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## Trump Cites Indian Ships In Iran Warning

Washington: US President Donald Trump on Friday accused Iran of acting in bad faith during ongoing negotiations and claimed that a drone attack targeting Indian ships near the Strait of Hormuz had been thwarted, injecting fresh uncertainty into diplomatic efforts that he had earlier said averted planned US military strikes. In a post on Truth Social, Trump rejected Iran's public description of the negotiations and said Tehran had misrepresented the terms of an agreement reached in writing. "The terms that Iran leaked out to the Fake News have NOTHING to do with the terms that were agreed to, in writing," Trump wrote. "What they said, including their weak and pathetic statement on having a deal, bears no relation to the truth. Very



dishonorable people to deal with. With them, there is no such thing as dealing in good faith. AMAZING!" Trump also alleged that Iran was behind an attempted drone attack on Indian vessels transiting one of the world's most important shipping corridors. "Also, their totally rebuffed Drone attack last night against Indian Ships leaving the Hormuz Strait is T O T A L L Y UNACCEPTABLE," he said. "They better get their act together, and

FAST!" The President did not provide evidence for the claim, identify the vessels involved or explain how the alleged attack had been repelled. There was no immediate response from Iranian authorities. The remarks came hours after Trump announced that he had cancelled planned strikes and bombings against Iran, saying discussions with the Islamic Republic had reached "the highest level of Iranian leadership" and received approval.

## CM Majhi Announces Addl 5 Kg Rice For NFSA, SFSS Beneficiaries Under New Mukhyamantri Annapurna Yojana

BHUBANESWAR, (Correspondent): Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Friday announced the launch of the Mukhyamantri Annapurna Yojana, under which beneficiaries covered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and State Food Security Scheme (SFSS) will receive an additional 5 kg of rice per month free of cost, increasing their total monthly entitlement to 10 kg per person. The announcement was made as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led state government completed two years in office. Addressing a press conference, Majhi said the state government has launched 121 new



schemes, programmes and initiatives over the past two years, claiming that Odisha is steadily moving towards the goal of becoming a "Samruddha Odisha" by 2036. Highlighting the government's welfare and development initiatives, the Chief Minister said

women's empowerment has remained a key priority. He cited flagship programmes such as Subhadra, Mukhyamantri Kanya Bibaha and Kanya Sumangala Yojana, and said more than four lakh Self-Help Groups (SHGs) received subsidised bank loans worth Rs 38,795 crore

during the period. Majhi also claimed that Odisha has emerged as one of the leading states in creating "Lakshpati Didis", reflecting the government's efforts to strengthen women's economic independence. Referring to farmers as "Annadatas", the Chief Minister said the

government has undertaken several measures to strengthen the agriculture sector, including the implementation of the Samruddha Krushak Yojana, one of the first major decisions taken after the BJP assumed office in the state. In a major education-related announcement, Majhi said education from Kindergarten (KG) to Postgraduate (PG) level would be made completely free in Odisha. The Chief Minister further said the Ayushman Bharat-Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana has extended cashless healthcare benefits to 3.46 crore beneficiaries, with access to treatment in more than 32,000 hospitals across the country.

## Facebook, Insta Down Globally; Users Unable To Refresh Feeds

New Delhi: Users of Facebook and Instagram across several countries reported widespread disruptions on Friday evening, with thousands complaining that the Meta-owned platforms were either not loading properly or failing to refresh content. The outage appeared to begin around 7 pm IST, according to user reports and data from outage-tracking platform Downt detector, which recorded a sharp surge in complaints. The disruption was not limited to any one region, with users from multiple countries reporting similar issues at roughly the same



time. In India, users across several cities said they were unable to access Facebook and Instagram normally. Many reported that feeds were not loading, while others said the apps were failing to refresh content. Some users also experienced login-related problems and difficulties accessing specific features on the

platforms. As the services encountered issues, many users turned to other social media platforms, including X, to check whether the problem was widespread. Posts from affected users suggested that the disruption was impacting both Facebook and Instagram, while some also reported problems

with Facebook Messenger. The outage appeared to affect users differently. While some said the websites remained accessible, others reported that the mobile applications were unable to load new content or update timelines. The varying nature of the disruption led to speculation that the issue could be linked to Meta's backend systems rather than users' internet connections or devices. Downt detector showed more than 100,000 reports related to Facebook alone, highlighting the scale of the outage. Instagram also witnessed a significant

number of complaints, with reports continuing to rise as more users flagged issues. Meta had not issued an official statement on the cause of the disruption at the time of writing. The company also did not provide a timeline for when normal services would be restored. While users attempted common troubleshooting measures such as restarting apps, switching internet networks and checking for software updates, reports suggested that the issue was likely occurring on Meta's side, limiting the effectiveness of such steps.

## 'Will Continue To Fight': Meenakshi Natarajan After SC Declines To Intervene In Nomination Rejection Row

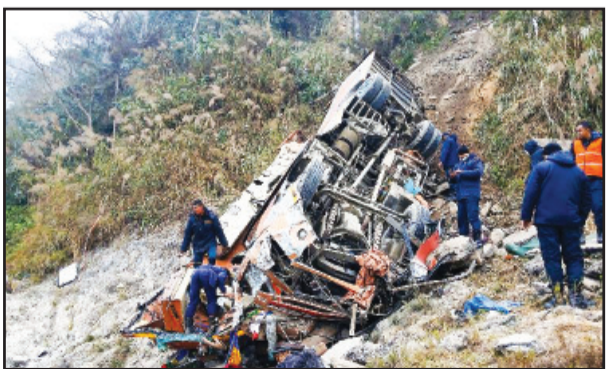
New Delhi: Congress leader Meenakshi Natarajan on Friday asserted that the party will continue their "fight" for justice following the Supreme Court declining to interfere with the Returning Officer's decision rejecting her nomination for the Rajya Sabha elections from Madhya Pradesh over the alleged non-disclosure of a criminal case in Telangana. The court observed that once a Returning Officer rejects a nomination paper, the statutory remedy available to an aggrieved candidate is to approach the Election Commission. It, therefore, refused to grant relief and left it

open for Natarajan to approach the poll panel. Speaking to IANS, Natarajan said: "We will continue to fight. In a democracy, there is another court which is of the public, which will take our fight there." While refusing to comment on the decision of the Supreme Court, she said: "We approached the Election Commission, but it did not take any decision, even after 48 hours, it has maintained silence." Addressing reporters later, she said: "We will take our next step according to what the senior leaders of the party decide. We will keep fighting our battle across forums. Even though our plea has

been dismissed, we are free to take our fight to the people." "We are not disappointed; the entire party is standing together. We are not shocked by the court's decision, but we all should be worried about the tremors being felt by the democracy." Defending Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi's "seat chori" allegation, Natarajan said: "Seat chori is very evident, and everyone has been a witness to it. The nomination of a candidate belonging to a corporate setup is not cancelled, whereas the nomination of one who is contesting on the basis of constitutional values gets cancelled."

## Nepal: Eight Die, 16 Injured In Bus Accident

Kathmandu: At least eight people have died after a passenger bus plunged off the road in the Buchchakot area of Nepal's central Kavrepalanchok district along the B P Highway, a senior official of the District Administration Office, Kavrepalanchok, said. Gopal Kumar Adhikari, Chief District Officer of Kavrepalanchok, told IANS that at least eight people travelling on the bus were killed, while 16 injured passengers are undergoing treatment



at Dhulikhel Hospital in the same district. "Of them, five are reported to be in critical condition," Adhikari said. Following the incident, police personnel, along with local residents, rescued the injured

and transported them to the hospital. The bus was travelling from Banepa in Kavrepalanchok to the Sungure area when it veered off the road and plunged into a gorge at Buchchakot in Namobuddha Municipality on

Friday afternoon. Adhikari said the bus fell about 300 metres below the highway. "The cause of the accident has not been identified so far," he added. Nepal has witnessed a rise in road accidents in recent years, alongside an increase in the number of vehicles on the roads. A decade ago, the Nepal Traffic Police reported 4,999 road accidents. In fiscal year 2024-25, the country recorded 7,669 road accidents and 1,900 deaths, according to the official data.

## PM Modi Views Northeast As India's Growth Engine; Devpt Can Defeat Insurgency: Manipur CM

New Delhi/Imphal: Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh said on Friday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi regards the Northeast as the "Growth Engine of India" and has envisioned the region as "Ashtalakshmi", asserting that accelerated development remains the most effective means to eliminate insurgency, unrest and instability in the state. Addressing the NITI Aayog's meeting with Chief Ministers of eight Northeastern states in Delhi, the Chief Minister called upon the NITI

Aayog to play a decisive role in the Manipur's economic recovery, peace-building efforts and long-term development. He noted that Manipur has suffered greatly in economically, socially and developmentally in the last few years and said that the NITI Aayog has a big role to play in the development of the Northeast region as a whole and Manipur in particular. The Chief Minister sought NITI Aayog's help in planning economic recovery, coordinating with Ministries, and engaging international

partners. During the interaction, Chief Minister Singh highlighted that connectivity is one of the most important sectors where Manipur needs sustained and major investments. "Major projects such as Railway connection to Imphal, National Highway projects connecting Imphal to the rest of the country, airport terminal expansion, among others, need early completion and these projects have the potential to change the developmental landscape of Manipur," he said. He also urged the NITI

Aayog to support projects like the Imphal Ring Road Project, elevated highway in Imphal, Imphal-Moreh (along Myanmar) Railway Project. The Chief Minister said that the 'Act East Policy' envisions Manipur as India's main land-based gateway to Southeast Asia, the actual execution of projects frequently faces delays due to cross-border political instability and other related challenges. This has led to a persistent implementation gap, he added.

## Dalmia Industrial Training Institute, Rajgangpur Ranked India's No. 1 Private ITI in MSDE's National Grading 2026-27

**Bhubaneswar (Correspondent)** :- Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Limited one of India's leading cement companies, is proud to announce that its Dalmia Industrial Training Institute (ITI), Rajgangpur, Odisha, has been ranked as the No. 1 Private ITI in India in the All India ITI Grading for Academic Year 2026-27 conducted by the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE). The institute also secured the 2nd position overall among 14,617 Government and Private ITIs assessed across the country, achieving an outstanding score of 9.7 out of 10. This latest recognition builds on the institute's strong track record of excellence, having secured the 2nd rank among private ITIs in India in FY 2024-25.



Its rise to the top position this year reflects a sustained focus on quality training, industry relevance and learner success. The institute offers technical training across trades including Fitter, Electrician, Machinist, Welder, Computer Operator & Programming Assistant (COPA) and Solar

Technician. In a notable achievement, 13% of enrolled candidates in the past two years were women, while 84% belonged to Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities. To mark the achievement, DCBL organised a felicitation ceremony for the institute's faculty, staff and students,

acknowledging their collective efforts in achieving this national recognition, in the presence of company officials. Commenting on the achievement, Mr. Chetan Shrivastav Executive Director-DCBL and Unit Head, Rajgangpur, "This recognition is a proud milestone for Dalmia

Bharat and a testament to the dedication of our students, trainers and industry partners. Being ranked as India's top private ITI further reinforces our commitment to continue expanding opportunities for youth, particularly women and underserved communities, while strengthening India's skilling ecosystem and building a future-ready workforce for the nation." As India continues to accelerate its skilling and manufacturing ambitions, Dalmia Bharat remains committed to empowering youth through industry-aligned vocational education and building a workforce equipped for the opportunities of tomorrow.

