



Manushi’s viewpoint

Actor Manushi Chhillar, amid sudden demise of actress Shefali Jariwala, shares her insight on a perfect look

LEISURE | P2



Pronatalism in Russia

In parts of Russia, pregnant schoolgirls are being paid more than 100,000 roubles for giving birth and raising their babies

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Inequality decreases

Inequality in India has come down significantly between 2011-12 and 2022-23, making it the 4th-most equal country globally

BUSINESS | P11



Red-hot form

Shubman Gill's belligerent 161 and fifties from Rahul, Pant and Jadeja help India set a target of 608 runs against England in the second Test

SPORTS | P12

ADR moves top court challenging Bihar electoral roll revision

NEW DELHI: The Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) has moved the Supreme Court, challenging the Election Commission's direction for a Special Intensive Revision, or SIR, of electoral rolls in Bihar. The EC June 24 issued instructions to carry out an SIR in Bihar, apparently to weed out ineligible names and ensure only eligible citizens are included in the electoral roll. Bihar goes to the polls later this year. The NGO has sought the setting aside of the order and communication, arguing that it violates Articles 14, 19, 21, 325, and 326 of the Constitution, as well as provisions of the Representation of People's Act, 1950, and Rule 21A of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960.

P8

Telangana factory blast: Odisha workers' death toll rises to 9

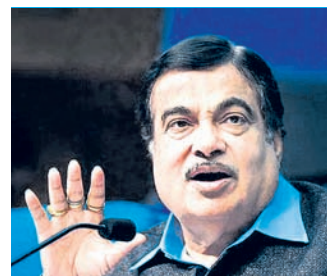
BHUBANESWAR: The death toll of workers from Odisha in the explosion at the chemical factory in Telangana rose to nine, with authorities confirming the identity of one more person using DNA-based analysis, an officer said Saturday. The latest victim of the factory blast was identified as Purna Chandra Sahu, a native of Sukarpada in Cuttack district, said Pritish Panda, Officer on Special Duty (OSD), Directorate of Odisha Pariwaar. With his death, a total of nine people from Odisha were killed in the powerful blast at a pharmaceutical plant in Pashamylaram in Telangana's Sangareddy district June 30.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Clearly, the administration can't speak in any language

Number of poor rising: Gadkari



AGENCIES

Mumbai, July 5: Union minister Nitin Gadkari Saturday expressed concern over the 'rising' number of poor, and said wealth was getting concentrated in the hands of some affluent people. There is a need for decentralisation of wealth, Gadkari said during an event in Nagpur, where he touched upon a range of issues, including agriculture, manufacturing, taxation and public-private partnerships in infrastructure development. "Slowly the number of poor people is increasing and wealth is getting centralised in the hands of some wealthy people. It should not happen," the Road



BACK HOME: The majestic chariots of the sibling deities stationed outside Srimandir after the return journey from Gundicha Temple during Bahuda Yatra that continued well into the night, Saturday (Report P3)

PIC: YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

Brothers back in arms

In a move that has sent jitters to the ruling BJP-Shiv Sena (Shinde faction)-NCP Mahayukti government in Maharashtra, Thackeray cousins Uddhav and Raj united at a public rally in Mumbai following a separation that spanned over two decades. The Awaj Marathicha (Voice of the Marathi) rally was jointly called by Shiv Sena (UBT) and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) as a sign of 'victory' following the recent rollback of a controversial policy mandating Hindi as the first language in the state's primary schools. In fact, the Hindi-must decision of the Devendra Fadnavis-led government served the ground for the reunion of the estranged cousins who had strongly, though separately, opposed it. During his speech at the rally, Raj – a sharp-witted cartoonist - in a lighter vein credited Fadnavis for bringing them together which even Bal Thackeray couldn't do. Nevertheless, with elections to the cash-rich Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) approaching, the development is being seen as more than just the alienated cousins

coming together for a cultural protest, but also a crucial move that will reshape Maharashtra's future political landscape

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 5: Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray Saturday said he and MNS head Raj Thackeray have come together to stay united as the cousins shared a political stage for the first time after two decades on the issue of Marathi identity and 'imposition' of the Hindi language. Addressing a 'victory' rally in Worli here to celebrate the rollback of the Hindi language GRs (resolutions) by the BJP-led government, Uddhav hinted at contesting the upcoming civic elections together. "We have come together to stay together. We will together capture power in the Mumbai civic body and Maharashtra," he said, evoking loud cheers from the crowd in the packed NSCI Dome. The elections to the high-profile civic body in Mumbai, which Sena considers its cita-



del and homeground, and other municipal corporations are due in coming months. Speaking ahead of Uddhav, the only person seated on the stage, Raj quipped that Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has managed to do what Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray and others couldn't by bringing the two cousins together. After he quit Shiv Sena in 2005 over apparent differences with his cousin, Raj Thackeray formed the MNS and has been projecting it as the true champion of the cause of the sons-of-

the-soil.

The parties, led by the cousins, had since contested elections against each other notwithstanding the intermittent calls for reunion raised by certain quarters. As the BJP expanded its footprint on the political landscape of Maharashtra and joined hands with Eknath Shinde, who split Shiv Sena in 2022, and NCP, the chorus for the reunion of the Thackeray brothers grew shriller over the last four months. The state government's flip-flop on the three-language policy and the introduction of Hindi as a third language provided a much-needed common cause. On Saturday, the political rancour seems dissipated, at least on the face of it, into the bonhomie at the event. The coming together of the estranged cousins-turned-comrades has not only enthused cadres of both parties, but it could also give a lifeline to both parties, which are struggling to regain their footing after drubbings in the Assembly polls last year.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, July 5: A 25-year-old runaway tribal woman was allegedly raped twice by a youth in Keonjhar town in around a fortnight's time on the pretext of helping her get some work to earn a living, police said. The accused, identified as Sanjay Parihar, 25, a native of Khudapasi village under Pandapada police limits in the district, was arrested after the survivor, accompanied by social activists of Sakhi-One Stop Centre, lodged a complaint Friday evening. It is alleged that she was raped June 19 and July 2. Town police station IIC Srikantha Sahu said a case (445/25) was registered in this connection, and the accused produced in the court Saturday. Further investigations are on, he added. According to the complaint, the survivor from Telkoi police station area ran away from her home in anger a month back following a family quarrel, and reached Keonjhar town. She was roaming alone in the area and used to sleep on the verandah of

a shop in Kashipur Sahi at night. Meanwhile, she came in contact with Sanjay who sought to know her name, address and the reason behind roaming alone in the town. After hearing her problem, he assured to get her a job so that she could earn a living. Since then, he met her on a regular basis, police said. On June 19, Sanjay allegedly took her to an abandoned house in the locality and raped her. He even threatened to kill her if she disclosed the matter before others. Fearing for life, she chose to remain silent, police said. Taking advantage of her vulnerability again, Sanjay July 2 night gagged her, took her to the same spot and raped her. When the shocked survivor was wandering around aimlessly after the incident, members of Sakhi-One Stop Centre, an organisation running under 'Prakalpa' - a non-profit in Keonjhar - spotted her. They rescued her and enquired about her problems. During counseling, she narrated her ordeal before the members.

Dalai Lama hopes to live beyond 130 years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

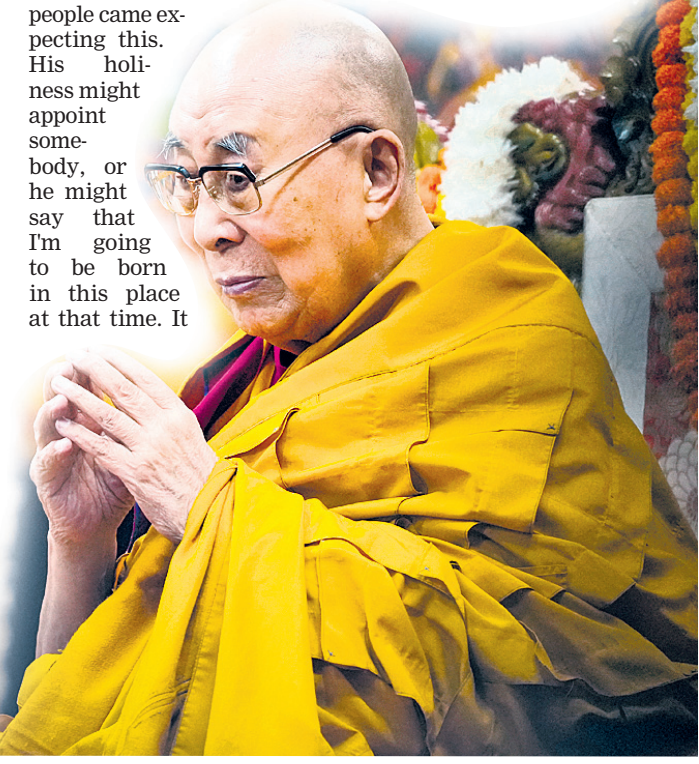
Dharamshala, July 5: The Dalai Lama Saturday put to rest rumours surrounding the announcement of his successor, saying he hopes to live for another 30-40 years more to serve people. Speaking at the long life prayer ceremony ahead of his 90th birth anniversary Sunday at Tsuglagkhang, the main Dalai Lama temple in McLeodganj, Tenzin Gyatso said that he has 'clear signs and indications' that the blessings of the Avalokiteshvara are with him. "Looking at the many prophecies, I feel I have blessings of the Avalokiteshvara. I have done my best so far. I hope to still live for 30-40 years more. Your prayers have borne fruit so far," the Tibetan spiritual leader said. The Dalai Lama's birth anniversary celebrations Sunday will be attended by Cabinet ministers Kiren Rijiju, a practising Buddhist, and Rajiv Ranjan Singh.

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pena Khandu, Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang, and Hollywood actor Richard Gere are slated to attend the ceremony. On Saturday, the Dalai Lama said that ever since he was a child, he had the feeling that he had a strong connection with Avalokiteshvara. "And I have been able to serve the Buddha dharma and the beings of Tibet so far quite well. And still I hope to live over 130 years," he said. The Tibetan government-in-exile has organised a weeklong series of events to celebrate the birth anniversary of the 14th Dalai Lama here. The Dalai Lama said that though the Tibetans have lost their country and are living in exile in India, he has been able to 'benefit beings quite a lot.' "Those living here in Dharamshala. I intend to benefit and serve beings as much as I can," he said. On the occasion, the Dalai Lama also recalled meeting

Chinese leader Mao Zedong, who famously said: "Religion is poison." "...but I didn't respond to him, so he actually cast a very evil gaze, but I didn't respond. And I felt compassion. Then later I met Nehru. Throughout my life, I have met people who have an interest in religion and those who don't have an interest in religion," the spiritual leader said. The rumours of an announcement of the Dalai Lama's successor have been making rounds since days ahead of his 90th birth anniversary, which have since been refuted in light of increased tension with China on the matter. Penpa Tsering, the president of the Central Tibetan Administration, rejected such rumours by saying, "It doesn't happen like that." "Some are talking as if his holiness is going to die tomorrow or the day after or next year or something. He says he's going to live for another 20 years. So we

have to understand the tradition. I think a lot of people came expecting this. His holiness might appoint somebody, or he might say that I'm going to be born in this place at that time. It

doesn't happen like that," Tsering said.





# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
If you are related in any way with the media, Ganesha predicts that you will taste success today. Since all the focus is on you, it is a great time to exhibit your skills. Your talents will get recognition and your short-term goals will come to fruition.

**TAURUS**  
The planets are not well disposed towards you today, fears Ganesha. There are strong chances of crossing swords with someone, getting into a serious personality clash. Not good is come out of it. You may simply end in alienating those who are otherwise well disposed towards you. Later in the ady the situation will ease out. Do not, ion the evening, miss out on a chance of dining out with friends and family members.

**GEMINI**  
It is the right day to reveal your innermost feelings to your loved ones and friends, and as well as to make them privy to your thoughts and opinions. Your courteous and kind nature will come to the fore today. Health and diet should not be issues today, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
Swiftness of your work will mesmerise people. They will make comparisons with you. Yet they can-not catch up with you. you are not at all greedy, nor do you make any needless demand any time. You will feel greater under-standing and proximity with your spouse.

**LEO**  
Your expenses will increase today owing to your carefree attitude. You need to curb down on your spending. The later half of the day will see you deal with minor issues related to the work-place. If you ignore these issues now, they will crop up into major problems later on. Hence, resolve them immediately, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
The only thing you have to do is begin what you want to do; don't bother about results, they will come automatically. Ganesha says monetary dealings will be beneficial, but warns that things may not turn out to be as stimulating as you would have wished. Ganesha therefore advises you not to expect too much, just flow with the tide.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says today is a good day for you. The ladies in your life will prove to be beneficial to you. You will be able to progress in your office because of your skills and abilities. You will be closer to your beloved today. You will show more interest in new topics and ideas.

