



## Elnaaz's prep

Actor Elnaaz Norouzi opens up about the intense preparation she underwent for her role in the series 'The Traitors'

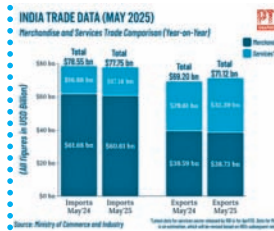
LEISURE | **P2**



## Iran seeks Trump mediation

Iran seeks US President Donald Trump's intervention in stopping Israel to end the four-day-old aerial war

INTERNATIONAL | **P10**



## Trade gap narrows

After registering a positive growth, trade deficit narrows at \$21.88 billion during the month

BUSINESS | **P11**



## Strong performance

A string of consistent final appearances and two gold medals power India to a commendable 3rd-place finish at Munich World Cup

SPORTS | **P12**



**ESCALATING CONFLICT:** An explosion is seen during a missile attack at Tel Aviv in Israel (Report P10)

PHOTO: AP/PTI

## Atithi Bhawan coming up at Ashok Nagar

**Bhubaneswar:** The state government Monday approved the construction of Atithi Bhawan at Unit-II, Ashok Nagar in Capital city. General Administration and Public Grievance (GA&PG) department has approved the project as part of the state's Outreach Programme. The facility, coming up on three acres of land, will serve as accommodation for visitors from various districts visiting the Capital city for official, healthcare, or other personal reasons. **P4**

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



See, Dad? This is what happens when the rulers' parents don't let them play video games

# CM: 73,346 bagged govt jobs in 1 year

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 16:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Monday said his government had facilitated employment for 73,346 youths in just 369 days since taking office.

Speaking at the 'Nijukti Me-la' (employment fair), where appointment letters were distributed to 964 newly recruited youths, mostly junior engineers, Majhi said, "Our government is only one year and four days old. In this short span, we have appointed 73,346 youths — 28,346 in government departments and 45,000 in the private sector."

Underlining the importance of government jobs, Majhi said he and his ministers failed to bag government jobs and therefore opted for other professions

# Girl gangraped on Gopalpur beach

### Cops detain, interrogate seven accused; three still at large

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Gopalpur/Berhampur, June 16:** A college girl was allegedly gangraped by 10 youths in front of her male friend on Gopalpur beach in Ganjam district Sunday evening, raising concern over safety of visitors at one of the most attractive tourist destinations in the state.

The survivor and her male friend have lodged a complaint at Gopalpur police station. Acting on the complaint, police have detained seven persons from the beach area and are questioning them. Prima facie, 10 youths are involved in the heinous crime.

Berhampur SP Saravana Vivek M reached the police station and conducted a probe Monday. A DSP-rank woman officer has been directed to conduct a proper investigation

into the matter. The SP accompanied by a scientific team, Gopalpur IIC and the male friend of the survivor visited the spot and conducted a probe into the matter Monday evening.

According to the complaint, the survivor is a resident of a different district and studying in a local government college.

The incident occurred when she, along with her male friend, visited Gopalpur sea beach. They were sitting at a secluded place on the beach Sunday evening when 10 youths on three bikes reached there and started assaulting the male friend.

Some of the youths captured her friend while others picked up the girl and took turns to rape her.

Later, they threatened her friend and forced him to pay them money through PhonePe. The survivor and her friend

reached the police station and lodged a complaint of gangrape. Police raided various places before picking up seven youths. The accused were found to be students of a local college. A special team has been formed to track down the three absconding accused.

Notably, this is third incident of rape during last six months under Golanthara and Gopalpur police limits. A 4-year-old girl was raped inside a bus under Gopalpur police limits in January. The driver and helper of the bus were arrested in this connection and the matter is now sub-judice in the court.

Similarly, two minor cousins were gangraped under Golanthara police limits June 3. Four youths were arrested in this connection. Locals attribute the rise in such crimes to lack of proper patrolling in beach area.

# First caste census post Independence

*India is set to conduct its first caste-based enumeration since Independence, as the Union government Monday issued a notification for the 16th national census. This marks the first time since 1947 that caste data will be officially collected during a census. The last comprehensive caste-based census was carried out by the British between 1881 and 1931. Since then, caste has been excluded from post-Independence census operations. This large-scale demographic exercise—taking place after a 16-year gap—is expected to cost the Union government over ₹13,000 crore. Approximately 34 lakh enumerators and supervisors, supported by around 1.3 lakh census officials equipped with digital devices, will carry out the data collection*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 16:** Sixteen years after the last census in 2011, the Union government Monday issued a notification for conducting India's 16th census which will include caste enumeration in 2027.

# FATF condemns Pahalgam attack

**New Delhi, June 16:** Condemning the brutal Pahalgam terror attack in April, global watchdog Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Monday said it has enhanced its focus on the steps that the countries have taken to combat terror financing, and will soon release a report on terror financing cases, including state-sponsored terrorism.

The rare condemnation by FATF shows that the 'international community has felt the severity of the attack', which killed 26 people at Pahalgam in Jammu & Kashmir, April 22, 2025, and spotlights that such attacks will not go unpunished, sources said, adding the terror attack was done by Pakistan-trained terrorists.

"Terrorist attacks kill, maim and inspire fear around the world. FATF notes with grave concern and condemns the brutal terrorist attack in Pahalgam April 22, 2025. This, and other recent attacks, could not occur without money and the means to move funds between terrorist supporters," the FATF said in a statement.

The massive exercise, which is expected to cost the government over ₹13,000 crore to give population-related data from across the country, will be conducted by about 34 lakh enumerators and supervisors and around 1.3 lakh census functionaries armed with digital devices. **P8**

# 50 yrs of croc conservation: Odisha tops in recovery

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kendrapara, June 16:** As the Crocodile Conservation Programme (CCP) in India is all set to observe its 50th anniversary (Tuesday) June 17, which is also observed as World Crocodile Day, Odisha, the only state to house all three species of crocodiles, finds itself in a proud place in implementing the reported most successful conservation project of saltwater crocodiles.

Before the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, came to be implemented, people used to kill the reptile freely for commercial purposes.

The scenario changed when the state launched the conservation programmes for all three species — gharial, mugger and estuarine crocodiles — in 1975, which no other state did five decades back, according to a researcher associated with the project.

While Bhitarkanika National Park is home to 1,826 saltwater crocodiles, Satkosia Gorge is the abode of 16 gharials as per the census report of January 2025. Around 300 muggers live in the rivers of the state, an official said.

The conservation programme of saltwater crocodiles, facing extinction five decades back, at Bhitarkanika National Park has turned out to be the most successful one in the country.

Bhitarkanika is home to nearly 70% of India's estuarine crocodile or saltwater crocodiles, said researcher Sudhakar Kar.

Kar was earlier officiated as the research officer in the Forest department.

"This crocodilian species is also found in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the Sundarbans in West Bengal. But its



population in these pockets is considerably on a lesser scale. The saltwater crocodile population in Bhitarkanika and adjoining river systems has increased manifold from 96 in 1975 to 1826 in 2025," the researcher said.

About one-third of the population comes under the adult or subadult category. Therefore, it augurs well for further growth of reptiles' population, he said.

Overall, the recovery of the species which were threatened

to say the least has been on an impressive scale in general and in saltwater crocodiles in particular, Kar opined.

The success of the crocodile recovery project is principally due to the protection of their habitat and the mangrove forest stretches being conferred the status of wildlife sanctuary and national park.

With the habitat coming under the protection of the Forest department under the Wildlife Sanctuary Protection Act, hu-

man interference in the river system and mangrove forest was proclaimed illegal, ensuring a safe and congenial habitat for the crocodiles, the researcher said.

As part of CCP, "rear and release" technique was adopted by collecting eggs from nests in the wild and breeding them in the crocodile hatchery, artificially.

The Forest department is sensitive towards human plight. It has erected bamboo barricades in more than 150 bathing ghats to prevent crocodiles from attacking humans, officials said.

"It is only during the rainy season when human-crocodile conflict takes place in some places. We sound alert during this period in Bhitarkanika National Park jurisdiction," the Assistant Conservator of Forest, Rajnagar Mangrove (forest) Division Manas Das, said.



# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Today, you may be stumped by some mysterious and wonderful event. That, or you may encounter an unexpected yet advantageous incident. It may not exactly be path-breaking, but it is sure to make you take stock of things. Also, you may find it difficult to meet deadlines today. Nevertheless, let people know how important your work is, says Ganesha.

**TAURUS**  
You are likely to become too ambitious today and strive to outdo others. So says Ganesha. You will be over eager to do some thing big, lay your hands on something precious and valuable. Though you are quite likely to succeed to some extent you over enthusiasm may land you in serious problems that may affect your persona; and private life.

**GEMINI**  
You will be busy organising some religious function today or in visiting a place of religious significance. You will encounter expenses in religious and charitable work. However, you should guard against ignoring your daily work in pursuit of all these matters, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
You will labour more to finish pending tasks. You will give priority to career compared to personal chores. So you will be caught up in your career and business riddles. By evening, however, you will have cheerful moments as Ganesha sees you having cherishing time with your beloved.

**LEO**  
You will be able to meet all challenges and obstacles successfully. Your ultimate goal is to come out victorious from any situations. There is a possibility that you will have to face severe competition in business or trade. Personal life will proceed without any hiccups though, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
Your renewed enthusiasm for life will bring about a radical change in you. Ganesha says today is a good time to let others see how important and how brilliant you can be. Your intelligence will become very evident as you demonstrate how things should be done.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says you will try to gain knowledge in new topics today. You will feel enthusiasm and a feeling of positivity today. You will show more interest when talking with friends and this will make you come closer to them. There will be benefits to you from your life partner.

**SCORPIO**  
The ground beneath you seems a bit shaky; watch your steps. A time would come when your confidence would be shattered, however, don't let set-backs and failures affect you. Adapt the attitude of 'this too shall pass' and the rest would fall in place, says Ganesha.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
A cheerful you, your energy level is on an all time high. Ganesha foresees that you will enrol you name for a correspondence or a part-time course. This will boost your confidence and brush up your memory as well. People who are in legal profession will have a rocking day ahead.

**CAPRICORN**  
You are a die-hard romantic and with every plan to please your sweetheart, you are taking him/her closer to the cloud nine. But, don't live in fantasy world, warns Ganesha, as problems are going to follow you everywhere. If you are a businessman, your rivals may give you a hard time. Take proper care of your health, advises Ganesha.

**AQUARIUS**  
You will remember this day for the rest of life as today you will make some important decisions and give a new direction to your life. You are in for a windfall and cherry on the cake will be all the recognition and rewards you get for your sincerity and hard work, predicts Ganesha.

**PISCES**  
You will finally realize the worth of your resources today. You will take a decision to increase your savings and clamp down on unnecessary expenses. Your expenses are likely to increase temporarily. It is a good idea to invest in debt schemes today, says Ganesha.



## WILL SMITH'S REVELATION ON NOLAN'S INCEPTION

Top star Will Smith took everyone by surprise by sharing that he turned down the lead role of filmmaker Christopher Nolan's *Inception* because he didn't "understand the plot". Nolan's blockbuster opened in theaters and went on to gross \$839 million at the worldwide box office.

## 'BEING AN IMMIGRANT IN US MEANS LIVING IN FEAR'

Grammy-winning Colombia star Shakira has talked about the dire socio-political instability facing immigrants in the US. Asked how it feels to be an immigrant living in America today, the four-time Grammy winner responded, "It means living in constant fear, and it's painful to see."



## India's first all-women flying book club over Odisha skies

Organised by Walking BookFairs and IndiaOne Air, the Literary Women Flying Book Club combined literature, aviation, and culture in a unique celebration of women's achievements



**BHUBANESWAR:** Eleven remarkable women made history here Sunday by participating in India's first-ever all-women flying book club, organised by Walking BookFairs and IndiaOne Air. The event,

dubbed the 'Literary Women Flying Book Club,' combined literature, aviation, and culture in a unique celebration of women's achievements.

The group took off from Bhubaneswar aboard a Cessna

Grand Caravan, a nine-seater single-engine aircraft piloted by captains Hemanjali Byram, Maulya Narayanaswamy, and Aneena Kurian from IndiaOne Air. Nine avid women readers from Odisha, representing di-

verse backgrounds, joined the pilots in the sky. Together, they read from a curated collection titled *A Reading List for Literary Women*, featuring works by some of the greatest women writers of all time.

Co-founder of Walking BookFairs, Satabdi Mishra, said, "This beautiful Sunday morning was a celebration of women breaking boundaries—through literature, aviation, and society. It was a fitting tribute during the Raja festival, which honors women and womanhood."

The flight journeyed to Jeypore in the scenic Koraput district before returning to Bhubaneswar, marking a day of inspiration, empowerment, and shared passion for reading. This historic event highlighted the invaluable contributions of women across fields and encouraged a community of women to soar—both literally and figuratively.

PNN

## Rashmika gets 'caught' again

**HYDERABAD:** Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda's off-screen chemistry gets caught on social media and news often. The rumoured couple has never confirmed their relationship, though they have been allegedly spotted together quite often. Recently, Rashmika during the *Kuberaa* pre-release event has fans talking yet again.

As per a report by news portal, during a recent event of the upcoming film *Kuberaa*, the host of the film actor Suma played a rapid-fire game with the Pushpa 2 actress.

During this segment, she asked about the different celebrities and the qualities she'd like to 'copy' from them. Talking about the other lead members of the film, she admired veteran actor Nagarjuna's timeless aura, Dhanush's versatility across multiple creative fields, and Allu Arjun's unmatched swag. But the moment Vijay Deverakonda's name came up, Rashmika seemed to couldn't contain her emotions.

With a smile, Rashmika responded blushing and said, "Everything, I'll take it all," making the audience whistle and cheer loudly.

While both actors have always said that they're just good friends, their public interactions often tell a different story. They have posted pictures from the same vacation spot or Rashmika sharing glimpses from Vijay's house. She has also been seen with Vijay's mother and brother, attending film screenings.

AGENCIES

## Elnaaz's The Traitor prep

**MUMBAI:** Bollywood actress Elnaaz Norouzi has opened up about the intense preparation she underwent for her

role in the series *The Traitors*.

She revealed that she spent months diving into books on human psychology, strategy, and deception to fully understand the complexities of her character.

Speaking about her role, Norouzi told this agency, "I've dedicated months of preparation to truly understand the intricacies of human nature for my role in 'The Traitors.' I've immersed myself in a variety of books on reading people and understanding the art of strategy and deception. Books are my best friend."

The Karan Johar-hosted reality show premiered on June 12 on Prime Video. The show also features names such as Anshula Kapoor, Maheep Kapoor, Karan Kundrra, Raj Kundra, Jasmine Bhasin, Ashish Vidyarthi, Harsh Gujral, Jannat Zubair, Janvi Gaur, Lakshmi Manchur, Mukesh Chhabra, Nikita Luther, Purav Jha, Rafter, Raj Kundra, Sahil Salathia, Sudhanshu Pandey, and Sufi Motiwala.

In the reality show, participants known as 'innocents' must work together to uncover and eliminate the hidden 'traitors'—a few among them secretly selected by host Karan Johar at the start of the game.

IAN5

## I do not believe in cheat days: Krishna

**MUMBAI:** Unlike many other fitness influencers, fitness icon Krishna Shroff does not believe in the concept of cheat meals, and her reasoning seems very clear.

During her fitness journey, the entrepreneur has evolved from enjoying her cheat meals to now embracing a more intuitive eating style.

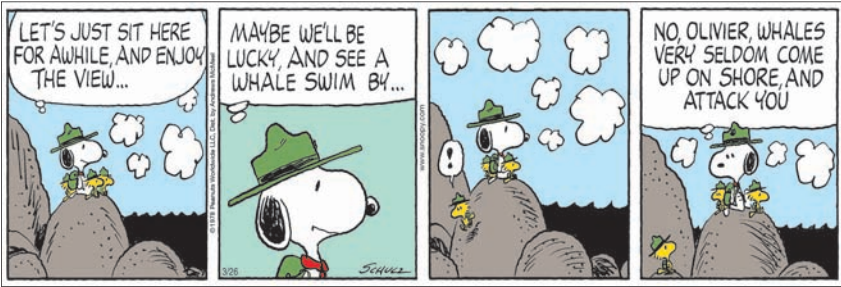
According to Krishna, having cheat meals takes her a couple of steps back from her progress.

She shared, "I don't have cheat meal days. When I first started my fitness journey I definitely did follow that rule where I would have one cheat meal a week. But now that I'm a little further along in my fitness journey, I actually realized that for me, it kind of backtracks me and takes me a couple of steps back from my progress. So what I prefer to do is just incorporate all my favorite foods in my diet plan. I wouldn't even say diet because I'm not really dieting. I'm kind of just into intuitively eating and that comes with practice."