## Celebrating World Environment Day: A Step Towards a Cleaner & Greener Bomaloi



**Sambalpur (Correspondent)**:- On the occasion of World Environment Day, a vibrant mass awareness programme on village cleanliness and Liquid & Solid Waste Management (LSWM) was successfully organized at Bomaloi Village in collaboration with NIWCYD. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from Bomaloi GP PRI Members, CRPs, MBKs, Anganwadi

Workers, Forest Department representatives, and villagers. The event commenced with an awareness rally, spreading the message of environmental conservation and community responsibility. A tree plantation drive was undertaken to promote a greener ecosystem and strengthen local biodiversity. To encourage proper waste management practices, mass cleanliness activities

alongwith dustbins were distributed among community members, reinforcing the importance of maintaining clean surroundings. The initiative served as a platform to inspire collective action towards environmental sustainability, highlighting the crucial role of community participation in building cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable villages for future generations.

## Bengal: Abhishek Banerjee To Face Three-Day Interrogation By CID, ED

**Kolkata:** Trinamool Congress general secretary and Lok Sabha member Abhishek Banerjee will have to face interrogation by two investigating agencies in three different cases for three consecutive days: June 14, June 15 and June 16. On June 14, Sunday, he will have to appear at the headquarters of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of West Bengal Police at Bhavani Bhavan in South Kolkata and face interrogation in connection with the case of mismatches in the signatures of some Trinamool legislators on a crucial resolution regarding appointments for important slots in the West Bengal assembly reserved for the opposition bench. This will be the second round of interrogation in this case, in which



Abhishek Banerjee, also the nephew of former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, will have to face. He had already undergone a marathon grilling in the matter on Thursday. On Monday, June 15, he is supposed to face interrogation by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) at the latter's Salt Lake office in the northern outskirts of Kolkata in connection with the multi-crore cash-for-school-job case in West Bengal. The ED had already served him a notice in the matter on June 3. Finally, on Tuesday, June 16, he is again supposed to appear at the CID headquarters to face interrogation in

connection with a case where he had been accused of inciting violence and threatening Union Home Minister Amit Shah before the recently concluded assembly polls in the state. The CID officials served him a notice in the matter on Thursday evening. Abhishek Banerjee said this evening that he would fully cooperate with any investigative agency in any case, as he had always done. Earlier, in the case of mismatched legislators' signatures, he dodged three summonses from the CID.

## Suspected Terror Accused In 2008 Bengaluru Bomb Blast Case Dies Of Heart Attack

**Bengaluru:** A suspected terrorist and accused in the Bengaluru's 2008 Madiwala bomb blast case died on Friday due to heart attack before the court could pronounce its judgment in the long-pending case. It can be noted that the 2008 Bengaluru serial bomb blasts were a series of seven coordinated low-intensity improvised explosive device explosions that struck the city, including a fatal blast at the Madiwala police checkpost bus stand on Hosur Road. The attacks tragically killed two people — including a woman at the Madiwala bus shelter — and injured several others. The deceased, suspected terrorist 60-year-old Abdul Khader, was lodged in judicial custody at Parappanna Agrahara



Central Prison in Bengaluru since 2010 in connection with the blast case. According to prison authorities, Khader's health suddenly deteriorated on Friday, following which he was being rushed to the Jayadeva Hospital for treatment. However, he reportedly suffered a heart attack on the way to the hospital and died before medical assistance could be provided. Prison

officials said Khader had complained of health issues, prompting authorities to immediately shift him to the hospital. After his death, the body was sent to Victoria Hospital for post-mortem examination. His family members have been informed about the incident. The trial against Khader was in its final stages, and the court was expected to pronounce its verdict in the case within

the next few days. However, the accused passed away before the court judgment could be delivered. A native of Virajpet in Madikeri district, Abdul Khader was facing charges in connection with the 2008 serial bomb blast case in Bengaluru. He had been arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) as part of the investigation into the explosions. The Madiwala

blast was among a series of explosions that rocked Bengaluru in 2008, triggering extensive investigations by security agencies. On July 25, 2008, multiple crude timer devices exploded within a 30-minute window. One of the primary sites was the Madiwala checkpost, and the injured were treated at the nearby St. John's Hospital. Investigators determined the bombings were orchestrated allegedly by the banned extremist outfit SIMI (Students Islamic Movement of India) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). The Karnataka Police and the NIA registered multiple FIRs and arrested dozens of suspects over the years. Several key individuals, including alleged handlers in Pakistan, were identified.

## First Batch Of Kailash Mansarovar Yatris To Enter Tibet Via Nathula On June 20

**Gangtok:** Preparations are in full swing for the 2026 Kailash Mansarovar Yatra through the Nathula Pass route, with the first batch of pilgrims scheduled to arrive in Sikkim on June 15 before crossing into China's Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) on June 20, officials said on Friday. Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation (STDC) Chairman Lukendra Rasaily said the first batch of pilgrims had already reported in New Delhi on June 11 and is currently undergoing mandatory medical examinations, fitness assessments, visa processing and other formalities coordinated by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). "The first batch has started its journey. Pilgrims are completing medical and documentation procedures in

Delhi and are expected to reach Gangtok on June 15 before proceeding to Tibet through Nathula on June 20," Rasaily told reporters. The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra via Nathula was launched in 2015 as an alternative route to the revered pilgrimage site. This year, 500 pilgrims have been selected through a computerised lottery conducted by the MEA from nearly 1,500 applicants across the country. The selected pilgrims will travel in 10 batches of 50 yatris each, with the final batch expected to commence its journey in August. After arriving in Gangtok, pilgrims will undergo a carefully planned acclimatisation programme to prepare for the high-altitude conditions. They will spend two nights at the First Acclimatisation Centre at 18th

Mile, at an altitude of around 10,500 feet, followed by another two nights at Hangu Lake, at approximately 13,000 feet. The acclimatisation phase includes local excursions, medical monitoring and a final health assessment by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) before pilgrims are cleared to cross Nathula Pass, which stands at an elevation of 14,140 feet. Once inside Tibet, the pilgrims will travel through Kangma, Lazi, Zhongba, and Darchen, the gateway to Mount Kailash. The sacred pilgrimage includes the revered Kailash Parikrama, which covers key halts such as Dirapuk and Zuthulpuk, before returning to India via the same route. Rasaily said infrastructure and accommodation facilities at the acclimatisation centres

have been significantly upgraded following the successful resumption of the Yatra in 2025 after several years of suspension due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other disruptions. "Last year was effectively a restart after a long gap. This year, we are better prepared with improved facilities, enhanced connectivity and stronger medical support systems," he said. The 22-day pilgrimage includes four days in Delhi for documentation and health checks, several days in Sikkim for acclimatisation and nearly 12 days in Tibet. Medical teams, liaison officers, and officials from the MEA, ITBP, the Ministry of Ayush, and the Sikkim government will oversee the pilgrimage.

## Bengal: FIR Filed Against Mamata Banerjee Over Communal Remarks

**Kolkata:** A first information report (FIR) has been registered against former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for allegedly making communally loaded and commonly provocative statements at an election campaign rally in central Kolkata. The FIR was registered at the Hare Street Police Station in central Kolkata, based on a complaint filed at Netaji Nagar Police Station in south Kolkata by Tushar Kanti Das on May 20. Since the spot where the former Chief Minister reportedly made the statement comes under the jurisdiction of the Hare Street Police Station,

the case was transferred there. In his complaint, a copy of which is available with IANS, the complainant referred to a particular statement at a pre-election rally in which Banerjee was heard saying that if the people of a particular community united, there would have been havoc, and that was not happening since her party was in power. The complainant claimed that although Banerjee did not name any particular community, her speech contained elements that could disturb communal harmony. He further alleged that the remarks were provocative, violent and communal,

likely to spread fear and hatred, cause misunderstandings, and disturb peace among multiple communities. "These remarks were likely to have a profound impact on the minds of the common people. If this matter is not treated seriously, it could undermine communal harmony and disrupt the state's democratic environment. It is also against the Constitution of the country and violates the model code of conduct before elections. Hence, an impartial and transparent investigation into the matter should be conducted," the complainant observed.

# Khordha Sets State Record with Over 10,700 Rooftop Solar Installations Under PM Surya Ghar Scheme

Bhubaneswar, (Correspondent): Marking a significant milestone in Odisha's clean energy journey, Khordha has become the first district in the state to cross 10,000 rooftop solar installations under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana. With 10,754 rooftop solar installations and an installed capacity of nearly 35 MWp, Khordha continues to lead Odisha in rooftop solar adoption, setting a benchmark for renewable energy deployment across the state. The achievement reflects Odisha's growing commitment to clean energy and sustainable development. The state



currently offers one of the most attractive rooftop solar subsidy structures in the country under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana for both up to 1 kW (ULA) and above 1 kW (non-ULA) consumer categories. Eligible consumers can avail combined Central and State Government subsidies of up to 1,38,000 for rooftop solar installations, significantly reducing upfront costs and making clean energy adoption increasingly affordable and accessible for households across both urban and rural areas. A major contributor to this success has been the

"Mo Chhata, Mo Sanchaya" campaign launched by Tata Power-led Odisha DISCOMs. The campaign has played a pivotal role in creating awareness about the economic and environmental benefits of rooftop solar among households, institutions and communities. Through extensive outreach activities, the campaign has encouraged consumers to adopt solar energy as a means to reduce electricity expenses while contributing to a greener and more sustainable future. Khordha emerged as a frontrunner in the campaign owing to its strong urban and rural participation, proactive local administration and effective consumer engagement initiatives. As part of the outreach efforts, Surya Ghar Gram Sabhas are being organized at the Gram Panchayat level to educate citizens about rooftop solar technology, subsidy benefits, installation procedures and long-term savings opportunities. The DISCOMs are also actively engaging with sarpanches, block-level officers, community leaders and citizens to facilitate consumer onboarding and maximize participation in the scheme. These collaborative efforts have enabled Khordha to become the first district in Odisha to achieve the landmark of 10,000 rooftop solar installations.

# Labour deptt advised to work in own district instead of going to other states

Malkangiri correspondent: If the workers of Malkangiri district work in their own district instead of going to other states, the development of the district will accelerate and the state will develop. For this, the labour department will provide all kinds of facilities to the workers. District Labour officer Purnima Durka advised the workers at a labor awareness camp in Serpalli Panchayat, Malkangiri Sadar Block. The state government is carrying out developmental work through various departments for the betterment of Malkangiri district. But many workers of the

district not working in their own district but going to other states and getting infected with various diseases and often facing death. Similarly, incidents of being tortured by brokers are being seen. The Labour Minister expressed his gratitude regarding the steps taken by the Labour Department for the labourers in the last one year. In particular, 427 beneficiaries have been included and Rs. 34,98,800 have been provided for the education of the children of labourers. Similarly, 148 beneficiaries have been provided with Rs. 3 crore 96 lakhs for death assistance, 139 with Rs. 6 lakh 95 thousand for cremation assistance, 62 with Rs. 31 lakh for marriage assistance, and 80 with Rs. 8 lakh for maternity assistance. Till now, labourers have been registered in the district. Similarly, from April this year till now, 188 beneficiaries have been included and a total of 78,247 have been provided with Rs. 16,99,600 for the education of the children of labourers. Similarly, 49 beneficiaries have been provided with Rs 1.35 crore for death assistance, Rs 2.22 lakh for cremation assistance, Rs 1.16 lakh for marriage assistance and Rs 1.80 lakh for maternity assistance to 45 beneficiaries.

