

## BMC Addl Commissioner assaulted during grievance hearing

3 persons including Corporator Jiban Rout arrested

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

Chaos unfolded at the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) office on Monday after Additional Commissioner Ratnakar Sahu was allegedly assaulted by a group of individuals during a public grievance hearing, prompting a strong protest by the civic body's employees and a police investigation.



According to Sahu, the incident occurred when five to six individuals, including BMC Corporator Jiban Rout, barged into his office chamber while he was hearing public grievances. "The corporator accused me of misbehaving with a person named Jaga Bhai.

When I denied the allegation, the group abused and man-handled me. They dragged me out of my office and tried to forcefully take me away in a vehicle," Sahu said.

The assault triggered an immediate response from BMC staffs, who launched a cease-

work protest demanding strict action against those responsible.

Mayor Sulochana Das also condemned the incident, terming it "shameful and unacceptable", and urged police to take swift action.

BJD president Naveen Patnaik strongly condemned the brutal assault on Sahu and demanded exemplary action from the Chief Minister.

Following the incident, the Kharavela Nagar police reached the BMC office and initiated a probe. CCTV footage from within and around the office was being reviewed to

identify the accused.

Police have so far arrested three individuals, Jiban Rout, Rashmi Mahapatra and Debashis Pradhan. They will be forwarded to court under the sections of law as mentioned in the FIR. Further investigation is ongoing, and efforts are being made to ascertain the involvement of other individuals in the incident, DCP Jagmohan Meena said. The situation at BMC remains tense with employees demanding assurances of workplace safety and strict enforcement of law and order within government institutions.

## Trinity enters Gundicha Temple

Thousands take glimpse of Lords on Adapa Mandap; partake in Adapa Abadha

SAROJ K MISHRA ■ Puri

The holy siblings, Lord Jagannath and His elder brother Lord Balabhadra and sister Devi Subhadra offered Darshan to devotees from Monday morning after the trio was enthroned on the Adapa Mandap on Sunday night.

In a ceremonial procession, the Trinity had entered the aunt's house, the Gundicha

Temple, through Goti Pahandi, one after another, from their respective chariots which had been parked at Saradhahali.

Thousands of devotees entering the Gundicha Temple in a queue made a Darshan of the deities on the Adapa Mandap, which began at 6.40 am on Monday amidst elaborate security arrangements. The administration has formed two separate queues, one for ticket holders and the other for the general public. Devotees have also received Adapa Abhada, the rice offerings prepared in the kitchen of the Gundicha Temple.

As it was the first day in the Gundicha Temple, heavy rush

was witnessed at food stalls to purchase Adapa Abhada. Adapa Abhada has special significance for devotees linked with emotion.

After Sunday's stampede, which claimed three lives and left 50 injured, police have installed a number of barricades at Saradhahali to make the entry of pilgrims smooth and hassle-free. To avoid rush in the city, entry of three and four wheelers to the city from the national highway has been completely restricted. Similarly, police are not permitting bikes and auto rickshaws to the Grand Road from streets in the city, which usually cause rush and road jam throughout the year.

## Tender row clouds Nalco's new bauxite mining project

PNS ■ Bhubaneswar

The National Aluminium Company Limited (Nalco) has found itself at the centre of a controversy over alleged irregularities in its tendering process for a new bauxite mining project in Odisha.

In recent months, the company has come under scrutiny for alleged favouritism in its tendering procedures. According to reliable sources, the issue surfaced during the tendering process for coalmine operations in Angul, which reportedly attracted the attention of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for suspected manipulations aimed at favouring a particular party.

Fresh concerns have now emerged regarding an upcoming tender for development and operation of a bauxite mine at Potangi in Koraput district

adjacent to Nalco's existing Panchpatmali facility. Sources allege that tender conditions are being tweaked to ensure a limited and possibly manipulated bidding process, potentially culminating in a single eligible tender, a practice reportedly seen in recent projects.

Initially, an internal committee and consultant KPMG had recommended that bidders for the Potangi contract should have experience in operating a mining project for at least 10 years. This criterion would have ensured a competitive and transparent bidding process. However, it is now learnt that the eligibility requirement is being raised to 15 years, a move likely to disqualify several competent firms with experience between 10 to 14 years.

Industry insiders warn that such restrictive criteria could

reduce the number of qualified bidders, creating scope for manipulation and inflated contract rates, ultimately affecting Nalco's competitiveness against private sector players operating similar bauxite reserves in Odisha.

Experts suggest that retaining the 10-year operational experience requirement, coupled with a minimum handling capacity of 3 million tonnes per annum (MTPA), would attract more experienced and capable bidders, fostering transparency, fairness and accountability as per Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) norms.

Stakeholders hope that the Nalco will uphold its legacy of fair practices and contribute meaningfully to Odisha's industrial growth as it marches towards completing 50 years of service in the State.

## 4 govt officials convicted in a day for graft

PNS ■ Cuttack

As many as four government functionaries were convicted in separate incidents by Vigilance courts on Monday for taking bribes and corruption.

In the first incident, the Special Judge, Vigilance, Angul convicted Babilata Behera, former Supply Inspector, Kaniha block in Angul district in a trap case and awarded her four years rigorous imprisonment (RI). The court also asked her to pay a fine.

Behera was caught by Vigilance while taking a bribe of Rs 43,000 from a sub wholesaler of K Oil in order to sign the utilisation certificate of K Oil distribution and to issue the release order in his favour. The agency would now move the competent authority for dismissal of Behera from service following her conviction.

In another case, Ambuja Devi, former Supervisor, ICDS, Bargarh (Urban) who was charge-sheeted by Vigilance for de-

manding and taking bribe from a newly appointed Anganwadi Worker, was convicted by Special Judge, Vigilance, Bargarh and sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for a period of two years and to pay fine.

In another case, Surendra Mohan Naik, former Assistant Fisheries Officer, Kaptipada block, in Mayurbhanj district and Raghunath Kar, former Assistant Fisheries Officer, office of District Fisheries Officer, Mayurbhanj, were convicted by Special Judge, Vigilance, Baripada and sentenced each to undergo RI for a period of three years and pay a fine of Rs 50,000.

The duo was charge-sheeted by the agency for misappropriation of government money by forging signature of beneficiaries and showing payment to them under the 'Multipurpose Farm Pond Scheme,' The Vigilance would now move the competent authority for stoppage of pension of Naik and Kar following their conviction.

## Puri stampede: OHRC issues notice to DM, SP

PNS ■ Bhubaneswar

The Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has served notices to the Puri district Collector and Superintendent of Police (SP) in connection with the stampede near the Gundicha Temple on Sunday.

The OHRC served notices to the two officials taking cognisance of a petition pertaining to the incident.

The OHRC has asked the authorities concerned to provide proper healthcare to the injured persons. It also directed the administration to take appropriate steps to prevent occurrence of similar incidents in future.

Three devotees were killed and several others were injured in the stampede at Saradhahali near the Gundicha Temple.

The incident took place when thousands of devotees congregated at Saradhahali to have a glimpse of Lord Jagannath and His siblings Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra on their respective chariots on the third day of the ongoing Rath Yatra festival.

Devotees have blamed poor crowd management for the stampede.

Taking the issue seriously, the State Government has suspended two police officials for derelictions of duty and transferred the Puri Collector and SP with immediate effect.

The Chief Minister has announced a compensation of Rs 25 lakh each to the bereaved families. Besides, the government has asked the Development Commissioner to probe the incident and submit a report within 30 days.



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# 2 Maoists gunned down in Kandhamal encounter

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

Security forces dealt a significant blow to Maoist insurgents on Monday, gunning down two armed cadres during an intense exchange of fire in Kandhamal district. Acting on precise intelligence inputs, the District Voluntary Force (DVF) launched a search operation in the forest near Purnajiba reserve forest under the Balliguda police station.

The encounter took place around noon when the

Maoists opened fire on the advancing DVF team. In retaliation, security personnel returned fire, killing two extremists on the spot. The deceased were identified as Manku, an Area Committee Member, and Chandan, a party member, both affiliated with an active Maoist unit operating in the Kandhamal-Kalahandi region. From the site, police recovered a rifle, a revolver, live rounds of ammunition, walkie-talkies, batteries and several Maoist-related materials.

The deaths are seen as a setback to Maoist efforts to regroup in the area. Kandhamal SP Harisha BC confirmed that both bodies have been recovered and that further combing operations are underway to track down any remaining members of the group. Congratulating the team, Odisha DGP Yogesh Bahadur Khurania praised the efforts of district police and DVF personnel. He described the successful operation as a major achievement in the State's on-

going campaign against Left-Wing Extremism. Security forces have intensified anti-Maoist operations across Odisha, particularly in southern and central districts, where insurgents previously maintained a strong presence. Monday's encounter marks one of the most significant operations in the region in recent months. Police have stepped up area domination and intelligence-based operations in the region to prevent Maoist regrouping and ensure safety in remote tribal areas.

# 'No space for arrogance before Lord Jagannath'

BJD slams govt over Rath Yatra tragedy

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

In the aftermath of the devastating stampede during Rath Yatra in Puri, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has condemned the Odisha Government for what it called a complete breakdown of administrative responsibility, asserting that pride and negligence have no place in the service of Lord Jagannath. A high-level BJD delegation visited the

Gundicha Temple and the stampede site at Saradhabali, where the incident occurred during the pulling of Lord Jagannath's chariot. The delegation also interacted with senior servitors to understand the lapses in coordination and crowd control. According to the servitors, the incident occurred due to mismanagement and lack of proper supervision by officials responsible for crowd control and ritual coordination. BJD vice-president Sanjay Das Burma, who led the team, questioned why no senior ad-

ministrative or police officials were present at the critical location when the incident happened. The delegation met the district Superintendent of Police and discussed upcoming rituals such as Adapa Besha, Bahuda Yatra, Adhar Pana, Suna Besha and Niladri Bije. They emphasised the need for sincere and coordinated efforts to ensure these rituals are conducted peacefully. BJD president and Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik personally spoke to the bereaved families and conveyed

his condolences. Criticising the government's response, BJD MP Subashish Khuntia likened the transfer of the district Collector and SP to a "slap on the wrist" and not a solution. "What happened to the committee formed with five ministers to oversee Rath Yatra preparations?" he asked. The BJD called on all officials involved in Rath Yatra management to abandon arrogance and wholeheartedly dedicate themselves to Lord Jagannath's service, ensuring that the remaining rituals conclude safely and with dignity.

## To boost pre-school education State to engage Sishu Sevikas in primary schools

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

The Odisha Government has announced engagement of Sishu Sevikas in Government Primary Schools that have established Sishu Vatikas. The initiative, aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, will be implemented from the 2025-26 academic session. According to a notification issued by the School & Mass Education Department, Sishu Vatikas have been set up in all

Government Primary Schools to provide structured pre-school education to children aged 5-6 years. To support this, Sishu Sevikas will be engaged in schools with qualifying enrolment strength. They will assist teachers in delivering foundational learning and enhancing the overall classroom experience for young learners. The School Management Committees (SMCs) at the school level will be responsible for selecting the

Sishu Sevikas. Each Sishu Sevika will receive a monthly honorarium of Rs 3,000. The Odisha School Education Programme Authority (OSEPA) will issue detailed guidelines outlining the selection procedure and duties of the appointed Sevikas. The financial burden for the initiative has been approved by the Department of School Education and Literacy, Government of India, and will be covered under the annual budget of Samagra Shiksha.

## CM, Law Min responsible for Puri stampede'



Alleges Youth Cong, demands their resignation

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

The Odisha Pradesh Youth Congress on Sunday staged a high-voltage protest demanding resignation of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan over the stampede during the Rath Yatra in Puri, which claimed three lives and injured many devotees. Led by Youth Congress president Ranjit Patra, hun-

dreds of workers marched from AG Square to the Chief Minister's residence. The protest turned tense as clashes erupted between protesters and police, leading to several detentions. Patra came down heavily on the BJP-led government, terming the incident a result of gross administrative failure. "Despite deploying nearly 10,000 police personnel and 275 AI surveillance cameras, the government couldn't ensure crowd safety," he remarked. He blamed the tragedy on the sudden and unco-

ordinated opening of the Pahandi corridor, which led to panic and the deadly stampede. He also criticised the Law Department's oversight panel, calling it ineffective and unprepared. The Youth Congress claimed over 10,000 VIP passes were distributed to BJP workers, turning the religious event into a political show. Patra also condemned the halting of Lord Jagannath's chariot near the Singhadwar to facilitate the participation of Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani.

## Toppo appointed Special Secy to CM

PNS ■ Bhubaneswar

The Odisha Government on Monday issued a notification regarding appointment of Mirdha Toppo as the Special Secretary to Chief Minister Mohan Majhi. OAS Mirdha Toppo is currently posted as PD DUDA in Keonjhar district. Toppo's career trajectory is a testament to his commitment and administrative acumen. He began his journey in grassroots governance, serving as Block Development Officer (BDO) in Patna, Karanjia, and Jhumpura blocks. His ef-



fective leadership and people-centric governance at the block level earned him widespread appreciation and set the foundation for future responsibilities. Following his success as a BDO, Toppo was subsequently

promoted and posted as Additional District Magistrate (ADM) in Bargarh district, where he played a pivotal role in overseeing key developmental initiatives and coordinating disaster response during floods and other emergencies. Continuing his upward journey, he later served as the Project Director (PD) of the District Urban Development Agency (DUDA) in Keonjhar, focusing on urban planning, infrastructure enhancement, and the implementation of centrally sponsored schemes in the urban areas of the mineral-rich district.

## Saswat Mishra appointed CM's Principal Secy

To continue as Finance Secy, Idco Chairman

PNS ■ Bhubaneswar

In a significant administrative reshuffle, senior IAS officer Saswat Mishra has been appointed as the new Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi. The appointment was made official through a notification issued by the General Administration and Public Grievance Department. Mishra, who is widely recognized for his administrative acumen and deep understanding of financial matters, will continue to hold his existing crucial responsibilities as the Principal Secretary, Finance Department, and also Chairman, Industrial Development Corporation of Odisha (IDCO). This dual responsibility highlights the government's confidence in his capabilities and his pivotal role in steering the State's financial health and industrial growth. Mishra is a seasoned bureaucrat from the 1996 batch



of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). His career has seen him hold several key positions within the Odisha government. Most notably, his tenure as Principal Secretary, Finance Department, has been instrumental in shaping the State's fiscal policies and managing its economic affairs. His leadership at IDCO has also been crucial in promoting industrial infrastructure and attracting investments to the State. The post of Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister had been lying vacant for quite some time, ever since NB Dhal transitioned to a new role in New Delhi.

## DGP reviews Puri stampede aftermath

Urges devotee caution during Rath Yatra

PNS ■ Bhubaneswar

Odisha Director General of Police (DGP) YB Khurania visited Puri on Sunday to assess the situation following a tragic stampede incident near the Gundicha temple that claimed three lives and left several others injured during the early hours of the Rath Yatra. Khurania said that a de-

tailed investigation is underway and emphasised that necessary corrective measures are being implemented to prevent recurrence of such incidents. He appealed to devotees to strictly follow police instructions, especially avoiding the use of mobile phones in crowded areas, which can trigger unnecessary chaos. "We are making every effort to ensure a smooth and safe darshan for devotees," the DGP stated. "I urge everyone to co-operate with the police and follow directions at key points."

## Prajna Pravah holds meet



PNS ■ Bhubaneswar

A meeting of the Bhubaneswar Chapter of Prajna Pravah, a national umbrella organisation of several nationalist think tanks of India, was organised on June 26 at Unit-8 Saraswati Shisu Vidya Mandir here on the topic 'Operation Sindoor'.

While Duryodhan Kathua chaired, State coordinator Rabi Narayan Panda, Bhubaneswar coordinator Gauri Prasad Tripathy and Bhubaneswar Youth coordinator Prof Abhisek Upadhyay were present. The meeting was attended by several intellectuals of the city including Padmashri

Adwaita Gadanayak who unanimously agreed that Operation Sindoor has significantly bolstered India's national security by showcasing its capability for precise, proactive, and indigenous military responses against terrorism, shifting from a doctrine of strategic restraint.

# Bridging hearts: A father's quest for perfect match

Unable to find a suitable bride from an indigent family for my youngest son, a well-settled IT professional-one of the priorities in the Intelligent Age-I struggle to reconcile with the changing norms of marriage. Opting for alliances beyond cultural boundaries gains no favour, despite my willingness to compromise," says a septuagenarian father, his voice tinged with remorse. There was a time when marriageable brides were plenty-both educated and half-educated. But today, the concept of "matrimony" seems to be driven by "money" before "matri," only then leading to the sacred knot. Even if one hastens into marriage, success is seldom guaranteed-an anecdotal truth to an age-old maxim. In this era, a groom's academic distinction serves as his iden-



SADANANDA DAS

tity, yet he often seeks a job-secure bride to bolster their mutual savings for a future child, acknowledging that modern individuals tend

to live and work in silos. As the father browses through matrimonial columns, his eyes remain fixed on the prescribed details of a distinct bride. His mind, crowded with self-inquiries, oscillates between compatibility and compromise. The battle of "his vs. hers" traits sometimes forces him to look further. Tossing restlessly in bed, half-awake and distressed, he turns to matchmakers-professionals who promise a suitable match, not a compromise from a bundle of proposals, backed by photos, horoscopes, and allied details. He even pays an initial subscription, hoping for results. Yet, these new "startups," armed with eloquence, often mismatch reality with their verbosity. Instead of settling the dust, they rush to present more proposals, adding

layers of information to appease an eager father. Some vanish after their first visit, pocketing token money meant for the search. The father's anxiety intensifies as he watches his son attend one friend's wedding after another, each time silently reminding him, "Hurry up, Father." Seeking a bride from his known social circles, he engages in intellectual discussions, keeping the quest for his son's marriage as a primary objective. As a father, he wonders if this relentless pursuit of marriage wisdom is mere folly. It is a duty that weighs heavily upon him-perhaps more than upon any other man in his age and circumstances. He contemplates how modern youth glorify love marriages, a concept romanticized by poets through generations. Yet, for his son, this notion seems unattain-

able. He has witnessed love marriages crumble, leaving little impact on the near or distant future of the couples. The reality, he believes, is a simple shift in words: "Marriage" should come first, then "love." Otherwise, relationships risk falling apart. It is often said that making the best out of challenges defines our younger generation-armed with a laptop, scrolling through social media during brief pauses from marathon work. Suddenly, the father reflects on how, in today's digitized era, nothing is impossible; technology offers new ways to connect people and combat growing isolation and loneliness. As he broods, his thoughts drift to a familiar story-one that revolves around the courtship rituals of Adelie and Gentoo penguins. In a timeless tradition, the male

penguin presents a "pebble" to the female as a token of love, a gesture that marks the beginning of nest-building and, ultimately, a life together. But times have changed. He muses that such "pebbling" now feels like a relic of the past, a buried gesture that pales in comparison to the courtship he once knew-vibrant and full of meaning, especially during his college days. Finding a bride from another State adds another layer of difficulty due to socio-cultural differences. While families may attempt to bridge the gap through language training centres, adapting to diverse traditions remains challenging. However, he muses, "Languages may differ, places may change, cultures may vary, and ways of worship may be distinct, but emotions remain universal."