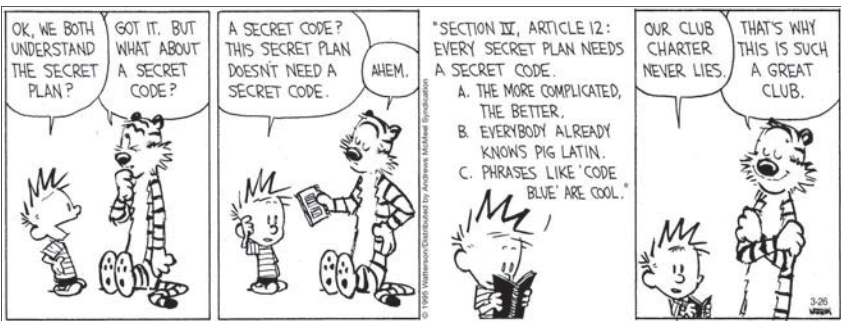
Revealing her mindset behind this approach, Krishna added, "So the more experience you have in this field and throughout this process, the more you'd be able to do it that way too. So for me, I love to incorporate my favorite foods in my diet, and that way I don't really have that craving to binge and then feel like I've been backtracked"

IAN5

## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

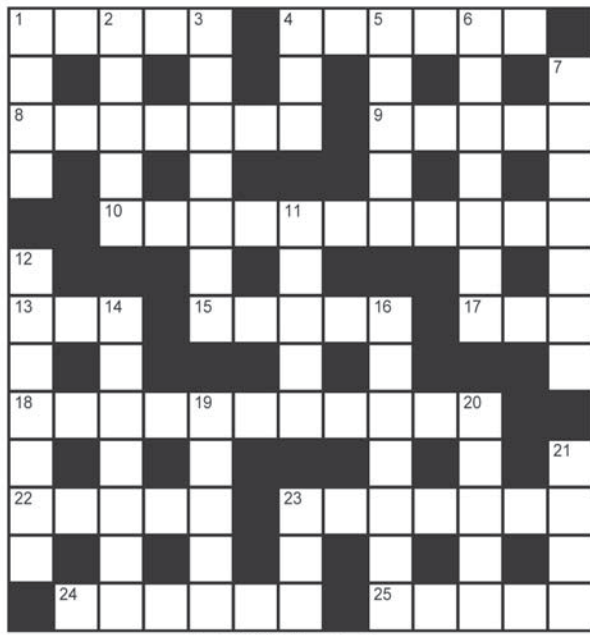


## BREVITY



## FUN post

## CROSSWORD



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### Across

- 1 Hot rock
- 4 Sharp as a tack
- 8 Jalousie parts
- 9 Keyboard instrument
- 10 Ignominious
- 13 Golfer's goal
- 15 Terrific
- 17 Stage signal
- 18 Motley assortment (4,3,4)
- 22 Weeper of myth

### Down

- 21 Stubborn sort
- 2 Wild pumpkin
- 3 Collars
- 4 Commercials
- 5 Something to talk about
- 6 Kind of cop or jam

### 7 Hockey players

- 11 Speedy
- 12 Name
- 14 California tree
- 16 Dilapidated (3-4)
- 19 Sharp narrow ridge
- 20 Bloodhound's clue
- 21 Eye affliction
- 23 Wine holder

## 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.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | 6 |   | 7 |   |   |   |   | 2 |
| 1 | 8 |   |   | 6 |   | 4 |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   | 3 |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 2 | 9 | 4 | 1 |   |   | 7 |   |
|   |   |   |   |   | 9 |   | 3 |   |
|   |   | 4 |   |   | 3 |   |   |   |
| 5 |   |   |   |   | 2 | 1 |   |   |
| 2 |   |   | 8 | 9 |   | 1 |   |   |

## SOLUTIONS

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | R | T | I | S | T | B | A | B | B | L | E |
| N | I | W | S | D | L | I | Y |   |   |   |   |
| T | R | A | P | E | Z | E | I | N | A | N | E |
| I | R | A | T | E | T | L |   |   |   |   |   |
| C | H | A | R | T |   |   | T | S | U | N | A |
| S |   | E | O |   |   |   | N | I |   |   | D |
| M | E | T | R | E |   | S | T | A | T | E | S |
| A | R |   | Y |   |   | R |   |   |   |   | S |
| G | R | U | Y | E | R | E |   |   |   |   | S |
| R |   | D | R | A |   | F | F | E |   |   | I |
| E | R | I | C | A |   | S | A | F | F | R | O |
| E | T | S | T |   |   | L | G |   |   |   | G |
| S | C | E | N | E | S |   | R | E | M | E | D |

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 8 |
| 2 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 7 |
| 7 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 9 |
| 9 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 5 |
| 8 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| 1 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 6 |
| 6 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 4 |
| 5 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 3 |

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW





## POST NEWS NETWORK

In the aluminium sector, Vedanta Limited leads with an investment proposal of Rs 1,28,000 crore to establish a

## POST NEWS NETWORK

the Governor has constituted the 6th SFC, under the chairmanship of Arun Kumar Panda, which will recommend transfer of resources from the state government to the local bodies for five years starting April 1, 2026.

## POST NEWS NETWORK

“Once these industries are

Majhi added that the government plans to recruit 1.5 lakh youths in the state service over the next five years.

FS&CW Minister Krushna Chandra Patra, Works Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan, H&UD Minister KC Mohapatra and PR&DW Minister Rabi Narayan Naik were also present on the occasion.

## PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, June 16:** Amid the surge in cases of diarrhoea in different parts of Odisha, Health and Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling Monday launched 'Stop

The Health Minister launched the campaign at the Community Health Centre at Bhuban in Dhenkanal district.

## AGENCIES

Former CM and Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik, wrote of X, "I am saddened to learn of the passing away of Thata Raja Ranarnaba Deb, the younger brother of Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb. I pray for the eternal peace of his soul and express my condolences to the family at this sad time."



## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Das claimed that the truth is that many cases of corruption have come to light in the recent past.

“A chief engineer was found to have many properties and crores of rupees in cash. An ED officer was caught by the CBI. An IAS officer was

The Health Minister emphasised the importance of personal hygiene practices such as washing hands, eating fresh food, drinking clean water, treating water sources, and avoiding open defecation to help contain diarrhoeal diseases.

Congress Legislature Party leader in Odisha Rama Chandra Kadam drew attention to the promises made by the BJP to the tribal people. "The BJP had made a promise regarding the PESA Act, but the truth is that the houses of tribal people were demolished. In tribal areas, they are being harassed to grab water, forest and land," he said. "The BJP had promised to make ASHAs permanent, give Rs 12,000 to Anganwadi workers and give electric scooters to girl students, but these promises had not been fulfilled till date," he said.




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# BMC raids eateries amid diarrhoea scare



SHINE and food safety teams destroy stale food and impose fines on unhygienic stalls near SUM Hospital and Master Canteen

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 16:** Following a surge in diarrhoea cases across the state and reports from the City, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Monday carried out inspection drives at eateries, fruit stalls, and hotels.

The BMC’s Sanitation and Hygiene Inspection for Neat Environment (SHINE) team, along with the food safety team, inspected roadside eateries and fruit stalls near Fire Station,

SUM Hospital, Patia Square, KIIT and Master Canteen area.

During the inspections, officials visited around 25-26 food stalls, destroyed stale food, and imposed fines totaling ₹29, 500 on several eateries. Many vendors were also warned for operating in unhygienic conditions.

N Ganesh Babu, Deputy Commissioner (Sanitation), said, “The BMC-SHINE team, in collaboration with the Food Safety team, conducted a food safety and sanitation drive at stalls near Master Canteen and SUM Hospital. Around 25–26 food stalls were inspected during the crackdown. Fine amounting to ₹17,000 was imposed from Master Canteen area.”

Similarly, BMC Mayor Sulochana Das visited the Trident Galaxy apartment complex in Ghatikia, Kalinga Nagar, to assess the situation following the

outbreak of diarrhoea among residents.

Speaking to the media after her inspection, Das stated, “People are knowingly using contaminated groundwater, which is leading to the spread of diarrhoeal diseases. Even though clean drinking water is available nearby, this particular apartment complex has not opted for a safe water connection.”

The Mayor warned that action will be taken against the builder for violating norms. “At the time of planning, the area was under BDA, but now it falls under the BMC. The construction was approved under certain conditions, which were not fully followed. Therefore, necessary action will be taken as per the rules,” she added.

Meanwhile, the BMC’s Food Safety Team has intensified inspections across the City to curb food contamination. Under the leadership of senior food safety officers, three inspection teams carried out raids in various areas, collecting a total of 19 food samples. Three hotels were sealed for violating safety standards, and fines amounting to ₹12,000 were collected from five other establishments. Officials confirmed that food safety inspections will continue in the coming days.



ANASARA RITUAL: Fruits from Hati Akhada Mutt reach Srimandir for deities, Monday

OP PHOTO

## Atithi Bhawan project in Capital approved

*New guest house in Capital city to offer affordable stay for visitors from all 30 districts under state’s Outreach Programme*

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 16:** In a move aimed at enhancing public convenience, the Odisha government Monday has approved

the construction of Atithi Bhawan, a dedicated guest house facility, at Unit-II, Ashok Nagar in Bhubaneswar.

The approval was granted through an order issued by the General Administration and Public Grievance department, as part of the state’s Outreach Programme.

The facility will serve as accommodation for visitors from various districts traveling to the capital for official, healthcare, or other personal reasons. Approximately three acres of land

have been allocated for the project, according to the land schedule provided by the Directorate of Estates.

The development is part of a broader initiative announced by Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari, who earlier stated that the state government plans to construct 30 district-specific guest houses in Bhubaneswar. These guest houses will provide affordable lodging options for people from all 30 districts of Odisha.

“Each guest house will have

100 rooms, catering to citizens visiting the capital city for healthcare or other needs,” the Minister said, emphasising the government’s commitment to improving accessibility and support infrastructure for people traveling from rural and remote areas.

The initiative reflects the government’s strategic focus on citizen-centric services and inclusive development, particularly in facilitating healthcare access and administrative engagement for district-level visitors.

## Govt adopts zero-tolerance on gender violence: Parida



PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, June 16:** The Odisha government has adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards gender-based violence, Deputy Chief Minister Pravatī Parida said here Monday.

Parida was addressing a state-level workshop on ‘gender-based violence and trauma-informed care of survivors’ organised here by the Odisha State Commission for Women.

Gender-based violence undermines the health, dignity, safety and freedom of the victims, she said.

“Our society will be empowered when women will be empowered and will lead the way to progress. Therefore, it should be everyone’s responsibility to prevent gender-based violence and raise awareness about it,” Parida said.

Parida, who is the Minister

for Women and Child Development, further said that the government is committed to the empowerment of women and it is working in this regard.

She suggested focusing on the skill development of the survivors residing in ‘Sakhi one-stop centres’ for women in distress to integrate them into mainstream society and revive their self-confidence and provide them with a way to survive.

She advised the police personnel to deal with gender-based violence-related cases sensitively.

On the occasion, Women and Child Development principal secretary Shubha Sharma said that all the departments of the state government will have to work in coordination to prevent gender-based violence.

Attending the workshop, Inspector General of Police (IGP), Crimes Against Women and Children Wing, Shyni S said that there is a need for a change in the mindset of society.

UNFPA India Representative and country director for Bhutan, Andrea M Wojnar emphasised the collective responsibility to eliminate gender-based violence.

## Odisha to observe 50 years of crocodile conservation

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 16:** The state government will observe World Crocodile Day Tuesday, marking 50 years of its pioneering Crocodile Conservation Project—a milestone in India’s biodiversity conservation efforts.

The Forest, Environment & Climate Change department will host the golden jubilee celebration of the project at the Golden Jubilee Hall, College of Agriculture, Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT). Forest Minister Ganesh Ram Singkhuntia will attend as chief guest, joined by environmentalists, conservationists, academicians, students, and members of the public. This initiative marked the beginning of one of India’s most successful species recovery programmes. At the time, crocodile populations were on the brink of extinction. Today, Odisha stands as a conservation model, with Bhitarkanika home to nearly 70 per cent of the coun-



try’s estuarine crocodiles.

Recent census data from Bhitarkanika shows a marginal increase in the overall saltwater crocodile population, with 1,826 individuals recorded in 2025, compared to 1,811 in 2024.

The rise is primarily observed among hatchlings, yearlings, and juveniles — an encouraging sign of a thriving breeding habitat. However, a slight dip has been noted in adult and sub-adult populations.

The day highlights the ecological importance of crocodiles — apex predators that help regulate prey populations and maintain the health of wetland ecosystems — while also

raising awareness about the threats they face, including habitat loss, poaching, and illegal trade.

Notably, Odisha holds a unique distinction in India as the only state to host wild populations of all three native crocodile species — the gharial, mugger, and saltwater crocodile.

It was here, in Bhitarkanika National Park in Kendrapara district, that the National Crocodile Conservation Project was launched in 1975 by the Government of India in collaboration with UNDP and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

## Schools to reopen June 20

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 16:** The Odisha government has postponed the reopening of schools for the 2025 academic session to June 20, instead of the previously scheduled June 18, due to high temperatures and the transition into the monsoon season.

The decision was conveyed in a letter from the School and Mass Education department to all District Education Officers (DEOs).

To ensure student welfare, all schools have been directed to serve mid-day meals (MDM) from the first day of reopening for children aged 6 to 14. The government is also considering implementing morning school timings (6:30 am to 10:30 am) in some districts, though no official confirmation has been



issued yet.

Despite the waning of the Covid-19 threat, schools are advised to maintain strict hygiene, ensure clean drinking water, and continue health monitoring to provide a safe learning environment.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Kesinga, Dist. - Kalahandi on dated 25.02.2025, I, Sukesh Kumar Goud, Resident At/Post - Laitara, P.S. - Kesinga, Dist. - Kalahandi, declare that my son’s Aadhaar Card his name was wrongly mentioned as Rupash Goud. Henceforth, he will be known as Rupesh Kumar Goud for all purpose. Sukesh Kumar Goud

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dhenkanal, June 16:** The 26th edition of Dhenkanal Heritage Walks (DHW) brought together around 30 heritage lovers from across Odisha Sunday as they explored the historic Kumbheswar Temple at Deopada village, coinciding with the colourful Raja Festival celebrations.

The event began with a community clean-up of the temple premises, followed by introductions and a walkthrough led by cultural historians and local experts. The Kumbheswar Temple, believed to be constructed around 1818 AD by King Gopinatha Bhabarta Pattanaik of Athagarh, holds deep mythological and architectural significance. Legends link its



origin either to the traditional “cow and milk” myth associated with Shiva temples or to the emergence of a ‘Kumbha’ (pot), hence the deity’s name — Kumbheswar.

Located in a village that derives its name from “Deo” (God) and “Pada” (abode), the temple stands as a testament to Odisha’s layered spiritual and

political history. It changed hands following a conflict where King Trilochan Singh Mahendra Bahadur of Dhenkanal defeated the ruler of Tigiria and Athagarh, acquiring the region that housed this temple.

Architecturally, the temple reflects the “Rekha Deula” style for the sanctum and a

| MARKET WATCH |              |         |                   |             |                 |
|--------------|--------------|---------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| CURRENCY     |              | BOURSES |                   | COMMODITIES |                 |
| INDEX        | VARIATION    | INDEX   | VARIATION         | INDEX       | VARIATION       |
| DOLLAR       | 86.08 ▼ 0.07 | SENSEX  | 81796.15 ▲ 677.55 | GOLD        | ₹99,789 ▼ ₹487  |
| EURO         | 99.78 ▲ 0.69 | NIFTY   | 55944.90 ▲ 417.55 | SILVER      | ₹106,746 ▲ ₹253 |

| WEATHER  |       |       |   |
|----------|-------|-------|---|
|          | BBSR  | CTC   | FORECAST  |
| Max Temp | 31.6° | 31.4° | Forecast for Bhubaneswar and n/hood valid for the next 24 hours |
| Min Temp | 25.4° | 24.0° |   |
| Humidity | 85%   | 85%   |   |
| Rainfall | TRACE | Nil   |   |

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# Woman killed in croc attack



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara/Aul, June 16:** A 45-year-old woman died after being attacked by a crocodile at Aanladiha village under Ko-lidiha panchayat and Aul police limits in Kendrapara district Monday, a Forest department official said.

The missing woman was identified as Kajal Mohanty, wife of Kailash Mohanty, a farmer of

the village. The incident took place when she went to take bath at Pania rivulet connecting the Kharasrota river.

The reptile dragged the woman to deep water when she entered the rivulet to take bath, said Chittaranjan Beura, the forest range officer of the Bhitarkanika park. A crocodile hiding in the rivulet dragged her inside the water.

