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BHUBANESWAR, THURSDAY JUNE 12, 2025; PAGES 12 ₹4

RNI Regn. No. ORIENG/2007/22475 I Late City **Vol.21 Issue 158** I *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

PUBLISHED FROM: DELHI | LUCKNOW | BHOPAL | BHUBANESWAR | RANCHI | CHANDIGARH | DEHRADUN | HYDERABAD | VIJAYAWADA

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The Pioneer
BHUBANESWAR | THURSDAY | JUNE 12, 2025

Health Dept initiative

10-day drive to enroll elderly under AVVY from today

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

The Odisha Government will launch an intensive 10-day campaign from June 12 to 21 to ensure universal coverage of citizens aged 70 and above under the Ayushman Vay Vandana Yojana (AVVY).

The initiative aims to enroll all remaining eligible elderly beneficiaries under the scheme, which provides Rs 5 lakh annual health coverage. Despite a target of 23 lakh beneficiaries, only 3.45 lakh have been enrolled so far.

To expedite the process, the Health and Family Welfare Department has mobilised Common Service Centres (CSCs), ASHAs, ANMs and Village-Level Workers. These personnel will facilitate door-to-door outreach and help citizens complete digital registration, particularly through mobile health units and designated enrollment camps.

AVVY was launched in Odisha alongside Ayushman Bharat-PM Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) and the Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana, but it stands out for its universal and inclusive design. Unlike other schemes, AVVY does not discriminate on the basis of income or previous scheme inclusion, ensuring that all senior citizens receive healthcare protection.

Officials said the campaign would help bridge the healthcare accessibility gap and urged families to assist their elderly members in availing of the scheme's benefits. Awareness drives, helpdesks and mobile enrollment camps would be held across all districts.

City cops nab fraudster from UP for duping bizman

PNS ■ Bhubaneswar

The Commissionerate Police have arrested a person from Uttar Pradesh for allegedly impersonating as an executive of Jindal Steel Ltd and duping a businessman of Bhubaneswar of more than Rs 11 lakh.

The accused, identified as Pradum Kumar from Bhojapur in Chandauli district of Uttar Pradesh, was apprehended on June 9 from his village under Sakaldiha police station in Chandauli.

He was later produced before the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Chandauli, and brought to Bhubaneswar on a transit remand.

According to the FIR registered on May 22 at the Cyber Crime police station in Bhubaneswar, the complainant, Mahesh Kumar Singh, had been searching online for a steel vendor and came across a toll-free number claiming to be associated with Jindal Steel. He was subsequently connected to a person posing as a company sales executive.

The fraudster convinced Singh to place an order for TMT steel and provided him with a forged proforma invoice featuring the Jindal Steel logo, design, and letterhead to appear genuine. Trusting the documents, Singh made two payments, Rs 1,25,300 via IMPS and Rs 10 lakh via NEFT/RTGS to an Indian Overseas Bank account controlled by the accused.

Police said the bank account used in the crime was registered in the name of Pradum Kumar. During the arrest, a mobile phone allegedly used in the scam was seized from his possession.

Police revealed that the accused and his accomplices have been targeting people by impersonating executives of reputed companies like Jindal Steel. They contact potential victims with fake business proposals, send forged invoices using company branding, and convince them to transfer large sums of money to bank accounts actually controlled by the fraudsters.

BJD to highlight govt failures with events in Jajpur, Puri

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

As the BJP prepares to mark the first anniversary of its government in Odisha with State-wide events, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has announced parallel programmes to expose the government's "failures and betrayal" of women, youth and students.

Addressing a press meet here, senior BJD leaders Pramila Mallik and Sanjay Das Burma said the party would organise a mega women's convention in Jajpur on June 13 and a youth-student convention in Puri on June 18.

Mallik criticised the BJP for sidelining key empowerment schemes like Mission Shakti, which had benefitted over 70 lakh women during the BJD regime through interest-free loans and work opportunities. She said the BJP had failed to offer dignity or support to women and called the Subhadra Yojana a "broken promise" as it now offers Rs 50,000 over five years instead of two.

She also accused the BJP of trying to take credit for "Lakhpati Didis" by showcasing women already empowered under BJD programmes.

Das Burma slammed the BJP for not fulfilling its promise of 1.5 lakh jobs. "In one year, every major recruitment be it OJAS, OPSC or SSC has been marred by controversies, including question paper leaks," he said. He also criticised the government for cancelling student scholarships introduced earlier.

The BJD will use the upcoming conventions to highlight these failures and rally public support, positioning itself as the true champion of women's empowerment and youth welfare in Odisha.

Guv stresses anaemia, vision care for women, kids

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

Governor Dr Hari Babu Kambhampati on Tuesday stressed the urgent need to address rising cases of anaemia and vision problems among women and school children during his visit to the State Women and Children's Hospital in Bhubaneswar.

Expressing concern over the growing prevalence of anaemia among women and adolescent girls, the Governor recommended inclusion of nutritious food items like carrot-beetroot juice and chikki in daily diets to boost hemoglobin levels. He called for regular health checkups and further scientific testing to assess the benefits of such dietary supplements.

Highlighting vision-related issues among school children, the Governor suggested that at least one teacher in every school be trained to identify early signs of eye problems. He assured that the matter would be discussed with the concerned departments for necessary action.

During his visit, the Governor reviewed several facilities within the hospital premises, including the Malati Choudhury residence, Recipe and Toyathon demonstration units, Model Anganwadi Centre, Yoga Centre and Library. Interacting with trainees, he enquired about their awareness of the training modules, facilities and government welfare schemes.

The Governor was informed that the institute has compiled all relevant Central and State Government schemes into a comprehensive booklet. He advised that this booklet be widely distributed among trainees and frontline workers to enhance grassroots-level awareness and ensure better scheme outreach.

CM inaugurates new DCP office building

Flags off 425 two-wheelers for police

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Tuesday inaugurated the newly constructed office building of the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Bhubaneswar Urban Police District.

Constructed at a cost of Rs 7.80 crore over 2,272 square meters, the state-of-the-art four-storey building is equipped with a host of modern facilities, including a cyber cell, CCTNS room, integrated control room, legal cell, passport section, conference hall, training centre, and ramp access for differently abled persons.

The CM said, "This facility will strengthen the delivery of timely and transparent policing. We have ensured that it is accessible, tech-enabled, and citizen-friendly,"

He said the government is focused on improving infrastructure for law enforcement across the state. "In March this year, 14 new police stations constructed at a cost of Rs 42 crore were inaugurated across various districts," he noted.

Majhi said, "Odisha has seen a satisfactory law and order situation in the past year, and even the Union Government has appreciated it."

To strengthen field investigations, the CM handed over 425 two-wheelers to investigating officers under the Commissionerate Police. "More four-wheelers are also being arranged for police stations. Use of technology will be expanded to aid criminal investigations," he added.

Rs 31L drug seized; 1 held in city

PNS ■ Bhubaneswar

The Special task Force (STF) of the Crime Branch seized 319 gram of brown sugar worth Rs 31 lakh and arrested a person involved in peddling drugs on Wednesday.

Based on a tipoff, a team of the STF conducted a raid on the bank of river Kuakhai on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar on Tuesday and seized the drug from his possession during search.

The arrested drug peddler is a resident of Bhubaneswar, police said but did not reveal his identity.

The police have also seized a motorcycle used by the drug peddler. The accused was forwarded to the court of District Judge of Khordha in Bhubaneswar. Earlier, he was involved in two other cases in Badagada and Balianta police stations here, police said.

Cong demands compensation for distressed farmers

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

Even as the State Government continues to highlight its agricultural success, the ground reality for Odisha's farmers paints a grim picture. The plight of farmers in multiple districts remains unresolved with delayed payments, crop damage and insurance dues pushing them into deeper distress.

Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Bhakta Charan Das on Tuesday held discussions with prominent farmer leaders from Nabarangpur, Ganjam, Angul and Jajpur and sharply criticised the BJP government for ignoring farmers' rights.

In Nabarangpur district's Raighar block, as many as 344 farmers have been awaiting payment for over four months. They had sold around 15,000 quintals of paddy during the last Kharif season and are yet to receive dues amounting to nearly Rs 4.5 crore. While farmers staged a sit-in in Bhubaneswar for four consecutive days demanding their rightful payment, the administration has failed to address their concerns.

In Ganjam district, over one lakh farmers who have paid crop insurance premiums are yet to receive compensation. Similarly, in Angul and Deogarh districts, more than 80% of crops were reportedly destroyed due to elephant menace, creating a critical situation for the affected cultivators. Despite the severity of the crisis, there has been little response from the State Government.

Das demanded immediate release of Rs 4 crore to the farmers of Raighar block, proper insurance compensation and input support to affected farmers in Ganjam and emergency assistance to those who suffered crop losses due to elephant depredation in Angul and Deogarh.

Monsoon becomes active in State again

Rainfall predicted for 7 days

PNS ■ Bhubaneswar

Many districts in Odisha are likely to witness rainfall activities during the next seven days as the southwest monsoon has become active in the State after remaining subdued for a brief lull, said the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) on Wednesday.

"Most of the districts in Odisha are likely to witness rainfall activities in next seven days. The maximum temperature across the State is likely to fall by 2 to 3 degree Celsius from Thursday," said IMD Regional Director Manorama Mohanty.

As per the IMD, heavy rainfall is very likely to lash several districts including Ganjam, Gajapati, Rayagada, Malkangiri, Koraput, Mayurbhanj, Baleswar, Kalahandi, Kandahamal, Nabarangpur, Nuapada, Sundargarh and Keonjhar between June 12 and 17.

The heavy rainfall would be accompanied by lightning and gusty surface winds, said the IMD.

Similarly, several districts including Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Puri, Khodha, Nayagarh, Subarnapur, Boudh and Balangir may witness thunderstorm and gusty surface winds till June 14.

Besides, light to moderate rain is likely at many places over the districts of Odisha till June 18, added the IMD.

HITTING THE BULL'S EYE

A single year of ruling not enough to assess a govt

BISWARAJ PATNAIK

The BJP got a default victory only because the BJD guys, under Naveen Patnaik's stewardship, erred on the most critical fronts. The masses of Odisha had truly loved Naveen because of his outwardly simple lifestyle and reticence. He never ever spoke a bitter word even against his sworn political detractors and opponents. Besides, he proved quite at the beginning he was a no-nonsense leader on issues of corruption and loose character among his colleagues no matter how senior or experienced one was. Thus, Naveen became a saviour, a messiah and a demigod all rolled into one in the first two or three years as Chief Minister. The rest is known history.

Naveen's first mentor Pyari Mohan Mohapatra was ruling Odisha, leaving Naveen free to enjoy life as a de jure boss. The arrangement suited both fine. Pyari had strengthened the BJD so well with financial and party discipline that the people voted Naveen back to power successively four times in a row. After Pyari was discarded, a young bureaucrat took over and he became the de facto boss just after the fifth massive victory in 2019. Naveen was completely relaxed to be left alone at home or elsewhere. The Congress had disintegrated into thin air and the upcoming BJP had no strength to compete when Naveen's popularity had gone beyond the skies.

In 2020, Covid swept across the world and proved to be a political game-changerin Odisha. Naveen, to remain safe, went into hiding. He was not to be publicly available ever again. The trusted young bureaucrat ran the State fairly well mostly as the political crooks were kept at bay. Incredible public goods came in place. Several pro-poor schemes and programmes were taken up successfully. A most wonderful health insurance scheme helped the poor communities like never before. Bhubaneswar became the sports capital of India as the bureaucrat himself was a born sportsman. The Jagannatha Temple site in Puri rivalled the Vatican City and more locations in India and abroad. The Cuttack bus terminal, the magically transformed Taldanda canal and the SCB Medical College expansion are a few of the projects that stand testimony to the 'out-of-the-box' thinking, planning and successful implantation by the bureaucrat, who made Naveen popular. The pandemic management was also remarkable. The Naveen administration had supplied oxygen to many starved States to save countless lives.

Everything was hunky-dory until Covid was gone. The highly efficient, workaholic bureaucrat delivering amazingly was kept over-inflated by a few sycophants so much as to believe he was irreplaceable and the only one eligible to succeed the boss. As the 2024 elections were fast approaching, Naveen committed a grave mistake by forcing the administrator to take total command and make whirlwind campaign trips all over the State. That was the first time the masses began suspecting Naveen was incapacitated. To add to the BJD's woe, the rank politicians including electoral candidates were ignored as if they never existed. Between the second half of 2023 and May 2024 when the elections were over, the BJD's publicity spending was enormous. More than anything else, the 'self-praise' campaign contents were so brazenly horrific that people decided to discard the Naveen team. The people took Naveen for a living vegetable. History was made when Naveen lost like a despised street political creature at the hands of a nondescript fellow who was out of jail on bail. The BJP thus won by default, not certainly by merit.

All the same, the BJP administration under the accidental Chief Minister Mohan Majhi is just not doing well. The saffron gang has not kept any of the big election promises. The local BJP guys have become so extortionate and devilish that the people have begun missing the Naveen administration much sooner than ever imagined.

Majhi is doubtlessly a perfect gentleman. But he has no control over his colleagues. Some of the ministers holding milch cow portfolios are plain daylight robbers. The Naveen administration was routinely rolling out red carpets to any business house setting up shop with impressive employment potential. But many of the Majhi team members are callous, unscrupulous and inconsiderate. Incidentally, a Mumbai-based industrialist had taken over an abandoned, defunct granite tile unit with a small quarry when all granite units in Odisha had failed and closed down due to lack of demand and funding support. This revamped unit at huge cost and with big employment potential, even after being cleared by the highest administrative machinery, is still waiting for routine endorsement by the minister for no reason or rhyme. Some party insiders keep spreading the rumour that a few ministers and legislators are so lowly and dishonest as to demand bribe money for smallest of jobs because they have spent big amount of money to win elections. Maybe, CM Majhi has no courage to punish these colleagues as he is not as absolutely independent as Naveen used to be.

There is quite much public displeasure about the Majhi government celebrating the first year of successful ruling. Just a single year of ruling is not exactly good enough a period to assess any government perfectly. Yet, there is big publicity about some make-believe great deeds by Majhi. Majhi's government machinery has no moral right to make claims of great achievements which have not happened at all. People have thoroughly disliked the Majhi job of changing the names of schemes or services as if taking revenge. Similarly, they have flayed Majhi for changing the colour of buses and other things that the BJD had created or brought in place. All said, it is also unwise to conclude that the Majhi government is splurging money on the first anniversary celebrations. There hasn't been any independent audit or Comptroller & Auditor General report yet verifying how much the BJP has spent on government communication or self-promotion since coming to power.

The conscious masses are unhappy with Majhi for not expanding the ministry and filling up the headless corporations and commissions, a few of which are Constitutional entities. Most disturbingly, a functional Lokayukt is nowhere in sight despite having been lawfully composed quite some time ago.

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Printed and published by Sarada Prasanna Nanda for and on behalf of CMYK Printech Ltd., 1067, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751012. Tel: 0674-2560272. Fax: 0674-2560355. e-mail: orissapioneer@gmail.com. Printed at WEBLINE, D-2/19, Sector-A, Zone-D, Mancheswar Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010. Executive Editor Deepak Kumar Jha Resident Editor: S.P. Nanda. RNI Regn. No. ORIENG/2007/22475. AIR SURCHARGE of Re. 1.00 East: Calcutta, Ranchi, North: Leh West: Mumbai & Ahmedabad South: Bangalore & Chennai. Central : Khajuraho, Delhi Office: 100k Milap Bhawan, 8/A Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110 002, Phone: 011-40110455, Corporate Office:- 201-205, 208-210, 2nd Floor, Pratap Bhawan 5, B.S.Z. Marg, New Delhi-110002 Phone: 011-69342500. Lucknow Office: 4th Floor, Sahara Shopping Centre, Faizabad Road, Lucknow 226 016. Telephones: 0522-2346443, 2346444, 2346445

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BHUBANESWAR, THURSDAY JUNE 12, 2025; PAGES 12 ₹4

RNI Regn. No. ORIENG/2007/22475 I Late City **Vol.21 Issue 158** I *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

PUBLISHED FROM: DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR RANCHI CHANDIGARH DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYAWADA

DELHI SIZZLES, STAY INDOORS

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

As temperatures continue to soar with an intense heatwave across the national Capital, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a fresh red alert for Delhi with maximum temperatures ranging between 44 degree Celsius and 46 degree Celsius in several areas. After this, the Health Ministry has urged people to stay indoors during peak hours, and stay hydrated.

"Extreme heat can be risky. Stay indoors during peak hours, eat lower-calorie food, drink safe fluids, and never leave kids or pets in parked cars," the Health Ministry, said in a post on social media platform X. "Call 108/102 if someone shows signs of heatstroke," it added.

To protect from the heat, the IMD urged citizens to wear lightweight, loose-fitting, and light-coloured clothing. Cover your head using a hat, umbrella, towel, and drink water frequently, it said.

At 5:30 pm, Ayanagar was the hottest at 45.0 degrees Celsius, followed by Palam at 44.5 degrees Celsius, Ridge at 43.6 degrees Celsius, Pitampura at 43.5 degrees Celsius, Lodi Road at 43.4 degrees Celsius, Mayur Vihar at 40.9 degrees Celsius and Safdarjung — the city's base station — reported 43.3 degrees Celsius, 3.4 notches above normal. The average minimum temperature was recorded 27.2 degree Celsius, which was also too high. Notably, the minimum temperature was recorded ranging between 25 degree Celsius and 29 degree Celsius in several weather stations.

Pedestrians cover their faces for protection from the scorching sun, on the banks of Dal Lake in Srinagar PTI

Humidity levels in the Capital fluctuated between 31 per cent and 73 per cent, with dry northwesterly winds prevailing throughout the day, aggravating heat discomfort.

The maximum alert on Wednesday comes amid a forecast of continuing extreme conditions over the next two days. The alert, which signifies take action conditions, advises the public to avoid exposure to extreme heat, stay hydrated, and limit outdoor activity, especially for vulnerable populations. Warning of severe heatwave condition, the IMD has revised its orange alert for Delhi and revised it to a red.

A red alert implies a "take action" warning, urging residents to avoid heat exposure,

Delhi has been witnessing erratic weather, record heatwaves, delayed monsoon to unusually chilly winters

remain hydrated and limit outdoor activity. It warns of a very high likelihood of developing heat illness and heat stroke in all ages and advises extreme care for vulnerable people.

Delhi has been witnessing erratic weather pattern, from late summers to record heatwaves, delayed monsoon to unusually chilly winters, in the last few years. This year, the seasonal patterns in the nation's Capital and the nearby NCR cities of Gurugram, Noida, and Faridabad have completely changed.

US-China negotiate trade deal

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Washington

President Donald Trump speaks to reporters after arriving on Air Force One, Tuesday PTI

President Donald Trump announced Wednesday that the United States will get magnets and rare earth minerals from China under a new trade deal and that tariffs on Chinese goods will go to 55 per cent. In return, Trump said the US will provide China "what was agreed to," including allowing Chinese students to attend American colleges and universities.

Several global brands are among dozens of companies at risk of using forced labour through their Chinese supply chains because they use critical minerals or buy minerals-based products sourced from the far-western Xinjiang region of China, an international rights group said Wednesday.

The report by the Netherlands-based Global Rights Compliance says companies including Avon, Walmart, Nescafe, Coca-Cola and paint supplier Sherwin-Williams may be linked to titanium sourced from Xinjiang, where rights groups allege the Chinese Government runs coercive labour practices targeting predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities.

The report found 77 Chinese suppliers in the titanium, lithium, beryllium and magnesium industries operating in Xinjiang.

It said the suppliers are at risk of participating in the Chinese Government's "labour transfer programmes," in which Uyghurs are forced to work in factories as part of a long-standing campaign of assimilation and mass detention.

Integrated defence chief highlights Chinese space threats

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Given the strides made by China in military space programme, Chief of Integrated Defence Staff Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit on Wednesday called for understanding the "rapidly evolving threat landscape." He made this assertion here as India contemplates its own surveillance capabilities He said remarkable advances made by "our neighbours to the north" must be understood as he also cited expansion in China's military space programme.

In his address at a seminar here, Air Marshal Dixit also said Chinese satellites have recently demonstrated "sophisticated 'dog-fighting' manouvres" in low earth orbits. He was speaking on 'Surveillance and Electro-optics' at the event hosted by think-tank CAPS (Centre for Air Power Studies) and Indian Military Reviews (IMR) at Subroto Park.

China's military space programme has expanded from "operating just 36 satellites in 2010 to over a thousand by 2024,

China's military space programme has expanded from "operating just 36 satellites in 2010 to over a thousand by 2024..."

with more than 360 dedicated to ISR missions". ISR refers to intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. "As we contemplate our own surveillance capabilities, we must understand the rapidly evolving threat landscape, particularly the remarkable advances made by our neighbours to the north," Air Marshal Dixit said. "They have evolved from a kill chain to a kill mesh, an integrated network that seamlessly interweaves ISR satellites with weapon systems," he added.

However, he laid emphasis on the success of Operation Sindoor and said while these challenges be acknowledged, "we must also celebrate our remarkable achievements."

Railway officials suspended for providing dirty coaches to BSF

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Wednesday suspended four officials and ordered an inquiry following the controversy after a train with dilapidated and dirty coaches was provided to ferry Border Security Force (BSF) personnel from Tripura for deployment during the Amarnath Yatra in Kashmir. The minister asserted that the dignity of the security forces is paramount and such negligence will not be tolerated at any level.

The action came a day after the Northeast Frontier Railway Zone dismissed the allegations in a social media post, where users criticised the railways over the condition of the coaches while reacting to videos of the train that surfaced online.

Three senior section engineers and a coaching depot officer of Alipurduar Rail Division have been suspended by the Railway Minister, the press note from the Railway Ministry said. The ministry said that a special train with all facilities has been arranged for smooth and comfortable movement of the security personnel.

About 1,200 BSF troops drawn from 13 companies were scheduled to board a special train on June 6 for Jammu Tawi from Udaipur in Tripura. The train had to make a few stops in between and collect troops from four locations in Tripura, Assam and West Bengal.

The ByStander

PIONEER IN SHORT

CJI emphasises role of Constitution in advancing equality

Chief Justice of India BR Gavai, speaking at the Oxford Union, hailed the Indian Constitution as a "quiet revolution etched in ink" that empowers the historically oppressed. Gavai emphasised the Constitution's role in advancing equality, especially for marginalised communities, and praised affirmative action measures and landmark rulings upholding social justice. Citing Dr BR Ambedkar's legacy, he stressed the importance of representation as a tool to redistribute power and dignity. He also highlighted recent reforms like women's political reservations.

FULL REPORT ON P4

Puri deities bathe in sacred ritual of Snana Purnima

SAROJ K MISHRA / RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Puri

The sacred Snana Purnima ritual unfolded with majestic splendour at the Jagannath Temple here on Wednesday with thousands of devotees thronging the holy city to witness the ceremonial bathing of the divine siblings Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Sudarshan.

The day began in the early hours with traditional rituals such as Mangal Alati, Abakash and Bimba Snana. The deities were brought out from the sanctum sanctorum (Ratna Bedi) in a grand Pahandi procession and placed on the Snana Mandap, a specially-constructed platform for the ritual bathing.

In an elaborate rite, 108 earthen pots filled with sanctified water infused with sandalwood paste, saffron, camphor, herbs and fragrant flowers were used to bathe the deities. Lord Jagannath received 35 pots, Lord Balabhadra 33, Devi Subhadra 22 and Lord Sudarshan 18.