"Marriage is not about finding someone you can live with, but finding someone you can't live without", and the saying the meaning of the true essence of the life of a nubile bride and a vowed groom, tied in the holy wed-knot, having dreams to fulfil. With no materialistic expectations, the father wonders when divine intervention will bless his son with a fulfilling married life. He awaits the day when better times will arrive, bringing joy to his son's future. Until then, he holds onto hope-because, in the end, a good marriage isn't just about compatibility, but about commitment, understanding, and a shared journey through life. (The author is a freelance journalist and reviewer based in Cuttack; sndas.agora@gmail.com)



# BJP govt has turned Rath Yatra into a political event'

Alleges Congress MP Saptagiri Ulaka

**RAJEEV RATHAN** ■ Bhubaneswar

Congress MP from Koraput, Saptagiri Ulaka, has lashed out at the BJP-led State Government alleging that Lord Jagannath has been sidelined from the government's agenda. Speaking at a press conference at the AICC headquarters in Delhi on Monday, Ulaka accused the State Government of failing on multiple counts related to the Jagannath Temple and the Rath Yatra.

Despite a year in power, the BJP government has not undertaken a proper audit of the temple's Ratna Bhandar nor has it formed a new temple management committee or made public the inquiry report into last year's mishap



involving the deities. "This time, the government reduced the Rath Yatra to a party event," Ulaka said, pointing to the distribution of over 5,000 passes to party workers, which, he claimed, led to chaos during the ceremonial procession.

Ulaka also alleged that VIP movement disrupted Lord Jagannath's chariot journey. "Three devotees died and many were injured due to total administrative failure," he added.

Ulaka demanded resignation of the Chief Minister, stat-

ing that mere apologies are not enough. He also demanded Rs 50-lakh compensation for the families of the deceased and Rs 25 lakh for the injured, along with a judicial inquiry by a District Judge within 10 days of Niladri Bij.

Congress leader Arabinda Das accused Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan of deflecting blame by calling the incident "God's will". He questioned the government's claims of upholding Odia Asmita while allowing VIP preferences to disrupt religious sanctity.

# Congress blames govt for Puri stampede

Demands CM's resignation

**RAJEEV RATHAN** ■ Bhubaneswar

A fact-finding team of the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) visited Puri on Sunday to assess the ground situation following the tragic stampede that occurred during Rath Yatra celebrations in the early hours of June 28-29. The incident claimed three lives and left several injured.

The team was constituted by OPCC president Bhakta Charan Das and led by former PCC president Prasad Harichandan. It included senior leaders such as former ministers Jagannath Patnaik and Nagendra Pradhan and PCC vice-president Santosh Singh Saluja. The delegation first visited the site of the incident near the Gundicha Temple and later met victims



undergoing treatment at the Puri District Headquarters Hospital. They expressed serious concern over the alleged discharge of two critically injured persons reportedly with crushed limbs without adequate medical attention.

Accusing the State Government of attempting to downplay the tragedy, the Congress team said it had failed both administratively and morally. They demanded Rs 50 lakh as ex-gratia to each bereaved family and Rs 25 lakh to the seriously injured.

The team called for the im-

mediate resignation of the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister and Law Minister, citing administrative lapses that led to the incident. They also raised doubts over the credibility of the inquiry announced by the Law Minister and demanded that a judicial probe be conducted by the sitting District Judge with action taken within ten days of the Niladri Bij ritual.

The team, which submitted its findings to OPCC chief Das, also visited the Congress-run Seva Shibir near Gundicha Temple.

# State assures farmers on paddy procurement Ration card holders face e-KYC deadline

**RAJEEV RATHAN** ■ Bhubaneswar

In a much-needed assurance to the farming community, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra on Monday confirmed that paddy procurement would continue for all farmers holding valid tokens even beyond the official deadline. He also urged farmers to complete iris scan-based biometric verification to remain eligible for future procurement cycles.

"There will be no lapses in the token system. Every eligible farmer will be accommodated," the minister stated, reaffirming the government's commitment to protecting farmers' interests.

So far, the State has procured over 19 lakh metric

tonnes of Rabi paddy this season surpassing last year's total of 12 lakh MT highlighting Odisha's increasing agricultural output and proactive procurement efforts.

Meanwhile, more than 2.58 million ration card holders are racing against time to complete their e-KYC verification. The government has warned that failure to comply by the end of June 30 will result in a three-month suspension of benefits under the Public Distribution System (PDS) with possible permanent cancellation upon continued non-compliance. The e-KYC initiative, which uses Aadhaar-based biometric or OTP authentication, aims to eliminate leakages and ensure benefits reach genuine recipients. However, rural areas continue to face digital access challenges. Authorities have assured support and urged citizens to visit local centres promptly.

# Water dispenser of Rotary Club B'pur unveiled

Tri-cycle donated to needy

**PNS** ■ Brahmapur

The Rotary Club, Brahmapur marked a day of community service with two significant initiatives aimed at uplifting the local community.

Past president Dr DJJ Swamy inaugurated a Rotary water dispenser unit at the premises of LUXE Inn, Bagula Street, Brahmapur, opposite City Hospital. The water dispenser, supported by LUXE Inn, a unit of S2 Residency, will provide clean drinking water to patients, attendants, staff of City Hospital, auto drivers, and passers-by, enhancing public access to the essential resource.

The event was graced by Rotary Club of Brahmapur president RL Tarun, secretary Rtn KVG Ravi Kumar, past president V Santosh Kumar, Srinivas Prusty, Satyakam Patro, president elect Venkat Anand, secretary elect Tangudu Rahul, treasurer V Satyanarayana, and members Gopiram Agarwal, VSN Raju, Natchiketa Subudhi and others.

In a separate event, the Rotary Club, Brahmapur demonstrated its commitment to supporting the differently-abled by donating a tri-cycle to a needy individual at the Rotary Community Service Hall, Brahmapur. The tri-cycle donation was made possible through the generous support of club member G Trinath Rao.

# State-wide Bharat Bandh today to protect Constitutional rights

**RAJEEV RATHAN** ■ Bhubaneswar

Odisha will witness a Bharat Bandh on Tuesday, July 1, as part of a nationwide protest spearheaded by Bharat Mukti Morcha, Bahujan Kranti Morcha, Rashtriya OBC Morcha and Rashtriya Parivartan Morcha. The bandh is being organised to safeguard Constitutional values and demand justice for marginalised communities.

The protest is aimed at drawing attention to what the organisers describe as an increasing assault on the Constitutional rights of SCs, STs, OBCs, Adivasis and religious minorities. In Odisha, multiple district and local-level units are expected to mobilise and hold peaceful demonstrations, marches and public awareness campaigns.

Protesters are calling for abolition of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and reinstatement of ballot paper voting to ensure electoral transparency and restore public trust in the democratic process. They are also demanding

an immediate caste-based census, including comprehensive data on OBCs, to support equitable policymaking and representation.

The bandh also seeks to protest alleged disrespect toward iconic Bahujan figures like Dr BR Ambedkar, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Birs Munda by public figures associated with the ruling establishment. Organisers are urging the government to honour their legacies with due respect.

Additional demands include return of the Mahabodhi Mahavihara in Bodhi Gaya to the Buddhist community, withdrawal of the controversial Waqf Amendment Bill 2025 and an end to targeted violence and displacement of tribal and Christian communities.

The organisers have appealed to the Odisha government and district authorities to uphold democratic rights and ensure that the bandh is allowed to proceed peacefully without repression or obstruction.

# Major rivers flow above red levels in Baleswar

46 GPs in 6 blocks, 1 ULB affected by flash floods

**UBACHAK MOHANTY** ■ Baleswar

As the major rivers flowing in Baleswar district are in spate on Monday, the district administration has sounded high alert.

Reports said the Subarnarekha and Jalka rivers were flowing above the danger level. At around 4 pm on Monday, the Subarnarekha was crossing its danger level (DL) flowing at 11.56 meters (mts) against its DL 10.36 mts at Rajghat. Similarly, the Jalka recorded 6.71 mts measured at Mathani against its DL 6.50 mts.

While incessant rains in the upper catchment areas created havoc, release of excess rainwater through Galudih



barrage caused floods in Bhograi, Jaleswar, Basta and Baliapal. The district administration, besides evacuating people from the low-lying vulnerable pockets, also began free kitchen arrangements after lodging them at 17 safe centres.

According to reports, hundreds of people of 46 GPs under six blocks and one ULB were affected by the flash floods. The affected GPs under different blocks included Basta (14 GPs), Baliapal (2), Jaleswar (7) and Jaleswar Municipality (8), Bhograi (13) and

Remuna and Sadar one GP each. A total of 2,916 people including 1,766 in Basta, 823 in Baliapal, 212 in Bhograi, 60 in Jaleswar and 55 in Jaleswar Municipality were evacuated. 13 free kitchens were run covering 2,208 beneficiaries with maximum number of kitchens established at Basta (7) followed by Bhograi (3). As many as 1,751 beneficiaries under Basta block were provided food through free kitchens followed by Baliapal (250) and Bhograi (92). Four teams of ODRAF including two at Baliapal and one each at Basta

and Bhograi have been deployed. Similarly, two Fire brigades each have been deployed at Basta, Baliapal, Jaleswar and Bhograi block.

Due to flash floods in the river Sono, one GP each in Remuna and Sadar area were affected. Senior officers have been deployed at different blocks to monitor the flood situation. At several places, road communication was disrupted due to running of flood water on road, while hundred acres of agricultural lands remained submerged under the flood water, reports added.

# Focus on cold storage network to boost farmer income

**RAJEEV RATHAN** ■ Bhubaneswar

Efforts to strengthen cold storage infrastructure across Odisha gained momentum with a high-level meeting held at the Lok Seva Bhavan on Monday, chaired by Deputy Chief Minister and Agriculture Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo.

Singh Deo emphasised that agriculture is a continuous and vital process that ensures year-round food supply and employment. He underlined Odisha's transformation from a food-deficit State to a food-surplus one, now exporting fruits, vegetables and indigenous fragrant rice to international markets.

"The rising demand for Odisha's agro-produce abroad opens up vast oppor-



tunities for our farmers. Ensuring proper farm-to-market linkages, fair prices for produce and protection of surplus stock are key priorities," he said.

To this end, the State Government is actively constructing cold storages in every sub-division. This infrastructure would help preserve pro-

duce, stabilize prices, eliminate artificial shortages and boost farmer incomes.

Singh Deo also noted that Odisha's natural strengths including its long coastline and improving maritime transport system position it well for agricultural exports. "By enhancing storage and logistics, we aim to further

empower our farmers and enhance food security," he added.

During the meeting, a private company also presented a proposal for setting up modern cold storage facilities in the State. The government is considering collaborations that can bring in technical expertise and investment.

# Youth-led workshop on menstrual hygiene at BU

'Let's talk about periods' drive focuses on awareness, dignity

**RAJEEV RATHAN** ■ Brahmapur

A youth-centric public health workshop on menstrual hygiene titled "Chal Periods Bishayare Kathaheba" (Let's talk about periods) was conducted at the Berhampur University last week aiming to break the silence and stigma around menstruation.

Organised in collaboration with the IFI Foundation, SwasthyaPlus and OdishaLive, the awareness programme saw enthusiastic participation from over a hundred students and faculty members.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Geetanjali Dash underlined the importance of normalising conversations around menstruation. "Despite being a natural process, menstruation is still shrouded in taboos that limit women's

progress. Through education and awareness, we can overcome these social barriers. Students must act as change-makers in their communities," she said.

Campaign head and IFI Foundation Vice-President Pranati Parida highlighted the link between menstrual hygiene and women's physical and mental well-being. "We need to empower the youth to create safe and informed spaces around menstrual health. This campaign aims to foster that change," she said.

A specially-curated awareness video was screened, and an informational booklet on menstrual hygiene was released. Students actively interacted with experts during a Q&A session led by senior gynaecologist Dr Kusum Dash and public health specialist Dr Sanjukta Sabat.

The event was compered by Priyanka Sucharita and coordinated by Amit Kumar Mohanty, Sitanshu Sekhar Sutar and Suchismita Behera.

# Min Swain accused of destabilising JSpur truck assn



**PRASANTA ROUT** ■ Paradip

The Jagatsinghpur District Truck Owners Association has accused local MLA and Minister of Industries, Skill Development, and Vocational Education, Sampad Chandra Swain, of creating unrest within the association and using the police administration to assert his dominance.

During a Press conference organised by the association, it was revealed that the Annual General Council Meeting, initially notified for June 29 at 10 am was called off at the last moment. The association had informed the local police administration about the meeting well in advance. However, on the day of the meeting, the Paradip police, allegedly acting under instructions from the Minister, issued a notice at 9:20 am, citing potential law-and-order issues and advising the association to postpone the meeting.

Association president Santosh Kumar Pattnaik shared that the Paradip police officer expressed helplessness, stating that the Minister had called him multiple times, pressuring him to halt the

meeting. This is not the first instance of interference by the Minister. The association had previously faced similar disruptions, leading to a legal case in the Civil Court of First-Class Magistrate. The court had directed the preservation of the association's status quo. However, disregarding the court's orders, the Minister, allegedly driven by political motives, used administrative powers to cancel the meeting and hinder the association's activities.

The association claims the Minister aims to divide its members and create unrest within the organization to fulfill personal political agendas. Reports also allege that a group of non-members, influenced by the Minister's supporters, gathered near the association's office to escalate tensions and justify the law-and-order claims by the police.

The press conference was attended by several leaders of the association, including vice president Ramakrishna Parija, general secretary Ranjit Kumar Behera, treasurer Sanjay Kumar Raut, and other prominent members.

# Incident-free Rath Yatra held across JSpur dist

Thousands throng to witness event at different places

**KAHNU NANDA** ■ Jagatsinghpur

Rath Yatra was celebrated with pomp and show across Jagatsinghpur district, and chariot pulling was done along with performance of all rituals in prime areas of the district in the last two days. Hundreds of devotees thronged the streets to have a glimpse of the Lords atop chariots by chanting hymns, hailing Lord Jagannath.

No untoward incident was reported during the festival as the administration and police had made elaborate arrangements for the safety and security of the devotees and visitors. Sources informed that

the Rath Yatra is popular in six major places in Jagatsinghpur district, like at Sidhala in Jagatsinghpur block, Dhyana Kuda in Biridi block, Garee in Naugaon block, Sarabanta in Erasama block, Gadakujanga in Kujanga block, and the port town of Paradip.

The ceremonial procession and ritual connected with the Rath Yatra took place after the customary sweeping of chariots by eminent personalities of the localities. Collector J Sonal attended the Sidhala Rath Yatra six km away from here and performed the sweeping ritual on Friday afternoon after which the chariot was pulled by devotees and local people. Nearly 20,000 devotees and residents from surrounding villages witnessed the festival.



In Dhyana Kuda Jagannath temple, the chariot pulling started after 4 pm. Pramod Nandi, the local designated king, performed the sweeping tradition in the presence of temple servitors. A huge gathering of devotees witnessed

mainly from the riverside Baisi Mouza areas on the occasion.

The Jagannath temple at Garee also witnessed about 40,000 devotees this year. Gyana Ranjan Biswal, the Thakur Raja of the temple,

performed the sweeping of chariots, which later began rolling on at around 4 pm. Women devotees pulled the Maa Subhadra chariot there.

Rath Yatra was celebrated at Sarabanta Jagannath temple in Gadaharishpur

Panchayat with a huge crowd turning out for the event. At Paradip port town, PPA Chairman PL Haranadh performed the sweeping ritual at the chariot and devotees pulled the chariot on Friday evening. The deities reached the Mausai Maa temple at Madhuban in the port town as per schedule.

The most glittering Rath Yatra was observed at Kunjabihari temple in Gadakujanga, where the chariot is usually pulled after a day. As per tradition of the temple, all rituals are performed on the day of Rath Yatra and the deities are left to take rest in the chariot till the next day evening, when the devotees pull the chariot. This year, former MLA Sambit Routray performed the sweeping rituals.



# SC permits substitution of attached property under PMLA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

In a notable development with far-reaching implications under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA), the Supreme Court on Monday permitted M3M Group to substitute a parcel of land attached under PMLA proceedings with an alternative property.

The order, passed by a bench comprising Justice Pamidighantam Sri Narasimha and Justice R Mahadevan, comes as a critical and timely judicial intervention — one that strikes a much-needed balance between the State's interest in securing alleged proceeds of crime and the rights of commercial enterprises to carry on legitimate economic activity.

The concept of substitution of attached property is not alien to PMLA but has often been clouded by a rigid enforcement mindset. Section 8(4) of the Act empowers the authorities to take possession of



confirmed attached property, while Section 8(8) provides for restoration to victims. However, nowhere does the law prohibit substitution per se. In practice, such flexibility has been exceedingly rare, with most enforcement actions resulting in indefinite stagnation of valuable commercial assets — thereby frustrating not just economic growth, but also investor confidence.

It is in this context that the Supreme Court's order in the M3M matter marks an evolu-

tion in the interpretation of PMLA's objectives. The substitution application filed by M3M was not a plea for immunity, but a pragmatic solution: replace the attached land with an alternate asset of equivalent or higher value, in order to allow development and public utility of the originally attached parcel. The Court's acceptance of this request implicitly affirms that preservation of alleged proceeds of crime need not come at the cost of economic paralysis — especially where the

accused party is cooperating and offering adequate security. What makes the order more remarkable is that it comes at a time when concerns have grown over excessive asset attachment by enforcement agencies — often in the early stages of investigation, and without confirmed findings of guilt. The current order introduces a practical middle path, one that allows the process of law to continue while safeguarding economic activity and contractual obligations, particularly in sectors like real estate that operate on long project timelines and high-value land banks.