**SCORPIO**  
The day begins with challenges at work, predicts Ganesha. But, don't you worry as you have all the zest to tackle your career front. Evenings will be full of social exchanges and attending parties and dinner with friends is on the cards.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
You are on a creative high today. You may be painting or sketching during the first half of the day. You may even find time to go through your past possessions and treasure. And during the later half of the day, you may be busy in giving your cosy corner and home a new look, a makeover. A pleasant day in store for you, says Ganesha.

**CAPRICORN**  
You don't experience mood swings everyday. In fact, it is a rarity that you through tantrums. But, today it is one of those rare days. You will get irritated by the smallest of things and feel very disturbed. This will not last for long though. By the end of the day, you will feel energetic and be the first one to take any risks, says Ganesha. You'll have a personality that others wish to have.

**AQUARIUS**  
You work while you work and play while you play. This approach certainly contributes a lot to your success, says Ganesha. You stay focused on your goal and make each step boldly, but wisely. Enjoy the evening in the presence of your friends and family members, and bring a joyous end to the day, says Ganesha.

**PISCES**  
You will be successful in defeating your enemies and seeing your capabilities some people might try to involve you in illegal activities. Ganesha advises you to be cautious of these people. Head for a long drive or take a walk if things begin to bother you as this make put you in a better mood, says Ganesha.



## BROOKE SHIELDS NOW MORE LENIENT WITH HER DAUGHTERS

*Blue Lagoon* actress Brooke Shields has become more lenient with her daughters. The 60-year-old has Rowan, 22, and Grier, 19, with her husband Chris Henchy, and Brooke admits that her parenting style has evolved over the years.

## LENA DUNHAM STEPS BACK FROM ACTING

American writer, director and actor Lena Dunham has decided that she would stay away from acting. She took the decision to focus on her writing and directing following the success of *Girls*, Lena explained.



# Manushi's take on perfect look

**Mumbai:** There is big debate going on now days about the vivid cosmetic treatments taken by the actress to achieve that perfect look and their repercussions after the sudden demise of actress Shefali Jariwala. Actress Manushi Chhillar, who will next be seen in Maalik opposite Rajkumar Rao has now shared her take on the matter.

During an exclusive interaction with this agency, Manushi revealed that contrary to popular opinion, getting cosmetic treatment is not a new phenomenon, it is just that we have access to better technology now.

Manushi said, "I come from a medical background and that's a very big misconception that it is a recent phenomenon, that is not the case. Maybe today we have more advanced technology but all of this has been around for centuries.

According to her, getting such procedures done should be a personal choice and not something that can be forced.

"If you talk about cosmetology, it's a very personal choice. It's not a requirement of a particular profession but if it makes you feel good, you should go ahead and do it – it's your personal choice- no one is allowed to give you an opinion on that and if you don't want to do it then no one should be forcing you to do it," the former Miss World added.

IAN S



## Celina hints at comeback

**Mumbai:** Though actress Celina Jaitley continues to make headlines with her social media posts, she has been away from the silver screen for nearly 13 years. However, it seems she is now ready to break that hiatus, and her fans are thrilled.

For the unversed, Celina was last seen in the 2012 film *Will You Marry Me?* Recently, the actress sparked comeback rumours after dropping a subtle hint on

Instagram. She posted a throwback video along with the caption: "Throwback to the 6th month of my 2nd consecutive TWIN PREGNANCY (7 years ago). Couldn't walk because of Symphysis Pubis Dysfunction (SPD) — Anyone else who had this? #whocanrelate"

Among the comments, one fan asked, "We miss you a lot. When will you come back to Bollywood?" To the delight of her followers, Celina replied, "Soon," followed by a red-rose emoticon. The actress also responded to several other heartfelt messages from fans, expressing gratitude and warmth.

While her one-word response has certainly piqued interest, there has been no official confirmation or announcement regarding her comeback project. Still, the hint has sparked anticipation, and it will be interesting to see what her return to showbiz entails in the coming months.

AGENCIES



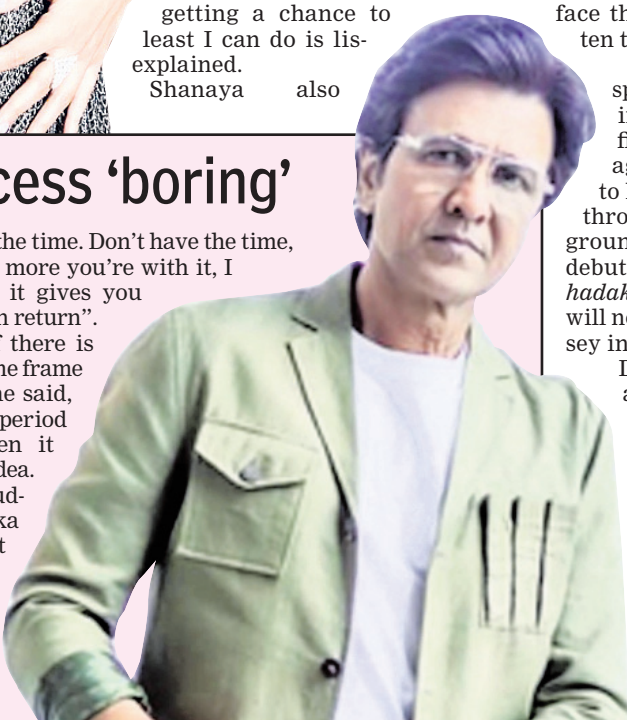
## Shanaya on handling criticism

**Mumbai:** Shanaya Kapoor, daughter of Sanjay and Maheep Kapoor, is all set for her Bollywood debut with *Aankhon Ki Gustaakhiyan*. In a recent interview, Shanaya opened up about dealing with criticism after appearing in her first advertisement. She shared that she took the feedback positively rather than treating it as trolling, acknowledging that learning from audience reactions is part of her job. "I read articles, comments, reviews, and I want to learn from them. I can't take it to heart. I'm getting a chance to face the camera, and the least I can do is listen to my audience," she explained.

Shanaya also

spoke about understanding the uncertainties of the film industry from an early age. Her father advised her to keep working on her skills through workshops and to stay grounded. Originally slated to debut with Shashank Khaitan's *Bedhadak*, which was shelved, Shanaya will now star opposite Vikrant Massey in *Aankhon Ki Gustaakhiyan*. Directed by Santosh Singh and produced by Mansi and Varun Bagla under Zee Studios and Mini Films, the film is adapted from Ruskin Bond's *The Eyes Have It* and tells the story of a visually impaired musician and a theatre artist. It releases in cinemas July 11.

AGENCIES



## Kay Kay calls his acting process 'boring'

**Mumbai:** Actor Kay Kay Menon, who will be seen returning to the fold with the upcoming season of *Special Ops*, has said that his process of approaching a character is 'boring' but works big time for him.

The actor recently told this agency, "It's a very boring process, actually speaking, if you go to see. It's about being with the script. Not necessarily thinking about it or brainstorming about it all the time. Because I seriously believe that the more you're with the script, at the end, it'll give you something very unique. That's what I wait for. It's a magic lamp. Suddenly, it emerges. It's there in your mind. The script is there. I don't really invest in terms of, 'What do I do with this? How do I play this scene?'. No. I wait it to come to me. It's like a good batsman will allow the ball to come to the bat. Like a test match".

He further mentioned, "I keep reading it

whenever I have the time. Don't have the time, don't worry. The more you're with it, I have found that it gives you something back in return".

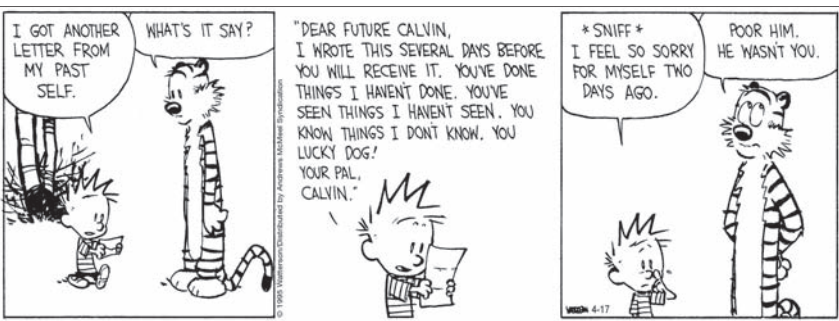
When asked if there is any particular time frame for it to work?, he said, "No, gestation period depends on when it comes. I have no idea. But it comes. Suddenly, it's a Eureka moment. Different people have different processes which they follow, this is mine".

IAN S

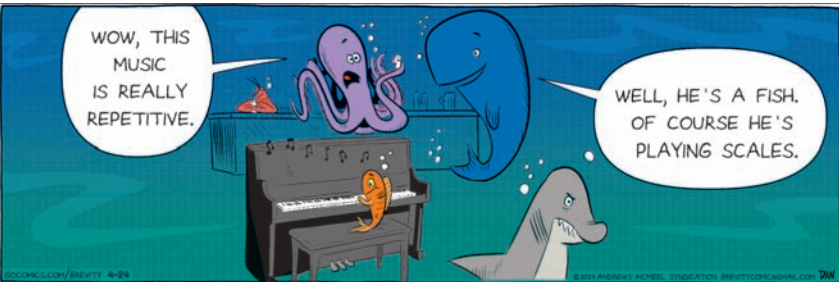
## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

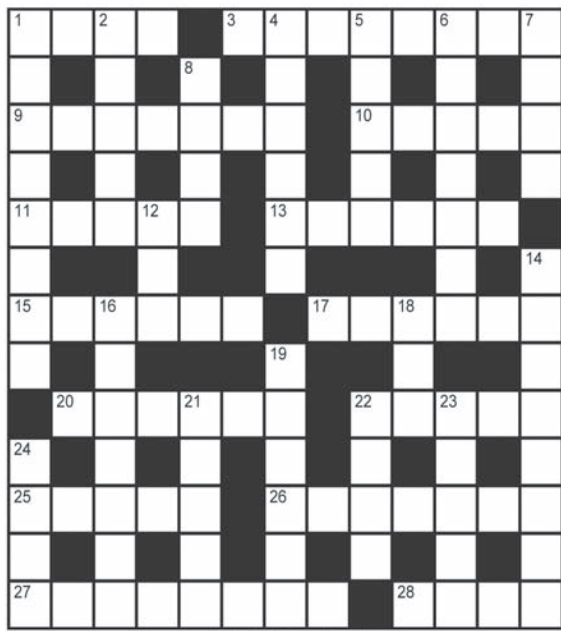


## BREVITY



## FUN post

## CROSSWORD



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### Across

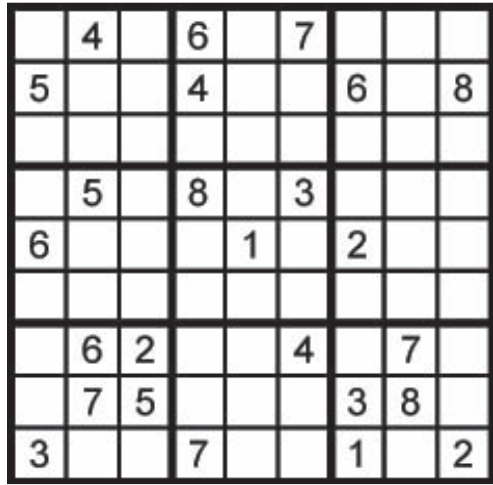
- Undertaking
- Gambling game
- Vitriolic
- Postpone
- Like draft beer (2,3)
- Sharp narrow ridges
- Fix
- Despot
- Between meal bites

### Down

- Embroidery frames
- North Atlantic herring
- Criminal
- Soup scoop
- White heron
- Pressing
- Trade stoppage
- Complete
- Heidi's home
- Crisp fabric
- The Old Sod
- Stinging insect
- Cookbook phrase
- Depots
- Antarctic rock hopper
- Toupee, in slang
- Theatre guides
- Angler's basket
- Subsides
- Not urban
- Metal spike

## SUDOKU

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

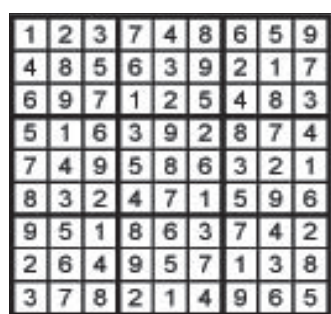


## SOLUTIONS

### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW







# Greener future a shared duty: Guv

Van Mahotsav marked with tree planting drives and green pledges at Raj Bhavan and ULC

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 5:** “Both individuals and institutions must take responsibility for creating a cleaner and greener future for the next generations,” said Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati while leading a plantation drive at Raj Bhavan on the occasion of Van Mahotsav, Saturday.

The event underscored the importance of tree plantation in combating climate change and preserving biodiversity. The Governor’s initiative reflected his continued commitment to environmental protection and sustainable living.