The matter came to the fore

after the woman failed to return home for long hours. Her two daughters went near the rivulet and searched only to find her clothes with no trace of their mother. They cried and raised an alarm.

The villagers rushed to the spot and searched for the woman in the rivulet riding motor boats. They found the crocodile eating the body and drove it away. The deceased is survived by her husband and three daughters.

The deceased's family would be paid an ex-gratia amount, said the officer. According to the revised norms, the Forest department will provide a compensation of Rs 10 lakh to the bereaved family after the completion of medico-legal formalities.

The human-crocodile conflict occurring in the areas in proximity to the Bhitarkanika National Park has resulted in the loss of 11 human lives in the last 22 months.



**GEARING UP:** Workers Monday put up giant size cutouts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on the eve of state level farmers' convention Krushak Shakti Samavesh to be attended by the Chief Minister. The convention, which will see participation of over 10,000 farmers is scheduled to be held at Patharchepa ground in Bolangir, Tuesday

# Raped by father, teen attempts to end life

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Berhampur, June 16:** A 16-year-old girl attempted suicide by consuming sleeping pills after being allegedly raped by her alcoholic father, and is now fighting for her life at a hospital in Ganjam district, police said.

The girl's father was arrested Sunday, when the world was celebrating Father's Day, and a court sent him to judicial custody Monday.

The girl was alone in her home June 11 when the man allegedly raped her, said PK Patra, the Inspector-in-Charge of Digapahandi police said.

The incident happened when the mother, a domestic help, went out for work. The father, a daily wager, came home drunk and allegedly raped the girl, he said.

Following the incident, the girl consumed sleeping pills in large quantities, police said, adding that she is at present fighting for her life at the MK-CG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur.

She narrated the entire episode to her mother after gaining consciousness, following which the police complaint was filed.

The accused, an alcoholic, has four children – two daughters and two sons. A case was lodged against him under different sections of the BNS and POCSO Act, police said.

# Cholera in endemic stage: Central team

PNN & AGENCIES

**Jajpur, June 16:** Jajpur/Bhubaneswar, June 16: A Central team, after inspecting diarrhoea and cholera-hit areas in Jajpur, Monday said that cholera was at an endemic stage in the district.

"There is no cholera outbreak in the district; it is endemic with just a little surge in cases," Shibani, Lahiri, a member of the Central team, told reporters here. "We have seen an outbreak of diarrhoeal diseases. We have given suggestions to the state on water safety, food safety, maintenance of personal hygiene and awareness creation," she said. The state government has already started distributing medicines in the affected areas and the maximum of the patients have been managed, Lahiri said.

Bhagirathi Diwedi, another member of the Central team, said that it was confirmed from laboratory test reports that cholera cases have been detected in the district. The state authority is monitoring the caseload, he said. "We are holding discussions with the officers concerned of Odisha and giving necessary suggestions," he said.

The 14-member Central team visited Jajpur district Sunday and held a meeting with the district administration. The team is also likely to visit some other districts, where diarrhoea cases have been reported. On the oth-



Roadside eateries, fastfood stalls remain shut in Vyasanagar area OP PHOTO

er hand, state Health Secretary Aswathi S and Special Secretary Bijay Kumar Mohapatra again visited the district Monday and conducted a review of the situation and preventive measures taken to control the disease.

The caseload has decreased and a few patients with mild symptoms have been admitted to hospitals Sunday and Monday, Aswathi said.

District Collector P Anvesha Reddy said that about 260 diarrhoea patients are under treatment in different health facilities in the district. "We are now giving emphasis to disinfection, personal hygiene and awareness campaigns," she said.

Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO) Bijay Mishra claimed that the in-patient flow to the hospitals has come down Monday.

As of the time of reporting, 256 patients were undergoing treatment for diarrhoea across vari-

## 2 fresh deaths take diarrhoea toll to 18

Two more persons died of diarrhoea in Jajpur district even as the 14-member central health team confirmed the presence of cholera in the affected areas, Monday. The deceased were identified as Basanta Barik, 42, of Bairimala village and Nanda Jena, 60, of Sarangpur village under Sukinda block. Barik died while undergoing treatment at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack while Jena succumbed at the Danagadi Community Health Centre. With this, the total death toll has gone up to 18.

Violations will attract legal action, officials warned.

Public awareness campaigns have been launched to promote preventive measures. The district administration has urged residents to drink boiled water, wash hands before meals and food preparation, and always after using the toilet. It also advised people to use toilets and consume properly cooked food to avoid diarrhoea and cholera infections.

Community gatherings, including weddings, birthdays, religious rituals, and feasts, have also been discouraged, they said.

Apart from Jajpur, diarrhoea cases have been reported in Tangi and Choudwar areas in Cuttack district, Bhuban NAC in Dhenkanal district, Aul block of Kendrapara district, Bhandaripokhari and Dhamnagar areas in Bhadrak district, and Anandapur in Keonjhar district, officials said.

# Construction near Tampara Ramsar site under NGT lens

*Encroachments yet to be removed; next hearing scheduled for August 6*

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhatrapur, June 16:** Construction of hotels, restaurants and resorts which allegedly encroached upon the ecologically sensitive Tampara Lake, a Ramsar site near here in Ganjam district, has come to a halt following an order by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in Kolkata.

The eastern zone bench of the tribunal in Kolkata had ordered a halt to all construction activities and scheduled the next date of hearing to August 6. However, many of the constructions are yet to be demolished despite the order of the tribunal.

During an earlier hearing April 3, the state government failed to submit its factual report and sought four weeks' time, which was granted and the hearing rescheduled to May 23. Since the report was submitted May 22, the tribunal further deferred the hearing to August 6.

The matter came up before the tribunal after the Cuttack-based Wildlife Society filed a petition August 3, 2023, alleging that the lake area was being

encroached upon in violation of environmental norms. A case (88/23) under the Environment Protection Act, 1986, was registered in August 8, 2023.

The tribunal heard the matter August 11 and issued notices to 13 respondents, including the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, the state Chief Secretary, Additional Secretary of Forest and Environment department, Ganjam Collector, Berhampur Development Authority, and the Berhampur DFO, directing them to respond within four weeks. Subsequently, all construction around Tampara Lake was stopped from August 12, 2023.

Subsequently a high-level committee was formed to assess the situation, September 5, 2023. After visiting the site September 22, the Ganjam Collector submitted a factual report to the NGT September 25, 2023, but no action had been initiated to demolish the construction. Consequently, the NGT directed the Collector July 16, 2024, to submit a personal affidavit within four weeks outlining the steps taken to remove the illegal structures.

Notably, Tampara Lake was declared a Ramsar site September 12, 2021, recognising its international ecological significance.

# Lone family remains in village abandoned due to govt neglect



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, June 16:** In the heart of Keonjhar district, a once-thriving village has faded into near oblivion, with only one family left behind as others fled years of administrative neglect.

Tankagadia, a small village under Gedama panchayat in Hatadihi block, was home to around 10 to 12 families just 25 years ago. Today, it shelters only Krushna Chandra Das and his family. Das lives with his four sons – Dinabandhu, Jagabandhu, Krupasindhu and Sukanta – and their family members, the last residents of a place long abandoned by both its people and the government.

Residents had spent years appealing to local authorities for essential amenities such as a motorable road, clean drinking water and electricity. But repeated pleas were met with

silence. Frustrated and left without hope, families of Subhash Jena, Yudhisthir Biswal, Krushna Biswal, Kunia Biswal, Bharat Biswal, Dharani Mohanty, and Babaji Das gradually moved away, settling in nearby Gedama and Mudulisahi.

In 2012, the district administration declared Tankagadia as an 'Adarsh Gram', or model village, a designation meant to bring holistic development to rural communities. Officials visited the village, held public meetings, and promised transformation. Yet nothing changed.

"No road was built. No electric poles came up. The tube well is now broken, and we fetch drinking water from far away," said Subashini Das, Krushna Chandra's daughter-in-law. "During the rainy season, we are completely cut off. Our children struggle to attend school, and if someone

falls sick, reaching a hospital is nearly impossible."

The family is forced to walk across uneven hilly terrain or tread narrow farmland levees to reach nearby habitations. With no road connectivity, their link to the outside world remains as fragile as their hope.

Former sarpanch Narahari Chakra, who served during the village's recognition as a revenue village in 2007-08, said Tankagadia was once earmarked for development. "After the village was declared a model village in 2012, the then sub-collector assured us that all basic amenities would be provided. But the administration soon lost interest," he said.

Anand Mohanty, another former sarpanch, blamed land disputes for the lack of progress. "Many villagers owned ancestral land along the proposed road route. With no agreement on land acquisition, the project stalled," he said.


The Das family now lives in isolation, with no immediate neighbours, no health services, no functioning infrastructure – and little sign of change. The silence from authorities over the years has become deafening.

When contacted, Hatadihi Block Development Officer (BDO) Ranjan Kumar Parida said the administration would review the current condition of the village and take necessary steps.

For now, the last family in Tankagadia waits – not just for development, but for recognition that they still exist.

## 2 minor boys go missing at Gulmi waterfall

**Koraput:** Two minor boys went missing Monday while shooting reels at the popular Gulmi waterfall in Koraput district. The boys, residents of Kosagumuda block in Nabarangpur district, were part of a group of five friends visiting the scenic tourist spot. According to reports, the incident occurred when the boys accidentally slipped and were swept away by the strong current while filming near the waterfall. Despite their friends' immediate efforts to raise an alarm, the two were pulled underwater within seconds. Following the mishap, personnel from the Kotpad fire brigade and local police rushed to the spot and launched an intensive search and rescue operation. As of the latest update, efforts to locate the missing boys were still ongoing.



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**POSSESSION NOTICE**

The undersigned being the authorized officer of the **DCB Bank Ltd.**, under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice on below mentioned dates calling upon the borrowers (Borrowers and Co-Borrowers) to repay the amount mentioned in the notice as detailed below in tabular form with further interest thereon from within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower and Co-Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower, Co-Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of section 13 of Act read with rule 8 also r/w section 14(1) of the Security Interest Rules 2002 on **13th June, 2025**.

The borrower, Co-Borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property (Description of the immovable Property) and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **DCB Bank Ltd.**, for respective amount as mentioned here below.


The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Demand Notice Dated :</b>   | <b>03-09-2024</b>   |
| <b>Name of Borrower(s) and Co-borrower(s) :</b>  | <b>JAYANTA BHATTIA, S/O. JOGENDRA BHATTIA, JOGENDRA BHATTIA, S/O. LATE BHIMA BHATTIA and TANULATA BHATTIA</b> |
| <b>Loan Account Number :</b>   | <b>DAHLCT00549096</b>   |
| <b>Total Outstanding Amount :</b>  | <b>Rs. 14,13,656.00 (Rupees Fourteen Lakh Thirteen Thousand Six Hundred Fifty Six Only) as on 03-09-2024</b>  |
| <b>Description of the Immovable Property</b> - ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PROPERTY SITUATED AT DISTRICT - CUTTACK, MOUZA - JHARAPADA, TAHASIL - KANTAPADA, TAHASIL NO. 32, THANA - GOBINDAPUR, THANA NO. 32, KHATA NO. 845/74, PLOT NO. 2499/3494 ADMEASURING AN AREA ACRE 0.040 DECIMAL AND PLOT NO. 2501/3495 ADMEASURING AN AREA ACRE 0.0475 DECIMAL KISSAM : GHARABARI AND THE SAID PROPERTY IS RECORDED IN THE NAME OF JAYANTA BHATTIA, S/O. JOGENDRA BHATTIA AND IS <b>BUTTED &amp; BOUNDED BY</b> - PLOT NO : 2499/3494 PLOT NO : 2501/3495, NORTH - ROAD, NORTH - ROAD, SOUTH - PLOT NO. 2500, SOUTH - PLOT NO. 2500, EAST - PLOT NO. 2501/3495, EAST - PLOT NO. 2501, WEST - PLOT NO. 2499, WEST - PLOT NO. 2499/3495. (The Secured Assets) |   |
| <b>Date : 17.06.2025</b><br><b>Place : Cuttack</b>   | <b>For DCB Bank Ltd. Authorized Officer</b>   |



The principle of Yoga is the turning of one or of all powers of our human existence into a means of reaching divine Being.

SRI AUROBINDO



# Korean Challenge

The people of South Korea have shown their maturity as votaries of democracy by recently gifting a landslide victory to presidential candidate Lee Jae-myung of the Democratic Party of Korea (DPK) who won the polls securing 49.42 per cent of the vote with a total voter turnout of 79.38 per cent. Lee assumes power with a solid popular mandate and comfortable control of the National Assembly. The election has brought to a close the period of uncertainty that began following a 6-month constitutional and political crisis stemming from former President Yoon Suk Yeol's short-lived imposition of martial law and subsequent impeachment.

The victory marks a tremendous political comeback for Lee, who narrowly lost the previous presidential election by a mere 0.7 per cent to the now disgraced Yoon. Lee was at one point mired in five ongoing legal cases, one of which had put in doubt his eligibility to run for this election until the Constitutional Court's decision in late March in his favour. His win means the return to office of progressive political forces in South Korea that last held power in 2022. The transition, however, poses challenges for Lee as he has to tackle an unenviable backlog of domestic and foreign policy issues.

Lee Jae-myung has an interesting political background. He is the leader of the progressive DPK, a former National Assembly member and a two-time presidential candidate. He was mayor of Seongnam, governor of Gyeonggi Province. His rise to power culminating in his victory in the presidential election is a remarkable achievement for someone who grew up in a slum, south of Seoul, dropped out of middle school to work in sweatshops and worked as a human rights lawyer and labour activist for two decades before entering politics in 2005. It is almost a rags to riches story that places him in a unique position to understand the problems of the common man, the poor and also big wigs of industry.

He faces one of the most daunting challenges of any South Korean president since Kim Dae-jung was elected to office in the midst of Korea's liquidity crisis in 1997. In South Korea's financial crisis of 2004, recovery from the economic downturns relied on China's economic boom. In 2017, the country bounced back because of the South Korean semiconductor export boom. But no such favourable factors exist today. On the contrary, Lee now has to deal with problems arising out of the ongoing war in Ukraine and Gaza, US tariffs, Chinese export controls and North Korea-Russia relations. All of these militate against South Korea's economic recovery.

The Bank of Korea recently cut the 2025 growth forecast by almost half (from 1.5 per cent to 0.8 per cent). Furthermore, the global trade war between United States and China, Korea's two most important trading partners, has begun to hurt the Korean export-led economy, with total global exports and car exports down 1.3 per cent and 4.4 per cent respectively last month. Korean exports to the United States and China have been hit even harder, with each falling by about 8 per cent last month.

The interim government that preceded Lee made no progress in addressing problems emanating from the bevy of Trump tariffs, including the 10 per cent baseline tariffs, 25 per cent auto tariffs, 25 per cent auto parts tariffs and 25 per cent tariffs on imports from Mexico. South Korean trade negotiators under the interim government failed at winning tariff exemptions. With about a month before the 90-day tariff pause ends on 8 July, President Lee will find himself with little to no time to spare before tackling the most important task of his early presidency: reaching a deal with US President Donald Trump.

As Lee wants to project South Korea as a staunch supporter of an alliance with the United States, he may have a favourable response from President Trump on issues such as tariffs, potential troop withdrawals and the US' North Korea policy. The two are scheduled to meet on the sidelines of the ongoing G-7 summit.

At the same time, he has already declared he is not averse to improving relations with Japan and China. His balancing act in respect to China may force Trump to drag cold feet.

On the whole, Lee would have a lot on his plate in the coming months to steer his country out of the current crises, be it domestic or global.

WISDOM CORNER

The discovery of truth is prevented more effectively, not by the false appearance things present and which mislead into error, not directly by weakness of the reasoning powers, but by preconceived opinion, by prejudice.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition.

STEVE JOBS

Nothing great is created suddenly, any more than a bunch of grapes or a fig. If you tell me that you desire a fig. I answer you that there must be time. Let it first blossom, then bear fruit, then ripen.

EPICETUS

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1885:

The Statue of Liberty arrives in New York. Hundreds of thousands of spectators welcomed the emblematic statue, which was a gift to the United States from the people of France and has become one of the country's most recognized symbols.

1930:

The United States imposed the protectionist Smoot-Hawley Tariff, raising the average tariff by some 20 percent and worsening an already beleaguered world economy.

1940:

The three Baltic states fall under Soviet occupation. While the world's attention was focused on the recent German invasion of Paris, the Soviet Union annexed Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

1944:

Iceland becomes a republic. The Nordic island country had previously been included in the Norwegian and Danish monarchies. The republic's first President was Sveinn Björnsson.

1972:

The arrest of five White House operatives sets off the Watergate scandal. The men were caught attempting to wiretap the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate office complex. The scandal ultimately led to U.S. President Richard Nixon's resignation.