It also potentially lays down a progressive precedent for other courts to consider substitution in suitable cases, provided the accused party demonstrates bona fides and offers assets that meet the twin tests of traceability and value sufficiency. Importantly, the substitution mechanism does not dilute the enforcement powers under PMLA — rather, it strengthens procedural fairness and reflects

a maturing jurisprudence that acknowledges the complexities of large-scale commercial operations caught in the crosshairs of criminal law.

M3M's success in obtaining this relief could now open the door for constructive dialogue between businesses and regulatory authorities, encouraging compliance through cooperation rather than confrontation. The order not only restores the commercial usability of a major land parcel, paving the way for project launch and employment generation, but also signals to investors and institutions that the Indian legal system remains open to equitable solutions even within stringent regulatory regimes.

In sum, the SC has rightly recognised that law enforcement and economic continuity can — and must — co-exist. This landmark order offers hope that legal innovation, when anchored in statutory discipline and judicial pragmatism, can meaningfully restore the balance that the rule of law ultimately seeks to uphold.

# India to receive above average rainfall in July, says IMD

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

Most parts of India are likely to receive above-normal rainfall in July, the weather department said on Monday, asking authorities and people in central India, Uttarakhand and Haryana to stay alert due to the risk of flooding. The IMD said rainfall is likely to be below normal in large parts of the northeast, many areas of eastern India and extreme southern peninsular India.

Average maximum temperatures are expected to remain normal to below normal in many regions. However, parts of the northeast, northwest, east and southern peninsula are likely to see above-normal temperatures, IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said during an online press briefing.

The country gauges 28 cm of rainfall on average in July. Mohapatra said there is a high chance of heavy rainfall in central India and the adjoining southern peninsula.



This includes east Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, adjoining areas of Vidarbha and Telangana and parts of Gujarat and Maharashtra.

"We should monitor the catchment areas of rivers such as the Godavari, Mahanadi and Krishna. Our models show a high probability of above-normal rainfall in the upper Mahanadi catchment, which includes Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. There are several other rivers in the region. We must closely watch rainfall activity and the water

levels in reservoirs," he said. He added that good rainfall is also expected in Uttarakhand and Haryana.

"This region includes several cities and towns, including Delhi. Many south-flowing rivers originate in Uttarakhand. We must take precautions for all these river catchments, cities and towns," Mohapatra said.

He said this kind of rainfall pattern usually occurs when the monsoon trough shifts south of its normal position and when multiple low-pressure systems form.

# CBI arrests 10th suspect in Mule accounts case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

The CBI has arrested the 10th suspect from Patna, Bihar, in connection with its crackdown on mule accounts used by cyber criminals to launder illicit money, officials on Monday said.

The agency has found that the suspect had "links in foreign countries" which are being investigated thoroughly, they said. The CBI had launched a nationwide crackdown on 8.5 lakh mule accounts in over 700 bank branches which were being used by cyber criminals to launder proceeds from scams involving digital theft, impersonation, fraudulent investments and UPI-based frauds, the officials said.

The CBI had during the operation conducted coordinated raids at 42 locations in Rajasthan, Delhi, Haryana, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh in which nine suspects were taken into custody. The materials found during searches took the agency to the 10th suspect in Patna who was arrested recently.

The CBI has not yet revealed the identity of either of the arrested suspect and is tight lipped about the case as the operations are still going on, they said. Those taken into custody include alleged middlemen, agents, aggregators, account holders and banking correspondents, all believed to be instrumental in orchestrating and facilitating the opening of these fictitious accounts, the officials said.

A mule account is opened in the name of an individual, who may or may not be aware that the account is used to launder illicit money.

# BJP slams Tejashwi Yadav's stand on Waqf Act

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

The BJP on Monday accused the opposition alliance of trying to turn the Constitution into a *sharia* script and using the garb of *samajwaad* (socialism) to hide its *namazwaad*, as it slammed RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav for asserting that his bloc, if elected to power in Bihar, will throw the amended Waqf Act in dustbin.

BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said the INDIA bloc of the RJD-Congress-Left in Bihar has shown its absence of respect for the Constitution, as the Act was passed by Parliament and is being adjudicated in the Supreme Court. He told reporters that the opposition alliance is driven by vote bank politics, a euphemism for its outreach to Muslim voters over the opposition to the Act from a large number of them.

Trivedi alleged that the INDIA bloc wants to enforce

Sharia provisions through the back door. States like Telangana and Karnataka are giving reservations to Muslims at the cost of quotas for Hindu OBCs, SCs and STs and West Bengal is also trying to do it, he said.

He underlined the BJP-led NDA's commitment to the values of the Constitution drafted by BR Ambedkar.

He said, *Samvidhan bachao* is merely a facade of these parties as their true face is *sharia laa*. If they are in power, they will add *namazwaad* to the Constitution's preamble. They want to turn the Constitution into a *sharia* script, but we will not allow it."

RJD's Tejashwi Yadav on Sunday claimed that the ruling NDA in Bihar was "on its way out" and the new Government in the state led by the opposition alliance will "consign to the dustbin" the Waqf Act brought by the Narendra Modi dispensation at the Centre.

The leader was addressing a 'Save Waqf, Save Constitution' rally at the his-

torical Gandhi Maidan in Bihar's Capital, Patna. Elections in Bihar will be held later this year. The BJP spokesperson said the ruling National Democratic Alliance will not allow any provisions of Ambedkar's Constitution to be thrown into the dustbin.

Slamming opposition parties, he said the *sharia* provisions they are advocating are not in force in even Islamic countries, including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Türkiye. These parties want to concentrate huge portions of Waqf land into the hands of some self-appointed Muslim religious leaders, he said, adding that these properties were never used for the welfare of the community.

Socialism believes in the distribution of wealth, but socialist parties like the RJD and the Samajwadi Party are doing the opposite and are, in fact, with a few self-appointed Muslim leaders, he said. This is not *samajwaad* but *namazwaad*, he alleged.

# Army Chief begins four-day trip to Bhutan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi on Monday began a four-day trip to Bhutan to further enhance the already close bilateral military ties against the backdrop of China's relentless efforts to strengthen infrastructure around the strategically located Doklam plateau.

In Bhutanese capital Thimphu, Gen Dwivedi will call on King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and hold wide-ranging talks with Bhutan's military chief Lt General Batoo Tshering, officials said. The Army Chief's visit to Bhutan from June 30 to July 3 comes amid the evolving regional security scenario and over seven weeks after India's Operation Sindoor targeting terror bases in Pakistani territories.

"The visit aims to further bolster the enduring bilateral defence cooperation between the two nations," the Indian Army said, adding it reflects India's commitment to its neighbour. It is expected that



the overall situation in the Doklam plateau as well as Chinese activities in the region are set to figure in Gen Dwivedi's talks with his Bhutanese interlocutors.

The strategic ties between India and Bhutan witnessed an upward trajectory in the last few years in the backdrop of a 73-day face-off between Indian and Chinese troops in Doklam tri-junction in 2017.

The Doklam plateau is considered an important area for India's strategic interest.

The standoff at the Doklam tri-junction in 2017 began after China tried to extend a road in an area that Bhutan claimed belonged to it. India

had strongly opposed the construction as it would have impacted its overall security interests. The India-China stand-off in the Doklam plateau even triggered fears of larger conflict between the two neighbours. Bhutan had said the area belonged to it and India supported the Bhutanese claim. The face-off was resolved following several rounds of talks.

Bhutan shares an over 400-km-long border with China and the two countries have held a series of boundary talks in a bid to resolve the dispute.

China and Bhutan are looking at an expeditious resolution of their festering boundary row

that could have implications for India's security interests.

In late 2023, Bhutan's then Foreign Minister Tandi Dorji held talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Beijing. A Chinese readout on the talks said Bhutan firmly abides by the one-China principle and stands ready to work with China for an early settlement of the boundary issue.

New Delhi has been keeping a close eye on the negotiations between Bhutan and China on their boundary row as it could have implications for New Delhi's security interests, especially in the Doklam tri-junction.

In October 2021, Bhutan and China signed an agreement on the "three-step roadmap" to expedite negotiations to resolve their boundary dispute. Chief Operations Officer of the Royal Bhutan Army Lt General visited India in February. During the trip, he held talks with Gen Dwivedi, NSA Ajit Doval, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh.

# Jal Shakti Ministry issues guidelines for scientist recruitment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

The Ministry of Jal Shakti has proposed a comprehensive overhaul of rules for recruitment and promotion of Group A scientists in the Central Ground Water Board, introducing a structured promotion path, mandatory field experience, tiered performance assessments and new training requirements.

The draft rules covering posts from Scientist B to G have been published for public consultation, and stakeholders are to submit their feedback by July 13.

The draft notification aligns the rules with the Revised Flexible Complementing Scheme introduced by the Department of Personnel and Training in 2024.

Promotions will be granted only after scientists complete minimum residency periods - three years at Scientist C level and up to five years at senior grades like Scientist F and G. Additionally, field experience of two years is required for

promotion to Scientist F and five years for Scientist G.

A key feature of the revised framework is the two-tier assessment system. Scientists will undergo Level-1 screening by an Internal Screening Committee, followed by Level-2 assessment by either an Assessment Board or a Department Peer Review Committee.

These evaluations will be held twice a year, in January and July. Scientists who do not qualify can be reassessed only after one year and must sub-

mit an additional Annual Performance Appraisal Report.

Training is also a significant component of the new rules. Direct recruits must undergo a mandatory one-year Induction Level Training Course, while officers promoted internally are required to complete two weeks of training in management and leadership at recognised government institutions such as the Rajiv Gandhi National Ground Water Training and Research Institute or Institute of Secretariat Training and

Management. The draft specifies that promotions under the Revised Flexible Complementing Scheme will be allowed only three times. If a candidate does not qualify within those attempts, they will be moved to the Modified Assured Career Progression scheme applicable to other Central Government employees.

Moreover, no retrospective promotions will be allowed. Officers on deputation or leave will receive promotions only upon their return.

Management. The draft specifies that promotions under the Revised Flexible Complementing Scheme will be allowed only three times. If a candidate does not qualify within those attempts, they will be moved to the Modified Assured Career Progression scheme applicable to other Central Government employees.

Moreover, no retrospective promotions will be allowed. Officers on deputation or leave will receive promotions only upon their return.

# QUAD nations launch sea observer mission to boost maritime cooperation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

The coast guards of India, Japan, the US and Australia have launched the first-ever "Quad-at-sea" mission to boost operational coordination and interoperability in the Indo-Pacific.

The decision to launch the mission was taken at the four-nation's grouping annual summit in Wilmington in September last year that was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other Quad leaders. "In a significant stride toward strengthening maritime security and interoperability in the Indo-Pacific, the coast guards of India, Japan, the United States, and Australia have launched the first-ever 'Quad at sea ship observer mission' under the Wilmington declaration," the defence ministry said.

"Two officers, including women officers, from each country have embarked on board US Coast Guard Cutter

Stratton, which is currently sailing to Guam," it said.

The ministry said the "cross-embarkation mission" marks an unprecedented step to enhance joint readiness, operational coordination, and domain awareness in support of a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific.

"The mission reflects the vision laid out at the Quad leaders' summit in September 2024 and signifies a deepening of operational ties between the Indian Coast Guard, Japan Coast Guard, US Coast Guard and Australian Border Force," the ministry said in a statement.

In a joint statement, the Quad leaders on September 22 rolled out a number of new and ambitious initiatives in areas ranging from maritime security, infrastructure to critical and emerging technologies and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

A key outcome of the summit was a decision on having joint Coast Guard operations under

a first-ever "Quad-at-Sea" ship observer mission to advance maritime safety and to continue with further missions in future across the Indo-Pacific. The defence ministry said India's participation reinforces its strategic maritime vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and complements national efforts under the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).

The Quad-at-sea initiative thus sets the foundation for fostering stronger trust, coordination, and collective resilience amid evolving maritime challenges in the region, the ministry added.

The IPOI is an open, inclusive, non-treaty based, global initiative that was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 14th East Asia Summit in November 2019 to promote collaborative efforts among like-minded nations to better manage, conserve and secure the Indo-Pacific maritime domain.

# BRICS to denounce Pahalgam attack

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

The BRICS leaders' declaration to be unveiled at the grouping's annual summit in Rio de Janeiro is set to forcefully denounce the Pahalgam terror attack and call for a firm approach to unitedly confront terrorism in line with India's expectation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the summit in the Brazilian city on July 6 and 7. India will be the grouping's chair for the next year. The prime minister is travelling to Brazil as part of his five-nation tour from July 2 to 9. The other countries that the prime minister is visiting are Ghana, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina and Namibia.

Dammu Ravi, secretary (economic relations) in the external affairs ministry, told a media briefing that Modi's participation in the summit will be an expression of India's solidarity with the bloc and it will be a great opportunity for him to connect with the leaders of the Global South.

Ravi suggested that the

BRICS leaders' declaration will have reference to the challenge of terrorism that will be much to the satisfaction of India.

"There is no contradiction in the way the members have come out with their understanding, sympathy and solidarity with India on Pahalgam. I think this has been very well captured in the (leaders) declaration and all the members are very sensitive to this matter," he said. "There is also a broader understanding on how to deal with this menace of terrorism and no one should be spared in dealing with it. I think that is very well captured."

"When you get the declaration, you will see the language is much to our satisfaction," Ravi added. BRICS brings together 11 major emerging economies of the world, representing around 49.5 per cent of the global population, around 40 per cent of the global GDP and around 26 per cent of the global trade.

The BRICS declaration is also expected to feature a reference to the Iran-Israel conflict. The senior diplomat said four concrete "deliverables" are

expected from the BRICS summit that include global governance and artificial intelligence, a framework declaration on climate finance and a partnership for the elimination of socially determined diseases. Asked about Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin deciding to skip the summit, Ravi only said it will be a key forum for India to continue to push for the interests of the Global South.

Ravi indicated that the BRICS summit could also deliberate on the issue of carrying out trade settlements in national currencies. Ravi said BRICS is bringing some understanding of how important it is to have alternative mechanisms to do trade and projects in national currencies.

"It is a process and we are confident that it will get traction in days to come," he said.

BRICS, originally comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, expanded in 2024 to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates, with Indonesia joining in 2025.

# SC junks Lalit's plea seeking BCCI to pay ED penalty



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday junked a plea filed by former cricket administrator Lalit Modi seeking an order to the BCCI to pay a penalty of ₹10.65 crore imposed on him by the ED for violating the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). A bench of Justices PS Narasimha and R Mahadevan, however, said Modi will be entitled to avail civil remedies as available according to law.

The Bombay High Court on December 19 last year had imposed a cost of ₹1 lakh on Modi while dismissing his petition seeking an order to the BCCI to pay a penalty of ₹10.65 crore imposed on him by the Enforcement Directorate for violating FEMA.

The high court had said the petition was "frivolous and wholly misconceived" as the adjudication authority under FEMA has imposed the penalty on Modi.

Modi, in his plea, said he was appointed as vice president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, during

which period he was also the chairman of the Indian Premier League governing body, a subcommittee of the BCCI. The plea claimed that the BCCI is supposed to indemnify him as per the bylaws.

The HC bench, however, referred to a Supreme Court judgment of 2005, which said the BCCI does not fall under the definition of a 'state' as defined under Article 12 of the Constitution.

Despite clear orders from the apex court, Modi filed this petition in 2018, the HC bench noted.

"In matters of alleged indemnification of the petitioner (Modi) in the context of penalties imposed upon the petitioner by the ED, there is no question of discharge of any public function, and therefore, for this purpose, no writ could be issued to the BCCI," the HC had said.

"In any event, the reliefs are wholly misconceived. This petition is frivolous, and accordingly, we dismiss this petition," the court had said and directed Modi to pay a sum of ₹1 lakh to the Tata Memorial Hospital within four weeks.



# Amarnath Yatra to begin from July 3 amid tight security cover

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Jammu

The stage is set for the annual Amarnath Yatra, commencing July 3, as Jammu and Kashmir prepares to welcome lakhs of devotees on the sacred pilgrimage to the Amarnath cave shrine.

To ensure an incident-free pilgrimage, authorities have implemented a multi-layered security framework from Lakhanpur, the entry point to Jammu and Kashmir, to the holy cave shrine at an altitude of 3,880 meters. The entire route from Jammu to the cave has been brought under CCTV surveillance, with a three-tier security blanket enveloping all base camps.

In a significant technological advancement, Facial Recognition Systems (FRS) have been installed at strategic locations on both routes. The system has already proven effective, with the arrest of two overground workers (OGWs) of terrorist organisations on June 19.

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology will tag all vehicles and individual pilgrims, enabling real-time tracking of their movements along the Pahalgam and Baltal routes.

Additionally, the routes passing through the Kashmir Valley have been declared “no-fly zones” from July 1 to August



Sadhus shout slogans as they wait for registration of Amarnath Yatra 2025 at Ram Mandir base camp in Jammu PTI

10, banning the use of drones and UAVs to enhance security.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, during his visit to the Baltal base camp in Ganderbal on Monday, reviewed the on-ground preparations and expressed satisfaction with the arrangements. “After meeting with senior officers of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) and security agencies, I can confidently say that this year’s arrangements are far superior to previous years. The coordination among security agencies is seamless, and they are on high alert,” Sinha told

reporters. To ensure a clean and comfortable pilgrimage, the administration has established 5,613 toilets and bathing units along the twin routes—2,920 on the Pahalgam axis and 2,693 on the Baltal axis. A workforce of 7,361 sanitation workers has been deployed to maintain cleanliness, supported by 15 Solid Waste Management Processing Facilities to handle waste effectively.

LG Manoj Sinha also inaugurated SASB’s Yatri Niwas at Pantha Chowk, with an accommodation facility to house 1300 pilgrims in Srinagar on Monday. To feed the pilgrims daily, permission has been

granted to 125 langars (community kitchens) to provide free, nutritious meals to pilgrims, security personnel, and sanitation workers. Authorised by the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, these langars, operated by organisations from Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and other states, stretch from Lakhanpur to the holy cave.