As part of the Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam initiative, the Governor planted a sapling at Shyamananda Park within the Raj Bhavan premises. Officers and staff members also joined the drive, planting several saplings across the campus to mark the occasion.

In line with this green vision, Raj Bhavan has already implemented several eco-friendly measures. Solar power systems have been installed to reduce dependence on conventional energy, and electric vehicles have been inducted into the Governor’s



fleet to curb emissions. These initiatives reflect a strong commitment to sustainability, making Raj Bhavan a model of green governance in the state.

Similarly, the University Law College (ULC), in collaboration with the District Legal Services Authority (DL-SA), Khurda, observed Van Mahotsav Friday under the theme ‘Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam’, aimed at raising awareness about environmental protection through tree plantation.

The event was graced by District Judge Biranchi Narayan Mohanty as chief guest, along with DLSA chairperson Salomi Sahu and other judicial officers. ULC Head Gyanendra Kumar Sahu welcomed the dignitaries and joined them in planting sap-

lings on the college campus.

ULC students participated in the campaign with great enthusiasm, reflecting their strong commitment to environmental conservation. The event also included discussions on the pressing need to combat environmental degradation and the critical role of afforestation in addressing climate change.

“This initiative reminds us that nurturing a tree is like nurturing life itself. Planting a sapling today is a promise for a cleaner, greener tomorrow,” said ULC head Sahu, urging students to embrace sustainable practices.

The programme concluded with a collective pledge to protect the environment and promote green habits in everyday life.

# Odisha launches statewide disinfection campaign

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 5:** In a proactive measure to prevent waterborne and vector-borne diseases, the state government has launched a special state wide disinfection and cleanliness drive, with a focus on high-risk districts.

The initiative is being carried out jointly by the departments of Health and Family Welfare and Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water.

The week-long campaign, continuing till July 11, will cover all villages, health facilities, public spaces, drinking water sources, and commonly used water bodies.

On the first day itself, the state disinfected 55,009 tube



wells, 77,334 dug wells, 98,009 piped water supply points, 4,823 overhead tanks and sumps, and 1,120 other water sources such as ponds and streams.

Additionally, 4,436 health facilities underwent deep clean-

ing, 10,251 OT water samples were tested for quality, and 5,18,413 ORS packets along with 7,47,836 halazone tablets were distributed. Over 12,155 villages and hamlets completed local cleanliness drives on the

same day.

PRI members, village communities, local leaders, and grassroots volunteers are actively participating to protect public health and curb seasonal outbreaks.

To ensure effective execution and monitoring, 18 special drive teams comprising senior officers have been deployed. Each officer is assigned two districts for field-level supervision, focusing on the prevention of acute diarrheal diseases, malaria, and dengue.

A standardised, checklist-based approach is being used to ensure uniform implementation and accountability in public health interventions across all districts, official sources said.

# ECSBC workshop for eastern states

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 5:** A two-day regional workshop on the Energy Conservation and Sustainable Building Code (ECSBC) was held in the City July 3 and 4.

Jointly organised by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Ministry of Power, Government of India and the Chief Electrical Inspector-cum-SDA, Energy department, the event focused on promoting awareness and implementation of ECSBC across eastern states—Odisha, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Bihar. The workshop was attended by Energy department Principal Secretary Vishal Kumar Dev, and Housing & Urban De-



velopment and Commerce & Transport departments Principal Secretary Usha Padhee who addressed the gathering.

BEE director Pravatanalini Samal, along with representatives from the State Designated Agencies (SDAs) of the participating states, was also present.

In his keynote address, Dev stressed the need for an official notification to implement ECSBC and urged state authorities to promote energy efficiency

in the construction sector. He also directed the launch of a pilot ECSBC project in the state. Samal assured full support for implementing ECSBC across the region.

Padhee emphasised that energy conservation is not just a regulatory mandate but a continuous effort to ensure a better future for the next generation. She noted that adopting ECSBC would play a vital role in realising the vision of a developed Odisha and a developed India.

So far, 13 prominent buildings in Odisha, including Madhusudan Academy, Police Commissionerate, Nirman Saudha, and OREDA, have received star ratings for energy performance. These buildings were felicitated at the event.

# Workshop held at Derabis College

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 5:** The IQAC Cell and department of Economics of Derabis College jointly organised a national workshop titled ‘Data to Dissertation with Qualitative Approaches for Student Projects’ July 3 and 4.

The event was graced by Bhabani Sankar Mohanty from the department of Statistics, Central University of Tamil Nadu; Sharada Prasad Sahoo from the department of Business Administration, Berhampur University and Md Imran, ICSSR research fellow from the department of Women’s Studies, Utkal University.

The workshop was inaugurated by Principal Chandra Sekhar Nayak, who also delivered the welcome address, emphasising the significance of such academic initiatives. The event received an overwhelming response from faculty members, students, and staff. IQAC Coordinator Biswajit Sahoo introduced the guests, while head of the Economics department, Sanjay Kumar Mishra, extended a note of gratitude to the organisers and students for ensuring the success of the programme.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, BIMAL KISHORE AGARWAL, S/o-Late Nemichand Agarwal, resident of Plot 17/C, Jaydurga Nagar, Bomikhal, Bhubaneswar, Dist.-Khurda, Odisha, declare by this affidavit No.- CF. No.- 106, dt- 04.07.2025. That now onwards I shall be known as BIMAL KISHOR AGARWAL for all future purposes. BIMAL KISHOR AGARWAL

# Odisha’s culture comes alive in Kremlin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Moscow, July 5:** A nine-day India Fest showcasing diverse cultural traditions of several Indian states opened Saturday next to the Kremlin here.

A lush green island of tropical India has been created with stalls selling Indian food and handicraft as part of the India Fest or Bharat Utsav at the corner of Manezh Square adjacent to the Kremlin wall linking it the Red Square.

It is organised jointly by the Embassy of India here and the department of Tourism of the government of Moscow under the local campaign

‘Moscow Summer’.

Inaugurating the Bharat Utsav, Ambassador Vinay Kumar said several Indian states including Delhi, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Nagaland are presenting their unique culture and traditions through dances and art during the nine-day fest.

Deputy Chairman of the Moscow City Tourism Committee Bulat Nurmukhanov, while speaking at the inaugural event said it was unprecedented that a foreign cultural fest was situated so close to the Kremlin and Red Square.

“This symbolises the depth of India-Russia relationship

and friendship of our people and leadership. This festival will contribute to further cement ties of common Russians with the people of India.”

He noted the number of incoming tourists from India has picked up pre-Covid level; last year 85,000 Indian tourists visited Moscow.

“Day 1 of Bharat Utsav – Festival of India kicks off today at Manezhnaya Square, Moscow with a vibrant showcase of Indian dance, music, and cultural performances, along with interactive masterclasses in yoga, crafts, and Indian classical dance- Bharatnatyam!,” the Indian Embassy

in Moscow said in a post on X.

“Join us today and celebrate India in the heart of Moscow!,” it added.

Member of Parliament from Odisha Sujet Kumar was seen greeting the Muscovites who had gathered in large numbers to watch the inauguration of Bharat Utsav and joined by Russian tourists who had come to see the Kremlin and Lenin’s Mausoleum at the Red Square.

He urged the Russians not to limit their India voyage to Delhi and Taj Mahal but to come to Odisha also “for spiritual enlightenment and historical monuments.”

# War, politics & religion shape urban wildlife

Many people imagine evolution as a slow, natural process far removed from human society. But in cities, evolution is directly influenced by human activity — and cultural forces like religion, politics, and even war are quietly reshaping the genetics of urban wildlife.

A recent global review by evolutionary biologists Marta Szulkin, Colin Garroway, and others examined how cultural practices across continents drive evolutionary changes in city-dwelling animals.

**Culture leaves a mark**

Urban areas dramatically change natural habitats, isolating wildlife populations and creating new environmental pressures. Over time, these changes lead to genetic shifts. For instance, when people divide landscapes — by building roads, walls, or cities — wildlife gets cut off from other groups. These isolated populations then evolve independently, a process known as genetic drift.

One striking example comes from Oviedo, Spain, where religious buildings were walled off between the 12th and 16th centuries. Fire salamanders on either side of the walls became genetically distinct, showing how built structures rooted in culture can lead to evolutionary divergence.



**Religious practices and wildlife**

In many parts of the world, religious customs also affect urban ecosystems. A notable case is prayer animal release, a Buddhist tradition where captive animals are freed to generate good karma. While the practice is spiritually meaningful, it often introduces non-native species into urban habitats. These newcomers may compete with or displace native wildlife and reduce local biodiversity.

Even local animal releases can have negative impacts. Capturing and releasing wildlife diminishes existing populations, lowers genetic diversity, and weakens their ability to adapt to future challenges.

**Political decisions with ecological impact**

Political agendas also leave deep evolutionary footprints. During China’s “Four Pests” campaign in 1958, sparrows were eliminated alongside rats, flies, and mosquitoes. Their absence caused a spike in crop-eating insects, contributing to famine and ecological imbalance.

In the United States, racial politics and urban planning have fragmented habitats. Highways built through marginalized communities have restricted the movement of animals like bobcats and coyotes, leading to genetically distinct urban populations, similar to

the salamanders in Spain.

**Wildlife in times of war**

War is another powerful force. In Ukraine, ongoing conflict has disrupted the migration of greater spotted eagles, forcing them to take longer, energy-draining routes. Local people, facing fuel shortages, have turned to nearby forests for wood, altering those ecosystems and impacting species that rely on them.

Interestingly, post-war landscapes sometimes become wildlife refuges. The demilitarized zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea, heavily guarded since 1953, has evolved into a safe haven for many endangered species. Similarly, the collapse of the Soviet Union led to the creation of the European Green Belt, a 12,500 km wildlife corridor that promotes biodiversity across 24 countries.

**Evolution in human shadows**

These examples show that evolution doesn’t happen in isolation — it happens alongside human stories. Religion, war, and politics alter the environment and, in turn, the path of wildlife evolution. Understanding these connections is crucial to building cities that support both human needs and ecological health.

(The Conversation)

# SAI Angan marks Mother’s Day 2025



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 5:** Celebrating the nurturing spirit, SAI Angan hosted a warm and heartfelt Mother’s Day event Saturday at the Indraprastha Auditorium of SAI International School.

The event welcomed mothers of students from Playgroup to Class III and was organised under the theme, “Love That Listens, Strength That Stands, Celebrating Every Mother’s Quiet Power.”

A key highlight was ‘Mom & Me: The Animated Edition’, where mothers and children

dressed as beloved cartoon characters—ranging from Minions and Spiderman to Krishna-Yashoda, Tom and Jerry, and mermaids. Together, they crafted masks and headgear before joyfully walking down the ramp. The activity fostered emotional bonding through creativity and fun.

“A mother’s love is the basis on which a child develops self-confidence, empathy, and character. At SAI, we cherish this quiet strength that shapes young lives,” said SAI International Education Group chairperson Silpi Sahoo.

WEATHER

Max Temp

30.5°

Min Temp

24.6°

Humidity

95%

Rainfall

12.2mm

CTC

31.6°

23.4°

97%

10.2mm

FORECAST

Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain/thunderstorm

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“Be fearless and resolute, all obstacles will melt away before you”

THE MOTHER



# Politics of Philosophy

The BJP’s constitution (Article 3) says, “Integral Humanism shall be the philosophy of the party.” The party’s membership form has a pledge which members are required to take. The first line of this pledge is: “I believe in Integral Humanism which is the basic philosophy of the Bharatiya Janata Party.” Integral Humanism is a term many Indians are familiar with but few know much about.

Integral Humanism comprises of the text of four lectures given by Deendayal Upadhyaya between 22 and 25 April 1965 in Mumbai. Upadhyaya held a bachelor’s degree in arts and was a journalist at the RSS house publication, Panchjanya. He was about fifty when he gave these lectures and became president of the Jana Sangh a couple of years after he delivered them. Let us go through the message of the BJP’s philosophy and then another time we can analyse it. What follows is a summary of the argument that Upadhyaya presents in his speeches, and it is presented as neutrally as possible.

The cause of the problems facing Bharat is a neglect of national identity. The nation is like an individual and becomes ill if its natural instincts are disregarded or suppressed. Despite independence, India was still undecided about the direction it would take to realise development. Independence is meaningful only if it is the instrument to express culture.

The focus in India was on episodic problems: economic. social and political. This was because India adopted a Western way of looking at economic, social and political doctrines along with Western science. Westernisation was synonymous with progress for Indians. However, the West was unable to reconcile nationalism, democracy and socialism. These were essentially Western ideals and they were all in conflict with one another. These ideologies were not universal and not free from the limitations of the particular people and cultures which gave birth to these isms. Ayurveda said that we need to find local cures to local diseases. Could Bharatiya culture provide a solution for the world?