FOCUS

BANKING

# WHEN A SMALL BANK COLLAPSES

On one hand, the Indian banking system is said to be becoming more inclusive, and at another level, some of the poorest of depositors find themselves locked out of their lifetime savings in a collapse they can't understand



A wholly-owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) called the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) insures all deposits in RBI-regulated banks up to a maximum of Rs 5 lakh per customer to protect savers in the event of a bank collapse. Now consider the latest bank collapse that has hurt some of the poorest and weakest depositors but has not made any waves, given that the bank is small, its network is limited, and the depositors carry no influence. This is the New India Cooperative Bank, an urban cooperative bank headquartered in Mumbai, which collapsed on 13 February, 2025, leaving its depositors, many of them auto or taxi drivers, small savers and sundry businesses like vegetable vendors, small stores and the like in the lurch. This is a multi-state scheduled bank with some 22 branches in Maharashtra and Gujarat, carrying a total of some 6,000 depositors who have no voice in a large banking system.

Small depositors, many of them senior citizens, queued up outside the bank, regulated by police, filled forms and sent in claims for their deposit insurance to kick in, all being assured that their moneys were secure and would be paid into another account by May 2025. But on 13 May, three months after they were barred from withdrawing money (and later allowed a maximum of Rs 25,000 per depositor) came a terse one-line announcement from DICGC. It read: "... the DICGC has extended the date on which it shall become liable to pay depositors of New India Co-operative Bank Limited, by a period of 90 days i.e. till August 12, 2025." There were no further references, explanations or elaboration of the circumstances under which the depositors were told to wait for three more months.

On one hand, the Indian

banking system is said to be becoming more inclusive, and at another level, some of the poorest of depositors find themselves locked out of their lifetime savings in a collapse they can't understand. Take the statement just last fortnight by RBI deputy governor M Rajeshwar Rao, who while speaking at a summit in Mumbai on financial inclusion said: "RBI's financial inclusion index, which captures the extent of financial inclusion across the country ... has increased from 60.1 in March 2023 to 64.2 in March 2024, showing a Y-o-Y increase of 6.82 per cent."

This is a commendable big picture story that works well in the headline but turns into a horror story when it translates to the small picture of a small collapse that has taken with it the fortunes and lifetime earnings of ordinary citizens. The lack of official outrage, the unexplained slow pace and extended time span for deposit insurance to pay out the depositors and the shocking accounts of corruption emerging in the light of criminal investigations into the bank tell the story of an India that is collapsing in the nuts and bolts of its operations even as we may celebrate a big picture story of growth and inclusion. What is

remarkable about the collapse is the bank's entirely unspectacular disappearance, as if nothing has happened, and the almost unnoticed devastating effect on the weakest in the system who have trusted the bank as a home-built institution to serve everyday workers. A 12,000-page chargesheet has been filed in the case but it brings little solace to depositors still waiting for their money. Police said some of the accused have fled the country.

The collapse of the urban co-operative bank is particularly painful because the institution traces its history to organising workers and has as its founding father none other than the late George Fernandes, the feisty trade union leader whose life was dedicated to fighting for the rights of those at the grassroots. Fernandes got together taxi drivers to form a bank when one of them was denied a loan by the "regular" banks in the days of what has come to be called the license-control-Raj. The bank became a place that welcomed unionised workers, auto drivers and small businesses who were then shunned by bigger banks. In the new, liberalised India, unions have long been disbanded or have at least lost their teeth, and the bank that

was founded with the workers as its backbone has now been shredded and robbed, it would appear, by a bunch of insiders. Among the accused are members of the family of one of the founders, Ranjit Bhanu, an associate of Fernandes.

While it may be possible to explain the lack of governance in cooperative banks given their interlinkages to politicians, local area influence and slow adoption of modern systems, the RBI cannot escape responsibility for failing in its supervisory functions. These banks clearly need different if not more attention given that they are small, they take financial inclusion deep into the interior and they run on deposits from some of the weakest and poorest who have trusted the system. Recent times have seen a string of collapses, of which New India is only the latest, indicating structural and governance issues that the RBI has been unable or unwilling to address effectively.

An annexure of the list of bank failures came from DICGC. It listed as many as 43 "bank failures" in the last three years, all of them cooperatives.

It was some five years ago that SBI rescued Yes Bank, then the fourth largest private sector bank, on the idea that some institutions are "too big to fail" - which has its own problems in terms of the implicit guarantee it provides against recklessness or wrongdoing. It is true that spectacular failures carry the risk of spectacular after-effects on the economy. But the unspectacular failures, like the New India case is, drive a different kind of damage - almost unseen, unheard but no less disruptive in the way they erode the trust of the ordinary citizen in the entire edifice of the banking system and its regulatory frameworks.

*The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal.* @THE BILLION PRESS

SPECTRUM

CONSERVATION

# Green crime goes global

Robert Muggah & Ilona Szabo

**ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME HAS BECOME SO EXTENSIVE THAT IT IS RESHAPING THE GLOBAL POLICY AGENDA, EVOLVING FROM A NICHE CONCERN TO AN URGENT TOPIC OF INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY**

In late 2024, Brazilian federal police dismantled a sprawling illegal gold mining network in Pará, exposing a criminal enterprise that stretched far beyond the rainforest. The operation, part of a broader crackdown on illicit mining in Indigenous territories, uncovered links to money laundering via shell companies and fraudulent permits, with funds traced to accounts in Dubai, Miami, and Panama.

During the raids, Brazilian authorities seized drones, encrypted phones, and fuel-laden barges - all tools of a well-financed transnational operation. The bust confirmed what researchers have warned about for years: environmental crime in the Amazon is now deeply entangled with global financial crime. The armed groups behind them are corrupting officials and increasingly operating at an industrial scale.

Environmental crime has become so extensive that it is reshaping the global policy agenda, evolving from a niche concern to an urgent topic of international diplomacy.

Environmental crimes are far more than a form of ecological vandalism. They can undermine national security, economic stability, and disrupt climate action and biodiversity protection. According to the Financial Action Task Force, environmental crimes such as illegal logging and mining, wildlife trafficking, and hazardous waste dumping generate annual revenues of up to \$280 billion, exceeding the profits of human trafficking and the illegal arms trade.

These illicit markets are often tied to organized crime networks and, increasingly, to transnational money laundering and corruption schemes, connecting resource-rich regions of Africa, Asia, and Latin America with financial hubs in North America, Europe, and the Middle East.

The growing awareness of the transnational threats posed by environmental crime is reshaping international, regional, and national responses. At the COP16 in Colombia last year, several governments and regional

organizations - including the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization and the Inter-American Development Bank - called attention to the relationships between environmental crime and biodiversity loss. And ahead of this year's COP30 in Brazil, illegal deforestation and associated crimes are emerging as a potential theme, given their implications for nature loss, carbon dioxide emissions, and global warming.

Meanwhile, the UN has intensified efforts to tackle environmental crime under its transnational crime prevention mandate. Efforts to combat forest crimes and wildlife trafficking have gained momentum over the past decade, especially since the 2015 Doha Declaration.

Several other intergovernmental institutions are also wading into these debates and looking for ways to counter environmental crimes. The BRICS grouping has tentatively identified environmental crime as a point of mutual concern and cooperation, following a 2021 meeting where member-state environment

ministers explicitly acknowledged the threats posed by wildlife crime. Earlier this year, BRICS+ foreign ministers issued a statement highlighting the importance of tackling illicit financial flows connected to environmental crimes.

Of course, coordinating and reconciling these diverse international efforts poses a challenge. Fortunately, the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice is exploring ways to harmonize disparate agendas, including by linking environmental crime to the countering of illicit financial flows. Similarly, the BRICS+ summit in Rio de Janeiro in July, COP30 in Belém, and the G20 summit in November all offer promising entry points to align priorities and strategies.

In an era of geopolitical volatility and institutional drift, strategic coordination is essential to any effective global response to environmental gangsters.

*The writers are the Co-Founders of the Igarapé Institute.* @PROJECT SYNDICATE

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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)



B-15, Rasulgardi Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010



## Monsoon woes

Sir, Even as some parts of India are reeling under the onslaught of heatwaves, southwest monsoon has crippled lives in several parts of coastal Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. The threat of flood looms large over numerous areas. Since these are the days of accurate IMD forecasts, it is high time state governments identify flood prone areas well in advance before the situation goes out of hand. Based on the weather forecasts people, especially those in the low lying regions, should be warned about the impending danger of massive water logging and floods. Methods of warning should be immaculate, repeated and reachable. Safe evacuation of people should be another major priority. Relief and rehabilitation cannot suffer due to oversight. Rehabilitation centres should be well stocked with all essential commodities. Additionally, landslide prevention mechanism should not escape the attention of governments. .

**Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA**

## Air travel safety

Sir, The recent accident of the Boeing 787-7 aircraft at Ahmedabad has sent shockwaves across the aviation sector and has shaken the faith of air-passengers worldwide. Though rare, such tragedies underline the importance of strict adherence to safety, efficient management and the need for better systems to prevent similar incidents in future. While investigations are still underway to determine the exact cause of the accident, some key lessons can be drawn, like strengthening pre-flight technical checks, continuous and updated pilot training, and engaging passengers more actively in safety awareness. Another important factor is 'Pilot fatigue', which is becoming a serious concern in air-travel. While regulations on flight duty time limitations and specific rest periods are in place, a more scientific approach as well as a better fatigue reporting system will help in tackling the silent danger of 'pilot fatigue' and ensure that pilots remain in peak condition. The Ahmedabad air crash is not only a heartbreaking event, but also a powerful call to action. It must be remembered that air travel safety is a shared endeavour, with each participant playing a crucial part in upholding the skies' sanctity.

**Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI**





MONSOON TIMES

# Goans keep intact tradition of preserving wild veggies



During the Raan Bhaji festival held in 2023 and 2024, it came to light that at least 40 different kind of wild vegetables are found in the forests of Goa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Panaji, June 16:** The Goa government is taking steps to preserve the old tradition of locals foraging for wild vegetables during the monsoon in the state's forests, aimed at protecting the cultural heritage and promoting sustainable food practices, officials said.

Backed by the government's initiative, Goa assembly speaker and Canacona MLA Ramesh Tawadkar has been spearheading a campaign to create awareness about the wild vegetables, popularly known as 'Raan Bhaji', in the coastal state.

The Pramod Sawant-led government has been promoting the campaign during the monsoon and supporting the Raan

In the olden days, villagers in Goa included wild vegetables in their diet. These are organic varieties, naturally found in forest areas and untouched by pesticides and fertilizers

RAMESH TAWADKAR | GOA ASSEMBLY SPEAKER AND CANACONA MLA

take the Raan Bhaji festival out of Goa, showcasing the coastal state's rich forest legacy to the world. The monsoon season has already begun in Goa, and Raan Bhajis are becoming a part of the daily meals of people in Canacona taluka.

A PTI Videos team Saturday visited Canacona taluka where local resident Akshada Velip took them to a forest to forage for 'Teryachi Bhaji' and 'Talkilyachi Bhaji'. After trekking through the dense forest for some distance, they reached the hidden spots where these wild vegetables flourish. The locals possess an intimate knowledge of the land, knowing exactly where to find these natural treasures.

"We don't use oil while preparing these vegetables. They are cooked only with water, which makes them more tasty," Velip told the team members at her house where she prepared the vegetables for them.

Triphal (Sichuan Pepper), jackfruit seeds, dal and other grains add a nutritional value to these dishes, she explained.

Taikilo (Cassia Tora), Tero (Colocasia Esculenta), Shirmuddi (Celosia Argentea) and Piuchi Bhaji (Safed Musli) are usually found on the sides of paddy fields and deep in the forests, she added.

Bhaji festival, which will be held sometime in September this year, Tawadkar told PTI.

"In the olden days, villagers in Goa included wild vegetables in their diet. These are organic varieties, naturally found in forest areas and untouched by pesticides and fertilisers," Tawadkar said. "Life expectancy was higher in the earlier times. People used to consume vegetables according to seasons. There is a need to promote these vegetables today. You could say it is part of the BJP government's 'Fit India' initiative," he said.

These vegetables also have medicinal properties and are beneficial for people of all age groups, he said.

During the Raan Bhaji festival held in 2023 and 2024, it came to light that at least 40 different kind of wild vegetables are found in the forests of Goa, the 56-year-old legislator said.

The Sahyadri Hill ranges run through Goa's northeastern talukas, including Canacona, Sanguem, Quepem and Sattari, which serve as the key hub for wild vegetables.

Tawadkar said he aims to

## Parsa East and Kanta Basan now Chhattisgarh's first solar-powered coal mine



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Raipur, June 16:** The Parsa East and Kanta Basan (PEKB) coal mine, operated by Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Ltd (RRVUNL) in Chhattisgarh's Surguja district, has become the first mine in the state to function on solar energy.

According to an official statement, a 9-megawatt solar power plant in the mine was officially inaugurated Friday by Rajesh Agrawal, BJP MLA from Ambikapur, who switched on the panel board to mark its commissioning.

Spread across approximately 30 acres of reclaimed land within the mine premises, the plant stands as a major milestone in the use of renewable energy in the mining sector, it said.

The development contract for the mine was awarded to Adani Enterprises through a competitive bidding process by the Rajasthan government, it said.

Developed by Mundra Solar PV Limited, a subsidiary of Adani Green Energy Ltd, the 9 MW solar facility is expected to reduce nearly 400,000 tonnes of carbon emissions over the next 25 years, comparable to planting 2.5 million trees. The project reflects the Group's long-term commitment to sustainable mining operations and environmentally conscious energy practices, it said.

Located in the Udaipur block, PEKB mine plays a vital role in supporting local employment, infrastructure development, and long-term sustainability.

To date, over 1.568 million trees have been planted in the region. Additionally, more than 1,000 children are being provided free quality education in English-medium schools operated by the project, the release said.

PEKB is a crucial source of coal for electricity generation for nearly 80 million consumers in Rajasthan, it said.

## Goa holds camps to fast-track forest rights claims of tribals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Panaji, June 16:** The Goa government Sunday organised camps across six talukas to assist tribal and forest-dwelling communities in resolving long-pending claims under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant recently announced that all pending cases under the Act would be disposed of by December 19. The day is celebrated to mark Goa's Liberation from 450-year-long Portuguese colonial rule. A government spokesman said 1,635 claimants participated in camps across six talukas and received assistance in filing and processing their claims.

"The presence of local tribal leaders, village-level forest rights committees, Gram Sabha members, and other key stakeholders ensured the initiative was both grassroots-driven and outcomes-focused," the spokesman said.

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# Sachin Tendulkar Foundation promises 50 playgrounds in Naxal-hit Dantewada

## BUILDING DREAMS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dantewada, June 16:** Dantewada in Chhattisgarh is shedding the tag of being a Naxal-affected district and is carving a new identity for itself as a sports hub thanks to the local administration's unique initiative supported by cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar's foundation.

With the Naxalite footprint gradually shrinking in the district, the administration has introduced 'Maidan Cup' in collaboration with the Mann Deshi Foundation and Sachin Tendulkar Foundation, under which 50 playgrounds will be developed in Dantewada to boost sports culture and talent.

"At least 20 playgrounds have been developed in the district so far with community participation as a part of the project, and by October, the target will be achieved," Dantewada collector Kunal Dudawat told PTI.

Last year, the state government organised the Bastar Olympics 2024 to promote sports talents from the Bastar region, comprising Dantewada and six other districts.

The idea was to connect sports talents of Naxal-affected and sensitive districts with the world through games, he said.

"Along these lines, we decided to introduce Maidan Cup to provide dedicated playgrounds to children and youth to further boost sports talents in collaboration with the Sachin Tendulkar Foundation and Mann Deshi Foundation," he said.

Dudawat said in the first phase, 50 playgrounds will be developed in as many villages, and it will be replicated in the entire district in the next phase.

The official said that 20 playgrounds have been developed with facilities for 13 different



'Achal', the fifth Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV) built by Goa Shipyard Ltd for the Indian Coast Guard during its launch to enhance coastal security and offshore asset protection, in Goa

## PENCHANT FOR INNOVATIVE FARMING

# Couple grows apples in Bilaspur plains

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bilaspur, June 16:** A farmer couple from Bilaspur in Chhattisgarh has been successful in cultivating apples, which are traditionally grown in higher altitudes with cooler climates.

Jadunandan Verma (53), whose family has been cultivating vegetables and paddy, said his interest in innovation in agriculture drove him to explore new avenues rather than continue with conventional farming.

Verma and his wife Divya (47) have become the cynosure of all eyes in their native Malhar nagar panchayat in Masturi development block, with most farmers wanting to emulate their spirit of taking new paths.