They are expected to serve approximately 1,00,000 meals daily, ensuring no one goes hungry during the arduous journey.

The langars are strategically located along the routes: 25 at

Baltal and Domel, 13 at the holy cave, 8 at Sheshnag, 5 at Pissutop, 12 at Panchtarni, 7 at Chandanwari, 9 at Nunwan, and 5 at Zojibal. An additional 50 langars line the Jammu-Pathankot and Jammu-Srinagar national highways, with five more at the Jammu base camp, Yatri Niwas Bhagwati Nagar.

The Shrine Board has curated a wholesome, non-oily menu tailored to the high-altitude terrain, prioritising the health and well-being of pilgrims who undertake the challenging trek to pay homage to the naturally formed ice lingam, a revered symbol of Lord Shiva.

LG Manoj Sinha, who chaired a high-level meeting with senior officials from the SASB, civil administration, J&K Police, and security agencies, emphasised the pilgrim-centric measures implemented this year. “I have closely observed the last four pilgrimages, and I can confidently say that the level of preparedness by the administration is far superior this time,” he said.

“The robust and well-integrated security protocols, combined with enhanced facilities, will ensure a peaceful and hassle-free experience for devotees,” Sinha also expressed hope that pilgrims from across the country would return with cherished memories of their journey.

# Firebrand Telangana BJP MLA Raja Singh resigns from party

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Hyderabad

Upset over the possible appointment of Ramchander Rao as BJP’s Telangana President, the party’s firebrand MLA Raja Singh on Monday wrote to Union Minister G Kishan Reddy saying that he is resigning from the primary membership of the saffron party.

Reddy is presently the state chief and the party high command is likely to announce new successor on Tuesday.

Singh said the decision to appoint the new head of the party in the state has come as a shock and disappointment, not just to him, but to lakhs of Karyakartas, leaders, and voters who have stood by the party through every high and low.

“With great sadness, I have decided to resign from the primary membership of the Bharatiya Janata Party. I request you, Shri Kishan Reddy ji, to kindly inform the Hon’ble Speaker of the Telangana Legislative Assembly that T Raja Singh is no longer a member of the BJP,” he said in the letter.

There are many capable senior leaders, MLAs, and MPs within Telangana who have tirelessly worked for the growth of BJP and who have the strength, credibility, and connections to lead the party forward.

Unfortunately, it appears



that some individuals, driven by personal interests, have misled the central leadership and taken decisions by running the show from behind the curtain, he alleged.

“This not only undermines the sacrifices of grassroots workers but risks pushing the party into avoidable setbacks,” he said. He said he has been a dedicated Karyakarta, elected three times in a row with the blessings of the people and support of the party.

“But today, I find it difficult to stay silent or pretend that all is well. This is not about personal ambition, this letter reflects the pain and frustration of lakhs of loyal BJP Karyakartas and supporters who feel sidelined and unheard,” Singh said.

Though he may be stepping away from the party, the Goshamahal legislator said he remains fully committed to the ideology of Hindutva and the service of Hindu Dharma and

the people of his constituency. Later, speaking to reporters, Singh said he went to the BJP office to file a nomination for the state president post.

The nomination should be supported by ten state BJP council members.

However, he alleged that some of the members who were supporting his candidature were threatened by few party leaders that they would be suspended if they chose to back Singh. In August 2024, Singh was suspended from the party following his alleged controversial remarks against “Islam and Prophet Mohammed” in a video which was later pulled down by the social media platform on which it was uploaded.

He was arrested under the Preventive Detention Act. However, the Telangana High Court in November 2022 had set aside the PD Act invoked against him. Later, he was granted bail.

# Legislatures are soul of the State: Vijender Gupta

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dharamshala/New Delhi

Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta on Monday said that Legislatures are not mere formal institutions but the “soul” of the State, shaping governance, justice, and progress for both present and future generations.

He had given the statement while addressing the Annual Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), India Region, Zone-II, held at Tapovan in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh.

Speaking on the theme “Role of Legislatures in Managing State Resources vis-à-vis Development of the State,” Gupta underscored the critical role of elected assemblies in ensuring transparent governance and inclusive growth.

He said that through open debate and collective decision-making, Legislatures approve every plan, policy, and law, making them central to a state’s development.

The Speaker highlighted the importance of parliamentary tools such as



Question Hour, Calling Attention Motions, and special debates in holding governments accountable and bridging the gap between grassroots issues and state-level action.

He also emphasized the role of committees in monitoring government expenditure, maintaining fiscal discipline, and ensuring delivery of welfare schemes.

Gupta pointed out that annual budgets affect every citizen, from welfare schemes

to healthcare and education, and it is the responsibility of the Legislature to ensure resources are used wisely. Calling for cooperation across party lines, he urged legislators to prioritise public welfare above politics and contribute actively to legislative proceedings.

He concluded by stressing the need for visionary, regionally relevant and environmentally sustainable policies to meet the nation’s development goals.

# Mamata Government backing sex crimes: BJP fact finding team

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ Kolkata

The four-member BJP fact finding team that on Monday visited Kolkata to inquire into the South Calcutta Law College rape case slammed Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for allowing a States — sponsored crime racket by letting “history-sheeters” to take control of her party Trinamool Congress.

“It is very sad to note the women are most unsafe in a State that is run by a woman Chief Minister,” senior BJP leader and Union Minister Satpal Singh said after he and his team members met Kolkata Commissioner of Police Manoj Verma and Nayana Chattopadhyay the Vice Principal of the said law College.

The team comprising Singh, senior BJP leaders including former Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Deb, Meenakshi Lekhi and Manan Kumar Mishra told media men after inspecting the site how in a catena of cases related to sexual crime against women the State police refuse to write FIRs defying the Supreme Court guidelines.

Questioning how history

sheeters could be appointed in a government aided college, Singh said, “we have been told that the main perpetrator of the crime in this case is a law graduate from this place and is a history-sheeter who has at least four grave charges against him, he is known to have molested women earlier too, despite such charges he was given appointment by the Governing body of this college, a governing body that is chaired by a TMC MLA, this speaks volumes of how Bengal has become a victim of state-sponsored crimes.”

The BJP leaders were referring to the prime accused Manojit Mishra a Trinamool Congress Chhatra Parishad leader and a practicing advocate who was appointed on a temporary basis by the college governing body regardless of his criminal background.

The former Tripura Chief Minister alleged that there were numerous such instances of rapes and other crimes against women going unreported as the police would not register FIRs.

“We can give you a long list of victims of sexual crimes in Bengal, where many of these women have been a victim of the TMC leaders, I recently

went to Cooch Behar where a woman was raped and had been hospitalised, but I found that the police had not registered any FIR in blatant defiance of the Supreme Court directive.”

Mishra who is also the Chairman of the Bar Council of India alleged how in most cases “as the TMC men are involved in the crimes against women the police refuse to register FIR and hush up the case, the report that we got this time is very disheartening and we will file the reports at appropriate level.”

Referring to their meeting with the Kolkata Commissioner of Police the BJP leaders said that “he has assured us that this time strong cases will be prepared against the accused so that they get the highest punishment.”

Alleging that the Kolkata Police was not allowing the victim or her family to meet the outside world, Deb said that “we will try to meet the victim or her family, but we are not sure because the police have hidden her in some place and not letting anyone to meet her, this is the kind of democracy that Mamata Banerjee Government is practicing here.”

# MCG sealed school building in Gurugram

PARVESH SHARMA ■ Gurugram

The Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) once again sealed the building of International Delhi Public School (IDPS), located in Basai Enclave, for violating building regulations on Monday.

The sealing operation was carried out by a team led by Assistant Engineer R.K. Mongia, along with Junior Engineers Varun and Hariom, and supported by a police force to ensure law and order during the action. This is not the first time the school building has faced action. Earlier, on June 18, the MCG had sealed the premises for unauthorized construction.

However, in a blatant defiance of the law, the owners broke the seal and resumed operations. Taking serious note of this violation, the corporation lodged an FIR against the building owners and re-initiated the sealing process.

According to MCG officials, the IDPS building was constructed without obtaining the necessary approvals from the MCG. Despite being issued multiple notices, the building owners failed to respond or

regularize the construction.

The officials further stated that the structure lacks the mandatory construction permissions, prompting the enforcement action.

“The building owners were given several warnings and notices to comply with the regulations, but they continued to ignore the rules,” said an MCG official.

**According to MCG officials, the IDPS building was constructed without obtaining the necessary approvals from the MCG**

“This sealing was carried out with police assistance to ensure no further violations occur. Such actions will continue against illegal constructions in the city.”

The corporation has also directed its officials to intensify monitoring of ongoing construction activities to prevent similar violations. Additionally, residents have been urged to report any unauthorized construction to the municipal authorities, assuring swift action against offenders.

# Cooking fuel smoke damages women’s brains: IISc study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Women exposed to household air pollution from cooking fuels may be at a higher risk of cognitive impairment than men, a study by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru has found.

The study, published in The Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia journal, analysed MRI brain scans of ageing adults in the rural town of Srinivaspura in Karnataka, revealing that women might be at a higher risk of experiencing adverse effects in the brain.

A team, which also included researchers from the University of Chicago, US, explained that burning solid fuels for cooking, especially in poorly ventilated spaces, can release air pollutants, such as oxides of carbon, nitrogen, sulphur and heavy metals, along with suspended particulate matter.

The pollutants have been shown to affect the brain through varied mechanisms, primary ones being inflammation and oxidative stress, they said.

The researchers analysed more than 4,100 adults aged 45

and above, who are participants of the ongoing Centre for Brain Research-Srinivaspura Aging, Neuro Senescence, and COGnition (CBR-SANSCOG) study at IISc. MRI brain scans were taken for around a thousand of these participants.

Cognitive impairment, they explained, affects memory, reasoning, and speech. It may precede conditions like dementia and Alzheimer’s disease — in which the affected person faces trouble performing daily routine activities.

The study’s authors wrote, “Polluting cooking technology users may be at a higher risk for cognitive impairment.”

Rural females, who tend to be more exposed than males, could have greater vulnerability to (household air pollution’s) adverse effects on the brain.” Given the increasing burden of dementia — an ageing-related disorder — in India, the findings have significant implications for public health, providing insights on how household air pollution can influence dementia risk, the team said.

“Policies promoting clean cooking fuel (or) technology adoption are imperative,” they wrote.They added that the findings support those from previous studies which showed



a lowered cognition and ability to process visual information in space among people using polluting cooking technology. Further, upon analysing the MRI brain scans of women, the team found lower volumes of hippocampus — a brain region critical for memory and known to be significantly impacted in

Alzheimer’s disease. Overall, the study broadens the understanding of how pollution-causing cooking fuel is related with poor cognition, the authors said.

“Community-centred interventions to improve health literacy and clean cooking fuel adoption among rural Indians, could help reduce the substan-

tial morbidities associated with polluting cooking fuel use, and reduce dementia risk,” they said.

The study is the only one to employ brain scanning techniques in a rural population to examine how household air pollution can adversely impact the brain structurally, the authors said.

# MP Police drop BSNL, shift to Airtel for better network

GIRISH SHARMA ■ Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Police has initiated a major shift in its internal communication system by deciding to discontinue the use of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) SIM cards and migrate all official connections to Airtel.

This marks the end of nearly four decades of reliance on BSNL’s network, which had long served as the backbone of communication for police personnel across the state. However, persistent network issues, frequent call drops, and poor data services, especially in remote and rural areas, have compelled the police force to make this long-pending change.

The decision reflects growing frustration among officials over BSNL’s inability to match the evolving demands of modern policing.

Despite being a state-owned telecom service provider, BSNL consistently lagged behind private players in terms of network expan-

sion and service upgrades. Over the past several decades, successive Central Governments failed to revive or significantly improve BSNL’s infrastructure and performance.

As a result, even essential services like those used by law enforcement agencies continued to suffer from outdated technology and unreliable connectivity. This systemic neglect eventually pushed the Madhya Pradesh Police to explore more efficient alternative.

On June 24, the Police Telecom Headquarters in Bhopal, under the direction of SSP Wireless Vijay Kumar Khatri, issued a formal order instructing all police units—including district police, battalions, fire services, and training schools—to port their BSNL numbers to Airtel.

The deadline for completing the process had been set for June 28. Officers have been asked to initiate porting by sending a ‘PORT <mobile number>’ message to 1900, followed by a ₹10 recharge.

Once the porting is successful, the details must be recorded in an Excel sheet and sent to the headquarters via email. A copy of the directive was also shared with Airtel’s local representative to ensure logistical support and coordination.

This transition is expected to improve communication efficiency within the police force, especially during emergencies, operations in sensitive areas and coordination between various units. Officials believe that Airtel’s superior network coverage and faster data services will enhance the responsiveness and effectiveness of the police.

The move also underscores the growing dependence on private telecom providers for critical public services, due to the continued underperformance of state-run entities like BSNL.

A senior officer in the ranking of Addl DG told that the transition period is still on and in a couple of days, all numbers will be ported to Airtel.



Editor's TAKE

Language imposition row

Maharashtra withdraws its resolution to implement 3-language policy after huge backlash in the state

The Maharashtra Government has withdrawn two Government resolutions (GRs) related to the implementation of the three-language policy in schools, following a fierce backlash from opposition parties and civil society over what was perceived as the imposition of Hindi. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced that a new committee headed by noted educationist Dr Narendra Jadhav would re-examine the language policy in detail and submit a report within three months. Until then, both resolutions issued on April 16 and June 17 have been scrapped.

The controversy first erupted when the Government issued a GR in April making Hindi a compulsory third language for students in Classes 1 to 5 in English and Marathi medium schools. Opposition parties, including the Shiv Sena (UBT), Nationalist Congress Party (Sharad Pawar faction), and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, termed the policy an attempt to erode regional identity and promote a cultural homogenisation under the guise of national integration. The resistance to Hindi is not unique to Maharashtra; southern states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh have historically pushed back against any perceived attempt to promote Hindi at the expense of their native languages. This opposition is rooted in a mix of cultural pride, historical memory, and concerns about linguistic equity. In states like Tamil Nadu, anti-Hindi agitations of the 1960s left a deep imprint, shaping the political and cultural outlook for generations. In Maharashtra, the assertion of Marathi identity has always played a central role in political discourse. Any attempt to dilute this through what is seen as a “national” agenda often provokes strong emotional and political responses. The core concern in these regions is that Hindi, already dominant in the central Government and national media, is being imposed through educational policies that ignore local linguistic contexts. Critics argue that while students in non-Hindi-speaking states are expected to learn Hindi, there is no reciprocal encouragement for Hindi-speaking students to learn regional languages like Marathi, Tamil, or Kannada. This one-sided policy direction fosters a sense of marginalisation and cultural erosion. At its heart, this controversy is a reflection of India’s enduring challenge: how to balance national integration with linguistic diversity.

Language in India is more than a means of communication; it is an emblem of identity, history, and emotional belonging. The issue is not with learning Hindi per se, but with the manner in which it is introduced and the lack of choice it implies. Voluntary, interest-driven language learning is welcome. Coercive mandates, however, tend to backfire. Going forward, Maharashtra’s decision to put the policy on hold and form an expert panel is a step in the right direction. It acknowledges the need for dialogue, consultation, and a broader consensus on something as sensitive as language education. India’s strength lies in its linguistic diversity. Efforts to unify the country through language should celebrate that plurality rather than suppress it. As the panel led by Dr Jadhav begins its work, the hope is that it will recommend a policy that upholds the rights of every child to learn the language he wants.

Strategic realignment in a shifting world order

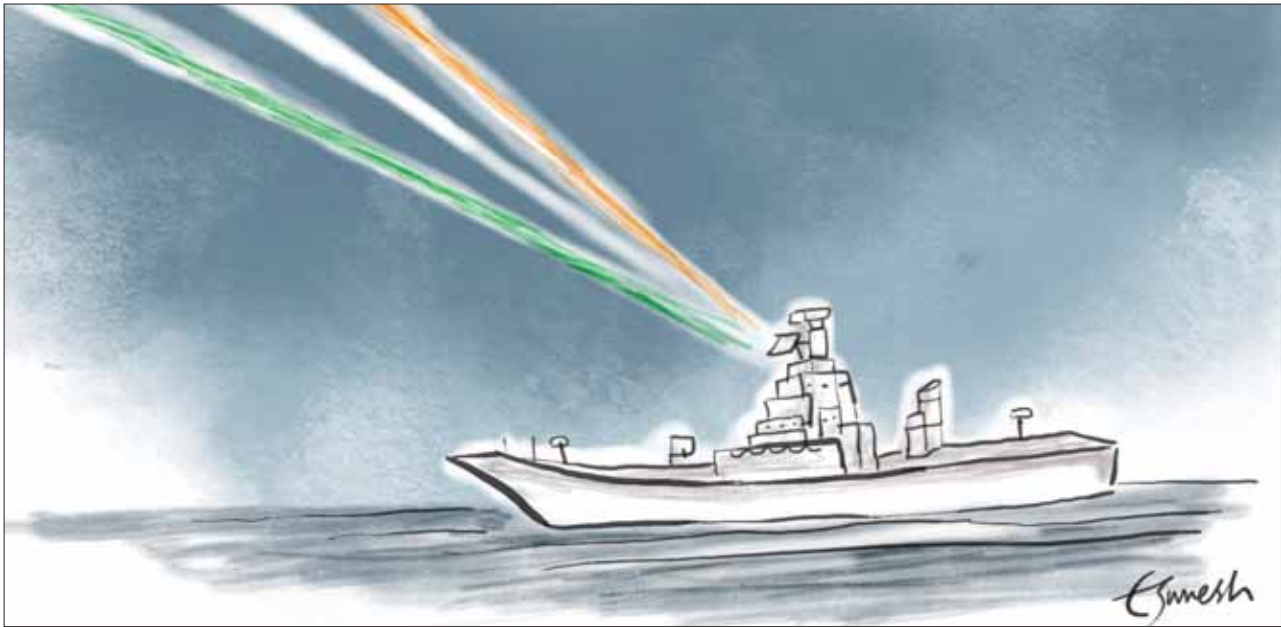
Against the backdrop of global instability, India is recalibrating its strategic posture. Anchored in a blend of realism, regional engagement, and democratic values, India’s maritime vision is emerging as the mainstay of its foreign policy

In recent years, international politics has seen the rise of several popular yet complex terminologies — bandwagoning, strategic autonomy, plurilateralism, and epistemic communities. These concepts have grown in prominence alongside earlier ideological debates such as the “End of History” and the “Clash of Civilisations” that dominated post-Cold War discourse.