## Elementary Graduation List Preparation Process Begins in Malkangiri District

Malkangiri, (Correspondent): As per the instructions of the Department of Schools and Mass Education, Government of Odisha letter number 12270 dated 13/5/2026, Directorate of Primary Education, Bhubaneswar letter number 5554 dated 13-3-2026, the Office of the District Education Officer, Malkangiri has started the preparation of the Elementary Graduation List of the district. DEO Shri Chittaranjan Panigrahi has issued instructions to all the Block Education Officers of the district through his letter number 3731 dated 11/6/2026, all BEOs will prepare the Elementary Graduation List VA, VB, IV and III of the primary teachers and graduation teachers under their respective jurisdictions separately within seven days and submit it to the District Office.

## Rain, Thunderstorm Bring Sharp Dip In Odisha Temperatures

Bhubaneswar (Correspondent): Widespread rain and thunderstorms across Odisha brought major relief from the grueling heat on Thursday, with day temperatures dropping sharply in all places. Boudh was the only station to cross 40°C, recording 40.1°C. All other places remained below the 40-degree mark. Western Odisha towns that had been reeling under intense heat saw a steep fall. Jharsuguda, which consistently recorded above 40°C in recent days, dropped to 32.6°C. Sambalpur recorded 35°C, Titilagarh 38.6°C, Bolangir 39°C, Angul 39.1°C, Dhenkanal 39°C, and Nayagarh 38°C.

## Accused Driver Forwarded to Court in Road Accident Case



Kantabanji, correspondence: The Kantabanji Police have forwarded an accused driver to court in connection with a road accident case registered at Kantabanji Police Station. The accused has been identified as Bhoginath Ghivela (27), son of Late Darasing Ghivela, a resident of Ward No. 6, Nuapada, under Kantabanji Police Station limits in Balangir district. According to police sources, the accused was arrested and produced before the court in connection with Kantabanji P.S. Case No. 113 registered under Sections 281, 106(1), 125(a), and 125(b) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

# TPCODL Celebrates 6 Years of Powering Progress in Central Odisha

Bhubaneswar, (Correspondent): TP Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL), a joint venture between Tata Power and the Government of Odisha, celebrated its 6th Anniversary, marking six years of transformative growth, innovation, and service excellence in Central Odisha's power distribution sector. Serving a population of 1.36 crore across a distribution area of 29,354 sq. km. and a consumer base of 32.96 lakh, TPCODL has emerged as a leading power utility in the country. The event highlighted the company's commitment to delivering reliable, quality, and customer-



centric power supply while building a resilient and future-ready electricity distribution network. During the occasion, the leadership reflected on TPCODL's significant progress in strengthening infrastructure, driving digital transformation, enhancing consumer services, and fostering a culture of safety and operational excellence. At the core of its growth has been an unwavering commitment to reliable, safe, and customer-first

service delivery. Recognised among India's leading power distribution utilities, TPCODL has secured an A+ rating in the latest Annual Integrated Rating & Ranking of Power Distribution Utilities by the Ministry of Power, Government of India. The company has achieved this prestigious distinction for the second consecutive year, underscoring its commitment to operational excellence, strong corporate governance and financial resilience. Addressing the gathering, Gajanan S. Kale, CEO, TPCODL, said, "Over the last six years, TPCODL has transformed the power distribution landscape of Central Odisha through innovation, operational excellence, and customer-focused initiatives. This milestone belongs to our employees, consumers, and partners who have been integral to our success. We remain committed to powering

progress and building a smarter and more sustainable energy future for the region." As part of the celebrations, TPCODL unveiled its company magazine, 'Smruti o Anubhuti' and recognised the contributions of employees and field teams whose dedication has been instrumental in the organisation's success. Cultural performances by employees and their family members added vibrancy to the event. The anniversary celebration reaffirmed TPCODL's vision of driving sustainable growth, empowering communities, and delivering world-class power services across Central Odisha.

## MCL orders inquiry into alleged irregularities in engagement of paramedical staff in PMP MCH Talcher

Sambalpur (Correspondent): Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) has constituted a five-member high level Committee to examine allegations regarding the engagement of certain para-medical staff at Pabitra Mohan Pradhan Government Hospital (PMPGH), Talcher, by service provider M/s Commando Industrial Security Force with allegedly fake/forged educational/professional certificates. The Committee has been mandated to conduct a detailed inquiry into the



matter, assess the responsibility of the service provider and others if any, and recommend suitable corrective measures, including standard operating procedures to prevent recurrence of such incidents. The

Committee has been directed to submit its report to the Director (HR), MCL within three (03) days. The medical college and hospital infrastructure was established by MCL as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility

(CSR) initiative. The hospital was handed over to the Government of Odisha, in Dec 23. Owing to initial constraints and on the directions of the Government of Odisha, MCL has been providing all support services including engaging paramedic manpower, to ensure its smooth functioning. The allegations relate to a limited number of fresh engagements made recently. The tainted staff has been terminated immediately. Findings of the Committee will decide further action, as necessary.

## Odisha Achieves 97.63% Form Distribution In SIR Drive

Bhubaneswar (Correspondent): The ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Odisha has achieved a significant milestone, with the State Election Commission completing distribution of 97.63 per cent of the targeted forms within just 14 days of the exercise. According to official sources, forms related to the revision process have so far been distributed to 3,26,08,262 voters across the state, reflecting the extensive reach of the campaign. To facilitate

voter participation, the Election Commission has enabled online access to the forms through its official portal. Eligible voters can download the forms, fill them out and upload the completed documents independently if they choose. As part of the house-to-house enumeration process, Booth Level Officers (BLOs) are providing each voter with two pre-printed enumeration forms (Annexure-III). One duly filled form is collected by the BLO, while the second copy is returned to the voter bearing the BLO's

signature as an acknowledgement receipt for future reference. The revision exercise is also leveraging modern technology to enhance transparency and accuracy in electoral roll management. Officials said complete details of 58,70,191 voters have already been digitised from the applications received so far. The digitisation initiative is expected to strengthen election management and streamline future electoral processes by improving the accuracy and accessibility of voter data.

## BMC Deploys Eight Rapid Action Teams For Urban Flood Control In Bhubaneswar

Bhubaneswar: (Correspondent): The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation has deployed eight Rapid Action Teams for urban flood control and rainwater drainage ahead of the monsoon. The RAT teams will operate 24 hours

with necessary equipment and machinery. They will immediately reach areas where rainwater accumulates and arrange for drainage. Each team has been provided with vehicles, water pumps, drain cleaning equipment,



and machinery for tree cutting. At a programme organised at the BMC headquarters on Friday, separate vehicles for the RAT teams were flagged off to mark their inauguration. Deputy Mayor, Commissioner,

Additional Commissioner, Standing Committee Chairman, and several Corporators were present. Various machinery allotted to the teams was handed over on the occasion. Commissioner Chanchal Rana said BMC is

prepared to handle any situation during this rainy season. The teams will work round the clock to ensure quick response to waterlogging and related urban flooding issues across the city.

## EDITORIAL

### India at a Demographic Crossroads: From Youthful Promise to an Ageing Future

For decades, India has been celebrated as the world's youngest major nation. Its vast population of young people has been viewed as a strategic advantage, a source of innovation, labor, entrepreneurship, and economic growth. While many developed nations grappled with shrinking workforces and ageing populations, India appeared poised to benefit from what economists call the "demographic dividend"—a period when the proportion of working-age people is significantly larger than the dependent population.

This demographic advantage has shaped national aspirations, economic policies, and global perceptions of India. The country's youthful workforce has often been described as the engine that could power its rise into a global economic superpower during the twenty-first century.

Yet beneath this optimistic narrative, a quieter transformation is unfolding. India's population is changing in ways that could profoundly reshape its economy, society, healthcare systems, and public institutions. Fertility rates are falling, life expectancy is increasing, family structures are evolving, and the proportion of elderly citizens is steadily growing.

India stands at a demographic crossroads. The country remains young today, but it is also beginning a long transition toward becoming an ageing society. The choices made in the coming decades will determine whether this transition becomes a source of prosperity or a significant social and economic challenge.

Every society passes through demographic stages. Historically, populations were characterized by high birth rates and high death rates. Improvements in healthcare, sanitation, nutrition, and education reduced mortality rates, leading to rapid population growth. Eventually, as societies urbanized and developed economically, birth rates also began to decline. This transition altered the age structure of populations.

## Raja Festival : Sustainable universe and Egalitarian Society

Dr. Suresh Kumar Nayak

Odisha, the land of Lord Jagannath, celebrates 13 festivals in 12 months meaning Odisha celebrates endless festivals throughout the year. Among all this one important festival is Raja Parba which is celebrated for three days during the mid of June, preferably starts from 14th June and ends in 16th. During this period, the state remains in a state of jubilation and celebration. The scorching rays of Summer of April and May calm down by the advent of South- West Monsoon in the first week of June through its tender drops. The sky that was blue during Summers turns out to be dark and white with patches of rain-bearing cloud moving here and there. It is in this occasion of soothing weather, relief from the heat and the new hope for next agricultural season Raja Parba is celebrated. Hence, it is a festival that is of great importance for the people who depend upon agriculture for their livelihood. Further, the word Raja itself in Odia means menstruation and it's a conjecture that mother Earth goes for three days long menstrual cycle during this period. So, in this

occasion no activities like tilling, construction or any other that hurts mother Earth are done. These three days of the menstrual cycle of earth ends in the fourth day with Basumati Gaadhua which means the bathing of mother Earth. In this eve people worship mother Earth by bathing pieces of stone as it's a replica and pray for a prosperous agricultural year in the days to come. This ritual of celebrating the menstrual cycle of Mother Earth through Raja festival is an acknowledgement of the fact that the society had no taboo regarding the menstruation of women in past days. It was treated as normal in the society where today women are kept in segregated place during their periods and are not allowed to enter a temple treating them impure.

For many, Raja festival is significant for it's closeness to agricultural class and people at large celebrate it for fun and merrymaking. On the other hand, we miss a larger message of women liberation that this festival signifies. It acknowledges the women as it is created by nature and hence freeing her from a societal burden. As a message to society, this Raja festival, has a name Raja meaning menstruation

which is often kept secret in many societies, leads to a greater acceptance of genuine woman issues. One last important aspect of this Raja festival is the acknowledgement of nature's contribution to human life and humans' duty for the maintenance of good health of nature. This mutual relation is very much essential for the promotion of sustainable development along with the protection of nature. During Raja festival, not hurting mother Earth for three days is exactly the promotion of sustainable development goals of the United Nations for protection of earth through climate action, and the women's liberation and menstrual hygiene are in the line with sustainable development goal of gender justice for women. This highlights the fact that the festivals of our society have a greater practical and philosophical Dimension that is often essential for a sustainable universe and egalitarian society for all. Indeed Raja Festival is one of such kind.

Often marked as local or national celebrations, festivals serve certain communal purposes. Festivals can be centered on a culture or ethnicity as a way to celebrate and uphold its social traditions or religious practices.