Adding royal grace to the occasion, Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deba arrived in a ceremonial palanquin and performed the Chhera Pahanra (sweeping) ritual before the deities, followed by Alati.

The deities were later adorned in their unique Hati Besha or Gajanana Besha, in which they appear in the likeness of Lord Ganesha, a divine sight symbolising power and prosperity.

Following the elaborate bath, the deities are believed to fall ill and are shifted to the Anasara Ghara for a 15-day healing period, away from public view. This marks the beginning of the countdown to the grand Rath Yatra.

Amid Snana Purnima festivities

Sevayat murdered in broad daylight in Puri

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

The spiritual sanctity of Snana Purnima was jolted on Wednesday when senior Jagannath Temple servitor Jagannath Dikshit was brutally murdered in broad daylight at Rabenia Chowk in Goudia Sahi under the Town police station in Puri.

The incident occurred despite elaborate security arrangements in place for the annual festival, including the deployment of over 70 platoons of police, anti-terror squads and AI-powered surveillance cameras.

Puri SP Vinit Agarwal confirmed that preliminary investigation points to previous enmity as the motive. "We are scanning CCTV footage and gathering evidence. A special team has been formed to track the absconding accused," he said. Senior officers, including Additional SP Gokul Ranjan Das, are personally overseeing the investigation.

According to police sources, fellow sevayat Narayan Pattajoshi has been named the prime suspect and is currently on the run. A manhunt has been launched across the town with checkpoints and surveillance intensified.

The murder occurred during peak ritual hours as thousands of devotees gathered to witness the ceremonial bathing of the deities at the Snana Mandap.

The incident has raised serious concerns over security lapses during major temple events and the internal discord among sections of servitors. Further updates from the police are awaited as the probe continues.

In Kendrapada

Losing lakhs in online games, BSF jawan hangs self

RAJESH BEHERA ■ Kendrapada

Online game claimed yet another life here in Kendrapada district and this time, it's a 38-year-old BSF jawan of Pahana village under Kudanagari police station limits.

The victim committed suicide by hanging himself, after he lost a huge amount to an online game.

The deceased, identified as Suryakanta Das, was working as a BSF jawan in Kolkata. He got addicted to online games two years ago without the knowledge of his family.

He used to play games on his salary money along with borrowing money from his father, relatives and friends. When the matter came to the notice of the family members and his wife, they restricted him from playing online games, but the latter could hardly help falling to the bait.

In two years, Suryakanta lost around Rs 30 lakh by playing online games and used to remain upset most often at his BSF camp in Kolkota. On last Saturday, losing mental balance, Suryakanta made a video call to his family members and slit his hand.

He on Sunday also talked to his wife and family members and commit suicide by hanging himself. He was rushed to BSF camp medical in a critical condition, but the doctor declared him dead.

State notifies amendments to plot sale, subdivision rules

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

The State Government on Wednesday notified the Odisha Development Authorities (Planning and Building Standards) Second Amendment Rules, 2025, introducing significant reforms in plot sale and subdivision regulations aimed at simplifying land transactions and ensuring smoother urban development.

Under the new rules, plot owners can now sell land up to 500 square meters without prior approval provided the land is not part of a larger real estate development project. This move is expected to greatly benefit individual landowners and streamline non-commercial property transfers.

In a major relief to families, plots divided among relatives will no longer require adherence to stringent layout regulations. The amendment also exempts owners from reserving additional open space for plot extensions if the original layout has already received approval.

Agricultural landowners also gain relief, as agricultural plots will continue to remain exempt from subdivision regulations, helping maintain their rural or farming status without being subjected to urban planning norms.

The government has introduced a legalisation mechanism for plots that were split without prior approval. To regularise such subdivisions, owners must ensure proper road access and pay requisite fees unless exempted under designated special zones.

In a step toward transparency, benchmark land value assessments for fee calculation will now be accessible online. The revised structure aims to make the valuation process more consistent and user-friendly.

Industrial plots located outside urban limits must now ensure a minimum access road width of six meters. However, developments that occurred before 2020 are exempt from this condition.

To encourage affordable housing, the amendment mandates that large landowners earmark 10% to 20% of their land for smaller residential plots, promoting inclusive growth and access to housing for economically weaker sections.

According to planning officials, the revised regulations are expected to reduce registration backlogs, speed up approval processes and encourage well-planned urban expansion. Legal experts and developers have welcomed the move, noting that it balances flexibility with essential planning norms.

Diarrhoea in Jajpur: 2 die; 500 affected

Cause is food poisoning

PNS ■ Jajpur

The diarrhoea outbreak situation in Jajpur district remains grim as two persons lost their lives while over 500 have been affected till now.

Director of Public Health Dr Nilakantha Mishra confirmed that food poisoning is the cause of the diarrhoea outbreak.

The worst-hit areas include Dharamsala, Danagadi, and Korei blocks, where local hospitals are overwhelmed by the sudden spike in patients showing gastrointestinal symptoms. District officials confirmed that over 100 patients are under treatment at the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) alone with more admitted across Korei, Dharamsala, and Danagadi hospitals.

Eleven critically ill patients were shifted from Jajpur Road Medical to the DHH and SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack for advanced care. Reports said that the diarrhea cases reportedly began two days ago, but the exact cause of the outbreak remains unconfirmed. In view of the escalated health crisis, a medical team from Bhubaneswar has been dispatched to investigate, alongside local health authorities.

Meanwhile, Health Secretary Ashwathy S stated that a medical team has already reached the affected site and submitted a preliminary report. "A team of doctors, microbiologists and food safety officers is currently investigating the cause behind the spread. An additional medical team is being dispatched to support treatment efforts while public health officials are closely monitoring the situation," Ashwathy said.

He added that discussions are underway with the Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Departments and directives have been issued to clean all drinking water sources in the area. The actual number of casualties would be confirmed after the team submits its report. Dharamsala block continues to witness the highest number of cases.

Nearly 150 patients have received treatment at the local Community Health Centre since Monday with around 30 still undergoing care, said reports. A State-level medical team has arrived in the district and is conducting house-to-house surveys in affected villages. The team is meeting the families of patients and collecting water and stool samples to help determine the outbreak's source.

Jajpur Collector P Anwesha Reddy also visited the concerned hospitals in Jajpur Road and Danagadi, reviewed medical preparedness and appealed to the public to only consume boiled or disinfected water. "An elderly patient has died, and we are awaiting the medical report to determine if it was diarrhoea-related," she stated.

IIT, IIM students to join Puri Rath Yatra

To study critical aspects of the festival

PNS ■ Puri

In a first, top students from India's premier institutions - including the IITs, IIMs, and leading policy and management schools - will converge in Puri to join hands with the District Administration for the world's largest annual spiritual gathering, the Jagannath Rath Yatra 2025.

Under a special Public Systems and Infrastructure Internship initiated by the Puri District Administration, these students will work at ground zero to study critical aspects of the Yatra, including crowd behaviour, public infrastructure, event planning, and inter-agency coordination.

Collector Siddharth Shankar Swain (IAS) said, "Jagannath Puri Rath Yatra is an exercise in scale, devotion, and coordination. It's time India's brightest minds saw what nation-building looks like in the field."

Over a 10-15 day period, selected interns will be assigned live projects around sanitation infrastructure, emergency response systems, seva stall operations, and digital citizen engagement. Their work will culminate in real-time reports and recommendations for future event efficiency, contributing directly to the planning of large-scale public systems.

The internship will be facilitated by Chaaipani, branding agency appointed exclusively to manage brand activations and brand integration to enhance public facilities at this year's Jagannath Rath Yatra.

"This is a rare opportunity for students to learn how logistics, culture, systems, and human behaviour in India operate at unprecedented scale. We're proud to help build a bridge between India's brightest students and its most powerful grassroots realities," said Chaaipani founder Shruti Chaturvedi.

This initiative also sets a new benchmark in blending spiritual heritage with future-focused learning, showcasing Odisha's leadership in civic innovation and cultural stewardship.

7K to get hassle-free power supply in B'pur

As substation capacity enhanced to 16.15 MVA

PNS ■ Brahmapur

In a focused move to upgrade the power infrastructure of Brahmapur and its adjoining areas, TP Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL) has completed the upgradation of the Kanisi Primary Substation (PSS).

The development is aimed at ensuring uninterrupted and reliable power supply to one of the town's most vital commercial belts, while addressing rising demand and reinforcing operational safety.

As part of the upgradation, the transformer capacity of one of the three Power Transformers (PTRs) catering to Haladiapadar has been increased from 3.15 MVA to 8 MVA. With this, the total substation capacity has now risen to 16.15 MVA. The increased capacity will significantly reduce the risk of overloading and support the growing electricity demand of nearly 7,000 consumers spread across Haladiapadar, Autonagar, Kanisi village, and surrounding areas. The remaining two PTRs, serving Tulu and Randha regions, continue to operate at 5 MVA and 3.15 MVA respectively. So, the total capacity of all three cumulatively has touched 16.15 MVA.

To ensure safety and system resilience, several infrastructure improvements have also been carried out.

CM unveils 'Kavyaanjali' on Snana Purnima

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Puri

As a tribute to Odia literature and cultural heritage, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi released the poetry collection 'Kavyaanjali' on Wednesday on the sacred occasion of Deba Snana Purnima in Puri.

The coffee table book, published in Odia and Hindi, draws spiritual inspiration from the Maha Kumbh and celebrates Odisha's rich literary traditions. The anthology reflects India's deep-rooted cultural ethos, blending devotion with poetic expression.

The CM invoked the literary contributions of Sarala Das, Jagannath Das, Fakir Mohan Senapati and Gangadhar Meher, icons who have shaped Odia literature. He emphasised that 'Kavyaanjali' is not just a collection of verses but a symbol of the language, identity and spiritual depth of Odisha.

The Chief Minister also visited the Snan Mandap of the Jagannath Temple to offer prayers for the welfare of the State and global harmony.

Puri MP Sambit Patra, who attended the event, suggested placing copies of 'Kavyaanjali' at major airports to showcase Odisha's literary legacy to the world. The CM echoed the vision of a culturally vibrant Odisha contributing to a 'Vikashit Bharat 2047' and called for collective efforts to nurture the state's artistic and literary spirit.

Severe shortage of engineers hits BeMC projects

Committee seeks urgent govt action

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Brahmapur

The Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC), one of the oldest urban bodies in Odisha, is reportedly grappling with severe administrative and technical deficiencies, primarily due to the absence of adequate professional engineers. This has severely impacted timely implementation of development projects and delivery of essential urban infrastructure.

Raising the issue, Milita Kriyanusthan Committee president Sanjeeb Kumar Patnaik alleged that despite overseeing 42 wards and managing a growing number of civic schemes, the BeMC currently operates with only one engineer. From roads and drains to buildings, vending zones, and market complexes, all Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) and cost estimations are being handled by a single professional.

"This overdependence has led to delays, repeated technical flaws, inflated estimates and rejections from higher authorities. Projects are caught in an endless loop of revision and resubmission, wasting both time and public funds," Patnaik said.

Sources said several DPRs have had to be reworked due to major discrepancies between estimated costs and actual project requirements. Often, the core purpose of the projects becomes irrelevant due to these delays. Public resentment is reportedly growing over the BeMC's inefficiency and lack of transparency in project execution.

Patnaik noted that urban bodies of similar size across the state have at least three to four qualified engineers on staff to ensure streamlined project planning. "It is unfortunate that Brahmapur as a corporation, despite its historical and strategic importance, has been left to function with such skeletal technical support," he remarked.

As the civic body expands to absorb nearby areas and aims to emerge as a full-fledged municipal corporation, Patnaik urged the State Government, local MLAs, MPs and the Mayor to immediately address the staffing crisis. He demanded urgent appointment of qualified experts to bring professionalism, transparency and efficiency to the BeMC's functioning.

He added that the people of Brahmapur expect action, not excuses, to ensure that the city's growth is not derailed.

World Environment Day

Utkal Alumina holds wk-long awareness drive

PNS ■ Rayagada

The Utkal Alumina International Limited(UAIL) observed the World Environment Day with a gamut of activities and awareness programmes focused on the theme of "Beat Plastic Pollution.

The campaign was formally inaugurated on Monday with a street play performance focusing on environmental protection and harmful effects of plastic pollution. Employees also took a pledge to reduce plastic use, reinforcing their individual and collective commitment towards sustainability.

As a part of the weeklong celebration, the Environment Department of UAIL organized a series of awareness activities aimed at promoting environmental consciousness among employees, students and community in periphery.

The programme began with theme based competitions such as drawing and plantation drives at Aditya Birla Public School to engage school students and cultivate a sense of responsibility toward environment. These activities were held both within the plant premises and in township areas to reach a wider audience.

To commemorate the occasion, a grand awareness rally was held on Friday from CCR building to plantation site. A mass plantation drive was conducted in identified areas within the plant premises to promote green environment.

'Withdraw prohibitory orders in Rayagada'

Activists slam crackdown on anti-mining protesters

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

Several civil society leaders, advocates and rights activists on Tuesday strongly condemned the actions of the Rayagada district administration including the detention of noted environmentalist Medha Patkar and others on the World Environment Day. They termed the crackdown as an attack on Constitutional rights and grassroots resistance to Vedanta's proposed bauxite mining project in the Sijimali hills of south Odisha.

In a joint statement, the signatories demanded immediate withdrawal of the prohibitory order issued under the BNSS by the Rayagada Collector on June 4. The order barred 24 individuals from entering the district for two months without prior notice or hearing. The list reportedly includes a serving IRS officer posted in Assam, raising concerns about the legality and motive behind the directive.

Medha Patkar, along with farmer leaders Lingaraj and Hara Bania and activist Narendra Mohanty, was detained at the Rayagada railway station while on her way to attend a meeting organised by the Maa Maati Mali Surakshya Manch in Sunger village. The meeting was aimed at observing the World Environment Day and mobilising opposition to the mining project. Police later sent the group back to Brahmapur under custody.

Activists alleged that the State is advancing land acquisition for the mining project without forest clearance or adherence to tribal rights. They called for a complete halt to the process, withdrawal of criminal cases and dialogue with affected communities, warning of irreversible ecological and social harm in Scheduled Areas.

BIPF honours Ghanashyam Scholarship recipients

PNS ■ Bhubaneswar

The Bansidhar and Ila Panda Foundation (BIPF) on Wednesday felicitated six outstanding students as recipients of the prestigious 'Professor Ghanashyam Dash Scholarship for Higher Education' (PGDS). The scholarship supports meritorious students pursuing professional degrees in engineering, medicine, STEM, and liberal arts by covering 90% of academic fees and eligible expenses for their four-year degree, amounting up to Rs 6 lakh per recipient.

Of the six awardees, two are pursuing engineering at premier IITs-Sandip Subhrajit Sahoo at IIT Hyderabad and Tarini Prasad Mishra at IIT BHU Varanasi-and four are pursuing MBBS-Satyajeet Parida and Alok Kumar Sahoo at AIIMS Bhubaneswar, Dibya Jyoti Jena at SCB Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack, and Ariyan Sahoo at FM Medical College and Hospital, Baleswar.

During the felicitation ceremony, Managing Director of IMFA and Trustee of Bansidhar and Ila Panda Foundation, Subhrakant Panda said, "Through the Professor Ghanashyam Dash Scholarship, we invest in future leaders who will drive innovation and change in our society."

From migrant worker to terracotta artisan

Life takes big changes for this Nuapada man

AJIT PANDA ■ Nuapada

For over a decade, Yogeshwar Rana of Maharajor village in Nuapada's Boden block toiled as a migrant labourer in brick kilns across distant States. Once resigned to the belief that he would remain a bonded worker for life to shape clay in different brick kilns, today, he proudly shapes clay in his own village, creating terracotta art that reflects dignity and craftsmanship.

"We used to mold clay for someone else's profit. Now, we create products that people admire-and we do it in our own homes," says Yogeshwar, crediting the district administration for opening the door to change. He is now a master trainer.

Belonging to the traditional Kumbhar (potter) community, Yogeshwar's story echoes that of many in Maharajor. With the decline of demand for traditional earthenware due to the rise of plastic and metal alternatives, these skilled artisans were left with few options. Lacking avenues to adapt, they began migrating for survival, leaving behind families who endured the hardships of their absence.

The turning point came when the Nuapada District Administration and the Handicrafts Department stepped in. Through structured training in terracotta craft and the introduction of motorized potter's wheels, villagers were not only equipped with modern skills but were also empowered to revive their heritage.

Today, Maharajor boasts vibrant Self-Help Groups (SHGs) like Maa Jayadurga and Maa Manikeswari SHGs, comprising thirty families who now earn a dignified livelihood from their own soil. Their terracotta creations are exhibited across the State, bringing both income and pride.

Under the leadership of Collector Madhusudan Das, Nuapada is actively working to end people's dependence on distress migration for livelihood. Maharajor stands as a glowing example of how opportunity, when matched with resolve, can turn the tide-from distress migration to dignified self-reliance.

ZSI Hackathon: FMU team clinches 1st prize

PNS ■ Baleswar

The Fakir Mohan University (FMU) added another feather in its cap as it secured first prize in the regional round conducted at the Marine Aquarium and Regional Centre (MARC), Digha, by showcasing exceptional innovation and scientific rigor.

A student team made its mark at the 110-Hour Hackathon on Biodiversity Conservation, organized by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) to celebrate its 110 years of scientific legacy.

The remarkable achievement highlighted Fakir Mohan University's growing role in marine biodiversity research and sustainable conservation practices.

The winner team included Soumyaranjan Dash ,Team Leader and Research Fellow, CRCIHSC, Ananya Devasmita Patra, and Bhaskar Beja Master's students, PG Department of Zoology. Their project focused on population recovery of Indian horseshoe crabs through a captive breeding model, a pioneering approach to conserve the ancient and ecologically vital species facing rapid decline. As the team moves to the national finale, it carries with it not just institutional pride, but also the hope of community-based, research-led ecological restoration.

The team credited their success to the unwavering support and guidance of Vice-Chancellor Prof Santosh Kumar Tripathy, Prof Bisnu Prasad Dash, Director, CRCIHSC, Dr Niladri Bhusan Kar, Assistant Professor, Zoology, and Dr Bharat Bhusan Patnaik ,Deputy Director, CRCIHSC, whose mentorship was instrumental in refining the project.

Held across multiple ZSI regional centers, the hackathon brought the bright minds across the country to address pressing issues in wildlife and ecosystem conservation.

The Vice-Chancellor FMU Prof Tripathy and university officials have congratulated the students on the accomplishment, applauding their spirit of innovation and dedication to science-driven environmental stewardship.

At the national-level round held at the Western Regional Center, ZSI Pune, Soumyaranjan Dash represented the university solo, competing against top researchers from across India. While others presented AI-enabled and tech-driven solutions, Dash's research-based conservation model stood out for its clarity, depth, and ecological relevance earning the team top honours and a berth in the final round, scheduled to be held at ZSI headquarters, Kolkata.

The Pioneer
BHUBANESWAR | THURSDAY | JUNE 12, 2025

Congress seeks Parliament debate on post-Pahalgam security

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

Jairam Ramesh, Congress general secretary in-charge communications FILE PHOTO

The Congress on Wednesday asked whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi, having met the members of the seven parliamentary delegations that were sent abroad, will now agree to have a full debate in the monsoon session of Parliament on the country's post-Pahalgam security and foreign policy challenges.

The opposition party also asked whether the PM will at least chair a meeting or a set of meetings of leaders of all political parties and take them into confidence on India's future strategy vis-a-vis both China and Pakistan.

Modi on Tuesday hosted the members of the multi-party delegations, comprising parliamentarians and former diplomats, who travelled to various world capitals over the past few weeks to convey India's message on the need to eradicate the menace of terrorism following the Pahalgam attack and Operation Sindoor. In a social media post, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said now that the PM has himself met with the members of the seven parliamentary delegations that had been sent to various countries, will he at least now chair a meeting or a set of meetings of leaders of all political parties and take them into confidence on India's future strategy vis-a-vis both China and Pakistan and the strategic implications of the CDS' revelations in Singapore.

His remarks were in reference to the comments made by Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen Anil Chauhan in Singapore recently that India rectified tactics and hit deep inside Pakistani territory after suffering losses of aircraft in the recent military clashes with Pakistan. He had also dismissed as "absolutely incorrect" Islamabad's claim of downing six Indian jets. Ramesh also asked if the PM will agree to have a full debate in the forthcoming monsoon session of Parliament on the country's post-Pahalgam security and foreign policy challenges, since the request of the INDIA bloc parties for a special session has been most unfortunately rejected. He further asked whether the PM will redouble efforts to bring the Pahalgam terrorists, who were reportedly involved in three earlier terror attacks in Poonch (December 2023), and Gagangir and Gulmarg (2024), to justice. Ramesh also asked whether a group of experts like the Kargil Review Committee, which was chaired by the External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's father K Subrahmanyam, will be set up to analyse Operation Sindoor in detail and give its recommendations on the future of warfare, including emerging military platforms and technologies, and building national capacities for strategic communications in crisis.

"Will the report — after suitable redactions — be placed in Parliament like the report of the Kargil Review Committee was in Feb 2000?" Ramesh said.

Later, he also asked whether the prime minister will allow two full days of discussion on China and Pakistan and give a clarification on US President Donald Trump's repeated claims about brokering a ceasefire between India and Pakistan.

The Government had sent the multi-party delegations to convey a message of national unity in the fight against terrorism, with the likes of Congress MP Shashi Tharoor and AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi joining the ruling alliance members in championing the Indian cause abroad.

Prominent former parliamentarians in the delegations included ex-Union ministers Ghulam Nabi Azad and Salman Khurshid. The Congress has also been urging the Government to clarify Trump's ceasefire claims, and object to his hyphenation of India and Pakistan.

Constitution is quiet revolution empowering marginalised: CJI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
New Delhi

Chief Justice of India BR Gavai FILE PHOTO

Chief Justice of India (CJI) BR Gavai has described the Constitution as a "quiet revolution etched in ink" and a transformative force that not only guarantees rights but actively uplifts the historically oppressed.

Speaking at the Oxford Union in London on the theme 'From Representation to Realisation: Embodying the Constitution's Promise' on Tuesday, the CJI, the second Dalit and the first Buddhist to hold India's highest judicial office, highlighted the positive impact of the Constitution on marginalised communities and gave his example to drive home the point.

"Many decades ago, millions of citizens of India were called 'untouchables'. They were told they were impure. They were told that they did not belong. They were told that they could not speak for themselves. But here we are today, where a person belonging to those very people is speaking openly, as the holder of the highest office in the judiciary of the country," the CJI said. He said the Constitution told the citizens that "they belong, that they can speak for themselves, and that they have an equal place in every sphere of society and power".

"At the Oxford Union today, I stand before you to say (that) for India's most vulnerable citizens, the Constitution is not merely a legal charter or a political framework, it is a feeling, a lifeline, a quiet revolution etched in ink. In my own journey, from a municipal school to the office of the Chief Justice of India, it has been a guiding force," he said.

He said India's Constitution was not merely a legal framework but a social and moral document crafted amidst deep inequality.

Its drafters, he noted, included representatives from some of the most marginalised communities in India — Dalits, Adivasis, women, religious minorities, persons with disabilities and even those formerly labelled "criminal tribes".

"The Constitution is a social document, one that does not avert its gaze from the brutal truths of caste, poverty, exclusion, and injustice. It does not pretend that all are equal in a land scarred by deep inequality. Instead, it dares to intervene, to rewrite the script, to recalibrate power and to restore dignity," he said.

The CJI said the Constitution carries within it the "heartbeat of those who were never meant to be heard, and the vision of a country where equality is not just promised, but pursued".