"Paddy and vegetable cultivation are predominant in our region. My family was also doing the same. Gradually my interest in innovation in agriculture drove me towards exploring new avenues other than conventional farming. I started growing different vegetables on my land as intercrop farming, then moved on to litchi," Verma told PTI Videos.

"In 2021, I thought of growing a variety of apple that can be cultivated in the plains that see temperatures of up to 50 degrees Celsius. I started



looking up Youtube videos. My maternal uncle had started apple farming in his village Birre in neighbouring Balodabazar district a year ahead of me but he could not get much success. I also took advice from him," he added.

Verma ordered 140 apple tree saplings, at Rs 350 each, from Himachal Pradesh in 2023, with sowing each of them on 60 'dismil' (decimal) land entailing an expenditure of Rs 700, he said.

"Villagers here did not believe it would work, and even I was apprehensive. However, I was confident that hard work

pays off. Eventually, all were surprised when the saplings grew into trees and bore fruits. The 140 trees have produced 50-60 kilograms of apples.

A large part of distributed here, while some I sold in the local market for Rs 250 per kg," he said. Apples grown in the plains can sometimes be sour but the ones from his land have good taste, he said, adding it was giving him confidence that its cultivation will fetch him good returns in the years to come.

Verma did his schooling till Class VIII before completing Class X from open school, and

In recognition of their hard work and innovation, the couple was invited as special guests from Chhattisgarh in the Republic Day 2025 celebrations

then went on complete a diploma course in agriculture under a government scheme.

The couple has two children, and their son is pursuing BSC agriculture with plans to take up innovative farming.

Recognizing their hard work and innovation, the duo were among those invited as special guests from Chhattisgarh in the Republic Day 2025 national celebrations in Delhi.

"This invite from the government of India made all my hard work worth it," Verma said with pride.

Malhar Nagar Panchayat chairperson Dhaneshwari Kaiwart said Verma has won many awards for innovation in agriculture and organic farming, with his apple cultivation now setting an example for others.

He has been felicitated by the prime minister and chief minister as well, Kaiwart added.

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For registration, please contact: Mitali Maharana, Mobile: 89081 20343.  
Registration is compulsory. The registration time will be from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
No walk-ins will be allowed.

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### OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER

### MAIN DAM DIVISION, BURLA

AT/PO - BURLA, DIST. - SAMBALPUR (ODISHA) 768017

Government of Orissa

"e" Procurement Notice No. MDD-e-03/2025-26 (Online)

Email Id : [semaindamdivn@gmail.com](mailto:semaindamdivn@gmail.com)

No.6818 /Date : 12.06.2025

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. No. of work  | : 25 Nos.  |
| 2. Estimated cost   | : Rs.4.54 to 23.33 lakhs   |
| 3. Period of completion                                   | : 3 to 12 (Three to twelve calendar) months  |
| 4. Date & Time of available of bid document in the Portal | : 18.06.2025 at 10.00 A.M.   |
| 5. Last date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal       | : 30.06.2025 upto 05.00 P.M.   |
| 6. Date of opening of bid                                 | : 01.07.2025 at 11.00 A.M.   |
| 7. Name & Address of the Officer inviting bid             | : Superintending Engineer<br>Main Dam Division, Burla<br>At/PO - Burla, Dist - Sambalpur, Odisha<br>Email : <a href="mailto:semaindamdivn@gmail.com">semaindamdivn@gmail.com</a> |

Further details, any corrigendum or addendum can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>

Sd./- Superintending Engineer,  
Main Dam Division, Burla

OIPR-32017/11/0016/2526



I am telling you, Chandrababu Naidu, you are ruining Lokesh's future (political). Anyway after you, only your son will take over (as a successor). Junior NTR will not come, will he? You are confusing Lokesh

ASAADDIN OWAIISI | AIMIM CHIEF

We are doing this because, for social justice, we must know the socio-economic and educational status of the people. Without knowing that, it becomes difficult to implement meaningful welfare programmes

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

No government can do recruitments by tweaking the rules. The BJP levels allegations against us, so that questions on the count of PDA, and who is snatching their rights, are not asked. This is their propaganda. No one can do propaganda better than the BJP

AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

SC denies interim bail to Amtek ex-chairperson

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court Monday refused to grant interim bail to former Amtek Group chairperson Arvind Dham in an alleged money laundering case stemming from a ₹2,700-crore bank fraud. A bench comprising Justices Sandeep Mehta and Prasanna B Varale said a three-judge bench headed by the then Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna April 7 had already refused to grant bail to Dham, directing him to surrender in jail. Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Dham, said his client had been in jail for 11 months and his regular bail plea was pending in the Delhi High Court since February 2025.

Four killed in road accident

**Hisar:** Four people, including an elderly couple, were killed after a car collided with a truck on the Hisar-Barwala bypass, about 40 km from Hisar, Monday, police said. The accident took place around 6 pm when the car was returning to Surjakhera village, Jind, from a hospital in Hisar. When the car reached the Barwala bypass, one of its tyres burst and it went out of control. The car collided with the truck that was coming from the opposite direction, killing four people on the spot, police said.

ED issues fresh summons to Vadra

**New Delhi:** The Enforcement Directorate has issued a fresh summons to Robert Vadra, the businessman husband of Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, for questioning in a money laundering case linked to UK-based arms consultant Sanjay Bhandari, official sources said Monday. He has been asked to depose before the federal probe agency here June 17 for the recording of his statement in this case that is being investigated under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the sources said.

HC reserves verdict on Batla House demolitions

**New Delhi:** The Delhi High Court Monday reserved its order on petitions seeking a stay on the demolitions in the Batla House area. Justice Tejas Karia reserved the decision after hearing the arguments of the Delhi Development Authority and the individual petitioners.



Everyone should strive for the grand success of this programme (yoga day) which is being conducted in the southern state based on the suggestions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi

N CHANDRABABU NAIDU |

ANDHRA PRADESH CM

SC DENIES PRE-ARREST BAIL TO 'DUNKI' AGENT

The Supreme Court Monday denied anticipatory bail to an accused for allegedly duping a man after promising to send him to the US through the "donkey" route and said such people bring disrepute to Indian passports



Centre must adopt T'gana model: Cong



The Opposition party said the notification is "silent" on the inclusion of caste in the exercise and asked whether this is another "U-turn" by the government

caste enumeration and asserted that some misleading information is being spread that there is no mention of caste census in the notification. "It has already been mentioned in the press releases dated 30 April, 4 June and 15 June, 2025 that census will also have caste enumeration," the spokesperson said.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said the much-touted gazette notification on the 16th census to be conducted in late 2026/early 2027 has just been issued and is a "damp squib".

"It is quite a damp squib and merely repeats what had already been announced April 30, 2025," Ramesh said on X. He further said that it is entirely because of the persistence and insistence of the Congress that Prime Minister Narendra Modi "surrendered" to the demand for a caste census. "He (Modi) had called Congress leaders as urban Naxals for making this demand. Both in Parliament

CASTE CENSUS

and in the Supreme Court, the Modi Government had rejected the very idea of a caste census - which it announced 47 days back," Ramesh said.

"Today's Gazette Notification is, however, SILENT on the inclusion of caste in the 16th Census. Is this yet another U-turn by the ustad of U-turns? Or will details be announced later?" he said.

The Congress firmly believes that the 16th census must adopt the Telangana model for not just caste enumeration but also bringing out detailed data information on socio-economic parameters caste-wise, he asserted.

Later, Ramesh also hit out at the BJP for accusing the Congress of always deceiving and betraying the Other Backward Classes following the Karnataka government's decision to junk an earlier caste survey in favour of a fresh count.

Ramesh told PTI that if one looks at history it would be very uncomfortable for the RSS and the BJP, which withdrew support to the V P Singh government on the Mandal Commission issue in August 1991, and started the 'Kamandal agitation'. The Congress leader also claimed that the RSS had opposed the Constitution of India, back in November 1949.

The government Monday issued a notification for conducting India's 16th census in 2027, 16 years after the last such exercise in 2011.

The census will be carried out with a reference date of October 1, 2026 in snow-bound areas like Ladakh and March 1, 2027 in the rest of the country, the notification said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KERALA MONSOON HAVOC

Floods disrupt life in northern districts

AGENCIES

**Thiruvananthapuram, June 16:** Incessant monsoon rains continued to wreak havoc in Kerala Monday, disrupting normal life, including road and rail traffic.

Northern districts bore the brunt of the rainfall, witnessing rising water levels in rivers and other waterbodies. Several residents were forced to evacuate to relief camps in districts, including Kannur and Kasargod, as flood water entered their homes.

In Kannur, people have been seen wading through knee-deep water to reach safer places since Sunday evening. "Children and elderly people were already shifted to relatives' houses. We are now moving to a relief camp opened nearby," a resident said. He lamented that frequent waterlogging following rains has made their lives

Heavy rains batter Mumbai

**Mumbai:** Three individuals were injured in wall collapse and tree fall incidents Monday as heavy rains lashed Mumbai, inundating several areas and briefly disrupting local train services. Colaba and Santacruz weather observatories for south Mumbai and suburbs, respectively, recorded 42.2 mm and 69.6 mm of rainfall between 8.30 am and 5.30 pm. At 9.3 pm, the Nariyalwadi area in the western suburbs received the highest rainfall in ten hours ended at 6 pm, followed by 92 mm at BKC, and 86 mm in Khar East.

miserable, preventing children from attending school and adults from going to work. In the Kakkad area of Kannur, an arterial road was completely submerged, bringing traffic to a standstill. Commuters, unaware of the situation, struggled to push their two-wheelers through knee-deep water on the road.



Tourists participate in rafting in the Beas river, near Manali, in Kullu district, Himachal Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

Man holds symbolic wedding with deceased fiancée

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Maharajanj (UP), June 16:** In an unusual gesture, a 29-year-old man Monday performed a symbolic wedding with his deceased fiancée just hours before her funeral in Uttar Pradesh's Maharajanj district.

The woman, identified as Priyanka Madhesia (23), allegedly committed suicide at her residence last night. Priyanka, who allegedly hanged herself, had an argument with this man named Sunny Madhesia.

The woman's family has, however, not lodged any police complaint yet. As the mourning family members and villagers gathered earlier

in the day in Krishna Nagar locality of Nichlaul to prepare for the woman's last rites, the atmosphere turned surreal when Sunny stepped forward with vermilion (sindoor) in his hand.

Amid chanting of mantras led by a local priest, he solemnly applied sindoor on the deceased woman's forehead and walked seven ritualistic circles around her bier in front of stunned onlookers, including women, who captured the episode on their mobile phones.

"This was my way of fulfilling her last wish...I loved her very much," said Sunny after performing the symbolic wedding. "We were going to get married in November. Even though she is no more, I want-



ed to make her my wife the way we had both dreamt," he added.

The symbolic marriage was performed with full Hindu rituals, including an offering of 'aarti'. Sunny later lit the funeral pyre, a role typically reserved for the spouse or a close

Air India crash: Govt constituted high-level committee meets



The panel, chaired by Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, listened to the opinions of various stakeholders about the possible causes of the aircrash and deliberated on steps to be taken to check future occurrence of any such accident

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi/Ahmedabad, June 16:** A high-level multi-disciplinary committee, set up by the government to look into the Ahmedabad plane crash, Monday deliberated on various possible theories that could have led to the country's worst air disaster in decades.

The panel, chaired by Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, listened to the opinions of various stakeholders about the possible causes of the aircrash and deliberated on steps to be taken to check future occurrence of any such accident, sources said.

In the first meeting of the panel here, the sources said, the focus of the participants was to analyse the possible causes of the aircrash and how

to go about in "formulating Standard Operating Procedures for preventing such occurrences in the future". Tata Sons and Air India Chairman N Chandrasekaran on Monday told the airline staff to use the plane crash in Ahmedabad as an "act of force" to build a "safer airline", as a high-level government panel held its first meeting to probe the possible causes of the air disaster.

Since a separate investigation is also being carried out by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB), which is looking into the technical aspects of the crash, the panel discussed about the possible causes and lesson to be taken from it, the sources said.

Civil Aviation Minister K Ramamohan Naidu Saturday said while the AAIB investigation will handle the technical aspects, the high-level committee will provide a holistic, policy-oriented roadmap for future safeguards.

Those who attended the meeting on Monday include representatives from the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Home Ministry, Indian Air Force, Intelligence Bureau, Gujarat government, Directorate General of Civil Aviation, and Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, among others.

Rapido rider slaps woman passenger over rash driving

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, June 16:** A Rapido bike taxi rider was caught on camera for allegedly slapping a woman passenger following an argument between them over rash driving, police said Monday.

The incident occurred on Saturday when the woman, who works as a saleswoman at a jewellery shop in Jayanagar, was en route to her workplace, they said. Owing to his alleged rash driving, she got off mid-ride and confronted him, leading to a heated argument between them. The woman reportedly also refused to pay the fare and return the helmet, police said.

When contacted, Rapido preferred not to comment on the matter, citing it as a police case. A video of the incident that has now gone viral on social media platforms showed the biker slapping the woman. The impact of the assault was such that she fell on the ground.



According to the police, when the matter came to light, both the woman and the rider were brought to Jayanagar police station. The woman claimed that the rider was driving rashly and jumped signals. When she questioned him, an argument broke out between them and he slapped her, a senior police officer said. Despite persuading the woman, she refused to give a complaint. However, police filed a Non-Cognizable Report (NCR) in the matter. A notice has also been sent to her to give a complaint, so that an FIR can be registered and further investigation can be carried out, he said.

PILIBHIT PARTY OFFICE ROW

SC junks SP's plea, asks it to move HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 16:** The Supreme Court Monday dismissed a plea of the Samajwadi Party against a decision restraining its Pilibhit district president from filing a fresh petition after it was asked to vacate its local party office.

A bench of Justices Sandeep Mehta and P B Varale, however, allowed the political party to approach the Allahabad High Court over the matter. The top court noted a 998-day delay in filing the appeal against the December 1, 2020 order of the high court on the plea of one Anand Singh Yadav who claimed to be the party's district president.

The bench observed the party had withdrawn its plea from the high court, but Yadav was restrained from filing any fresh plea on the issue.

ple was formally engaged. The wedding was scheduled for November 29, 2025.

The Station House Officer (SHO) said that a minor argument, however, broke out between the couple Sunday evening. Priyanka, who was found hanging in her room later that night, was rushed to the Community Health Centre in Nichlaul, where doctors declared her dead on arrival, he added. No formal complaint has been lodged by the family regarding Priyanka's death, police said.



of the day  
quote

You (BJP) must be ashamed that you are labelling bona fide Indian citizens as Bangladeshis just because of the language they speak. One should feel proud to speak Bengali, as well as Gujarati, Marathi and Hindi. If you ask me, I can speak in all these languages

**MAMATA BANERJEE** | WEST BENGAL CM

Families of the stranded students in Iran are growing increasingly anxious with each passing day. I earnestly urge the Ministry of External Affairs to intervene and take immediate steps to ensure the safe return of their loved ones

**MEHBOOBA MUFTI** | PDP PRESIDENT

Since MGN-REGA is a demand-driven scheme, what happens if there is a surge in demand during the first half in case of disasters or adverse weather conditions? Will not imposing such a cap hurt the poor who depend on MGNREGA for their livelihood?

**MALLIKARJUN KHARGE** | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

POST  
OF THE DAY

My reach has been crushed only because I dared to speak the truth

Mass reporting by IT Cell will not silence me

If you are reading this please do not scroll

Like it Share it Let them know we will not be silenced

**Jai Samvidhan**

@Politicx2029

SHORT TAKES

KTR appears before Telangana ACB

**Hyderabad:** BRS Working President K T Rama Rao on Monday appeared before the Telangana government's Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) as part of its ongoing inquiry in the Formula E race case. Speaking to reporters at the BRS headquarters here prior to his appearance, Rama Rao called the investigation against him "political harassment" and accused the Congress government of trying to divert public attention from its "failure" to fulfill the election promises.

Minor fire in Pune-bound train

**Pune:** A minor fire broke out in the lavatory of the moving Daund-Pune shuttle train Monday morning after a passenger allegedly threw a lighted cigarette in a dustbin there, causing panic among passengers, police said. The blaze was quickly doused and no one was injured in the incident which occurred near Yavat in Pune district at around 8 am, an official from Daund railway police station said. A 55-year-old person, who prima-facie seemed to be mentally unstable, was detained in connection with the incident and handed over to police, a railway spokesperson said.

Monsoon hits MP; five dead in lightning strikes

**Singrauli (MP):** Five people, including an elderly woman and three minors, were killed Monday in separate lightning strikes in Madhya Pradesh's Singrauli district as monsoon arrived on its normal date in the state. The fatalities were reported from Jiyawan, Chitrangi and Bargawan police station limits, officials said.



