the Tata group firm and Arçelik, a Turkish multinational household appliances company. In FY25, Voltbek recorded sales of over 1 million refrigerators and washing machines each, establishing itself as the fastest-growing home appliances brand in the country. Voltas' total investment in Voltbek is ₹836.92 crore, representing a 49 per cent share.

Iran-Israel war may affect India exports

The escalating tensions between Iran and Israel are also sending shockwaves through global stock markets, with India's benchmark Sensex closing 573 points lower Friday



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 15: The Iran-Israel conflict has further increased global economic uncertainties, impacting world trade, including India's exports, as it is expected to drive up both air and sea freight rates, exporters say.

They said that India's exports to Europe and counters like Russia may get impacted due to this war. If the conflict continues for long, the movement of merchant ships through routes such as Strait of Hormuz between Iran and UAE, and Red Sea would be affected.

"The war will further hurt global trade. The situation was gradually improving but now again the trade will be impacted. Our exports to Europe and countries like Russia may get hurt. Freight rates and insurance are expected to increase," Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President S C Ralhan said.

Indian export consignments gradually started moving through the Red Sea route but now again it would get impacted, he said. The immediate fallout of the conflict that started on early Friday or June 13 will be freight and insurance charges going up after a period of calm as Red Sea routes were slowly coming back to normal. Mumbai-based exporter and Technocraft Industries Ltd Founder Chairman S K Saraf said. Cargo ships had gradually returned on Red Sea routes, saving those 15-20 days while moving to US and Europe from India and other parts of Asia.

"The merchant ships will again avoid the Red Sea which will lead to escalation of freight costs that will have to be borne by traders. If war would go beyond a week, it can push freight rates by about 50 per cent," he added

The present conflict that began with an attack on Israel on October 7, 2023 had brought cargo movement through Red Sea routes to a halt due to attacks by Houthi rebels on commercial shipping. After the US intervened with attacks on the rebels, the firing on commercial ships stopped.

"Everything depends on whether the conflict remains localised or expands to include other countries. Its impact will



The tea sector is witnessing frequent fluctuations in production due to erratic rainfall, waterlogging and a rise in temperature, exceeding 35 degrees Celsius. Climate change adaptation and mitigation have become a major challenge to keep the sector sustainable

ARUJIT RAHA | SECRETARY GENERAL, IFA

Iran-Israel conflict, likely to drive mkts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 15: Stock investors will track the on-going conflict between Iran and Israel, Brent crude oil prices, inflation data and US Fed interest rate decision for further cues this week, analysts said.

Tariff-related news would also dictate trends in the equity market, experts noted. Stock markets faced heightened volatility last week and ended in the red amid escalating geopolitical tensions, which sparked a risk-off sentiment. Investor sentiment was hit hard on surging oil prices as fears of supply disruptions resurfaced.

"Indian stock markets are likely to follow the global trend, following rising tension in the Middle East amid the Israel-Iran conflict, which could fuel further pessimism and prompt investors to flee riskier assets. Also, traders

INDIAN STARTUPS RAISE \$184.75MN

INDO- ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 15: Indian startups continued to attract investor interest as 20 startups raised around \$184.75 million in funding this week.

The deals included five growth-stage and 14 early-stage startups, while one startup chose not to disclose its funding details. Seed funding dominated the funding types this week, with several startups raising capital in their early journey.

Other rounds included Series A, pre-seed, pre-Series A, and even late-stage funding rounds like Series G. The startup activity was also spread across cities. Bengaluru led with nine deals, followed by Delhi-NCR with five.



Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai also saw their startups securing investments. Sector-wise, fintech startups emerged at the top with six funding deals. Deeptech and OTT sectors followed with two deals each, while other sectors such as aerospace, foodtech, e-commerce, and sportstech also saw positive movement.

Among the key highlights of the week was fintech unicorn CRED, led by Kunal Shah, which secured \$72 million from investors, including Lathe Investment, RTP Global, Sofina Ventures, and QED Innovation Labs.

FlexiLoans, a fintech platform focused on MSMEs, also raised \$44 million in its Series C round, while EV component startup Vecmocon raised a total of \$18 million in its Series A round, with \$8 million coming in this week through both primary and secondary transactions.