It is generally thought that Bharatiya culture thinks of salvation of the soul and does not bother about body, mind and intellect but that is untrue. Dharma is given foremost place in Bharatiya culture. Dharma is the natural law that is eternal and universally applicable. Dharma is higher than the executive, legislative and the judiciary, and it is also higher than the people. If out of 450 million Indians, all except one voted for something it would still be wrong if it was against dharma. The people have no right to act against dharma. The words ‘secularism’ and ‘dharma nirpeksh’ used in the Constitution are wrong and bad because dharma is a necessary condition for the State. That which is not based on dharma is unacceptable and therefore secularism was fatally flawed.

National unity is India’s dharma and so diversity was problematic. For this reason India’s Constitution needs to be changed from federal to unitary with no legislative powers for the states, only for the Centre. Conflict between individuals and institutions of society is a sign of decadence and perversion.

The West was wrong to see the adversarial relationship between the individual and the State as the reason for progress. The individual was made up of body, mind, intelligence and soul. A human being is born with a soul. Personality, soul and character are different from one another. The person’s soul is unaffected by personal history. Similarly, national culture is continuously modified by history. Culture includes all the things held as good and commendable, but they do not affect ‘chiti’, the national soul. India’s national soul is fundamental and central. Chiti determines the direction of cultural advance. It filters out what is to be excluded from culture. Societies are animate and a society has a body, mind, intellect and soul. Some Westerners were beginning to accept this truth. One of them, William McDougall said that a group had a mind and a psychology, its own methods of thinking and action just as an individual did.

Societies have an inborn nature that is not based on its history. Events do not affect it. This group nature is like the soul in individuals, which was also unaffected by history. This group mentality is like mob mentality but developed over a longer period. The nation needs both an ideal and a motherland and only then is it a nation. And the State exists to protect this nation, which has an ideal and a motherland.

The difference between India and the West was that we regard the body only as an instrument to achieve dharma. Our efforts were for dharma, artha (money), kama (pleasure) and moksha (liberation). The mistake of the West was to treat the four separately. You could get voting rights but then you didn’t get food. The United States had both political freedom and wealth but it also topped the list in the number of suicide and mental patients. This was puzzling — there was bread and voting rights but no peace or happiness. Sound sleep was scarce in America because they had not thought of the integrated human being. The Americans said “honesty is the best business policy” and the Europeans said “honesty is the best policy,” but the Indians said “honesty is not a policy but a principle.”

This, broadly speaking, is what the BJP says is its basic philosophy. It would be interesting to see how many BJP ministers or members can explain what it means and what it is intended to do. If they believe in it, as they are required to pledge, one would be interested to know what that belief is.

## WISDOM CORNER

“Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive”

DALAI LAMA

“Human greatness does not lie in wealth or power, but in character and goodness. People are just people, and all people have faults and shortcomings, but all of us are born with a basic goodness”

ANNE FRANK

“The first principle is that you must not fool yourself and you are the easiest person to fool”

RICHARD P. FEYNMAN

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1535: English humanist and statesman Thomas More was beheaded for refusing to accept King Henry VIII as head of the Church of England.
- 1907: Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, noted for her intense, brilliantly coloured self-portraits, was born.
- 1942: Anne Frank forced into hiding. Anne Frank and her family went into hiding in Amsterdam on this day in 1942 and lived in a secret annex—an experience documented in her diary, which became a classic of war literature—until their capture on August 4, 1944.
- 1957: Paul McCartney met John Lennon for the first time, at a church event in Liverpool, England, where the latter’s band was performing; the duo would later form the Beatles, perhaps the most influential band in history.

# power post

## FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY

# OCEAN-FOCUSED INNOVATION

In 1960, my father, Jacques Piccard, reached the bottom of the Mariana Trench – nearly 11,000 meters below sea level. The mission was not to make headlines, but to disprove a dangerous misconception. Some experts had claimed that no life could survive in the crushing darkness of the ocean’s depths, and that assumption had led to proposals to use the deep sea as a dumping ground for nuclear waste. But my father and his team encountered living fish – a discovery that prevented a potentially catastrophic mistake.



Bertrand Piccard

CLEAN INNOVATION IN THE OCEAN ECONOMY IS ALREADY GENERATING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES FOR FORWARD-LOOKING COMPANIES AND COUNTRIES

My father’s mission underscores what exploration has always meant to my family. It is not about conquest and domination, but rather curiosity and understanding. Studying nature expands not only the frontiers of our knowledge, but also the scope of our responsibility as planetary stewards.

Today, the ocean is under greater threat than ever, and not only because the United States has just set the stage for private companies to pursue deep-sea mining in international waters. Despite decades of warnings, humanity continues to treat the ocean as an inexhaustible resource and a bottomless dumping ground. We are suffocating it with plastic, heating it with emissions, poisoning it with chemicals, and depleting it by overfishing. But the biggest danger is subtler: As was true in 1960, there is glaring gap between what we know and what we are doing.

While we speak of binding treaties and ambitious targets, our actions remain fragmented and insufficient. Even as the ocean’s degradation accelerates, governments often take refuge behind the complexity of global consensus-building, using it



Despite decades of warnings, humanity continues to treat the ocean as an inexhaustible resource and a bottomless dumping ground

as an excuse for inaction. As a result, fishing vessels engaged in illegal practices, such as destructive bottom trawling in marine protected areas, are still permitted to sell their catch freely in ports and markets. Although regulations exist, enforcement is weak, sporadic, or simply absent. But we cannot afford to wait for the perfect implementation of perfect treaties. Nor should we use others’ failure to address the problem as an excuse for our own inaction. After all, we already know the solutions, and we have the tools to pursue them. What is missing is the will.

At the Solar Impulse Foundation, we have identified more than 1,800 clean and profitable strategies and tools that reconcile economic growth with environmental preservation. Many focus on strengthening regenerative and sustainable practices in the blue economy – from technologies that track illegal fishing and monitor vessel movements from space, to innovations in low-carbon shipping, plastic waste prevention, and regenerative aquaculture.

Our recent Ocean Opportunity Guide, mapping ocean-foc-

used innovation, shows just how broad and mature these solutions are. From bio-enhancing concrete that supports marine life to seaweed-based alternatives to single-use plastic and traceability platforms that eliminate greenwashing in seafood value chains, these are not theoretical models; they are real tools already being deployed around the world. Behind them stands a growing ecosystem of entrepreneurs, scientists, and engineers.

Equally, new financial mechanisms are emerging to bridge the gap between innovation and scale. Blended finance structures, results-based payments, and de-risking vehicles are beginning to unlock capital for nature-based solutions and sustainable aquaculture, particularly in vulnerable coastal economies. These developments show that diverse stakeholders, when aligned, can build an innovation ecosystem capable of solving one of the world’s most complex challenges.

The solutions we highlight are tested, scalable, and economically sound. They do more than protect ecosystems; they also create jobs, stimulate new

markets, and reduce long-term operational risk. Clean innovation in the ocean economy is already generating competitive advantages for forward-looking companies and countries. Financial instruments that de-risk nature-based investments are helping to stabilize coastal economies and expand access to new forms of capital. And circular-economy solutions like seaweed-based packaging and marine-life-friendly infrastructure are not only reducing environmental harm, but also lowering material costs and strengthening supply-chain transparency.

In short, ocean preservation is becoming an engine of industrial renewal and geopolitical resilience. As an economic development strategy, it is both future-proof and inclusive, and it appeals to investors, entrepreneurs, and policymakers alike. But to unlock this potential, we must change the narrative. Sustainability is not about sacrifice; it is about modernization, innovation, and efficiency.

Far from an environmental constraint, ocean preservation is a catalyst for a more dynamic, resilient global economy. As such, it should be recognized as the new frontier of exploration. Our task is to discover not uncharted depths, but better systems. Like the entrepreneurs featured in the Ocean Opportunity Guide, we should all be questioning what we have built and considering how it can be improved. The spirit of exploration must guide us toward regeneration, not exploitation. It must inspire us to stop waiting for others, and to start demonstrating the leadership that this moment demands.

*The writer, a Swiss explorer, is the founder of the Solar Impulse Foundation.*

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## SPECTRUM FOREIGN POLICY

# Adrift & unanchored ambitions

Post-colonial Indian foreign policy and its non-alignment ideals were shaped by the internationalist values of the anti-colonial struggle—opposing all forms of colonial occupation, militarism, apartheid, neo-colonial economic policies, capitalist and imperialist hegemony. The term Non-Alignment was first used at the United Nations by India and Yugoslavia to describe their refusal to align with either side during the Korean War. This position later evolved into a global forum—the foundation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)—where India was not only a founding member but also provided vital leadership in promoting the principles of decolonisation, socialist development, democratisation, peace and solidarity.



Bhabani Shankar Nayak

THE MEANDERING FOREIGN POLICY OF INDIA HAS NOT ONLY WEAKENED ITS POSITION WITHIN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD BUT ALSO ABROAD

NAM was not merely a stance against the bipolarisation of global politics into the imperialist power blocs of the Warsaw Pact and NATO, it was also a strong opposition to all forms of capitalist and colonial hegemony. As a global platform representing more than 55% of the world’s population, NAM did not advocate for ‘neutrality’ in international affairs. Rather, it actively opposed colonial, capitalist, and imperialist structures, processes, and institutions, with the goal of promoting democratic develop-

ment and economic prosperity grounded in peace and active opposition to wars and conflicts. These principles fundamentally shaped Indian foreign policy, aligning moral leadership with national interest in the realm of global politics.

In the post-Cold War period, the NAM continued to advocate for multilateralism, equality, and mutual non-aggression—principles that significantly influenced the foreign policy of the Global South. Within this context, India emerged as a major voice of reason and peace, upholding and advancing these ideals on the global stage.

However, the rise of Hindutva politics and its unflinching adherence to US-led imperialist agendas has significantly undermined the independence of Indian foreign policy and weakened the pursuit of genuine national interest. India’s close association with Israel and its participation in the US-led Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), often described as an emerging “Asian NATO”, have eroded India’s strategic autonomy and national interest. These shifts, presented under the guise of a “multi-alignment” strategy, have diluted the foundational principles of Indian foreign policy and weakened the NAM. In this transition, India’s foreign policy appears to have lost its moral compass—once root-

ed in anti-colonial solidarity, peaceful coexistence, internationalism and global justice—in favour of opportunistic alignments. The current trajectory not only threatens India’s historic diplomatic legacies but also compromises the core values that once defined its role on the global stage.

No other Indian Prime Minister has travelled as extensively as Narendra Modi; however, the frequency of a leader’s foreign visits does not, in itself, define the values or effectiveness of a country’s foreign policy. The meandering foreign policy of India has not only weakened its position within the neighbourhood but also abroad. The “neither here nor there” trajectory of India’s foreign policy reflects an opportunistic shift that undermines the core values of India and its historic legacy of solidarity with anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles. Indian foreign policy often appears erratic and directionless, lacking a coherent vision or guiding principles. As a result, countries that once regarded India as a reliable and guiding partner in the turbulent waters of global politics no longer place the same trust in its current foreign policy.

For the US and Europe, India is too often seen merely as a vast market, and Indians as passive consumers. Historically, imperialist and capitalist

powers have viewed countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East not with dignity or mutual respect, but as sources of natural and human resources to be exploited through strategic and self-serving foreign policies.

India needs to distance itself from American imperialists and neo-colonial Europe, which can never be trusted as reliable partners. As Henry Kissinger famously said, “It may be dangerous to be America’s enemy, but to be America’s friend is fatal.” In this context, the foundational values of the NAM remain more relevant than ever. Reviving these principles is essential to restoring the independence of Indian foreign policy and promoting a more democratic and equitable world order—one in which peace and prosperity are shared, not dictated by hegemonic powers driven by American, European, capitalist, and corporate interests.

India must pursue an independent and non-aligned foreign policy that aligns with the interests of its own people as well as those across the globe, in order to reclaim its glory and moral compass. Let Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is a family) blossom again in India.