"It compels the State not only to protect rights but to actively uplift, to affirm, to repair," he added.

Referring to BR Ambedkar's legacy, the CJI said he was a visionary who transformed his lived experience of caste discrimination into a global understanding of justice.

XFG COVID variant shows high immune escape: Experts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
New Delhi

Emergence of the new XFG variant of the virus that causes COVID-19 is part of SARS-CoV-2's natural evolution, said Dr Balram Bhargava, former Director General of the Indian Council for Medical Research, amidst India recording over 200 cases linked to the variant.

Dr Bhargava was part of the team at the forefront of managing the country's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. "The emergence of the XFG variant is part of the SARS-CoV-2 virus's natural evolution," he said.

His statement comes as India's active COVID-19 cases crossed 7,000 as of June 11, with over 300 added in the last 24 hours and six deaths recorded in the same period, data from the Union Health Ministry shows.

According to the latest data from the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG), 206 cases have been linked to XFG variant, with the highest count of 89 infections coming from Maharashtra, followed by West Bengal reporting 49.

Dr Bhargava said the XFG variant of SARS-CoV-2 (which causes COVID-19) carries mutations which may improve its ability of binding to human cells and bypassing immune defences. "Early reports suggest that the variant has high immune escape potential, but there is no current evidence to indicate (an) increased severity (of disease)," he said.

NMC proposes three-year rotatory headship in medical colleges

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

The National Medical Commission (NMC) has proposed introducing three-year rotatory headship for departments in medical colleges among eligible faculty members who qualify for promotion based on seniority and possession of a postgraduate medical degree.

Suggesting draft amendments to the Postgraduate Medical Education Regulations (PGMER) 2023, the NMC has also proposed including MS (Traumatology and Surgery) as a feeder broad specialty qualification for several super-specialty courses, such as MCh in Neurosurgery, MCh in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, and other MCh programmes.

The draft amendments have been published in the official gazette on May 30 and the NMC has invited feedback from stakeholders such as from students, faculty, and the medical community on the changes. Under the existing 2023 regulations, each department is led by a professor appointed as the head of department (HoD).

"The post of the Head of Department will be rotated every three-years amongst professors and associate professors (who are eligible to become professor) who hold medical postgraduate degree, based on seniority in the department," the NMC said in the proposal.

This proposal comes amid demands from faculty associations of several medical colleges and academic bodies for more equitable administrative structures. This move aims to bring in fairness and provide opportunities for younger and qualified faculty to take on leadership roles.

In April, the Faculty Association of AIIMS (FAIMS), Delhi, and the Faculty Association of PGI Chandigarh had jointly expressed deep concern over the continued delay in implementing the long-standing policy of rotatory headship in these premier institutions.

A General Body Meeting of FAIMS was held on April 16 followed by the General Body Meeting of the PGI Chandigarh Faculty Association on April 17. "Both the bodies unanimously voiced that the rotatory headship system, along with the collegium system, is essential for promoting a fair, transparent and democratic governance structure within their institutions," the two bodies had said in a joint statement. In 2023, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare formally communicated that the rotatory headship policy would be implemented in AIIMS, Delhi and PGI Chandigarh from June 2024.

Sri Lanka army chief visits India to boost ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

Lieutenant General BKGM Lasantha Rodrigo, Commander of the Sri Lanka Army, centre, pays homage at the National War Memorial during his visit to India in New Delhi on Wednesday PTI

Lieutenant General BKGM Lasantha Rodrigo, Commander of the Sri Lanka Army arrived here on Wednesday on an official visit to India from June 11-14.

This visit is set to enhance bilateral military cooperation and explore new avenues for collaboration, particularly in the areas of training and capability enhancement, defence ministry said.

The visit underscores the continued efforts of both nations to further strengthen and deepen their longstanding defence partnership.

The first day of the visit began with a solemn wreath-laying ceremony at the National War Memorial in New Delhi. Lieutenant General BKGM Lasantha Rodrigo paid tribute to the brave soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to the nation.

Following the wreath-laying, he was given a formal Guard of Honour in the South Block Lawns. The ceremonial event, attended by senior officials of the Indian Army, marked a significant gesture of respect and a symbol of the enduring friendship between the two nations. The Guard of Honour was followed with a series of high-level meetings beginning with an in-depth interaction with Lieutenant General NS Raja Subramani, Vice Chief of the Army Staff of the Indian Army.

Both the military leaders discussed wide ranging issues including aspects of bilateral defence cooperation and regional security concerns.

China express gratitude to India for rescuing cargo ship crew

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

The Indian Coast Guard ships carry out the firefighting operation after a fire broke out on a Singapore-flagged ship following a container explosion off the Kerala coast on Tuesday. PTI

The Chinese Embassy in India has expressed gratitude to the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard for the "prompt and professional rescue" operation following a blaze on board a cargo vessel off the Kerala coast.

Of the 22 crew members of Singapore-flagged MV Wan Hai 503 that caught fire following a container explosion on Monday, 18 were rescued by the Navy, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and other agencies. The crew members include eight Chinese, six Taiwanese, five Myanmarese, and three Indonesian nationals, the ICG had said in a statement on June 9.

Chinese Embassy Spokesperson Yu Jing, in a post on X on Tuesday, mentioned the incident and expressed gratitude to the Navy and the ICG.

"Our gratitude goes to the Indian Navy @indiannavy and the Mumbai Coast Guard for their prompt and professional rescue. We wish further search operations successful and the injured crew members speedy recovery," she wrote.

The incident occurred at approximately 9.20 am IST, around 44 nautical miles off Azhikkal in Kannur district of Kerala and 130 nautical miles northwest of Kochi.

The vessel was en route from Colombo, Sri Lanka, to Nhava Sheva, Mumbai, with an expected time of arrival (ETA) on June 10, 2025. "#IndianNavy in a closely coordinated #SearchAndRescue operation with @IndiaCoastGuard, DG Shipping and other stakeholders, has safely rescued 18 out of 22 crew members Singaporean Flagged MV Wan Hai 503. The MV had reported internal container explosion and resultant major fire onboard," the Navy had posted on X Monday night.

The fire on board the Singapore-flagged container vessel has been largely contained, though it is still not fully under control, defence sources said on Wednesday.

The ship is currently stable but has a slight tilt of around 10 to 15 degrees to the port side.

A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket with the Crew Dragon capsule stands ready for launch on pad 39A for a mission to the International Space Station at the Kennedy Space Centre in Cape Canaveral, Fla. on Tuesday PTI

Axiom-4 mission put off

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

The Axiom-4 mission, which was scheduled to carry Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla and three others to the International Space Station on Tuesday, was put off again to fix a leak in the SpaceX's Falcon-9 rocket.

SpaceX announced that it was "standing down" from the Falcon-9 launch to allow time for repairs after a post-static inspection of the rocket's boosters identified a liquid oxygen leak.

"Once complete and pending Range availability, we will share a new launch date," SpaceX said in a social media post.

ISRO Chairman V Narayanan said the liquid oxygen leak was detected in the propulsion bay during a seven-second hot test on the launch pad. The hot test was to validate the performance of the booster stage of Falcon-9 launch vehicle. "The ISRO team discussed with experts at Axiom and SpaceX and it was decided that the leak would be fixed and necessary validation tests conducted before clearing for the launch," Narayanan said.

Hence, the Axiom-4 launch slated on June 11, 2025 to send the first Indian Gaganyatri to the International Space Station stands postponed, the ISRO chairman said.

Axiom Space spokesperson said that during the post-static fire investigation of the Falcon-9 booster that supports the Axiom-4 mission, SpaceX teams identified a liquid oxygen leak that requires additional work.

"SpaceX continues to work closely with Axiom Space and partners," Axiom Space said in a statement.

Commander Peggy Whitson, pilot Shukla and specialists Tigor Kapu of Hungary and Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski of Poland were slated to embark up on the Axiom-4 mission.

The 14-day mission will "realise the return" to human spaceflight for India, Poland and Hungary.

Rahul writes to PM, flags delay in scholarships for marginalised students

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagging the "deplorable" conditions in residential hostels for Dalit, ST, EBC, OBC and minority students and the delay in post-matric scholarships for those from marginalised communities.

In his letter to Modi, Rahul Gandhi urged the PM to resolve these two critical issues which he said hinder education opportunities for the 90 per cent of students who are from marginalised communities.

"Firstly, the conditions in residential hostels for students from Dalit, ST, EBC, OBC and minority communities are deplorable. During a recent visit to Ambedkar Hostel in Darbhanga, Bihar, students complained about single rooms which 6-7 students were forced to share, unhygienic toilets, unsafe drinking water, lack of mess facilities, and no access to libraries or the internet," the Congress leader said. "Secondly, post-matric scholarships for students from marginalised communities are plagued by delays and failures," Gandhi said and cited the example of Bihar where he claimed the scholarship portal was non-functional for three years and no student received a scholarship in 2021-22.

"Even thereafter, the number of Dalit students receiving scholarships fell by nearly half, from 1.36 lakh in FY23 to 0.69 lakh in FY24. Students further complain that the scholarship amounts are insultingly low," Gandhi said in his letter to Modi dated June 10.

"While I have cited examples from Bihar, these failures are widespread across the country. I urge the government to immediately take two actions to remedy these failures," he said.

Gandhi called for an audit of every hostel for students from Dalit, Scheduled Tribes (ST), Economically Backward Class (EBC), Other Backward Classes (OBC) and minority communities to ensure good infrastructure, sanitation, food and academic facilities; and allocate adequate funds to address deficiencies.

He also appealed for disbursement of post-matric scholarships on time, increasing scholarship amounts, and improving execution by working closely with state governments.

"I am sure you agree that India cannot progress unless youth from marginalised communities progress. I look forward to your positive response," Gandhi said in his letter to Modi.

The issues were also raised at a joint press conference by Congress' SC department chief Rajendra Pal Gautam, Adivasi Congress chief Vikrant Bhuria and AICC NSUI in-charge Kanhaiya Kumar at the Congress' Indira Bhawan headquarters.

Kumar said Rahul Gandhi is continuously meeting students, employees and teachers from Dalit, backward, tribal, extremely backward and minority classes.

"Whenever we meet students from these classes, the first thing they say is that we do not get our scholarship on time. Scholarship drop out is very high in the country, because the government has made the entire scholarship process a punishment," Kumar said. "Rahul Gandhi has written a letter to Prime Minister Modi on the scholarship of students, other problems and hostel conditions. However, what action the government takes on this will be known only in the coming time," he said.

The Pioneer
BHUBANESWAR | THURSDAY | JUNE 12, 2025

Editor's TAKE

A diplomatic victory over Pakistan

The All party delegations return home after presenting Indian side of the story of Operation Sindoor

The return of the high-profile, multi-party Indian parliamentary delegation, led by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, marks the successful conclusion of a strategically significant five-nation diplomatic tour. The delegation was part of a larger Indian diplomatic initiative launched in the aftermath of the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack and prompted India's robust counter-response — Operation Sindoor. The delegation's objective was twofold: to present a unified Indian stance on cross-border terrorism and to directly counter Pakistan's international narrative. By all accounts, the mission has been a resounding success. The delegation's mandate was to explain the rationale behind Operation Sindoor — a series of precision strikes conducted by India on terror infrastructure across the border — and to build international support by underscoring Pakistan's long-standing complicity in cross-border terrorism. The presence of MPs from across the political spectrum — including leaders from the BJP, Congress, Shiv Sena, TDP, and JMM — signalled a powerful message: India is united on matters of national security. This bipartisan unity was crucial in demonstrating that India's foreign policy and its fight against terrorism transcend party lines.

The five-nation itinerary included Guyana, Panama, Colombia, Brazil, and finally the United States — a diverse mix of emerging powers and global influencers. Over three weeks, the delegation engaged in over a hundred high-level meetings with presidents, prime ministers, vice presidents, lawmakers, policy experts, think tanks, journalists, and members of the Indian diaspora.

In Washington DC, the team held crucial discussions on Capitol Hill, where lawmakers not only echoed India's concerns but also praised the country's restraint in its military response. Perhaps the most significant strategic gain came in the arena of perception. Pakistan's attempts to portray itself as a victim of terrorism — even as its territory shelters terror outfits — were met with scepticism and, in many cases, outright rejection by international stakeholders. Apart from exposing Pakistan's complicity, the tour generated substantial goodwill for India. India's message was not merely one of retaliation, but of restraint, resolution, and responsibility. The timing, co-ordination, and unity behind the diplomatic push have added a new layer of credibility to India's global image — not only as a regional power but as a mature democracy tackling the complex issue of terrorism within the bounds of international law.

As the delegation returns home, India can count the tour as a diplomatic victory on multiple fronts — exposing Pakistan's faltering narrative, reinforcing international support, and affirming India's stature as a responsible global actor. In a world where perception often rivals facts, this all-party effort has served its purpose — not only in countering propaganda but in projecting India's strategic maturity and political unity. With more such outreach initiatives planned as part of India's 33-capital diplomatic effort, this tour sets a benchmark in bipartisan foreign policy action and international strategic messaging.

Highways to prosperity and growth

With game-changing projects like Greenfield expressways, aerial buses, and the Gati Shakti platform, the Modi Government is rewriting the narrative of development — one road at a time

When Narendra Modi took oath as India's Prime Minister in 2014, the BJP-led Central Government prioritised infrastructure development above all else from that very moment. In this direction, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways became the focal point of infrastructure growth.

Under Modi's leadership, this Ministry has not only accelerated the country's economic development but has also given it a new dimension over the 11 years since 2014. The construction of highways — both completed and upcoming — has played a significant role in changing the trajectory of the country's growth.

Efficient highways, waterways, and railways can reduce logistics costs and boost the economy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi dreams of making India a 'Vishwaguru' (World Leader). India has emerged as the world's third-largest economy and a $5 trillion economy.

To fulfil this dream, we need to increase exports, which will, in turn, boost growth in agriculture, services, and industrial sectors. In the past 11 years, the roads built have already reduced our logistics costs from 16 per cent to 10 per cent, and next year, we aim to bring it down further to 9 per cent. This will enhance our exports, make us more competitive, and help India advance more powerfully toward becoming a 'Vishwaguru'.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is building 25 new Greenfield Express Highways across the country. Over 3,000 km of highways are also being built to connect ports and promote religious tourism. The Government's efforts to boost religious tourism are also taking shape. The Buddhist Circuit project, completed at a cost of ₹22,000 crore, has significantly increased the number of tourists visiting the birthplace of Lord Buddha from South Asia, Indonesia, Malaysia, China, Singapore, and Japan.

Simultaneously, the number of pilgrims visiting the Char Dham sites — Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri — has tripled. A ropeway worth ₹12,000 crore is being constructed to connect Kedarnath. About 90 per cent of the work on the road linking Kailash Mansarovar in Uttarakhand to Pithoragarh has been completed. In India, particularly in the national capital, the dream of 'flying buses' is on the verge of becoming a reality.

This includes aerial buses, flash-charging electric buses, and double-decker flying buses for hilly regions. The aerial bus service from Dhaula Kuan in Delhi to Manesar, based on a skyway system, is almost in its final stages. I am confident that this experiment will be crucial in resolving the persistent traffic congestion on this special route. Nagpur will soon see the launch of the first flash-charging electric bus. It will have 135 seats, executive class, front TV screens, and bus hostesses like air hostesses. This bus will have a maximum speed of 120 km/h and will stop every 40 km for just 30 seconds to fully charge before resuming its journey.

NITIN GADKARI

Such work cannot be achieved by merely sitting in an office preparing DPRs — it requires wholehearted effort! A recent study by IIM-Bangalore on road construction revealed that every ₹1 spent on National Highway (NH) construction has led to a ₹3.21 increase in India's GDP, a multiplier effect of 3.2 times. Consequently, domestic production has grown by 9 per cent and car sales by 10.4 per cent. The work done by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has not only boosted economic activity but also created numerous job opportunities. Here are some figures worth noting: In 2014, India had only 91,000 km of national highways. By 2024, this network has expanded by nearly 60 per cent to 1.46 lakh km.

The daily pace of road construction has increased from 12 km/day to 28–30 km/day. Under the ambitious ₹5.35 lakh crore Bharatmala project, the target is to build 65,000 km of roads, including economic corridors, international border roads, and border area connectivity.

This plan is a decisive step toward reducing India's logistics costs further. The 'Gati Shakti' and multimodal connectivity initiative integrates roads, railways, air, waterways, and ports into a single digital platform, which has helped ensure timely project completion.

Our ministry has also started implementing road development projects through public-private partnership (PPP) models, which has attracted significant private investment. Under this model, road projects worth over ₹12 lakh crore have been undertaken. This journey, which began in 2014, is not just about roads; in a way, it has become the lifeline of India's progress.

The expansion of the highway network has not only made travel easier but also boosted domestic trade, industry, tourism, and safety. From day one, our Government has been working tirelessly to ensure inclusive development reaches every person in the last row of society. We are committed to accelerating this work even faster in the coming years to achieve this goal as soon as possible. We now have a clear vision of building world-class infrastructure and making our national highways network superior to even that of the United States by 2047, so that India becomes an economic superpower. "America does not have good roads because it is rich; America is rich because it has good roads." This quote by former US President John F Kennedy, displayed in my office at the Transport Bhavan in Delhi and earlier in Maharashtra when I was a minister, is not there by chance.

This has been our guiding mantra for the past 11 years under the leadership of Modi ji. We are determined to carry this work forward even faster in the future. In the coming years, India's road infrastructure will be better than that of the United States — this is not a dream, but a reality taking shape. By maintaining a balance of quality, speed, transparency, and environmentally-friendly policies, India's national highway network will be recognised at the global level.

(The writer is the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways. Views are personal)

PIC TALK

A flock of painted storks at Pulicat Lake, in Sriharikota. PTI

The Unavoidable Journey of Learning

SECOND Opinion

As conscious beings, we have five sense organs which are also called doors of knowledge. Hence it would not be a wrong statement to make that, because of our very nature, we cannot be without learning. Like, our ears are always open, so we are constantly listening. The words that go through our ears to our brains are like lessons that we receive constantly. Similarly, we see the whole world through our eyes which also results in learning good things as well as bad things.

The electrical impulses that we receive through our skin or taste buds, reach our brain which is also a kind of learning for us. However one must understand the fact that all the above-mentioned processes of learning take place by awareness or consciousness that is present in our brain without which learning is next to impossible.

In this context, we should know that our sense-organs are only the doors, learning is a process that is undergone by the consciousness. It may be called 'mind-intellect-memory-feeling' combined or we may simply call it a 'Soul'. So, all bits of information or all messages that we receive influence the Soul.

RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

And they give good or bad experiences to the soul. Further, we must know that there are two kinds of information or knowledge we acquire.

One is the knowledge of material things; the other is about the soul, karma, supreme etc. The latter kind of knowledge, when put into action, results in some sanskaras or as we call it personality traits.

Most of our actions performed again and again under the influence of a sanskara, result in experiencing happiness or sorrow. Throughout our journey of life, we constantly learn some such lessons that result in the formation of sanskaras according to our karma.

Hence, if we know clearly that learning is unavoidable and that we are always learning good or bad things, resulting in good or bad sanskaras that lead to happiness or sorrow, then we will never say that we have no time or no interest in learning.

Likewise, if we know that our sanskaras go along with our life after life, then we will be more careful in learning good things and in giving up bad things because education seems to be an elixir that can bring us a healthy mind & body along with a lasting fruitful life.

We all know this fact very well that in the present day life, nobody is perfect as far as goodness and virtues are concerned. Hence, it cannot be denied that we all need to be enlightened and we urgently need to improve the quality of our thoughts, speech and actions.

Since we cannot avoid learning, even if we wish, why don't we then learn to inculcate, in us, moral values, virtues or good qualities so that we may make progress towards perfection? Why do we wish to carry a heavy load of rubbish on our heads? Why do we want to delay our march towards our goal? What do we gain by making lame excuses, saying that we have no time or that we are not interested? What is it that we are interested in?

Are we interested in our downfall, decay or doom? In sinking and drowning deep down in the quagmire of vices, evils and mud? Remember !! The more we delay, the worse will be our condition and the more difficult it be to rectify our ways.

The process of learning, as was said earlier, is ceaseless and continuous and hence someone has rightly said "we learn everyday & shed the ego and the perception that I know everything".

Hence we cannot stop it even if we try our best, putting all our might into it. So why not we remain alert & follow the right path that saves us from tragedies, traumas, tensions and turmoil of life?

Right learning is important what we learn defines us. It is simple yet a profound change we go through. Right learning can make us a better person, someone who has right frame of mind and is aware about his responsibilites and strives to make this world a better place.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist. Views are personal)

Letters to the Editor

Calls for parliament debate

The question is arising whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi, having met the members of the seven parliamentary delegations that were sent abroad, will agree to have a full debate in the Monsoon Session of Parliament on the country's post-Pahalgam security and foreign policy challenges.

Will the Prime Minister chair a meeting or a set of meetings of leaders of all political parties and take them into confidence on India's future strategy towards both China and Pakistan? Prime Minister Modi on Tuesday hosted the members of the multi-party delegations, comprising parliamentarians and former diplomats, who travelled to various world capitals over the past few weeks to convey India's message on the need to eradicate the menace of terrorism following the Pahalgam attack and Operation Sindoor.

If the Prime Minister agrees to have a full debate in the forthcoming Monsoon Session of Parliament on the country's post-Pahalgam security and foreign policy challenges, it is welcome, since the request of the INDIA bloc parties for a special session has been most unfortunately rejected. The Prime Minister's efforts to bring the Pahalgam terrorists, who were reportedly involved in three earlier terror attacks in Poonch (December 2023), and Gagangir and Gulmarg (2024), to justice.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

Israel's allies impose sanctions

The question is arising: are Britain and its handful of allies changing their attitude towards Israel? Under this changed attitude, can Israel be put on the back foot just by criticising the genocide being committed in Gaza? On Tuesday, five countries, including Britain, banned two people close to Netanyahu and ministers in the Government. Israel's Ben-Gvir and Smotrich will be subjected to travel bans and property confiscation for 'inciting violence' against Palestinians. The pair, who live in illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, have been major supporters of the destruction and expulsion of Palestinians, expansion of illegal settlements and annexation of Palestinian land during their time as ministers in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Government.

As long as America is with it, Israeli atrocities and its expansionist tendencies will not be stopped. Immediately after this announcement by England and its allies, America itself has criticised it. Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said that this step is "humiliating", and his Government will hold a special meeting early next week, in which it will be decided how to respond to this "unacceptable decision". It is possible that in retaliation, Israel may also announce the end of its diplomatic relations with these five countries, because it needs only America's support to continue its dictatorship in the Middle East.

JANG BAHADUR SINGH | JAMSHEDPUR

Why everyone needs to learn

The present era can truly be called the age of artificial intelligence (AI). AI is now making deep inroads into every aspect of our daily lives — from education to healthcare and from business to industry.

In this context, it has become essential for individuals from all walks of life-students, professionals, entrepreneurs, and educators-to understand the appropriate and ethical use of AI.

However, the reality is that there are now numerous accessible platforms available to learn the fundamentals and practical applications of AI-such as online courses, webinars, e-learning platforms, and various training programs. Importantly, the knowledge of AI is not limited to technologists alone. It has become an essential skill for students from arts, commerce, and science streams, as well as for working professionals and entrepreneurs.

The more people understand and responsibly apply AI, the more it can simplify life, save time, and enhance productivity.

Therefore, we sincerely urge the media to give greater importance to spreading awareness about this transformative technology so that society at large can stay informed and empowered. There are mis feelings about AI and its applications. Better use of an additional intelligent value can be placed at the highest level to achieve best results.