## Raja Parba : Mother Earth & and Womanhood

Jyotsna Mohapatra

The Raja Festival (Raja Parba) is a vibrant, uniquely cherished four-day agrarian festival celebrated in Odisha, India. Dedicated to womanhood and the fertility of Mother Earth, it marks the arrival of the monsoon. During this time, all agricultural work stops as the earth is believed to be menstruating. Raja is primarily observed for three days. The very first day of this three day long festival is termed as Pahili Raja which is also considered to be the last day of the month Jestha. The second day is named as Raja Sankranti; first day of the month Asadha. The concluding day is named in local dialect as Bhuin Dahana popularly known as Sesa Raja. However, the festival in some parts of the regions actually ranges for a period of four days with inclusion of the fourth day termed as Basumata Puja or Basumata Gadhua.

Odisha, the eastern coastal state of India, is

known for its rich heritage and culture. Apart from the world-famous Ratha Yatra, which takes place in June, Odia people also celebrate a unique festival called Raja. This is a three-day-long festival dedicated to Mother Earth and womanhood at large. The festivities begin a day before Mithuna Sankranti and conclude two days after that. The first day of the festival is called Pahili Raja, the second is Mithuna Sankranti and the third Bhu daha or Basi Raja. The preparation begins one day before Pahili Raja, and it is called Sajabajaj. Primarily, it is a time for the unmarried girls to prepare for their matrimony. They follow various customs related to the festival by consuming nutritious food like Podapitha, not walking barefoot, taking a bath on the first day, and merrily swinging on ropes attached to a tree.

There's a story associated with this festival. Goddess Earth, the consort of Lord Vishnu, undergoes her menstrual cycle during this period. Interestingly, the word 'Raja' in Odia

means menstruation, and it is derived from Rajaswala, meaning a menstruating woman. Surprisingly, it is a festival that celebrates this aspect of womanhood which makes the feminine entity unique. Menstruation is considered as a sign of fertility, and therefore, it celebrates femininity and her ability to give birth to another life. During the Parba, Odia people do not undertake any construction works or tilling that requires the earth to be dug. And by not doing such activities, they pay ode to the Mother Earth who needs a break from routine work.

The festival concludes with a custom called Vasumati Snana or the bathing of Bhuma Devi. Women worship a stone that symbolises the Mother Earth. They give her a bath with turmeric paste and offer her flowers and smear her with Sindoor. This festival is also associated with the end of the summer season and the arrival of the monsoon. And therefore, it is also associated with agriculture and cultivation related communities and activities.

## Abuse of Administrative Authority: A Major Threat to National Progress

Arun Kumar Tripathy



The progress of a nation is measured not merely by economic growth, infrastructure,

or technological advancement but by the quality of governance experienced by its citizens. Roads, bridges, industries, and digital services may symbolize development, but true national progress rests upon justice, accountability, transparency, and public trust. When administrative authority is exercised fairly, citizens feel protected and empowered. However, when power is misused, governance becomes a source of fear rather than confidence. Abuse of administrative authority has therefore emerged as one of the most serious obstacles to national progress.

Government officials, whether in the police, revenue administration, development departments, or other public institutions, are entrusted with authority to serve society. Their powers are intended to protect rights, ensure law and order, and facilitate development. However, when authority is exercised arbitrarily or without accountability, it can cause immense hardship to ordinary citizens.

One of the most concerning aspects of administrative abuse is the misuse of police powers. Across the nation, allegations of false cases, wrongful implication of innocent persons, custodial excesses, and fake encounters have periodically surfaced. While the majority of police personnel discharge their duties with sincerity and dedication, even isolated incidents of misuse have far-reaching consequences. An innocent citizen entangled in a false criminal case may lose years of productive life, spend enormous sums on legal expenses, face social stigma, and suffer emotional trauma. Such experiences not only affect individuals but also weaken public confidence in law enforcement institutions.

Similarly, reports of custodial deaths and allegations of fake encounters have

repeatedly raised concerns about the protection of human rights. In a democratic country governed by the rule of law, every individual deserves due process and a fair hearing. Justice cannot be delivered through shortcuts. The legitimacy of the state depends upon its commitment to lawful procedures and respect for human dignity.

Misuse of authority is not confined to police administration alone. Revenue officials, collectors, tehsildars, and block development officers possess substantial powers that directly affect citizens' lives. They are responsible for land records, certificates, welfare schemes, development projects, rehabilitation measures, and various public services. When these powers are exercised unfairly, citizens often find themselves helpless before a vast administrative machinery.

Delays in issuing certificates, arbitrary decisions regarding land matters, selective enforcement of regulations, and unnecessary procedural hurdles often create frustration among the public. In many instances, people spend months or even years moving from one office to another to obtain services that should be delivered within a reasonable period. Such experiences discourage citizens and undermine trust in governance.

Public debate has also intensified whenever senior officials facing serious allegations of corruption have been arrested, substantial amounts of cash have reportedly been recovered during investigations, and legal proceedings have been initiated, only for administrative reinstatements to occur while cases remain pending. While reinstatement may be legally permissible under service rules and does not imply guilt or innocence, such developments often raise questions in the minds of citizens regarding accountability and transparency. The issue is not about any particular individual; rather, it concerns the larger perception that public office should be accompanied by the highest standards of integrity and responsibility.

Another disturbing trend is the growing disconnect between administration and human sensitivity. Governance is ultimately about people. Behind every file lies a human story;

behind every application stands a family seeking relief, support, or justice. Unfortunately, excessive bureaucracy, workload, pressure, and institutional rigidity sometimes make officials insensitive to the difficulties faced by ordinary citizens.

The solution to this problem is not merely punitive action but also human development within public institutions. Periodic yoga programmes, meditation sessions, stress-management workshops, and mental health counselling camps should be organized for government officials. Public servants often work under enormous pressure, dealing with complex administrative challenges and public expectations. Emotional well-being and mental balance can contribute significantly to compassionate and citizen-friendly governance. An officer who is mentally healthy and emotionally balanced is more likely to exercise authority with wisdom, patience, and empathy.

Transparency must become the cornerstone of administration. Every government office should clearly display procedures, eligibility criteria, required documents, fees, and timelines for public services. Citizens should never have to depend upon middlemen, personal influence, or unofficial channels to obtain services guaranteed by law. Information should be made available in simple language through notice boards, websites, and digital platforms accessible to all. Equally important is the introduction of strict time limits for administrative work. Applications for caste certificates, income certificates, land mutations, pensions, welfare benefits, licenses, and other services should be disposed of within clearly defined periods. Delay without valid justification should attract administrative accountability. Time-bound governance not only improves efficiency but also reduces opportunities for corruption and harassment.

Strong laws are required not only for citizens but also for government officials. In every democratic society, accountability must operate in both directions. Citizens who violate the law face penalties, investigations, and legal

proceedings. Similarly, officials who deliberately misuse authority, abuse public trust, engage in corruption, or violate citizens' rights should be subjected to swift and transparent disciplinary action. Accountability should not be viewed as hostility toward public servants; rather, it strengthens institutions by ensuring responsible exercise of power.

Technology can further reduce opportunities for misuse. Digitization of records, online tracking systems, CCTV monitoring of public offices, electronic file movement, social audits, and transparent grievance redressal mechanisms can significantly enhance accountability. Citizens should be able to monitor the status of their applications and complaints without repeatedly visiting government offices.

At the same time, honest and dedicated officials must be protected and encouraged. Administrative reform should not create a culture of fear but a culture of responsibility. Officers who work sincerely in difficult circumstances deserve recognition, while those who misuse authority should face appropriate consequences. This balance is essential for effective governance.

National progress cannot be achieved through economic indicators alone. A nation truly advances when its citizens feel secure, respected, and treated fairly by public institutions. Democracy flourishes when authority serves the people rather than dominates them. Abuse of administrative authority, whether through false cases, arbitrary decisions, corruption, delays, or insensitivity, weakens the foundations of governance and hinders development.

The need of the hour is a comprehensive reform agenda based on transparency, accountability, human sensitivity, mental well-being, technological modernization, and time-bound service delivery. Power must always remain accountable to the people. Only when authority is guided by justice, compassion, and responsibility can a nation achieve genuine and sustainable progress.

The law should be equally strong for the common citizen and for those who exercise public power. Public office is not a privilege; it is a sacred trust. The future of the nation depends upon ensuring that this trust is never betrayed.

# KALABAISAKHI STORM LEAVES 15 FAMILIES HOMELESS IN GAJAPATI

Paralakhemundi, (Correspondent): Fifteen poor families in P. Govindpur village under Mohana block of Gajapati district has been left homeless after a powerful Kalbaisakhi storm ripped off the roofs of their houses on Wednesday evening. The affected families are now forced to live under the open sky and have appealed for immediate government assistance. The storm, accompanied by heavy rain and strong winds, struck the area around 5 p.m., causing extensive damage to tin-



roofed and thatched houses. Residents said the sudden squall tore away the roofs of at least 15 homes, exposing families and their belongings to the elements. Most of the affected households belong to economically weaker sections and are struggling to cope with

the loss. They have urged the administration to provide emergency relief and financial assistance. Mohana Tahsildar Chakradhar Padhi said the extent of the damage is being assessed and assured that eligible beneficiaries would receive assistance as per government norms. The storm also uprooted several large trees in the village and snapped power lines at multiple locations, disrupting electricity supply in the area. Restoration work is reportedly underway.

# FAKE MORTGAGE RACKET BUSTED, CACHE OF BIKES & MOBILES SEIZED

Paralakhemundi, (Correspondent): In one of the biggest fraud crackdowns in recent years, Gajapati Police have arrested a man accused of cheating unsuspecting people for nearly five years through a bogus loan and mortgage scheme. During a raid on the accused's residence, police seized 137 motorcycles, 128 mobile phones, forged documents, stamp papers, and over Rs 3.61 lakh in cash, exposing the scale of the alleged racket. The accused, identified as K. Rabindra Reddy of



Adaba village, was arrested by Adaba Police under the supervision of R. Udayagiri SDPO Rakesh Kumar Sahu following a complaint lodged by Chandrasekhar Das of Mohana. According to police, Rabindra Reddy allegedly targeted innocent villagers by offering loans against pledged assets. He would collect valuable items such as motorcycles and mobile phones, provide only a small amount as loan, and later refuse to return

the pledged property and original documents even after borrowers repaid the money. Investigators believe he had been operating the fraudulent scheme for the last five years. The fraud came to light when complainant Chandrasekhar Das pledged his motorcycle worth around Rs 90,000 and obtained a loan of Rs 20,000. After repaying the loan, he allegedly failed to recover either the vehicle or its original documents and subsequently approached the police.