*The writer teaches at the London Metropolitan University.*

## 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)

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## Multi-front threats

Sir, This refers to “Chinese Intel kept Pak ahead of India,” **Orissa POST**, July 5. Operation Sindoor, conducted against Pakistan, exposed the evolving multi-front threats facing India. While the immediate confrontation was with Pakistan, the operation revealed the deeper strategic collusion involving China and Turkey. Though the Chinese PLA did not engage directly alongside Pakistani forces, credible intelligence indicated logistical and technological support, with Chinese-supplied equipment and surveillance aiding Pakistan. Moreover, the operation served as a testing ground for Chinese ammunition, indirectly making it a laboratory for Beijing’s military ambitions. Turkey’s involvement, through supply of drones and tactical support, further internationalized the conflict. Ankara’s interest in South Asian geopolitics, motivated by its ideological alignments, adds another dimension to India’s external threat perception. A growing concern now looms in the east. Bangladesh, once a close partner, is showing signs of strategic alignment with the China-Pakistan axis. Economic investments from Beijing and increasing military cooperation are pulling Dhaka into a new orbit, complicating India’s regional calculus. India can no longer afford to prepare for linear threats.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

## Zoonotic diseases

Sir, The first rabies vaccine was administered by French scientist Louis Pasteur on 6 July, 1885. This brought about a heightened awareness about zoonotic diseases or diseases that are transmitted between animals and human beings. Besides direct contact, insects, ticks and contaminated food can also act as vectors. Anthrax, COVID-19, rabies, brucellosis and bird flu are well known zoonotic infections. While all zoonotic diseases are not transmitted by vectors, a few vector-borne diseases are also zoonotic: malaria and dengue are classic examples. Poor sanitation and hygiene, inadequate food safety measures, and animal habitat encroachment by humans have contributed to the proliferation of zoonotic diseases. Those who are at a higher risk of contracting zoonotic diseases, especially farmers, should be made aware of the risk factors. World Zoonoses Day falls on 6 July.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA



FACTIONALISM, NARRATIVE CLARITY, CULTURAL DISCONNECT

# Challenges aplenty for new Bengal BJP chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, July 5:** With the 2026 West Bengal Assembly polls on the horizon, the BJP has placed its bet on soft-spoken RSS loyalist and party veteran Samik Bhattacharya to steer its troubled state unit out of a prolonged phase of internal discord, grassroots disarray and “cultural disconnect” with the Bengali electorate.

But as Bhattacharya, a quintessential Bengali ‘bhadralok’ takes charge, a key challenge before him is whether the state BJP under his leadership pursues a moderate, inclusive Hindutva line or continues with the combative and hardline posture championed by leaders like Suwendu Adhikari.

A Rajya Sabha MP and one of the BJP’s most articulate Bengali faces, Bhattacharya was recently unanimously elected president of the West Bengal unit, a move seen as an attempt to calm factional storms, revive a demoralised cadre and address the growing perception that it lacks cultural connect and ideological clarity in the state.

“The party is above individuals. My focus will be on strengthening the organisation and outreach at all levels. West Bengal deserves a better alternative to the politics of violence, corruption and commu-



SAMIK BHATTACHARYA | WEST BENGAL BJP PRESIDENT

nalism pursued by the TMC,” Bhattacharya told PTI after taking charge.

Rhetoric alone, however, will likely not suffice, feel political analysts. The BJP in Bengal is confronting serious challenges, both internal and electoral.

In a marked shift in tone, Bhattacharya has sought to position the BJP as an inclusive force, distinct from the strident posturing of some of its leaders.

“The BJP’s fight is not against the state’s minorities. Young boys in minority households who are roaming around with stones – we want to snatch away the stones and hand them books. We want to take away

**I am appealing to the educated Muslim society to throw away this government. In the next 20 years, there will be no change in power at the Centre as the people of this country are with PM Modi. A BJP government in the state will propel your growth**

SAMIK BHATTACHARYA | WEST BENGAL BJP PRESIDENT

their swords and give them pens instead. We envision a Bengal where a Durga Puja procession and a Muharram rally are held side by side without conflict,” he had said recently.

The remarks appear to be part of a conscious attempt to win over middle-class urban voters, liberal professionals, and the youth – groups that contributed to the BJP’s 2021 Assembly poll setback.

A BJP leader said the party must reflect Bengal’s unique political culture.

“We cannot grow in Bengal by alienating communities. If we want middle-class Bengali Hindus, liberal professionals and even silent first-time voters to back us, we have to show we can take along everybody and speak the language of inclusivity,” he said. But, not everyone in the party is con-

vinced. “Bengal’s voters want clarity. If we confuse them with half-hearted messaging, we lose core and swing voters,” said a leader close to Adhikari, the face of the party’s aggressive Hindutva plank and Leader of the Opposition.

The minorities comprise nearly 30 per cent of the electorate and are a deciding factor in almost 120 of the 294 assembly seats.

Political analyst Maidul Islam told PTI that Bhattacharya’s message signals a shift in the BJP’s positioning in Bengal.

“What Bhattacharya said – the BJP is not the enemy of minorities and wants to protect pluralism – is something new for the Bengal unit, and in sharp contrast to what Adhikari and others have said. Whether Bhattacharya can make moderate Hindutva the party’s dominant line remains to be seen,” Islam said.

The TMC has long accused the BJP of promoting a ‘Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan’ model, out of sync with Bengal’s cultural ethos. Former state BJP president Sukanta Majumdar, however, dismissed such criticism.

“No one has a monopoly on Bengali culture. The BJP represents every Bengali who wants development and dignity,” he asserted. The TMC, meanwhile, remains unconvinced. “The BJP is still driv-

en by RSS’ Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan ideology. Samik Bhattacharya cannot camouflage it,” TMC leader Kunal Ghosh said.

In the 2021 polls, the TMC used Bengali sub-nationalism to counter the BJP’s Hindutva narrative, branding it a party of outsiders.

“Bhattacharya’s soft-spoken, scholarly image, fluency in Bengali literature and RSS background position him as a bridge between the ideological core and the broader Bengali electorate. However, reclaiming cultural legitimacy for a party often branded an ‘outsider force’ won’t be easy,” said Islam.

Another critical issue Bhattacharya faces is infighting. Since the 2021 Assembly poll defeat, factionalism between the BJP’s old guards and defectors from the TMC has crippled organisational unity.

“He’s not seen as belonging to any camp. That’s why Delhi picked him. But to bring everyone together, Samik da will have to assert himself fast. Otherwise, he will be reduced to a rubber stamp,” a senior state BJP leader said. In his first address as state chief, Bhattacharya had acknowledged the rift and called for unity.

Political analyst Biswanath Chakraborty believes Bhattacharya’s real test lies in energising the party base.

# Manipur to shut relief camps by Dec, begins phased resettlement



AGENCIES

**Imphal, July 5:** In a move towards restoring normalcy, the Manipur government has announced plans to close down nearly 350 relief camps housing Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) by December 2025.

These camps have been sheltering people uprooted by the ethnic violence that broke out in May 2023, displacing over 62,000 individuals.

The announcement was made by Chief Secretary PK Singh as he said the state was now transitioning from emergency relief to long-term rehabilitation, with a structured three-phase plan already underway.

According to Singh, the number of displaced people has dropped to around 57,000, and in districts like Churachandpur and Kangpokpi, families have begun returning to their homes.

The government aims to complete the first phase of the resettlement plan this month, with the second and third phases scheduled for October and December, respectively.

Families unable to return to their original homes by the 2025 deadline will be provided with newly constructed prefabricated housing units. Construction of an additional 1,000 such units is in progress to accommodate those still unable to safely resettle in their villages.

Financial assistance will be provided under three cat-

egories. The first group comprising around 7,000 families whose homes were destroyed during the violence will receive approximately Rs 1.3 lakh each to rebuild.

A second group of 7,000 people, who fled their homes though their properties were partially damaged, will also receive aid to restart their lives.

The third group, estimated between 8,000 and 10,000 individuals, will be given prefabricated shelters if they cannot return to their original locations by the end of this year.

The chief secretary said the rehabilitation effort is being undertaken in close coordination with the Central government.

He also highlighted ongoing efforts to reopen major highways across the state, a crucial step towards restoring connectivity and public movement.

“With the current pace of progress, we are optimistic that people will soon be able to move freely across major roads in the state,” he said.

On the security front, Singh reassured that state police and Central forces have been adequately deployed in vulnerable areas, especially agricultural zones.

“There is a visible improvement. I appeal to all civil society organisations from both sides to maintain calm. Isolated incidents may happen due to disruptive elements, but overall, the situation is steadily improving,” he added.

# 10 MT of organic black pepper shipped from Meghalaya to Mumbai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Zikzak (Meghalaya), July 5:** Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma Saturday said 10 metric tonnes of organic black pepper from South Garo Hills region were shipped out to Mumbai, the second big export from the area after an 11 MT of outbound consignment in 2023.

Mumbai-based Everest Spices has procured the organic black pepper from here, he said.

Taking to X, Sangma said, “10 MT of organic black pepper facilitated by the Kerupara and Dingampara Integrated Village Cooperative Societies (IVCS) under Zikzak block, South West Garo Hills, shipped to Mumbai, the area’s second big export after 2023’s 11-tonne success.”

Backed by the Meghalaya Basin Management Agency and Meghalaya Livelihoods and Access to Markets Project, the local co-operatives are turning Garo’s organic black gold into a big opportunity, he said.

The growing demand for Meghalaya’s organic spices is

encouraging more farmers to tap into its potential, the chief minister said.

The Meghalaya Basin Management Agency and the Meghalaya Livelihoods and Access to Markets Project support grassroots cooperatives in turning small-hold farming into a scalable and market-driven enterprise.

The state currently produces over 22,000 metric tonnes of spices annually, including turmeric, ginger, black pepper, and bay leaf, an official said.

With organic practices gaining momentum, the state is emerging as a key player in India’s premium spice segment.

“This is a proud moment for our farmers and a leap forward towards sustainable agri-business,” said the official from South West Garo Hills.

It shows that even remote villages can lead in quality, sustainability, and market access, he said, adding that farmers across the Garo Hills are embracing organic farming and collective marketing, transforming the region into a thriving agri-export hub.



Members of Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist) in a scuffle with police personnel during a protest against the alleged rape of a student at South Calcutta Law College, in Kolkata, Saturday

PTI Photo

# Mizoram sees fresh influx of Myanmarese refugees

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Aizawl, July 5:** A fresh influx of Myanmarese people was reported from Mizoram’s Champhai district Saturday after a fierce gunfight broke out between two warring outfits in the neighbouring country, officials said.

Gunfights reportedly took place between two pro-democratic forces, Chin National Defence Force (CNDF) and Chinland Defence Force (CDF)-Hualngoram, at Khawmawi, forcing locals to flee to Zokhawthar village in Champhai.

Khawmawi in Myanmar

and Zokhawthar in India are separated by the Tiau river. The number of people fleeing the gunfight is yet to be ascertained, officials said.

The CNDF and CDF operate in the Chin state, and cadres of the two groups belong to the same Zo ethnic tribes. The two

outfits have been fighting over the last few days over control of the area, they said.

A leader of the Young Mizo Association (YMA) in Zokhawthar said the gunfight has created tension in the border village.

He said the YMA has urged both groups not to point their

arms towards Zokhawthar, as bullets have hit some houses in the village. However, no casualties have been reported so far in the border village, he said.

One person drowned in the Tiau river while fleeing to India, and YMA volunteers were searching for him, he added.

# Tipra Motha leader begins foot march to Delhi over infiltration

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Agartala, July 5:** A leader of the Tipra Motha Party (TMP) Saturday began a long march to New Delhi to urge the Centre to tackle the infiltration issue in Tripura.

The TMP is an ally of the BJP-led coalition government. TMP leader David Murasing said he began the 2,500 km journey on foot from Agartala to New Delhi as a citizen of Tripura to highlight his concern over infiltration.

Murasing is also the zonal chairman of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) of Bichandraman in South Tripura district. “Infiltration has been a serious issue in Tripura for 75 years. This is not only Tripura’s problem but also a national issue. If the demography of the northeastern state changes further due to infiltration, the country will also face serious challenges,” he told reporters.

“My mission is to reach New Delhi’s Jantar Mantar and submit a memorandum to Delhi seeking stringent measures to stop infiltration,” he said.



Murasing said the Centre had promised to fulfil the Tiprasa accord signed between the Central government and the state government (in March 2014) within six months. It has been one year now with no visible outcome forthcoming.

“The Centre might have forgotten the problem of Tripura because of its small geographical area. We are also citizens of the Republic of India. Our problem is the country’s problem,” Murasing said.

“Infiltration is not all about the possibility of demographic change. It also poses a serious

**The Centre might have forgotten the problem of Tripura because of its small geographical area. We are also citizens of the Republic of India. Our problem is the country’s problem**

DAVID MURASING | TMP LEADER

security challenge to our nation. We want the Centre to handle the infiltration issue with an iron hand to secure our safety and security,” he said.

Asserting that TMP supreme Pradyot Kishore Manikya has lent full support to his long march, Murasing said he met Bubagra (King) and sought his blessings.

“Maharaja has full support for my mission. He blessed me. I embarked on a mission as a citizen of the state, not an active member of the party,” he said.

Earlier, Chief Minister Manik Saha said that the northeastern state is no longer a ‘safe zone’ for infiltration due to proactive measures to prevent infiltration from across the border.

# ‘Ulto Rath’ festival celebrated across Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, July 5:** Devotees pulled the chariots of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra Saturday as the ‘Ulto Rath’ (Return Car) festival was celebrated across West Bengal with pomp and gaiety.