AGEL TOPS NSE ESG RATINGS

Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) has been ranked first in the ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) ratings in utilities, power sector by NSE Sustainability Ratings & Analytics Ltd, an entity of the National Stock Exchange (NSE). Additionally, AGEL is also among the top five entities in ESG ratings assessed from the top 100 listed companies by revenue across the NSE. NSE recently launched its ESG ratings for listed companies



will exercise caution ahead of US Federal Reserve interest rate decision on Wednesday, coupled with other central banks of Japan and the UK announcing their interest rates separately," Ketan Vikam, Head of Sales at financial services provider Almondz

Institutional Equities, said.

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled nearly 1 per cent Friday last week as weak global markets and a spike in Brent crude oil prices weighed on investor sentiment.

"Looking ahead, investors

Red FM's 'Sajja Bajja Raja' celebrates Odisha's culture

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 15: The vibrant spirit of Odisha's beloved Raja festival came alive at Esplanade One Mall here as Red FM launched its much-awaited 'Sajja Bajja Raja' festival 2025. The three-day celebration kicked off June 14 and will conclude June 16. The event witnessed a grand turnout of over 3,000 visitors, transforming the venue into a hub of culture, entertainment, and community celebration. Raja Rajkumari contest was the heart of event, showcasing the charm, talent, and confidence



of 30 spirited participants. Alongside, a variety of local food stalls and a lively game zone kept visitors engaged and entertained throughout the event. Organised with the aim of promoting Odisha's rich cul-

ture are expected to remain cautious amid premium valuations and geopolitical risks. All eyes are now on the upcoming US Fed meeting. The Fed's commentary and economic projections will be closely scrutinised for future policy cues," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited said.

Last week, the BSE benchmark tanked 1,070.39 points or 1.30 per cent, and the Nifty declined 284.45 points or 1.13 per cent. Markets would also track trends in global equities and movement in the rupee, analysts said.

Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said, "Overall, we expect the market to remain subdued on the back of weak global cues, while industry-specific news flows would continue to drive sectoral movements."

tural heritage, the festival also served as a vibrant platform for local talent and entrepreneurship. The immersive blend of traditional festivities and modern attractions made the 'Sajja Bajja Raja' festival a standout addition to this year's Raja celebrations in the city. The event was supported by Shuvam Construction as the title partner, with HCG Panda Cancer Hospital as the health partner. TBZ, joined as the jewellery partner, while the Institute of Management Bhubaneswar partnered in the education segment. OrissaPost served as the official print partner.

NEA exports power to B'desh via India

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kathmandu, June 15: The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) Sunday resumed exporting 40 megawatts (MW) of electricity to Bangladesh through India's power transmission system.

The resumption follows a tripartite agreement signed in 2023 between the NEA, the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB), and India's NTPC Vidut Vyapar Nigam Limited (NVVN). Under the agreement, the NEA will export electricity to Bangladesh for five months - from June 15 to November 15 - during Nepal's peak production period in the rainy season. NEA Deputy Manager Subarna Sapkota of the Electricity System Control Department stated that a total of 146.88 million units of electricity will be exported over this period, generating an estimated ₹129 crore in revenue.

The electricity will be transmitted from Nepal's 400 kV Dhalkebar Substation, routed through Muzaffarpur and Behrampur in India, before reaching the Bheramara Substation in Bangladesh.

According to the NEA, the export resumed at midnight on Saturday after Bangladesh opened a letter of credit (LC), clearing the way for the transaction.

AC sales growth cools amid peak demand season

Climate change is likely to disturb the industry as IMD has predicted gradual drop in temperature from the mid of June as a western disturbance is expected to move in

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 15: Unrelenting heatwave across north and east regions has spiked sales of room air-conditioners (RAC) in June, but intermittent rains in several part of the country amid peak demand season have forced the industry players to lower sales projections to 10-15 per cent for this year.

The summer, which is the peak season for sales of room air-conditioners, has disappointed AC makers this time, though there are some silver lining in June with impulse purchases happening due to the heatwave.

RAC makers said after hav-

ing an encouraging numbers in February and March, helped by an early arrival of summer, they were expecting a high double-digit volume growth of around 25 per cent from the last year, and had also built up inventory.

"We all had planned for a 25 to 30 per cent growth, which is not going to take place. This is a disappointing summer; that is the truth. It is part and parcel of the game," Blue Star Managing Director B Thiagarajan told PTI.

"We have to manage the situation and move forward," he said, adding that now the RAC industry will end up with 10 to 15 per cent growth this year, de-



spite a good start in February and March.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had last week said that temperatures are likely to have a gradual drop from

the mid of June as a western disturbance is expected to move in, bringing cooler winds, rain, and thunderstorms.

