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Pro-Iran Protests Continue In Kashmir Valley Despite Restrictions

Srinagar: Despite restrictions imposed by authorities on Monday to maintain law and order, pro-Iran protests continued at several places across the Kashmir Valley, with clashes reported between security forces and protesters at a few locations. Police and security personnel were deployed in large numbers throughout the Kashmir Valley, with authorities focusing particularly on Shia Muslim-dominated areas in Srinagar city and elsewhere. Barricades made of concertina wire were erected in the city centre at Lal Chowk, where thousands of protesters had gathered on Sunday, raising slogans against the United States and Israel. Schools, colleges and universities remained closed on Monday and will continue to remain shut on Tuesday, officials



said. All examinations scheduled for Monday and Tuesday have been postponed. The University of Kashmir administration said fresh dates for the deferred examinations would be announced shortly. Movement of people and vehicles was restricted in several areas, and the speed of internet services was reduced to prevent the circulation of provocative content on social media. This is the second consecutive day of protests in the Kashmir Valley following the reported killing of

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader, in joint airstrikes by the United States and Israel early on Saturday. Officials said protests were reported from the Bemina, Gund Hassi Bhat, Budgam, Magam, Shalteng and Jehangir Chowk areas of Srinagar, as well as from Pulwama town in south Kashmir. Protesters assembled in these areas and marched through the streets, raising anti-US and anti-Israel slogans. In certain places, security forces used lathis and tear smoke shells to

disperse demonstrators. Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, chief cleric and chairman of the Muthahida Majlis-e-Ulama (MMU), had called for a protest shutdown on Monday. The call was supported by several political parties, including Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president and former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti. The Kashmir Valley has an estimated 16 lakh Shia Muslims, predominantly residing in Zadibal in Srinagar; Magam and Budgam towns in Budgam district; and in several villages across Baramulla, Ganderbal, Pulwama, Anantnag and Bandipora districts. Senior police officers, including Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat, supervised the security arrangements across the Kashmir Valley.

Odisha Govt On Alert Over Middle East Crisis; Forms Working Group For Migrant Safety

Bhubaneswar (Correspondent): In view of the prevailing war-like situation in the Middle East, the Odisha government on Monday convened a high-level meeting under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Anu Garg to assess the situation and prepare measures to ensure the safety of migrant Odias residing in the region. The meeting was held as per the instructions of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, with a focus on closely monitoring developments and initiating coordinated action if required. During the meeting, the Chief Secretary advised all concerned departments to remain alert and prepared, while keeping a close watch on the evolving situation. She emphasized the need for coordinated efforts to provide timely assistance



and reliable information to Odias staying abroad. It was highlighted that the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India, has issued a 24-hour toll-free helpline number (800-4634342) and a WhatsApp number (+971543090571) to assist Indian nationals in the affected regions. To strengthen the state's response mechanism, the Odisha government has formed a dedicated working group in coordination with Odisha Mo Paribar, the State

Home (Swarashttra) Department, the State Labour Directorate, and the Protector of Emigrants — an organisation responsible for safeguarding the interests of overseas Indians. Prithish Panda has been appointed as the Nodal Officer for Odisha Mo Paribar to facilitate information dissemination and assistance. He can be contacted at 9583321964 for support related to Odias in the Middle East. Director General of Police Y.B. Khurania, who attended

the meeting, stated that the situation is being monitored very closely and necessary steps are being taken. He added that all concerned officers have been put on alert and the situation remains under control. The DGP further informed that social media posts related to the situation are being strictly monitored, and immediate action is being taken wherever necessary to prevent misinformation. Among others present at the meeting were Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department, Hemant Sharma; Director of Intelligence R.P. Koche; Director of Odisha Mo Paribar and Secretary, Culture Department, Bijayaketan Upadhyay; Labour Commissioner Indramani Tripathi; and senior officials from various departments.

PM Modi thanks King of Jordan for "taking care of Indian community" amid West Asia tensions

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday spoke with the King of Jordan, His Majesty King Abdullah II and affirmed India's support for the "peace, security and the well-being" of Jordanians. The Prime Minister expressed concerns over the "evolving situation" in West Asia, while thanking His Majesty for looking out for the Indian diaspora in Jordan during this "difficult hour." In a post on X, the PM wrote, "Spoke with His Majesty King Abdullah II, the King of Jordan.



Conveyed our deep concern at the evolving situation in the region. We reaffirm our support for peace, security and the well-being of the people of Jordan. I thanked him for taking care of the Indian community in Jordan in this difficult hour." Earlier today, Prime Minister

Narendra Modi engaged in separate telephone conversations with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud and Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, as the conflict in the Middle East continues to intensify following recent

escalations. During these discussions, the Prime Minister strongly condemned the recent attacks on both Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. He also enquired about the safety and well-being of the large Indian community residing in these countries, reflecting India's priority to safeguard its diaspora amid the regional turmoil. These calls build on PM Modi's ongoing diplomatic outreach since the conflict erupted involving the United States, Israel, and Iran. On Sunday, he held a

telephone conversation with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, where he reiterated India's call for an early cessation of all hostilities in the region to restore peace. In a parallel engagement that day, PM Modi spoke with United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. He condemned Iranian attacks on Gulf countries and urged immediate de-escalation, while expressing appreciation to the UAE leader for ensuring the safety and well-being of the Indian community there.

First Indian Casualty Reported in US-Iran Conflict After Oil Tanker Attack in Gulf of Oman

NEWDELHI: An Indian crew member has been killed after a bomb-carrying drone boat struck an oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman, marking the first reported Indian casualty in the escalating US-Iran conflict. According to the state-run Oman News Agency, the Marshall Islands-flagged vessel MKD VYOM was hit off the coast of Muscat on March 1. The deceased crew member, who was stationed in the engine room at the time of the explosion, was identified as an Indian national. The vessel's manager, V. Ships,

confirmed that the tanker suffered an explosion followed by a fire after being struck by a suspected projectile. The company described the incident as tragic and confirmed one fatality among the crew. The strike comes amid heightened tensions in West Asia following joint airstrikes by the United States and Israel targeting Iran. While no group has formally claimed responsibility for the tanker attack, Iran has previously threatened vessels navigating near the strategic Strait of Hormuz. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi

addressed reports of Iranian strikes across Gulf nations, including Oman. Speaking to Al Jazeera, he stated that certain military actions were being carried out independently by armed forces under broader strategic directives. Explosions were also reported in regional cities including Dubai, Doha, and Manama, raising concerns about a widening conflict. In a separate incident on Sunday, 15 Indian nationals were aboard the Palau-flagged tanker Skylight when it was struck near Oman's Musandam peninsula.

Delhi High Court Restores Bail to Youth Congress Chief Uday Bhanu Chib

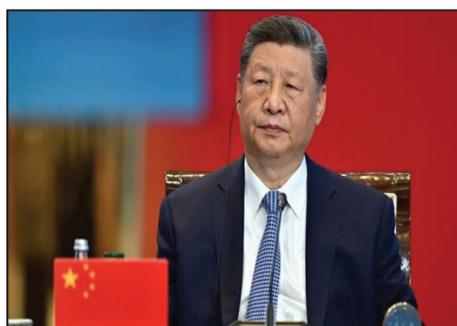
NEWDELHI: The Delhi High Court on Monday restored the bail granted to Indian Youth Congress (IYC) president Uday Bhanu Chib in connection with a protest during the India AI Impact Summit. In a special sitting, Justice Saurabh Banerjee stayed a February 28 order passed by a sessions court that had suspended Chib's bail. The high court observed that the lower court's order lacked adequate reasoning and appeared to have been issued without proper

application of mind. "Where is the reasoning in this order? According to my little understanding, the order has to be stayed," the bench remarked during the hearing. The court further noted that some degree of judicial reasoning must be evident, especially when granting an interim stay on a bail order. Prima facie, the bench said it was not satisfied with the sessions court's decision. Chib had moved the high court challenging the sessions court's decision to stay the bail granted by a duty

magistrate. Earlier, Duty Magistrate Vanshika Mehta of Patiala House Courts granted bail to Chib after he was produced by the Delhi Police Crime Branch at around 3:30 am on Saturday. The magistrate observed that there was no purpose in keeping him in further custody. However, later that evening, the sessions court stayed the bail order until further proceedings. It termed the magistrate's decision a rare and exceptional circumstance that justified an ex parte stay.

China Urges Restraint as US-Iran Conflict Escalates, Calls to Prevent Regional Spillover

NEWDELHI: China on Monday issued its first official response to the escalating conflict between the United States and Iran, urging all parties to prevent further regional destabilization and avoid a wider spillover of fighting across the Middle East. In a statement, China's Foreign Ministry emphasized the need for restraint, stating that efforts must be made to "prevent spillover of fighting." The ministry underscored its



opposition to the use of force in international relations and called for an immediate halt to military operations. The response follows

heightened tensions after US and Israeli strikes targeted Iranian positions, prompting Tehran to launch retaliatory missile and

confirmed that one Chinese national has been killed amid the ongoing hostilities. The government has advised its citizens in affected areas to evacuate as soon as possible. Officials stated that more than 3,000 Chinese nationals have already departed Iran since the conflict intensified. China reiterated its position advocating dialogue, diplomatic engagement, and collective efforts to restore regional peace and stability.

Odisha Rice Bowl Under Siege: Deadly Mill Waste Hits Water Table

Bargarh (Correspondent): Groundwater contamination poses a serious, urgent threat to Odisha's vital rice belt, raising alarming health concerns across the region. The Bargarh district, known as Odisha's rice-producing heartland, is facing a critical crisis as unchecked effluents from rice mills and widespread chemical use in agriculture contaminate local water sources. Untreated wastewater from rice mills seeps into canals and soil, contributing to worsening health outcomes, including a rising incidence of cancer among residents. Notably, villages such as Govindpur, Nagenpalli, Bhoipali, Rengali Camp, Gorkhapali, Barpali, Paikmal, and Barahmunda report



ongoing pollution, with rice mills discharging solid waste and ash directly into water bodies without adequate treatment. The State Pollution Control Board (SPCB), Sambalpur Regional Office, has recently issued show-cause notices to several units, including Krishna Mercerisers, Yorsha Cotton Mill, Om Foods Products, Balaji Agro Products, Vijayalakshmi Rice Mill, and Shankar Rice Industries, emphasising the need for stricter compliance.

Despite these measures, inspections on January 16 and 22 revealed continued violations, risking closures and permit revocations if breaches persist.

Meanwhile, the surge in chemical-intensive farming, driven by irrigation from the Hirakud Dam, has led to increased use of pesticides and fertilisers. Residues such as endosulfan, carbofuran, and cypermethrin have been detected in groundwater at levels exceeding safety limits,

adding to community health risks. Bargarh has recorded Odisha's highest cancer rates, with many cases linked to chemical exposure, partly due to farmers lacking adequate protective measures. Pesticide use soared from 440.7 tonnes in 2016 to 713.9 tonnes in 2017, highlighting a troubling dependency on chemicals. Although authorities have issued repeated notices, enforcement remains inconsistent, prompting concerns over the sincerity of regulatory actions and the possible influence of revenue motives. Past efforts by former District Magistrate Harihar Panigrahi demonstrated effective enforcement strategies. Still, current renewal processes often bypass field

inspections, raising fears of unchecked violations amid close ties between officials and grain market stakeholders. Environmentalists and community leaders are urging for stricter, transparent monitoring and enforcement actions to safeguard public health and environmental integrity. The ongoing health crisis has severely impacted vulnerable populations, especially those over 50, with a notable increase in cancer and kidney diseases. Particularly affected are residents near mills and in slum areas, who are demanding urgent relocation and a transition to sustainable, organic farming practices to protect health and restore environmental balance.