## Important verdict of the High Court; NBW cannot be issued without sufficient reason

Cuttack (Correspondent): The Orissa High Court has given an important verdict regarding the personal liberty of the citizen. The court has clarified that if an accused fails to appear in court on a fixed day, a direct Non-Bailable Arrest Warrant (NBW) cannot be issued without any concrete reason. On this basis, the High Court has quashed the NBWA order issued by the lower court (Lakhanpur JMFC) against the applicant Trinath Guru. The order was passed by the sitting judge Gorishankar Satpathi after conducting the final hearing of the case. According to the details of the case, on May 6, 2026, the applicant and the other accused were absent during the hearing of the case in the lower court. Based on this, the Lakhanpur JMFC ordered the issuance of NBW against the accused Trinath Guru directly on the same day. Challenging this action of the lower court, the petitioner approached the High Court. During the hearing in the High Court, the petitioner's counsel submitted that the accused had already been granted bail in the case on 23 December 2025 and he was also complying with the bail conditions. As per law, once bail is granted, it remains valid until cancelled; therefore, issuing NBW directly without any clear information or reason for absence for just one day is legally wrong. The High Court reviewed the order of the lower court and held that the court has sufficient power under Section 355 of the BNSS to compel the personal presence of the accused. If an accused does not appear in court, the magistrate should first issue a notice to the bailors instead of issuing an NBW directly.

## Gunfight incident in Birmaharajpur

### The murder was committed due to past enmity: Accused arrested

SUBARNAPUR (Correspondent): A gunfight was committed due to past enmity. A youth from Champamal village was killed in this gunfight near the Subarnapur district Birmaharajpur town Sub Collector Office Chhak. The family had filed a complaint with Birmaharajpur police station regarding the murder of Shubham Pritam Hota, a friend of that village. However, since the incident, the accused Shubham Pritam Hota had been absconding. While he had fled to various states, the police team had set up camp at various places to arrest him. Today, Subarnapur Supdt. Of Police Narayan Naik, through a press conference at



Birmaharajpur police station premises, informed that the main accused of the said gunfight incident was arrested from a hostel near Rajendra University in Balangir and that the said incident was completely unknowingly committed due to past enmity. It was reported that Bikram Maharana (Viki) (24) of Champamal village was

killed in a shooting incident that took place behind a liquor shop on an evening in April 17. In the said incident, on the night of April 17 at 9.30 pm, the accused Shubham Pratim Hota (Biki) and the deceased Bikram (Viki) and some friends were sitting behind a shop in the said square when suddenly the sound of gunshots was heard. The bullet went off in Bikram's

neck. A case was registered under case number 90/2026 with the Birmaharajpur police. Other friends who were there rescued Bikram and took him first to Birmaharajpur and then to Subarnapur District Head Quarter Hospital for treatment. However, the doctor in Subarnapur declared Bikram dead. At that time, while they were sitting on the bed together with the gun kept by Shubham, the gun that was kept by his friends was accidentally shot and Bikram. It was suspected that the death of the deceased was due to enmity. However, the investigation revealed that the incident had taken place due to enmity and informed that a lot of evidence was found.

## Discontent Erupts in Jajpur Town BJP!

JAJPUR (Correspondent): An atmosphere of instability and dissatisfaction has reportedly emerged within the Jajpur Town BJP organization. Allegations suggest that repeated changes in the appointment of the Town Yuva Morcha President have led to growing resentment among party workers.

According to sources, a few days ago, young leader Abhay Rout was appointed as the President of the Jajpur Town BJP Yuva Morcha. However, it is

learned that the decision was later changed abruptly, and Akshay Kumar Behera was assigned the responsibility instead. This change has raised several questions among grassroots party workers. Some workers have alleged that unclear decisions by the district leadership are weakening the organization in Jajpur Town and adversely affecting the morale of party cadres. On the other hand, some party workers have also alleged that certain

leaders are maintaining covert ties with opposition parties and are creating instability within the organization. However, no official evidence has yet emerged to substantiate these allegations. Attention is now focused on how the district leadership will respond to the controversy and what steps will be taken to resolve the issue. Political observers believe that the matter could bring a new twist to BJP politics in Jajpur district in the coming days.

## Birmaharajpur Police's Big Success: Police foil robbery attempt: 5 robbers arrested



SUBARNAPUR (Correspondent): Birmaharajpur Police has achieved a big success. Police foiled a robbery attempt. A gang of robbers was caught by the police while attempting a robbery from Birmaharajpur police station area of Subarnapur district. Birmaharajpur police have arrested 5 accused with various deadly weapons. Subarnapur Supdt. Of Police Narayan Nayak gave this information at a press conference held at Birmaharajpur Police Station on Friday. According to the information, Birmaharajpur Police Station Officer Jajati Keshari Sahu received

information from a reliable source that some youths were planning to commit a robbery near ITI under Hikudi Out post. A police team led by IIC raided the place and arrested the gang of robbers. The police arrested Lipun Mahakur (21) of Kirtipur village of Sonepur police station in Subarnapur district, Satyaram Chaulia (20) of Haradokhol village, Debananda Patra (30) of Baladi village of Tarbha police station, Uttam Urma (28) of Maheswarpinda village of Manamunda police station in Boudh district and Soubhagya Kumar Naik (23) of Champamal village of

Birmaharajpur police station and seized a gun, two live cartridges, a sword, a knife, 5 mobile phones, a bike and a scooter from them and other weapons. All the accused have been arraigned in Birmaharajpur police court, informed this in the press conference. A case has been registered with Birmaharajpur police under case No. 149/2026. A case has been registered in this regard with Birmaharajpur police. Today's Birmaharajpur SDPO Hemant Rao and Police Station Officer Jajati Keshari Sahu were present at the press conference along with Supdt. Of Police Narayan Naik

## Mukhyamantri Annapurna Yojana' Launched: Distribution of Smart Ration Cards and Smartphones in Malkangiri

Malkangiri, correspondent: The Malkangiri District Level 'Mukhyamantri Annapurna Yojana' was launched with a grand ceremony at the local Cultural Bhawan. At the state level, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi launched the scheme at the IDCO Exhibition Grounds in Bhubaneswar and it has been implemented in Malkangiri district as well. Malkangiri MLA Narasingh Madkani attended the event as the chief guest. Highlighting the importance of the scheme, MLA Shri Madkani said, "The Chief Minister Annapurna Scheme is a groundbreaking initiative of the state government for the development of the poor and vulnerable classes.



With the distribution of smart ration cards and smartphones, people in remote areas will be digitally empowered and no beneficiary will be deprived of their rights. We are determined to reach every eligible family in the district." Organized under the direct supervision of District Magistrate Pratesh Arvind Rajashirke, the program was attended by SDC Chairperson Ganga

Sodhi, MP Representative Sanjay Sarkar, Additional District Magistrate Administration Somnath Pradhan, CDO & Executive Officer Dasarathi Sarabu, District Social Welfare Officer Suchita Panda. It is worth noting that a total of 5,18,679 families have been registered in Malkangiri district under the National Food Security

Act and the State Food Security Scheme. All the beneficiaries are being provided 5 kg of rice free of cost every month and a total of 25,933.00 quintals of rice have been distributed monthly. Now this rice distribution process for the months of April, May and June will be implemented through 'Mukhyamantri Annapurna Yojana'.

## Constable arrested for attempting to rape a sanitation worker, suspended by rural SP

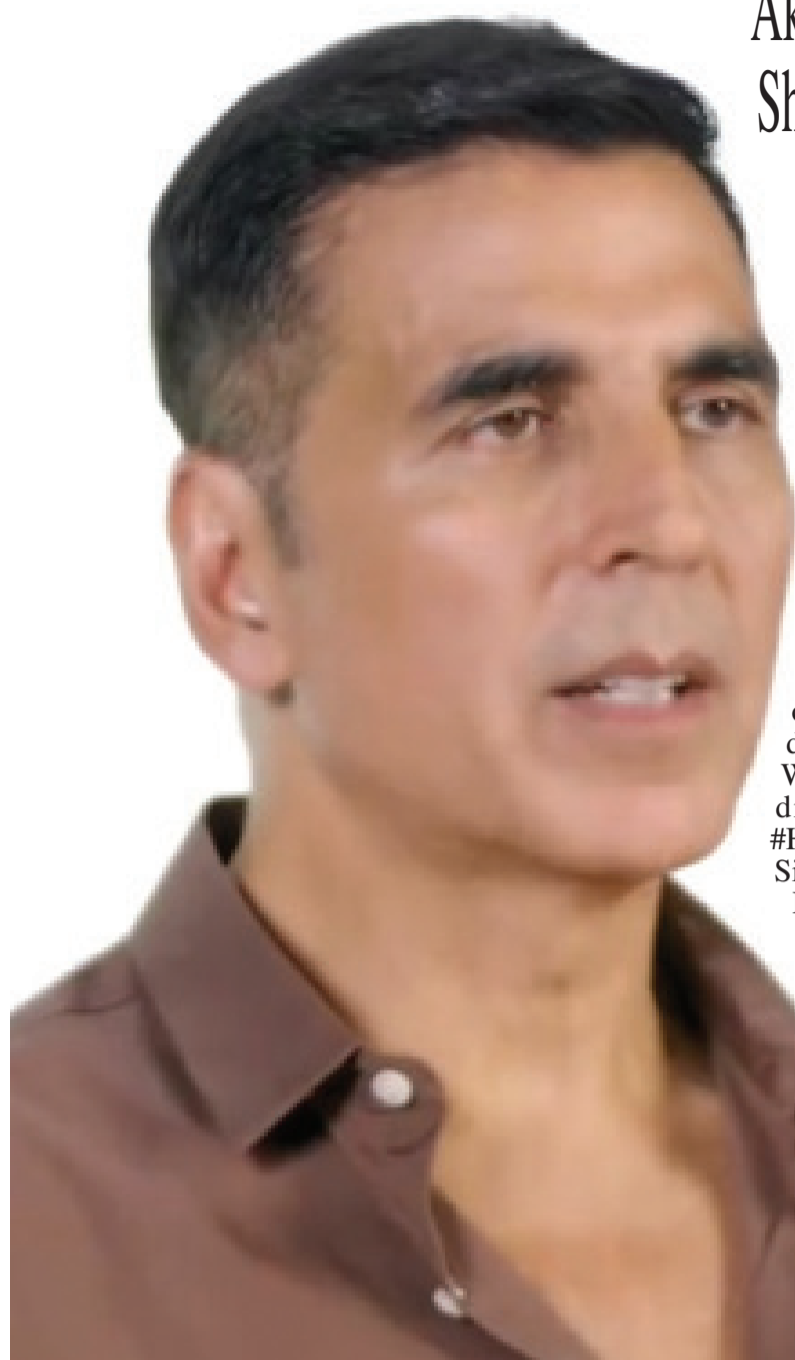
Cuttack correspondent: Khaki is in trouble. A serious allegation of attempted rape has been filed against a police constable. The constable attempted to rape a woman sanitation worker. Importantly, such a shocking incident took place near the state police headquarters, inside the police lines of Cuttack Bux Bazar. The accused was arrested after

the female sanitation worker lodged a complaint at the Cantonment police station. The arrested constable is Badambar Pares Samal (49), working in the Cuttack Rural District Reserve Office. The accused has been tried in court. Considering the gravity of the incident, Constable Pares has been suspended from the post of Cuttack Rural SP. According

to the information received, last Wednesday morning. A 46-year-old female contract worker, who was in charge of cleaning ward number 15, just 100 meters away from the state police headquarters, was sweeping. While sweeping, she reached the Cuttack Rural Reserve Office. At this time, the accused constable Pares came out of the Reserve Office campus

and hit the cleaner from behind. Since it was early in the morning, the woman suddenly could not see Pares. But she shouted. However, Pares caught her and misbehaved with her. Then the victim cleverly escaped from there and ran towards the police headquarters. Yesterday, some forces came there to arrest the construction workers. Seeing a

woman running, they stopped her and investigated the incident. When the victim told what happened to her, the Cantonment police station was immediately informed. But by the time the police station staff reached, the accused Pares had fled from there. After that, the cleaner informed the officer above about the incident and lodged a complaint at the police station.