According to Thiagarajan, the current June quarter will

be bad for the RAC industry. However, he expects a bounce back in the September quarter. He expects some recovery in the festive season and also in the quarter when the energy label changes, as makers offer discounts to liquidate the old inventory.

"A lot of pre-buying takes place whenever energy label changes are there. People will end up buying in that quarter," he said.

Voltas MD & CEO Pradeep Bakshi said in the last two months, there has been hardly any growth for the industry in comparison to 2024 sales.

"Rather, actually, there has been a de-growth for the in-

dustry. So, I don't think people are now looking at big growth numbers in the first quarter (June quarter). Hitting last year's number would itself be a challenge," Bakshi said.

The peak summer months have actually been impacted by the weather. It played a spoilsport during the peak summer months. After losing April and May, it's difficult to recover in the rest 10 months, said Bakshi.

However, he also added last some days are showing good results as summers are peaking up, temperatures are rising, especially in the northern region of the country, which may pave the way for better results in the coming months.

Poor show continues

INDIA SUFFER SIXTH CONSECUTIVE DEFEAT IN PRO LEAGUE, LOSE 2-3 TO AUSTRALIA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Antwerp (Belgium), June 15: The Indian men's hockey team's wretched run in the European leg of the FIH Pro League continued as it endured sixth defeat in a row, losing 2-3 to Australia, here Sunday.

India have already lost matches to Netherlands, Argentina even as all the games were close.

Former India captain Manpreet Singh, who played his 400th match Sunday, failed to inspire his side despite taking the early lead.

Sanjay (3rd minute) and Dilpreet Singh (36th) scored for India, while Tim Brand (4th), Blake Govers (5th) and Cooper Burns (18th) sounded the board for Australia.

India stared on a positive

note, dominating the early share of exchanges. Three minutes into the match, India took the lead through Sanjay who scored from a rebound from

their first penalty corner.

But India's joy was short-lived as Tim Brand equalised a minute later, beating goalkeep Krishan Bahadur Pathak all

ends up.

A minute later, Australia took lead when Blake Govers scored from top of the circle, again beating Pathak all ends up.

The Kookaburras thereafter completely dominated the proceedings, earning as many as four penalty corners, the last of which was converted by Cooper Burns in the 18th minute.

In the 24th minute, Pathak made a good save to deny Davis Atkin. Australia had another penalty corner soon but Pathak was up to the task. In the 27th minute, India secured back-to-back penalty corners but failed to utilise the chance. India bounced back after the change of ends when Dilpreet Singh scored in the 36th minute after being set up by Shilanand Lakra and Abhishek.

Thereafter Australia dominated the proceedings.

The Kookaburras pressed hard on the Indian defence and earned as many as three penalty corners in the last 10 minutes but Pathak stood firm in the front of the goal to deny the opponents.

400 CAPS, COUNTING

India midfield maestro Manpreet Singh became the only second Indian hockey player to don the international cap for the 400th time when he took the field Sunday for the Hockey Pro League 2024/25 match against Australia, adding his name to an elite list of legends who have graced the world stage with unwavering consistency and heart. The 33-year-old midfielder from Punjab, a place synonymous with Indian hockey folklore, now stands as the second-highest capped Indian men's player of all time, behind only former captain and current hockey India president Dilip Tirkey (412 caps). Speaking on the milestone, an emotional Manpreet said, "I still remember the goosebumps I felt in my debut game. To be standing here, 400 games later, is beyond anything I imagined. This milestone is shared with every coach who pushed me, every teammate who backed me, and every fan who believed in me when I needed it most. I'm still learning, still growing — and I play with the same hunger today as I did at 19." From his debut in 2011 as a spirited 19-year-old to becoming the heartbeat of the Indian midfield, Manpreet's career mirrors Indian hockey's resurgence. He has won four Asian Champions Trophy titles (2013, 2018, 2023, 2024), two Asian Games Gold medals (2014, 2023), two Olympic bronze medals (2020, 2024), two Commonwealth Games Silver medals (2014, 2022), podium finishes at the 2014-15 and 2016-17 FIH World League and Hockey Champions Trophy in 2018. Manpreet's consistency on the field has been matched by his recognition off it. His accolades underline his immense contribution to Indian sport. He was awarded Arjuna Award in 2018, became FIH Men's Player of the Year in 2019, conferred with Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award in 2021 along with Hockey India Balbir Singh Sr. Player of the Year in 2019 and Hockey India Ajit Pal Singh Award for Midfielder of the Year – 2014, 2021.