JAYANTHY SUBRAMANIAM | MUMABI

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT: AN ISSUE THAT NEEDS URGENT ATTENTION

We are confronted by innumerable challenges on the local, internal and external fronts that every nation finds it difficult to ascertain what its priorities should be. However, internal enemies are difficult to conquer as policies and laws are more focused on immigration and the refugee problem, leading to the neglect of internal displacements caused by nature's fury.

The recent report published by the Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre recorded that 32.3 million Indians faced the threat of internal displacement on account of natural disasters, primarily due to floods and storms, between 2015 and 2024. The global scenario is even more grim as 210 countries registered 264.8 million forced movements, with East Asia and South Asia being the most adversely affected during the period.

It also highlights that about 90 per cent of global displacement is the outcome of floods and storms, which must stir nations into action. China, the Philippines, and India (5.4 million) are the leading countries in terms of domestic displacements. It is worth pondering over the state of legal procedures, which lack teeth and enforcement.

The biggest obstacle is global indifference when it comes to tackling the myriad aspects of climate change, as autocratic or populist Governments are hell-bent on dismantling frameworks meant to mitigate climate change.

The Paris climate conference of 2015, aimed at reducing global temperatures, with targeted and time-bound measures agreed upon by countries, and meeting the Agenda for Sustainable Development by 2030, can only be achieved if all countries take equal responsibilities and work for the betterment of human society by taking concrete steps. The oft-quoted phrase "Nero fiddled while Rome burnt" still haunts mankind to take a lesson from history.

VIJAY SINGH ADHIKARI | NANITAL

Please send your letter to the letterstopioneer@gmail.com. In not more than 400 words. We appreciate your feedback.

The Pioneer
BHUBANESWAR | THURSDAY | JUNE 12, 2025

Film Festivals and the 3C Mantra: Creativity, Culture, Commerce

In an era marked by technological acceleration and cultural fluidity, film festivals serve as vital spaces of connection and creation. They are where artistic vision finds commercial grounding and where the business of cinema becomes inseparable from the soul of storytelling.

FIRST Column

The 3C's mantra that defines the film festival ecosystem — Creativity, Culture, and Commerce — has become the cornerstone of a global cinematic renaissance. Today, film festivals are not just glamorous red-carpet affairs or celebrity-driven events; they are transformative platforms unlocking new opportunities for content creation, cross-cultural collaboration, global networking, strategic partnerships, and narrative innovation. In short, they are the modern-day crucibles where storytelling meets strategy.

From Cannes to Berlin, Venice to IFFI, Locarno to Sundance, film festivals have evolved into sophisticated arenas that redefine cinematic expression.

They are reshaping the celluloid experience through experiential storytelling, sustainable creative roadmaps, and tech-enabled narratives that resonate across boundaries. Their evolution reflects a collective aspiration to reimagine the medium, not just in how films are made, but in how they are shared, discussed, and remembered.

The world's most celebrated film festivals have retained their traditional flavour while courageously stepping into new territory.

The Cannes Film Festival, for instance, remains a symbol of glamour, yet now actively promotes ecological awareness and inclusivity through programs like the "Cinema for the Climate" section. Similarly, the Venice Biennale embraces innovation through its Virtual Reality section, while TIFF (Toronto International Film Festival) has become known for elevating social-issue films into the awards circuit. These examples highlight how the 3C's are no longer abstract ideals; they are tangible, operational principles shaping programming and policy.

The unified objective is clear: visualise the future of cinema through the lens of commercial viability, cutting-edge technology, and artistic innovation. And festivals, in balancing these objectives, are becoming incubators of excellence, where ideas are born, refined, and launched into the world.

CHAITANYA K PRASAD

Film markets are an integral part of this new cinematic landscape. Events such as Marché du Film at Cannes and Film Bazaar at IFFI serve as value-creation platforms where creativity meets investment. These markets offer a single — window ecosystem for distributors, producers, and emerging talent to forge deals, secure financing, and explore global collaborations.

You could feel this unfolding in real-time at Cannes 2025. The atmosphere wasn't just about premieres; it was about presence, about ideas landing with impact.

Mission Impossible: The Final Reckoning opened to packed houses, but it wasn't just a franchise flex anymore. There was something more grounded beneath the action, a sense of purpose, and the co-production buzz around it was loud, American spectacle meeting European strategy. And then there was Homebound, that small, aching film about displacement and the idea of home, which left people silent after the credits. It was the kind of film that didn't shout but stayed.

Meanwhile, the Marché du Film pulsed like its own beating heart. Pavilions were fuller; deals more layered. Conversations spanned multilingual co-productions, AI-led storyboarding, and even climate-conscious filmmaking.

It wasn't transactional; it was transformative. Countries like India, South Korea, and Nigeria didn't just showcase films; they showed up with vision, and with intent. Cannes 2025 made one thing abundantly clear: creativity doesn't get diluted by commerce, it grows because of it. And culture? Culture was the thread running through it all, holding it together, making it matter.

> THE CANNES FILM FESTIVAL, FOR INSTANCE, REMAINS A SYMBOL OF GLAMOUR, YET NOW ACTIVELY PROMOTES ECOLOGICAL AWARENESS AND INCLUSIVITY THROUGH PROGRAMS LIKE THE "CINEMA FOR THE CLIMATE" SECTION. SIMILARLY, THE VENICE BIENNALE EMBRACES INNOVATION THROUGH ITS VIRTUAL REALITY SECTION

Today's commercial landscape at festivals is populated by accredited agents, pavilions, exhibitors, and stakeholders who are not just selling films; they're shaping the business of storytelling. Co-production deals, project financing, distribution arrangements, and IP partnerships are negotiated in these spaces, affirming the financial architecture of the festival ecosystem.

Notably, the commercial value of festivals is no longer transactional but transformational. They're redefining how cinema is monetised and how stories are positioned globally. In the age of OTT, film festivals have also become spaces for digital content negotiations, IP marketing, and branded storytelling ventures. Each global festival has carved a distinct identity. While Cannes stands for glamour and auteur prestige, Berlinale champions political cinema, and Locarno thrives on experimentation. These brands have emerged from consistent visual language, storytelling themes, fashion statements, and strategic stakeholder engagement.

In this ecosystem, branding is not just about logos or campaigns; it's about shaping a cinematic culture. It's the deliberate interplay of Creativity, Culture, Content, and Consistency, the 4Cs of festival branding. The buzz, the arc lights, the curated installations, and even the architectural design of venues contribute to the festival's emotional and cultural memory.

India's growing role in the global cinematic discourse is exemplified by the Bharat Pavilion at Cannes, designed by the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad.

Titled The Sutradhara, or storyteller, it reflects India's fusion of tradition and innovation. With its 2024 theme, Create in India, the Pavilion spotlighted India's vibrant cinematic heritage, technological readiness, and openness to global partnerships. More than just a national representation, the Bharat Pavilion has become a diplomatic and cultural bridge; connecting India's storytellers with producers, buyers, critics, and policymakers from across the world. It's a space where artistry meets policy, and where culture is leveraged for creative diplomacy.

The Bharat Parv, an integral part of the Pavilion experience, adds a further dimension to celebrating Indian cuisine, music, craftsmanship, and diversity. This new format of global storytelling mirrors the idea of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: the world as one family. And importantly, it sends a clear message: India is not just a content provider, it's a creative force and co-production hub.

Film festivals today function as living ecosystems, nurturing voices, encouraging risk-taking, and building transnational communities. Their role in shaping public perception, fostering policy discourse, and enabling commercial success is more relevant than ever.

Whether it was Cannes' "Cinema for the Climate," Venice's Virtual Reality section, or IFFI's mainstream-indie convergence, the new festival circuit is breaking boundaries with purpose. It's showcasing new cinematic languages, driven by talent, diversity, and digital disruption. As the film festival landscape continues to evolve, the 3C's — Creativity, Culture, and Commerce — remain the North Star.

With countries like India building immersive, multi-stakeholder pavilions and enabling co-creation through policy and soft power, the red carpet is no longer just about glitz; it's about vision, value, voice, and who gets to tell the next global story.

(The writer is former Civil Servant, writes on Cinema and Strategic Communication. Views are personal. Inputs provided by Zoya Ahmad and Vaishnavie Srinivasan)

RBI shields India from global turbulence, spur domestic growth

In an assertive policy pivot aimed at shielding the Indian economy from both internal slowdown and external headwinds, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) repo and Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) cut decisions reflect an urgency to fortify domestic demand and build monetary buffers ahead of any external shocks.

The repo rate was cut by 50 basis points to 5.40 per cent and slashing the CRR by 100 basis points, releasing a substantial ₹2.5 lakh crore in systemic liquidity. This move goes far beyond textbook monetary easing — it's a calculated shift toward growth insulation, driven in part by global trade volatility, slowing capital flows, and protectionist rhetoric resurging from the West, especially from the United States. The RBI is shifting its dependence on foreign portfolios to domestic investment.

The RBI's sweeping rate and CRR cuts are not just a response to slowing growth — they are a strategic counter to global turbulence. As trade dynamics harden and election rhetoric in the U.S. turns more inward — looking, India is sending a clear signal: we'll build our growth engines at home, and we won't wait for the world to stabilise.

Banks and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) are now better placed to grow loan books despite global capital uncertainty. The ₹2.5 lakh crore liquidity injection, through CRR cut, is a strategic play to strengthen domestic credit capacity, in case foreign investment inflows taper due to U.S.-centric policy shifts. In a world potentially heading toward deglobalisation 2.0, the RBI is quietly laying the foundations for an India that is credit — rich, demand-driven, and less vulnerable to foreign tantrums.

SHIVAJI SARKAR

This is crucial for raising industrial production. In April 2025, IIP slowed to 2.7 per cent against 3 per cent growth in March and 5.2 per cent in April 2024. The growth was primarily driven by a 3.4 per cent rise in the manufacturing sector. The core sector, which comprises eight key industries, grew by 0.5 per cent in April 2025, according to the National Statistics Office.

While headline inflation has remained within the RBI's comfort band of around 4 per cent, the lurking risk of imported inflation — rises to 31.1 per cent in February 2025 from 1.31 per cent in June 2024 — stemming from global prices, shipping costs, geopolitical instability, and currency value decline, continues to be a concern. The RBI appears to have weighed these risks but is now betting on economic expansion as the bigger imperative, especially as private investment and consumer demand remain below pre-pandemic trajectories.

Financial markets immediately responded to the RBI's policy announcement with optimism. Sectors such as real estate, banking, automobiles, and financial services rallied. This is preceded by a severe fall in the stock markets all through May and before, causing severe losses.

The value of currency in circulation was around ₹16.5 lakh crore in November 2016. It has risen to ₹38.35 lakh crore on May 30, 2025, up from ₹34.70 lakh crore on September 6, 2024, rising 0.2 per cent a week or 7.4 per cent in a year.

The overall reserve money (RM) rose by 0.4 per cent on the week, to ₹49.62 lakh crore. The RM, the physical cash held by the public, including banknotes and coins as well as the CRR and other banks' deposits with RBI play a crucial role in regulating the money supply and influencing economic activity. It's the starting point for the money creation process, where banks can create more money through lending. A more aggressive Trump-driven trade stance, if it materialises, could raise the cost of imports and dent export competitiveness — just as India is trying to recover its industrial mojo. India is hurrying through deals for more imports from the US, including shale oil adding to further costs.

The rate cut is also likely to spur affordable housing uptake, shielding the sector from any fallout in foreign investment or imported material cost spikes. Stocks such as Godrej Properties, DLF, and Kolte-Patil Developers surged after the policy, buoyed by hopes of a demand revival and better liquidity for developers.

Stocks like HDFC Bank and Bajaj Finserv jumped, reflecting optimism around stronger credit demand and a proactive central bank. The Nifty Financial Services index rose nearly 2 per cent, reflecting investor belief that India's financial ecosystem will now be less dependent on foreign portfolio flows and more driven by internal credit momentum.

Imported inflation occurs when the cost of imported goods and services rises, leading to higher domestic prices as currency weakens. Gold and major components of India's imports, significantly contribute to this inflation. Higher import costs raise production expenses for companies causing overall price increases.

While consumer price inflation remains under control, the risk of imported inflation is rising. A Trump-style economic strategy could mean higher tariffs on Chinese goods, pushing up global commodity prices. For India, this could translate to costlier imports of electronics, machinery, and chemicals, feeding into core inflation. The RBI seems to be pre-emptively countering this by stimulating growth now before such inflationary pressures creep in. In many ways, the RBI is borrowing a page from Trump's manual: act boldly, defend your domestic economy, and expect volatility.

Rising imported inflation could lead to a depreciation of the rupee, which would further exacerbate inflationary pressures. The RBI might need to intervene in the currency markets to manage volatility. Certain sectors, such as those reliant on imported raw materials, might face increased costs due to higher imported inflation. This could impact their profitability and pricing power. This could flare up prices of imported raw materials or goods hiking costs leading to higher prices for goods and services. It could impact economic growth if consumers and businesses reduce spending in response to higher prices. The RBI's sweeping rate and reserve ratio cuts are not just a response to slowing growth — they are a strategic counter to global turbulence. As trade dynamics harden and election rhetoric in the US turns more inward-looking, India is sending a clear signal: we'll build our growth engines at home, and we won't wait for the world to stabilise.

India is not immune to global shocks, but this move ensures it isn't caught unprepared. Overall, the RBI's rate cut decision is aimed at supporting growth, but a significant rise in imported inflation could alter the policy landscape and require adjustments to ensure price stability. Still, the new policy if done properly could ensure Growth First, Global Noise Later.

(The writer is a senior journalist. Views expressed are personal)

From Myth to Mission: The Untold Story of India's Women Warriors

Traditionally, across civilisations, women have not played a direct role in wars and battles. In early societies, the preservation and safety of women were seen as vital to the survival and continuity of communities. Yet history offers many powerful exceptions — women who defied convention and proved themselves as exceptional warriors.

Take, for instance, the Amazons, the legendary tribe of female warriors in Greek mythology, celebrated for their archery, riding skills, and battlefield acumen. Closer to home, the Rigveda mentions Vishpala, a warrior who returned to combat with a prosthetic leg after losing her limb in battle — a testament to resilience and courage. Indian tradition reveres Shakti, embodied as Maa Durga, the warrior goddess armed with weapons and mounted on a lion — symbolising feminine strength in its most powerful form.

In more recent centuries, figures like Mai Bhago Kaur and Rani Durgavati stood against the Mughal armies, while Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi and Kittur Chennamma fought valiantly against British colonial rule. These women were not mere outliers — they were trailblazers whose legacies continue to inspire.

PRIYAL BHARDWAJ

The participation of Indian women in the military began formally with their induction into nursing services under the British Indian Army. Thousands served with distinction during the World Wars. After independence, women were granted regular commissions in the Armed Forces Medical Corps in 1958. Since then, more avenues have gradually opened. In 1992, women were inducted into various non-medical branches of the Indian Army under the Short Service Commission. By 2008, they were eligible for permanent commission in the Legal and Education Corps, and in 2020, this opportunity was extended to eight more branches. Over the last decade, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, there has been a conscious and concerted effort to promote the inclusion of women in the armed forces. Iconic milestones — such as Captain Tania Shergill leading an all — male contingent at the 2020 Republic Day Parade, or Lieutenant Colonel Sophia Qureshi heading an all-male contingent in a multinational exercise — have inspired a new generation of young women to envision careers in uniform. The opening of the National Defence Academy to women marked a significant milestone.

As of July 2023, there are close to 4,000 women officers in the Indian Armed Forces. Including the medical corps, the number rises to around 5,800. Additionally, there are approximately 1,000 women in other ranks and 4,600 female nursing staff. These figures are steadily increasing as policies evolve to encourage wider participation.

Importantly, there is now no distinction in the deployment and working conditions of male and female officers. Assignments are based on operational requirements, and employment rules are gender-neutral, ensuring equal opportunities for both men and women.

Modern warfare is increasingly technology-driven, and women have emerged as critical assets in domains like communications, cyber warfare, and intelligence. Women scientists and engineers are making vital contributions to defence technology and innovation — creating new systems, refining operations, and boosting India's defence preparedness. They serve as role models, inspiring younger generations, and challenging traditional stereotypes.

Earlier, we were inspired by pioneers like Dr. Tessy Thomas, who led India's missile development programs. Today, we draw inspiration from the women who played pivotal roles in Operation Sindoor — a mission that not only avenged the lives lost in a terror attack but also marked a milestone in gender-inclusive defence operations.

From visible faces like Wing Commander Singh and Colonel Qureshi to the many unsung women who formed the backbone of the Integrated Air Command and Control System (IACCS), their contributions were critical. The IACCS is an advanced command and control system that integrates real-time data from various air defence assets to detect, identify, intercept, and neutralise hostile threats. It is estimated that women constituted 25-30 per cent of the IACCS team involved in Operation Sindoor. The mission's success, in many ways, was a sisterly salute to those who had lost their husbands in the line of duty.

The story of India's women in defence — be it at DRDO, ISRO, or in operational command — remains one of the most compelling yet untold narratives of our times. It is heartening to witness women rightfully occupying critical positions in service to the nation.

Their increasing presence in leadership roles is not just a matter of representation; it is a strategic imperative. With a Government committed to their empowerment, their role is only set to grow. As India embraces inclusive strength, we move closer to realising our full national potential — powered equally by the resolve of our daughters.

(The writer runs Sangini Saheli, a non-profit organisation focused on the empowerment of women and is the General Secretary of the BJP Women's Wing in Delhi. Views expressed are personal)

The Pioneer
BHUBANESWAR | THURSDAY | JUNE 12, 2025

Jaishankar meets EU Parliament President Roberta Metsola

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Brussels

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Wednesday met European Parliament President Roberta Metsola here and discussed ways to further strengthen the EU-India strategic partnership.

Jaishankar, who is travelling to Europe to boost bilateral ties and reaffirm India's policy of zero-tolerance against terrorism, also met leaders of the European Parliament and welcomed their support for "stronger" India-EU relations. "A warm conversation with @EP_President Roberta Metsola in Brussels this morning. Discussed further strengthening of India-EU parliamentary ties, building upon our shared values of democracy and pluralism," he said in a post on X.

"Value her positive sentiments on advancing our partnership in trade, technology and security," the minister added. Metsola said she was delighted to welcome Jaishankar to the European Parliament.

"As negotiations on a free trade agreement advance, we look forward to transform commitments into actions and to strengthen the strategic partnership between Europe and India," she added. Jaishankar, who is travelling to Europe a month after India launched Operation Sindoor in response to the Pahalgam attack, said he had a "pleasure interacting" with European Parliament members Angelika Niebler, Urmas Paet, Pilar del Castillo, Vladimir Prebilic and Winkler Gyula on Tuesday.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Members of the European Parliament, Angelika Niebler, Urmas Paet, Winkler Gyula, Vladimir Prebilic and Pilar del Castillo in Brussels PTI

"Welcomed their support for stronger India-EU ties. Also appreciate their understanding of India's right to defend itself against terrorism," he said, adding that they "exchanged perspectives on global developments and regional issues." Jaishankar has also met European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and praised her "strong condemnation" of the Pahalgam attack and solidarity in combating terrorism. The April 22 Pahalgam terror attack claimed 26 lives, following which India carried out precision strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on May 7.

Los Angeles police swiftly enforce downtown curfew

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Los Angeles

Los Angeles police swiftly enforced a downtown curfew Tuesday night, making arrests moments after it took effect, while deploying officers on horseback and using crowd control projectiles to break up a group of hundreds demonstrating against President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown.

Members of the National Guard stood watch behind plastic shields, but did not appear to participate in the arrests.

Hours later, many of the protesters had dispersed, although sporadic confrontations continued that were much smaller than in previous nights. Officials said the curfew was necessary to stop vandalism and theft by agitators looking to cause trouble.

Democratic Gov Gavin Newsom earlier accused Trump of drawing a "military dragnet" across the nation's second-largest city with his escalating use of the National Guard. He also deployed Marines, though none were seen on the streets Tuesday.

Newsom asked a court to put an emergency stop to the military helping federal immigration agents, with some guardsmen now standing in protection around agents as they carried out arrests. He said it would only heighten tensions and promote civil unrest. The judge set a hearing for Thursday, giving the administration several days to continue those activities.

The change moves troops closer to engaging in law enforcement actions like deportations as Trump has promised as part of his administration's immigration crackdown. The Guard has the authority to temporarily detain people who attack officers but any arrests ultimately would be made by law enforcement.

Protesters hold signs during an immigration demonstration in Brookhaven, Ga, near Atlanta PTI

Trump has activated more than 4,000 National Guard members and 700 Marines over the objections of city and state leaders. They were originally deployed to protect federal buildings.

Demonstrations have spread to other cities nationwide, including Dallas and Austin, Texas, Chicago and New York, where a thousand people rallied and multiple arrests were made.

In Texas, where police in Austin used chemical irritants to disperse several hundred demonstrators Monday, Republican Gov Greg Abbott's office said Texas National Guard troops were "on standby" in areas where demonstrations are planned, Abbott spokesperson Andrew Mahaleris said Tuesday evening.

Guard members were deployed to San Antonio, according to assistant police chief Jesse Salame. He said he did not know how many were sent or details on the deployment.

LA mayor puts curfew in place

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass declared a local emergency on the fifth day of protests and said the curfew will run from 8 pm Tuesday until 6 am Wednesday. She said it was expected to last for several days.

"We reached a tipping point" after 23 businesses were looted, Bass said during a news conference Tuesday.

The curfew covers a one square mile (2.5 square kilometre) section of downtown that includes the area where protests have occurred since Friday. The city of Los Angeles encompasses roughly 500 square miles (nearly 2,300 square kilometres).

The curfew doesn't apply to residents who live in the designated area, people who are homeless, credentialed media or public safety and emergency officials, according to Los Angeles Police Chief Jim McDonnell.

Russian attacks kill three, wound 64 as drones hit Kharkiv

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Kyiv

Russian forces launched a new drone assault across Ukraine overnight on Wednesday, killing three people and wounding 64 others, Ukrainian officials said.

One of the hardest-hit areas was the city of Kharkiv in northeastern Ukraine, where 17 attack drones struck two residential districts, Mayor Ihor Terekhov said. Emergency crews, municipal workers and volunteers worked through the night to extinguish fires, rescue residents from burning homes, and restore gas, electricity and water services.

"Those are ordinary sites of peaceful life - those that should never be targeted," Terekhov wrote on Telegram.

Three people were confirmed killed, according to Kharkiv regional head Oleh Syniehubov. In a statement, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that 64 people had been wounded and reiterated his calls for greater international pressure on Moscow.

"Every new day now brings new vile Russian attacks, and almost every strike is telling," he said. "We must not be afraid or postpone new decisions that could make things more difficult for Russia. Without this, they will not engage in genuine diplomacy. And this depends primarily on the United States and other world leaders. Everyone who has called for an end to the killings and for diplomacy must act."

Kharkiv has been frequently targeted in recent months as Russia launched repeated large-scale drone and missile attacks on civilian infrastructure.

Moscow's forces have launched waves of drones and missiles in recent days, with a record bombardment of almost 500 drones on Monday and a wave of 315 drones and seven missiles overnight on Tuesday.

The attacks come despite discussions of a potential ceasefire in the war. The two sides traded memorandums at direct peace talks in Istanbul on June 2 that set out conditions. However, the inclusion of clauses that both sides see as nonstarters make any quick deal unlikely.