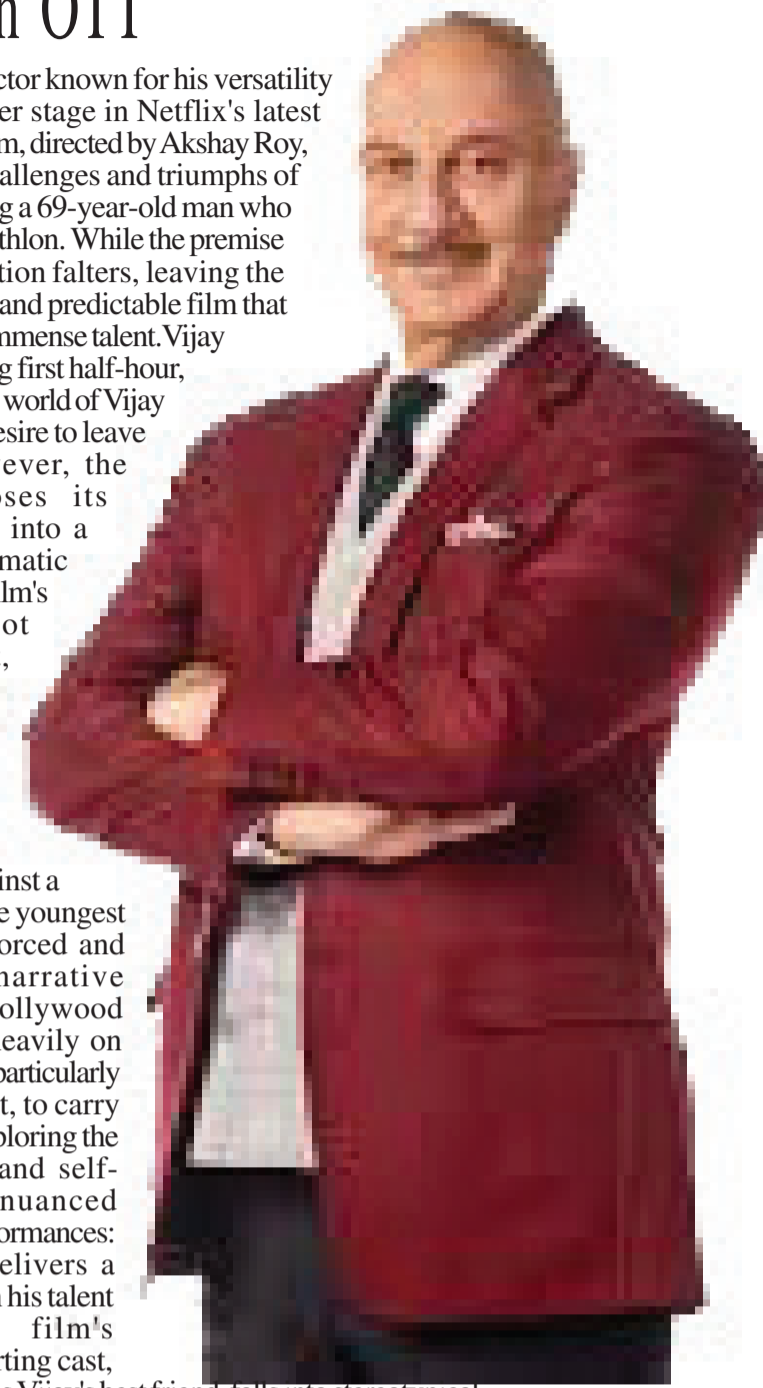
## Akshay Kumar Kannappa's 'Lord Shiva' first glimpse on Jan 20, film scenes shot in Paris!

The much-hyped mythological flick Kannappa, which also stars Prabhas, has been the talk of the town since its announcement. While the film was previously scheduled for a December release, but the makers have postponed the release date to avoid clash with Allu arjun's Pushpa 2 The Rule and Ram Charan's Game Changer in Ja, will be releasing on 25 April 2025. Ahead of its theatrical release, the makers of Kannappa finally announced the first glimpse of 'Akshay Kumar' as 'Lord Shiva', which is all set to drop on January 20th, 2025! Taking on to X and Instagram, 24 Frames Factory, the producers of Kannappa, wrote: "A Glimpse of Divinity! Presenting a glimpse of 'Akshay Kumar' as a powerful embodiment of divinity, strength, and tranquility in #Kannappa. Witness the full look reveal on 20th January as the divine spectacle takes shape! #HarHarMahadev?." Directed by Mukesh Kumar Singh and produced by Ava Entertainment and 24 Frames Factory, the epic tale will release worldwide on April 25, 2025, in multiple languages including Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Hindi, and English. Kannappa was shot originally in Telugu. The film boasts an impressive lineup of stars. While popular Telugu star Vishnu Manchu is in the titular role, cameos come from some of the biggest names in Indian cinema. Akshay Kumar himself will appear in a special role as Lord Shiva, while Prabhas

portrays Nandi, and Mohanlal takes on another pivotal cameo. Kajal Aggarwal will grace the screen as Goddess Parvati, adding to the film's celestial appeal. A mythological fantasy film helmed by Mukesh Kumar Singh, the film is based on the tale of a staunch devotee of Lord Shiva. It needs mentioning here that Akshay Kumar has previously essayed the role of Lord Shiva in OMG 2 – 2023 film starring Yami Gautam, Pankaj Tripathi, and Aarush Varma – and was the sequel to OMG that was released in 2012. In the poster released, Akshay Kumar as Lord Shiva looks good. But only the glimpse on Jan 20 will tell how far the top actor has justified with the persona of Lord Shiva. As per the buzz, despite being a mythological flick, a special portion of Kannappa had been shot in Paris.

## Anupam Kher's "Vijay 69" Disappoints on OTT

Anupam Kher, a veteran actor known for his versatility and charisma, takes center stage in Netflix's latest offering, "Vijay 69." The film, directed by Akshay Roy, attempts to explore the challenges and triumphs of aging, with Kher portraying a 69-year-old man who decides to compete in a triathlon. While the premise holds promise, the execution falters, leaving the audience with a lackluster and predictable film that fails to fully utilize Kher's immense talent. "Vijay 69" begins with a promising first half-hour, introducing us to the vibrant world of Vijay Mathews (Kher) and his desire to leave a lasting legacy. However, the narrative quickly loses its momentum, descending into a predictable and melodramatic spiral that undermines the film's potential. **Weak plot development:** The plot, riddled with improbable twists and turns, feels contrived and fails to engage the audience emotionally. The sudden shift from Vijay's personal quest to a competition against a young boy aiming to be the youngest triathlon finisher feels forced and disrupts the narrative flow. **Overreliance on Bollywood tropes:** The film relies heavily on familiar Bollywood tropes, particularly a forced romantic subplot, to carry the narrative, instead of exploring the complexities of aging and self-discovery in a more nuanced manner. **Unconvincing performances:** While Anupam Kher delivers a spirited performance, even his talent cannot salvage the film's shortcomings. The supporting cast, including Chunky Panday as Vijay's best friend, falls into stereotypical portrayals, further diminishing the film's authenticity. **Lackluster direction and editing:** The direction lacks finesse, and the editing is jarring, contributing to a disjointed viewing experience.



## 5 Incredible Reasons To Add Kidney Beans To Your Daily Diet

*Kidney beans or rajma are procured from the herbaceous plant, scientifically termed Phaseolus vulgaris. These beans are a storehouse of protein and an ideal replacement for red meat. In fact, piping hot rajma chawal is a perfect balance of protein on par with dairy or meat protein without added calories and saturated fat. A cup of kidney beans provides 15grams of protein. read on to know more about healthy beans.*

### Regulates Blood Sugar

Rajma is an excellent legume that helps in stabilizing blood glucose levels as it is a good source of soluble fibre and low on the glycemic index. Kidney beans are slow-burning carbohydrates that can prevent a spike in blood glucose levels. Moreover, the soluble fibres in rajma lower blood sugar and cholesterol levels, improve insulin sensitivity and assist in managing diabetes symptoms. Also Read: Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus: Causes, Symptoms And Treatment

### Heart Healthy

The goodness of fibre in rajma is beneficial in lowering the risk of heart disease. Evidence proves that soluble fibre in rajma lowers bad cholesterol (LDL) and ups the good cholesterol (HDL) by forming a gel-like substance in the stomach and preventing the reabsorption of cholesterol into the body. In addition, rajma is a good source of potassium which dilates blood vessels and lowers blood pressure.

### Prevents Cancer

Rajma is loaded with whopping amounts of antioxidants that help in the battle of cancer. The presence of flavonoids in rajma is beneficial in preventing the formation of cancer cells. According to the American Cancer Institute, lignans and saponins in rajma have the ability to fight cancer cells.

### Sustains Weight Loss

The abundance of soluble fibre and protein in rajma is one of the best legumes to be added to a weight loss meal plan. These beans keep you satiated, slow gastric emptying time and help in losing weight. The presence of alpha-amylase inhibitor in rajma hinders the absorption and breakdown of starch and aids in losing weight.



## What Happens When You Eat Dessert Before Your Meal

There is no shame in admitting that we have all grown up hearing, "No sweets before dinner." From laddoos before lunch to slices of cake before a full meal, eating desserts before meals was often frowned upon by elders. But truthfully, who has not given in to temptation? In today's world of trending diets, cheat days, and constant sugar cravings, resisting a bite of ras malai or gulab jamun, especially during festivals, is no easy task. But is indulging your sweet tooth before a meal harmful? Experts in Ayurveda and nutrition weigh in on what it actually means for your digestive health. **Should You Eat Dessert Before Meals?** Yes. Contrary to what we have always been told, eating sweets before your main meal could benefit your digestion, according to Ayurvedic principles.



**Why Do Some Experts Recommend This?** According to Ayurveda, the order in which you consume the six rasas—or tastes—plays a role in balancing your doshas and aiding digestion. It is said that sweets should ideally be eaten before the main course, not after.

Yoga expert Manisha Yadav explains that Madhur rasa, or the sweet taste, is grounding and nourishing in nature. It gently activates the digestive fire without overwhelming it. In contrast, salty, spicy, or sour foods can stimulate digestion too quickly, which may lead to an imbalance. The sweet taste is particularly pacifying for vata and pitta doshas, which can become aggravated by spicy or excessively hot foods.