PM Modi Speaks To Jordan's King Abdullah II On West Asia Crisis

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday held a telephone conversation with King Abdullah II of Jordan, expressing India's deep concern over the rapidly deteriorating situation in West Asia. The call came amid escalating military confrontations involving the US, Israel and Iran, which have reportedly drawn in several neighbouring countries through retaliatory strikes and missile attacks. In a post on X, the Prime Minister said he had spoken with the King of Jordan to convey India's concern over the evolving regional situation. He reaffirmed India's firm support for peace, security and the well-

being of the people of Jordan. The Prime Minister also thanked King Abdullah II for ensuring the safety and care of the Indian community in Jordan during the current crisis. The outreach reflects India's diplomatic engagement with regional leaders as tensions intensify in West Asia. Recent developments include joint US-Israeli strikes on Iranian targets, which, according to reports, resulted in the death of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. This was followed by Iranian missile and drone attacks targeting Israel, US military installations and locations in Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia and

Bahrain. Jordan has reportedly been directly affected, with accounts of intercepted projectiles over its territory causing injuries and property damage. In response to the evolving security situation, Jordan has implemented partial nightly closures of its airspace as a precautionary measure to safeguard civil aviation, joining other countries that have restricted flights amid heightened risks. The Prime Minister's conversation with King Abdullah II follows similar discussions with leaders of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, during which he condemned attacks on their sovereignty and emphasised India's solidarity.

NITI Aayog Hosts Natural Farming Workshop to Boost Farmer Incomes

New Delhi: NITI Aayog organized a two-day national workshop on natural farming under its State Support Mission (SSM), uniting farmers, policymakers, scientists, startups, and citizens nationwide. Maharashtra and Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat, addressing virtually, underscored natural farming's role in soil health restoration, input cost reduction, and farmer income growth. New Hindi-English training manuals were launched to equip farmers, extension officers, and grassroots



workers with region-specific, practical knowledge. Key institutions like Junagadh Agricultural University, Dr. YS Parmar University of Horticulture & Forestry, and Gujarat Natural Farming Science University actively contributed. Farmers, officials, and Krishi Vigyan Kendra scientists from Punjab, Rajasthan,

Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Odisha deliberated practices. APEDA, N A B A R D, Cooperation Ministry, DAHD, Environment Ministry, and ATARI officials shared insights on convergence, certification, market linkages, and

institutional support. Agri-startups, civil society, farmer producer groups highlighted India's burgeoning natural farming ecosystem. Key Discussions Day one's open forum drew 770 participants voicing adoption hurdles, certification woes, market access, and field challenges—consensus formed on farmer-led models. Day two featured on-site demonstrations of practices for exotic crops and bio-input preparation via manual/automated systems.

Emirates, Etihad Resume Limited Flights From Dubai Airport

New Delhi: UAE-based airlines Emirates and Etihad Airways announced on Monday that they will start operating a limited number of flights from the evening, after Dubai Airports confirmed a partial resumption of operations after the airport was closed due to the outbreak of hostilities between the US-Israel alliance and Iran. Emirates said it will prioritise customers with earlier bookings as it restarts services in phases. The airline will contact passengers who have been rebooked onto these limited flights directly. "Please do not go to the airport unless you have been notified,"



it said in a statement. The Dubai-based airline said that all other flights remain suspended until further notice. It said it continues to monitor the situation and will adjust its operational schedule accordingly. Updates will be published on emirates.com and its official social media channels. "We would

like to thank our customers for their understanding and patience," the airline said, adding that the safety and security of passengers. Meanwhile, Etihad will conduct some repositioning, cargo and repatriation flights "in coordination with UAE authorities and subject to strict

operational and safety approvals", the airline said in a statement. However, authorities have not provided a timeline for full restoration of normal operations. Dubai Airports said a small number of flights will be permitted to operate from Dubai International (DXB) and Dubai World Central - Al Maktoum International (DWC) starting Sunday evening. However, the UAE's General Civil Aviation Authority said: "Exceptional flights are now operating at UAE airports. Do not proceed to the airport until your airline contacts you with confirmed flight details to ensure a smooth process for all."

Youth Front Threatens Mass Protests Over Chib's Arrest

New Delhi: India Youth Front warned of street demonstrations against the arrest of Indian Youth Congress President Uday Bhanu Chib, with leaders from multiple organizations demanding a government apology at a press conference held at Youth Congress headquarters Monday. Youth Congress General Secretary Surbhi Dwivedi highlighted the court's finding that their protest was neither inflammatory nor anti-national, insisting the Prime Minister apologize for maligning the group. "Voicing national concerns branded us traitors," she charged. Fahad Ahmed, National President of NCP (Sharad Pawar faction) Youth Wing, predicted bail pressures would ease, freeing Chib soon.

President Murmu Launches Lakhpati Beti, Free Gas Schemes for Delhi Women

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated Delhi government's Lakhpati Beti scheme, free gas cylinders for Holi-Diwali, Saheli Pink Smart Card, and direct benefit transfer of ₹100 crore to 40,642 girls' accounts at Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium today. Addressing the gathering, Murmu hailed women's strides across sectors — from defending borders as soldiers, pioneering research as scientists, to hoisting India's tricolor at global sports arenas



and leading in politics, service, administration, and business. "Educating women, boosting their confidence, and providing support is our collective duty," she said. "We must assure

daughters they can dream big, with us standing by to realize them." Delhi Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, CM Rekha Gupta, Union Minister Harsh Malhotra, Cabinet

Ministers Manjinder Singh Sirsa, and Dr Pankaj Kumar Singh attended. Murmu noted New Delhi as India's diverse capital: "Empowered, educated, self-reliant Delhi women will inspire the nation." Gupta called it a "golden chapter" for Nari Shakti, not mere launches but a pledge of honor and empowerment. "An empowered daughter strengthens families; self-reliant women build confident societies, paving Viksit Delhi," she said, assuring opportunities, security, and respect.

Twenty Flights From Dum Dum Airport To West Asia Cancelled Amid Rising Tensions, Passengers Face Disruptions

Kolkata: The escalating military tensions in West Asia have directly impacted air travel, with several flights from Kolkata's Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport, Dum Dum, to various West Asian destinations cancelled on Monday. A total of 20 flights operated by five airlines were affected, causing significant inconvenience to passengers. The cancellations include eight flights by Emirates, four by Qatar Airways, four by Etihad Airways, two by Air

Arabia, and two by Fly Dubai. Passengers travelling to destinations such as Dubai, Doha, and Abu Dhabi have been particularly impacted. Major West Asian airports, especially hubs like Dubai, serve as key transit points for international travel. A large number of passengers from India use these hubs en route to Europe and the United States. Regular direct flights operate from Kolkata to these centres, but services have been disrupted due to the current tense

situation. The disruptions are not limited to Kolkata alone. Flights from Delhi, Bengaluru, and Chennai to West Asia have also been temporarily suspended. Authorities have indicated that air services to several major cities in the region may remain affected until tensions ease. As a result, passengers travelling from India are facing difficulties reaching their destinations, while Indian citizens stranded in West Asia are concerned about visas and return travel.

Delhi Court Orders Immediate Release of 14 JNU Students Arrested During Protest

New Delhi: Fourteen people, including three office-bearers of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union, were released from Tihar Jail on Monday after being granted bail in connection with the February 26 Long March held on the JNU campus. Those released include JNUSU President Aditi, Vice

President Gopika, Joint Secretary Danish, former President Nitesh Kumar, AISA's All India President Neha and other students. On February 26, the students' union had organised a Long March across the campus protesting against certain policies of the university administration. The students

stated that the demonstration was held over issues including alleged caste-based remarks, rustication of student leaders and demands for greater equality within the institution. During the march, tension reportedly escalated despite the deployment of Delhi Police and the Rapid Action Force. Student groups alleged

that strict measures were taken during the protest, leading to the arrest of 14 students. The Patiala House Court granted bail to the accused after hearing the matter. Their release was delayed initially due to verification of permanent addresses, following which they remained in judicial custody and were

lodge in Tihar Jail. After being released, student union leaders described the development as a victory for the student movement and reaffirmed their commitment to continue raising issues related to social justice and equality. Among their key demands are the

implementation of UGC equity regulations, enactment of the proposed Rohith Act, withdrawal of revised curricula framed under the New Education Policy, revocation of rustication orders against student leaders and resignation of the Vice-Chancellor.

Srinivas Yadav murder case: High Court dismisses plea against conviction of accused

Cuttack, (Correspondent) : Hearing a 33-year-old murder case, the Orissa High Court has upheld the life imprisonment of the accused. The High Court has dismissed the plea against the conviction passed by the lower court in the case of shooting dead Srinivas Yadav of Jharsuguda. The accused Rambabu Sahu and Bhushan Sahu (deceased) were involved in the case. The incident took place on August 6, 1992, at around 9 pm near Jharsuguda Station Square. The informant, Sansthan Yadav, was returning from milking when the accused

attacked him and Srinivas. On the orders of accused Rambabu Sahu, Bhushan Sahu and others attacked Sansthan with a machete and shot Srinivas. Later, Srinivas died while undergoing treatment at the hospital. The case was heard by a bench comprising Justice Manas Ranjan Pachak and Justice Shashikant Mishra. Rejecting the arguments of the defense counsel, the court said that although there were some discrepancies in the statements of the witnesses, they are admissible as they were recorded five years after the

incident. Both the dying declarations given by the deceased Srinivas are correct and the names of the accused are clearly mentioned in them. The court has termed the lack of relevance to the ballistic report as a flaw in the investigation, but this cannot trump the evidence of the eyewitnesses. Upholding the judgment of the lower court, the High Court clarified that even though the accused were on bail, their bail bonds have been cancelled. The court has ordered their immediate arrest and the remaining parts of the body to be cut off

ECoR Adopts "Seva Sankalp Resolution" with Solemn Commitment to Service Excellence

Bhubaneswar, (Correspondent): In line with the adoption of the "Seva Sankalp Resolution" by the Union Cabinet, East Coast Railway held a solemn meeting at Sabha Griha, Rail Sadan, to formally read out and reaffirm its commitment to the spirit of the Resolution. The meeting was chaired by Shri Parmeshwar Funkwal, General Manager, East Coast Railway. Principal Heads of Departments, officers and staff members were present. At the same time, similar meetings were organised in all Divisions of the Zone, ensuring that the message of Seva reached every level of the organisation. The



"Seva Sankalp Resolution" was read out in a solemn manner, reflecting a collective pledge towards transparency, efficiency, accountability and citizen centric governance. The Resolution reinforces the commitment of Indian Railways to ethical functioning, responsive administration and dedicated service to the nation. Addressing the

gathering, Shri Funkwal emphasised that "Seva" (service) is the soul of Indian Railways and the guiding principle of its functioning. He observed that the Resolution signifies a conscious effort to move beyond colonial era administrative mindsets and embrace a governance model rooted in Indian values. During the meeting, Principal Heads of Departments

offered practical suggestions for implementing the Resolution in day-to-day functioning. Discussions focused on improving service delivery, upgrading passenger amenities and strengthening safety systems. The deliberations were constructive and forward looking, laying down a clear and actionable roadmap. The collective reading of the Resolution symbolised a united commitment of East Coast Railway to work with renewed dedication, align with the vision of the Government of India, and continuously strive for better, people focused railway services.