Wednesday's strikes also caused widespread destruction in Kharkiv's Slobidskyi and Osnovianskyi districts, hitting apartment buildings, private homes, playgrounds, industrial sites and public transportation. Images from the scene published by Ukraine's Emergency Service on Telegram showed burning apartments, shattered windows and firefighters battling the blaze. "We stand strong. We help one another. And we will endure," Terekhov said. "Kharkiv is Ukraine. And it cannot be broken."

Ukraine's air force said that 85 attack and decoy drones were fired over the country overnight. Air defence systems intercepted 40 of the drones, while nine more failed to reach their targets without causing damage.

In other developments, Russia has returned 1,212 bodies of Ukrainian soldiers in line with an agreement reached during the talks in Istanbul between Russian and Ukrainian delegations.

Ukraine's Coordination Headquarters for Treatment of Prisoners of War said that the bodies came from Kharkiv, Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions, as well as Russia's Kursk region where Ukrainian forces waged an incursion. It said that authorities would work to determine their identities as quickly as possible.

Global brands at risk of using forced labour through Chinese supply chains

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ London

Several global brands are among dozens of companies at risk of using forced labour through their Chinese supply chains because they use critical minerals or buy minerals-based products sourced from the far-western Xinjiang region of China, an international rights group said Wednesday.

The report by the Netherlands-based Global Rights Compliance says companies including Avon, Walmart, Nescafe, Coca-Cola and paint supplier Sherwin-Williams may be linked to titanium sourced from Xinjiang, where rights groups allege the Chinese Government runs coercive labour practices targeting predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities. The report found 77 Chinese suppliers in the titanium, lithium, beryllium and magnesium industries operating in Xinjiang. It said the suppliers are at risk of participating in the Chinese Government's "labour transfer programmes," in which Uyghurs are forced to work in factories as part of a long-standing campaign of assimilation and mass detention.

Commercial paints, thermos cups and components for the aerospace, auto and defence industries are among products sold internationally that can trace their supply chains to minerals from Xinjiang, the report said. It said that companies must review their supply chains.

"Mineral mining and processing in (Xinjiang) rely in part on the state's forced labour programmes for Uyghurs and other Turkic people in the region," the report said.

The report came as China and the United States, the world's two largest economies, said that they have agreed on a framework to get their trade negotiations back on track after a series of disputes that threatened to derail them.

The two sides on Tuesday wrapped up two days of talks in London that appeared to focus on finding a way to resolve disputes over mineral and technology exports that had shaken a fragile truce on trade reached in Geneva last month.

Pope Leo XIV names first Chinese bishop

Brazilian former soccer player Cafu kisses the hand of Pope Leo XIV during Pope's weekly general audience in St Peter's Square at The Vatican PTI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Vatican City

Pope Leo XIV made his first appointment of a Chinese bishop under the Vatican's 2018 agreement with Beijing, signalling he is continuing one of Pope Francis' most controversial foreign policy decisions.

The Vatican expressed satisfaction that Leo's June 5 nomination of Bishop Joseph Lin Yuntuan as auxiliary bishop of Fuzhou was recognised Wednesday by Chinese authorities. The Vatican said in a statement that Lin taking possession of the diocese and the civic recognition of his appointment "constitutes a further fruit of the dialogue between the Holy See and the Chinese authorities and is a significant step in the diocese's communal journey."

Francis had riled conservatives when he approved a deal in 2018 over bishop nominations, which had been the most divisive issue in Vatican-China relations since diplomatic ties were severed when the Communists came to power.

China had insisted on an exclusive right to name bishops as a matter of national sovereignty, while the Vatican asserted the pope's exclusive right to name the successors of the original Apostles.

China's estimated 12 million Catholics have been divided between an official, state-controlled church that didn't recognise papal authority and an underground church that remained loyal to Rome through decades of persecution.

The Vatican tried for decades to unify the flock and the 2018 deal was aimed at healing that division, regularising the status of seven bishops who weren't recognised by Rome and thawing decades of estrangement between China and the Vatican.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk defends centrist Government

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Warsaw

Prime Minister Donald Tusk defended his centrist, pro-European Government before parliament on Wednesday, seeking to reassert control and rally his fractured coalition after suffering a bitter political defeat.

Tusk requested a vote of confidence in the wake of the June 1 loss of Warsaw Mayor Rafal Trzaskowski — his close ally — to nationalist historian Karol Nawrocki. Backed by US President Donald Trump, Nawrocki is set to replace outgoing President Andrzej Duda, another conservative who repeatedly blocked Tusk's reform efforts.

"I am asking for a vote of confidence with full conviction that we have a mandate to govern, to take full responsibility for what is happening in Poland," Tusk said.

Most of the power in Poland's parliamentary system rests with an elected parliament and a government chosen by the parliament. However, the president can veto legislation and represents the country abroad.

"Anyone who is ready to move forward with me, with the government, and above all with our voters, regardless of these momentary emotions, and build a better Poland, should vote today for a vote of confidence in our Government," Tusk said.

The vote, scheduled for Wednesday afternoon, is widely expected to go in Tusk's favour. His four-party coalition holds a narrow but stable majority in the 460-seat Sejm, Poland's lower house.

A loss would trigger the formation of a caretaker Government and may open the door for an early parliamentary election. That could potentially returning power to the conservative Law and Justice party, in coalition with the far-right Confederation party, whose candidate placed third in the presidential race.

Tusk had long counted on a Trzaskowski victory to break the institutional deadlock created by Duda's vetoes. Instead, he now faces an incoming president aligned with the nationalist opposition and openly hostile to his Government's legislative priorities.

"We cannot close our eyes to reality," he said. "A president who was reluctant to accept the changes we proposed for Poland and our voters is being replaced by a president who is at least equally reluctant to those changes and proposals."

But he also argued that Trzaskowski's narrow defeat indicates that there is continued strong support for those who share his views.

The election result has rattled the already uneasy governing coalition, which spans from centre-left to centre-right and has struggled to deliver on key campaign pledges, including liberalising Poland's abortion law and legalising same-sex civil unions. Tusk acknowledged the growing strains in Wednesday's address.

Many are also blaming Tusk for contributing to Trzaskowski's loss. Much of the criticism has come from within his coalition, as his partners examine whether they are better off sticking with him or risking a collapse of the coalition. Some are calling for a new prime minister to be selected.

There are questions about what Tusk can realistically achieve before the next parliamentary election, scheduled for late 2027 and whether the coalition will even survive that long amid a surge in popularity for the far right. Polish media and political analysts are debating whether this might be the 68-year-old Tusk's political twilight.

"I know the taste of victory, I know the bitterness of defeat, but I don't know the word surrender," Tusk said.

As part of his fresh start, he announced plans for a government reconstruction in July that will include "new faces."

Austria falls silent for minute in memory of people killed in shooting

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Graz

Austria fell silent for a minute on Wednesday in memory of the 10 people killed in a school shooting in Graz, which ended with the gunman taking his own life. The man's motive remained unclear.

Austria has declared three days of national mourning following what appears to be the deadliest attack in its post-World War II history. At 10 am on Wednesday, marking the moment a day earlier when police were alerted to shots at the BORG Dreierschützengasse high school, the country stopped for a minute of silence. Hundreds of people lined the central square in Graz, Austria's second-biggest city. Some laid more candles and flowers in front of the city hall, adding to a growing memorial to the victims. The first candles were laid on Tuesday evening as a crowd gathered on the square, some people hugging each other as they tried to come to terms with the tragedy. Hundreds of people joined Austrian officials at a service Tuesday evening in the Graz cathedral.

Among those on the square Wednesday was Chiara Komlenic, a 28-year-old art history student who finished her exams at the school there.

"I always felt very protected there. The teachers were also very supportive," she said. "I made lifelong friendships there. It just hurts to see that young girls and boys will never come back, that they experienced the worst day of their lives where I had the best time of my life. I still know a few teachers, it just hurts a lot."

In the capital, Vienna, the local transport authority had trams, subway trains and buses stop for a minute.

Police said they found a farewell letter and a non-functional pipe bomb when they searched the home of the assailant.

The 21-year-old Austrian man lived near Graz and was a former student at the school who hadn't completed his studies. Police have said that he used two weapons, a shotgun and a handgun, which he appeared to have owned legally.

Police didn't elaborate on investigators' findings in a brief post on social network X. But a senior official who acknowledged that the letter had been found on Tuesday night said it hadn't allowed them to draw conclusions.

"A farewell letter in analog and digital form was found," Franz Ruf, the public security director at Austria's Interior Ministry, told ORF public television. "He says goodbye to his parents. But no motive can be inferred from the farewell letter, and that is a matter for further investigations."Asked whether the assailant had attacked victims randomly or targeted them specifically, Ruf said that is also under investigation and he did not want to speculate.

He said that wounded people were found on various levels of the school and in one case, in front of the building. By Wednesday morning, the authority that runs hospitals in Graz said that all patients were in stable condition.

36 Palestinians killed, 207 injured in Gaza: officials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Deir Al-Balah (Gaza Strip)

Palestinians desperately trying to access aid in Gaza came under fire again on Tuesday, killing 36 people and wounding 207, the Palestinian Health Ministry said.

Experts and humanitarian aid workers say Israel's blockade and 20-month military campaign have pushed Gaza to the brink of famine.

At least 163 people have been killed and 1,495 wounded in a number of shootings near aid sites run by the Israeli and US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, which are in military zones that are off-limits to independent media. The Israeli military has acknowledged firing warning shots on previous occasions at people who it says approached its forces in a suspicious manner.

The foundation says there has been no violence in or around the distribution points themselves. But it has warned people to stay on designated access routes and it paused delivery last week while it held talks with the military on improving safety.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Tuesday there is "meaningful progress" on a possible ceasefire deal that would also return some of the 55 hostages still being held in Gaza, but said it was "too early to hope." Foreign Minister Gideon Saar also mentioned on Tuesday that there was progress in ceasefire negotiations.

Netanyahu was meeting with the Israeli negotiating team and the defence minister on Tuesday evening to discuss next steps.

People are killed just trying to get food

In southern Gaza, at least eight people were killed while trying to obtain aid around Rafah, according to Nasser Hospital.

In northern Gaza, two men and a child were killed and at least 130 were wounded on on Tuesday, according to Nader Garghoun, a spokesperson for the al-Awda Hospital, which received the casualties. He said most were being treated for gunshot wounds.

Witnesses told The Associated Press that Israeli forces opened fire at around 2 am, several hundred metres from the aid site in central Gaza. Crowds of Palestinians seeking desperately needed food often head to the sites hours before dawn, hoping to beat the crowds.

The Israeli military said it fired warning shots at people it referred to as suspects. It said they had advanced toward its troops hundreds of metres from the aid site prior to its opening hours.

Mohammed Abu Hussein, a resident of the nearby built-up Bureij refugee camp, said Israeli drones and tanks opened fire, and that he saw five people wounded by gunshots.

Abed Haniyah, another witness, said Israeli forces opened fire "indiscriminately" as thousands of people were attempting to reach the food site.

"What happens every day is humiliation," he said. "Every day, people are killed just trying to get food for their children." Additionally, three Palestinian medics were killed in an Israeli strike on Tuesday in Gaza City, according to the health ministry.

The medics from the health ministry's emergency service were responding to an Israeli attack on a house in Jaffa street in Gaza City when a second strike hit the building, the ministry said. The Israeli military did not comment on the strike, but said over the past day the air force has hit dozens of targets belonging to Hamas' military infrastructure, including rocket launchers.

The UN has rejected the new aid system

Israel and the United States say they set up the new food distribution system to prevent Hamas from stealing humanitarian aid and using it to finance militant activities.

The United Nations, which runs a long-standing system capable of delivering aid to all parts of Gaza, says there is no evidence of any systematic diversion.

UN agencies and major aid groups have refused to cooperate with the new system, saying it violates humanitarian principles by allowing Israel to decide who receives aid and by forcing Palestinians to relocate to just three currently operational sites.

The other two distribution sites are in the now mostly uninhabited southern city of Rafah, which Israel has transformed into a military zone. Israeli forces maintain an outer perimeter around all three hubs, and Palestinians must pass close to them to reach the distribution points.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has spoken of creating a "sterile zone" in Rafah free of Hamas and of moving the territory's entire population there. He has also said Israel will facilitate what he refers to as the voluntary emigration of much of Gaza's 2 million Palestinians to other countries - plans rejected by much of the international community, including the Palestinians, who view it as forcible expulsion.

Hamas started the war with its attack on southern Israel on October 7, 2023, when Palestinian militants killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took another 251 hostage. They still hold 55 hostages, fewer than half of them alive, after most of the rest were released in ceasefire agreements or other deals.

Israel's military campaign has killed nearly 55,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. It says women and children make up most of the dead, but does not distinguish between civilians and combatants. Israel says it has killed more than 20,000 militants, without providing evidence.

The war has destroyed vast areas of Gaza and displaced around 90 per cent of its population, often multiple times.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Known to all that my client **Smt. Somwati Devi owner of the PROPERTY NO. 26-P/208, AREA 60SQ.YDS.,KHASRA NO.305,GALI NO.1, NASIR PUR,(INDRA PARK),PALAM COLONY,NEW DELHI-110045 and Smt.Somwati Devi purchase property from 1. Sh. Lokender Singh & 2. Sh. Inder Pal vide Notarized GPA, ATS and Will dated 24.06.1992, now Smt. Somwati Devi wants to sell aforesaid property.** And It is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 15 days of this publication.

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Ch. No. 760 - Dwarka Court Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-75
Mobile :- 9899013918

PUBLIC NOTICE

Known to all that my client **Smt. Rajni Khurana owner of the PLOT NO. 27 & 28, AREA 26.66 SQ. YDS. KHASRA NO. 622 & 623, NAWADA, MOHAN GARDEN, D.K ROAD, UTTAM NAGAR, NEW DELHI -110059 and Smt.Rajni Khurana purchase property from Smt.Kamal Madhok vide Notari zed GPA, ATS and Will dated 09.02.2025, now Smt. Rajni Khurana wants to sell aforesaid property.** And It is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 15 days of this publication.

AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION
Ch. No. 760 - Dwarka Court Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-75
Mobile :- 9899013918

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to all concern that Mrs. Preeti Mukhija W/o Sh. Ketan Mukhija & Mr. Harsh Makhija S/o Sh. O.P. Makhija both R/o 27D, Sector-82, HIG Flats, Swarnim Vihar, Noida, who is the Joint owner of T-406, Logix Blossom Greens, Tower-T, 4th Floor, Plot No. GH-01, Sector-143, Noida (U.P) had sold the said property on GPA basis to the following person(s). GPA was executed on in favour of Mr. Ketan Mukhija S/o Sh. O.P. Makhija R/o 27D, Sector-82, HIG Flats, Swarnim Vihar, Noida(U.P) Which is registered at Sub Registrar-1 Gautam Budh Nagar Bahi No.4, Jild No.1361, Page No. 249 to 272, Serial No.606, Dt. 26.03.2018. The agreement to sell was not registered or not executed. So it is informed to all concern that the said property is going to be transferred in favour of Sh. Rituraj Jain S/o Padam Chandra Jain R/o 1053, Adrash Nagar, Shikohabad, Firozabad U.P. If any one has/have any objection he/she may file his/her objection along with the sufficient proof in the Residential Department of the Noida Authority within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. **Mr. Ketan Mukhija**

Public Notice

This is to inform the General Public that our client Mr. Manish Garg @ Mannish Garg S/o. Sh. Manohar Lal Garg and Smt. Santosh Kumari W/o. Manohar Lal Garg R/o. H. No- 160, Vaishali, Delhi are owner of property bearing No-160, Vaishali , Delhi by virtue of sale deed Number 17050 dated 08.11.2011 duly registered with Sub – Registrar VI-A, Delhi executed by Sh. S.M. Arora and Sh. Ravinder Mohan in favour of our client. That in the chain of title documents, Agreement to Sell and General Power of Attorney both dated 06.09.1984 executed by Sh. S.M. Arora S/o Sh. Krishna Kumar with respect to the property in question , are involved, however, the same has been misplaced, and the intimation report bearing LR No. 2875688/2025 in this regard stands given to the Delhi Police on dated 28.05.2025. That our client intends to mortgage the property referred above with SBI, Branch at Kundli, Haryana by way of equitable mortgage. Any individual, Bank/ financial institution etc. claiming any right , title or interest in the Property no-160, Vaishali, Delhi on the basis of the said misplace Agreement to sell and General Power of Attorney both dated 06.09.1984 any other registered or unregistered documents, shall inform the same to the undersigned within 7 days from today. After the expiry of 7 days No claim in this regard shall be entertained. **Advocate Yogita (No: 9911456298)**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Reg: Residential House No. 2650, area measuring 65 sq.yds., Situated in Subi Mandi, Abadi Punjabi Basti, Lambi Gali, Subzi Mandi, New Delhi. ***(Hereinafter referred to as the "Said Property").***

Be it known to all that our clients, Mr. Krishan Kumar Verma & Mrs. Sadna Verma (hereinafter called the "Purchasers") intends to purchase the said property from Mr. Lalit Kumar Jain (hereinafter called the "seller"). Initially, Mr. Hukam Chand owned the said property vide conveyance Deed dated 10.11.1960 and further Mr. Hukam Chand transferred the said property vide Sale Deed dated 02.04.1969 in favour of Mrs. Parkash Wati Jain. Upon the death of Mrs. Parkash Wati Jain on 16.05.2004 the said property devolved upon **Mr. Lalit Kumar Jain** vide Regd. Will dated 18.02.1997.Thus, Mr. **Mr. Lalit Kumar Jain** has become the owner of the said property. The said owner has also informed that the said property is not mortgaged anywhere and there is no charge or dispute or any litigation pending regarding the said property.

Any person including Bank/s, Financial Institution/s. relative/s having any claim, right, title or any interest of any nature whatsoever into or upon the said property is hereby called upon to make the same known, in writing, with documentary evidence, by Registered AD Post, to the undersigned at the address mentioned herein below within 07 days of publication of this notice and in the event of no response having been received to the notice, the title of the owner in respect of the said property shall be deemed to be clear of any charge or encumbrance of any nature whatsoever and any subsequent claim shall not bind our clients/Purchaser, in any manner whatsoever.

Shivkant Arora, Advocate
M/s Intellective Law Offices
A-74, LGF, Defence Colony,
New Delhi -110024

PUBLIC NOTICE

Re: Flat No. C-1, on Upper Ground Floor, admeasuring 38.00 sq.mtrs., built on Property bearing No. 171, situated in the layout plan of Vikram Enclave Extension, Village Pasonda, Pargana Loni, Tehsil & Distt. Ghaziabad; hereinafter referred to as "said Property".

NOTICE is hereby given to general public that our clientess, Mrs. Anita Kholi(hereinafter referred as "the purchaser") intends to purchase the said flat from Mr. Parikshit Handa (hereinafter referred as "the Seller"). In this connection, the seller owned the said flat vide Sale Deed dated 25.02.2025, Document No. 2290executed by Mr. Akbar Ali. The seller has further informed us that Mr. Akbar Ali purchased the said flat from Mr. Egrish & Mr. Sidaqqi who owned the said flat vide mutation letter and succession certificate issued by concerned authority upon the death of Mrs. Firoza died on 14.01.2010 and her husband Mr. Abdul Kadir. Further, Mrs. Firoza purchased the said flat from Mrs. Rati Devi vide Sale Deed dated 16.04.2004 and wherein Mrs. Rati Devi owned the said property including said flat from Mr. Dharamveer by virtue of Regd. Sale Deed dated 28.09.2000. Further seller has informed us that Original Sale Deed dated 16.04.2004 in respect of the said flat and forming part of chain documents (hereinafter called the "said document") has been lost/misplaced and is not traceable. A lost property paper report to this effect has also been lodged with Uttar Pradesh Police vide LAR No. 20250000391607dated 06/06/2025.

If the aforesaid original document (the said document) or any one of them is/are found or has/have been found by any person, the same may be returned and delivered to the undersigned at the address mentioned herein below. Further, if any person, body, institution is having any claim and/or objection in respect of the said flat or any part thereof, he/they may raise his/ their objection/s, in writing, with documentary evidence, by Registered AD Post, to the undersigned at the address mentioned herein below within 07days of publication of this notice. Otherwise, after expiry of 07days from the date of publication of this notice, no objection shall be acceptable.

General Public may also take note that any deal or transaction done by anybody on the basis of the said documents or any of the aforesaid documents shall be illegal and not binding on our clients. The person doing so shall be liable to be prosecuted under the law.

SHIVKANT ARORA, ADVOCATE
FOR M/S INTELLECTIVE LAW OFFICES
A-74, LOWER GROUND FLOOR,
DEFENCE COLONY, NEW DELHI-110024

PUBLIC NOTICE

Known to all that my client **1.Smt.Lata Aggarwal, 2.Sh.Ravi Jindal,3. Sh. Vishal Goyal, 4. Smt. Savita & 5. Smt. Supyar Devi owner of the FLAT NO. 102, UGF, AREA 90 SQ YDS., PROPERTY NO.15 AND 16,KHASRA NO.631, (IN CONVEYANCE DEED 0/631/0), CHANKYA PLACE,PART-2,BLOCK-R,NEW DELHI-110059 and 1. Smt. Lata Aggarwal, 2. Sh. Ravi Jindal, 3.Sh.Vishal Goyal,4.Smt.Savita & 5.Smt. Supyar Devi purchase property from Smt. Preeti Arora vide 2 Notarized GPA,ATS and Will dated 30.12.2023, and now 1. Smt. Lata Aggarwal,2. Sh. Ravi Jindal, 3. Sh. Vishal Goyal, 4. Smt. Savita & 5. Smt. Supyar Devi wants to sell aforesaid property,** so It is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 15 days of this publication.

AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION
Ch. No. 760 - Dwarka Court Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-75
Mobile :- 9899013918

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice to General Public That, Mrs. Usha Rani has applied for a loan from M/s PNB Housing Finance Ltd. for the Plot No. 7E Area 55 Sq. yards, out of Khasra 69//8 (8-0), situated at revenue estate of village Saran, Tehsil & District Faridabad, Haryana; hereinafter referred to as "said property". That, Mrs. Usha Rani has made us understand she has lost or misplaced the following documents:- 1. Sale deed no 3957 dt 15.06.1981, 2. Sale deed 1904 dt 28-07- 1982, 3. Sale deed 11678 dt 03-02-1983, 4. Sale deed 793 dt 20-04-1985, 5. Sale deed 5493 dt 24-11-1989, in respect of said property vide LR 1322508825002791280/281/282/283 somewhere, which are not traceable or cannot be found.

Now, I would like to announce to general public that If anybody or any person got or having any claim against on the said above documents by way of legal heirs, Mortgage, Gift, Lease, Inheritance, Lien or otherwise or any objection with said above documents may come to our Delhi office within seven days and render their claim with documentary valid evidence. If any, else the same would be treated as unclaimed and unrebutted and moved forth accordingly.

M/S PASS & ASSOCIATES LLP
B-132, L.G.F, Malviya Nagar
New Delhi-110017, Mob: 9991116006

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Mrs. Rajni W/o Mr. Virender Kumar is the owner of Residential Built-Up Property Bearing No. 423, Area Measuring 75 Sq. Yds., Out of Khasra No. 642, Situated in the Abadi of Gali Panna Wali, Farash Bazaar, Shahdara, In the area of Village Chandrawali, Illaqa Shahdara, Delhi-110032, by virtue of Reg. GPA, ATS & Will, dated 12.12.2005, Reg. No. 24095, Book No.4, Vol No. 1903, Page No.177-182, executed by Mrs. Poonam Rastogi W/o Mr. Satish Rastogi, same to be finance by SMFG INDIA HOME FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED, General public hereby informed that if anybody has any charge/interest/title in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Rahul Raj Pathak, Advocate
SG Associates (Law Firm)
FF 18, Lotus Pond Plaza,Vaibhav Khand,Indirapuram,Ghaziabad UP.
E-mail: sgassociatespl@gmail.com, Ph: 8130309204, 01204440300

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, **Gajendra Singh Rana** S/o Lt Bir Singh Rana, **R/o D-248 Gaur Green Avenue, Abhay Khand II, PS Indirapuram, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh,** declare that Me and my wife **Uma Singh Rana** & other member of my family have no social relation with my brother **Devendra Singh Rana** S/o Late Bir Singh Rana and his wife **Gunjan alias Pooja** D/o Hargopal Singh R/o Village Narsena, District Bulandshahr. We are not partners or responsible in any way for any of their moral or immoral acts.