Hillang scripts history with gold at South Asian Bodybuilding C'ship

First woman athlete from Arunachal Pradesh to win gold in physique sports at an international tournament

AGENCIES

Thimphu, June 15: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu lavished praise on Hillang Yajik, who made history by clinching gold and silver at the 15th South Asian Bodybuilding and Physique Sports Championships 2025 in Thimphu, Bhutan.

Yajik, who hails from Arunachal Pradesh, clinched a gold medal in the Women's Model Physique (up to 155 cm) category and a silver medal in another category. Following her splendid performance at the event, Yajik became the first woman athlete from Arunachal Pradesh to win gold in physique sports at an inter-



national tournament.

Khandu hailed Yajik for her dazzling performance at the 15th South Asian Bodybuilding and Physique Sports Championships 2025 in Thim-

phu, held from June 11 to 15.

"Big applause to Ms. Hillang Yajik for her phenomenal feat at the 15th South Asian Bodybuilding & Physique Sports Championships 2025 in Thimphu, Bhutan! With 1 Gold and 1 Silver medal, she becomes the first-ever woman from our state to clinch an international Gold in physique sports -- a trailblazer in every sense! Your dedication, discipline, and determination have carved a proud chapter for Arunachal and the nation. More power to you, Hillang," Khandu wrote on X.

Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju congratulated Yajik for her record-shattering performance and wrote n X, "I'm delighted as India's Miss Hillang Yajik wins 1 Gold and 1 Silver Medal at 15th South Asian Bodybuilding & Physique Sports Championships 2025 at Thimphu in Bhutan. Hillang Yajik is from Arunachal Pradesh, who has created a history. Hearty Congratulations to Hillang Yajik!"

Beckham knighted by King Charles III

The former Manchester United and England captain is now 'Sir David Beckham', a title befitting one of the most influential and celebrated footballers of all time

AGENCIES

London, June 15: Football icon David Beckham has officially received a Knighthood from King Charles III Saturday, honouring his outstanding contributions to sport and charity.

The former Manchester United and England captain is now 'Sir David Beckham', a title befitting one of the most influential and celebrated footballers of all time.

Widely regarded as one of the greatest midfielders in the



history of the game, Beckham enjoyed a stellar playing career that spanned across top clubs and continents. He represented footballing giants such as Manchester United, Real Madrid, AC Milan, Paris Saint-Ger-

main, and LA Galaxy, leaving his mark with world-class performances and a legacy of excellence.

At the international level, Beckham donned the England shirt 115 times between 1996

Eves suffer narrow loss



India women's hockey team loses 1-2 to Australia in Pro League

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, June 15: The Indian women's hockey team fought on equal terms against Australia but conceded a last-minute goal to lose 1-2 in its FIH Pro League match here Sunday.

This was India's second consecutive defeat to the same opponents as they had lost 2-3 Friday. India took the lead in the third minute through a field goal from Vaishnavi Phalke and they were 1-0 up at half-time. But Australia restored parity in the 37th minute through Amy Lawton.

The match was heading towards a draw but Lexie Pickering scored the winner from a penalty-corner variation in the 60th minute to break Indian hearts.

India made a bright start to the game as they won three back-to-back penalty corners in the very first minute, add-

ing pressure on the Australian backline. India carried on their momentum and scored the opening goal as early as the third minute to take charge of the match.

Navneet Kaur carried the ball forward and passed it to Sharmila Devi to the left. Devi played it to the far post for Vaishnavi to deflect the ball into the net.

India continued to pile on the pressure as Navneet came close to extending the lead but narrowly missed the target.

Minutes later, Australia won two back-to-back penalty corners towards the end of first quarter but India did well at the back to maintain their lead.

Australia improved their performance in the second quarter and started creating goal-scoring chances. Both sides exchanged possession and battled it out in the midfield but they couldn't be separated in the second quarter as India headed into the second half with a goal in hand.

Australia were more dominant in the third quarter and caused troubles for the Indian defence. Greta Hayes came teasingly close to scoring a goal as

she struck a shot towards an empty net. However, the ball was accidentally stopped by her own teammate.

In the 37th minute, Australia were on the attack again and Lawton managed to find the equaliser through a brilliant field goal.