Illegal Soil Lifting from Railway Land Raises Alarm in Kantabanji !

Kantabanji, correspondence : Allegations of large-scale soil theft from railway land have surfaced in the Kantabanji area of Kantabanji, triggering concern among residents and raising questions over enforcement by the authorities. According to local sources, soil is being excavated openly throughout the day from railway property without any apparent checks. Residents allege that despite repeated instances of illegal digging, no concrete action has been taken so far by officials concerned. It is alleged that a group of organised operators is



involved in cutting and transporting large quantities of soil using tippers and other heavy machinery. The continuous excavation has reportedly resulted in the formation of deep pits at multiple locations on the railway land. Locals claim that these pits often

accumulate rainwater, creating pond-like structures that pose potential safety hazards. Residents fear that unattended excavated areas could lead to accidental mishaps, particularly for children and cattle moving through the vicinity. Citizens have

expressed apprehension that unchecked soil removal may weaken the structural stability of railway land and could pose risks to railway infrastructure. Any damage to the land adjoining railway tracks, they say, may have serious implications for public safety if not addressed in time. Concerned residents have urged the railway authorities to launch an immediate inquiry and clamp down on the alleged illegal activity. They have called for the seizure of vehicles and machinery involved in the excavation and strict action against those responsible.

MACHINES TO BECOME CAPABLE, SMARTER IN FUTURE: PROF. (DR.) PENN

Bhubaneswar, (Correspondent): As the buzz grows louder around the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI), an internationally known expert on the subject has said that machines will become capable, smarter and even surpass human intelligence. "Machines will not only be able to learn but they will learn how to learn," Prof. (Dr.) Jonnie Penn, Professor of AI Ethics and Society, University of Cambridge and Faculty Affiliate, Berkman Klein Center



for Internet and Society, Harvard University, said while speaking at an International AI Conclave organised at the SOA Deemed to be University on Monday. Delivering the keynote address at the conclave on the theme 'India's AI Future-Role of Academia, Industry, Research and Innovation', Prof. (Dr.) Penn said AI was not in the news 15 years ago

as it is today with the development making people ponder over its future impact. Prof. (Dr.) Penn spoke about the economics of AI dubbing it as 'intention economy' saying it could maximize the likelihood of achieving a given aim. He also explained AI's impact on the socio-technical sphere and how it would relate to climate change. The program, which was

presided over by SOA Vice-Chancellor Prof. Pradipta Kumar Nanda, was addressed by Mr. Dharmakumar Seeraj, Ambassador of Guyana to India, Mr. Karlito Nunes, Ambassador of Timor-Leste to India and Ms. Arlette Gabriela Bustamante Garcia, Counsellor, Embassy of Bolivia in India. Prof. Prasanta Kumar Patra, Pro-Vice Chancellor of SOA, delivered the welcome address while Prof. Jyoti Ranjan Das, Dean (Students' Welfare) coordinated the event.

Campus Must Rekindle Spirit of Leadership: MLA Bargarh at 'Murchhana' festival

Bargarh, correspondence: The vibrant "Murchhana" festival at Parvati Giri Women's College was alive with energy as leaders and educators rallied students to rediscover activism and ignite change. Addressing the gathering as a distinguished guest, Bargarh MLA Ashwini Kumar Sarangi emphasised that the spirit of rebellion against injustice originated on college campuses and passionately called for self-reflection among teachers and students, inviting students to witness the Assembly and offering unwavering support. Bargarh MP Pradeep Purohit, the chief guest, captivated the audience with inspiring success stories of women achievers and proudly announced a grant to build a new



meeting hall. Addl. District Magistrate Madhuchhanda Sahu celebrated the college's remarkable achievements, while English Professor Manabhanjan Panigrahi compared life to a pencil, urging students to sharpen their skills and erase negativity to carve their path. With its golden jubilee celebration set for 2028, the college reaffirmed its dedication to maintaining government recognition

and excellence. The event shone brightly with awards — including the prestigious Kiran Mayi Mohapatra Memorial Award to top graduate Mehek Goyal, the Biology Award to Itishri Meher, and recognition of Toshmati Biswal as an all-rounder in academics and sports. Cultural performances under Guru Shankar Patnaik and Vinod Dash culminated the festivities in a spectacular display of talent and unity.

Joint Public Grievance Hearing Held at Gajapati

Parlakhemundi, (correspondence): A district-level joint public grievance hearing was held at the conference hall of the District Magistrate's office in Parlakhemundi, the headquarters of Gajapati district. In this grievance hearing, Additional District Magistrate Muni Dr Honnaga, Gajapati SP Yatindra Kumar Panda, Project Administrator Integrated Tribal Development Agency Parlakhemundi Ansuman Mohapatra heard the grievances. A total of 96

grievances were received in today's district-level grievance hearing camp. Out of which, 82 were individual grievances, 14 were village-based grievances. The departmental officers have been instructed to resolve all other grievances immediately. Complaints were received regarding various issues such as social security, land lease, MNREGA, house construction, ration card, education, water irrigation roads and health problems.

DEMAND FOR ICU, ADVANCED MEDICAL FACILITIES FOR DHH GAJAPATI REVERBERATES IN ASSEMBLY

Parlakhemundi, correspondence: The urgent need for lifesaving medical infrastructure in Gajapati district headquarter hospital at Parlakhemundi found a strong and compassionate voice in the Standing Committee meeting of the Odisha Legislative Assembly held in Bhubaneswar. Raising a matter of critical public concern, Rupesh Panigrahi, MLA Parlakhemundi, urged immediate strengthening of

healthcare facilities in Gajapati DHH with special emphasis on establishing an Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Highlighting the ground reality, the MLA informed the committee that the District Headquarters Hospital at Parlakhemundi is functioning without an ICU, forcing critically ill patients to travel long distances to other districts in search of advanced treatment. This delay, he noted, often proves perilous for patients

requiring emergency and intensive care. In view of the growing healthcare needs of the region, MLA Panigrahi strongly demanded the immediate establishment of an ICU along with a modern MRI facility at the hospital. He further stressed the urgent appointment of specialist doctors, adequate nursing staff, and the provision of sufficient ambulance services to ensure timely referral and emergency response. Describing healthcare as the lifeline of a developing society, the



MLA appealed for swift government intervention so that the people of this predominantly tribal and remote district are not deprived of critical medical care. The demands, centred on the creation of ICU and advanced diagnostic

and emergency support systems, aim to transform the District Headquarters Hospital into a dependable centre of critical care—bringing relief, hope, and a sense of security to the people of Gajapati.

District Collector's Joint Public Grievance Hearing Held

Cuttack (correspondence) : A joint public complaint hearing of the District Collector has been held today at the Badamba block office. A total of 115 complaints were received in the public complaint hearing held under the chairmanship of District Collector Shri Dattatraya Bhausahab Shinde. There were 97 individual complaints and 18 collective complaints. In the complaint hearing camp, special steps were taken for speedy resolution of 5 complaints. During the hearing of this complaint, Superintendent of Security Mr. Bineet Agarwal, Additional District Magistrate Mr. Kamaljit Das, District Council Chief Development Officer and Executive Officer Mr. Prashant Kumar Naik, Ashtgarh Upazila Collector Mr. Prahlad Narayan Sharma and other departmental officers were present. In addition, various officials have been instructed to take immediate action after hearing various registered complaints related to drinking water, old age allowance, disability allowance, health, education, agriculture, livestock etc. It is worth noting here that the joint public complaint hearing of the District Collector will be held on the 9th at Kishannagar Tahshil.

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ବିବେକ

ମାଲକାନଗିରି ସହରର ସମସ୍ତ ନାଗରିକଙ୍କୁ ସର୍ବନିମ୍ନ ଗୌରବ ଦେବା ଯୋଗାଇ ଦେବାରେ ନିମ୍ନଲିଖିତ ସମାଜିକ ପ୍ରସାର କରିବା ଲାଗି ଅନୁରୋଧ କରୁଅଛୁ ।

- ୦୧ ॥ ସହରର ସମସ୍ତ ବ୍ୟବସାୟୀ ନିକଟିକର ବ୍ୟବସାୟ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ଉପରେ ବର୍ଷା ବନ୍ଧୁ ପୂଜା ପୂଜା ଲାଭେ (ଓପା ଓ ଶୁଖିଲା) ସଂଗୃହଣ କରି ରଖିବେ ଏବଂ ତେ ଉପରେ ପୂର୍ବସ୍ଥରେ ପରିଷଦର ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ଗ୍ରହଣ କରାଯାଏ ।
- ୦୨ ॥ ସେହିଭଳି ସହରର ସମସ୍ତ ନାଗରିକ ନ୍ୟ ନିକ ଉତ୍ତର ଉତ୍ତର ବର୍ଷା ବନ୍ଧୁ ପୂଜା ପୂଜା ଲାଭେ (ଓପା ଓ ଶୁଖିଲା) ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ଗ୍ରହଣ କରାଯାଏ ।
- ୦୩ ॥ କୌଣସି ନାଗରିକ ନିକ ଉତ୍ତର ଉତ୍ତର ଗ୍ରାଣୀ ଯଥା : -ଗାଈ, ମହିଷା, ଛେଳି, କୁକୁର ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ସର୍ବସାଧାରଣ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଛାଡ଼ିବେ ନାହିଁ ।
- ୦୪ ॥ ସହରର ସମସ୍ତ ବ୍ୟବସାୟୀ ନିକ ନିକର ବ୍ୟବସାୟୀ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା କରିବା ନିମନ୍ତେ ଅନୁମତି (Trade License) ପୌର ପରିଷଦ ମାଲକାନଗିରିର ଠାରୁ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ କରିବା ନିମନ୍ତେ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରାଯାଏ ଏବଂ ତତ୍ ପ୍ରମାଣପତ୍ର ନିକ ନିକ ବ୍ୟବସାୟୀ ଛାଡ଼ିବେ ନାହିଁ ।
- ୦୫ ॥ ପୁର ବନ୍ଦିଆ ଓ ଗାଈ ବନ୍ଦିଆ ଯାନ ରାଜରାଜ୍ୟ ଉପରେ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଅବରୋଧ କରନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ ।
- ୦୬ ॥ ପରିଷଦର ବ୍ୟାଜ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥାକୁ ବୁଲେଇ ବୁଲନ୍ତୁ ।
- ୦୭ ॥ ପରିଷଦର ବିକସ ଆଦି ଠିକ ସମୟରେ ପୈଠ କରନ୍ତୁ ।

ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଅନୁରୋଧ ଉପରେ ନିକଟିକି ଆମ ସହରକୁ ଏକ ସୁସ୍ଥ ସହରରେ ପରିଣତ କରି କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ତଥା ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ସ୍ତୁତି ସ୍ୱୀକାର କରିବା ।

ଅଧ୍ୟକ୍ଷ
ପୌର ପରିଷଦ, ମାଲକାନଗିରି

କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନିର୍ବାହୀ ଅଧ୍ୟକ୍ଷ
ପୌର ପରିଷଦ, ମାଲକାନଗିରି

EDITORIAL

Language Gaps: Bridging Words, Bridging Worlds

Language is more than a tool for communication; it is the foundation of identity, culture, learning, and social connection. Yet across the world—and especially in multilingual societies like India—language gaps continue to divide people. These gaps exist between generations, regions, educational backgrounds, and digital access levels. When language differences prevent understanding, they can limit opportunities, weaken social bonds, and deepen inequality.