Ramesh Chander (Adv) Ch. 68, Western Wing, Tis Hazari

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Advocate Laxmi Shukla, hereby declare on behalf of my client Mr. Brahm Pal S/O Mr. Shiv Charan R/o **House No. 8, DAULAT PUR, SHAHABAD GAON, NORTH-WEST DELHI-110042** that he has disowned his son, Mr. Anmol Rana from all movable and immovable assets and family relations due to his misconduct, misbehavior, and disobedient activities. Mr. Anmol Rana shall have no legal right, claim, or interest in any property assets, or liabilities belonging to Mr. Brahm Pal. Anyone dealing with him will be doing so at their own risk and responsibility.

LAXMI SHUKLA (Advocate), Seat no. 46 Bar, R. No.-1, Civil Side Tis Hazari, Delhi-110054.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Known to all that my client **Sh. Manoj Gupta owner of the SECOND FLOOR, AREA 61 SQ. YD., PVT. PLOT NO. 5 AND 5-A, KHASRA NO.104/4 /1, SANT NAGAR, BURARI, DELHI-110084 and Sh. Manoj Gupta purchase property from 1. Sh. Sonu & 2. Sh. Rajesh Kumar vide Notarized GPA, ATS and Will dated 30.12.2024, now Sh. Manoj Gupta wants to sell aforesaid property.** And It is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 15 days of this publication.

AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION
Ch. No. 760 - Dwarka Court Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-75
Mobile :- 9899013918

NORTHERN RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE

Name of work with its location	Provision of Telecom facilities in c/w **1)** Improvement of ROB cell Room No. 150, Vigilance Branch and Crime Branch at ANNEXE-I, Baroda House in the S/o SSE/W/BH under ADEN/E-III. **2)** Improvement/Upgradation to rooms no. 104, 105, 106, 107, toilet and officer hall of medical department at 1st floor of Annexe-II building at Baroda House in the section of SSE/W/BH under ADEN/E-III. **3)** Reliability and improvement of Railnet facilities in DRM Office, New Delhi. **4)** Construction of New medicine OPD building at NRCH in the S/O SSE/W/NRCH under ADEN/NRCH.

App. Cost of the work	₹ 41,18,339.97/- only	Earnest Money Deposit	₹82,400/- only

Address of the office	Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer-C, Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annexe-1, DRM office, New Delhi-110055.
Date & Time for upload the tender/ closing of tender	Tender uploading/ closing date & time-03/07/2025 up to 15.00 hrs.
Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc.	See the Northern Railway website **www.ireps.gov.in** & Notice board at S&T branch, 3rd Floor, DRM office, State Entry Road, New Delhi-55.

Tender No. 558-Sig-16-Tele-OT-1013 Dated: 11.06.2025
1739/2025
SERVING CUSTOMER WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice NO. 22/2025-2026 Dated: 11.06.2025
Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement system

Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:-

S. No.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
01	09255006	CAST STEEL CASNUB 22HS BOGIE	960 NOS	07.07.25
02	19250764	SPRING LOADED SWITCH FOR ZPT	1147 NOS	14.07.25
03	07241086A	HELICAL SPRING FOR AXLE BOX	700 NOS	18.07.25
04	19250808	END FRAME DE ASSEMBLY	58 NOS	22.09.25
05	19254439	DOUBLE ROW SELF ALIGNING SPHERICAL ROLLER	205 NOS	29.09.25
06	19250803	SET OF SINGLE DUCT LEATHER	95 NOS	06.10.25

NOTE- 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. **www.ireps.gov.in** for details. **2.** No Manual offer will be entertained.
1744/2025
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

CSB Bank
Trusted Heritage Smart Future

PUBLIC NOTICE ON AUCTION OF PLEDGED GOLD ORNAMENTS

The borrower/s in specific and interested bidders,in general, are hereby informed that on account of non-repayment of the Banks due by the borrowers as under despite the payment notice and recall/auction notice issued by the Bank, the gold ornaments pledged with the bank security by the respective borrowers for the loan availed by them will be sold in public auction on "as is where is" and "non-recourse" basis through e-auction portal https://csbegold.auctiontiger.net on 21st June 2025 at 10.30 AM The auction may be adjourned to any other later date at the discreation of the bank upon publication of the same in the Bank's notice board. The borrowers are hereby further inform that the gold ornaments will be disposed of by private sale if the public auction is not successful and if there is a further balance to be recovered thereafter, legal action will be initiated against the borrower/s for recovery of the balance amounts due to the bank.In case of diseased borrower, all conditions will be applicable to legal heirs

S. No.	Account Name	Client ID	No. Of Acc.	Bal.Outstanding as on 10/06/2025	Weight (grams)
	NEW DELHI				
1	Purva	4859064	001	2,68,756.00	49.98
	ASHOK VIHAR - DELHI				
2	Vinay Basoya	4180947	001	2,56,649.10	45.00
3	Vinod Kumar	4660386	001	1,76,060.90	30.85
4	Vimlesh	4660443	001	1,38,928.20	24.34
	GREATER KAILASH - II				
5	Amit Kumar	4332093	001	2,18,725.00	48.43
	GAUTAM NAGAR				
6	Vikas Saini	4071729	001	43,098.50	9.20
7	Anil Yadav	4328523	001	92,044.00	26.10
8	Sanjeev Jena	4834639	001	1,33,489.50	31.50
9	Poonam Solanki	7096092	001	63,129.00	15.00
	KAROL BAGH				
10	Manoj Kumar	4807141	001	1,59,265.60	30.70
11	Sohan Lal	4918837	003	9,60,988.00	173.29
12	Asha Gola	7668704	001	4,91,194.00	90.50
13	Shabenoor	8140581	001	4,30,119.00	80.13
14	Sunil Kumar	8172847	001	4,52,439.80	85.16
15	Vinod	8173905	002	7,90,141.35	150.69
	PALAM				
16	Krishan	4580303	002	2,80,829.00	54.11
17	Ajay Kumar	4960209	001	1,76,591.00	33.40
18	Priya Sharma	4977021	001	1,97,103.00	35.30
19	Gaurav Mudgil	7655506	002	19,49,952.00	396.99
20	Santosh Devi	8177001	001	3,15,797.00	59.00
	JANAKAPURI				
21	Inder Pal	4870961	001	27,980.00	5.16
	ROHINI SECTOR 7				
22	Mukesh	4512150	001	1,18,466.02	32.55
23	Mukesh Vashisht	4678345	001	38,031.00	7.50
24	Sudhir Kumar	4860807	001	75,321.00	13.56
25	Vinod Kumar	4889663	002	66,879.44	13.19
26	Rahul Kumar	7936328	002	6,69,995.50	126.88
	SHALIMARBAGH				
27	Ekta Ekta	4286494	001	2,14,442.00	44.52
28	Subodh Jain	4349101	001	13,86,498.00	298.90
29	Kavita Kumari	4568365	001	49,471.00	9.38
30	Aruna Chakraborty	4918233	001	87,658.50	15.50
31	Preeti	4927377	001	79,896.00	15.58
32	Ansh Mann	4960767	001	46,821.00	8.00
33	Harsh	4969755	002	3,79,433.00	80.62
34	Rakesh Kumar	4975431	001	1,76,493.00	37.17
35	Shiva	5066887	001	89,955.00	18.04
36	Ankit	5068552	001	52,795.00	9.77
37	Jeenat Jaha	7707429	001	13,73,696.00	293.49
38	Nitin Jain	7877135	001	2,70,877.00	51.66
39	Monika .	7956228	001	55,350.00	10.60
40	Sanjana Jindal	8167873	001	7,12,271.00	132.45
41	Aditya Kapoor	8171292	001	1,74,757.00	37.50
42	Jitender	8278983	002	13,67,964.00	253.59
43	Sakshi	8283720	002	20,14,176.00	388.02
	OKHLA				
44	Rajesh Kumar	4273332	003	3,09,682.50	62.09
45	Subodh Saini	4786572	001	27,695.25	5.84
46	Pooja Kumari	7927141	002	3,01,025.00	53.65
	PATEL NAGAR				
47	Rakesh Kumar	4626034	001	1,19,024.00	21.40
48	Satish Mohite Mohite	4750007	001	55,540.00	10.45
49	Nikhil Anand	4972523	001	2,33,116.00	46.18
50	Jatashankar Singh	5067305	001	81,617.00	16.49
	TILAK NAGAR, NEW DELHI				
51	Rajesh Kumar	4971217	001	35,359.40	6.80

For more details/account wise information borrowers/interested bidders may contact respective branches and for participating in the auction, please visit/login to the e-auction portal https://csbegold.auctiontiger.net

NCT OF DELHI | 12.06.2025 Sd/- Authorized Officer, CSB Bank

ESAF
ESAF SMALL FINANCE BANK
REGD. OFFICE: ESAF Bhavan, Mannuthy, Thrissur- 680 651, Kerala.

GOLD AUCTION NOTICE

Notice is hereby given for the information of all concerned that Gold ornaments pledged with ESAF Small Finance Bank and not redeemed by borrowers, despite repeated reminders and notices, of our branches, are listed below. This will be auctioned as per the details given below:

DATE OF AUCTION: **20-06-2025** TIME: **2pm to 5 pm**
AUCTION VENUE: **Through e-Auction**
AUCTION ADDRESS: **https://gold.matexnet.org/**
Contact Number: 9944171360 / 9843312694

To register as bidder for the e-Auction with terms and conditions, and full details of e-Auction please visit the above site.

BRANCHES & LOAN ACCOUNT NUMBERS

FARIDABAD: 75240003688343.

Customers who are interested to release the ornaments by paying the total due amount may do so, at the respective branches, on or two days before the date of the auction.

Bidders who wish to participate in the auction shall produce their KYC documents. GST No. is mandatory for registered firms/companies. Bidders shall deposit a sum of Rs.50,000 as EMD before participating in the auction.

Thrissur Sd/-
Date: **12-06-2025** Authorized Signatory

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, M/s Vatika Ltd. is developing a Group Housing Colony over an area measuring 7.50 acres at Sector 82A, falling in the Residential Plotted Colony, Sector 81 to 85, Gurugram, in accordance with the provision of License No. 113 of 2008 dated 01.06.2008, License No. 71 of 2010 dated 15.09.2010 and License No. 62 of 2011 dated 02.07.2011 granted by Director, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh.

And whereas, several individuals have made bookings / entered into purchase agreement for allotment of property in the said group housing colony (hereinafter referred as allottees).

And whereas, the earlier approved building plans vide Memo no. ZP-792/SD(BS)/2014/28568 dated 22.12.2014 are now proposed to be revised, for which DTCP, Haryana has granted in-principle approval for the revision in building plans vide Memo no. ZP-792-III/PA(DK)/2025/21752 dated 10.06.2025.

Accordingly, vide this Public Notice, objections/suggestion, if any are hereby invited from any of the allottees on the revised building plans. The earlier approved building plans & revised building plans (approved in principle) are available for perusal on our website https://www.vatikacollections.com/homes-future-ready/gurgaon/sovereign-next/ and at our site office and in the office of Senior Town Planner, Sector-14, Gurugram, Haryana.

In case of any objection on the revised building plans, the allottee may file his/her objections/suggestion in the office of Senior Town Planner, Sector 14, Gurugram, Haryana and in the office of the undersigned at Unit no.-A-002, Ground Floor, Block A, INXT City Center, Sector 83, Gurugram, Haryana within 30 days of the publication of this notice, failing which it shall be assumed that there are no objections to the proposed revision in the building plans.

Place: Gurugram For M/s Vatika Limited
Date: 12.06.2025

Kind Attention Rail Passengers

INTRODUCTION OF NEW TRAIN BETWEEN FIROZPUR CANTT AND HAZUR SAHIB NANDED

It is notified for the information of passengers that Railways will introduce a new Train Service No. 14622/14621 Weekly Express from 13.06.2025 to run between Firozpur Cantt & Hazur Sahib Nanded stations as per the following time-table & stoppages :-

14622/14621 Firozpur Cantt. - Hazur Sahib Nanded - Firozpur Cantt. Express Train (Weekly)

TRAIN NO. 14622 ARR.	TRAIN NO. 14622 DEP.	STATIONS	TRAIN NO. 14621 ARR.	TRAIN NO. 14621 DEP.
---	13:25	Firozpur Cantt. Jn.	04:40	---
13:50	13:52	Faridkot	03:23	03:25
14:07	14:09	Kot Kapura Jn.	03:06	03:08
15:05	15:25	Bathinda Jn.	02:00	02:20
15:58	16:00	Mansa	23:29	23:31
16:38	16:40	Jakhal Jn.	22:55	22:57
16:58	17:00	Dhamtan Sahib	22:35	22:37
17:43	17:45	Jind Jn.	21:56	21:58
18:30	18:32	Rohtak Jn.	21:12	21:14
19:00	19:02	Bahadurgarh	20:42	20:44
19:40	19:42	Shakur Basti	20:24	20:26
20:20	20:25	Delhi-Safdarjung	19:38	19:42
21:35	21:37	Faridabad	18:48	18:50
23:05	23:10	Mathura Jn.	16:50	16:55
23:50	23:55	Agra Cantt	16:05	16:10
02:05	02:07	Gwalior Jn.	14:00	14:02
03:35	03:43	Virangana Lakshmibai Jhansi	12:40	12:48
06:15	06:17	Bina Jn.	09:30	09:32
07:10	07:12	Vidisha	07:18	07:20
08:05	08:15	Bhopal	06:25	06:35
09:55	10:00	Itarsi Jn.	04:35	04:40
12:43	12:45	Khandwa Jn.	02:13	02:15
14:45	14:50	Bhusaval Jn.	23:45	23:50
17:55	18:00	Manmad Jn.	21:20	21:25
20:55	21:00	Aurangabad	16:50	16:55
21:56	21:58	Jalna	14:56	14:58
22:50	22:59	Selu	13:42	13:44
00:26	00:28	Parbhani Jn.	12:56	12:58
01:25	01:30	Purna Jn.	12:20	12:25
03:30	---	Hazur Sahib Nanded	---	11:50

Date of Regular Run : 14622 Ex. Firozpur Cantt Jn. from **13.06.2025** (every Friday) and **14621** Ex. Hazur Sahib Nanded from **15.06.2025** (every Sunday)
Accommodation : AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, 3 Tier Economy, Sleeper & General.

For any kind of information, passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.

Follow us on :-
NORTHERN RAILWAY
Your Convenience - Our Concern
Visit us at : www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in
1738/2025
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Sanjay Kumar S/o Thakur Dass R/o E-82, 2nd floor, Sector-1, Rohini, Delhi-110085 have changed my name to Sanjay JUNEJA permanently.

PD(2211)C

I, No.16027819K Rfn Zala Vijaykumar Rameshbhai, R/o Vill- Badrkha. To- Dholka, Dist- Ahemdabad, Gujarat, have changed my daughter's name form Aelvika to Aelvika Vijaykumar Zala vide Affidavit dated 11/09/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2213)C

I, Ranee Devi, Mother of JC-472914N Sub & Hony LT Raju Singh, R/o- Vill- Chak Pagamber Pur, PO- Sidhanw, Teh & Dist- Fatehpur, U.P.-212663, have changed my name from Ranee Devi to Rani Devi, vide affidavit dated 11/06/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2214)C

I, Chander Kala, Mother of- No.16011808N Hav Manoj Kumar R/o- H. No. A/43, Gokul Vihar, Rohta Road, Meerut, U.P.- 250001, have changed my name from Chander Kala to Chandrakala, vide affidavit dated 11/06/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2215)C

I, Savitri Devi, Mother of- No.16019138M L/Nk Rajveer Singh, R/o- Gautam Nagar, Nadi Par Tall, PO & Teh-Morar, Gwalior, M.P.- 474011, have changed my name from Savitri Devi to Ram Devi, vide affidavit dated 11/06/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2216)C

I, Sonka, D/o- JC-472871K Sub H/LT Chander Bhan Singh R/o- VPO- Astawan, TO- Kumher, Dist- Bharatpur, Rajasthan- 321201, have changed my name from Sonka to Sonika Kumari, vide affidavit dated 11/06/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2217)C

I, Shiva Chouhan, S/o JC-470723A EX - Sub Hony Capt. Manoj Kumar, R/o- Vill/PS-Sadhaura, Teh- Bilaspur, Dist-Yamuna Nagar, Haryana-133204, have changed my name from Shiva Chouhan to Shiva Chauhan, vide affidavit dated 11/06/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2218)C

I, Sangeeta Devi W/o- No. 16018889F Hav Surendra Kumar, R/o- Vill & PO- Tasar Badi, Teh- Dhod, Dist- Sikar, Rajasthan- 332042, have changed my name from Sangeeta Devi to Sangeeta Kumari, vide affidavit dated 11/06/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2219)C

I, Kishori Devi W/o No. 15416775P Hav Saroj Kumar Paswan R/o- Vill/PO-Kharaua, PS- Rahika, Dist-Madhubani, Bihar- 847238, have changed my name from Kishori Devi to Kishori Kumari vide affidavit dated 11/06/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2220)C

I, Surendra Kumar F/o No. 15796786L Nk(OCC) Satya Prakash Mishra R/o- Vill-Parei, PO- Pipriya Mandan, Teh- Bisalpur, Dist- Pilibhit, U.P.-262203, declare that in my son's service record, my name is wrongly written as Surendra Kumar Mishra whereas my correct name is Surendra Kumar which may be amended accordingly.

PD(2221)C

I, Kamla Devi, M/o No. 15796786L Nk(OCC) Satya Prakash Mishra R/o- Vill-Parei, PO- Pipriya Mandan, Teh- Bisalpur, Dist- Pilibhit, U.P.-262203 declare that in my son's service record, my name is wrongly written as Kamla Mishra whereas my correct name is Kamla Devi which may be amended accordingly.

PD(2222)C

I, Khandekar Vishnu Pandhrinath, F/o- No. 17001018F Nk Khandekar Gorakh Vishnu, R/o- H. No. 1/43, Sadar Bazar, Delhi Cantt-110010, have changed my name from Khandekar Vishnu Pandhrinath to Vishnu Pandharinath Khandekar, vide affidavit dated 10/06/2025 before Executive Magistrate Delhi Cantt.

PD(2223)C

I, Khandekar Kamal Vishnu M/o- No.17001018F Nk Khandekar Gorakh Vishnu, R/o- H. No. 1/43, Sadar Bazar, Delhi Cantt- 110010, have changed my name from Khandekar Kamal Vishnu to Kamal Vishnu Khandekar, vide affidavit dated 10/06/2025 before Executive Magistrate Delhi Cantt.

PD(2224)C

I, Sweta D/o- No.14805096P Ex- Hony Nb Sub Surendra Kumar, R/o- A-78, Gali No. 2, Sainik Enclave, Vikas Nagar, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059, have changed my name from Sweta to Sweta Kumari, vide affidavit dated 11/06/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2225)C

I, No. JC-472499X Sub Rajesh Singh R/o- Vill- Randhir Colony, PO- Gole Ka Mandir, Dist- Gird, Gwalior, M.P.-474005, have changed my daughter's name from Sonali to Sonaali, vide affidavit dated 11/06/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2226)C

I, No. 16019342L Hav Dheeraj Kumar, R/o- Vill+Post- Jarua Katra, Dist- Agra, U.P.- 283102, have changed my daughter's name from Kumari Natasha to Natasha, vide affidavit dated 11/06/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2227)C

I, Mursaleen S/o Mohd Ali Hasan R/o Village Babura, Post Makaita, Thana Dhoraiya Distt, Banka, Bihar - 813105, have changed my name to Mursalin (Both are same Person)

PD(2228)C

The Pioneer
BHUBANESWAR | THURSDAY | JUNE 12, 2025

GOLD ETFS STAGE COMEBACK WITH ₹292-CR INFLOW IN MAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

PIONEER FILE PHOTO

After a two-month outflow, Gold Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) experienced a net inflow of ₹292 crore in May driven by resilient gold prices and sustained global uncertainties.

The inflow led to an expansion in the category's assets under management to ₹62,453 crore in May from ₹61,422 crore in April, latest data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed.

Going by the data, Gold ETFs witnessed an inflow to the tune of ₹292 crore last month, marking an improvement from outflow of ₹6 crore in April and ₹77 crore in March.

"The renewed traction in May signals a gradual return of investor interest, likely driven by resilient gold prices and sustained global uncertainties that reinforce gold's appeal as a strategic hedge," Nehal Meshram, Senior Analyst — Manager Research at Morningstar Investment Research India, said.

Furthermore, the relative stability in gold prices through May have provided a more attractive entry point for investors looking to build or rebalance allocations toward safer assets, she added.

Also, investors are now realising the need to have gold as a part of their portfolio and therefore, the buying has begun, Santosh Joseph, CEO of Germinate Investor Services, said.

"Apart from the dip and asset allocation, there is generally a tendency to stay in dollar assets, which are different from equities and therefore, gold is a unique asset class which is dollar-denominated but not equity-connected. It's got a negative correlation to equities, and therefore, it forms a perfect hedge to one's portfolio. So it's a combination of things that led to inflow," he added.

While inflows are yet to reach the levels seen earlier in the year, the trend suggests a gradual and measured return of interest in gold, underpinned by its long-term diversification benefits.

Gold, with its superlative performance over the last few years, has garnered substantial investor interest and the consistent increase in folio numbers serves as a testament to its attractiveness.

The folio numbers in gold ETFs rose by 2.24 lakh to 73.69 lakh in the month under review from 71.45 lakh in April. This indicates a growing inclination among investors towards funds related to gold.

Gold ETFs, which aim to track the domestic physical gold price, are passive investment instruments that are based on gold prices and invest in gold bullion. In short, Gold ETFs are units representing physical gold which may be in paper or dematerialised form.

One gold ETF unit is equal to one gram of gold and is backed by physical gold of very high purity. They combine the flexibility of stock investments and the simplicity of gold investments.

Regulatory framework important for investments: Swiss diplomat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bern

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal meeting his counterparts in Switzerland PTI

Switzerland's State Secretary for Economic Affairs Helene Budliger Artieda has said a good regulatory framework and cut in red tape in India is important to attract Swiss investments.

She said businesses here have raised concerns about bureaucratic hurdles. India and the four European nation bloc EFTA has signed a free trade agreement on March 10, 2024, which is expected to come into force from October 1.

Under the pact, India has received an investment commitment of $ 100 billion in 15 years from the grouping while allowing several products such as Swiss watches, chocolates, and cut and polished diamonds at lower or zero duties.

The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) members are Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

She said for $ 100 billion investments, "we need to have the best framework conditions and this was part of the business roundtable meeting in the presence of Minister Goyal".

"That will be important that red tape will be cut as much as possible. Even in Switzerland, companies always complain that there is too much red tape. It will be very important that India creates a good framework for Swiss investments to come in," she told reporters here after meeting Goyal on June 10.