They congregated in Digha, the coastal town in Purba Medinipur district, where the Rath Yatra of the newly constructed Jagannath temple was celebrated for the first time.

In Digha, around 200 km away from Kolkata, the chariots were pulled from ‘Masir Bari’ (the place of aunt of three sibling deities) to the new Jagannath temple, covering a 750-metre route.

Thousands of people gathered along Park Street-JL Nehru Road crossing, Moulaali, Park Circus 7 Point, Shakespeare, Sarani, Hungerford Street, ISKCON temple in Kolkata as the devotees danced to the beat of ‘Hare Krishna’ and ‘Joy Jagannath’ when chariots were being pulled.

People made a scramble to touch the ropes to pull chariots of the three deities as the ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Conscious-



ness)-organised religious procession went through key thoroughfares of central and south Kolkata before reaching the Radha Krishna temple on Albert Road.

Return Car procession was also taken out at Mayapur in Nadia district, the global headquarters of ISKCON, where thousands of devotees turned up.

Chariots were also pulled in different parts of the metropolis and elsewhere in the state by religious organisations, and also many households where the idols are worshipped traditionally for years.

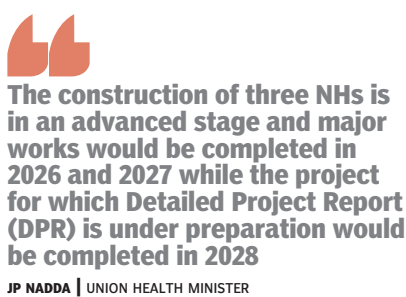
Amid beats of drums and cymbals, flower-decked chariots were also taken out in Mahesh (Hooghly district), Mahisadal (Purba Medinipur),

Rathtala in Belgharia (North 24 Parganas), Baghbazar (Kolkata), Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, English Bazar (Malda) and other parts of the state on the occasion of Ulto Rath, being held nine days after Rath Yatra June 27.

Fairs and exhibitions on roadsides and grounds in urban and rural areas attracted large crowds, including children.



**Sambhal (UP):** Eight people died while two others were injured after their SUV rammed into a wall in Sambhal district of Uttar Pradesh, police said Saturday. The accident occurred when a groom and nine others, who were accompanying him, were en route from Har Govindpur village to Sirtoul in Budaun, Additional Superintendent of Police (South) Anukriti Sharma said.



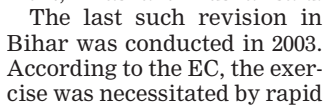
The high priests of Takht Sri Patna Sahib in Bihar Saturday pronounced Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal 'tankhaiya' (guilty of religious punishment) for failing to appear before it and ignoring its directions. Takht Sri Patna Sahib is one of the five temporal seats of Sikhism. The Akal Takht in Amritsar is the supreme temporal seat



The ED filed a criminal case against Bhandari and others under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in February 2017, taking cognisance of an I-T department chargesheet filed against him under the anti-black money law of 2015.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

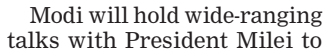


Constitution and Section 16 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, in carrying out the revision.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

This is the first Indian bilat-



In his departure statement, the prime minister said that Argentina is a key economic partner in Latin America and a close collaborator in the G20 and that he looked forward to discussions with President Javier Milei, whom he had met last year.

*The Department of Consumer Affairs and the Bureau of Indian Standards called for strict enforcement against the manufacture or sale of helmets without BIS certification.*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The department also called for strict enforcement against the manufacture or sale of helmets without BIS certification.



"The Department has ob-

served that many helmets sold on roadsides lack the

**New Delhi:** The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested two key men allegedly involved in trafficking of humans to the US via the infamous 'dunkri' route, officials said Saturday. The arrests came after searches at a location each in Himachal Pradesh and Delhi, they said. The accused, Sunny alias Sunny Donker of Dharanashala of Kangra district in HP, and Shubham Sandhal alias Deep Hundi of Ropar, Punjab, who was living in Outer Delhi's Peeragarhi, were arrested on Friday, the NIA said in a statement. Both, the probe agency said, were associates of Gagandeep Singh alias Goldy, who was arrested in March. Gagandeep was arrested on a complaint of a victim, who was trafficked to the US using the dunkri route and was deported to India this February.

**Bangalore.** Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre has suspended two officials for negligence and dereliction of duty in connection with the 'unnatural death' of five tigers in the Male Mahadeshwara(MM) Hills, officials said. The minister has also recommended the suspension of Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF) Y Chakrapani in connection with the issue, they said. A female tigress and her four cubs were found dead in the Huguam range of the MM Hills June 26. Khandre also recommended departmental inquiries into their conduct. Following the incident, authorities arrested three individuals, including the cow's owner, who allegedly poisoned the cow's carcass, suspected of causing the tigers' deaths.

In one Delhi operation, over 2,500 non-compliant helmets were seized from 9 manufacturers with expired or cancelled licences.

BIS branch offices were instructed to engage continuously with district administrations and police departments to support this campaign.



of the day quote

Governments at the Centre and in the state have put the country up for sale. They have now hatched a conspiracy to deprive the poor of their voting rights with the Bihar assembly elections less than three months away

RABRI DEVI | FORMER CHIEF MINISTER, BIHAR

We don't want quantity, we want quality. Our youngsters want to be millionaires overnight and blame the government when they fail. Without consistency, hard work, and humility, no business or movement can survive

JACOB ZHIMOMI | NAGALAND MINISTER FOR COOPERATION

Ladli Behna Yojana beneficiaries would receive ₹1,250 plus an additional ₹250 on Raksha Bandhan. After Diwali, the monthly benefit would be hiked to ₹1,500

MOHAN YADAV | CHIEF MINISTER, MADHYA PRADESH

POST OF THE DAY

Govt employees and politicians get free healthcare. Poor people get Free ₹5 Lakh health coverage. Average Indians buy Insurance to protect themselves in private hospitals and pay 18% GST on that. Incredible India.

@RajeshwariRW

SHORT TAKES

Thai Lion flight to Bangkok cancelled

**Kolkata:** A Thai Lion Air flight to Bangkok from Kolkata's Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport was cancelled early Saturday due to a "technical snag", officials said. The flight with 130 passengers and seven crew on board returned to the parking bay after it was pushed back for taxing to the runway due to a "technical snag", officials said. Later, the flight was cancelled for the day. According to Airports Authority of India (AAI) officials at the airport the aircraft landed at Kolkata around 1.23 am Saturday and was supposed to take off at 2.35 am for travelling to the Bangkok Don Mueang International Airport (DMK).

1 killed, another hurt in bomb explosion

**Kolkata:** One person was killed and another was injured in a crude bomb explosion in West Bengal's Purba Bardhaman district, police said Saturday. The incident took place around 8.30 pm in Rajoa village under Katwa sub-division triggering panic among residents. The blast was so intense that it blew off the tin roof of the house where bomb-making was going on, they said. Locals said the explosion occurred in an abandoned house, often frequented by anti-social elements, allegedly for manufacturing crude bombs.

Naxalite killed in Bijapur encounter

**Bijapur:** A Naxalite was killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, police said Saturday. A gunfight broke out in the Indravati National Park area when a joint team of security forces was out on an anti-Naxal operation, an official said.



Piyush Goyal can beat his chest all he wants, mark my words, Modi will meekly bow to the Trump tariff deadline

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

PNB-FRAUD CASE

Nirav Modi's brother held in US

Nehal Modi (46) is an accused in the alleged ₹13,000 crore Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud -- one of the biggest banking scams -- reportedly orchestrated by him, Nirav Modi and their uncle, Mehul Choksi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 5:** US authorities have arrested fugitive diamondaire Nirav Modi's younger brother, Nehal Modi, following extradition requests from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), officials said Saturday.

Nehal Modi, who is the subject of a Red Notice issued by the Interpol, was taken into custody Friday, US officials told Indian authorities.

The next hearing in the matter is scheduled for July 17, during which Nehal Modi, a Belgian national, may seek bail -- a move expected to be contested by US prosecutors, the officials said.

The arrest stems from a joint extradition plea submitted by the ED and the CBI.



The proceedings, led by US federal prosecutors, are based on two charges -- one count of money laundering under section 3 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PM-LA) and one count of criminal conspiracy under sections 120B (criminal conspiracy) and 201 (disappearance of evidence) of the Indian Penal Code.

Nehal Modi (46) is an accused in the alleged ₹13,000 crore Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud -- one of the biggest banking scams -- reportedly orchestrated by him, Nirav Modi and their uncle, Mehul Choksi.

Nirav Modi had, through his companies, siphoned off approximately ₹6,498 crore from the PNB by issuing fraudulent letters of undertaking (LoUs), while the remaining amount was misappropriated by his uncle in a similar modus operandi, according to the CBI chargesheet.

Born and raised in Belgium's Antwerp and fluent in English, Gujarati and Hindi, Nehal Deepak Modi is wanted in India for allegedly laundering proceeds of crime on behalf of his brother, Nirav Modi, who remains incarcerated in a London prison, facing extradition proceedings to India.

It is alleged that Nehal Modi played a pivotal role in concealing and transferring large sums of illicit money through a labyrinthine web of shell companies and offshore transactions, in violation of Indian financial laws.

He has been named as an accused in separate chargesheets filed by both the ED and the CBI.

In the ED chargesheet, Nehal Modi has been charged with destruction of evidence and "knowingly and intentionally" assisting Nirav Modi in his alleged illegal acts, the officials said.

The ED has claimed that after the PNB scandal came to light, Nehal Modi, along with Nirav Modi's close confidante and executive Mihir R Bhansali, "transported 50 kg of gold and substantial cash from Dubai", and instructed dummy directors not to reveal his identity to investigating authorities.



Police use water cannon to disperse Congress workers during a protest demanding the resignation of Kerala Health Minister Veena George over the death of a woman in a building collapse at Kottayam Medical College, in Thiruvananthapuram, Saturday

BIHAR LAW AND ORDER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 5:** The Congress Saturday alleged that the BJP-JDU government in Bihar has failed to maintain law and order in the state and demanded that a special Assembly session be convened to discuss this as well as the issue of intensive revision of electoral rolls.

The party also alleged that special intensive revision is a "deliberate conspiracy" to help the BJP win the elections.

Assembly elections are due in Bihar in the next few months and the opposition parties have strongly objected to the intensive revision process.

Cong demands special Assembly session

Addressing a press conference at the AICC headquarters at Indira Bhawan, Congress leader Akhilesh Prasad Singh claimed that there was a time when entire Bihar was known as a land of peace, harmony, knowledge, and penance, but today, but not any more as bullets of goons were spewing fire.

He said on one hand the ADG, Law and Order, says that increasing attacks on the police are a matter of concern and on the other hand, criminals fire bullets near the residence of Tejashwi Yadav in Patna, but are still at large.

KANGANA ON WAY TO MANDI TO VISIT RAIN-RAVAGED AREAS

BJP's Mandi MP Kangana Ranaut Saturday was on her way to the flash floods- and landslide-hit areas of the Himachal Pradesh district, a day after the Congress took potshots that the state party leadership was riled by her absence. As many as 14 people have died and search is on for 31 missing people, as cloudbursts, flash floods and landslides caused massive destruction in Mandi district Tuesday



NATIONAL HERALD CASE 'AICC attempted to revive AJL'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 5:** Senior advocate RS Cheema, representing Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Saturday argued that the AICC was not trying to sell the assets of Associated Journals Limited (AJL) but rather attempting to save the institution which was part of the freedom movement.

Cheema, in his arguments before Special Judge Vishal Gogne, quoted Mark Twain and Urdu poet Wasim Barelvi to drive home his rebuttal against the Enforcement Directorate's (EDs) allegations.

The federal agency has accused Sonia and Rahul Gandhi, late Congress leaders Motilal Vora and Oscar Fernandes, as well as Suman Dubey, Sam Pitroda, and a private company, Young Indian, of conspiracy and money laundering over the fraudulent takeover of properties valued at over ₹2,000 crore belonging to Associated Journals Limited (AJL), which published the National Herald newspaper.

"Can my friend (ED counsel) tell me why they were shy about placing the Memorandum of Association (MoA) of AJL? AJL was established in 1937 by Jawaharlal Nehru, J.B. Kripalani, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, and others," he said.

36 Amarnath pilgrims hurt after 5 buses collide in J&K

The buses were part of a convoy headed for the Pahalgam base camp of the pilgrimage in south Kashmir from Jammu's Bhagwati Nagar. All the injured persons rejoined the yatra after receiving treatment at the Ramban district hospital

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ramban/Jammu, July 5:** At least 36 Amarnath pilgrims, hailing from different states, suffered minor injuries when five buses slammed into each other in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district Saturday, officials said.

The buses were part of a convoy headed for the Pahalgam base camp of the pilgrimage in south Kashmir from Jammu's Bhagwati Nagar. All the injured persons rejoined the yatra after receiving treatment at the Ramban district hospital.