Understanding Language Gaps
A language gap arises when individuals or groups cannot effectively communicate due to differences in language proficiency, vocabulary, or linguistic exposure. It may occur between:

Urban and rural populations – where access to formal language education differs

Private and government school students – often divided by English proficiency

Generations – elders fluent in regional languages and youth preferring English or digital slang

Digital users and non-users – shaped by technology-driven language evolution

These gaps are not merely linguistic; they reflect social, economic, and educational disparities.

Language and Educational Inequality

In many parts of India, children begin schooling in regional languages but encounter English-medium education later. This transition can be challenging. Students who lack early exposure to English often struggle with higher education, competitive exams, and job opportunities.

At the same time, excessive emphasis on English can marginalize mother tongues, weakening cultural roots and comprehension skills. Research shows that early education in one's mother tongue improves conceptual understanding and confidence.

Thus, the issue is not choosing one language over another, but creating balanced multilingual competence. The Digital Language Divide

The digital revolution has created new language barriers. Much of the internet's educational and professional content exists in English. Individuals unfamiliar with English face limited access to online learning, government services, and employment resources.

However, the rise of regional language content, voice technology, and translation tools is helping bridge this divide.

Cultural and Generational Disconnect

Language gaps also affect relationships within families and communities. Elders may prefer traditional expressions rooted in culture, while youth adopt hybrid language influenced by social media. This shift can create misunderstandings and emotional distance.

Preserving linguistic heritage while embracing evolving communication styles is essential for maintaining intergenerational harmony.

Economic and Professional Impact

Language proficiency often determines employability. Fluency in widely used languages like English can open doors to global opportunities, while limited proficiency can restrict career growth. Yet local languages remain vital in governance, grassroots development, and community engagement.

Balanced language skills enable individuals to operate effectively both locally and globally.

Bridging the Language Gap

Addressing language gaps requires coordinated efforts:

1. Multilingual Education

Schools should promote learning in the mother tongue alongside regional and global languages.

2. Digital Inclusion/Developing online content in regional languages and improving translation tools can expand access.

3. Community Initiatives/Reading clubs, cultural programs, and storytelling traditions can preserve linguistic heritage.

4. Family Engagement

Encouraging conversations in both traditional and modern languages strengthens bonds.

5. Policy Support/Government initiatives should support linguistic diversity while ensuring access to global communication tools.

Conclusion: Language gaps are not just about words—they shape access to knowledge, cultural continuity, and social equality. Bridging these gaps requires valuing linguistic diversity while promoting inclusive communication. When societies embrace multilingualism, they empower individuals to connect across cultures, generations, and opportunities.

Between Celebration and Reflection, The Lunar Eclipse on Dola Purnima



Dr Simant Kumar Nanda

Hindu festive occasions often carry deep philosophical insight, enriched with spiritual appeal and

supported by subtle scientific backgrounds. Such is the significance of Dola Purnima this year, when the festival of devotion coincides with a lunar eclipse. While the devotional observance of Dola Purnima falls on the Full Moon day, Holika Dahan takes place that night, and Holi, as we customarily celebrate it through the joyful playing of colours, follows on the next day. Thus, even as the festive spirit unfolds across these days, this year's Dola Purnima will uniquely align with a lunar eclipse, creating a rare confluence of celebration and cosmic rhythm. On 3rd March 2026, the full moon of Dola Purnima will coincide with a lunar eclipse, a convergence that brings together astronomy, tradition and philosophical reflection. Dola Purnima, widely celebrated in Odisha and across India, marks devotion, harmony and the gentle arrival of spring. It is associated with the playful grace of Krishna and symbolises the rhythmic balance between nature and human emotion. On this night of fullness, when the moon is expected to shine in its complete brilliance, it will instead gradually enter the shadow of the Earth, creating a striking contrast between celebration and cosmic pause.

From a scientific perspective, a lunar eclipse occurs when the Earth comes precisely between the Sun and the Moon during a full moon, blocking direct sunlight from reaching the lunar surface. Yet the Moon does not disappear. Instead, it often turns

a reddish or copper hue. This happens because Earth's atmosphere bends and filters sunlight, scattering shorter blue wavelengths while allowing longer red wavelengths to pass through and softly illuminate the Moon. The same physical process is responsible for the colours of sunrise and sunset. Thus, even during eclipse, the Moon continues to shine, though differently, through refracted light. Modern astronomy recognises the event as a predictable celestial alignment that has no harmful effect on human life or the natural world.

Indian mythology presents a symbolic explanation of eclipses through the story of Rahu. As narrated in texts like the Bhagavata Purana, Rahu is the immortal celestial entity who periodically attempts to swallow the Sun or Moon, creating temporary darkness. Yet the luminaries always re-emerge, untouched. This narrative reflects an intuitive understanding that obstruction is never permanent and that light eventually returns. Rather than contradicting science, such myths historically served to interpret cosmic events in ways meaningful to human imagination and moral reflection.

Dola Purnima itself carries deep symbolic value. The ritual of placing the deity on a gently swaying swing represents balance, movement between extremes such as joy and restraint, action and reflection, expression and silence. The coincidence of an eclipse on this day transforms this symbolism into a cosmic metaphor. The full moon, often associated in Indian thought with the human mind and emotional completeness, entering shadow suggests that fullness does not exclude moments of dimness. Even the brightest phases of life may pass through intervals of obscurity.

This insight resonates with the balanced

philosophy expressed in the Bhagavad Gita, where harmony is understood not as the absence of change but as steadiness within it. During the eclipse, the Moon does not lose its identity, it glows differently. Similarly, clarity in life may persist even when circumstances filter its brightness. The event thus becomes a reminder of resilience, that shadow need not signify loss but transformation.

In social and personal terms, festivals encourage outward celebration, while rare celestial events often inspire inward reflection. Their convergence on this Dola Purnima suggests a meaningful rhythm, celebration enriched by awareness. Just as the Moon regains its full radiance after passing through shadow, human experience too moves through cycles of light and uncertainty without losing its essential continuity.

Seasonally, Dola Purnima marks the transition of spring toward greater vitality. The eclipse mirrors this shift, symbolising movement rather than disruption. Growth in nature, as in life, includes moments of pause and recalibration. The sky's quiet drama on this night therefore becomes not an omen but an affirmation of balance.

Viewed through science, mythology and philosophy together, the lunar eclipse on Dola Purnima this year stands as a reminder that light and shadow coexist within the same cosmic rhythm. It invites both celebration and contemplation, suggesting that completeness is not the absence of darkness but the ability to endure it. As colours of devotion fill the day and the Moon journeys through Earth's shadow by night, the universe itself appears to echo a timeless insight, that even in moments of dimness, illumination endures and returns in renewed form.

DOLA PURNIMA" - IN ODISHAN CULTURE



SHYAM SUNDAR SAHOO

During the spring season, when the fragrance of the blossoming blooms of mango tree fills the air, the sweet notes of the cuckoo bird is heard and echoed, the tapestry of the earth is decorated with greenery and multicoloured flowers all round, when everything appears to be brimmed with agility and hilarity, "Dola Purnima" sets in on the full moon day of month of Phalgun heralding the culmination of forty day long Basant Utsav that commenced from Basant Panchami.

"Dola Purnima" stands as one of the most significant and vibrant mass festival in Odisha culture. Each and every celebration in our state is based upon historical or mythological context laced with religious, spiritual or regional background. Hence how can "Dola Purnima" be out of place? Its history holds a hoary tale with religious and devotional overtones since antiquity. With the advent of spring season, Lord Krishna accomplished the swing festival (divine play) with Radharani and Gopis during Dwapara Yuga some five thousand years ago in Brindaban, Braja Dham by swaying on a decorated swing (Dola). Padma Purana is quite vocal and explicitly explains the spiritual significance best captured in the shloka stating -

"Dolamandapam Drustwa Govindam Purusottam Phalgun Purnima javat, sarbapapaih Pramuchyate" (Whoever witness Lord Krishna on the swing on the full moon day of Phalguna is absolved of all sins).

It is that memorable day commemorating the divine play of Lord Krishna which is being remembered and celebrated in our state from posterity to posterity till date without any check or break.

While most of the regions in India are engrossed in celebrating Holi exuberantly, Odisha the state of Lord Jagannath, celebrates Dola Purnima in a unique way for five to ten days. It is profoundly rooted in Vaishnavism and dedicated to the divine love of Lord Krishna and Radha. During the stay of Shri Chaitanya in Puri, the festival gained momentum and was converted into a mass

festival for days together in Odisha.

The literary meaning of Dola Purnima is "Dola" means swing and "Purnima" means full moon day i.e. the swing represented the divine play of Lord Krishna. It is a general and spiritual perception that by swinging the deity on this day, devotees help Him to enjoy the sweet breeze of Spring and are cleansed of their sins.

Dola Purnima is not to be construed as a mere festival in the culture of Lord Jagannath and soil of Vaishnavism in the state of Odisha, but it is a multiday religious procession with Holi as the colour playing day on the day following Dola Purnima. It is ayatra (journey) of the divine from the sanctum to the mortal plane to mingle with the devotees symbolising that God is coming to the people's doorstep. In our culture the festival kicks off on "Phagu Dasami day" (tenth day of bright fortnight of month of Phalguna) and concludes on Dola Purnima.

The beautifully adorned idols of Radha and Krishna (the village deities) referred to as Dola-Govinda are placed in finely decorated palanquins called Vimanas and set to travel from village to village by the palanquin bearers to accept the offerings (bhog) of the devotees called "Dwari Bhog". The devotees warmly welcome the God by lighting lamps and cleansing their doorstep area with cow dung and decorating it with Chita (a traditional decoration of art form using rice dough). The daily village rounds are called "Chacheri" which is a unique spectacle to be witnessed when the decorated wooden palanquins (Vimanas) shouldered by Gopals (milk man) make round from village to village with the spiritual air filled with the music of Ghant and Ghanta, Drum and Sankirtana.

On Dola Purnima day the celebration reaches its pinnacle when the Vimanas carrying the idols from different villages assemble in the Melan ground. The deities are placed on a large swing "Dola" and swung to the accompaniment of Sankirtan and prayers with the spray of Phagu (red coloured abira). Among others, the biggest and famous Dola melena in Odisha is the Hari Rajpur "Panchu Dola Melena" accommodating 80-100 beautifully decorated Vimanas in the sprawling Melena ground of over 80 acres of land having a historical legacy dating back to 1637 A.D. Similarly, Olakana Melan in Cuttack and

Hariankatha Melan in Kendrapada are noteworthy and are a feast for the eyes of the onlookers.