The Indian minister was here on a two-day official visit to meet businesses to attract investments into India.

On the issue of Swiss Government suspending the most favoured nation (MFN) status clause in the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) between India and Switzerland, Artieda said there has been some misunderstanding on this. "But it really has no connection whatsoever. I think it's important to know that both India and Switzerland share a double taxation treaty and that treaty is valid and that means there will not be any issue," she said. In a statement in December 2024, the Swiss Government announced the suspension of the MFN clause in the DTAA between India and Switzerland, potentially impacting Swiss investments in India and leading to higher taxes on Indian companies operating in the European nation. She also said implementation of the trade agreement will help increase exports of Swiss watches and chocolates in India.

Swiss companies will have the advantage of preferred access to markets in India for both watches and chocolates due to this pact. Further she added that Switzerland is confident of achieving the $100 billion investment commitment in 15 years in India.

India will certainly cross $825 billion exports this fiscal: Goyal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bern

The world trade is facing severe geo-political challenges, but India has consistently emerged as a winner in such times and the country's exports of goods and services will certainly cross $825 billion in 2025-26, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said.

Despite global economic uncertainties due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Israel-Hamas war and the Red Sea crisis, the country's overall exports touched an all-time high of $825 billion against $778 billion in 2023-24.

As per estimates of certain multi-lateral bodies, there would be a contraction in global trade, Goyal said.

"The world is going through severe geo-political challenges. So these are challenging times, but India has always emerged (as) a winner in challenging times and we did a record $825 billion exports in 2024-25. This year, we hope to do much better," he said.

When asked if last fiscal's figures will be crossed, he said: "We will certainly be able to cross that".

Apex exporters' body FIEO has projected that the country's overall goods and services exports are expected to grow by over 21 per cent year-on-year to $1 trillion during 2025-26. Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President S C Ralhan has said the healthy growth may come on account of international buyers seeking to diversify their sourcing in the wake of global economic uncertainties.

In 2025-26, merchandise exports are expected to grow 12 per cent to $525-535 billion from $437 billion in 2024-25, while services exports are likely to rise by about 20 per cent year-on-year to $465-475 billion from $387 billion in the last fiscal, according to FIEO.

The major sectors that are expected to show a significant jump in the shipments this fiscal include electronics, engineering, chemicals, textile and clothing, pharma and even the agriculture sector.

Free trade agreements with countries such as the UAE, Australia and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) will also help boost exports in the coming months.

The India-EFTA trade agreement is expected to come into force from October 1 this year.Goyal also said that FTAs signed during the Congress era were not good and have impacted domestic firms.

They signed FTAs with countries like ASEAN, which are India's competitors; besides, they were not balanced, he said, adding that India opened more markets for those countries and "we did not get" good deals in return.

Force Motors-BMW partnership hits milestone

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Chennai

The Chennai plant, established in 2015 was set up exclusively to manufacture engines for the full range of BMW cars produced in India

Auto major Force Motors and German luxury car maker BMW Group have achieved a milestone in their partnership with the roll out of 1,00,000 th engine from the Chennai plant.

A sports utility vehicle BMW X5 received the 1 lakh-th engine produced from the state-of-the-art engine assembly facility located at Singaperumalkoil near here.

"The collaboration between BMW Group India and Force Motors is an example of what Indo-German industrial cooperation can achieve. The successful roll-out of 1 lakh engines is not just a manufacturing accomplishment, it is a testament to vision, collaboration and execution at scale," the company said in a statement on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, BMW Production Network 2, BMW AG, Vice President Marcus Wollens said, "We are thrilled to celebrate the roll-out of the 100,000th BMW engine at Force Motors Chennai plant which is the result of a decade of outstanding partnership and dedication."

"Our engines stand for excellent engineering, innovative technology and high performance. This partnership reinforces BMW Group's commitment to deliver world-class products in India. The 100,000th engine milestone stands as a testament to our shared vision and exemplifies the robust Indo-German synergy that continues to thrive," he added. Force Motors Ltd Managing Director Prasan Firodia said, "We are honoured to be a trusted and strategic partner to BMW Group in India, and this milestone stands testimony to the commitment, precision and quality that this collaboration resonates with."

The Chennai plant, established in 2015 was set up exclusively to manufacture engines for the full range of BMW cars produced in India. With advanced automated lines, stringent quality controls, digitally integrated operations and highly skilled employees, the Chennai facility meets BMW Group's global manufacturing standards.

The facility has become a vital part of BMW Group's localisation strategy, ensuring seamless integration of global excellence with local capabilities.

AC industry will comply with temp standardisation without any

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

The air-conditioning industry will comply with the new temperature standardisation announced by the Government within a couple of months, including resetting its inventory, without passing any additional costs to consumers.

Leading room-air conditioner (RAC) makers such as Voltas, LG Electronics, Blue Star and Haier have welcomed the move and said the move will not only help the industry to grow sustainably by saving energy, but also optimise energy consumption, reduce grid load in peak summers and also extend the lifespan of the units.

On Tuesday, Power Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said the Government is working on a framework to standardise the default temperatures of air conditioners, including those in automobiles, in the range of 20 to 28 degrees Celsius.

The industry will have to go for some minor modifications in the designs and settings of the remote control and its firmware (software embedded into hardware devices) for its implementation and needs up to six months for its implementation.

Voltas MD Designate Mukundan Menon said the decision to standardise the operating temperature range of

The industry will have to go for some minor modifications in the designs and settings of the remote control and its firmware for its implementation

Room Air Conditioners (RACs) between 20 to 28 degrees Celsius, is a welcome step towards smarter, sustainable cooling. "This aligns with India's broader energy efficiency goals and the Bureau of Energy Efficiency's (BEE) commitment to promoting responsible energy use," he said. However, implementation will require manufacturers to reprogram devices or deploy software to comply with the revised temperature settings.

"The Government has indicated that compliance will be monitored, though specific enforcement timelines are yet to be announced. At Voltas, we are ready to support this transition and remain committed to delivering efficient cooling solutions to Indian households," he said. Blue Star Managing Director B Thiagarajan said the issue of over-cooling had been under discussion for a long time.

"The industry is very comfortable in implementing it. The question is that the remote firmware has to be changed and inventory has to be managed on a cut-off date," he said adding, "It is a simple job. So, there is no problem."

According to Thiagarajan, a lower temperature does not necessarily make a human being feel comfortable. It depends on air circulation and humidity control to make a human being comfortable.

Haier Appliances India President NS Satish said "this will have economic benefits to the country and environmentally also, as less power means a lower carbon Footprint," he said, adding for consumers, lower power consumption means electricity saving, which will put a little extra money into their pockets.

Working on AI-powered telecom technology: DoT executive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Artificial intelligence will serve as a foundational technology for future networks, with AI-native systems enabling new services like immersive experiences, autonomous operations and integrated sensing, a DoT official has said.

Sanjeev K Bidwai, Member (Technology), Department of Telecommunications, on Wednesday said institutions like C-DoT, IITs and other leading R&D centres are working on indigenous AI-powered telecom technologies, actively contributing to international standards through platforms like ITU-T, ITU-R and 3GPP.

"According to ITU-R's vision document M.2160, AI will be a key enabler for future networks, from intelligent radio interface management to cross-domain orchestration and personalised service delivery.

"AI native networks will not only manage complexity but will unlock new service frontiers, immersive digital experiences, autonomous systems, integrated sensing and on-demand slicing for multi-tasks," he said.

Natural gas usage to more than double by 2040: PNGRB study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

India's natural gas consumption is likely to rise by close to 60 per cent by 2030 and more than double by 2040, on the back of rise in usage of the fuel as CNG in automobiles and for cooking and industrial purposes, according to a study by oil regulator PNGRB.

Consumption of natural gas, which is used to produce electricity, make fertilizer or turned into CNG for running automobiles and piped to household kitchens for cooking, is expected to rise from 187 million standard cubic metres per day in 2023-24 to 297 mmscmd by 2030 under 'Good-to-Go' scenario, the study by Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) said.

'Good-to-Go' scenario assumes moderate growth and developments based on current trends and commitments.

Consumption of natural gas is projected to rise to 496 mmscmd by 2040 under the same scenario.

Under the 'Good to Best' scenario that considers accelerated progress, favourable policy implementation, and enhanced investments leading to higher-than expected growth, consumption could rise to 365 mmscmd by 2030 and 630 mmscmd by 2040.

"India's energy demand is expected to keep growing. Natural gas being a convenient, clean and cheap (alternative) with respect to other fossil fuels is likely to grow," it said.

Rupee rises 6 paise to settle at 85.51 against US dollar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

The rupee appreciated 6 paise to close at 85.51 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, supported by strong foreign fund inflows and a weak American currency against major rivals overseas.

However, investors stayed on the sidelines ahead of the CPI data release on Thursday and restricted the gains, traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 85.53 and reached an intra-day high of 85.42 and a low of 85.56. It finally settled at 85.51 (provisional), up 6 paise from its previous closing of 85.57.

"The rupee traded positive...Supported by sustained FII and DII buying activity, even as the dollar index remained flat. While rising crude prices capped further appreciation, steady fund flows kept the rupee resilient. The currency is expected to move in a range of 85.25 to 85.85," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst — Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said.

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex rose 123.42 points to end at 82,515.14, while the Nifty rose 37.15 points to 25,141.40.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, dipped 0.05 per cent to 99.04.

Gold jumps ₹820, silver remains flat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Gold prices jumped ₹820 to ₹98,490 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday due to fresh buying by retailers and stockists in line with firm global trends, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.5 per cent purity appreciated by ₹750 to ₹98,000 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). However, silver prices traded flat at ₹1,07,100 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, spot gold in the international markets rose by $ 12.09 per ounce or 0.36 per cent to $3,334.69 per ounce.

"Gold edged higher... Supported by safe-haven demand as traders expressed concerns about tariff-related uncertainty. "This renewed uncertainty followed a federal appeals court ruling that allowed US President Donald Trump to continue imposing global tariffs," HDFC Securities' Senior Analyst, Commodities Saumil Gandhi said.

Gandhi also highlighted that these concerns overshadowed some of the optimism stemming from the positive trade talks between the US and China.

During their two-day discussions in London, both parties agreed on a plan to ease trade tensions.

Markets close higher on firm global trends, foreign fund inflows

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Benchmark Sensex closed higher by 123 points while Nifty rose for a sixth consecutive day on Wednesday following a rally in global markets amid optimism over US-China trade talks and foreign fund inflows.

In a volatile session, the 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 123.42 points or 0.15 per cent to settle at 82,515.14. During the day, it climbed 391.79 points or 0.47 per cent to 82,783.50 , driven by gains in IT and energy shares. In its sixth straight day of gains, the 50-share NSE Nifty ended 37.15 points or 0.15 per cent up at 25,141.40. The index moved between a low of 25,081.30 and a high of 25,222.40 during the day. In the six sessions to Wednesday, Nifty gained 598 points or 2.42 per cent. After a flat start, the Nifty gradually moved higher in the first half and tested the resistance at 25,200, but failed to sustain the momentum at close, Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd said.

From the Sensex pack, HCL Tech, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Reliance Industries, Bajaj Finserv, ICICI Bank, Tata Motors and Eternal were the lead gainers. Power Grid, Adani Ports, IndusInd Bank, Nestle, HDFC Bank and Hindustan Unilever were among the laggards. "Profit-booking continues in the broader markets, driven by elevated domestic valuations. However, large-cap resilience is supporting the indices, with institutional investors favouring companies with stable earnings outlooks.

"Auto and IT sectors remain in focus - auto stocks are gaining on improved monthly sales, while IT shares are benefiting from optimism around a potential US-China trade resolution," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd, said. The BSE smallcap gauge went up by 0.06 per cent while midcap index dipped 0.12 per cent.

"Benchmarks ended with marginal gains on Wednesday extending their consolidation phase. Positive developments in US-China trade talks and a steady global equity environment helped buoy sentiment, though gains were tempered by profit-booking in certain sectors," Satish Chandra Aluri, Analyst, Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

Among sectoral indices, oil and gas surged the most by 1.83 per cent, followed by energy (1.33 per cent), BSE Focused IT (1.30 per cent), IT (1.25 per cent), teck (1.01 per cent), healthcare (0.74 per cent) and auto (0.19 per cent).

Financial Services, FMCG, industrials, power, utilities, services, capital goods and bankex were among the laggards.

The Pioneer
BHUBANESWAR | THURSDAY | JUNE 12, 2025

Bhutia, others demand overhaul of Indian football

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Kolkata

Outraged by India's plummeting fortunes on the football field, talismanic former captain Bhaichung Bhutia has accused the national federation of destroying the sport while some other stakeholders have lambasted the current system as "rotten" and riddled with "fragile egos". Bhutia's scathing attack on the All India Football Federation (AIFF) and its President Kalyan Chaubey came a day after the team collapsed to a stunning 0-1 loss to a lower-ranked Hong Kong in the third round of the AFC Asian Cup qualifiers.

"It's very painful to see. We are definitely struggling now to even qualify for the Asia Cup, which we've been qualifying for regularly," Bhutia said.

"Countries like Uzbekistan, Indonesia (likely qualifiers based in current form) and Jordan have qualified for the World Cup, and we are still struggling for the Asia Cup. Very unfortunate," he lamented. The loss on Tuesday left India's hopes of qualifying for the 2027 Asian Cup hanging by a thread — a stark contrast to their recent back-to-back appearances at the continental showpiece.

Visibly anguished, the former India captain called for Chaubey's resignation and demanded a structural overhaul of Indian football, describing the on-field disasters and off-field chaos as symptoms of a deeper rot.

Current India head coach Manolo Marquez, who is also the coach of Indian Super League side FC Goa, took over from Croatian legend Igor Stimac in July last year. Stimac was sacked after a string of disappointing results, including a loss to Afghanistan in a World Cup qualifier in Guwahati. Marquez hasn't been able to arrest the slide either and the team has logged just one win in its last eight matches. It is being widely speculated that he does not wish to continue in the position.

India had trained for nearly three weeks in Kolkata ahead of the crucial match on Tuesday, only to be outclassed by a team ranked 26 notches below them (India: 127, Hong Kong: 153). The latest defeat is expected to push the country down to 133 in the FIFA rankings.

Bhutia, who was defeated by Chaubey in the AIFF presidential election in September 2022, did not mince words while calling out the current leadership, alleging mismanagement, corruption, and bypassing of key footballing committees in major decisions, including the appointment of Marquez.

"Kalyan Chaubey has destroyed Indian football. Chaubey has to resign and leave. He has completely destroyed it. Three General Secretaries in two-and-a-half years — the entire structure, the system will have to be changed," he said.

"Controversy after controversy, corruption charge. Even after months now we don't know who the I-League winner is," he added, referring to the ongoing legal tussle between Inter Kashi and Churchill Brothers for the championship.

He accused Chaubey of bypassing the Technical Committee to appoint Marquez and criticised the decision to let the Spaniard simultaneously coach both FC Goa and the national team.

Bhutia also criticised the decision to bring talismanic striker Sunil Chhetri out of international retirement, saying it was a poor call driven more by desperation than planning.

"It was nice of him to come out of retirement, but it was a completely bad decision. Manolo should not have requested, and now we hear the Federation pushed for it. But what's changed?" he asked.

"There is nothing happening at the grassroots. It's all negative news off the field, and that reflects on the national team's performance."

Bhutia also ridiculed AIFF's decision to offer a USD 50,000 match bonus instead of a qualification-linked reward for the Hong Kong game. "You're paying Rs 42 lakh for one game. Why not link it to qualification? It just shows how clueless the management is."

It is the lowest point: Goutam Sarkar

Former India international Goutam Sarkar echoed Bhutia's sentiments, expressing frustration at the team's stagnation and the federation's failings.

"We have not progressed even an inch. If Sunil Chhetri continues to be your indispensable player, can it be more unfortunate?" he wondered. "Of course, the Federation is completely responsible. They have been a complete failure."

Foreign coaches not the solution: Subrata

Legendary defender and coach Subrata Bhattacharya slammed the obsession with foreign coaches and called for more faith in Indian talent. "It's no guarantee that a foreign coach will give you success. Domestic coaches like PK Banerjee and Amal Dutta brought glory."

"Foreigners in ISL won't help Indian players develop. Only Indian coaches know our boys and can develop them."

On Chhetri's return, Bhattacharya, who also happens to be his father-in-law, said, "It's his personal decision, but if it was done to serve someone's personal interest, it's wrong."

System rotten, needs urgent fix: Ravi Puskur

Two of Indian football's key club stakeholders — Bengaluru FC owner Parth Jindal and FC Goa CEO Ravi Puskur — also launched a scathing attack on the AIFF and the broader footballing ecosystem, calling for deep introspection and structural reform in the wake of the humiliating defeat. FC Goa's Puskur called the system "rotten in ways we refuse to admit."

"Everything moves on influence, favours, and fragile egos. We don't have the maturity to manage the ecosystem we claim to be building. We turn on each other faster than we face uncomfortable truths," Puskur wrote on X.

Puskur, however, felt that blame for the national team's persistent failures cannot be placed solely on the federation, the coach, or the players. "We lost the match versus Hong Kong yesterday and there's outrage — players, coach, federation, clubs are all facing the ire. But the truth is: blame isn't isolated. It belongs to all of us. And yes, that includes me," he added.

"Clubs — mine included — have inflated player salaries irresponsibly. We are outbidding each other for perception, knowing fully well it's unsustainable. Then we act shocked when these players fall flat on the international stage. WE built that illusion."

Get a manager and system that works: Jindal

Bengaluru FC owner Parth Jindal also lashed out at the AIFF on social media, calling for urgent course correction.

"This is completely unacceptable @IndianFootball — just not good enough under any circumstances — deep introspection needed by the AIFF — this is not what all of us lovers and backers of Indian football have spent our hard-earned money and effort to witness — get a manager and a system that works — it's high time," he said.

Abhijeet seizes sole lead with win over Gharibyan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

In a major shake-up, Indian Grandmaster Abhijeet Gupta emerged as the sole leader at the Delhi International Open chess tournament following a commanding victory over GM Mamikon Gharibyan of Armenia. The result puts the Indian GM in pole position with 6.5 points, heading into the final stretch of the tournament.

The top-board clash between GM S L Narayanan and GM Boris Savchenko, both tied at the top before the round, ended in a balanced draw, pushing both to six points.

They are now part of a tightly packed chasing group, joined by several others who secured key wins on Wednesday.

Round 7 also saw several critical results that tightened the race at the top. GM Mihail Nikitenko defeated GM Alexei Fedorov to move to six points, while GM Vitaly Sivuk secured a strong win over Alekhya Mukhopadhyay, also climbing to six.

GM Diptayan Ghosh joined the leading pack after overcoming GM Aleksej Aleksandrov.

Meanwhile, GM Luka Paichadze and GM Manuel Petrosyan played out a draw to stay in contention with 5.5 points each, as did GM Aditya S Samant and IM Semetey Tologontegin, who also shared the spoils to reach 5.5.

Australia qualifies for 2026 World Cup with win over Saudi Arabia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Melbourne

Connor Metcalfe scored his first goal for Australia and Mitchell Duke iced the 2-1 victory in Saudi Arabia that ensured the Socceroos qualified for a sixth straight World Cup.

Needing just to avoid a five-goal defeat to secure direct entry to the 2026 tournament, the Socceroos rallied with Metcalfe equalizing just before halftime with a left-foot strike and Duke putting them ahead with a 48th-minute header. Abdulrahman Al Oboud had opened for the Saudis after 19 minutes. Goalkeeper Mat Ryan made five saves, including a late penalty, in his 100th international for Australia. The Socceroos had to qualify through playoffs in 2018 and 2022 and so earning the direct entry took some pressure off.

"We've done the first part - qualifying automatically," Socceroos coach Tony Popovic said. "Now the next part is to be bigger and better for the World Cup." Popovic was part of the Socceroos squad that qualified for 2006, ending a long World Cup drought for Australia, and then reached the second round. Now he has guided another generation of players to the marquee global tournament. "We've built a good foundation now (but) we want to get better, kick on and try and do something special in the World Cup," he said.

Earlier, Japan and South Korea ended successful campaigns on a high with emphatic home victories over Indonesia and Kuwait, respectively.

In Osaka, Daichi Kamada scored after 15 minutes to set Japan, preparing for an eighth consecutive World Cup, on its way to a 6-0 victory. Takefusa Kubo added a second five minutes later and Kamada extended the lead just before the break. Soon after the restart, Ryoya Morishita and Shuto Machino piled on and Mao Hosoya made it six.

The Palestinian team was eliminated from contention after conceding a goal seven minutes into stoppage time in a 1-1 draw with Oman, giving the Oman team the last spot in the next round of continental qualifying. Six qualifiers so far from AsiaAustralia joins already-qualified Japan, Iran, South Korea, Uzbekistan and Jordan i n reaching the expanded 48-team tournament in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Asia's two other automatic places will be settled between the six third- and fourth-place teams. That round takes place in October. The teams will be Oman, Qatar, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Indonesia.

Earlier, South Korea, which has qualified for an 11th straight World Cup, sealed the top spot in Group B after beating Kuwait 4-0.

Jeon Jin-woo scored after 33 minutes at Seoul World Cup Stadium and Lee Kang-in added a second soon after the restart. Oh Hyeon-gyu and Lee Jae-sung also got on the scoresheet. Elsewhere, China finished off another disappointing campaign with a 1-0 win over Bahrain in a game between teams already eliminated from contention.

Indian junior women's team fights past Belgium

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Antwerp

Indian junior women's hockey team edged out Belgium 2-1 to register their second successive win during the European tour here. Lalthantluangi (35') and Geeta Yadav (50') scored for India after a goalless first-half at the Hockey Center of Excellence on Tuesday.

India scored the opening goal after Lalthantluangi successfully converted a penalty stroke. In the last quarter, Van Hellemont (48') scored the equaliser through a field goal.

However, two minutes later, Geeta replied with a field goal and grabbed the winner for India.

India then defended well to fend off the Belgian attacks in the final 10 minutes.

India had beaten Belgium 3-2 in the the first match, and the visitors will next play their European counterparts in the third and final match on June 12.

Man City signs Reijnders from AC Milan to complete $150 million spending spree

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Manchester

Manchester City concluded a $150 million spending spree ahead of the Club World Cup by announcing the signing of Netherlands midfielder Tijjani Reijnders from AC Milan on Wednesday.

The 26-year-old Reijnders moved for an initial fee of 55 million euros ($63 million) and is the second midfielder — after France playmaker Rayan Cherki — to join City in the special June 1-10 transfer window created to allow sides in the 32-team Club World Cup to reshape their squads.

City paid Lyon $41 million for Cherki and also signed Algeria left back Rayan Aït-Nouri from Wolverhampton for $42 million. After deciding not to push to sign Florian Wirtz — the Germany playmaker is close to joining Liverpool, according to reports in the British media — City has spent around the same amount on three players.

Add this latest splurge to an outlay of more than $200 million in the winter transfer window and City has already spent at least $350 million on players in 2025 to provide manager Pep Guardiola with a squad capable of reclaiming the Premier League title from Liverpool.

Breakthrough seasonReijnders has just been named as the best midfielder in Serie A after a breakthrough campaign in which he scored 15 goals and added five assists across all competitions for Milan, which endured a dismal season and failed to qualify for Europe.

He joined Milan from AZ Alkmaar in 2023 for a fee of around 20 million euros (then $22.4 million) and recently signed a contract extension through to June 2030. That's the length of his contract at City, too. City is releasing De Bruyne to end his 10-year stint at the club and now has Reijnders and Cherki to link up with Rodri in an enticing midfield set-up.

Reijnders said he was "ecstatic" to be joining City.