Complete eradication of terrorism from the soil of Jammu Kashmir is our top priority. Our mighty warriors of J&K Police must adopt a multi-pronged approach and harness the power of intelligence, community engagement, technology and inter-agency collaboration

**MANOJ SINHA** | J&K LT GUV

SC REGISTRY, OFFICES TO REMAIN OPEN SATURDAYS

The Supreme Court Monday decided to keep its registry and offices open on all Saturdays, starting July 14. As practice, top court benches do not hold courts Saturdays



Model found dead in Haryana canal, police suspect murder

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chandigarh, June 16:** The body of a Haryana-based model was discovered in a canal in the Kharkhoda area of Sonipat with visible injury marks, the police said Monday. Sheetal alias Simmi, who worked as a model making music videos, lived with her sister in Panipat and left home for a shoot June 14. When she failed to return, her family filed a missing complaint with the Panipat Police.

"The police received the information that a young woman's body, later identified as Sheetal, was found in a canal late Sunday. A police complaint was registered in Panipat regarding her going missing," a Sonipat police official said. The police are treating the case as suspected murder and are probing the role of Sheetal's 'male friend' in her death.

Deputy Superintendent of Police, Panipat, Satish Kumar revealed that a car belonging to a man from Israna, Panipat, was also retrieved from the canal, and it was presumed that the driver managed to swim to safety.

"It was found that Sheetal was in this car and a youth had taken her along and could have murdered her as injury marks have been found on her body," the DSP said. "We received information about the injury marks from the Kharkhoda police and cannot rule out the possibility of murder. The post-mortem is underway in Kharkhoda where the body was recovered. The complainant's family has also made certain allegations," the DSP added.

Before going missing, Sheetal attended an event in Ahar village.

When asked about a distress call made by her family on the day she disappeared, alleging that she was assaulted by her male friend, another police official stated, "We are verifying this claim and conducting further investigations."

PLANE MISHAP

DNA tests identify 119 victims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ahmedabad, June 16:** Four days after the horrific crash of an Air India plane claimed 270 lives, 119 victims have so far been identified through DNA matching and 76 bodies, including that of former Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani, were handed over to their families, officials said Monday.

An official expressed hope that the DNA profiling all the victims will be completed by either Tuesday evening or Wednesday morning. Rupani was among the 242 passengers and crew members on board the London-bound Air India flight AI-171 that crashed in Ahmedabad June 12. His mortal remains were handed over to his wife Anjali Rupani and other family members at the city civil hospital.

Authorities are carrying out DNA tests to establish the identity of the victims as many bodies were charred beyond recognition or damaged. "Till Monday evening, 119 DNA samples have been matched, and 76 bodies have already been handed over to the respective



families. These deceased were from different parts of Gujarat and Rajasthan," Medical Superintendent of Ahmedabad Civil Hospital Dr Rakesh Joshi told reporters.

He expressed hope that the DNA profiling all the victims will be completed by either Tuesday evening or Wednesday morning. He urged the grief-stricken kin of the victims to not panic over the time-consuming process of matching DNA samples with mortal remains.

"We are trying our best to finish this process as soon as possible. Some are complaining that the results have not come

The Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner with 242 persons on board crashed into a medical college complex in Ahmedabad June 12

While 241 persons on board the London-bound aircraft died, one passenger miraculously survived

THE CRASH ALSO KILLED 29 PERSONS ON THE GROUND, INCLUDING FIVE MBBS STUDENTS

even after 72 hours. I appeal to them not to panic because this is a very important process with legal implications. We will call them as soon as results arrive," Joshi asserted.

India, Cyprus condemn terrorism, agree to boost defence ties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Nicosia, June 16:** Cyprus Monday extended "unwavering support" to India in its fight against cross-border terrorism as the two countries "unequivocally" condemned terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations, including international and cross-border terrorism.

A joint declaration issued after wide-ranging talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Cyprus President Nikos Christodoulides said the two sides "reaffirmed their shared commitment to countering hybrid threats that undermine peace and stability".

"Cyprus expressed solidarity and unwavering support to India in its fight against cross-border terrorism. The two leaders strongly condemned the gruesome killing of civilians in the recent heinous terrorist attacks in Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir, India," the declaration said.

"They reiterated their zero-tolerance approach to terrorism, rejecting any justification for such acts, under any circumstances. They emphasized that those responsible for the attacks should be held accountable," it added.

Terrorists killed 26 civilians in a terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam April 22.

"Cyprus and India unequivocally condemned terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations, including international and cross-border terrorism, and reaffirmed their shared commitment to countering hybrid threats that undermine peace and stability," the joint declaration said.

It said the two leaders urged all States to respect the sovereignty of other nations and condemned cross-border terrorism in all its forms.

Emphasising the need for a comprehensive, coordinated, and sustained approach to combatting terrorism across borders, the two leaders underscored the importance of working collaboratively, bilaterally and with the multilateral system, the declaration said.

Modi reached Cyprus Sunday on the first leg of his three-nation tour. This is his first foreign visit since India carried out Operation Sindoor under which the Indian armed forces carried out strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on May 7 in retaliation to the Pahalgam terror attack.



Indian Army personnel and local residents participate in a yoga session ahead of International Yoga Day 2025, in Ladakh

PTI PHOTO

Two senior officials booked for negligence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dehradun, June 16:** Two senior officials of helicopter service operating firm Aryan Aviation Private Ltd have been booked for alleged negligence leading to the chopper crash near Kedarnath that killed all seven on board, including a two-year-old and the pilot.

A case has been registered against Aryan Aviation's accountable manager Kaushik Pathak and manager Vikas Tomar at Sonprayag police station under Section 105 of the BNS (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) and Section 10 of the Aircraft Act 1934 which deals with penalties for violating rules made under the Act, particularly those related to the carriage of dangerous goods or providing false information about them, police said.

CHOPPER CRASH

HONEYMOON MURDER

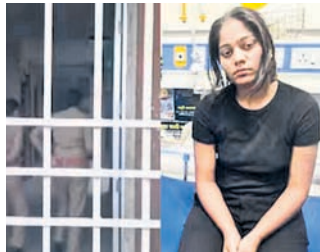
Victim's kin demands narco test on Sonam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Indore, June 16:** The elder brother of Raja Raghuvanshi, an Indore-based transport businessman murdered while honeymooning in Meghalaya, Monday demanded a narco-analysis test on prime accused Sonam's parents and said the family suspects the involvement of more people in the killing.

Police have arrested five people, including Raja Raghuvanshi's wife Sonam (25) and her alleged lover Raj Kushwaha (20), for their alleged involvement in the 29-year-old businessman's murder last month. They are in the Meghalaya police's custody, and an SIT is probing the case.

Talking to reporters during Raghuvanshi's 13th-day death ritual here, his elder brother, Vipin Raghuvanshi, said, "We want a narco-analysis test on Sonam, her parents, brother



Govind and sister-in-law."

Sonam is accused of getting her husband killed during their honeymoon with the help of Kushwaha and three others, in a case which has sent shockwaves across the country.

The other three accused, Vishal Chauhan, Akash Rajput and Anand Kurmi, were initially suspected to be hired killers, but the police later found they were friends of Kushwaha.

Vipin Raghuvanshi said, "New videos related to the murder are surfacing one after the

other. We believe more people might be involved in my younger brother's killing."

He also demanded that people who posted these videos on social media also be questioned and asked why they had not released the footage earlier.

He, however, expressed satisfaction with the Meghalaya police's probe. "Our family is happy with the investigation," he added. Meanwhile, Sonam's brother Govind attended the ritual feast, although the Raghuvanshi's family said he had not been invited.

"I am here to seek forgiveness. If anyone suspects us, we are asking to be investigated. We stand with Raja Raghuvanshi's family," he told reporters.

Govind had also taken part in Raja Raghuvanshi's post-death ritual in Ujjain on June 13. However, tensions between Govind and the Raghuvanshi family appear to be growing.

No rules, no rides: HC grounds bike taxis in K'taka

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, June 16:** Bike taxi services operated by app-based aggregators came to a standstill in Karnataka Monday following the High Court's directive to suspend operations.

Complying with the order, bike taxi options were removed from ride-hailing apps such as Ola, Uber and Rapido. Karnataka Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy confirmed the development, stating that the companies must abide by the court's decision.

"Three months ago, the court ruled that bike taxis are illegal. It initially gave six weeks, and then another six weeks on request. Now that 12 weeks have passed, the aggregators must follow the High Court order," Reddy told PTL.

On Friday, a division bench of the Karnataka High Court refused to stay an earlier single-judge order that suspended bike taxi services in the state. The division bench, comprising Acting Chief Justice V Kameshwar Rao and Justice Sreenivas Harish Kumar, was hearing appeals filed by Uber India Systems Pvt Ltd, ANI Technologies Pvt Ltd (which operates Ola), and Roppen Transportation Services Pvt Ltd (which operates Rapido), among others.

The companies had challenged the April 2 ruling that directed them to halt bike taxi services within six weeks. The deadline was later extended till June 15. The single judge had observed that such services cannot operate unless the state government notifies specific rules and



guidelines under the Motor Vehicles Act.

The division bench noted that it would have considered granting a stay on the order if the state had indicated progress in drafting the rules. However, the government stated that it

had taken a policy decision not to frame such regulations, leading the court to deny relief to the aggregators. The bench issued notices to the state government and other respondents, setting the next hearing for June 24.

Meanwhile, Ola Uber Drivers

The companies had challenged the April 2 ruling that directed them to halt bike taxi services within six weeks

The deadline was later extended till June 15

The single judge had observed that such services cannot operate unless the state government notifies specific rules and guidelines under the Motor Vehicles Act

and Owners' Association president Tanveer Pasha demanded strict enforcement of the order. Rapido, in a statement, acknowledged the court's decision and expressed concern for its riders. "Even though we are not the initiating party in the ongoing case, we have remained

engaged as a responsible stakeholder. This is a challenging time for our captains—many of whom rely on bike taxis as their primary income source," it said.

The company reiterated its commitment to working with the government and Transport Department to develop a regulatory framework that is "compliant, sustainable, and future-ready."

"Our priority is to protect the interests of gig workers while ensuring commuter safety. We are actively pursuing all avenues to support our captains and hope our dialogue with the government leads to a viable policy, as seen in several other states and union territories," Rapido added. Uber also confirmed the suspension of its bike taxi services from June 16.



of the day

quote

The facts speak for themselves. Everyone in government needs to wake up to what is happening in Gaza. All those with influence must exert maximum pressure on Israel and Hamas, to put an end to this unbearable suffering

VOLKER TÜRK | UN RIGHTS CHIEF

The city of Budapest will organise Hungary's Pride march by the LGBTQ community on June 28 as a municipal event celebrating freedom

GERGELY KARACSONY | BUDAPEST MAYOR

For British nationals in Israel, we're giving advice today to register their presence. Our key message to British nationals in Israel is to follow the advice of local authorities on staying close to shelter

KEIR STARMER | PRIME MINISTER, UK

SHORT TAKES

Bhutto urges for dialogue resumption

**Islamabad:** Pakistan People's Party (PPP) chief Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has urged India to return to the negotiating table, saying that all outstanding issues between the two countries can only be resolved through comprehensive dialogue. Bilawal, who is leading a parliamentary delegation to the West, made the comments in an interview with German broadcaster DW Urdu during a visit to Brussels Sunday. The Express Tribune newspaper reported. "All outstanding issues between Pakistan and India can only be resolved through comprehensive dialogue," he said. "If India does not come to the table, it will not be in their favour." The former foreign minister warned that any attempt by India to block Pakistan's water supply would be seen as an existential threat, leaving Pakistan with no option but war.

Niger kills 13 in illegal mine raids

**Niamey:** Niger's army has raided jihadist-controlled informal mining sites in the country's west, killing more than a dozen insurgents and seizing material linked to the manufacture of improvised explosive devices, it said. An army statement said the raids took place last week in the Tagueye locality, near Niger's western border with Burkina Faso. It said 13 insurgents were killed and one arrested. "Previously under the control of armed terrorist groups, these sites have been dismantled and systematically rendered inoperative," said the army statement released over the weekend. The raids "aimed at drying up the sources of financing for terrorist activities", it said.

Indian woman jailed for stealing at airport

**Singapore:** One of the two women from India, who were caught stealing from shops at Singapore's Changi Airport earlier this month during their transit, was jailed for eight days while the other was fined Monday. Goenka Simran, 29, was sentenced to eight days jail after she pleaded guilty to one count of theft in dwelling. Another similar charge was taken into consideration during her sentencing, The Straits Times newspaper reported. Goenka had flown to Singapore from Kolkata and was awaiting her connecting flight to Bali when she decided to head to the shops at Terminal 3.



Tehran rings Trump for truce

REUTERS

**Tel Aviv/Dubai, June 16:** Iran called on US President Donald Trump Monday to force Israel to cease fire as the only way to end the four-day-old aerial war, while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his country was on the "path to victory".

Israeli forces stepped up their bombardment of Iranian cities, while Iran proved capable of piercing Israeli air defences with one of its most successful volleys yet of retaliatory missile strikes.

"If President Trump is genuine about diplomacy and interested in stopping this war, next steps are consequential," Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on X.

"Israel must halt its aggression, and absent a total cessation of military aggression against us, our responses will continue. It takes one phone call from Washington to muzzle someone like Netanyahu. That may pave the way for a return to diplomacy."

Sources told Reuters that Tehran had asked Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Oman to press Trump to use his influence on Israel to agree to an immediate ceasefire. In return, Iran would show flexibility in nuclear negotiations, said the two Iranian and three regional sources.

Netanyahu told Israeli troops at an air base that Israel was on its way to achieving its two main aims: wiping out Iran's nuclear programme and destroying its missiles.

"We are on the path to victory," he said. "We are telling the citizens of Tehran: 'Evacuate' — and we are taking action."

'DESPERATE'

Israel launched its air war



Araqchi: 'It takes one phone call from Washington'

Netanyahu: 'We are on the path to victory'

Tehran asks Arab state to intercede with Trump

Iran says more than 224 Iranians have been killed, most of them civilians

Friday with a surprise attack that killed nearly the entire top echelon of Iran's military commanders and its leading nuclear scientists. It has said it now has control of Iranian airspace and intends to escalate its campaign in coming days.

Tehran's retaliation is the first time in decades of shadow war and proxy conflict that missiles fired from Iran have pierced Israeli defences in significant numbers and killed Israelis in their homes.

Iran says more than 224 Iranians have been killed,

most of them civilians. Media published images of wounded children, women, and the elderly from cities across the country.

State TV broadcast scenes of collapsed presidential buildings, burned-out cars, and shattered streets in Tehran. Many residents were trying to flee the capital, describing queues for petrol and bank machines that were out of cash.

"I am desperate. My two children are scared and cannot sleep at night because of the sound of air defence and attacks, explosions. But we have nowhere to go. We hid under our dining table," Gholamreza Mohammadi, 48, a civil servant, told Reuters by phone from Tehran.

In Israel, 24 people have been killed so far in Iran's missile attacks, all of them civilians. Round the clock television images showed rescuers working

REMAINING 3 ACTIVISTS RELEASED FROM ISRAEL

The remaining three volunteers who were detained by Israeli forces have been released and were returning to their home countries via Jordan, the nonprofit Freedom flotilla coalition said Monday



Judge dismisses juror over protests by lawyers for Sean 'Diddy' Combs

REUTERS

**New York, June 16:** A Black juror was dismissed from Sean "Diddy" Combs' sex trafficking trial Monday, despite defense objections that the dismissal would reduce the racial diversity of the panel determining the hip-hop mogul's fate.

US District Judge Arun Subramanian said the juror's inconsistent answers to questions about where he lived raised questions about his honesty and could taint a verdict.

Subramanian said he took defense concerns about race seriously — Combs is Black — but could not take into account that the Black male juror would be replaced by a white male, who had been an alternate juror.

"The court should not, indeed cannot, allow race to enter into its consideration," Subramanian said outside the jury's presence, as the sixth week of Combs' trial got underway in Manhattan federal court.

The jury is anonymous, which is common for high-profile trials where jurors could face threats or harassment if their identities were known.

Subramanian said the jury was "diverse."

Combs has pleaded not guilty to racketeering and sex trafficking charges. Prosecutors say he coerced women over two decades to take part in drug-fueled sexual performances with male sex workers, sometimes known as "Freak Offs." The defense says the sexual activity described by prosecutors was consensual.



Iranian state-run television halts live broadcast after Israeli strike

Iran's state-run news agency reported Monday that state-run television abruptly stopped a live broadcast after an Israeli strike. During the broadcast, an Iranian state television reporter said the studio was filling with dust after "the sound of aggression against the homeland." Suddenly, an explosion occurred, cutting the screen behind her as she hurried off camera. The broadcast quickly switched to prerecorded programmes. An hour earlier, Israel had issued a warning the evacuate the area of Iran's capital where the TV studios are located.

in ruins of flattened homes.