The accident took place near Chanderkote, along the Jammu-Srinagar national highway, at around 8 am due to the failure of the brakes of one of the buses in the convoy, the officials said. "There was a minor accident at Chanderkote when a Pahalgam-bound vehicle collided with other stationary vehicles due to brake failure," Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said in a statement. He said 36 pilgrims received minor injuries in the incident. They were discharged after preliminary treatment and resumed the journey towards the 3,880-metre cave shrine in the south Kashmir Himalayas, the statement said.

"By the blessings of Lord Shiva, all the devotees are safe," the LG said.

"Our priority is the safety of all pilgrims. Directed the officials concerned to implement comprehensive safety measures for vehicles of pilgrims undertaking Amarnath Yatra and ensure safety checks at all key locations and uninterrupted availability of food and medicines at Yatra route," he added. Earlier, the LG spoke to Jammu Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar and Ramban Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Alyas Khan and asked them to provide all necessary assistance to the injured pilgrims.



mu Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar and Ramban Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Alyas Khan and asked them to provide all necessary assistance to the injured pilgrims.

Sinha had asked senior officials to remain on alert and ensure all necessary arrangements for a hassle-free journey of the pilgrims, a spokesperson of the Raj Bhavan said.

The LG applauded the swift response of the district administration and health officials.

Earlier, the Ramban deputy commissioner said the last vehicle of the Pahalgam convoy lost control and hit stranded vehicles at the Chanderkote Langer site, damaging four vehicles and causing minor injuries to 36 pilgrims.

He said the government officials already present at the site rushed the injured to the district hospital.

Several senior police officers visited the hospital to monitor the treatment of the injured and directed the chief medical officer to ensure the best care.

"The yatris were later shifted to other vehicles for their onward journey," the deputy commissioner said.

Union minister Jitendra Singh said he spoke to the Ramban deputy commissioner after learning about the road accident.

Assembly elections are due in Bihar in the next few months and the opposition parties have strongly objected to the intensive revision process

killed. This is a matter of great concern, he noted.

"Murders are happening daily in almost all districts



Referring to Friday's murder of prominent businessman Gopal Khemka, Singh said a few years ago his son was also

India's first cooperative univ will curb nepotism, boost training: Shah

Shah was addressing a gathering at the campus of Anand Agriculture University after laying the foundation stone of Tribhuvan Sahkari University (TSU) that will be built on a 125-acre plot at a cost of ₹500 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Anand (Gujarat), July 5:** Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah Saturday said India's first national university for cooperatives coming up in Gujarat will work to end nepotism as only persons trained by it will get jobs in this sector in the future.

Shah was addressing a gathering at the campus of Anand Agriculture University after laying the foundation stone of Tribhuvan Sahkari University (TSU) that will be built on a 125-acre plot at a cost of ₹500 crore

ering at the campus of Anand Agriculture University after laying the foundation stone of Tribhuvan Sahkari University (TSU) that will be built on a 125-acre plot at a cost of ₹500 crore

"The upcoming university will work to address the allegations of nepotism in this sector. Unlike the past, when people were first hired and then trained, only trained people will get jobs in this sector in the future," Shah said.

The Union minister said the university will also address the existing "weaknesses" in this sector and fill the training gaps



in the domain that engages every fourth person of the country, or about 30 crore people.

He said the cooperatives sector in India has no dearth of talent and what the country requires now is trained manpower.

TSU will fill this "mega vacuum" which has stopped the progress of this sector, he said.

Shah also sought to address criticism from some quarters about the upcoming university not being named after Dr Verghese Kurien, the father of the White Revolution, saying his role in the cooperatives sector

The university has been named after the late Tribhuvandas Keshubhai Patel, one of the pioneers of the cooperative movement in India who was instrumental in laying the foundation of Amul

can never be denied.

"Patel sahab (Tribhuvan Patel) enlightened and nurtured the cooperative movement... it was his vision that the sector is standing strong today," he said.

Shah said it was Patel who sent Kurien to study in the Netherlands, adding those "who say that Kurien's contribution to this sector was not being acknowledged were the ones who did nothing to celebrate his birth centenary".

It is Amul that is celebrating his legacy, he said. Congress leaders who raised such questions do not know that Patel was from their party. The BJP did not even exist then, the minister said.

Shah said the TSU will not only produce a talented workforce but also leaders like Patel for the cooperatives sector. It will also work to frame policies, undertake research and development initiatives and standardise the course material to be taught at various educational forums for cooperatives.

The minister said the university will prepare experts who will run the proposed cooperatives like taxi services, startups and digital platforms.



of the day

quote

Continued peace, stability and growth in ASEAN will transform our entire region – and this will translate to better jobs, opportunities and living standards for all our peoples

**LAWRENCE WONG** | SINGAPORE PRIME MINISTER



It is factually not correct that Hafiz Saeed is a free man; he is in the custody of the Pakistani state

**BILAWAL BHUTTO ZARDARI** | PAKISTAN'S FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER



This (mob violence) is not a reflection of public distrust of the judiciary, rather an expression of anger accumulated in the past 17 years (against the past regime)

**MOHAMMAD ASADUZZAMAN** | BANGLADESH'S ATTORNEY GENERAL

SHORT TAKES

Struck Russian

airbase: Ukraine

**Kyiv:** Ukraine said it struck a Russian airbase Saturday, while Russia continued to pound Ukraine with hundreds of drones overnight as part of a stepped-up bombing campaign that has further dashed hopes for a breakthrough in efforts to end the more than 3-year-old war. Ukraine's military General Staff said Saturday that Ukrainian forces had struck the Borisoglebsk airbase in Russia's Voronezh region, describing it as the "home base" of Russia's Su-34, Su-35S and Su-30SM fighter jets. Writing on Facebook, the General Staff said it hit a depot containing glide bombs, a training aircraft and "possibly other aircraft." Russian officials did not immediately comment on the attack. Such attacks on Russian airbases aim to dent Russia's military capability and demonstrate Ukraine's capability to hit high-value targets in Russia. Last month, Ukraine said it destroyed more than 40 Russian planes stationed at several airfields deep in Russia's territory in a surprise drone attack. Russia fired 322 drones and decoys into Ukraine overnight into Saturday, Ukraine's air force said. Of these, 157 were shot down and 135 were lost, likely having been electronically jammed.

Karachi building

collapse toll 19

**Karachi:** The death toll from a collapsed old residential building in Karachi's Lyari area climbed to 19 Saturday, with rescue teams fearing the casualties could rise further as an operation to clear the debris is still underway. Deputy Commissioner South Javed Leghari said that the rescue teams had recovered 19 bodies so far while six injured were being treated in hospital. "Unfortunately, rescue teams who have been working since yesterday afternoon fear there are more bodies under the debris and rubble of the building and the casualties will increase," he said. The five-storey building in the Baghdadi area of Lyari collapsed on Friday. Initially Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab told the media at the incident site that seven bodies had been recovered and the injured were moved to hospital. The building was on the list of dilapidated buildings in the old areas of Karachi. Leghari said there were 22 old buildings out of which 16 had been vacated by the authorities but six still remained occupied by residents who didn't want to leave.

Parisians take historic plunge into Seine after 100 yrs

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Paris, July 5:** Cries of "It is warm!" rang out across the Seine Saturday morning as Parisians jumped into the river — legally — for the first time in more than 100 years.

Public swimming was allowed in designated areas of the Seine, including two newly built wooden decks near the Eiffel Tower and the Ile Saint-Louis in central Paris. Before sunrise, a municipal officer skimmed away the last few patches of algae with a fishnet. Soon after, a line of eager Parisians formed, towels in hand, waiting for their chance to jump in.

Woos and cries of joy echoed across the riverbanks as the first swimmers entered the emerald-green water.

Every swimmer wore a bright yellow lifebuoy tied around their waist, part of strict safety measures enforced by a dozen lifeguards in high-visibility vests. The current was weak, just enough to tug gently at their limbs — a reminder that this is still a living, urban river.

"It's so nice to swim in the heart of the city, especially with the high temperatures we've been having lately," said Amine Hocini, a 25-year-old construction worker from Paris. "I'm surprised because I thought it was going to be cooler and in fact, it's much warmer than I thought."

The return to swimming follows a 1.4 billion euro (\$1.5 billion) cleanup project tied to last year's Olympics. Officials now say the Seine meets Euro-



pean water quality standards on most days. Mayor Anne Hidalgo, who already took a dip last year, was there Saturday morning, holding up a transparent bottle filled with river water as a show of confidence. Environmental authorities confirmed bacteria levels were well below official thresholds.

Swimming in the Seine had been illegal since 1923, with a

CHINA'S FIRST

LEGOLAND OPENS

A giant 26-metre Lego figure named Dada welcomed visitors to the new Legoland resort in Shanghai. The resort, which opened Saturday, is the first in China. It is one of 11 parks across the world and was built with 85 million Lego bricks.



Israeli strikes kill 14

in Gaza, another 10

die seeking food

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Deir al-Balah, July 5:** Israel airstrikes killed 14 people in the Gaza Strip, while another 10 Palestinians were killed separately as they sought food in the embattled enclave, hospital officials in Gaza told The Associated Press Saturday.

Two American aid workers with the Israel-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) were also injured in southern Gaza in an attack at a food distribution site which the organization claimed was carried out by Hamas, without providing further evidence.

The latest bloodshed comes as US-led ceasefire efforts aimed at halting a nearly 21-month war appear to be gaining momentum.

Hamas gave a "positive" response late Friday to the latest US proposal for a 60-day truce but said further talks were needed on implementation.

Hamas has been seeking guarantees that the initial truce would lead to a total end to the war and withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza. President Donald Trump has been pushing for an agreement and is set to host Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House next week to discuss a deal. The Israeli airstrikes struck tents in the Muwasi area on the southern end of Gaza's Mediterranean coast, killing seven people, including a Palestinian doctor and his three children, according to Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis.

Four others were killed in the town of Bani Suheila in southern Gaza, and three people were killed in three different strikes in Khan Younis. The Israeli army did not provide immediate comment on the strikes.

Separately, eight Palestinians were killed near a GHF aid distribution site in the southern city of Rafah, the hospital said. One Palestinian was also killed near another GHF point in Rafah. It was not clear how far away the Palestinians were from the sites. GHF denied the killings happened near their sites. Previously the organization has said no one has been shot at its sites, which are guarded by private contractors but can only be accessed by passing Israeli military positions hundreds of meters away.

Trump's big bill may

come at political cost

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Washington, July 5:** Barack Obama had the Affordable Care Act Joe Biden had the Inflation Reduction Act President Donald Trump will have the tax cuts.

All were hailed in the moment and became ripe political targets in campaigns that followed. In Trump's case, the tax cuts may almost become lost in the debates over other parts of the multitrillion-dollar bill that Democrats say will force poor Americans off their health care and overturn a decade or more of energy policy.

Through persuasion and browbeating, Trump forced nearly all congressional Republicans to line up behind his marquee legislation despite some of its unpalatable pieces.

He followed the playbook that had marked his life in business before politics. He focused on branding — labelling the legislation the "One Big, Beautiful Bill" — then relentlessly pushed to strong-arm it through Congress, solely on the votes of Republicans.

But Trump's victory will soon be tested during the 2026 midterm elections where Democrats plan to run on a durable theme: that the Republican president favours the rich on tax cuts over poorer people who will lose their health care.

Trump and Republicans argue that those who deserve coverage will retain it. Non-partisan analysts, however, project significant increases to the number of uninsured. Meanwhile, the GOP's promise that the bill will turbocharge the economy will be tested at a time of uncertainty and trade turmoil.

Trump has tried to counter the notion of favouring the rich with provisions that would reduce the taxes for people paid



in tips and receiving overtime pay, two kinds of earners who represent a small share of the workforce.

Extending the tax cuts from Trump's first term that were set to expire if Congress failed to act meant he could also argue that millions of people would avoid a tax increase. To enact that and other expensive priorities, Republicans made steep cuts to Medicaid that ultimately belied Trump's promise that those on government entitlement programs "won't be affected."

"The biggest thing is, he's answering the call of the forgotten people. That's why his No. 1 request was the no tax on tips, the no tax on overtime, tax relief for seniors," said Rep. Jason Smith, R-Mo., chairman of the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee. "I think that's going to be the big impact."

Presidents have seen their signature legislative accomplishments unravelled by their successors or become a signifi-

cant political liability for their party in subsequent elections.

A central case for Biden's reelection was that the public would reward the Democrat for his legislative accomplishments. That never bore fruit as he struggled to improve his poll numbers driven down by concerns about his age and stubborn inflation.