"It is also a dream come true to play in the Premier League," he said. "This league has seen many of the best Dutch players perform through the years and it's an inspiration to follow in their footsteps."

US looks unprepared with World Cup a year away

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Nashville (USA)

The only bright side for the US Soccer team is the World Cup starts in a year, not this week.

The Americans conceded four goals in the first half, failed to get a shot on target and were embarrassed in a 4-0 blowout loss to Switzerland in a friendly on Tuesday night.

"It's really easy to look at one game, one half, and be like, oh, this is all going to pieces, they can't come back from this," defender Walker Zimmerman said. "But you look even the build-up to the 2022 (World Cup), we take down Morocco 3-0 and they make it into the semifinal. Things change — that was six months apart. It's not the end of the world."

Heading into their CONCACAF Gold Cup opener against Trinidad and Tobago on Sunday, the Americans are on a four-game losing streak for the first time since 2007 and have dropped four consecutive home games for just the third time overall and first time since 1988.

US Coach Mauricio Pochettino blamed himself for picking a starting lineup that included four players with two or fewer international appearances. He wanted them to gain international experience but the Americans gave up four goals by the 40th minute for the first time since November 9, 1980, at Mexico and the first time ever at home, according to Opta.

"It was my decision and the decision didn't work," he said. "It's painful because you don't want to improve losing games."

A dismayed fan base, angered by first-round elimination at last year's Copa America and two losses in the CONCACAF Nations League final four in March, is questioning the commitment of the team's player pool.

The US Was missing star Christian Pulisic (wanted time off); Yunus Musah (personal reason not disclosed); Weston McKennie, Tim Weah, Gio Reyna (headed to the Club World Cup); Antonee Robinson, Tyler Adams and Folarin Balogun (injured); and Sergiño Dest (regaining fitness).

Dan Ndoye scored in the 13th minute, Michel Aebischer in the 23rd, Breel Embolo in the 33rd and Johan Manzambi in the 36th.

Smaller fields make top 10 easier at LIV Golf: Jon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Oakmont (USA)

Two-time major champion Jon Rahm comes into the US Open off another top 10 at LIV Golf, which is nothing new. The Spaniard has never come in lower in the 20 events he has finished since joining the Saudi-backed league at the start of last year.

Is that a big deal?

I would happily trade a bunch of them for more wins, that's for sure, said Rahm, who has two LIV victories but has yet to win this year. "But I keep putting myself in good position." One of the criticism of LIV is the 54-man fields over 54 holes, especially with a half-dozen or more considered past their prime and several unproven young players. Rahm delivered some context on his streak.

"Listen, I'm a realist in this case," he said. "I've been playing really good golf, yes, but I'd be lying if I said that it wasn't easier to have top 10s with a smaller field. That's just the truth, right? Had I been playing full-field events, would I have top 10 every single week? No. But I've been playing good enough to say that I would most likely have been inside the top 30 every single time and maybe even top 25."

He considered that impressive, and he figures most of those would be top 10s.

Rahm tied for eighth last week in Virginia without ever having a serious chance of winning over the final few holes. He said against a full field, he doubts that would have been a top 10.

"I think winning is equally as hard, but you can take advantage of a smaller field to finish higher," he said. "As much as I want to give it credit personally for having that many top 10s, I wouldn't always give it as the full amount just knowing that it's a smaller field."

DeChambeau and LIVBryson DeChambeau says the contract he signed to join Saudi-funded LIV Golf is up next year and he's already looking ahead to a new one.

"We're looking to negotiate end of this year, and I'm very excited. They see the value in me. I see the value in what they can provide, and I believe we'll come to some sort of resolution on that," DeChambeau said on Tuesday. "Super excited for the future."

LIV contracts are confidential and there has been ample speculation whether the Public Investment Fund will shell out the kind of signing bonuses that helped lure players away from the PGA Tour in 2022.

Meanwhile, unification with the PGA Tour and LIV Golf appears at a standstill as PIF officials want any future to include team golf.

"I think that LIV is not going anywhere," DeChambeau said. He said Yasir Al-Rumayyan, the PIF governor behind the rival league, "has been steadfast in his belief on team golf, and whether everybody believes in it or not, I think it's a viable option." DeChambeau believes LIV is going in the right direction and referenced the indoor tech-infused TGL as having teams making money.

"I believe there is a sustainable model out there," he said. "How it all works with the game of golf, who knows? But I know my worth."

Xander and YouTubeXander Schauffele might spend less time on his phone than anyone, usually only scrolling through the news. A few weeks ago at the Memorial, during a rapid-fire series of random questions, he was asked who he would take with him on "The Amazing Race" reality show.

"What's The Amazing Race," he asked.

So when he was told about Tommy Fleetwood's latest venture with YouTube and asked if he would considering doing something like that, Schauffele replied, "Is that like a serious question?" But he has spent time on YouTube for a reason. Schauffele made his US Open debut in 2017, the year after the Open at Oakmont. What better way to check out the course than watching a US Open at Oakmont?

"I watched some of the '16 coverage on YouTube. I would have watched it on any platform that would have been provided, but I watched some of that coverage there just to see sort of how guys were hitting shots and how the ball was reacting," Schauffele said.

Turns out that wasn't his first experience on YouTube.

"I've been in dark places where I've looked up swing tip things on YouTube as well, trying to make sense of it, just like every golfer has. I'll confess to it," he said. "I'm luckily not there anymore, which is probably healthy for myself and my family. "Yeah, there's a lot on there, I can tell you that much."

Rory and his driverRory McIlroy expressed concern about his driver after badly missing the cut in the Canadian Open, his last tournament ahead of the US Open.

He said he worked at home over the weekend and realised he was using the wrong driver. And he was coy about which one he was using, suggesting that people could always go to the range to find out for themselves.

The Pioneer
BHUBANESWAR | THURSDAY | JUNE 12, 2025

Scheffler to face tough major at US Open

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Oakmont (USA)

Scottie Scheffler doesn't care what the oddsmakers think or what people say about his status as the overwhelming favourite in this US Open and pretty much everywhere he plays.

But he can hear them — and sometimes, he hears from them. "That's why I had to get rid of my Venmo, because I was either getting paid by people or people requesting me a bunch of money when I didn't win. It wasn't a good feeling," Scheffler said with a laugh on Tuesday at Oakmont.

It wasn't entirely clear if he was kidding. He did say later the most anyone tried to pay him for a win — he has won 19 times worldwide in just over three years — was a couple of dollars. "That didn't happen nearly as much as the requests did," he said. Perhaps the most telling number for Scheffler, No. 1 in the world ranking for the longest streak since Tiger Woods in the late 2000s, is that he has won 25 per cent of his tournaments since capturing his first PGA Tour title at the Phoenix Open in 2022.

He has won three of his past four tournaments — including his third major at the PGA Championship last month at Quail Hollow — by a combined 17 shots. There's a lot of numbers that define his dominance in golf.

None of it matters to him

I don't pay attention to the favorite stuff or anything like that, he said. "Starting Thursday morning, we're at even par and it's up to me to go out there and play against the golf course and see what I can do." That doesn't figure to be easy. Oakmont is considered the toughest golf course in America, and the last few days of practice rounds have not changed anyone's opinions. Most of the attention is on the rough that covers the tops of shoes. Sunshine on Tuesday made the greens feel even faster after a few days of rain. Scheffler thinks the bunkers are underrated. The overall consensus?

"Man, it's just tough," Collin Morikawa said

Scheffler would seem to have a game built for this given his extraordinary ability to control his golf ball from tee-to-green. He has yet to win his national open, though he had chances at Los Angeles (2023), Brookline (2022) and Torrey Pines (2021).

The exception was last year at Pinehurst Number 2, where Scheffler was never in the mix. One reason might be the schedule — the Memorial was the week before the US Open last year, another tough test that Scheffler won and never felt he had a chance to catch his breath.

He won the Memorial again this year

"Having the week off was really important for me to get home, get some rest, recover, and I showed up here on Sunday and was able to play maybe 11 holes and really get used to the conditions," Scheffler said. "It feels much more like my normal major prep, versus last year where you're coming in from basically a major championship test. Coming into another one is pretty challenging."

Rory McIlroy had a few extra days off after missing the cut in the Canadian Open last week, giving him time to find a driver that will help find the fairways at Oakmont, perhaps the most critical part of this test. McIlroy and Scheffler were listed as close to co-favorites after McIlroy won the Masters, giving him the career Grand Slam. He already had won three times on some of golf's biggest stages. Scheffler at that point had yet to win this year.

So much has changed in the last two months. McIlroy spoke at the PGA Championship of still wanting to achieve more in golf, knowing that nothing will ever beat that feeling of finally becoming a Masters champion to join the most exclusive club of players with all four majors.

He spoke last week of lacking motivation when getting ready for the Canadian Open.

"At some point, you have to realize that there's a little bit more golf left to play this season," said McIlroy, singling out Oakmont, the British Open in his native Northern Ireland and the Ryder Cup in September. "But I think weeks like Quail Hollow or even weeks like last week, it makes it easier to reset in some way, to be like, OK, I sort of need to get my stuff together here and get back to the process and sort of what I'd been doing for that seven months from October last year until April this year."

For Scheffler, he's been on such a roll that how he plays will be a big part in the chances the rest of the field has.

Jordan Spieth was asked about Dustin Johnson — only Scheffler has been at Number 1 longer in the last 10 years — and Spieth immediately turned it into a conversation about his Dallas neighbour.

"Scottie's level is something I haven't seen personally out here," Spieth said. "I play with him at home, too. He might pull an iron shot once and then hit the pin on his chip."

The margin for error is smaller at Oakmont than on most courses, mainly because of all the trouble off the tee — bunkers and dense rough — and challenges on the fast greens

England sweeps T20 series against the West Indies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Southampton (England)

England completed a 3-0 sweep of the Twenty20 international series against the West Indies after smashing 248-3 en route to a 37-run win in Southampton on Tuesday. Put into bat for what proved a high-scoring third and final match of the series, England racked up its second-highest total in the format as Ben Duckett made a 46-ball 84 and put on 120 for the opening wicket with Jamie Smith, whose 26-ball 60 included five sixes.

England delivered its highest-ever score after 10 overs of a T20 — 135-1 — and never let up, with captain Harry Brook (35) and Jacob Bethell (36) sharing an unbroken stand of 70 in 5.1 over to help set an imposing target of 249.

The Windies never really got close on a good batting track though still made a commendable 211-8 after slipping to 70-4 after 7.1 overs. Rovman Powell was the top scorer for the tourists with an unbeaten 79 off 45 balls, and captain Shai Hope had a 27-ball 45.

England also won the ODI series between the teams by a 3-0 margin, marking an ideal start to the white-ball captaincy for Brook. England's focus switches to test cricket now, with a highly anticipated five-match series against India starting June 20.

Tuchel runs into early problems with England as critics circle

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ London

Hired amid skepticism because of his nationality, German coach Thomas Tuchel was brought in as England manager to get the national team from soccer's birthplace "over the line" at a World Cup for the first time since 1966.

One year out from the 2026 tournament in North America and Tuchel has already run into problems — and is feeling the wrath of England's fans, too.

The 3-1 loss to Senegal at home in a friendly match on Tuesday brought a crashing end to Tuchel's honeymoon period that was already tottering after England could only eke out a feeble 1-0 win over 173rd-ranked Andorra four days earlier.

Boos rang out as Tuchel and England's players left the field at the City Ground in Nottingham after losing to an African nation for the first time.

Tuchel has coached some of the world's biggest clubs in Paris Saint-Germain, Bayern Munich and Chelsea and was regarded, tactically, as a big step-up from predecessor Gareth Southgate. For many, Southgate lacked that magic touch to turn England into title-winners despite its deep runs at the past four major tournaments.

These are early days — Tuchel only started the job in January — but England might even have regressed in its latest era under a foreign coach.

Here's a look at the teething problems being encountered in Tuchel's tenure:

TacticsWhile Southgate no doubt generated a great culture and atmosphere in the squad off the field, he was accused of being too pragmatic and lacking flexibility in his tactics on it.

Tuchel was expected to be a huge upgrade in that respect but England doesn't yet have an identity under the German. England captain Harry Kane listed the ingredients his team were missing against Senegal - and there were plenty.

"With and without the ball, we aren't quite clicking," said Kane, who opened the scoring. "We aren't finding the right passes, the right tempo. In the one-vs-ones, we're losing duels and that aggressive nature we've had.

"There are some ideas that are new and we have some new players coming into the team who haven't got experience at international level. It's a mixture of things."

Tuchel only has four more camps to get his ideas across ahead of the World Cup, should England qualify of course. The team won its opening three World Cup qualifiers — against Albania, Latvia and Andorra — and tops Group K with five matches to play from September to November.

SelectionSome of Tuchel's early-tenure selections have raised eyebrows.

He has brought former Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson, age 34 and most recently playing at Ajax, back into the squad because of his leadership qualities and to "take care of all the standards in the group," Tuchel said. But is Henderson good enough to still be in the team?

He has persisted with right back Kyle Walker, who is aged 35, seemingly passed his best and most recently sent on loan to AC Milan where he has struggled to impress. Tuchel has the likes of Reece James and new Real Madrid player Trent Alexander-Arnold as alternatives but is preferring Walker, again talking about how the veteran is "pushing the standards" in the camp.

Some of his picks at center back — newcomers Trevoh Chalobah and Dan Burn among them — have also been scrutinised.

BluntnessWhile Southgate always shielded his players from criticism, Tuchel is more open and blunt with any negative analysis.

Indeed, after the Andorra game where England toiled, Tuchel accused his players of lacking "the seriousness and the urgency that is needed in a World Cup qualifier" and said he didn't like their attitude and body language.

To many, it was fair comment but something England's players maybe hadn't been used to hearing from their coach. Will they take it the wrong way — and prefer Southgate's arm-round-the-shoulder approach?

In mitigationIn defense of Tuchel, England's players were coming off long club seasons and might have switched off mentally before linking up with England for the Andorra and Senegal games.

Tuchel also made 10 changes against Senegal and was clearly testing out some new players and tactical approaches.

"There is no need to panic," he said

"We know more now. We are smarter ... I hate losses like nothing else but we don't go next week to the World Cup, we go in one year."

However, more bad results or performances in September, when England plays Andorra at home and Serbia away, and the nation's fans — and some sections of the media, no doubt — will get on Tuchel's back and likely use his passport against him.

Can grind for another six years: Dustin Johnson

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Oakmont (USA)

So much about Dustin Johnson returning to Oakmont is about reliving past glory. He won his first major championship at the US Open under extreme and bizarre conditions that allowed him to exorcise so many demons in the majors and become the best player in the world.

That was 9 years ago

The question now is how much golf he has left. "I think I've got another six years in me," Johnson said, contemplating the question only briefly before coming up with a most arbitrary number. "I can grind for another six years. And then I'm going fishing."

Recent results would suggest he already has one line in the water. Johnson already has a Hall of Fame career with his 24 titles on the PGA Tour, two majors, the only player to sweep the World Golf Championships, one of only five players to have been No. 1 in the world for more than 100 weeks. He turns 41 in two weeks.

Why grind?

"Because I want to get back," he said. "Because I know I've still got it." Johnson was the biggest name to sign with Saudi-funded LIV Golf in 2022 when the golf world was turned upside down. He was on the fringe of contention that summer at St Andrews and the next year in the US Open at Los Angeles Country Club. He won in each of the first three years on the rival circuit of short fields (54 players) and short weeks (54 holes).

The last 16 months have made him feel like an afterthought. He has not finished among the top three on LIV in his last 20 events. He has missed the cut in five of his last seven majors. He tied for 10th last week on LIV, which he considered progress.

"I feel like my game's been really close," he said. "I haven't really got a lot out of it. So it was definitely nice to have a nice finish last week. I played good every day. I didn't ... You know, still kind of giving away some shots. I need to clean that up a little bit."

There is rarely any urgency to anything Johnson does, and that six-year window comes with a caveat. He has two more years left on his 10-year exemption from winning at Oakmont in 2016. Next month will be his last free pass to the British Open from his 2020 Masters victory. He needed a special invitation to the PGA Championship this year.

Johnson has played only one non-major since joining LIV. That was the Saudi International at the end of last year. He missed the cut.

Yes, Oakmont seems like a long time ago.

Few players have endured more misfortune in the majors and have been able to shake it off. There was the 82 in the final round at Pebble Beach in the 2010 US Open. He was knocked out of a playoff at Whistling Straits that year in the PGA Championship for setting his 4-iron into sand where spectators had been sitting. That was deemed to be a bunker.

He had a 12-foot eagle putt to win the 2015 US Open at Chambers Bay, only for it to slide some 4 feet by on a green that had hardly any grass. He missed the birdie putt and finished one behind Jordan Spieth.

His mental toughness is underrated. Imagine playing the last seven holes of a US Open not knowing the score because the USGA was trying to decide whether to penalize him for a ball that moved on the fifth green of the final round at Oakmont. Johnson played on, not giving it another thought, winning by three after he was assessed one penalty shot in scoring.

"That Sunday was a little weird," he said.

Chaos would have been another word to describe it. That's not in Johnson's vocabulary even though it seems like it should be.

Ask almost any PGA Tour loyalist which LIV player they miss seeing, and Johnson's name is at the top of the list.

"There have been two guys since 2010 that I thought in full flight, I loved watching them play. And it was Rory (McIlroy) and DJ," Adam Scott said. Scott recalled a morning round at Riviera in the cool Pacific air.

They were playing the 13th, which bends to the left around the eucalyptus trees. Scott hit a perfect draw. Johnson unloaded his high cut over the trees, a carry of nearly 310 yards in the heavy air.

"I just thought, That is insane.' Just the freedom he played with and the freedom of the swing and athleticism," Scott said. "And then he gets up and hit a three-finger 7-iron, super soft, a buttery shot after pounding one. Super impressive."

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public Sri P. C. Meher, dated 07/06/2025, I, Sanjay Kumar Agrawal, R/o Khariar, Santi Nagar, Ward No. 2, PO/PS – Khariar, Dist–Nuapada, declare that the correction of my son's name in his PASSPORT from SIDDHARTHA KUMAR AGRAWAL to SIDHARTHA KUMAR AGRAWAL and also correction of my name in his Birth Certificate wherein wrongly mentioned SANJAYA KUMAR AGRAWAL instead of actual name is SANJAY KUMAAR AGRAWAL.

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OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, MOHANA

No. 2191 Date: 09.06.2025

1st CORRIGENDUM

In continuation to this office bid identification No. **Online Tender 01/MOHANA/2025-26** Invited vide this office letter no 2036 dtd 23.05.2025, partial modification of TCN has been made as follows.

Sl. No.	Item	Time schedule as per Original TCN	Time schedule as per Corrigendum Notice
1	Availability to tender online for bidding	Dt. 11.06.2025 at 11.00 A.M. to Dt. 23.06.2025 Up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt. 04.07.2025 at 11.00 A.M. to Dt. 17.07.2025 Up to 5.00 P.M.
2	Date & time of seeking tender clarification if any	Dt. 20.06.2025 up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt. 15.07.2025 Up to 5.00 P.M.
3	Date & time of opening of tender (Price Bid)	Dt. 24.06.2025 at 11.00 A.M.	Dt. 18.07.2025 at 11.00 A.M

All other terms and conditions are remain unchanged.

Superintending Engineer
RW Division, Mohana

OIPR-25148/11/0038/2526

Vinicius goal sends Brazil to 2026 World Cup, delighting fans in Ancelotti's home debut

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Sao Paulo

A goal by Vinicius Júnior secured Brazil a place in the 2026 World Cup, quite a momentous home debut for Carlo Ancelotti as head coach. The once prolific duo at Real Madrid helped Brazil to a 1-0 win over Paraguay at Sao Paulo. Ecuador secured its place at next year's global tournament later Tuesday with a 0-0 draw at Peru. Defending champion Argentina, held to a 1-1 draw by Colombia, had already qualified and is assured of finishing atop South American qualifying.

Ecuador and Brazil each have 25 points in the standings, but the Ecuadorians are in second spot based on victories. The two nations are 10 points behind Argentina but, crucially, more than six points clear of the seventh-place team with two games remaining in the qualifying campaign.

The top six teams in South America earn direct entries to the 48-team World Cup. Chile will miss a third consecutive World Cup after losing 2-0 at Bolivia to remain last in 10-nation round-robin competition, a result that cost head coach Ricardo Gareca his job. Uruguay beat Venezuela at home 2-0, with goals from Rodrigo Aguirre and Giorgian de Arrascaeta, and edged closer to one of the direct spots with 24 points.

Venezuela, with 18, is one ahead of Bolivia in the contest for seventh place that grants an intercontinental playoff berth. Lionel Messi had a quiet night in Argentina's draw with Colombia in Buenos Aires. Luis Díaz opened the scoring for the visitors in the 24th minute. Enzo Fernandez was sent off in the 70th minute to the disappointment of more than 80,000 fans at the Monumental de Nunez Stadium. But Julián Alvarez scored the equalizer in the 81st with a low crossed shot.

Madrid-Sao Paulo

Ancelotti received some frustration from fans after Thursday's 0-0 draw with Ecuador, as his team focused on defending the entire match. The Italian coach, who turned 66 Tuesday, promised changes to make his team more aggressive at the NeoQuimica Arena.

He was welcomed by 46,000 fans, including NBA star Gianni Antetokounmpo, who displayed a tifo in yellow and green that read "Parabens, Carleto" (Happy birthday, Carleto in Portuguese).

Gabriel Martinelli replaced midfielder Gerson and was one of the best players of the encounter. Raphinha returned after suspension and created many problems for Paraguay's defense. And Vinicius Júnior was often seen as a targetman, sharing the duties with Matheus Cunha. A mistake by Paraguay's defense, a low cross by Cunha and a gentle touch by Brazil's new Number 10 produced the only goal of the match. "It is for you," the striker told the coach as he celebrated.

Despite the low score, the hosts were much more aggressive than in most of its games in this World Cup qualifying campaign.

"We needed to win here for our people. Now we have more time to work, see what we can improve," Vinicius said after the match. He won't play Brazil's next game in qualifying against Chile due to suspension. "We need to celebrate this. After September it is all about the World Cup."

After the final whistle, a clip of Ancelotti's first days on the job was shown in big screens around the stadium. A raucous celebration erupted again, as if the Italian coach had brought new life to a team that only three months ago appeared lost and doomed.

O-268

Phone No.06821-241026 (O)/241079(R) Fax No-06821-241026/240056 e-mail: eerwss_bnj@nic.in<eerwssbnj2009@gmail.com

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RWS&S DIVISION, BHANJANAGAR-761126

Govt of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice

Bid Identification No. E.E._RWS&S_ 08 /2025-26

1. The Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Bhanjanagar, Ganjam on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in Single Cover system according to the norm of "e" Procurement system in online mode in Ganjam District from the eligible contractors as per DTCN.
2. Nature of Work: **Internal furnishing of Divisional Water Testing Laboratory at RWS&S Division Bhanjanagar.**
3. Nos. of Tender : 01
4. Tender Cost : Rs 19.09 Lakh
5. Tender Paper Cost : 6000.00
6. Class of Contractor : D & C
7. Date and Time of Availability of bid document in the portal : Dt. From 11.00AM on **12.06.2025** to 5.00 PM on **21.06.2025**
8. Date of Opening of Bid : Dt. **23.06.2025** at 11.00 AM
9. Period of completion : 60 (Sixty) days
10. The bidders have to participate in online bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website https://tendersorissa.gov.in

Executive Engineer
RWS&S Division Bhanjanagar.

OIPR-25021/11/0012/2526