In Shreekhetra Puri, Lord Jagannath takes the form of Dola Gobinda and is worshipped by the devotees on the Dola Bedi. The representatives (Chalanti Pratima) of Lord Jagannath i.e. Dola Gobinda, Sridevi and Bhudevi are ceremoniously brought to the Dola Bedi through a well decorated Vimana along the symphony of crunch, ghant, ghanta, kahali, chhatra etc and placed on a swing (Dola) where all temple rituals are scrupulously undertaken and abira is offered to the Lord. Thousands of devotees throng to Puri to have a darshan of Dola Gobinda with the strong belief that a glimpse of Lord on the Dola Bedi eliminates their sins of many lifetimes. The new Almanac (Panji) is opened and read aloud before the Lord. In the temple the deities adorn "Chacheri Besha" dressed in beautiful red silk attire (Phagu Khandua). On Dola Purnima day the deities in the temple undergo Rajarajeswar Besha (Suna Besha) adorned with massive gold ornaments which is called the attire of king of kings symbolising Lord's supreme sovereignty over the Universe.

Odisha's rich tradition and precious cultural heritage are not only vast and vivacious but also a living legend which has stood the test of time. Dola Purnima is such a festival which carries mythological, religious, social and cultural significance with it. The easy accessibility of the divine at every door point of the devotees in the Chacheri Bhog and Dola Melana is of prime importance in the sense that all are equal in the eyes of Lord irrespective of caste, wealth, status and religion. The grandest Dola Melan serves as a meeting place for the nearby villagers for interaction displaying unity and solidarity. The Melan promotes brotherhood and communal harmony patronising the cultural activities like Pala, Daskathia and Gotipua protecting them from utter extinction. To add to this, it is also observed as a harvest ending festival and cows are worshipped on this day (Gomata puja) honouring the animals who provide livelihood. The Chacheri bhoga and Dola Melana justify and vivify the fact that Vaishnavism was deep rooted in Odishan soil and well pervasive in its culture from time immemorial.

Holi : Festival of Colours



Er. Prabhat Kishore

India is the country of festivals, which symbolises its enriched culture, tradition and civilisation.

The festivals are based on geological happenings, mythological beliefs, happiness and joy, changes of seasons and various other factors. Holi is one of such a festival, which is called Rangotsava (festival of colours), Basantotsava (festival of spring) or Premotsava (festival of love). It is celebrated over two days. The first day, called Chhoti Holi or Holika Dahan and the second day, called main Holi, are celebrated with enthusiasm and fun.

Holika Dahan falls on Purnima of the Phalgun Shukla Paksha and symbolises the victory of good over evil. The Puran deals that on this day Bhagwan Vishnu in the form of Narsingham, who was half Nar (human) and half Singh (lion) killed the Demon King Hiranyakashipu for his evil deeds and saved the life of His disciple Prahlad. People lit bonfires in order to remove negativity from their lives and pray for the wellbeing of the family and society. To remove

negativity from the house, its cleanliness is necessary. According to the Panchang, Holika Dahan is performed during the Pradosh Kaal (which starts after sunset) while the Purnamasi Tithi prevails, while Holi is celebrated on Chaitra Krishna Paksha Pratipada.

Holi is an ancient Sanatan Dharma festival with its cultural rituals, which has been dealt in Puran, Daskumar Charit, Kalidas's writings. It is also mythologically related to Bhagwan Krishna and Radha. It has special significance in Braj Bhoomi, the birth place of Krishna and in Barsana, the village of Radha. The Lathmar Holi of Barsana is famous world-wide. The women (as Gopis) use lathi (sticks) to beat the men (as Gops), who protect themselves with Dhals (Shields). It is also related to Bhagwan Ram in Tretayug, which reflects in the folk song "Holi Khele Raghuvira Awadh Mein".

Holi celebrates the arrival of summer and end of winter season in Indian Sub-continent. It is also an invocation for a good harvest spring season. It is also known as Phagwa (named after Phalgun month), Rangwali Holi, Dhulendi, Dhuleti, Dol Purnima, Dol Jatra, Pali etc. Outside India, it is famous and celebrated in Nepal, Bangala Desh, Surinam, Mauritius, Fiji, Trinidad, Guyana, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia,

Jamaica and other countries with great zeal.

On the day of Holi, people apply Coloured powder solutions (Gulal) in the day-time and Abir in the evening. The custom and celebration vary with regions. It marks an occasion to renew ruptured relationship, eliminate conflicts, and get rid of ourselves from emotional impurities from the past.

Sikhs have traditionally celebrated the festival with its historic texts referring to it as Holi. Shri Guru Govind Singhji Maharaj modified Holi with three day Holi Mohalla extension festival of Martial Arts. The extension started the day after the Holi festival in Anandpur Sahib where the Sikh soldiers would train in various military exercises.

People must be aware of their wealthy health as well as environment. Hence, they should celebrate eco-friendly Holi by using natural and herbal colours & gulal instead of chemical-based synthetic colours & gulal. Herbal gulal is made from flowers, fruits, leaves and locally available ingredients. Palak (Spinach) and Mehandi is used for preparing green colour, Rose for pink colour, Haldi and Flowers of Palas and Genda (Marigold) for yellow and saffron colour, Chukandar (beetroot) for red colour. Chandan (Sandalwood) and other flowers and leaves

are used for preparation of various other natural colours.

In addition to real life, the festival has been portrayed in reel-life of movies & serials too. The big as well as small screens acted as a catalyst to spread the festival vibes among the people. Several movies have become hit only because of Holi scenes and its melodious songs. Numerous melodious famous songs like "Rang Barse Bhinge Chunarwali Rang Barse", "Holi Khele Raghuvira Awadh Mein", "Ang Se Ang Lagana Sajan", "Holi Ke Din Dil Khil Jate Hain", "Aaj Na Chhodenge Bas Hamjoli Khele Holi", "Apne Rang Mein Rang De Mujhko", "Mal De Gulal Mohe, Aaye Holi Aaye Re", "Jogira Holi Khelat Nandlal Aao Re Aao Khelen Holi Brij Mein", "Holi Aaye Re Kanhayee", "Mohe Chhedo Na Nand Ke Lala", "Tan Rang Lo Jee Aaj Man Rang Lo", etc. are powerful enough to make people emotional.

Now in the age of globalisation, Holi is not limited to a particular religion and belief, but is open to all communities and humankind. It represents arrival of spring, season of love, and forgiving others for past wrongdoings. It is the symbol of joy, humour, friendship, and positivity in human life.

SUCI protests US and Israeli attack on Iran



Delang, (Correspondent): SUCI (Communist) has condemned the joint attack on Iran by US and Israel and has called on the people of India to protest against it. The protest meeting organized at Delang Station Bazaar on Sunday evening was

presided over by the party's regional committee president, Comrade Dinabandhu Parida. Comrades Batakrishna Swain, Padma Charan Jena, Trinath Pradhan criticized the imperialist policies of America and appealed to the party to support the nationwide protest.

Raid by the Forest department 210 flap shell Turtles recovered



Malkangiri, (Correspondent): Today, a joint operation was conducted by Kalimela and Motu Range staff near MPV-48 Canal Road. During the search operation, the team detected one Bolero ZLX vehicle loaded with 10 gunny bags containing 210 live Indian Flap Shell Turtles. On noticing the forest staff, the driver and other co-accused persons fled from the spot, and they could not

be apprehended at the time of the raid. The forest staff successfully seized the vehicle along with the gunny bags containing the turtles. A wildlife offence case has been registered, and an investigation is currently underway. Efforts are being made to identify and trace the accused persons at the earliest. The rescued turtles are being taken for safe custody and further necessary action as per wildlife protection provisions.

Two students achieve success in the science fair competition held at the state level youth festival

SUBARNAPUR, (Correspondent) --- During the district level joint grievance hearing held at the Sonepur block conference hall, two students of class XI of Pipilipalli Odisha Adarsha Vidyalyaya in Subarnapur district Asmit Nanda and Biswa Prakash Rath, secured third place at the state level in the science fair competition of the state level youth festival held at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar from 24.12.2025 to 26.12.2025. For achieving success, the Sports and Youth Services Department, Odisha Government,

presented them with a cash prize of Rs. 15,000.00/- in the form of a cheque by the Additional District Magistrate (Revenue) Rajendra Majhi today during the joint grievance hearing. These two young talented students have created a website for farmers, Leafence. Lovable.app has been developed. Through this website, farmers can scan a plant or scan a photo of it to diagnose the disease of that plant and get a lot of information related to agriculture. Both the students were congratulated by the district administration for this achievement.

District Collector's Joint Grievance Hearing Camp

Malkangiri, correspondent: A joint public hearing camp was held today at the FLC Hall located in the District Collector's office under the chairmanship of District Collector Somesh Kumar Upadhyay. A total of 34 grievances were heard in the camp. Out of which 26 were personal and 8 were rural problems. After receiving all the applications, the District Collector directed the concerned departmental officers to investigate them and take immediate action and to inform the District Collector about the details of the action taken. Additional District Collector Administration Somnath Pradhan, Chief Development Officer and Executive Officer Dasharathi Sarabu, Sub collector Collector Duryadhan Bhoi along with district level officers, BDOs and Tehsildars were present in this joint grievance hearing camp.

The Puri District Contractors' Association, Nimapada and Kakatpur Assembly Constituency branches, have strongly opposed the construction work of the Nimapada-Balanga road

Nimapada, (Correspondent): Once again, the construction work of the road from Nimapada to Balanga has become controversial. Today, the Nimapada and Kakatpur Assembly Constituency branches of the Puri District Contractors' Association strongly protested against the road construction work and demanded a vigilance inquiry. According to reports, the State Government has sanctioned more than 744 crore for the construction of a 14-kilometre road from Nimapada to Balanga via Bayabar. However, since the beginning of the project, allegations have been raised that the contracting agency



has been involved in corruption and substandard construction work. It is alleged that ARSS Company, which had been blacklisted during the previous government over corruption charges, has secured the project

under the name of a new agency through manipulation. Although the construction work is being carried out under the supervision of the Assistant Engineer of the Works Department, it has been observed that despite repeated instructions, the agency

has ignored government orders and openly violated rules for its own benefit. Today, members of the State Contractors' Association and the Nimapada and Kakatpur Contractors' Associations jointly visited the road construction site near

Nuharkiri Chhak on the Nimapada-Balanga main road. They exposed various irregularities committed by the contractor. Despite government orders mandating the installation of concrete sensor pavers in the road construction, the rules have allegedly been completely violated. The association has also alleged large-scale irregularities in the use of sand, concrete, and WMM (Wet Mix Macadam) materials, stating that the required quantities were not properly used. The State Committee of the Contractors' Association and local residents staged a protest demanding a vigilance investigation.

This year's matric exam is over, the results will be published in the first or second week of May

Cuttack: This year's matric examination has ended today. The result will be declared in the first or second week of May. The Board President Shrikant Tarai informed. OMR sheet check has already started. Subjective accounts will start from next 19. A total of 15,000 inspectors are employed in 55 centers. The results will be out in May. On the last day, 5.5 lakh candidates took the math exam. This year, the matric examination has been held from February 19 to March 2. About 5 lakh 61 thousand 979 candidates have given the exam. CCTV was arranged in a total of 3 thousand 82 centers.