As the global order continues to undergo sweeping changes, many once-stable doctrines now stand challenged, highlighting an enduring truth of international relations: change remains the only constant. Amid this flux, a notable evolution has emerged — the strengthening of strategic and democratic bonds between the United States and India, the world’s oldest and largest democracies. While several global regions continue to simmer under conflict — West Asia and the Ukraine-Russia war being prime examples — India and the US have taken steps towards enhancing mutual cooperation in defence, trade, and global governance.

In this environment, nations are urgently seeking robust strategic mechanisms to preserve sovereignty and national interest. The resurgence of offensive realism as a philosophical framework underscores this strategic recalibration. As great powers jostle for influence, the 19th-century maritime doctrine of Alfred Thayer Mahan — that control of the seas equates to global dominance — has resurfaced with striking relevance. Maritime security, therefore, has become the linchpin of modern geopolitics. Oceans are no longer viewed simply as trade routes but as strategic zones essential to regional stability, economic resilience, and defence readiness. Recognising this, India has been working to secure its maritime frontiers, particularly within the framework of its Neighbourhood First Policy and its vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR).

These principles aim not only to foster regional collaboration but also to establish India as a stabilising maritime power in the Indian Ocean. One of the strongest manifestations of India’s maritime strategy has been its deepening cooperation with countries like Mauritius. Recent Indo-Mauritius coordination exemplifies India’s intent to build an integrated network of partnerships, especially in response to assertive moves by other regional powers. This includes countering China’s growing influence through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), military bases such as the one in Djibouti, and the strategic encirclement of India via the “String of Pearls” doctrine. In response, India has forged closer security partnerships with countries in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) such as Sri Lanka, Maldives, Seychelles, Bangladesh, and



Mauritius. A coastal radar surveillance network has been established, alongside the Indian Ocean Region Information Fusion Centre (IFC-IOR), which shares real-time intelligence to enhance situational awareness. These steps ensure that India remains agile in detecting and responding to maritime threats. India’s defence preparedness has also been fortified with procurements like the Indo-Russian BrahMos supersonic cruise missile and advanced components for its Air Force’s MiG-29 jets. Parallely, the Necklace of Diamonds strategy — India’s response to China’s “String of Pearls” — is bearing fruit through naval partnerships and infrastructural projects in Oman, Myanmar, Chabahar Port in Iran, and the Changi Naval Base in Singapore.

Underpinning these efforts is India’s Act East Policy, which seeks to reinforce economic, cultural, and strategic ties with East and Southeast Asian nations. Through an expanded network of ports, high-quality medical assistance, humanitarian relief, and joint patrolling initiatives, India is also working to build a resilient and secure Indo-Pacific architecture. Crucially, this strategic reorientation demands not just naval might but also consensus and diplomatic cohesion. India has led calls for a unified maritime policy across the IOR. The empha-

sis now lies in gathering all regional actors at a common table to forge cooperative responses to transnational challenges — ranging from piracy and drug trafficking to terrorism, cybercrime, and climate-induced threats. India’s leadership in climate action and sustainable development has further bolstered its diplomatic credentials. The country has advocated for renewable energy cooperation and equitable access to technological resources among developing nations. These initiatives not only support the environmental resilience of small island nations but also reinforce India’s role as a responsible global actor.

India’s trade volumes with its neighbouring nations have surged significantly in the last half-decade, reflecting the success of its regional engagement strategy. The bolstered economic ties are increasingly complemented by military-to-military cooperation and strategic dialogues, ensuring a multi-layered relationship that transcends transactional interests. In 2023, the Quad (comprising India, the US, Japan, and Australia) took a decisive step forward through the panel titled “The Quad Squad: Power and Purpose of the Polygon.” Member nations reiterated their commitment to safeguarding the Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. The Quad’s focus on maritime security, resilient infrastructure, and capacity-building for smaller nations aligns perfectly with India’s SAGAR doctrine.

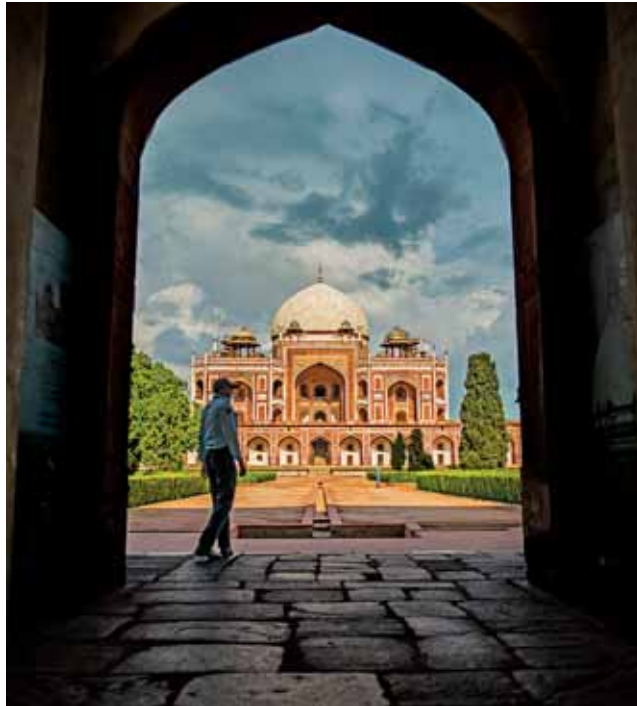
This initiative also strengthens the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), where India’s growing leadership continues to receive global acknowledgement. Looking ahead, there’s a growing consensus on the need for a multi-

tiered strategic mechanism to safeguard maritime trade routes, tackle piracy, and counter emerging threats such as smuggling, cyberattacks, and transnational terrorism. Creating resilient alliances that can jointly withstand the impact of such challenges will remain central to India’s foreign policy calculus. This collaborative spirit is not merely a reflection of geopolitical necessity — it is also rooted in India’s cultural philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the world as one family. The idea is not just to defend borders but to co-develop strategies that promote shared prosperity, regional equity, and timely support during crises. In conclusion, India’s maritime and strategic vision is undergoing a significant transformation — blending realism with regional empathy and diplomatic foresight. From countering China’s BRI to building strategic depth through its Necklace of Diamonds, India is carving out a stable and inclusive maritime architecture.

By integrating security, economic, and environmental priorities, India offers a roadmap that blends traditional wisdom with modern statecraft. The coming years will be crucial. The success of India’s strategy lies in its ability to ensure that new geopolitical frameworks are inclusive, robust, and adaptable to the fast-evolving international order. This approach will not only preserve regional peace and prosperity but will also project India as a pivotal force in shaping the contours of 21st-century global diplomacy.

(The author, a recipient of the Bharat Gaurav Award, is a Professor and expert in Strategic Affairs. Views are personal)

PICTALK



Humayun’s Tomb rises majestically above the moody monsoon clouds, a familiar silhouette against the stormy sky.

PHOTO: PANKAJ KUMAR

The emotional toll of vitiligo in India

SECOND Opinion

India has the dubious distinction of having the highest prevalence of vitiligo in the world, estimated at 8.8 per cent (as against the global prevalence of 1 per cent-2 per cent). Every year, over 1 lakh cases of vitiligo are reported in India, and though the condition can occur at any age, it is more common before the age of 30.

In a world filled with beauty standards set by societal norms, one condition often becomes the subject of whispered conversations and hidden insecurities — Vitiligo. This chronic autoimmune condition, characterised by depigmented patches that appear when melanin-producing cells are destroyed, affects millions worldwide.

Beyond its Physical symptoms, Vitiligo patients face significant social stigma, impacting their mental health and relationships.

Meet Satya, a 28-year-old artist from the vibrant city of Jaipur who has been living with vitiligo since she was 12. “At first, I was a shy girl who tried to hide my skin,” she recalls. “I wore long sleeves, avoided swimming, or anything to cover up the patches.” The stigma associated with her condition was palpable, often leaving her feeling isolated and exposed to unwanted stares and comments. People often think it’s contagious or

associate it with a lack of health, but they don’t understand the emotional toll it takes.

Farah’s story is not unique. Many with vitiligo experience harsh judgments and discomfort in their daily lives. Marriage prospects are affected especially in tier 2 cities and villages. Mental health issues such as anxiety and low self-esteem are common in Vitiligo patients.

The Dermatologist’s Perspective:

Vitiligo can significantly impact an individual’s self-esteem and mental well-being. While doctors focus on medical treatment, it’s essential to consider a holistic approach that includes emotional support. Treatment options: Several treatment options each tailored to fit the unique needs of the patient. These may include:

1. Topical Corticosteroids and Immunosuppressants like Pimecrolimus and Tacrolimus: These are commonly prescribed to reduce inflammation and encourage repigmentation in the affected area.
2. Phototherapy: Controlled exposure to ultraviolet B light can stimulate skin repigmentation in some patients.
3. Skin Grafts: In more severe cases, dermatologists may recommend surgical options such as skin grafting.
4. PRP therapy: Stimulates Pigment cells with new vessel formation at Vitiligo areas causing repigmentation.



SATISH BHATIA

5. Depigmentation Therapy: For those with widespread vitiligo, this involves lightening the unaffected skin to create an even tone.

However, Vitiligo treatment goes beyond just the skin. “We encourage patients to engage in counseling or support groups. The emotional experience of living with vitiligo is just as important as managing the physical symptoms.”

The Importance of Counseling

Counseling plays a critical role in coping with the psychological impact of vitiligo. Mental health professionals can help individuals develop coping strategies, improve self-acceptance, and reduce feelings of anxiety or depression associated with appearance.

Vitiligo is more than just a skin condition — it’s a deeply personal battle against stigma, isolation, and societal pressure. In India, where beauty standards remain rigid, those with vitiligo often face emotional trauma alongside physical symptoms.

While medical treatments offer hope, healing must include mental health support and social awareness. It’s time we move beyond appearances and embrace inclusivity, ensuring that people like Satya and millions more — are seen, supported, and empowered to live without shame.

(The writer is a Board Certified Dermatologist MD, IFADA, Indian Cancer Society, Mumbai. Views are personal)

Letters to the Editor

Trump’s rhetoric and the cost of chaos

US President Donald Trump’s recent outburst calling Iran’s Supreme Leader “public enemy number one” is not only diplomatically reckless but emblematic of the impulsive, performative politics that defined his presidency. Iran’s condemnation of the remark as “disrespectful and condemnable” reflects a broader concern: Trump’s approach to foreign policy often privileged provocation over prudence.

From abandoning the Iran nuclear deal and walking away from climate commitments to cosyng up with autocrats and sparking trade wars, his tenure was marked by erratic swings between isolationism and interventionism. The result — strained alliances, emboldened adversaries, and a world less stable. Now, as he angles for a return to power, Trump’s inflammatory rhetoric seems more like campaign theatre than credible policy.

His comments risk inflaming already tense Middle East dynamics, particularly in the wake of the Israel-Iran flare-up. Meanwhile, his contradictory talk of a “very big” trade deal with India, despite calling barrier removal “unimaginable,” mirrors the familiar pattern — grandstanding with little substance.

The tragedy isn’t just the poor choices — it’s how predictably they repeat. In seeking strength, he sowed division; in chasing deals, he eroded trust. The world has grown weary of the chaos he once called strategy.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

India’s second man in space

Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla has made all Indians proud by being only the second Indian Astronaut to be launched into Space and the first Indian to enter the International Space Station (ISS) (634th person to be aboard that ISS)!

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s 18-minute conversation with Indian astronaut Shukla, who not only emphasised Earth’s unity from space and its alignment with India’s values, but also said, “We see sunrise and sunset 16 times a day from orbit...” Our nation is moving forward at a very great pace...”

And added, “India looks grand and bigger from space than it does on the map.” Shubhanshu-Modi talk is reminiscent of PM Indira Gandhi’s talk with Squadron Leader Rakesh Sharma in 1984 when PM Indira Gandhi talked LIVE with Rakesh Sharma. She asked what the Earth looked like from above. Rakesh told Ms Gandhi that India looks like ‘Sare Jahan se Achha’ from space. What a thoughtful reply! I still remember that. And that is precisely what Subhanshu expressed, but using different words (But from space, India appears truly grand — majestic in scale and spirit). Interestingly, Rakesh Sharma was sent to space with no charges, but the Modi Government bought a seat in Axiom-4 for ₹548 Cr, or \$64 million for a 24-day stay.

BIDYUT KUMAR CHATTERJEE | FARIDABAD

Debate over ‘socialist’ and ‘secular’

Recently, some RSS members have started a debate in the country that the words “Socialist” and “Secular” were originally not a part of the Constitution, but were added by The Constitution (42nd Amendment) Act, 1976, during the Emergency imposed by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The insertion of “socialist” aimed to emphasise socialism as a goal and philosophy of the Indian state, with a focus on eradicating poverty. The NDA Government is already working to remove poverty in the country. The inclusion of “secular” reinforced the idea of a secular state, treating all religions equally, maintaining neutrality, and not endorsing any particular religion as a state religion.

What is the objection to inserting these two words in the Constitution? Rather, the Government should emphasise implementing these words in letter and spirit instead of indulging in unnecessary debate. The current debate over the insertion of “Socialist” and “Secular” in the Constitution distracts from their intended spirit.

While it’s true these words were added during the 42nd Amendment, their core values have always underpinned India’s democratic ethos. Rather than questioning their legitimacy, the focus should be on realising these ideals in practice — by upholding religious neutrality and working sincerely to eradicate poverty. Implementation, not revisionism, is the need of the hour.

SK KHOSLA | CHANDIGARH

SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES - A BOON OR A BAND-AID?

The Prime Minister’s recent statement (30.6.2025) that 95 crore Indians are beneficiaries of social security schemes raises a pertinent question — should this be a matter of pride or concern?

Out of 150 crore citizens, if 95 crore rely on Government aid, it reflects the deep economic distress faced by the majority. For instance, 81 crore depend on free ration, while in several states, women and the elderly receive monthly stipends of ₹1,500. Though these appear generous, they are often politically driven gestures, announced during elections without long-term economic planning.

The real issue is that these schemes offer short-term relief, not long-term solutions. Five kilos of rice or a ₹1,500 handout cannot lift families out of poverty. Meanwhile, Governments — both state and central — grapple with mounting debts, and such expansive welfare is funded by borrowing or increased taxes and fees. In Andhra Pradesh, the much-

hyped ‘Navaratnalu’ schemes were offset by steep hikes in electricity tariffs, bus fares, and house taxes, while essential goods became increasingly unaffordable. Healthcare schemes often end up enriching private insurance firms and hospitals, not safeguarding the poor. Meanwhile, educated youth wait for jobs, only to be offered unemployment allowances instead of employment. What’s more troubling is the parallel reality where the rich are pampered — corporate tax cuts, exemptions, waived loans — enabling billionaires to thrive amidst growing inequality. Despite rising GDP and India’s rank as the fourth-largest economy, its growth remains elite-centric.

That’s perhaps why we are still only invitees, not members — at G7 summits. True welfare lies in empowerment, not dependency. The need of the hour is to create opportunities for self-reliance, not perpetuate helplessness through doles.

AG RAJMOHAN | ANANTAPUR



# How extreme weather is undermining India’s infrastructure and economy

From roads that melt in summer heat to power plants shutting down for lack of water, and telecom networks buckling under extreme weather stress, India’s highways, railways, energy grids, ports, and defence posts are increasingly vulnerable to climate shocks

FIRST  
Column

Climate change isn't just about erratic rains, heat-waves, and extreme weather events leading to natural disasters; it's silently and actively wearing down the very backbone of our nation, impacting its infrastructure and consequently its economy in a very subtle manner. India's essential infrastructures — from the highways and railways to power grids, ports, airports, water systems, and telecom networks — are facing a growing crisis.

As if in science fiction, railway tracks, originally designed to operate within a limited temperature range, are reported to be twisting like snakes in the extreme summer heat, and newly paved roads melt under one's feet. In 2023, extreme heatwaves saw railway tracks buckle and twist in places like Jharkhand's Dilwa station. Similar incidents were reported across several states, leading to the deployment of special monitoring teams, strict summer safety protocols, and even speed restrictions on vulnerable sections to prevent accidents. Our roads are suffering too. In April 2023, a brand-new 200-metre stretch of road in Surat, connecting the Chandra Shekhar Azad Bridge to Adajan Patiya, literally began to melt under scorching heat. This incident starkly highlighted how fragile Indian roads become if they are not made from climate-resilient materials and consider outdated temperature thresholds.

Excessive rains bring a different set of problems. Rainwater seeps into tiny cracks developed due to extreme weather conditions creating potholes and, in severe cases, causing large road sections to collapse. Considering that over 60 per cent of goods and 85 per cent of people in India depend on road transport, such climate-induced damage is a huge threat.

It impacts our safety, access to healthcare systems, the efficiency of supply chains for essential goods, and ultimately, the country's economic development. The power supply also feels the heat, quite literally. Hydropower, which makes up about 13 per cent of the country's energy, is at risk. Its reliance on steady river flows makes it vulnerable to erratic monsoons, landslides, and melting glaciers, all of which can disrupt power generation.

Similarly, thermal power plants, which provide about 83 per cent of India's electricity, need massive amounts of water for cooling. This makes them incredibly vulnerable, impacts generation capacity and may trigger electricity shortfalls across critical regions. The Parli thermal power station in Maharashtra, crucial for its Marathwada region, has faced repeated shutdowns due to dangerously low reservoir levels. In March 2016, the 1,720 MW Raichur Thermal Power Station in Karnataka was also forced to shut several units amid severe water shortages. Between 2013 and 2016, 14 of India's 20 largest



thermal utility firms had to suspend operations at various points due to insufficient water, causing an estimated loss of ₹9,100 crore. With soaring heatwaves, demand for electricity goes up pushing the power grids to their limits.