"It's terrifying because it's so unknown," said Guydo Tetelbaum, 31, a chef in Tel Aviv who was in his apartment when the alerts came in shortly after 4 am. He had tried to reach a shelter but his door was blown in.

"This could be the beginning of a long time like this. Or it could get worse, or hopefully better, but it's the unknown that's the scariest."

Trump has consistently said

40 Palestinians killed near food distribution centres

REUTERS

**Cairo/Gaza, June 16:** Israeli fire killed at least 40 people, half of them near an aid distribution site operated by the US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation Monday, the territory's health ministry said, as UN officials denounced Israeli-backed aid delivery methods.

Medics said at least 20 people were killed and 200 others wounded near an aid distribution site in Rafah, the latest in daily mass shootings that have killed hundreds of Palestinians trying to reach food since Israel imposed a new distribution system after partly lifting a near three-month total blockade.

Israel has put responsibility for distributing much of the aid it allows into Gaza into the hands of a new US-backed group, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, which operates three sites in areas guarded by Israeli troops. The United Nations has rejected the plan, saying GHF distribution is



— STARVING PEOPLE KILLED BY 'LETHAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM', UN SAYS

— 'IT TURNED OUT TO BE A TRAP' SAYS SURVIVOR

inadequate, dangerous and violates humanitarian impartiality principles.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military about Monday's reports of shootings. In previous incidents it has occasionally acknowledged troops opening fire near aid sites, while blaming militants for provoking the violence. Relatives arrived at Nasser Hospital to mourn the dead. Women and children wept beside bodies wrapped in white shrouds.

Trump says removing Russia from group was a mistake

REUTERS

**Kananaskis, Alberta, June 16:** Group of Seven leaders met Monday seeking a common approach on wars in Ukraine and the Middle East but before their summit formally began, US President Donald Trump said removing Russia from the former Group of Eight over a decade ago had been a mistake.

Trump's overt statement of support for Russian President Vladimir Putin was an early challenge for a once tight-knit grouping that has struggled to find unity as Washington retreats from multilateralism.

G7 leaders from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the US, along with the European Union, are convening in the resort area of Kananaskis in the Canadian

Rockies until Tuesday.

Speaking alongside Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, Trump said the former Group of Eight had been wrong to kick out Russia in 2014 after it annexed Crimea.

"This was a big mistake," Trump said, adding he believed Russia would not have invaded Ukraine in 2022 had Putin not been ejected.

"Putin speaks to me. He doesn't speak to anybody else, he's not a happy person about it. I can tell you that he basically doesn't even speak to the people that threw him out, and I agree with him," Trump said.

His comments raise doubts about how much Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy can achieve when he meets the leaders Tuesday. European nations say they want to per-

G7 LEADERS STRUGGLE FOR UNITY



sanctions on Moscow.

Zelenskyy said he planned to discuss new weapons purchases for Ukraine with Trump.

Trump spoke Saturday with Putin and suggested the Rus-

ation role between Israel and Iran.

French President Emmanuel Macron dismissed the idea, arguing that Moscow could not be a negotiator because it had

Leaders begin talks on global economy, trade differences

Trump does not intend to sign joint statement on Israel-Iran - US official

Effort under way to put Ukraine back on Trump's radar

started an illegal war against Ukraine. A European diplomat said Trump's suggestion showed that Russia was very much on US minds.

European officials said they hoped to use Tuesday's meeting with Zelenskyy and NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte and next week's NATO summit to convince Trump to toughen his stance.

"The G7 should have the objective for us to converge again, for Ukraine to get a ceasefire

to lead to a robust and lasting peace, and in my view it's a question of seeing whether President Trump is ready to put forward much tougher sanctions on Russia," Macron said.

With an escalating Israel-Iran conflict, the summit in Canada is seen as a vital moment to try to restore a semblance of unity among democratic powerhouses.

In another early sign the group may struggle to reach agreement on key issues, a US official said Trump would not sign a draft statement calling for de-escalation of the Israel-Iran conflict.

A Canadian official, though, said the conflict would come up in bilateral meetings throughout the day and it was too early to speculate on the outcome of those conversations.



# business

## of the day quote

We are making all the efforts to see that these essential items of imports can come to India... what I feel that this diplomatic and commercial communication should yield a positive result

SUNIL BARTHWAL | COMMERCE SECRETARY

As part of the celebrations of #8Year-sOfGST on 1st July 2025, all the CGST Commissionerates across States have set up Helpdesks to fast track and resolve any queries on GST at the GST Pakhwada from 16th-30th June 2025

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

IFC's investment aims to leverage private capital and solutions to boost job creation, promote inclusive and sustainable growth, and support India's transition to a higher middle-income country

MOHAMED GOULED | IFC VICE PRESIDENT (INDUSTRIES)

## SHORT TAKES

### ReNew profit jumps

**New Delhi:** ReNew Energy Global Plc (ReNew) Monday posted a multi-fold jump in its net profit to ₹313.7 crore in the March quarter compared to a year ago, mainly on the back of higher revenues. Its net profit was ₹60.9 crore a year ago, according to a company statement. Total income or total revenue for Q4 FY25 stood at ₹3,439.1 crore against ₹2,477.6 crore in the year-ago period, it stated. Total income for the quarter includes external sales from our module and cell manufacturing operations, amounting to ₹991.4 crore. During the quarter, revenue from the sale of power rose to ₹1,829.4 crore from ₹1,690.8 crore in the fourth quarter of FY24. For the full 2024-25 financial year, net profit rose to ₹459.1 crore compared to ₹414.7 crore in FY24. Total income or total revenue was ₹10,907 crore in FY25, against ₹9,653.1 crore a year ago. Revenue from the sale of power increased to ₹8,148.6 crore during the same period from ₹7,662.4 crore in the year-ago period.

### IOB launches Tamil PIN generation portal

**Chennai:** Public sector Indian Overseas Bank has introduced 'Akshara', a new online portal designed to simplify and enhance the security of PIN generation for its customers. It aims to provide a convenient and user-friendly way for account holders to generate Debit card PINs According to bank officials, traditional PINs generated by users for accessing credit or debit cards, are based on easy identifications like birthdays or sequential numbers posing security risks to customers.

### PNB, SCCL sign pact

**New Delhi:** State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) Monday said it has signed an agreement with The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) to launch the comprehensive salary saving scheme featuring enhanced accidental insurance coverage of ₹1.25 crore for SCCL employees. The agreement was signed in Hyderabad in the presence of PNB MD and CEO Ashok Chandra and other senior officials from both organisations, the bank said in a statement. As per the agreement, account holders would get up to ₹5 lakh for two dependent children (aged up to 25 years) for college and higher studies, available for up to three years, it said. The bank would offer a maximum ₹10 lakh per daughter for marriage of up to two daughters (aged 18-25 years), it added.



Gold traded in a narrow range near ₹99,800, as profit booking was witnessed following reports of multiple potential trade deals between India-US, India-China, and US-Euro zones

JATEEN TRIVEDI | VP RESEARCH ANALYST, LKP SECURITIES

## GOVT TO ASSESS WAR IMPACT ON INDIA'S TRADE

The government is closely monitoring the situation arising from the Iran-Israel conflict, and a meeting with shipping lines, container firms, and other stakeholders will be held this week to assess the impact on the country's overseas trade and address any issue, a top official said Monday. The impact of the war on India's trade will depend on how the situation unfolds over a period of time, said Commerce Secretary



# Trade gap narrows to \$21.88bn

Imports declined 1.7 per cent year-on-year to \$60.61 billion during the month under review due to fall in the inbound shipments of gold and crude oil

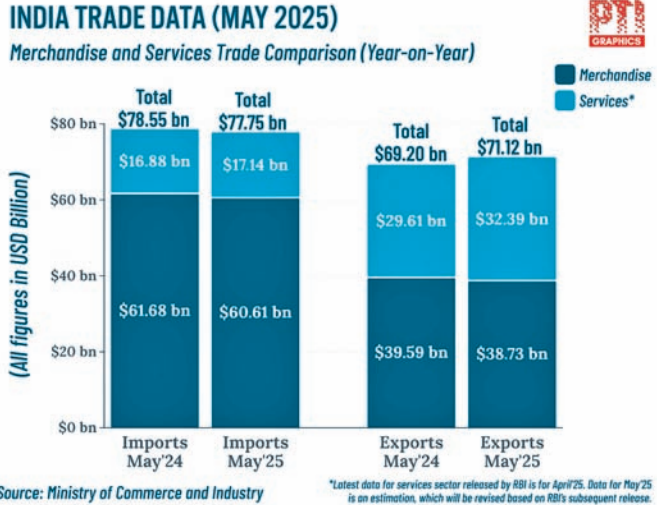
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 16:** After registering a positive growth for two months, India's exports slipped into negative territory again, contracting 2.17 per cent year-on-year to \$38.73 billion in May due to a fall in global petroleum prices, while trade deficit narrowed at \$21.88 billion during the month.

According to government data released Monday, imports declined 1.7 per cent year-on-year to \$60.61 billion during the month under review due to fall in the inbound shipments of gold and crude oil. Cumulatively, during April-May 2025-26, exports increased by 3.11 per cent to \$77.19 billion, while imports rose by 8 per cent to \$125.52 billion.

The trade deficit was \$48.33 billion. The dip in exports and imports narrowed the trade deficit – the difference between the value of imports and exports in May. It was \$22.51 billion in the same month last year. It was \$26.42 billion in April.

The fall in merchandise shipments can be attributed to increasing global uncertainties. The Iran-Israel war could further dampen the prospects. The commerce ministry is holding an inter-ministerial meet-



ing along with stakeholders this week to discuss what can emerge out of this conflict.

The main export sectors which recorded negative growth during the month included rice, iron ore, gems and jewellery, engineering, and certain textile segment goods. Exports of petroleum products declined by 30.32 per cent to \$5.6 billion in May.

Similarly, crude oil and gold imports decreased by 26.14 per cent and 12.6 per cent to \$14.75 billion and \$2.5 billion, respectively.

However, exports of tea, coffee, spices, and ready-made

garments of all textiles, chemicals, marine products, and pharma have registered positive growth. Electronic goods' shipments rose 54.1 per cent to \$45.7 billion in May.

Briefing the media on the data, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said that despite global uncertainties, India is doing well on the exports front. During the last two months, crude oil prices have dipped and it has a "dampening" impact on exports, he added.

"If you look at the global picture...we are doing much better than the global average," Barthwal said, adding, like last year,

## Markets rebound

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, June 16:** Shrugging off geopolitical concerns amid escalating tensions between Israel and Iran, stock markets rebounded by nearly 1 per cent on Monday following value buying in oil & gas and IT shares and gains in other Asian markets as Brent crude oil prices dropped.

30-share BSE Sensex jumped 677.55 points or 0.84 per cent to settle at 81,796.15 with 27 of its constituents ending in the green and three with losses. The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 227.90 points or 0.92 per cent to 24,946.50.

Among Sensex firms, UltraT-each Cement rose the most by 2.39 per cent. Tech Mahindra, HCL Tech, Tata Consultancy Services, Eternal, Asian Paints, Tata Steel and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the gainers. Tata Motors, Adani Ports and Sun Pharma were the laggards. The BSE midcap gauge jumped 0.93 per cent and small-cap index climbed 0.38 per cent.

All BSE sectoral indices ended higher. IT jumped 1.50 per cent, followed by BSE Focused IT (1.50 per cent), teck (1.35 per cent), oil & gas (1.22 per cent), realty (1.21 per cent), services (1.10 per cent) and consumer durables (1.05 per cent).

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng settled in the positive territory. Previously, BSE Sensex lost 1,396.54 points, and Nifty dropped 422.8 points.

## Domestic PV sales marginally down



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 16:** Domestic passenger vehicle wholesales were marginally down 0.8 per cent at 3,44,656 units in May this year as compared to 3,47,492 units in the same month last year, as vehicle sales across categories showed stable performance, Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers said Monday.

Two-wheeler dispatches from manufacturers to dealers were up 2.2 per cent at units 16,55,927 in May as compared to 16,20,084 units the same month a year ago, according to the latest data released by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM).

Total vehicle wholesales across categories were up 1.8 per cent at 20,12,969 units as against 19,76,674 units in May last year, it added.

"All vehicle segments posted stable performance in May 2025," SIAM Director General Rajesh Menon said in a statement. He further added though, the Passenger Vehicles (PV)

# WPI inflation dips to 14-month low

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 16:** Wholesale price inflation (WPI) declined to a 14-month low of 0.39 per cent in May on easing prices of food articles and fuel, and experts said geopolitical tensions could push up prices.

WPI-based inflation was 0.85 per cent in April. It was 2.74 per cent in May last year.

In a statement, the industry ministry said the inflaton in May is in positive zone primarily due to "increase in prices of manufacture of food products, electricity, other manufacturing, chemicals and chemical products, manufacture of other transport equipment and non-food articles". According to the WPI data, food articles saw a deflation of 1.56 per cent in May, against a deflation of 0.86 per cent in April, with vegetables, onion, potato and pulses seeing negative inflation.

Deflation in vegetables was 21.62 per cent in May, compared to 18.26 per cent in April. Fuel and power, too, saw a deflation of 2.27 pc in May, compared to a 2.18 per cent inflation in April.

Manufactured products, however, saw positive inflation at 2.04 per cent, compared to 2.62 per cent in April. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) mainly takes into account retail inflation while formulating monetary policy. Data released last week showed retail inflation eased to

over six-year low of 2.82 per cent in May mainly due to subdued food prices. The RBI this month cut benchmark policy interest rates by a sharp 0.50 per cent to 5.50 per cent amid easing inflation. RBI has cut inflation projections for the current fiscal year to 3.7 per cent from the earlier estimate of 4 per cent, as it expects core inflation to remain benign with the easing of international commodity prices.

The sub-4 per cent average retail inflation projection is the lowest in recent years. ICRA Senior Economist Rahul Agrawal said the cooling in WPI was broad-based, with the food, non-food manufacturing, minerals, and fuel and power segments contributing to the dip in headline print between these months.

ICRA said crude oil prices have risen quite sharply in the ongoing month, following escalation of tensions between Israel and Iran. The price of the Indian basket of crude oil has averaged 4.3 per cent higher on a month-on-month basis during June 1-13 after contracting continuously since February. Moreover, the extent of the year-on-year deflation in such prices has also narrowed in the month, relative to May 2025.

"Higher crude oil prices, along with some depreciation in INR relative to USD, would impart upward pressure on the WPI inflation print for June 2025," Agarwal said.

## SBI reduces interest rates

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 16:** State Bank of India (SBI) has reduced its lending rate by 50 basis points following the Reserve Bank's policy rate cut, making loans cheaper for both existing and new borrowers.

With the latest round of reduction, the Repo Linked Lending Rate (RLLR) of SBI would come down by 50 basis points to 7.75 per cent. It has also reduced the External Benchmark Based Lending Rate (EBLR) by similar basis points to 8.15 per cent from 8.65 per cent earlier.

The revised rates come into effect from June 15, 2025, according to updated rate information on SBI's website. The rate reduction is in response to the June 6 RBI jumbo rate cut by 50 basis points to support growth, which hit a four-year low of 6.5 per cent in FY25. It also cut the cash reserve ratio by 100 basis points to 3 per cent, adding ₹2.5 lakh crore to already surplus liquidity in the banking system by December this year.

For fixed deposits, the interest rate on 1-2 year term deposits will be lower by 25 basis points to 6.50 per cent. The interest rate of a specific tenor scheme of '444 days' (Amrit Vrishti) has also been revised from 6.85 per cent to 6.60 per cent, effective from June 15, 2025.

Senior citizens are offered an additional 50 bps, while super senior citizens are eligible for an additional 60 basis points over the card rate.

# Early rains dampen fuel demand growth in June

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi June 16:** Early rains in several parts of the country declined fuel consumption in June, with diesel slipping to negative territory again after two months of growth, as per provisional industry data.

After two months of robust consumption growth, petrol demand slowed to 2.3 per cent to 1.4 million tonnes in the first half of June, sales data of three state-owned fuel retailers, which control about 90 per cent of the market, showed.

Petrol demand had risen by close to 9 per cent in May. Diesel saw a 4.8 per cent decline in consumption at 3.26 million tonnes between June 1 and June 15.

The demand for India's most used fuel has rebounded since April - rising by nearly 4 per cent in April and 2 per cent in the following month. Diesel, the lifeline of transport and rural agri economy, saw a just 2 per cent growth in demand in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2025, witnessing a negative growth in most months.

Industry officials said early arrival of rains led to reduced demand in irrigation while also dampening vehicular movement. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) declared the monsoon onset over Kerala May 24, eight days earlier than the usual June 1 date. This early arrival triggered widespread rains across several states, including Karnataka, Maharash-



tra and the North-East.