BJP's huge block-level workers' meeting in Harishankar

Patnagarh, (Correspondent) A huge block-level workers' meeting of BJP was held at Balangir district Khaprakhhol Block Harishankar Lichu Bagicha on Monday. The meeting was chaired by Mandal President Umakant Pradhan. Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Empowerment and Power Department Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo was the chief guest, District President Sribesha Behera, Kisan Morcha District President Madhav Sai, District General Secretary Kunu Munda, Vice President Debakant Panigrahi,



Senior BJP Member Prabodh Nanda Panigrahi, Deputy Chief Minister's Block Representative Padma Kumar Singh Bariha, Balangir Lok Sabha MP's Block Representative Santosh Kumar Bhainsal, Women's Mandal president Jyosna Mayi Sahu were prominent participants. He called for giving priority to the people to reach the

people with the pro-people schemes of the central government and the state government. Similarly, he asked all the workers to get organized for the upcoming panchayat elections. Similarly, he informed about the big projects that have been started for the Khaprakhhol block area. Later, a merger festival was organized.

Padiyabahal Sarpanch Devaraj Padhan and more than hundreds other party workers were welcomed with party caps and garlands. On this occasion, hundreds of women and men including Prashant Kumar Meher, Muna Daruwan, Upendra Bhoi, Praveen Agarwal, Shashi Pujari, Dasharath Pangrahi, Satyanand Sendriya, Debashish Sahu, Ravi Sahu, Damayanti Baraha participated. The program was conducted by Dr. Abhay Tripathi, while Lathor Mandal President Bikas Behera proposed the vote of thanks.

Joint Public Grievance Hearing Camp Held at Jajpur Zilla Parishad Conference Hall

JAJPUR (Correspondent): A Joint Public Grievance Hearing Camp was organized today by the district administration at the Zilla Parishad Conference Hall in Jajpur. District Collector Shri Ambar Kumar Kar presided over the camp and personally heard various complaints and grievances of the public. During the hearing, the Collector assured that the concerned departmental officers would thoroughly verify the complaints and take necessary steps to resolve the genuine issues at the earliest. A total of 194 grievances were registered during the camp. Out of these, 154 were related to individual issues, 7 were concerning group or village-level problems, and 33 petitions sought financial assistance from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. As many as 40 grievances were resolved on the spot. Among others present at the camp were Superintendent of Police Shri Yashpratap Shrimal, Additional District Magistrate Shri Yudhishtir Nayak, Chief Development Officer-cum-Executive Officer of Zilla Parishad Shri Devi Prasad Mohanty, Sub-Collector Jajpur Shri Tapas Ranjan Dehury, Tahasildar Jajpur Shri Ravi Narayan Padhi, Chief District Medical & Public Health Officer Dr. Bijay Kumar Mishra, along with other district-level, block-level and field-level officers, who actively participated in addressing the grievances of the people.

Session on Vikhit Bharat Youth Parliament

Paralakhemundi, (Correspondent) At SKCG (Autonomous) College session on Vikhit Bharat Youth Parliament held. SP Gajapati Jatindra Kumar Panda graced as chief guest. Presided by Principal Prof. Radhakant Bhuyan, Dr. Sanyasi Behera, District Nodal Officer of NSS graced on dias. Speakers highlighted on glimpses to strengthen democracy & roadmap for youths to join on development scenarios. Their vital contributions will be reinforced to saturate global recognitions to our nation. Now it has been proved by strategies & principles with diehard contributions of key players to reinstate & apt excellency in global field to our nation. Now other nations, too, nurture dynamic role played being the largest democracy in world. On this occasion elocution competition held among students. Among them Sneha Behera, Samarpan Das, Shradhanjali Das, A. Saranya & Aradhana Mishra qualified for state level Youth Parliament.

Joint Commissioner of Excise Department's signature theft and money laundering incident

Cuttack, (Correspondent): The Excise Department has taken action in the incident of Rs 3.67 crore being transferred to the bank account of a retired ASI in the Northern Excise Intelligence Department instead of the provisioning pension of Rs 25 lakh. Initially, Sandeep Kumar Patnaik, a junior assistant of the Excise Department, has been suspended in this money laundering incident. This financial irregularity was detected during the audit

and considering the seriousness of the incident, the vigilance is likely to investigate. According to information, Achyut Dehuri of Athagarh, Cuttack district, who was an ASI in the Northern Excise Intelligence Department, retired from service in 2023-24. After retirement, he was supposed to get provisioning pension of Rs 25 lakh. But the digital signature of Rajendra Bhatra, Joint Commissioner of the Cuttack Excise

Commissioner's Office, who is the DDO (Drawing and Disbursing Officer) of the Northern Excise Intelligence Department, has been misused in some way. Junior Assistant Sandeep Kumar Patnaik in the Northern Excise Intelligence Department has transferred Rs 3 crore 67 lakh to the bank account of the ASI concerned for issuing bills 16 times. It is said that this money went without the knowledge of the ASI. There is also

a question about the lack of proper verification while paying the bills to the treasury. Now that this incident has come to light, the ASI has agreed to return the money. The Excise Department is said to have suspended only one junior assistant from his job and sat down to suppress the case. Sudhansu Behera, a senior assistant working in the Sambalpur Excise Office, has been appointed in place of the junior assistant. The office of the

Commissioner of Police has issued a directive to take full responsibility from the junior assistant. It is questionable whether only a junior assistant is involved in this incident or other senior officials are involved in such a large-scale financial transaction. It is said that if the Vigilance investigates the entire case, it will be possible to reveal who else benefited from the financial transaction. A report on this issue was published in 'Sambad' on February 24.

Block level Collector & S. P. joint grievance hearing camp held at Sonepur

SUBARNAPUR (Correspondent) Sonepur Block Level Joint Grievance and Redressal Camp was held at Sonepur block conference hall. In this joint grievance and redressal camp, Additional District Magistrate (Revenue) Rajendra Majhi and Additional Supdt. Of Police

Pratap Kumar Rana participated in the joint grievance and redressal camp and received a total of 37 registered grievance redressal applications of various objections and problems of the public. Out of which, 34 applications were individual, while 03 collective applications were received. 01 application was

decided during the immediate grievance redressal. All the remaining collective and individual grievance redressal applications have been given to the concerned department officers to resolve within a specified time. The joint grievance and redressal camp, which was held under

the supervision of Sonepur Block Development Officer Pratik Kumar Kar, was attended by Chief Development Officer and Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad Shri Aswini Kumar Meher, Sub Collector Sonepur, Dr. Soumyarupa Rath, Deputy Collector, Grievance Redressal Officer, Ms.

Priyadarshini Sahu, Tehsildar, Sonepur, Ms. Swarnarekha G, various district level officers, tehsil and block level officers, employees, District Panchayat Officer cum District Information and Public Relations Officer Arjun Majhi, journalists from various newspapers and representatives of electronic media.

Times are scary, but safe in Abu Dhabi: Esha Gupta



Thousands of travellers are stranded in the United Arab Emirates following widespread flight disruptions caused by the escalating conflict in the Middle East after US-Israel-Iran strikes. Actor Esha Gupta revealed she is currently in Abu Dhabi amid rising tensions across the Middle East. She assured her fans that she is safe, while admitting that the ongoing situation is both challenging and frightening. Hoping to be back in India soon, Esha on Instagram Story wrote, "To everyone checking in and messaging, I'm sorry for not replying. We are ok, we are safe! Times are scary, very tough. God is there to protect us. We trust the @modgovae is doing the best in protecting and interception."

"Praying for everyone effected. all those stranded and safety for all above all. Hope to be home soon," she added. Israeli-US strikes into Iran resulted in the death of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei. The strikes which have been labelled by the Israeli Defence Forces as Operation Roaring Lion, comes after months of close and joint planning with the U.S. Armed Forces, IDF's Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani said in a video message on Sunday. He added, "Our mission could not be more clear. The IDF will continue to act to remove emerging threats against Israel because the price of an action is too high". Iran is observing 40 days of public mourning following the death of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Reuters reported, citing Iranian state media. The death occurred following strikes by the US and Israel (Operation Epic Fury/Lion's Roar) on Saturday. In response to the ongoing heightened tension in the Gulf region, the situation prompted India to initiate diplomatic outreach and expressions of solidarity among regional and international leaders. According to reporting by Al Jazeera, Iran has launched coordinated attacks on US-linked targets across several Gulf Arab states in response to what Tehran described as a large-scale joint assault on its territory by the United States and Israel, raising concerns of a wider regional conflict.

Mahesh Babu praises Priyanka Chopra Jonas' performance in 'The Bluff'

Actor Mahesh Babu has praised his co-star Priyanka Chopra Jonas for her stellar performance in the film *The Bluff*, calling her "in top form." Taking to his X handle, Mahesh shared his admiration, highlighting the engaging action and emotional depth of the film. "#TheBluff is a well-mounted film with engaging action and emotions!!! @priyankachopra is in top form, swashbuckling and ticking all the boxes with a packed performance... Sending all my love to the team for the amazing work," Mahesh Babu wrote. Earlier, renowned filmmaker SS Rajamouli also showered praise on Priyanka's performance after watching the trailer of *The Bluff*. On Instagram Stories, Rajamouli wrote, "Priyanka is unstoppable and always surprises... what a commanding presence and fiery performance. Looking forward to *The Bluff*." Priyanka Chopra is gearing up for her highly anticipated return to Indian cinema with *Varanasi*, directed by SS Rajamouli. The film stars Mahesh Babu in the lead role and is set to be released in 2027. Mahesh Babu plays the role of Rudhra, and Priyanka will portray Mandakini. The film will also feature actor Prithviraj Sukumaran. In *The Bluff*, set in the Cayman Islands, Priyanka takes on intense action sequences, including sword and gun fights opposite Karl Urban. Directed by Frank E. Flowers, *The Bluff* is produced by Anthony Russo, Joe Russo, and Angela Russo-Otstot under the AGBO production banner. The film was released on Prime Video.



Protein thandai

Ingredients (serves 2):

Almonds - 6
Cashews - 5
Roasted makhana - 15 to 20
Poppy seeds - 2 tsp
Fennel seeds - 1 tsp
Black peppercorns - 4 pcs
Green cardamom - 4 pods
Cinnamon stick - 1
Saffron - 3 to 4 strands
Anjeer - 1/2 (depending on taste)
Toned milk - 250 ml
Warm water - 3 tbsp
Protein (vanilla) - 1 scoop (Vanshika used Oziva Plant Protein)
Method of preparation: Soak the roasted makhanas in water for a few minutes
Infuse the saffron in a little milk



Blend the soaked makhanas with the saffron-infused milk, nuts, spices, vanilla protein powder and milk. Serve chilled.

Can fasting improve brain health?

For weight loss, one common approach is to burn more calories than you consume, which often means practising portion control. Beyond simply reducing meal size, many people are turning to time-restricted eating patterns such as intermittent fasting or one meal a day (OMAD), where there are defined windows for eating and fasting. The idea behind it is that during fasting periods, the body taps into stored fat and burns it for energy.

There has been a surge in these types of diets as more people prioritise weight loss goals. But amid these diet trends, an important question comes up: how does fasting impact your brain health? Cognitive functions, including attention span and decision-making skills, are important for day-to-day functioning. So what does fasting actually mean for your brain health and overall cognitive performance?

How does fasting impact brain health?

One of the ways fasting may affect brain health is by influencing neuroplasticity and neurodegeneration, as highlighted by the neurologist. He added, "Current evidence supports the hypothesis that structured fasting regimens may enhance neuroplasticity and reduce risk factors associated with neurodegeneration. In fact, he acknowledged that yes, fasting, especially intermittent fasting and time-restricted eating patterns, may cause a neuroprotective effect through major metabolic



and molecular adaptations.