Lawton did well to win the ball from an India defender and then unleashed a powerful shot from the edge of the circle, past the keeper into the bottom right corner.

In the fourth and final quarter, India earned a penalty corner but the Australian keeper was up to the task to keep her side in the contest.

In the 54th minute, India won four penalty corners in a row but they failed to find the net. In their third attempt, India were unlucky not to take the lead. Neha fired a shot which took a deflection and struck the post.

With 34 seconds left on the clock, Australia converted a penalty corner to complete their comeback in the match.

Tatum Stewart played the perfect pass to Pickering who deflected the ball into the net to hand Australia all three points.

THIRD YEAR IN ROW

Ferrari clinches the 24 Hours of Le Mans

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Le Mans (France), June 15: Ferrari won the 24 Hours of Le Mans for the third year running Sunday but a late surge from Porsche Penske Motorsport denied the Italian manufacturer a podium sweep.

The No 83 Ferrari 499P crew of Robert Kubica, Ye Yifei and Philip Hanson took the win as Ferrari won for the 12th time in the 93rd edition of the storied race, which began 102 years ago. Their bright-yellow car, privately entered by the AF Corse team, got the better of Porsche and the two official factory-entered Ferraris. Kubica took the checkered flag after a marathon spell at the wheel Sunday afternoon to make sure of the win.

"It has been a long 24 hours," Kubica said to his team over the radio and thanked them in Italian. "Enjoy." It's a career highlight for 40-year-old Polish driver Kubica, whose promising Formula 1 career was interrupted in 2011 when a crash while competing in a rally left him with severe injuries.

RPL kicks off in grand style



Bengaluru Bravehearts & Delhi Redz split points; Chennai Bulls and Hyderabad Heroes win handsomely

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, June 15: It was a red-letter day in the sport of rugby as the inaugural season of the Rugby Premier League (RPL) kicked off in grand style Sunday evening at the Shahaji Raje Bhosale Sports Complex (Andheri Sports Complex).

All six franchises were in action on the opening day, giving the fans a fantastic experience of one of the oldest sports in the world.

On Day 1, the Bengaluru Bravehearts and Delhi Redz played out a nail-biter that ended in a tie, whilst the Chennai Bulls and Hyderabad Heroes bagged comprehensive wins.

The opening match of Season 1 of the RPL had the Bengaluru Bravehearts taking on the Delhi Redz, in what turned out to be an absolute humdinger. After four quarters of intense rugby, with both sides going for the kill, the Bengaluru Bravehearts and the Delhi Redz shared the spoils, as the scores read 21-21.

For the Bengaluru Bravehearts, Akuila Rokolisoa scored two Tries in the first and second quarters respectively, whilst Philip Wokorach added a third in the penultimate quarter. Akuila Rokolisoa was also on hand to complete the conversions as well. The Delhi Redz, who conceded early, though roared back with Patrick Okongo scoring two Tries, in the first quarter and third quarter.

The Redz also had Matias Osadczuk get on the score-sheet with a try in the second quarter. Matias Osadczuk and

Deepak Punia were also able to convert their kicks, helping the Redz level things before the final whistle.

Match two of the opening day saw the Chennai Bulls win at a canter against the Mumbai Dreamers, with the score reading 24-5. It was a tight first quarter, with neither side getting on the scoresheet. However, after that, the Chennai Bulls settled in and took control. Terry Kennedy scored tries in the second and third quarter, and Vaafauese Maliko along with Muhammed Ep, added to the list of tries with their efforts in quarter two and four. Terry Kennedy was also able to convert his kick, and Joaquin Pellandini added another couple of points for the Bulls. For the Mumbai Dreamers, it was Henry Hutchinson who managed to get the first points of the tournament for his side when he scored a try early in the final quarter.

In the final game of the day, the Hyderabad Heroes put on a fine display -- showing great co-ordination within themselves, as they swatted aside the Kalinga Black Tigers, with the score at 24-14. Joji Nasova's try put Hyderabad in the lead before Maurice Longbottom's try brought things to level pegging. Both the sides had also converted their kicks, and continued to trade blows in the second quarter with Hyderabad's Manuel Moreno and Kalinga's Harry McNulty adding tries for their teams. Moreno and Longbottom converted the kicks after that once again, as the teams stayed locked on points, with the game on a knife-edge.

In the second half, Hyderabad were out of the blocks quicker than their opposition as Javed Hussein and Kevin Wekesa, added a try each in the third and fourth quarter to put the seal on the win.