Delhi's power demand in the summer of 2024 breached 8,300 megawatts — the highest ever recorded in the National Capital Territory — placing immense stress on the city's electrical infrastructure. The hot climate and stressed electrical infrastructure contribute to a sharp rise in electrical fires. The telecommunication systems are under pressure since the mobile towers, data centres, and internet cables are also at risk from floods, strong winds, and extreme heat. Data centres, needing cool environments, are at constant risk of overheating during heat waves, threatening service continuity. In addition to the civilian set-up, the defence infrastructures are also increasingly exposed to extreme weather conditions.

On the coasts, cyclonic storms and coastal flooding impact the naval facilities. The Hudhud in 2014, for example, caused extensive damage to facilities on the eastern coast. In the Himalayas, Indian Army posts in high-altitude regions like Siachen and parts of Ladakh do face the impact of glacial retreat and unpre-

dictable weather. Melting permafrost weakens foundations, while sudden avalanches and flash floods pose increasing risks to soldiers and supplies. In 2021, a glacier burst in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district

destroyed bridges and roads critical to the region. The vulnerability of urban infrastructure to climate-change-related vagaries gets further increased due to unplanned constructions on wetlands, blocking of drains, paving of areas, and lack of infrastructure upgradation. In Bengaluru, for example, rainfall in September 2022 inundated major tech parks and upscale housing complexes, causing the requirement of an estimated ₹225 crore for repair to roads and buildings, and restoration of businesses. Bengaluru's IT sector suffered major disruptions, with productivity losses running into millions.

Chennai's catastrophic floods in December 2015, which killed over 400 people and caused thousands of crores in property damage highlight the dangers of ignoring urban hydrology and the impact of climate change. Mumbai's vulnerability to flooding has been on public display almost every monsoon season with the July 2005 deluge etched in memory: 944 mm of rainfall in a single day, claiming over 1,000 lives. In 2023, parts of central and east Delhi went underwater, revealing that the capital's aged and often clogged drainage systems are easily overwhelmed by erratic rainfall. The Hyderabad flash floods of October 2020 were contributed by cloudbursts, delivering over 190 mm of rainfall in 24 hours.

Over 70 people lost their lives, thousands were displaced, and property damage was estimated at over ₹8,000 crore. Again, the devastating impacts of Cyclone Amphan in 2020 and Cyclone Yaas in 2021 laid bare the fragility of its urban systems in the wake of extreme weather activities. While urban centres like Guwahati are witnessing repeated waterlogging and



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landslides; the 2013 Kedarnath disaster, floods in Srinagar in 2014, and the unusually heavy rains in 2019 in Patna with immense damages therefrom are a stark reminder of the urgent need to prioritise climate change preparedness.

Insecurity over land and water is contributing to rising conflicts between communities, especially in regions where traditional resource-sharing systems are breaking down under environmental stress. The "climate-displaced" populations that comprise mostly poor people often lack legal protection and access to adequate compensation, exacerbating existing inequalities.

Simultaneously, the burden on public institutions — healthcare, forestry, sanitation, disaster response, and policing — continues to grow, making it harder for the state to deliver services equitably. The conceptualisation of forests as a form of natural infrastructure is gaining increasing traction, emphasising their critical role in providing essential ecosystem services that directly parallel those traditionally associated with human-built systems.

Much like engineered infrastructures, forests regulate hydrological cycles, contributing significantly to flood control through water retention and gradual release; and perform large-scale carbon sequestration, acting as vital sinks for atmospheric carbon dioxide. This perspective can facilitate a shift towards more sustainable planning and development practices that integrate natural capital alongside conventional infrastructure investments. Climate-proofing India's future has no alternative.

The recurring incidences of damage to infrastructure relating to climate change expose dangerous flaws in our infrastructure, much of which, built decades ago, simply wasn't designed for today's climate extremes.

India needs a major shift in how it plans and develops. It must design for the future (i.e., build infrastructure that can withstand higher temperatures, heavier rains, and stronger storms); protect natural defences by restoring forests, lakes, wetlands, and green spaces; implement land-use regulations that consider climate risks; and prioritise funds for climate-resilient upgrades and advanced early warning systems.

Simultaneously it must involve local communities in planning and disaster preparedness and empower them duly recognising their unique knowledge. Addressing the emergent challenges requires not just environmental action, but coordinated policy efforts across urban development, environment, forestry, health, and disaster management to ensure that climate resilience goes hand in hand with social justice and national cohesion. Climate change is no longer a distant threat; it's here, impacting every aspect of our lives. Addressing it isn't just an environmental issue; it's crucial for India's economic stability, social well-being, and national security. The time to act is now.

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(The writers are Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, UP and Maharashtra. Views expressed are personal)

## From ancient kilns to smart city: The metamorphosis of Moradabad

Moradabad, formerly known as Chaupala and also called Rustam Nagar, is one of the largest industrial cities in western Uttar Pradesh. Nestled on the gentle banks of the Ramganga River, it has long drawn water for its kilns and workshops — its artisans skillfully transforming molten brass into heirloom pieces. Today, Moradabad's handicraft industry and artistic brassware jewelry are celebrated across continents, earning it the affectionate nickname "Pital Nagri," or Brass City.

Moradabad sits 165 km east of New Delhi on NH 24 (now NH 9), a crucial highway bustling with trucks, buses, and aspirations heading towards Lucknow and beyond. For local entrepreneurs, NH 24 is more than just pavement; it represents a promise of timely deliveries and access to new market frontiers. Thanks to the Hapur–Moradabad six-laning project, which opened in March 2022, the travel time to the capital has already been reduced by almost 30 per cent. Proposed upgrades — a regional airport, a 60 m-wide ring road, and a 36 m industrial corridor — are poised to further weave Moradabad into India's economic tapestry. Under the Moradabad Master Plan 2031, city planners plot an ambitious trajectory for growth and inclusion. A mega-MSME park and handicraft village will unite designers, producers, and exporters beneath one roof — transforming scattered workshops into a cohesive campus. The brass industry powerhouse already hosts 30,000–40,000 units, and recent diversification into steel, aluminium, and iron goods has bolstered resilience when global demand fluctuates. Complementing this is an Industrial Logistics Park and Knowledge City — spaces where young engineers prototype new tools and entrepreneurs pitch digital solutions. The transport infrastructure projects will link the SEZ's 58 operational units directly to the city's industrial zone, leveraging NH-24's logistic advantages.

Moradabad's civic landscape is undergoing a quiet renaissance under the Smart City initiative. High-definition CCTV cameras now pepper major junctions. Digital traffic signals adjust in real time to ease morning jams, and a user-friendly online grievance portal ensures that if a streetlight fails or a pothole appears, a single click sets local teams in motion. At the heart of it all, NH 24 serves as both backbone and barometer — its steady flow mirroring the city's rhythm.

Riding this growth wave, enhanced accessibility and industrial spill have ignited a real-estate boom along the NH 24 corridor. In New Moradabad, young families now settle into gleaming apartment towers. Property values have surged by 15–20 per cent in recent years, driven as much by repeat homebuyers seeking community as by corporate leases for warehouses and office parks. Master-planned townships boast verdant green belts and clubhouses, while smaller enclaves celebrate Moradabad's heritage through brass-themed public art and bustling



weekend bazaars. As infrastructure quietly reshapes the urban fabric of Moradabad, a quiet transformation is taking place, people are aligning their lifestyle choices with better-planned spaces and emerging corridors of opportunity. New Moradabad is becoming the city's most promising zone for both living and investment.

Led by the Moradabad Development Authority (MDA) and prominent private developers, over 1,000 acres have been earmarked for integrated development, featuring residential complexes, commercial hubs, educational zones, and abundant green spaces.

The appeal is affordable, yet backed by state-planned infrastructure and rising end-user demand, without the crowding of metros. Whether you're looking to build, invest, or settle, New Moradabad offers a rare combination: the calm of a growing city and the confidence of planned progress. It's not just a place on the map, it's a destination taking shape with purpose. Healthcare, too, is emerging from its traditional cocoon. By July 2025, Moradabad will host one of Uttar Pradesh's twelve advanced food and drug testing laboratories — an institution as vital to farmers and pharmacists as the kilns are to artisans.

Here, grain samples and medicine vials undergo rigorous quality checks. The forthcoming Medicity promises tertiary-care specialties from cardiology suites to maternity wings for helping families once forced to travel hours for treatment. Many health care precincts, combining modern hospitals, specialty clinics (cardiology, oncology, orthopedics), including traditional wellness centers (Ayurveda, Yoga), are being established on the same campus.



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While diagnostic hubs and proposed medical colleges boost research. To meet the demands, there's a hospital boom — leading specialty chains and upgrades to the District Census Hospital along NH 24 reduce patient travel times, offering lower costs, private-room comforts, and green corridor transfers. Moradabad is steadily establishing itself as an educational, medical, and financial hub even for the smaller towns and rural belts that surround it. Financially, Moradabad's growing network of banks, fintech services, and MSME-friendly institutions support not just the city but all nearby regions without the need to travel to metro cities.

Education and services form Moradabad's rising undercurrent. Technical institutes offer courses in metallurgy and design, with students learning both CAD software and traditional repoussé techniques. Concurrently, the services sector — IT support for export documentation, logistics consultancies, hospitality ventures — now employs a growing cohort of graduates. Afternoon *chai* discussions in college canteens often pivot from exam stress to startup dreams, reflecting a city where heritage and innovation converse at every corner. Moradabad's story is one of dynamic equilibrium: honoring ancestral skill even as highways widen, nurturing small-scale artisans even as mega-parks rise. Its strategic perch on NH 24 has unlocked opportunities across industrial, residential, healthcare, and educational sectors, while a clear Master Plan lays out milestones for the coming decades. In every clink of brass, every new road sign, and every skyline silhouette, you sense a city writing its next chapter — one that marries the warmth of handmade crafts with the pulse of modern ambition. Crafted in the spirit of Moradabad's artisans and the promise of NH 24, where every mile tells a story of heritage reborn and horizons expanded.

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(The author is the Director of Lohia Worldspace. Views are personal)

## Beyond bat and ball: Decoding the tactics of modern T20 cricket

T20 cricket is often seen as a batsman's game: short boundaries, flat wickets, and powerplays that favour hitting. But the approach to building an innings has evolved enormously. Is it fair to view T20 through the same lens as we do cricket? The simple answer would be, yes, as the bat, the ball and 11 players on each side are present in T20, but the fact that ten wickets are available to be spent in 120 balls fundamentally alters the risk and reward, arguably making it an entirely different game. T20 cricket is considered the most volatile form of cricket.

In test and even ODI cricket, 90-95 per cent of the time the best sides generally go on to win the game. However, in T20 cricket, it's fairly random. In T20 cricket, even the best teams will have a win percentage of 70 or 75 and the worst will have a percentage of 40-45, so, the gulf in quality is not massive, and it's very random and on top of that you have a short season.

So judging teams on their tactics and intent is a much better metric than results because results in T20 cricket can be very random. Because time is limited, each ball in T20 is a high-leverage event. Teams try to optimise every delivery, making the format heavily managed. Historically, multiple players would adopt the role of an anchor — someone who batted conservatively to stabilise the innings. But modern T20 tends to limit this role to one or two players. "It all comes down to knowing your game and the opposition's," says IIT20 analyst Kieran Parmley. "There's almost no batter who can't score at a strike rate of over 160 in the last four overs once set. But if you take 45 balls to get there, what use is that?"

He cites Chris Gayle, who may take time early but knows exactly which bowlers to target later, as an example of effective pacing. Maximising 120 balls and 10 wickets is the key. The worst T20 innings? Scoring 160/2 — because preserving wickets is pointless if you don't maximise your total. A famous example is Ajinkya Rahane's knock in the 2016 T20 World Cup semi-final.

His 40 off 35 balls looked steady on paper, but it took up nearly a third of the innings for just 20 per cent of the runs, slowing the scoring rate and preventing more explosive batsmen from getting a chance. India posted 192/2 but still lost comfortably.

Despite the drawbacks, many teams still use anchors. Freddie Wilde, an analyst for Royal Challengers Bangalore, argues that selecting an anchor is a defensive tactic — like Jose Mourinho's football approach. "It lowers a batting side's ceiling but also reduces the chance of collapse." He believes anchors become more valuable as the standard of cricket improves. Players like Virat

Kohli and Kane Williamson are better suited to top-tier leagues like the IPL than second-tier competitions like England's T20 Blast, where raw power is often enough.

A team's choice to include or omit an anchor reflects its philosophy. England, for instance, left out technically solid Joe Root in favour of power hitters like Jos Buttler and Jonny Bairstow, aiming to out-hit opponents. Australia, with a stronger bowling attack, often used Steve Smith as an anchor, comfortable defending slightly lower totals. The strategy paid off with their first T20 World Cup title in 2021.

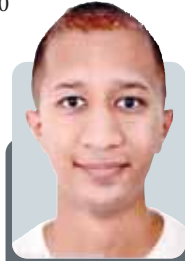
Another key debate in T20 strategy is when to deploy your best batsmen. Some argue they should be open to exploit field restrictions, but others like analyst Alagappan Vijaykumar believe the best should bat in the middle overs.

"A number four batter needs to be versatile: if they come in at 10/2, they must rebuild cautiously; at 100/2, they must attack immediately. They face the dual pressure of maintaining momentum while protecting wickets."

Fluid batting orders have become common since the mid-2000s when Rahul Dravid and Greg Chappell experimented with adjusting the lineup based on the game context. Now, with data-driven match-ups, teams often hold bowlers back for specific batsmen, complicating the job of middle-order players even more.

A number six batter's role is also particularly tough. Unlike a number four, they rarely get time to settle. "You used to need just range as a finisher," says Vijaykumar. "Now you need brute power to counter high-speed, hard-length deliveries, or you need to pair different skill-sets — like Dinesh Karthik's range with Andre Russell's power at KKR." T20 is often portrayed as a bowler's nightmare, but the reality is more nuanced. While batting techniques have improved, bowling has also advanced through analytics, smarter variations like the wobble seam, and faster pitches. "If you watch dismissals from the '50s and '60s, you'd be shocked at how poor some shots were. Today's bowlers are as sharp as the batters," says Vijaykumar. Ultimately, T20 is a distinct format requiring distinct tactics. Each delivery carries weight.

Picking when, and how to deploy your best players — anchors, power hitters, or middle-order maestros — determines success more than sheer batting or bowling quality. In a game defined by volatility and thin margins, understanding the interplay of roles and risk is what separates the merely good from the truly great sides.



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(The writer is a sports journalist. Views are personal)











# Growth needs stability: RBI Governor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ Mumbai

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Monday said financial stability, like price stability, is a necessary condition for boosting economic growth even as he flagged that structural shifts in the global economy are making policy interventions challenging. “Financial sector regulators remain committed to protecting customers, promoting competition and fostering innovation as they strike the right balance between improving efficiency and growth, and safety and soundness,” he said in the foreword to the Financial Stability Report (FSR) for June. According to the governor, there are many structural shifts that are reshaping the global economy, including growing fragmentation in trade, rapid technological disruption, ongoing climate change and protracted geopolitical hostilities. “They make economic forecasts difficult and policy interventions challenging. Therefore, even as they navigate through the fog of uncertainty, it is



imperative for central banks and financial sector regulators to remain vigilant, prudent and agile in safeguarding their economies and financial systems,” he said. Malhotra also highlighted that “financial stability, like price stability, is a necessary condition, and not a sufficient one to boost India’s potential growth”. As custodians of financial stability, he said, the efforts are to develop a well-functioning financial system that not only promotes macroeconomic stability but

also provides financial services efficiently. Amid global uncertainties, he said, the Indian economy remains a key driver of global growth. “Growth momentum is buoyed by strong domestic growth drivers, sound macroeconomic fundamentals and prudent policies. Nonetheless, external spillovers and weather-related events could pose downside risks to growth,” he said. The outlook for inflation, on the other hand, is benign and there is greater confidence in the durable alignment

of inflation with the Reserve Bank’s target, he said. As this edition of the FSR highlights, the resilience of the domestic financial system is continuously improving, bolstered by strong capital buffers, low non-performing loans and robust profitability, he said. Results of stress tests reaffirm the strength of the banking and non-banking sectors with capital levels projected to remain well above the regulatory minimum even under adverse shock scenarios, he said, adding that

the healthy balance sheets of corporates, banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) augur well for the economy. Observing that tariffs by the US administration in April has set in motion a new paradigm in trade and economic policy, he said geopolitical risks remain elevated. The ensuing policy uncertainty and unpredictability will influence global growth, he said, adding, international agencies, including the IMF, the OECD and the World Bank, have revised growth downwards. Against this backdrop, near-term global financial stability risks have increased and the market turbulence in April was a stark reminder of how existing vulnerabilities in the global financial system are amplified by sudden shocks. Though financial markets have stabilised after this episode, he said they remain volatile and highly sensitive to economic and geopolitical developments. Globally, he said, risks associated with elevated public debt and possibilities of further corrections in asset prices remain high.

# Industrial output growth slows

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ New Delhi

India’s industrial production growth slowed to a nine-month low of 1.2 per cent in May 2025 due to poor performance of manufacturing, mining and power sectors caused by the early onset of Monsoon, according to official data released on Monday. The factory output, measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), had expanded by 6.3 per cent in May 2024. The National Statistics Office also revised downward the industrial production growth for April to 2.6 per cent from the earlier estimate of 2.7 per cent released last month. The previous low was observed in August 2024 when IIP remained unchanged. The NSO data showed that the manufacturing sector’s output growth decelerated to 2.6 per cent in May 2025 from 5.1 per cent in the year-ago month. Mining production contracted by 0.1 per cent against a growth of 6.6 per cent a year ago. Power production declined by 5.8 per cent in May 2025 against 13.7



per cent growth in the year-ago period. During April-May period of FY26, industrial production grew by 1.8 per cent compared to 5.7 per cent a year ago. Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, Head - Research & Outreach, ICRA said, “The early onset of the monsoon doused activity in mining and the demand for electricity, with both these sub-sectors of the IIP reporting a contraction in May 2025, amidst an anaemic growth of manufacturing. Moreover, the underlying trends were uneven, with three of the use-based categories displaying a contraction, amidst a continued high 14.1 per cent

expansion in capital goods, boosted by a low base, Nayar said. Tepid industrial volume growth in the first two months of the quarter does not augur well for industrial GVA (gross value added) growth in Q1 FY2026, she added. As per use-based classification, the capital goods segment growth accelerated to 14.1 per cent in May 2025 from 2.6 per cent in the year-ago period. Consumer durables (or white goods production) contracted by 0.7 per cent during the reporting month against a growth of 12.6 per cent in May 2024.