**Can Eating Sweets First Help Prevent Overeating?** Absolutely. According to Ayurveda, consuming sweets at the beginning of a meal helps settle the vata and pitta doshas before introducing more stimulating flavours. In addition, the sweet taste provides

a sense of satiety early on. As Manisha Yadav notes, this can help you feel fuller sooner and may reduce the tendency to overeat, making it easier to manage your weight. **What Happens When You Eat Sweets After A Meal?** Sweet foods are heavy by nature. If consumed at the end of a meal, they can be harder to digest. This can lead to issues such as bloating, gas, fermentation, and toxin formation. According to the expert, delayed digestion of sweets can interfere with nutrient absorption and gut health. **How To Reduce Sugar Cravings After Meals** Even if you understand the logic behind eating sweets first, sugar cravings after meals can be difficult to manage. Here are a few practical tips to gradually reset your habits and lifestyle: 1. Choose Healthier Alternatives Swap high-sugar desserts with better options like fresh fruits, yogurt with honey, til chikki, or a small piece of dark chocolate. Nutritionist Neha Ranglani recommends these as effective swaps that still satisfy your sweet tooth without causing blood sugar spikes. 2. Focus on Balanced Meals Ensure that your



meals contain a good mix of protein, healthy fats, and complex carbohydrates. A well-balanced plate helps stabilise blood sugar levels, reducing cravings later. 3. Stay Hydrated Sometimes, what feels like a sugar craving is actually thirst. Drink plenty of water throughout the day to reduce the chances of mistaking dehydration for hunger. 4. Distract Yourself If the urge for sweets hits, shift your focus. Neha Ranglani suggests activities like going for a walk, listening to music, or engaging in a creative hobby. Anything that takes your mind off food can help. 5. Increase Salt Intake - Mindfully According to nutritionist Pooja Makhija, sugar cravings can sometimes signal a lack of salt in the diet. When salt levels drop, the brain's reward centres activate, leading to intense cravings for sugary foods. Ensuring an adequate intake of natural salts may help reduce this cycle.

## FIVB-KIIT-KISS Centre of Excellence for Volleyball Elevated to International Centre of Excellence by FIVB

**BHUBANESWAR,** (Correspondent): In a landmark development for Indian and global volleyball, the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) has announced the elevation of the highly successful FIVB-KIIT-KISS Centre of Excellence (CoE) at KIIT Deemed to be University into an International Centre of Excellence (ICoE) for Volleyball and Beach Volleyball. The announcement was made during a meeting of the FIVB Governing Body held at the FIVB Headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland, attended by Prof. (Dr.) Achyuta Samanta, Founder of KIIT, KISS and KIMS, and Member of the FIVB Governing Council. The upgraded International Centre of Excellence marks a significant milestone in the development of volleyball, not only in



India but across the global volleyball community. The Centre has already been a premier high-performance training hub for Indian volleyball athletes, coaches, and technical personnel. It will now open its doors to players, coaches, trainers, and sports professionals from around the world, positioning India as an emerging international hub for Volleyball and

Beach Volleyball development. Speaking at the meeting, Dr. Fabio Azevedo, President of FIVB, highly commended the Centre's rapid progress and achievements since its inception. He highlighted the successful conduct of the Senior Indian Women's Volleyball Team's selection and coaching camps at KIIT University, which played a crucial role in

the team's impressive bronze medal-winning performance at the recently concluded CAVA Women's Volleyball Championship in Kathmandu, Nepal. Dr. Azevedo also congratulated Prof. Samanta and the KIIT-KISS team for the outstanding organisation of the Beach Pro Tour Challenge 2026, held in March 2026, which welcomed athletes from more than 52 countries. He praised the world-class competition facilities, athlete services, and hospitality provided during the event, describing it as one of the finest editions of the tournament. Recognising these achievements, the FIVB expressed its strong support for KIIT and KISS to host the next two editions of the Beach Pro Tour Challenge in 2027 and 2028.

## Cricket, Spirituality Come Together Ahead Of ODI In Dharamsala!

Dharamsala: With the opening One Day International (ODI) match between India and Afghanistan slated on Saturday at the iconic cricket stadium in Dharamsala, one of the most beautiful grounds located at an altitude of 4,000 feet above sea level, cricket and spirituality came together in a unique Himachali way. Former Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA) President and Member of Parliament Anurag Thakur accompanying cricket body office-bearers on Friday sought blessings of the revered Lord Indrunag deity so that rain doesn't play a spoilsport as the Meteorological Department predicted rain and thundershowers. The temple dedicated to the rain god is located in hills overlooking the stadium. Cricket fans, too, participated in the

prayers. For generations, Lord Indrunag has been regarded as the protector of the Kangra Valley and a divine guardian associated with favourable weather and overall prosperity. Seeking the blessings before major international matches has become a cherished tradition, reflecting the unique bond between cricket, culture and faith in Dharamsala, the abode of Tibetan spiritual leader The Dalai Lama, an HPCA functionary told IANS. The stadium, nestled in the foothills of the Himalayas, has 12 corporate boxes, each having a seating capacity of 20 seats. Each box was much in demand in all the previous matches, both international and T20. A Met official in Shimla said widespread rains and thundershowers

might occur in the region till June 14 due to fresh Western disturbance over north Pakistan and adjoining Jammu and Kashmir. "Sustained wind with a speed 40-50 km per hour is likely to prevail in state's Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti districts till June 13," he added. Meanwhile, the cricket fever across Dharamsala is electrifying as fans from across the country are set to descend to witness the match. Former Indian captain Rohit Sharma, captain Shubman Gill, along with several other Indian stars, have already arrived here, further fuelling excitement among cricket lovers. Fresh snowfall this week on the stadium's overlooking majestic Dhauladhar ranges has transformed the mountains chucking with a breathtaking

panorama. The snow-clad peaks have once again reminded the fans that why Dharamsala's showpiece stadium is widely regarded as the most beautiful venue on the planet. With crystal-clear mountain air, pleasant weather and unmatched Himalayan vistas, the ODI promises to be far more than a cricket match, it will be a celebration of sport, culture, spirituality and nature. Speaking on the occasion, HPCA Secretary Manuj Sharma told the media that with the blessings of Indrunag deity all preparations for the match have been completed and the association is looking forward to hosting another memorable international fixture. Former Union Minister Anurag Thakur said this cricket stadium has become one of Himachal Pradesh's greatest ambassadors on the global stage.

## FIFA World Cup Wonderkid: Meet Youngest Debutant For Mexico Gilberto Mora

**Mexico City:** History was written at the Mexico City Stadium as the FIFA World Cup 2026 kicked off. At just 17 years old, teenage prodigy Gilberto Mora etched his name into Mexican football folklore, becoming the youngest player ever to represent El Tri at the global showpiece during Mexico's opening-match win over South Africa. The moment arrived in the 65th minute when Mora was called off the bench. His introduction triggered a deafening roar from the home crowd, which included boxing megastar Canelo Alvarez. Mora, at 17 years and 240 days, became the sixth-



youngest player to make a World Cup appearance. Pele (17 years and 235 days), Salomon Olembe (17 years and 185 days), Femi Opubunmi (17 years and 101 days), Samuel Eto'o (17 years and 99 days) and Norman Whiteside (17 years and 41 days) were his junior. Born in Tuxtla Gutierrez in southern Mexico and

nurtured at Tijuana, Mora made his top-flight debut just under two months before he turned 16. Since then, he has soared like the eagle that adorns his nation's flag. He has broken Liga MX age records, announced himself as one of Mexico's brightest young talents and impressed at the FIFA U-20 World Cup Chile

2025, where Mexico reached the quarter-finals, playing with a maturity that belied his age. His breakthrough with El Tri came at the 2025 Concacaf Gold Cup, where coach Javier Aguirre trusted him when the stakes were at their highest. Mora made his debut against Saudi Arabia in the quarter-finals, becoming the youngest footballer ever to represent Mexico's senior national team. He went on to set up Raul Jimenez for the decisive goal in the semi-final against Honduras. The 17-year-old stands out for his ability to read and anticipate play, receive between the lines, evade pressure and release the ball with perfect timing.

## Tanvi Patri, Abhinav Garg To Lead Indian Contingent At Badminton Asia Junior Championships

**New Delhi:** All India Junior ranking medallists Tanvi Patri and Abhinav Garg will lead a strong Indian contingent for the Badminton Asia Junior (U-19) Championships to be held in Yatsushiro, Japan, from June 26-July 5, 2026. The team championships will be conducted from June 26-30, with the individual championships scheduled thereafter. Patri and Garg were directly selected for the team after winning the All India U-19 ranking tournament in Bengaluru last month, along with the top doubles pairings in each category. Boys doubles combination of Punith S. and Pavan S.,



Diya Bheemaiah B. and Baruni Parshwal (girls doubles), and Punith S. and Deepak Raj Aditi (mixed doubles) were the three direct selections in the paired events. The rest of the squad was picked following a selection trial at the National

Centre of Excellence in Guwahati as per the guidelines laid out by the Junior Selection Committee, BAI. "Having won our first mixed team medal at the Junior World Championships last year, we are confident that this group of

juniors will continue to build on that performance. All the players are in good form, and we are expecting multiple medals from them," said Badminton Association of India General Secretary Sanjay Mishra.

## Indian Shooting Legend Jaspal Rana Dies at 49, Leaving Behind a Golden Legacy

**NEWDELHI:** Indian shooting lost one of its greatest icons on Thursday night as celebrated shooter and coach Jaspal Rana passed away at the age of 49. The multiple Asian Games and Commonwealth Games gold medallist breathed his last at a hospital in Delhi, sending shockwaves across the Indian sporting fraternity. Rana's untimely demise comes just days after he reportedly fell ill during the Indian contingent's return journey from the ISSF World Cup in Munich, Germany. Following his arrival in Delhi, he was immediately hospitalised and underwent medical treatment. Born in 1976, Jaspal Rana emerged as one of India's brightest sporting stars at a young age. He first captured national attention after winning gold in the 25m Centre Fire Pistol event at the 1994 Asian Games. Over the next decade, he established himself as one of the most successful shooters India has ever produced. His achievements include multiple medals at the Asian Games, Commonwealth Games and international shooting championships. Rana remains one of India's most decorated Commonwealth Games athletes, winning a remarkable 15 medals, including nine gold medals. One of the defining moments of his illustrious career came at the 2006 Asian Games in Doha. There, Rana delivered a historic performance by winning three gold medals and setting a world record in the 25m Centre Fire Pistol event. His achievements elevated India's status in international shooting and inspired an entire generation of athletes. Rana's extraordinary accomplishments earned him several prestigious honours.

## End of an Era: Kane Williamson Retires From International Cricket as New Zealand's Highest Run-Scorer

**NEWDELHI:** One of cricket's most respected modern-day legends has called time on an extraordinary international career. New Zealand batting icon Kane Williamson announced his retirement from international cricket with immediate effect on Friday, ending a remarkable 16-year journey at the highest level. Widely regarded as one of the finest batters of his generation, Williamson leaves the game as New Zealand's highest run-scorer across all formats with an incredible 19,346 international runs, including 48 centuries and six double centuries. For more than a decade and a half, Williamson was the backbone of New



Zealand cricket. His calm temperament, exceptional technique and ability to perform under pressure made him one of the most dependable players in world cricket. The 35-year-old was not only a prolific run-scorer but also a transformational leader who guided New Zealand to some of the most memorable

moments in its cricketing history. His greatest achievement came in 2021 when he captained New Zealand to victory in the inaugural ICC World Test Championship, securing the nation's first major ICC world title. Williamson was a key member of cricket's famous "Fab Four" alongside Virat Kohli,

Steve Smith and Joe Root. The quartet dominated world cricket over the past decade and consistently set new standards in batting excellence. Among them, Williamson earned admiration for combining elite performances with humility, sportsmanship and

professionalism. Explaining his decision, Williamson revealed that retirement had been on his mind for some time. He said he wanted to step away knowing he had given everything possible to New Zealand cricket and felt the timing was right. According to Williamson, continuing without the same level of commitment and intensity would not have been fair to the team. He added that he was satisfied with his career and optimistic about the future of New Zealand cricket. Williamson said he was fortunate to leave the international stage on his own terms and without any lingering regrets. He expressed confidence in the current generation of New Zealand players and praised the talent

emerging within the national setup. Despite retiring from international cricket, he emphasised that the Black Caps would always remain close to his heart. He tributes Pour InNew Zealand head coach Rob Walter described Williamson as one of the most influential figures in the history of the sport. Walter said Williamson's achievements extended far beyond statistics and highlighted the lasting impact he had on the culture, standards and values of New Zealand cricket. According to the coach, Williamson consistently placed the team above personal milestones and leaves behind a legacy that will continue to inspire future generations.