Petrol sales in the first half of June were 7 per cent lower than 1.5 million tonnes consumption during May 1-15. Its consumption was up 7 per cent when compared with the same

period in June 2023 and 30 per cent higher from Covid-restriction period in June 2021.

On the other hand, diesel demand was 5.2 per cent lower when compared to consumption in June 1-15, 2023 and 3.1

## Arrival of rains led to reduced demand in irrigation while also dampening vehicular movement

per cent below the first half of May 2025. It however was 9.5 per cent higher than June 2021, when restrictions imposed to curb spread of Covid-19 virus had reduced economic activity.

The growth in both petrol and diesel sales in April and May this year was on the back of rise in consumption for electioneering last year.

Jet fuel (ATF) consumption grew 3.1 per cent to 328,900 tonnes in June 1-15 this year.

ATF sales were 8.4 per cent higher than consumption in May 1-15, 2023 and 12 per cent over June 1-15, 2021. Month-on-month, ATF consumption was however nearly 2 per cent lower.

LPG continued to be in the fast lane with 4 per cent growth to 1.27 million tonnes in June 1-15, driven by Ujjwala connections. Since 2019, the fuel consumption has risen at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 37 per cent.

Cooking gas sales were 6 per cent lower than 1.35 million tonnes consumption of May 1-15. Its usage was 10.7 per cent more than consumption in May 1-15, 2023 and 32.6 per cent higher than June 1-15, 2021, the data showed.



SHORT TAKES

BCCI to hold additional bone test in jr cricket

**New Delhi:** In a significant move, the BCCI has decided to conduct an additional bone test at the junior level to ensure that no cricketer misses out on playing an extra season due to the "+1 factor" that is currently added to the calculation, which renders players ineligible by thinnest of margins. As per the existing norms, a player undergoes a bone test for age determination via the TW3 method (test used for assessing bone age) and a +1 factor is added to determine his or her eligibility for the next season in the same age group. However, with the rule change, a cricketer in the Under-16 boys' category, will undergo a second bone test the following season to determine his eligibility to appear in the same age bracket in case the +1 factor rules him out in the previous year. "It is being done to have an exact age and make sure that no player loses due to arithmetical calculation rather than scientific calculation," a BCCI source told PTI. The bone age cut-off for U-16 boys is 16.5 years and 15 years for U-15 girls competition.

Women's ODI WC: India to face Pak at Colombo

**Dubai:** India's marquee Women's ODI World Cup match against Pakistan will be held at the neutral venue of R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo October 5, the ICC announced Monday. Colombo had to be added as a neutral venue according to the hybrid model that was accepted for the Champions Trophy and beyond earlier this year after India refrained from travelling to Pakistan for the ICC event. However, India will kick off their campaign against Sri Lanka at Bangalore September 30, and will also face Bangladesh October 26 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, dispelling the rumours of the venue losing hosting rights of the matches after the recent stampede during the Royal Challengers Bengaluru victory celebrations. India's other matches are against South Africa October 9 and against Australia October 12 at Visakhapatnam.

Team MGD1 finishes 5th

**London:** Team MGD1, comprising predominantly of Indian players, defeated Freedom to finish fifth in the FIDE World Blitz Team Championship, days after winning the prestigious 'Rapid' title in the tournament here. WR Chess overcame KazChess to secure their second Blitz crown since the competition began in 2023. Team MGD1, with Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi playing on the top board, had earlier made it to the 16-team knockout and beaten Generation XYZA 4-0 in the first round. But the team comprising, Erigaisi, P Harikrishna, David Guijarro, V. Pranav, Leon Luke Mendonca, Stavroula Tsolakidou and Atharvaa Tayade, suffered a 1-3 defeat at the hands of Hexamind Chess Team -- that had the likes of American GM Lovon Aronian and Vidit Gujrathi among others -- in the quarterfinal 2-4. The duel was decided by Hexamind's Anish Giri defeating P Harikrishna in a tense endgame. In the fifth-place playoff, MGD1 emerged victorious defeating Freedom in both matches 4-2.

EFI mess out in open

Bank account freezed, FEI cancels equestrian events in India due to non-payment of dues

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 16:** In a development that will hurt the riders and the development of equestrian sport in the country, at least 24 domestic and international tournaments have been cancelled due to non-payment of dues to the world governing body, FEI, by the Equestrian Federation of India (EFI).

It has been learnt that EFI was supposed to pay about Rs 27 lakh to the FEI officials as remuneration and allied charges for various events held between January and March 2025.

However, the federation's account stands frozen due to the infighting among the warring factions, leading to non-payments of dues, forcing International Equestrian Federation (FEI) to take off the events from the calendar.

The EFI also needs to settle accounts for unpaid salaries, various costs of tournaments hosted in the past year and other expenses running into almost two crore.

"EFI was supposed to pay remuneration to FEI officials for various Eventing, Show Jumping and Dressage events held in Delhi, Meerut, and Jaipur. However, the bank has frozen the account due to different factions within the Federation claiming operational access," an EFI source told PTI.

DEFYING AGE

Maria wins Queen's Club final at age 37



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, June 16:** German qualifier Tatjana Maria proclaimed herself "Queen of Queens" after winning the Wimbledon warm-up tournament at the Queen's Club for the biggest title of her career.

The 37-year-old mother of two claimed her first WTA 500 title with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over eighth-seeded Amanda Anisimova in the grass-court final in London.

The 86th-ranked Maria won in front of her daughters Charlotte and Cecilia, and her husband and coach Charles-Edouard Maria. "It means a lot to me," Maria said.

On the way to her fourth WTA title, she eliminated four top 20 players, including Karolina Muchova, Elena Rybakina and Madison Keys, to become the oldest singles champion on the WTA Tour since 2020, when Serena Williams won the Auckland Classic at age 38.



"It is embarrassing and the athletes are the biggest losers here, but that is the situation. The sports ministry has been apprised of the latest infighting," the source added.

What led to the mess?

The EFI was supposed to hold its election in September 2023 but litigations delayed the polls, following which a Committee of Administrators (CoA) was appointed by the Delhi High Court May 21, 2024.

The decision was challenged and, May 29, the court reinstated the Executive Committee of the EFI as an interim measure, keeping in mind the participation of Indian riders in the Paris Olympics.

The EC, in a meeting on April 11, 2025, without the presence of court-appointed observer SY Quraishi, decided to suspend Colonel Jaiveer Singh as secretary general of the Federation. Quraishi directed the EC to get

the order approved from the court before its implementation. Colonel SS Ahlawat moved the court May 5, seeking approval. However, the application was rejected May 7 since the decision was not conforming to the law.

"The faction that removed the secretary general notified the development to FEI and also claimed the ownership of the bank account before getting the approval of the court. The bank then froze the account due to multiple stakes," the source said.

When contacted, Colonel Jaiveer Singh confirmed the development.

"If you read the EFI statutes, the constitution says that the General Assembly, by a two-thirds majority of votes, can terminate from the Federation any member of the Executive Committee, Selection Committee, Athletes' Commission, and other sub-committees for gross misconduct or for activities

contrary to the interests and objectives of the EFI. They decided on my removal without calling the General Assembly. It had to be rejected by the court. Moreover, they attached the plea with an old case that does not stand now," Jaiveer told PTI.

Events cancelled

FEI Secretary General February 11, 2025, had written to the EFI that it was cancelling the Eventing event that was to be held February 24-28 in Meerut.

EFI was supposed to clear the dues by February 7 but due to non-payment, FEI proceeded with the cancellation of the event. FEI made it clear that EFI will have to pay in advance for future events, and failure to comply will result in cancellation of future events.

Till June 16, 2025 EFI has lost 12 events, including a workshop on Para dressage, and is set to lose 12 more till mid-October.

These include the Para Dressage World Challenge in Bangalore (Oct 10-12), World Dressage (Oct 8-9 in Bangalore), and FEI Jumping (CDS Jul 24-27 in Bangalore). Asked how come EFI has not paid salaries and other expenses from the past when the bank account froze only recently, the source said, "You are right. The AGM held on August 18, 2024, had approved the budget and calendar, but the EC chose not to pay it."

"We really need an intervention of the Sports Ministry here. Unless they do something about it and fresh elections are held, the mess is not going to clear."

OFF TO FLYING START

Ruthless PSG crush Atletico Madrid

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Pasadena, June 16:** Paris Saint-Germain laid down an ominous marker on their march towards global domination at the FIFA Club World Cup Sunday as Bayern Munich showed no mercy to Auckland's amateurs with a ruthless 10-0 walloping.

The first full day of action at the inaugural edition of the 32-team club tournament saw newly crowned European champions PSG produce a scintillating 4-0 rout of Atletico Madrid after Bayern's double-digit drubbing of Auckland City.

The New Zealand minnows are one of the Cinderella stories of the tournament, made up of amateur players who had to take unpaid leave to travel to the United States.

But Bundesliga Goliaths Bayern were in no mood to indulge the Davids from the Oceania region, and duly ran riot in Cincinnati.

Jamal Musiala scored a second-half hat-trick after coming off the bench while Kingsley Coman, Michael Olise and Thomas Mueller all netted twice.

Sacha Boey scored the other goal in a Group C game that



amounted to target practice for Bayern, who will face tougher tests ahead in the tournament against Boca Juniors and Benfica.

"We have to remain modest but it was important to be able to say that we took the game seriously," said Bayern coach Vincent Kompany. "It was a good first match at the tourna-

ment, but of course challenges are going to grow and it's going to become more difficult."

While Bayern were left satisfied with a clinical opening, PSG delivered a statement win over Atleti in front of an 80,619 crowd at a sun-baked Pasadena Rose Bowl -- the venue for the 1994 World Cup final.

Strong finish helps India double Munich WC haul

The tournament saw India register their third top-three finish this year in four World Cups, with two gold and as many bronze medals



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 16:** A string of consistent final appearances and two gold medals powered India to a commendable third-place finish at the recently-concluded World Cup in Munich, one of the most prestigious and challenging tournaments on the ISSF's annual calendar.

The tournament saw India register their third top-three finish this year in four World Cups, with two gold and as many bronze medals.

The team not only improved its standing from joint third last year, but also doubled its medal count, including the number of gold.

"The Munich World Cup which is an annual feature of the International Shooting calendar and is held at the revered Olympic Shooting range, which hosted the sport at the 1972 Munich Olympics, has once again brought out the best in our rifle and pistol shooters," said K Sultan Singh, Secretary General, National Rifle Association of India (NRAI).

He added, "When many were saying and quite rightly so, that India will find it very tough given the large field, quality of competition and the fact that some of our best were not part of the squad, our athletes have proven that the depth in Indian shooting is more formidable than ever before."

The high point for India at Munich this year, as also of this whole international season, has been the stunning consistency of rising women's pistol star Suruchi Singh.

The Haryana teenager won an unprecedented third consecutive individual ISSF World Cup stage gold in the women's 10m air pistol, two months after a memorable debut in Buenos Aires. She went where no Indian has ever gone before.

The other highlight was Arya Borse and Olympian Arjun Bhatia's tremendous win over the Chinese world record holders Sheng Lihao and Wang Zifei, the former also the Olympic champion in the event, in the 10m air rifle mixed team final, where they completely outgunned their opponents 17-7.

With some incredible and consistent series of high scores,

On behalf of the NRAI, I congratulate the entire squad including the coaches and support staff, for the amazing results, not only in Munich, but throughout the year

K SULTAN SINGH | SECRETARY GENERAL, NRAI

they showcased the depth and new found confidence in Indian shooting.

Elavenil Valarivan (women's 10m air rifle), a two-time Olympian, and Sift Kaur Samra (50m rifle 3 positions women), Olympian and world record holder, also reinforced their status as world-class shooters with their bronze-winning performances in Munich.

Elavenil also set a new qualifications national record of 635.9 en route to her bronze while Suruchi equalled Manu Bhaker's qualifications national mark of 588 in the women's air pistol.

In keeping with the trend this year, Indian World Cup debutants also delivered encouraging performances in strong fields.

Ananya Naidu shot a solid 632.4 to finish 13th in women's 10m air rifle, while Nishant Rawat (10m air pistol men) and Aditya Malra (air pistol men) shot scores of 582 and 578 to finish 10th and 27th respectively.

India made a total of seven finals in the 10 events in Munich with Bhaker (women's 25m pistol), Varun Tomar (men's 10m air pistol) and Chain Singh (men's 3P) making the cut.

China finished on top of the standings with seven medals including four gold while Norway edged India to second on the basis of having won a silver with the same number of golds and medals as India.

A total of 11 nations including the individual neutral athletes group won medals in Munich.

The ISSF bandwagon will move to Lonato Del Garda in Italy next month for the year's fourth Shotgun World Cup stage, while the fourth and final rifle/pistol World Cup is scheduled for Ningbo in China in September.

RPL Season 1: Chennai Bulls lead table

Bengaluru Bravehearts win big against Kalinga Black Tigers

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, June 16:** Both the Chennai Bulls and Bengaluru Bravehearts had a superb day on the field, on a rainy Monday, as they registered comprehensive wins in their games during Season 1 of the Rugby Premier League, here at the Shahaji Raje Bhosale Sports Complex.

The Chennai Bulls defeated Mumbai Dreamers on the second successive day to win two out of two and lead the points table, while the Bravehearts are second, with one win and a draw.

In the first match of the day, the Bengaluru Bravehearts were in superb form and stormed past the Kalinga Black Tigers, winning the game 35-10.

However, it wasn't an easy start for the Bravehearts, as the Kalinga Black Tigers went ahead in the first quarter through Lucas Lacamp's try. After that, the Bravehearts cranked up the style and turned the game on its head as Philip Wokorach scored two tries, and



the troika of Akuila Rokolisoa, Iowane Teba, and Mohit Khatri added a try each as well.

Whilst the Kalinga Black Tigers failed to convert any of their kicks, the Bravehearts were able to place their with-in the goalposts, to pick up an additional ten points. Philip Wokorach, Iowane Teba (three kicks), and Akuila Rokolisoa were the kicktakers for the

Bravehearts, who eventually won at a canter. The Bravehearts are now unbeaten in their opening two games, having drawn the first and won the second.

In Match 2 on the day, the Chennai Bulls took on the Mumbai Dreamers and overcame the challenge with relative ease. The Bulls won comfortably with the score at 31-17. The Bulls were out of the blocks faster than their opponents, and pretty much kept the Mumbai Dreamers at arm's length.

However, in the final quarter, the Dreamers got into their act and attempted what could have been a comeback for the ages, before the Bulls nipped it in the bud with a fine counter-attack in the final minutes of the contest.

For the Bulls, Vaafauese Maliko and Joseva Talacolo scored a couple of tries each, and Filipe Sauturaga added another. Joaquin Pellandini then had two chances to score his kicks, and Filipe Sauturaga added another couple of points to the tally.

CANADIAN GRAND PRIX

Russell takes win as McLarens collide

REUTERS

**Montreal, June 16:** George Russell celebrated Mercedes' first win of the Formula One season in Canada Sunday while McLaren's Oscar Piastri went 22 points clear in the championship after teammate Lando Norris smashed into him and retired.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen, who had hoped to win for a record fourth year in a row at Montreal's Circuit Gilles Villeneuve, had to settle for second after a challenge fizzed out behind the safety car.

Russell's 18-year-old rookie teammate Kimi Antonelli finished third for his first F1 podium and the first by an Italian since 2009.

Piastri was fourth, with the safety car leading the final lap before peeling off to clear the way for Russell to take the chequered flag.

"Well done team. That made up for last year," said Russell, who also started on pole in 2024 but finished third. His last win



before Sunday was in Las Vegas in November. "It's amazing to be back on the top step. I felt last year was a victory lost and probably got the victory today due to the incredible pole lap yesterday."

Piastri now has 198 points ahead of Norris on 176, with Verstappen on 155 with Russell on 136.

In the constructors' standings Mercedes moved up to second, ahead of Ferrari and 175 points behind McLaren.

HEADLINE DRAMA

An uneventful afternoon erupted in headline drama



- Russell takes Mercedes first win of season
- McLaren drivers Norris and Piastri collide three laps from end
- Piastri stretches lead to 22 points after 10 of 24 races
- Antonelli takes first podium in F1

when Norris hit the rear of Piastri's car three laps from the end -- a clash long predicted in the title battle between the pair -- while trying to overtake.

The Briton, whose broken car stopped by the side of the

track, was quick to blame himself when it all went wrong after they had earlier gone side by side.

"I'm sorry. All my bad. All my fault. Stupid from me," Norris said over the team radio.

Piastri pitted as the safety car was deployed and rejoined with a tyre advantage over Antonelli that he could not use as the racing never resumed.

"Glad I didn't ruin his race. In the end apologies to the team," Norris told Sky Sports television. "This wasn't even like a 'that's racing', it was just silly from my part."