For the uninformed, neuroplasticity is the brain's ability to learn, adjust and rewire, while neurodegeneration, which is the loss of neurons, gradually pave way to neurodegenerative ailments like Alzheimer's. So it indirectly suggests that fasting helps reduce the risks of these neurodegenerative diseases. A process occurs when you are fasting, called metabolic switching. Dr Chaudhary explained, "One primary

mechanism involves 'metabolic switching,' in which glycogen depletion shifts energy utilisation from glucose to ketone bodies. Ketones such as beta-hydroxybutyrate not only provide efficient neuronal fuel but also function as signalling molecules that upregulate brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), which plays a role in synaptic plasticity, learning, and memory consolidation."

Dietary mistake increases liver cancer chances in obese people: 'When you eat a diet rich in...'

Liver cancer is one of the leading causes of cancer-related deaths. According to a 2023 study published in *Clinical and Molecular Hepatology*, it is the fourth most common cause of death globally. Besides conditions like cancer, fatty liver disease is also incredibly common, with Medline Plus stating that around 25 per cent of the world's population is affected. If not managed, fatty liver can progress to more advanced and complex liver-related ailments. It becomes important to trace back to the root causes responsible for liver diseases for a better understanding and to get a complete picture. Dr Saurabh Bansal, a gastrointestinal, laparoscopic, cancer and robotic surgery specialist and consultant at Apollo Spectra Hospital and National Heart Institute, New Delhi, shared with HT Lifestyle the key drivers behind these conditions.

He identified obesity, which, according to him, eventually lead to liver-related ailments, along with a major dietary mistake: consuming certain types of unhealthy fats. This fat consumption eventually leads to weight gain, essentially acting as the core reason triggering the chain of events.

The surgeon said, "Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), the most common form of liver cancer, is increasingly linked to obesity and metabolic dysfunction-associated fatty liver disease (MAFLD)." This puts things into perspective, as obesity is usually thought to cause diabetes or heart ailments, but it turns out it also impacts other vital organs like the liver.

which type of fat should be avoided?

Fats are one of the macronutrients, and like the other two, carbohydrates and proteins, they are required for a balanced diet. However, choosing the right type of fat is critical for overall health. As per Dr Bansal, obesity and other serious liver ailments are caused by the consumption of unhealthy fats. He noted, "Liver cancer risk is shaped not only by excess body weight but also by diet quality, particularly the type of fats consumed. When you eat a diet rich in animal-derived fats, you are at high risk."

He shared the findings of a decade-long study, published in 2025, to further clarify this connection. "Researchers examined whether cancer risk in obesity is driven simply by excess fat or whether



the source of dietary fat matters. The findings were clear: diets rich in animal-derived fats such as butter, lard and beef tallow significantly accelerated tumour growth in obese models."

So while obesity remains a precursor to many diseases, including liver conditions, it is not just weight that matters. The surgeon reminded that animal derived fats, like butter you use regularly, can make liver tumours grow faster in obese people. These are the kinds of fats you need to watch out for.

What is safe?

The gastrointestinal surgeon advised choosing plant-based fats. He said, "Diets based on plant-derived fats, including palm oil, olive oil, and coconut oil, did not promote cancer growth, even when obesity levels were comparable." This means that even in obese people, these fats do not accelerate tumour growth. In addition to diet, Dr Bansal also suggested that sustained weight loss can slow or reverse fatty liver disease and reduce liver cancer risk.

KISS University Hosts East Zone Inter University Chess (Men) Championship 2025-26

BHUBANESWAR, (Correspondent): KISS University is hosting the prestigious East Zone Inter University Chess (Men) Championship 2025-26 under the aegis of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU). The five-day championship is being held from 2nd to 6th February 2026 at the renowned Viswanathan Anand International Chess Hall, KIIT University. A total of 30 universities from across the eastern region of India are participating in the championship, with nearly 300 players and officials competing in the tournament. The top four teams from this event will qualify for the



All India Inter University Chess Championship. The opening ceremony was graced by Prof. Gaganendu Dash, Director General (Sports), KIIT & KISS; International Master Sekhar Kumar Sahoo, FIDE Senior Trainer; and AIU Observer Dr. Dhinu M.

R from Sree Sankaracharya University, Kerala, Mr. Rudrakesh Jena, Joint Director Sports, KISS University along with officials of the Odisha Chess Association. On the occasion, Prof. Achyuta Samanta, Founder of KIIT, KISS & KIMS, conveyed his best

wishes to all participating universities and encouraged the players to uphold the spirit of discipline, fair play, and excellence. He emphasized the importance of sports in holistic education and nation-building. Photo attached for your kind reference.

T20 WC: Travel Disruptions Delay Zimbabwe's Return From India

New Delhi: The Zimbabwe cricket team's return home from India after a successful ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 has been delayed because of the air travel disruptions caused by the crisis in the Middle East, the Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) informed in a release on Monday. Captained by Sikandar Raza, Zimbabwe surprised everyone by storming into the Super 8 undefeated, scripting victories against former champions Australia and Sri Lanka. Though they lost all three matches in Group 1 in the Super 8 stage, Zimbabwe ended their campaign with their heads held high as they had exceeded the expectations of most fans by reaching the Super 8. But their celebrations on returning home are on hold as they teams is unable to board the flight because of the war-like situation following a joint

attack by the US and Israel on Iran. They were scheduled to travel via Dubai, but with the airport there closed, they are waiting for alternate arrangements to return home. "Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) confirms that the Zimbabwe senior men's team remains safe and well in India following the conclusion of their ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 campaign. The squad was scheduled to return home via Dubai, but travel plans have been affected by the evolving situation in the Middle East, which has disrupted key transit routes," Zimbabwe Cricket said in a statement on Monday. ZC said it is waiting for the ICC to work out its contingency measures to secure alternative travel arrangements. "The International Cricket Council (ICC) has activated contingency measures and is working with international

carriers to secure alternative travel arrangements. ZC remains in constant communication with the ICC and team management on the ground to ensure the squad's safe and timely return. "Further updates will be provided as more information becomes available," it said. Earlier, Zimbabwe head coach Justin Sammons said the team's travel plans remain uncertain after their Men's T20 World Cup campaign came to an end with a five-wicket loss to South Africa in their last Super Eights clash at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi. Amid the situation in the Middle East cities like Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Doha, Bahrain, and Kuwait, which have been witnessing strikes from the Iranian forces and airport operations being fully suspended, Zimbabwe's players and coaches were originally scheduled to return home in three batches.

Semifinal Trilogy: India, England Face-Off Yet Again; Key Stats Ahead Of Wankhede Clash

New Delhi: A familiar rivalry will once again take centre stage as India and England lock horns in the second semi-final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 at the iconic Wankhede Stadium. This is the third consecutive edition in which the two heavyweights will meet in the last four, having faced each other in the semi-final of the tournament's previous two editions in 2022 and 2024. The upcoming clash in Mumbai continues a compelling semi-final sequence. In 2022, England halted India's campaign at the penultimate stage before going on to beat Pakistan to lift the trophy. Two years later, the script flipped. Led by Rohit Sharma, India defeated England in the 2024

semi-final and carried that momentum into the final, where they overcame South Africa in Barbados to claim the title. Notably, in both recent editions, the winner of the India-England semi-final has gone on to become world champion, a statistical trend that adds further weight to Thursday's contest. England have played six T20Is at the Wankhede Stadium so far, winning three and losing as many. India, meanwhile, have played seven T20Is at the iconic venue, having won five of them. However, the Men in Blue haven't lost a T20I at the venue since December 2017. Their two losses in Mumbai came against the West Indies in 2016 and vs England in 2012. India and England have met

twice in the shortest format at the Wankhede, with each side winning one game. India and England have met five times in the T20 World Cup. The head-to-head ledger marginally favours India, who have won three of those encounters, while England have claimed two victories. The numbers reflect a closely fought rivalry, with little separating the sides on the global stage. The rivalry's most iconic chapter dates back to the inaugural edition in 2007. It was during that group-stage meeting that Yuvraj Singh etched his name into cricketing folklore. Following an on-field exchange with Andrew Flintoff, Yuvraj launched Stuart Broad for six sixes in a single over, the first such feat in T20 internationals.

T20 WC: Jasprit Bumrah Wins 'Impact Player Of The Match' Medal After India's Win Over WI

New Delhi: India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah was adjudged the 'Impact Player of the Match' after a decisive spell helped India maintain the West Indies to a chaseable target before Sanju Samson's unbeaten 97 helped the defending champions secure a crucial victory in their T20 World Cup clash on Sunday at Eden Gardens in Kolkata. Bumrah returned figures of 2/36 from his four overs. While the numbers may not fully reflect his influence, the timing of his breakthroughs proved pivotal. In the 12th over of the innings, with the West Indies looking to accelerate, Bumrah struck twice, removing the dangerous Shimron Hetmyer and Roston Chase, to derail



the Caribbean side's momentum and tilt the contest firmly in India's favour. His ability to deliver in pressure situations once again underlined why he remains India's go-to bowler in crunch moments. The twin strikes not only stemmed the flow of runs but also exposed the middle

order, allowing India to tighten the screws in the death overs. Presenting the medal, India's fielding coach T Dilip lauded the team's collective intensity while singling out Bumrah for his composure in decisive phases. "Brilliant stuff, brilliant effort, well done. We're a gun team and today

we showed with our intent what it means to be that. That's what the play was today. Today's game reminds me of my favourite quote: "The strength of the team is each individual, and the strength of each individual is the team." Today we represented that through care and belief everytime we did

that. Outstanding efforts. The impact player goes to someone who owns the big moments most of the times with his calm face and deadly execution. He's none other than Jasprit Bumrah," he said while presenting the medal to the pacer. Bumrah, in turn, credited his teammates for holding their nerve during the chase and ensuring India crossed the line without panic, as he said, "Thank you so much. Special mention to Dube as well, the two fours that he hit didn't let the pressure come into our team. So yeah, special mention to him. Tilak also played a great knock, not taking away anything from him but yes, come the big day we're off to get together and hopefully do well in Mumbai. Cheers."

PV Sindhu to Miss All England Championships

NEW DELHI: PV Sindhu, two-time Olympic medallist, faces heartbreak as she remains stranded in Dubai and is set to miss the prestigious All England Championships starting Tuesday in Birmingham. Sindhu's travel plans collapsed after US and Israeli strikes on Iran triggered retaliation from Tehran, leading to airspace closures across the Gulf region. Consequently, flights from Dubai were suspended, leaving Sindhu and her team grounded since Saturday. The Indian ace, along with coach Irwansyah Adi Pratama, narrowly escaped danger when an explosion occurred near their place of stay.



Authorities quickly moved them to a secure location as tensions escalated. Sindhu was scheduled to face Thailand's Supanida Katethong in the opening round, but with Dubai airspace still closed, she will be forced to

withdraw. Meanwhile, the Badminton World Federation (BWF) continues to monitor the situation. Officials assured that they are prepared to assist delegations with delays or rerouting and may adjust competition schedules if

necessary. Several Indian shuttlers managed to reach Birmingham via alternate routes through Singapore and Africa. Lakshya Sen, India's top men's singles contender, arrived without issues and will face world No. 1 Shi Yu

Qi of China. Rising star Ayush Shetty also reached safely and will take on Indonesia's Alwi Farhan. In women's singles, Malvika Bansod prepares to challenge Olympic champion Chen Yufei, while Unnati Hooda, who travelled via Africa, must overcome jet lag against Pornpawee Chochuwong. India's doubles hopes remain strong with Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty leading the men's campaign, Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand competing in women's doubles, and Dhruv Kapila-Tanisha Crasto, along with Rohan Kapoor-Ruthvika Shivani Gadda, contesting in mixed doubles.