# Prosperous farmers essential for goal of developed India: Shivraj Chouhan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ Bareilly

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday stressed that a developed agricultural sector and prosperous farmers are essential to achieving the goal of ‘Viksit Bharat’ (developed India). Speaking at the 11th convocation ceremony of the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) here, the minister emphasised the importance of taking up integrated farming, which combines crop cultivation, animal husbandry and related agri activities, to make agriculture profitable. “Prime Minister Narendra Modi has resolved to build a developed India and under his leadership, a massive campaign is underway to build a grand, glorious, prosperous and developed India. “But to achieve ‘Viksit Bharat’, a developed agriculture sector and prosperous farmers are essential in which animal husbandry has a very big contribution,” the minister said. Chouhan, who is popularly



known as *mama* (maternal uncle), addressed the passing out students as *priye vidyarthi bhaanji aur bhaanjiyo* (dear nephews and nieces). “IVRI is not just an institute, but (it is) the base of India’s rural lifestyle, animal husbandry culture and scientific advancement... “Scientists who passed out from here have given direction not only to the country but also to the world in the field of veterinary science, rural development, livelihood, milk production, vaccine research, disease diagnosis and biosecurity,” Chouhan said. He called upon the students to use

their education for the country’s growth and development. “Agriculture cannot become a profitable business without animal husbandry. Only crops will not suffice. A new concept of integrated farming in which animal husbandry is done along with farming. There are other dimensions to it too. “Therefore, animal husbandry is very important even today and therefore there is no doubt that we have done amazing work in this field, but there is a need to keep working continuously in the future,” the Union minister asserted. Later, in a post on X in

Hindi, Chouhan said, “Today, I had the privilege of participating in the convocation ceremony organised at ICAR - Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) located in Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, in the dignified presence of the Honourable President Droupadi Murmu Ji... “I extend my heartiest congratulations and best wishes to all the newly initiated students for a bright future. The nation will surely benefit from your knowledge, your spirit of service and your energy,” Chouhan said on X. He added that animal husbandry is extremely important for the rural economy. “Even today, a large part of livelihood in villages depends on animal husbandry and related activities. Without this, farming cannot become a profitable business. “I am confident that all of you will play an active role in the resolution of ‘Viksit Bharat’ (Developed India) and ‘Viksit Krishi’ (Developed Agriculture) and will make the vision of respected Prime Minister Shri @narendramodiji a reality,” Chouhan said on X.

# India Inc must work towards inclusive, green growth, says HUL chairman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ New Delhi

India Inc must play a responsible role for “inclusive and environmentally responsible” growth of the country, even as the government is taking steps for that, said HUL Chairman Nitin Paranjpe has said. To become a developed nation, India should chart a path that prioritises economic growth alongside environmental sustainability and social progress, he said while addressing the shareholders in the 92nd AGM of the leading FMCG maker. “While the government is taking significant steps, ‘India Inc.’ must play a crucial role in ensuring this growth is inclusive and environmentally responsible,” he said. In his speech titled ‘Building a Winning Business in an Aspiring India’, Paranjpe reflected on the evolving business landscape, noting that while India offers immense opportunities, it is equally important to address the challenges that accompany this growth. The world today is



characterised by “uncertainty and chaos,” however Indian economy is continuing its growth journey. “However, amidst this incomprehensibility, the Indian economy appears poised to continue its path to sustainable and inclusive growth,” he said. Paranjpe called period from 2014 to 2024 as the “decade of India’s economic resurgence” which aligns with the vision of a ‘Viksit Bharat’ (Developed India) by 2047. “Achieving zero poverty, quality education for all, affordable healthcare, mean-

ingful skilled employment, and becoming the world’s food basket are ambitious yet achievable milestones in India’s journey to becoming an advanced economy,” he said. Elaborating India growth journey Paranjpe said “several tailwinds will help achieve this, including a strong digital infrastructure, a conducive policy environment, and a burgeoning young population.” He called out India’s Digital Public Infrastructure as one of its greatest future advantages, and hailed the Open Network for Digital

Commerce (ONDC) for levelling the playing field for kirana walas and retailers across the nation. At the same time, he mentioned that getting sellers and resellers to leverage e-commerce and improve India’s e-retail penetration is a tall order. Hinting towards growing premiumisation, Paranjpe said the Indian consumer is evolving, seeking newer products, better experiences, and aspiring for more. “As a business serving the needs of an ever-aspiring consumer and partner to a nation focused on its growth, we bear significant responsibility. The new India presents several opportunities that we can leverage to leapfrog into the future,” he said. Pranjpe also added, HUL like other makers is witnessing ‘unprecedented’ technological advancements, where Artificial Intelligence (AI) is taking over everything from searches to product design to farming, bio-mimetic inspired design, driverless vehicles and Mars missions to science utilising bugs for cleaning homes.

# Commercial vehicles likely to see 3-5 per cent growth this fiscal: Icr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ Mumbai

Domestic commercial vehicle (CV) industry is likely to see a 3-5 per cent year-on-year growth in wholesale volumes this fiscal, after logging a slight dip of 1.2 per cent in FY25, Icr said in a report on Monday. This growth is expected to be driven by resumption of construction and infrastructure activities and a steady economic environment, the ratings agency said in its latest report. Domestic CV wholesale vol-

umes saw a miniscule 0.1 per cent increase in the previous month on a year-on-year basis, while sequentially it grew by around 1.6 per cent. However, in the first two months (April-May) of the current financial year, the CV wholesale volumes declined by 0.7 per cent year-on-year, it said. CV retail volumes, according to Icr, declined by 3.7 per cent year-on-year in May 2025, while sequential decline was at 11.3 per cent, it said, adding such trends reflect elevated inventory at dealerships’ end. In the medium and heavy commer-



cial vehicle (M and HCV) segment, retail sales volumes in May witnessed a moderate decline of 4.4 per cent on a Y-o-Y basis, while reporting a

sizeable decline of 18.9 per cent sequentially. The M and HCV (trucks) wholesale volumes are expected to register a 0-3 per cent Y-o-Y growth in FY26,

after a 4 per cent decline in FY25, as per the report. Retail volumes in the light commercial vehicle (LCV) segment in the previous month declined by 3.2 per cent on a Y-o-Y basis, and by 4.9 per cent on a sequential basis, reflecting muted demand. The LCV (trucks) wholesale volumes are likely to register a limited growth in FY26. Increasing preference for pre-owned vehicles over new vehicles in this segment has also impacted the demand in the recent past, it stated. While M and HCV (trucks)

and LCV (trucks) segments are expected to witness modest Y-o-Y volume growth of 0-3 per cent and 3-5 per cent, respectively, the buses segment is likely to see a relatively higher growth of 8-10 per cent Y-o-Y for this fiscal, Icr said. At the same time, pick up in construction and mining activities, coupled with a steady economic environment, will support the demand prospects for the LCV (trucks) and M&HCV (trucks) segments, while replacement demand is likely to support volume growth for the buses segment, the report said.

# US-India trade talks extended



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ New Delhi

The Indian team, headed by special secretary in the department of commerce Rajesh Agravwal, will remain in Washington till Monday for negotiations on an interim trade agreement with the US, an official said. The stay of the Indian officials has been extended for three days until June 30. Initially, the delegation was scheduled to stay for two days with the talks having commenced on June 26. These negotiations are significant as both countries are engaged in negotiations for an interim trade deal and are trying to finalise the pact before July 9, the deadline for the expiry of the suspensions of reciprocal tariffs imposed by the Donald Trump administration on April 2. On April 2, the US imposed an additional 26 per cent reciprocal tariff on Indian goods but suspended it for 90 days. However, the 10 per cent baseline tariff imposed by America remains in place. India is seeking full exemption from the additional 26 per cent tariff. Agriculture and dairy sectors are difficult and challenging areas for India to give duty con-

cessions to the US. India has not opened up dairy in any of its free trade pacts signed so far. The US wants duty concessions on certain industrial goods, automobiles - especially electric vehicles, wines, petrochemical products, dairy, and agricultural items like apples, tree nuts, and genetically modified crops. India is seeking duty concessions for labour-intensive sectors like textiles, gems and jewellery, leather goods, garments, plastics, chemicals, shrimp, oil seeds, grapes, and bananas in the proposed trade pact. The two countries are also looking to conclude talks for the first tranche of the proposed bilateral trade agreement (BTA) by fall (September-October) this year. The pact is aimed at more than doubling bilateral trade to \$ 500 billion by 2030 from the current \$ 191 billion. Before the first tranche, they are trying for an interim trade pact. The US team was here from June 5 to June 11 for the talks. The negotiations will continue both virtually and physically in the days to come. India’s merchandise exports to the US rose by 21.78 per cent to \$17.25 billion in April-May this fiscal, while imports rose by 25.8 per cent to \$8.87 billion.

# Hindustan Zinc pays back to India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ Udaipur

**The contribution-56 per cent of Hindustan Zinc’s revenue-underscores its role in nation building**

Hindustan Zinc Limited, the country’s only and the world’s largest integrated zinc producer, has contributed ₹18,963 crore to the national exchequer in FY25, according to its 8th Annual Tax Transparency Report released today. This marks a 44 per cent year-on-year increase and brings the company’s five-year total contribution to ₹87,616 crore. The contribution-56 per cent of Hindustan Zinc’s operational revenue-underscores its role in nation building and commitment to fiscal transparency. The report provides a detailed breakdown of payments including ₹18,191 crore in government royalties and levies, ₹12,393 crore in corporate income taxes, ₹21,627 crore in dividends to the Government of India, and ₹27,500 crore in indirect taxes. Hindustan Zinc achieved several operational milestones

in FY25, including record mined and refined metal production of 1,095 KT and 1,052 KT, respectively. It also recorded a four-year low zinc production cost of \$1,052/MT and grew total metal reserves to 13.1 Mt, extending mine life beyond 25 years. The company, which contributes an average of ₹3,600 crore annually to Rajasthan’s economy, engaged a Big 4 audit firm to provide independent assurance on the report. The initiative aligns with its strong Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) agenda. Hindustan Zinc has been ranked the world’s most sustainable metals and mining company by S and P Global’s Corporate Sustainability Assessment.

# World shares mixed, US stocks hit high

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
■ Bangkok

World shares started the week mixed, with European markets opening lower, after US stocks closed at an all-time high following their recovery from the shocks of the Trump administration’s trade policies. Canada’s decision to cancel a plan to tax US technology firms that had led President Donald Trump to halt trade talks helped to steady the markets. US stock futures advanced after Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said the talks had resumed. The future for the S and P 500 was up 0.4 per cent while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 0.5 per cent. Germany’s DAX edged 0.2 per cent lower to 23,979.42, while the CAC 40 in Paris also gave up 0.2 per cent, to 7,676.98. Britain’s FTSE 100 lost 0.3 per cent to 8,773.30. In Asian trading, Tokyo’s Nikkei 225 climbed 0.8 per cent to 40,487.39. Hong Kong’s Hang



Seng lost 0.9 per cent to 24,072.28, while the Shanghai Composite index advanced 0.6 per cent to 3,444.43. China reported that its factory activity improved slightly in June after Beijing and Washington agreed in May to postpone imposing higher tariffs on each others’ exports, though manufacturing remained in contraction. In South Korea, the Kospi gained 0.5 per cent to 3,071.70. Australia’s S and P/ASX 200 rose 0.3 per cent to 8,542.30. Taiwan’s Taixex lost 1.4 per cent and the Sensex in India was down 0.6 per cent. In Bangkok, the SET gained 0.7 per cent. On Friday, the S and P 500 rose 0.5 per cent to

6,173.07, above its previous record set in February. The key measure of Wall Street’s health fell nearly 20 per cent from February 19 through April 8. The Nasdaq composite gained 0.5 per cent to 20,273.46, its own all-time high. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 1 per cent to 43,819.27. The gains on Friday were broad, with nearly every sector within the S and P 500 rising. Nike soared 15.2 per cent for the biggest gain in the market, despite warning of a steep hit from tariffs. An update on inflation Friday showed prices ticked higher in May, though the rate mostly matched economists’ projections. Inflation remains a big con-

cern. Trump’s on-again-off-again tariff policy has made it difficult for companies to make financial forecasts and strained household budgets. A long list of businesses from carmakers to retailers have warned that higher import taxes will likely hurt their revenues and profits. The US has 10 per cent baseline tariffs on all imported goods, along with higher rates for Chinese goods and other import taxes on steel and autos and the threat of more severe tariffs continues to hang over the economy. The current pause on a round of retaliatory tariffs against a long list of nations is set to expire on July 9. Failure to negotiate deals or further postpone the tariffs could once again rattle investors and consumers. In an interview with Fox News Channel’s “Sunday Morning Futures,” Trump said his administration will notify countries that the trade penalties will take effect unless there are deals with the United States. Letters will start going out “pretty soon” before the approaching deadline, he said.



# Lack of variety in India’s bowling attack concerning, says Chappell

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ London

Australia batting legend Greg Chappell believes India paid the price for a lack of variety in their bowling attack during the first Test against England and has called for the inclusion of Arshdeep Singh and Kuldeep Yadav, whom he hails as the “best wrist-spinner since Shane Warne”, in the playing XI.

India lost the opening Test of the five-match series by five wickets at Headingley, where they were also guilty of dropping as many as eight catches.

“As disappointing as the fielding in Headingley was, it was not the main reason India lost the Test. Most of India’s problems were self-inflicted. Perhaps the most expensive error was the no-ball that gave Harry Brook an early life in the second innings,” Chappell wrote in his column for ‘ESPNCricinfo’.

However, the former Australian skipper felt that the sameness of India’s right-arm seamers — Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, and Shardul Thakur — posed a bigger tactical problem than the fielding



issue.”More concerning to me, though, is the lack of variety in the bowling attack. Apart from Jasprit Bumrah, India’s seamers are too similar - all right-arm, medium-fast, operating at comparable angles.

“There is a reason why wickets often fall after a change of bowling. It forces the batter to recalibrate. That variability isn’t available to Shubman Gill with his current crop.”

The 76-year-old former India coach called for the inclusion of left-arm seamer Arshdeep and wrist-spinner Kuldeep to add much-needed contrast to the attack.

“Without Bumrah, I’d like to see left-arm Arshdeep Singh added to the mix and Kuldeep Yadav, possibly the best wrist spinner since Shane Warne, included in the attack.”

At Headingley, pace spear-

head Jasprit Bumrah returned match figures of 5/140 from 43.4 overs. In contrast, Thakur and Krishna ended with 2/89 from 16 overs and 5/220 from 35 overs respectively.

“Even with Bumrah in the mix, the rest of the attack has to be more disciplined. I didn’t see two consecutive balls land in a dangerous place. They were either too full, too short or too wide. Bowlers

have to work in partnerships as much as batters.

“All England have to do at present is to see off Bumrah and they know the pressure will go with him,” Chappell wrote.

Chappell also criticised the Indian team management’s preference for batting depth over a balanced bowling attack.

“I don’t agree that an extra batter who bowls should be selected as insurance against top-order collapses. The top six must be trusted to deliver the runs and that the best combination to secure the requisite 20 wickets is available to the captain,” he said.

India opted to go with all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja as the lone spinner at Leeds.

“Jadeja is not a front-line spinner in English conditions. If his batting is considered good enough, he can be a support spinner; otherwise a rethink is necessary. If India are to reverse their fortunes in this series then a better balanced team is required.

“The selectors are the ones under pressure now. If batters and bowlers have to be prepared to take risks to score runs and take wickets, they too have to have the courage to take bold decisions.”



## Dhoni seeks trademark for sobriquet ‘Captain Cool’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Former Indian cricket team captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni has filed a trademark application for the phrase ‘CAPTAIN COOL’, a sobriquet widely associated with his calm on-field demeanour.

According to the Trade Marks Registry portal, the application’s status is ‘accepted and advertised’. It was published in the official trademark journal on June 16. The application was filed on June 5.

The proposed trademark is registered under the category for sports training, providing sports training facilities, sports coaching and services.

No comments could immediately be obtained from Dhoni.

Interestingly, another company, Prabha Skill Sports (OPC) Pvt Ltd, had earlier filed a similar application for the phrase. However, that application’s status is showing as ‘rectification filed’.

Earlier this month, Dhoni was inducted into the ICC’s Hall of Fame for the year 2025 along with seven cricketers,

including Australian great Matthew Hayden and South Africa’s Hashim Amla.

The ICC hailed Dhoni as a player who excelled not just in numbers but also in “extraordinary consistency, fitness and longevity”.

“Celebrated for his calm under pressure and unmatched tactical nous, but also a trailblazer in the shorter formats, MS Dhoni’s legacy as one of the game’s greatest finishers, leaders and wicketkeepers has been honoured with his induction into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame,” the ICC statement had said.

# Confident India hope for Mandhana encore in 2nd T20I against England

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bristol

Confident India will aim to capitalise on opener Smriti Mandhana’s sublime form and hope for skipper Harmanpreet Kaur’s availability to achieve another big win when the second Women’s T20I against England is played here on Tuesday.

Mandhana’s maiden T20I century in the opening game at Nottingham guided India to a massive 97-run win, and the

likely presence of skipper Harmanpreet — who was rested for the first game as a precautionary measure following a head injury sustained during a warm-up match — for the second game would only add to the hosts’ worries.

Mandhana’s stroke-filled century would have rung alarm bells in the English camp as it tries to find answers to the dramatic batting collapse it suffered while chasing a steep 210-run total.

It was a day when

Mandhana’s entertaining innings brought the hosts under tremendous pressure, which was later exploited by the Indian bowlers.

India struck twice early and the slow bowler, especially left-arm spinner Shree Charani who grabbed four wickets in her maiden T20I, complete the demolition job.

Mandhana, who led the T20I run-scoring charts last year, seemed to have picked up from where she had left off, smashing all the English bowlers

with impunity. Though the left-handed batter said after the match that the T20I format wasn’t her forte, it was a statement the cricket experts would take with a pinch of salt.

The India vice-captain’s power-hitting was on full display as she collected most of her boundaries on the off-side, while her three maximums came on the on-side.