## Paradip Port Authority Conducts Multi-Agency Mock Drill with NDRF to Strengthen Disaster Response Preparedness

Paradip, (Correspondent): In a significant step towards strengthening disaster preparedness and emergency response capabilities, Paradip Port Authority (PPA), in collaboration with the 3rd Battalion of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Mundali, conducted a Multi-Agency Coordination Mock Drill at the Main Fire Station, Paradip Port. The exercise brought together emergency response teams from various government agencies, industrial units, and mutual aid partners operating in and around Paradip. The objective was to test preparedness levels, improve coordination among stakeholders,



and ensure a swift and effective response during emergencies such as cyclones, industrial accidents, fires, and other disaster situations. The programme began with a tabletop exercise, during which Shri Ramakanta Dash, Team Commander, NDRF, highlighted the importance of resource mapping, coordinated planning, and timely decision-making during emergencies. The session provided participants with an

opportunity to review response procedures and discuss strategies for handling complex disaster scenarios. The practical drill that followed simulated a range of emergency situations, including structural collapse and search-and-rescue operations, rope rescue techniques, road clearance following cyclone-related obstructions, industrial firefighting involving tank fire scenarios, and casualty management with

medical evacuation. The exercise demonstrated how different agencies can work together seamlessly to save lives, protect critical infrastructure, and restore normalcy during a crisis. Speaking on the occasion, Shri Sanat Kumar Patel, Commandant, CISF, appreciated the efforts of all participating agencies and stressed the importance of regular drills in identifying gaps and

enhancing preparedness. He noted that such exercises help build confidence and ensure that response teams remain ready to act effectively when real emergencies occur. Shri Manoj Kumar Chauhan, Deputy Commandant, CISF, thanked all stakeholders for their active participation and emphasized that disaster management is most effective when institutions work together as a coordinated network. He observed that for a major industrial and maritime hub like Paradip, strong partnerships and continuous preparedness are essential for minimizing risks and ensuring public safety.

## TPNODL inaugurates New Metering Store at Rairangpur

Balasore, (Correspondent): TP Northern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPNODL) today inaugurated its fourth dedicated metering store at Rairangpur, reaffirming its commitment to providing hassle-free and consumer-friendly services across the northern region of Odisha. The store was inaugurated ceremoniously by Mr. Dushyant Kumar Tyagi, Chief Executive Officer - TPNODL in the presence of Mr. Nilesh Potphode, Chief Operation services, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Mohanty, Chief Projects, Mr. Debadutta Panda, SE Baripada and company other officials and key stakeholders. The metering store initiative is part of TPNODL's strategic plan to establish 13 metering

stores across the northern region, ensuring greater accessibility and convenience for consumers. The first store was inaugurated at Balia, Balasore in August 2025, followed by openings at Joda and Anandpur in Keonjhar district. With the Rairangpur store now operational, nine more stores are scheduled to be inaugurated soon, including Jaleswar, which is already in the pipeline. Speaking at the event, CEO Mr. Tyagi emphasized TPNODL's focus on consumer-centric services: "Our metering stores are designed to bring efficiency, transparency and convenience to our consumers. This initiative is a step forward in strengthening our service delivery and ensuring that every

consumer has easy access to metering solutions." The metering stores are envisioned as local service hubs that will directly address consumer needs related to metering issues. By bringing these facilities closer to communities, consumers will no longer have to wait for meter-related queries or support. Each store is equipped with a mini testing bench to check the accuracy of meters, ensuring transparency and trust in billing. This facility will allow consumers to verify meter performance on the spot, thereby reducing disputes and enhancing confidence in the system. Additionally, the stores will provide a one-stop solution for meter installations, replacements, and billing support, making service delivery faster, more reliable, and more consumer-friendly.

## ICONiQ White's Winning Streak Continues as the World's Fastest-Growing Millionaire Whisky Brand

Bhubaneswar, (Correspondent): Allied Blenders and Distillers Limited (ABD), one of India's leading spirits companies, has earned global recognition once again as ICONiQ White Whisky has been named the world's fastest growing millionaire whisky brand for the third consecutive year in Drinks International's Millionaires' Club 2026 report.

ICONiQ White topped the Fastest Growing Whiskies ranking globally and emerged as the second fastest growing spirits brand across all categories worldwide. Having entered the Millionaires' Club in 2023, ICONiQ White has more than doubled its volumes each calendar year, making it one of the most compelling growth stories in the global spirits industry. The report describes the brand's growth

trajectory as one that has 'made history'. ICONiQ White continues to demonstrate strong growth momentum, achieving its highest-ever monthly sales and crossing the 1 million cases milestone in a single month in May 2026. The recognition is further strengthened with Officer's Choice Whisky, the company's flagship brand, ranked as the world's No. 7 spirits brand overall and now ranks No. 3 whisky brand globally. Sterling Reserve Whisky also retained its place among the world's top 25 millionaire whisky brands, underscoring ABD's growing strength across consumer segments and price points. Together, the three brands have featured in Drinks International's Millionaires' Club for three consecutive years, reflecting the scale, consistency and growing global

relevance of ABD's portfolio. Published annually by Drinks International, The Millionaires' Club is the definitive global report that ranks spirits brands selling over one million liters cases per year, spotlighting the highest-performing and most dynamic names in the international liquor industry. The above rankings are for the calendar year 2025.

Commenting on the achievement, Amar Sinha, Managing Director, ABD, said "Being recognised as the world's fastest growing millionaire whisky brand for the third consecutive year is a significant milestone for ICONiQ White and reflects the strong consumer affinity it has built in a short span. The continued presence of Officer's Choice and Sterling Reserve in the Millionaires' Club further underscores the breadth and resilience of our portfolio.

## Vedanta Aluminium Nurtures Resilient Rural Communities in Jharsuguda

Jharsuguda, (Correspondent): Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest aluminium producer, is driving inclusive growth beyond its core operations through Project VedGram, its agriculture-focused development initiative in Jharsuguda. Through a combination of modern farming inputs, water conservation, livestock support, and livelihood diversification, the programme is helping rural communities build resilience by creating new, sustainable pathways for progress. Over the past year, Project VedGram has positively impacted more than 1,000 farmers and rural households through a range of interventions including Wadi establishment, paddy cultivation, livestock development, poultry micro-enterprises, and pisciculture, contributing



to a significant improvement in farmers' annual income. Reinforcing its commitment to encouraging sustainable agriculture, Vedanta Aluminium recently marked World Agriculture Day by organizing a Soil Awareness Programme and Soil Health Camp for local farmers. The initiative focused on promoting soil conservation, encouraging scientific farming practices, and enhancing awareness

about the role of soil health in improving agricultural productivity and long-term farm sustainability. Commenting on the impact of the initiative, C Chandru, CEO - Vedanta Aluminium, Jharsuguda said "Sustainable development begins with empowering communities to become self-reliant. Through Project VedGram, we are working closely with rural households to strengthen livelihoods, enhance agricultural productivity, and create

opportunities for long-term prosperity. Our commitment extends beyond economic growth, focusing on building resilient communities that can thrive for generations to come." Speaking about the initiative Rajesh Marei a farmer from Siriapali village said "Before receiving irrigation support, I had to depend on the rains and could grow only one crop each year. Today with the help of Vedanta and project VedGram, I am able to cultivate multiple crops across different seasons, which has increased my income and reduced farming risks. This support has made a real difference to my family's livelihood and future." Since inception, Project VedGram has facilitated the establishment of 50 wadis across nearly 25 acres of land in

Jharsuguda, transforming previously unproductive land into income-generating orchards. To improve water security, the initiative has also supported the construction of 35 community ponds and 10 farm ponds, enhancing community access to irrigation and water conservation. The project has also improved access to essential services through the installation of solar-powered drinking water systems in Siriapalli and Katikela villages. In terms of livestock development, more than 100 farmers in Jharsuguda have benefited from the distribution of over 800 kg of mineral mixture and 5,300 kg of Harit Dhara, which are food supplements that provide essential macro and micro minerals to livestock.

## Birla Global University Among India's Top New-Age Private Universities in IIRF 2026

Bhubaneswar, (Correspondent): Birla Global University has gained considerable recognition in the IIRF India Rankings 2026, published by the International Institutional Ranking Framework (IIRF), as an institution committed to excellence in academics, innovation, and holistic growth. These rankings measure institutes on various key parameters and provide rankings in different categories like universities, engineering, law, and management colleges. IIRF Rankings have acknowledged the



efforts of higher education institutes to ensure a balanced and holistic assessment, offering students, parents, and educators an objective framework for evaluating institutional quality and performance. In the latest rankings of 2026, Birla Global

University ranks 71st in "The New Age Private University-Overall" and ranks 3rd in the State and 9th in the Zone which indicates its increasing eminence as one of India's Best Private Universities. These achievements highlight BGU's commitment to academic

excellence, industry collaboration, world-class research, innovative learning, and student achievement. They also reflect our goal of building an exceptional learning ecosystem for students to thrive in an ever-changing world. As Birla Global University steps forward to become a nationally and globally recognized institution, it remains focused on nurturing responsible leaders, fostering interdisciplinary learning and making meaningful societal impact through our education and research.

## Sensex Jumps Nearly 1,700 Points On Hopes Of US-Iran Peace Deal

Mumbai: Indian equity benchmarks rallied sharply on Friday, with the Sensex soaring nearly 1,700 points and the Nifty reclaiming the 23,600 mark, as investor sentiment improved on hopes of a potential peace agreement between the United States and Iran. The Sensex closed at 75,527.95, gaining 1,695.40 points, or 2.30 per cent, from its previous close of 73,832.55. The 30-share index opened at 74,709.27 and touched

an intra-day high of 75,608.02 before settling near the day's peak. The Nifty also ended strongly at 23,622.90, up 461.30 points, or 1.99 per cent. The index opened at 23,412.55 and climbed to an intra-day high of 23,645.35 during the session. Commenting on Nifty technical outlook, experts said that a sustained move above 23,800 could further improve sentiment and pave the way toward the 24,000 psychological mark. "On

the downside, the 23,550-23,500 region is now expected to act as an important immediate support area, having transitioned from resistance to support following the breakout," an analyst stated. The rally came after US President Donald Trump said that Washington had reached a "great settlement" with Iran and that only the finalisation of the document remained. The comments fuelled optimism in global

markets, with investors betting that easing geopolitical tensions could stabilise energy supplies and reduce uncertainty. Among Nifty constituents, Shriram Finance, Bajaj Finance and Larsen & Toubro emerged as the top gainers. The broader market also witnessed robust gains. The Nifty MidCap index ended 2.43 per cent higher, while the Nifty SmallCap index advanced 2.8 per cent.