Messi Magic Seals Inter Miami's Win Over Orlando City



NEW DELHI: Lionel Messi struck twice as Inter Miami overturned a two-goal deficit to defeat Orlando City 4-2 in Major League Soccer's Florida derby on Sunday. Orlando dominated early and raced into a 2-0 lead. Marco Pasalic opened the scoring in the 18th minute with a low finish from Ivan Angulo's cross. Six minutes later, Griffin Dorsey surged forward and set up Martin Ojeda, who buried his shot to double the

advantage. Messi responded with chances from Rodrigo De Paul and Messi, but Orlando goalkeeper Maxime Crepeau denied both efforts. The game shifted after halftime when substitute Mateo Silveti unleashed a 25-yard strike in the 49th minute to give Miami hope. Messi equalised in the 57th minute, curling a left-foot shot past Crepeau. He then orchestrated Miami's third goal in the 85th minute, laying off a

clever pass for Telasco Segovia to finish. In the 90th minute, Messi sealed the comeback with a low free-kick that slipped under Crepeau, completing a remarkable turnaround. The reigning MLS champions bounced back after losing their season opener, with Messi's brilliance proving decisive. His double and assist highlighted his enduring influence, while Miami's resilience underscored their title credentials.

PCB Slaps Heavy Fine on Pakistan Cricketers After T20 World Cup Exit

NEW DELHI: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) fined national team players PKR 5 million (Rs 16.28 lakh) each after the squad failed to qualify for the T20 World Cup

semifinals. According to reports, the decision followed Pakistan's loss to India in the group stage and their subsequent defeat to England in the Super 8. Although Pakistan

managed a narrow win over Sri Lanka, the result was not enough to secure qualification. Board officials expressed strong dissatisfaction with the team's overall

performance. Former captain Javed Miandad criticised the players, saying they failed to leave an imprint of cricketing excellence. He noted that T20 cricket has

become highly methodical and Pakistan's players struggle to match higher-ranked teams. Miandad urged the PCB to take radical decisions.

Skill Champions from Eastern India Shine at IndiaSkills Regional Competition 2025-26

Bhubaneswar, (Correspondent): The IndiaSkills Regional Competition 2025-26 for the eastern region concluded today at the SDI Auditorium, Bhubaneswar, marking a celebration of youth talent, technical excellence and regional pride. Organised under the aegis of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and supported by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), the competition brought together over 200 skilled youth from Odisha, Bihar, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Participants competed across 59 skill categories, including 37 skills



demonstrated onsite and 22 assessed through innovative formats, all aligned with national and global industry standards. Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State (I/C) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education, Government of India, said - "The IndiaSkills Regional Competition 2025-26 in the Eastern Region reflects the rising aspirations and capabilities of our youth. The Eastern states are steadily strengthening India's growth story, and what we have witnessed here is not just competition, but a culture of excellence aligned with global standards. Such platforms deepen collaboration between states, industry and institutions, ensuring that talent from every district finds opportunity. I

commend all participants and experts whose dedication embodies the spirit of Skill India and advances our collective journey towards a Viksit Bharat." Shri Sampad Chandra Swain, Hon'ble Minister for Industries, Skill Development and Technical Education, Government of Odisha, said, - "As we speak of building a Viksit Bharat, we must recognise that true development goes beyond physical or economic growth. Real progress is rooted in skills. It is driven by capability, confidence and access to the right opportunities. As Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji has emphasised, when knowledge and skills align with the needs of

the nation, their impact multiplies significantly. This vision is also echoed by Chief Minister of Odisha, Shri Mohan Charan Majhi, who has underscored that strengthening skill development is fundamental to building a Viksit Odisha. The Skill India Mission provides every individual with a meaningful platform to showcase their skills on a global stage, including at competitions like World Skills Competition. The skills being imparted today will shape your future. They will open doors, create opportunities and take you to global platforms where your talent can truly shine". Shri Suryabanshi Suraj, Hon'ble Minister of State for Higher

Education; Youth & Sports; and Odia Language, Literature and Culture, Government of Odisha, added, - "The Skill India Mission, envisioned by Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, has transformed skilling into a true national movement. The vision of Union Education Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan has further strengthened the integration of education with employability and innovation. Under the leadership of Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State (I/C) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education, Government of India, this ecosystem has gained clear direction and renewed momentum.

Vedanta Declared Preferred Bidder for Karnapodikonda Bauxite Block in Odisha

Bhubaneswar, (Correspondent):: Vedanta Limited has been declared the 'Preferred Bidder' for the Karnapodikonda bauxite block in Koraput, Odisha, following a competitive e-auction conducted by the Directorate of Mines and Geology, Government of Odisha. As per the tender document, the block is at the G2 level of exploration and spans 532.747 hectares. The asset strengthens Vedanta's raw material security and supports strategic backward integration for its aluminium business. Rajiv Kumar, CEO, Vedanta Aluminium said, "Being declared the preferred bidder for the Karnapodikonda bauxite block reinforces our journey toward building a fully integrated and resilient aluminium value chain in India. This development directly supports our expansion roadmap and reinforces Vedanta Aluminium's commitment to driving industrial growth, local value creation, and self-reliance in critical minerals."

Vedanta Aluminium, India's leading aluminium producer, is focused on securing long-term bauxite resources to sustain production amid rising demand and a robust market outlook, especially in the context of the upcoming demerger of Vedanta Limited.

TPNODL's Skill Development Centres Drive Excellence in Odisha's Power Distribution

Balshwar, (Correspondent): TP Northern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPNODL), a joint venture between Tata Power and the Government of Odisha, has established five skill development centers in northern Odisha, focusing on enhancing the practical technical and safety competencies of its employees, business associates, and young ITI students in the region. These centers, equipped with cutting-edge facilities, provide hands-on training in safe working procedures, modern technology, and advanced electrical techniques, fostering a culture of excellence in



the power distribution sector. The centers trained 354 government ITI electrician students from five districts in the previous year, while over 440 students have undertaken various training and awareness sessions in the current financial year. Additionally, the centers trained over 4,000 employees last year, and an impressive 13,877

MCL hosts Annual Mines Safety Fortnight Awards 2025-26

Angul, (Correspondent): Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) hosted the Annual Mines Safety Fortnight (AMSF) awards ceremony 2025-26 under the aegis of Directorate General of Mines Safety at the company headquarters here, reaffirming its unwavering commitment to the principle that "Safety is not an obligation, but a core value at MCL." Shri Ujjwal Tah, Director General & CIM, DGMS-Dhanbad was the chief guest, while Shri Uday Anant Kaole, Chairman-cum-Managing Director, MCL presided over the ceremony. Prominent



among others were Shri Keshav Rao, Director (HR); Shri P K Patel, CVO; Shri A K Behura, Director (Fin); Shri S K Jha, Director (Tech-Ops/P&P); Area General Managers, DMS Officials from Bhubaneswar Region I & II. Shri Tah, along with CMD and Dr. Shyam Sundar Prasad, Dy. DGMS, South Eastern Region, Ranchi paid tribute to the coal

and technology-driven safety management, setting benchmarks in the coal sector. CMD Shri Kaole, in his address emphasized that safety is achieved not merely through compliance but through conviction, competence, coordination, and continuous vigilance. More than 112 awards in 19 different categories were presented during the ceremony, honouring individuals, contractors, mines and areas that exhibited exceptional dedication and excellence. Representatives from NTPC, NLCIL, OCPL, Vedanta, NALCO, JSPL & SCCL, Union

representatives and Safety Board members, Head of Department and employees of MCL were also present on this occasion celebrating dedication to mines safety and innovation. Various events such as community awareness initiatives, safety campaigns, First Aid & CPR demonstrations, Safety Jingle competitions, Monthly Special Safety Drives etc were organised during the fortnight from 02nd December 2025 to 15 December 2025 across all Mines/Projects, Central Workshops, Substations, GVTCs, Contractor Establishments, Area Offices, and Corporate Offices of MCL.

Director General, RPF Holds Review Meeting with ECoR Officials

Bhubaneswar, (Correspondent):: Ms. Sonali Mishra, IPS, Director General of the Railway Protection Force (RPF), held a comprehensive review meeting with Shri Parmeshwar Funkwal, General Manager and senior officials of East Coast Railway at Rail Sadan, Bhubaneswar today. The meeting focused on strengthening railway security, enhancing passenger safety measures, improving crowd control mechanisms, and reinforcing inter departmental coordination to ensure seamless and secure train operations across the Zone. Safety of passengers on tracks, prevention of trespassing, and



measures to curb unsafe practices such as crossing railway lines were also reviewed in detail. Special emphasis was laid on adopting a proactive, sensitive, and passenger friendly approach to security management, with particular attention to the safety and dignity of women, children, senior citizens, and other vulnerable groups. The Director General

reviewed arrangements related to crowd management during peak hours and festive seasons, deployment of RPF personnel at sensitive locations, and effective monitoring of station premises and circulating areas. During the interaction, Ms. Mishra underscored the importance of building public trust through a alertness, professionalism, and

swift response. She stressed that passenger security must be visible, approachable, and reassuring so that every traveller feels safe not only inside trains but also at stations, platforms, circulating areas, and trackside zones. Officials were encouraged to sensitise field staff towards courteous behaviour, prompt grievance redressal, and effective

Jindal Foundation and Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation launch Mobile Sanitation Unit

Bhubaneswar, (Correspondent): Reinforcing its commitment to community welfare and improved urban sanitation, Jindal Foundation, in collaboration with Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), launched a Mobile Sanitation Unit designed to provide convenient and hygienic restroom facilities during public events, festivals, and large gatherings across the city. Smt. Shallu Jindal, Chairperson of the Jindal Foundation, and Smt. Sulochana Das, Mayor of BMC, officially flagged off the vehicle today in Bhubaneswar. They were joined by key dignitaries, including Smt. Manjulata Kanhar (Deputy Mayor, BMC); Sri Chanchal Rana, IAS (Commissioner, BMC); Sri Kailash Chandra Das, OAS-SAG (Additional Commissioner, BMC); Sri Biranchi Narayana Mahasupakar



(Corporator & Head of the Standing Committee on Sanitation, BMC); Sri Prashant Hota (President & Head of Corporate Communications and High Impact Social Projects, Jindal Steel); and several other senior BMC officials. The specially designed truck-mounted sanitation facility has been provided by Jindal Foundation as part of its ongoing efforts to support civic infrastructure, while the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation will oversee its deployment, operations, and maintenance to ensure it serves citizens efficiently whenever required. Speaking on the initiative, Shallu Jindal, Chairperson of Jindal

Foundation and Chancellor, OP Jindal University, Raigarh, said, "At Jindal Foundation, we strongly believe that access to clean and dignified sanitation is essential for building healthy and inclusive communities. As cities continue to grow and host large public events, the need for accessible sanitation facilities becomes even more important. This Mobile Sanitation Unit is a step towards supporting Bhubaneswar's vision of a cleaner and more citizen-friendly city, and we are pleased to partner with the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation in this meaningful initiative."