The long camp in Bengaluru followed by their early arrival in England and a couple of tour matches seem

to have helped the Indian players get into the rhythm of the shortest format as they showed no signs of rustiness in Nottingham.

India looked like a well-knit unit despite missing their premier seamers, Renuka Singh Thakur and Pooja Vastrakar, who are injured.

Harleen Deol at Number 3 looked the right call as she forged a 94-run stand for the second wicket with Mandhana to set up the platform for a big total.

While the bilateral white-ball series may not have immediate implications, it will certainly give the young Indian players the look and feel of the things to come when the T20 World Cup is held next year in England.

And, the 20-year-old debutant Shree Charani did really well in her maiden outing, delivering a dream spell of 3.5-0-12-4 to set up India’s win by displaying a lot of discipline and focus to strangle the England batters.



## Azhar appointed Pakistan’s acting red-ball head coach

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Lahore

Former all-rounder Azhar Mahmood was on Monday elevated to the post of Pakistan’s acting red-ball head coach until the conclusion of his current contract, which runs until April next year.

Mahmood had signed a two-year contract with the Pakistan Cricket Board in April last year as assistant coach across formats along with Australia’s Jason Gillespie (Tests) and South Africa’s Gary Kirsten (limited overs), who have both moved on.

“The Pakistan Cricket Board today announces Azhar Mahmood as the acting red-ball head coach of the Pakistan men’s team. Azhar will serve in this role until the conclusion of his current contract,” the PCB said in a statement. “A sea-

soned cricketing mind, Azhar Mahmood steps into the role with an impressive portfolio of experience. Having served as the assistant head coach of the national side, Azhar has long been a pivotal part of the team’s strategic core.

“His deep knowledge of the game, combined with hands-on international exposure and proven success in the English county circuit, make him exceptionally well-suited for this position,” the PCB added. PCB highlighted Mahmood’s achievements in winning County Championship titles for Surrey as their assistant coach.

“His red-ball pedigree is underscored by two County Championship titles — an achievement that speaks volumes about his leadership, tactical acumen and unwavering commitment to excellence,” it said.

# French soccer union blasts Club World Cup over player welfare

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Paris

France’s union of professional soccer players launched a scathing attack on the Club World Cup on Sunday, saying it is “urgent to stop this massacre” amid ongoing concerns about extreme player workloads.

The UNFP also accused FIFA president Gianni Infantino of living “in an ivory tower” by ignoring the impact congested calendars have on players worldwide.

“The incongruity of the situation is not lost on anyone, except, of course, Gianni Infantino and his flatterers. From the height of his ivory tower, which he parades around the world, the FIFA president is not bothered by the fate that the international calendar reserves for the game’s leading players,” the UNFP said in a statement early Sunday morning.

“His (Infantino’s) Club World Cup proves, to the point of absurdity, that it is urgent to stop this massacre game. He flouts the physical and mental health of players for a few more dollars.”

The UNFP statement said the Club World Cup comes at the end of an already exhausting season, and therefore ignores “collective bargaining

agreements (which) almost everywhere, provide for an incompressible period of three weeks of rest for footballers between two seasons.”

FIFA was approached for comment by The Associated Press.

Days before the start of the month-long Club World Cup, which ends on July 13, soccer chiefs faced renewed calls to safeguard players over growing fears of injuries and burnout.

The newly expanded tournament involving 32 of the world’s best teams has faced pushback since FIFA announced it would be added to an already saturated calendar. The tournament will be played every four years, sandwiched in between the men’s World Cup, European Championship and Copa America.

It went ahead against the backdrop of legal challenges in Europe, strike threats and repeated concerns over players’ mental and physical welfare due to too many games.

“The UNFP, like FIFPRO and FIFPRO Europe, has been protesting for years against the drastic increase in workloads,” The UNFP added. “But also against the harmful repercussions for domestic football of a calendar that FIFA is still alone in building today.”

**MIGHTY PSG SETS SIGHTS ON ANOTHER TROPHY**

**Atlanta (USA):** Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) left no doubt it was Europe’s top club with a historic victory in the Champions League. Now, PSG is intent on conquering the world. Les Rouge-et-Bleu turned in a dominating performance at the Club World Cup on Sunday, brushing aside Lionel Messi and Inter Miami with a first-half blitz that resulted in a 4-0 victory.

While the European powerhouses complained mightily about having to play in the newly expanded tournament at the end of a grueling season, PSG is taking the 32-team competition seriously.

Outside of a 1-0 loss to Brazilian club Botafogo in group play, PSG has won three games by a cumulative 10-0 since arriving in the United States.

“It’s clear that this is a historic season for us. We intend to continue making history with this competition,” PSG coach Luis Enrique said through an interpreter. “We’re fighting to claim silverware. This season is very long for all the teams. But we’re excited to be here.”

Last September, Manchester City midfielder Rodri suffered a severe knee injury soon after saying players were close to going on strike over excessive workloads.

League on May 31, key PSG players like Ousmane Dembélé and Désiré Doué played for France and then went to the United States soon after for the Club World Cup. Some French clubs have already resumed training for the upcoming Ligue 1 season, which begins mid-August, while others start next week. PSG was not able to push back its start to the Ligue 1 season.

“We don’t see how or why the Parisians should not benefit from the three weeks of complete rest they are entitled to,” the UNFP said, adding that the toll of extra games for PSG’s players could impact the national team in early September.

“A delay in preparation that must also worry (France coach) Didier Deschamps ahead of two qualifying matches for the 2026 World Cup,” the UNFP said, before concluding. “What do you say, Mr. Infantino?”

FIFA hopes the event will be to club soccer what the World Cup is to international soccer and establish itself as one of the biggest and wealthiest tournaments in sport.

The old version of the Club World Cup, which was played yearly, was dominated by European teams in recent times.

## Guatemala enters CONCACAF Gold Cup semifinals

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Minneapolis (USA)

José Morales sent Guatemala to the semifinals of the CONCACAF Gold Cup with the clincher over Canada in a 6-5 penalty-kick decision after a 1-1 draw on Sunday.

Rubio Rubin scored the tying goal with a header in the 69th minute for Guatemala, which is 106th in the FIFA rankings and reached the semifinals for the first time since 1996. Guatemala will meet the United States in St. Louis on Wednesday, while Mexico plays Honduras in the other semifinal in Santa Clara, California. The championship is in Houston on July 6.

The seven-round shootout was a fitting end to a fast-paced and feisty contest that went down as one of the best of this biennial tournament for North America, Central America and the Caribbean. The blue-and-white-clad fans of Guatemala flocked to US Bank Stadium and made the announced crowd of 32,289

sound almost like a sold-out NFL game inside the home of the Minnesota Vikings with the translucent roof.

Jonathan David scored on a penalty kick in the 30th minute for 30th-ranked Canada, which won its group with two wins and one draw but had to play the second half with 10 men. Canada has been bounced from the quarterfinals in four of the last five Gold Cup tournaments.

Canada forward Jacob Shreffelburg was ejected in first-half stoppage time for a second yellow card, after lowering his elbow during a mid-air collision for the ball that knocked Guatemala defender Steven Robles to the ground.

Dayne St. Clair, an MLS All-Star who plays just a few miles away for Minnesota United, made two saves for the Reds in regulation against a consistent if erratic attack as Guatemala had an 11-5 edge in shot attempts and a 58 per cent possession rate.

# Aldrich Potgieter wins Rocket Classic on 5th playoff hole

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Detroit (USA)

Aldrich Potgieter ended the protracted Rocket Classic, making an 18-foot birdie putt on the fifth playoff hole to outlast Max Greyserman for his first PGA Tour title on Sunday.

“I finally got one to the hole,” Potgieter said after missed opportunities on the green by three players led to the longest playoff of the season on the tour.

He celebrated by embracing his caddie and shaking hands with Greyserman and his caddie before giving his father, Heinrich, a hug.

The 20-year-old Potgieter is the youngest player on the tour and its biggest hitter, averaging 326-plus yards off the tee. He became the ninth player to win for the first time this season.

Potgieter was born in South Africa, moved to Australia when he was 8 and returned to South Africa at age 17 because the COVID-19 pandemic limited his opportunities to compete.



“We had to give up a lot, moving to Australia, moving back,” he said. “Emigrating is definitely not the easiest thing. Coming alone at the start of my career to the States and giving it a grind, and having my dad here has helped so much.”

Potgieter won the British Amateur at the age of 17 and

became the youngest Korn Ferry Tour winner last year, paving the way for him to become the second-youngest player to earn a PGA Tour card through the minor league just after his 20th birthday. The youngest was Jason Day, who was 19 in 2007.

Chris Kirk was eliminated

after missing a 4-foot putt on the second playoff hole - that after pushing a 9-foot putt past the cup on the first extra hole with a chance to win.

Greyserman and Potgieter each had opportunities to win end it on the 72nd hole at Detroit Golf Club, but couldn’t convert on birdie opportu-

nities to break a tie at 22 under with Kirk.

“This one’s going to sting for a little bit,” Greyserman said.

Potgieter, two strokes ahead entering the round, closed with a 3-under 69, and Greyserman and Kirk each shot 67.

Greyserman missed a 12-foot putt and Potgieter came up short on an uphill, 42-foot putt. That set up Kirk with an opportunity to win it, but he couldn’t take advantage. After Greyserman two-putted from 39 feet for par and Potgieter did the same from 20 feet, Kirk had a chance to win it with a 9-foot putt only to push it to the right of the cup to extend the playoff.

The trio then went to the par-3, 158-yard 15th and Greyserman was the only one who was accurate off the tee and didn’t take advantage.

The trend continued on the par-4 16th, where both Greyserman and Potgieter missed 16-foot putts with a chance to win.

At the par-5 14th, Greyserman hit is drive 361 yards - his longest of the week - and was just 2 yards behind

Potgieter’s blast. Potgieter hit his approach from 195 yards to 19 feet and he pulled his putt. Greyserman two-putted from 29 feet for birdie.

Back at No. 15 for a second time in the playoff, Greyserman two-putted from 34 feet and then Potgieter finally ended it.

“Just wasn’t my time,” said Greyserman, who finished second for the fourth time after coming up short for his first PGA Tour victory.

Michael Thorbjornsen (67) and Jake Knapp (68) finished a stroke out of the playoff.

Collin Morikawa, meanwhile, is still waiting to end his drought.

He shot a 68 to finish 19 under and in an eighth-place tie. The two-time major winner, who was the highest-ranked player in the field at No. 5 in the world, has not won the PGA Tour since October 2023 at the Zozo Championship in Japan.

Ryder Cup captain Keegan Bradley, who rose to No. 7 in the world after winning the Travelers Championship last week, closed with 67 to tie for 41st at 12 under.



## Boxer alleges sexual harassment by woman coach; parents lodge FIR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ New Delhi

A woman coach with the Sports Authority of India's National Boxing Academy in Rohtak has been accused of sexual harassment by a minor pugilist, who according to the FIR filed by her parents, has slipped into depression because of repeated "mental and physical abuse".

Despite having a copy of the FIR, PTI is withholding the name of the accused as the matter is under investigation.

When reached for a comment, the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) and the Sports Authority of India (SAI) acknowledged receiving a complaint from the 17-year-old victim about intimidation and incidents of slapping but denied being told about sexual harassment as alleged in the FIR. Both the bodies said that their internal investigations did not find any evidence against the coach, who is continuing to play a leading role in conducting the national camp for junior and youth boxers at this point.

In her FIR lodged at a Rohtak police station, the victim has stated that the coach tried to forcibly remove her clothes once, slapped her on multiple occasions, threatened to ruin her career and called her a "person of bad character" in front of other boxers leading to her isolation.

The complaint against the coach has been registered under Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita's section 115 (voluntarily causing hurt) and 351 (3) (criminal intimidation) along with Protection of Children from Sexual Abuse act's section 10 (aggravated sexual assault).

SAI said it would assist in the investigations as and when



required. "...We have not received copy of any such FIR as of now. A complaint was however lodged by a female Boxer of NBA Rohtak through email, on 24/4/25 in which she alleged Mental and Physical harassment by a female coach during an invitational boxing tournament held in Ireland from 25th March 2025 to 3rd April 2025. No allegation of sexual harassment was levelled in that complaint," SAI Regional Centre (Sonepat) stated in response query. "A detailed inquiry was conducted in which statements of the complainant, the coach concerned, the fellow coaches and staff members and fellow athletes were taken and the allegations made could not be established." "SAI is committed to ensuring clean sports and will extend any cooperation required during investigation based on the FIR, at any point of time," it added. The girl's parents have stated that they are not satisfied with the BFI's handling of the matter. Describing in detail the abuse she was allegedly subjected to, the victim's parents said that during the tour of Ireland, the coach humiliated the boxer and went on to molest her as well. "This coach had tried to touch her inappropriately in the past too but my child could not understand her actions at that time," the FIR alleged. The parents said that the victim was also punished with strenuous physical exer-

cise after failing to record a (training) video as demanded by the coach.

"She apologised to the coach for not recording the video as well as the coach desired and requested her to do the seconding (coaching assistance during bouts) for her in the fight.

"But the coach did not go with her for the fight and did not allow any other coach to accompany her either. She even stopped my daughter's fellow boxers from helping or supporting her during the bout. We have CCTV footage in which statements of the complainant, the coach concerned, the fellow coaches and staff members and fellow athletes were taken and the allegations made could not be established." "SAI is committed to ensuring clean sports and will extend any cooperation required during investigation based on the FIR, at any point of time," it added. The girl's parents have stated that they are not satisfied with the BFI's handling of the matter. Describing in detail the abuse she was allegedly subjected to, the victim's parents said that during the tour of Ireland, the coach humiliated the boxer and went on to molest her as well. "This coach had tried to touch her inappropriately in the past too but my child could not understand her actions at that time," the FIR alleged. The parents said that the victim was also punished with strenuous physical exer-

cise after failing to record a (training) video as demanded by the coach.

"The coach accused my daughter of talking excessively to boys. She called other boxers, insulted her in front of them and asked her to bring her phone. When my daughter headed to her room to do as instructed, she followed her inside and tried to touch her inappropriately after locking the room from inside," the FIR states. "She tried to forcibly take off my daughter's clothes and when she resisted and pushed her, the coach repeatedly slapped her.

## Akshay Bhatia finishes T-26 in Rocket Classic golf

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ Detroit (US)

Akshay Bhatia shot nine birdies in the last 12 holes to score a respectable 7-under 65 on the final day to finish tied-26th in the Rocket Classic golf tournament here.

The Indian-American golfer finished with a total of 15-under over four rounds to finish T-26 with five others.

Bhatia, who had modest rounds of 68-70-70 on the first three days, had nine birdies in the last 12 holes after two bogeys in the first six holes.

Bhatia opened the final round with bogeys on the third and the fifth and then had four birdies in a row from seventh to the 10th.

He had another four-in-a-row from 12th to the 15th and one more final birdie on

the 18th. South African youngster Aldrich Potgieter made an 18-foot birdie putt on the fifth playoff hole to outlast Max Greyserman for his first PGA TOUR title on Sunday.

The 20-year-old from South Africa is the youngest player on the TOUR and became the ninth player to win for the first

time this season.

Chris Kirk was eliminated after missing a 4-foot putt on the second playoff hole. That

was after pushing a 9-foot putt past the cup on the first extra hole with a chance to win. Potgieter, two strokes

ahead entering the round, closed with a 3-under 69, and Greyserman and Kirk each shot 67.

### AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an Affidavit on Dt. 25.06.2025 before Notary Public Cuttack, I, Mrutyunjay Panigrahi, Wife- RihanaAktar, Flat No.C-306, Metro Greenwoods Apartment, Patapur, Cuttack Banki Road, Trisulia, Barang, P.O- BGP Pur, Dist. Cuttack hereby declare that I have changed my female child name from 'AahanaRituparna' to 'AahanaAnayra'. Henceforth, She shall be known as 'AahanaAnayra' now onwards for all purposes.

Mrutyunjay Panigrahi (Father)

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER:RWS&S DIVISION:BERHAMPUR  
Near JaradaBunglow, Pin - 760004, Ph. 0680-2296344  
eerwsa\_bham@nic.in rws&sbam@gmail.com  
Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING  
Bid Identification No. EERWSSBAM- 06/2025-26

The Superintending Engineer, RWS&S Division, Berhampur, Ganjam on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites bids in Single Cover & Double cover system according to the norm of "e" Procurement system in online mode for Supply, drawing, design, construction, testing and commissioning and maintenance of different PWS Schemes in Ganjam District from the eligible contractors as per DTCN.

1	Name of the work	Execution of different works of different P.W.S. Scheme in Ganjam District.
2	No of Work (Tender)	04 Nos.
3	Estimated cost (Approximate)	From Rs 11.63 Lakhs to Rs 53.72 Lakhs
4	Period of completion	From 120 to 180 days
5	Date & Time of availability of bid document in the Portal.	From 02 -07-2025 at 11.00 hrs to 13-07-2025 up to 17.00 hrs
6	Last date & time for seeking clarification	11-07-2025 up to 17.00 hrs
7	Dt. of opening of Bid	14-07-2025 at 11.00 hrs
8	Last date / Time for receipt of bids in the Portal	13-07-2025 up to 17.00 hrs
9	Name & address of the Officer inviting tender.	Superintending Engineer, RWS&S Division, Near Jarada Bunglow, Berhampur-760004, Dist. Ganjam, Odisha.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>  
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- Ophthalmic Assistance
- Dialysis Technician
- Operation Theatre (OT) Technician
- Electrocardiogram (ECG) Technician
- Electroencephalogram (EEG) Technician
- Electromyography (EMG) Technician
- Blood Collection Technician
- Ward Technician
- Ophthalmic Surgical Assistant

#### Diploma Courses:

- Medical Laboratory Technology
- Medical Radiology Technology

#### Bachelor Courses:

- B.Sc. Medical Laboratory Technology
- B.Sc. Clinical Microbiology
- B.Sc. Medical Radiation Technology (Radiology)
- B.Sc. Operation Theatre Technology
- B.Sc. Optometry
- B.Sc. Anesthesia Technology
- B.Sc. Emergency Medicine Technology
- Bachelor in Physiotherapy
- Nursing

#### Masters Courses:

- M.Sc. in Medical Laboratory Technology
- M.Sc. in Applied & Clinical Microbiology
- M.Sc. Optometry