Since taking office in January, Trump has acted to gut tax breaks meant to boost clean energy initiatives that were part of Biden's landmark health care-and-climate bill. Obama's health overhaul, which the Democrat signed into law in March 2010, led to a political bloodbath in the midterms that fall. Its popularity only became potent when Republicans tried to repeal it in 2017.

Whatever political boost Trump may have gotten from his first-term tax cuts in 2017 did not help him in the 2018 midterms, when Democrats regained control of the House, or in 2020 when he lost to Biden.

At least 27 people

dead in Texas floods

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Kerrville, July 5:** Rescuers were searching Saturday for more than two dozen children from a girls' camp and many others still missing after a wall of water rushed down a river in the Texas Hill Country during a powerful storm that killed at least 27 people, officials said. Among the dead were nine children.

The destructive fast-moving waters along the Guadalupe River rose 26 feet in just 45 minutes before dawn Friday, washing away homes and vehicles. The danger was not over as torrential rains continued pounding communities outside San Antonio Saturday and flash flood warnings and watches remained in effect for parts of central Texas.

Some 27 people remained missing from Camp Mystic, a Christian summer camp along the river, said Dalton Rice, Kerrville's city manager. An unknown number of people at other locations were still unaccounted for, he said Saturday.

"People need to know today will be a hard day," said Kerrville Mayor Joe Herring, Jr. "Please pray for our community."

Searchers used helicopters,



A drone view of vehicles partially submerged in flood water following torrential rains that unleashed flash floods along the Guadalupe River in San Angelo, Texas, US

PIC: REUTERS

Pronatalism: Russia paying schoolgirls to have babies

**Wales, July 5:** In some parts of Russia, schoolgirls who become pregnant are being paid more than 100,000 roubles (nearly £900) for giving birth and raising their babies.

This new measure, introduced in the past few months across ten regions, is part of Russia's new demographic strategy, widening the policy adopted in March 2025 which only applied to adult women. It is designed to address the dramatic decline in the country's birthrate.

In 2023 the number of births in Russia per woman was 1.41 – substantially below 2.05, which is the level required to maintain a population at its current size.

Paying teenage girls to have babies while they are still in school is controversial in Russia. According to a recent

survey by the Russian Public Opinion Research Centre, 43% of Russians approve of the policy, while 40% are opposed to it.

But it indicates the high priority that the state places on increasing the number of children being born.

Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, regards a large population as one of the markers of a flourishing great power, along with control over a vast (and growing) territory and a powerful military.

Paradoxically, though, his efforts to increase the physical size of Russia by attacking Ukraine and illegally annexing its territory have also been disastrous in terms of shrinking Russia's population.

The number of Russian soldiers killed in the war has reached 250,000 by some estimates, while the war sparked



an exodus of hundreds of thousands of some of the most highly educated Russians.

Many of them are young men fleeing military service who could have been fathers to the next generation of Russian citizens.

But while Russia's demographic situation is extreme, declining birth rates are now a

global trend.

It is estimated that by 2050 more than three quarters of the world's countries will have such low fertility rates that they will not be able to sustain their populations.

Putin is not the only world leader to introduce policies designed to encourage women to have more babies. Viktor Or-

ban's government in Hungary is offering a range of incentives, such as generous tax breaks and subsidised mortgages, to those who have three or more children.

Poland makes a monthly payment of 500 zloty (£101) per child to families with two or more children.

But there's some evidence this has not prompted higher-income Polish women to have more children, as they might have to sacrifice higher earnings and career advancement to have another child.

In the United States, Donald Trump is proposing to pay women US\$5,000 (£3,682) to have a baby, tied to a wider MAGA movement push, supported by Elon Musk and others, to encourage women to have larger families.

Reversing demographic trends is complex, because the

reasons that individuals and couples have for becoming parents are also complex.

Personal preferences and aspirations, beliefs about their ability to provide for children, as well as societal norms and cultural and religious values all play a part in these decisions.

As a result, the impact of "pronatalist" policies has been mixed. No country has found an easy way to reverse declining birth rates.

One country seeking to address population decline with policies, other than encouraging women to have more babies is Spain, which now allows an easier pathway to citizenship for migrants, including those who entered the country illegally.

Madrid's embrace of immigrants is being credited for its current economic boom.

THE CONVERSATION



of the day

quote

In today's fast-changing world, its mandate must be renewed. The NDB's mandate must be renewed with a focus on greater agility, technological advancement, and efficiency in an enhanced way xxx

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

India's fragmented agri-logistics and lack of segregation infrastructure make cross-contamination likely, risking trace GM presence in export consignments

AJAY SRIVASTAVA | FOUNDER, GTRI

The MSME sector is the backbone of Bharat's economy, and the rapid adoption of digital tools such as smartphones, UPI, Aadhaar-enabled banking, and emerging AI workflows is proof that this segment is embracing modernization

ANAND KUMAR BAJAJ | FOUNDER, MD & CEO, PAYNEARBY

SHORT TAKES

India to clock record coal output in FY26

**New Delhi:** India is on track to achieve a record coal production of 1.15 billion tonnes in the financial year 2025-26, according to a new report. The country's domestic coal production touched an all-time high of 1,047.6 million tonnes in FY25, growing at an average annual rate of 10 per cent over the past five years, as per data compiled by CareEdge Ratings. This growth has been driven by a series of policy reforms aimed at making coal mining more efficient and self-reliant.

IndusInd Bank's net advances drop 4%

**Mumbai:** Private lender IndusInd Bank has reported a 3.9 per cent year-on-year (YoY) fall in net advances to ₹3,34,477 crore for the quarter ended June 30 (Q1 FY26). The figure stood at ₹3,47,898 crore in the same period previous year (Q1 FY25). On a sequential basis, advances dropped 3.1 per cent from ₹3,45,019 crore reported in the March quarter (Q4 FY25).

Gold soars over ₹1,100 this week

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 5:** Gold prices surged ₹1,135 and silver prices soared over ₹2,000 this week amid uncertainties around the US tariff deal deadline (July 9) and a decline in the US dollar index.



On June 30, the 24-carat gold rate was at ₹95,576 per 10 grams, while it closed at ₹97,021 Friday, IBJA data showed. Similarly, the 22-carat gold price surged ₹1,131 to ₹96,633 against Monday's price of ₹95,502 per 10 grams. Meanwhile, the silver price settled at ₹107,580 per kg against the June evening closing price of ₹105,510 per kg, a rise of ₹2,070 per kg. Notably, silver hit an all-time high at ₹1,09,550 per kg June 18. Both the precious metals have given a recommendable return in the first half of the calendar year, with gold



Prop trading firms like Jane Street account for nearly 50% of options trading volumes. If they pull back – which seems likely – retail activity (~35%) could take a hit too. So this could be bad news for both exchanges and brokers

NITHIN KAMATH | FOUNDER AND CEO, ZERODHA

APSEZ'S GREEN INFRA FEAT

In a significant step for green infrastructure, Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ) Saturday said it has inaugurated the world's first steel slag road at any port, setting a new global benchmark in circular economy-led development. This marks India's third steel slag road, but the first-ever constructed inside a private port globally, placing India and APSEZ at the forefront of sustainable maritime infrastructure



FII buying hinges on India-US trade deal

*Sensex and the Nifty, two benchmark indices, fell 0.7% each as profit booking following the recent rally and global uncertainty continued to taint overall market sentiment*

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, July 5:** Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) have turned cautious this month ahead of the potential India-US trade deal announcement and upcoming Q1 FY26 results, analysts said Saturday.

FIIs were net buyers in the last two months, buying ₹18,082 and ₹8,466 worth of shares in May and June, respectively. However, the trend seems to have faded in the current month.

The FII activity in early July indicates selling. In the first four days, FIIs were sellers every day, with a cumulative sell figure of ₹5,772 crore.

"Resumption of FII buying will hinge on two things — one, if a trade deal happens between India and the US, that will be positive for markets and FII flows — and two, Q1 FY26 re-



sult indications," said VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited.

It will be good if the results show a recovery in earnings. If these factors are not met, it may affect the market and FII flows, he added. On Friday, FIIs offloaded ₹8,277.90 crore, while domestic institutional investors sold shares worth ₹ 11,334.32 crore, according to the latest data available on BSE.

FIIs purchased shares in financials, cars and auto parts, and the oil and gas sector in the second half of June. They sold equities in power and capital goods companies. Profit booking is a trend in recent high-performing segments.

Malabar launches NUWA diamond collection

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 5:** Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one of the world's largest and most trusted jewellery retailers, unveiled its latest natural diamond jewellery collection — NUWA by Mine Diamonds — at its Bhubaneswar showroom at Rupali Square, Saheed Nagar Saturday.

The launch also marked the opening of the Diamond Show, a celebration of craftsmanship and elegance.

Mrs India Worldwide 2025 winner Sangita Nayak inaugurated the show, joined by Malabar management and staff. The NUWA collection, inspired by abstract patterns and modern silhouettes, features innovative designs such as 2-in-1 rings, zipper-inspired necklaces, rotating bangles, and Italian chains. Speaking on the launch, MP



Ahammed, Chairman, Malabar Group, said, "Our latest NUWA collection redefines versatility, matching every mood and occasion. It's grand in design yet light in feel — a perfect blend of style, smart design, and wearability."

The campaign features brand ambassador Kareena Kapoor Khan, encouraging women to #ShineOutLoud with bold and graceful designs that celebrate

UltraTech denies CCI probe in cement cartelisation case

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, July 5:** UltraTech Cement Ltd Saturday denied being investigated by the antitrust regulator Competition Commission of India (CCI) for alleged contravention of competition norms.

In a stock exchange filing, the Aditya Birla Group company called such media reports "false and misleading" and clarified that it is not under investigation in a case from 2020.

"The company has neither received any order from the CCI in this case nor have the company's financials been sought by the CCI," a stock exchange filing read. "It is clarified that the Company is not under investigation in this Case No 35 of 2020 before the Competition Commission of India," according to the filing.

The filing further stated that the India Cements Limited, a subsidiary of the Company, "is party to Case No 35 of 2020 and is separately making appropriate disclosures in this regard, while exploring legal options".

In a separate exchange filing, India Cements Limited (ICEM) said it is yet to receive a full version of the CCI investigation report under the Competition Act, 2002.

Meanwhile, UltraTech Cement Limited has announced the resignation of its Chief Legal Officer, Anoop Khattry, effective from the close of business July 3, 2025, due to personal reasons.

Bacardi India's Legacy whisky bags global honours



**B**acardi's Legacy Premium Indian Whisky wins Gold at World Whiskies Awards 2025, and Silver at Asia Spirits Masters 2025, showcasing Indian craftsmanship globally.

The World Whiskies Awards is one of the most prestigious global competitions in liquor industry that select the unparalleled, and promote the world's best whiskies to consumers and trade across the globe. Whiskies are judged by nose, palate, finish, balance, quality, character, complexity and functionality.

The World Whiskies Awards thus serve as the ultimate platform for whisky aficionados, industry experts, and connoisseurs to come together and celebrate the pinnacle of whisky craftsmanship. This esteemed event meticulously selects, rewards, and promotes the most outstanding whiskies, showcasing the mastery of distillers who have pushed the boundaries of flavour, complexity, and character.

A Gold award is a testament to excellence because each entry is evaluated on a 100-point scale focuses each factor. This win is further complemented by Silver at the Asia Spirits Masters 2025, hosted by The Drinks Business Asia — reinforcing Legacy's growing acclaim on the international stage.

Mahesh Kanchan, marketing director, India & neighbouring countries, Bacardi India, said, "We are immensely proud of Legacy's Gold win at the World Whiskies Awards 2025 and Silver at the Asia Spirits Masters 2025 — a landmark moment that affirms our vision of placing Indian whisky on the global map. This recognition is a powerful validation of our commitment to crafting world-class spirits that are bold, distinctive, and deeply rooted in Indian heritage. As we continue to push boundaries, innovate, and scale, Legacy leads the way in shaping a new narrative for Indian whisky—one of pride, purpose, and global potential."

and Scottish malts with Indian grains, Legacy delivers a rich and smooth taste with fruity notes, subtle smoke, toasted oak, and a hint of spice, making it perfectly balanced. Reflecting the culture and passion of India through its craftsmanship and flavour, Legacy has received an overwhelming response from consumers since its launch.

More than just a spirit, Legacy is a celebration of Indian craftsmanship — a rich, nuanced expression that bridges timeless heritage with modern sophistication. This international accolade not only validates the whisky's exceptional character but also cements Legacy's position as a rising star in the premium segment, reinforcing Bacardi's presence in the Indian whisky space.

Legacy is available in 3 sizes (750ml, 375ml, and 180ml) in key markets across Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha, Maharashtra, Telangana, Kerala, Pondicherry and Goa- showcasing Bacardi's commitment to India as one of its top priority markets worldwide.

*Disclaimer: This post is not for liquor promotion. It is to be noted that alcohol consumption is injurious to health and prohibited for people below legal drinking age.*





