



## Sam faces backlash

Actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu is once again in the eye of a social media storm for promoting a supplement brand

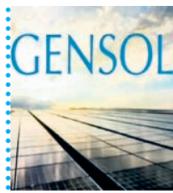
LEISURE | P2



## Bilawal's suggestion

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari proposes enhanced intelligence cooperation between Pakistan and India to combat terrorism

INTERNATIONAL | P10



## Blow to Gensol entities

NCLAT declines to stay the NCLT order directing to freeze assets of Gensol, its promoters, and related entities

BUSINESS | P11



## Lacklustre show

India lose 0-2 against Thailand in an international football friendly in a reality check ahead of Asian Cup qualifying round match

SPORTS | P12

# Fatal fete: 11 dead as RCB party goes berserk



CROWD CHAOS: Police struggle to control crowd as fans gather during RCB's felicitation ceremony, in front of Vidhana Soudha, in Bengaluru, Karnataka, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

**Bengaluru, June 4:** Celebrations descended into chaos and finally tragedy as 11 people lost their lives and more than 30 were left injured outside the Chinnaswamy stadium while trying to join a party inside the venue to honour Royal Challengers Bengaluru's IPL triumph here Wednesday.

However, the felicitation of the players went ahead nonethe-

less as the stadium was packed to the rafters despite the chaos. Much like last night when the team's win in Ahmedabad triggered a street party in the Garden City, Wednesday too had thousands, which eventually became lakhs, converging at the Chinnaswamy stadium, leaving the police outnumbered and struggling to take control of the situation.

The men in uniform tried to use mild force to disperse the

crowd or to at least bring some order but that did little to discourage people, many of whom could be seen pressed against the stadium's entrance gate, desperate to get in.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced that 11 had died and 33 were injured "due to stampede near Chinnaswamy Stadium." "More than 2-3 lakh people came near Chinnaswamy Stadium, no one expected this crowd," Siddaramaiah said.

"Most of deceased in RCB celebrations are youth. Government will provide ₹10 lakh compensation to kin of deceased," he added, while declaring that there will be a magisterial inquiry into the incident. The injured are being treated at the nearby Vydehi hospital and Bowering hospital.

The BCCI said the turn of events was shocking and the organisers should have been better-prepared. "It's most unfor-

tunate, organisers should have planned RCB's IPL-winning celebrations better," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia told PTT.

The political slugfest also started soon enough with the opposition BJP targeting the Congress-led government for not handling the situation properly. The RCB and the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) have jointly announced ₹5 lakh compensation to the "families of those who have lost their loved ones".

# Faulty jabs kill 6 in SLNMCH

Back-to-back deaths spark tension, prompt probe

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Koraput, June 4:** At least six patients admitted at Saheed Laxman Naik Medical College and Hospital (SLNMCH) here died after they were allegedly administered wrong injections Tuesday night.

Five of them died within 90 minutes of taking the jabs Tuesday night while another succumbed in the early hours of Wednesday.

The deceased were identified as Bhagaban Paraja, 38, of Badapindapadar village, Rukmini Pentia, 42, of Minaguda village, Jagannath Pujari, 29, of Dabuguda under Borigumma block, Shukra Majhi, 45, of Jaganguda under Semiliguda block, Phulmati Majhi of Koksara in Kalahandi district and Bati Khara of Machhra area in Koraput.

While Phulmati, Shukra and Rukmini had been admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU), Bati, Jagannath and Bhagaban were undergoing treatment in the general wards of the hospital. Their families alleged that they were administered injections, following which they died.

After reports surfaced, two separate investigations were ordered into alleged negligence in the hospital, officials said.

District Collector V Keerthi Vasan announced that a committee will be formed and the matter will be probed. SLNMCH's superintendent Dr Susanta Kumar Sahu said that the state government has formed two DMET teams from Cuttack and Berhampur which

will reach Koraput by night and probe the matter.

The bereaved family members were provided ₹10,000 financial assistance each from the district Red-Cross fund by the district administration in the presence of BDO Debashis Goud and Koraput Municipality Executive Officer Gyanajit Tripathy.

"We have convened a meeting of all departmental heads. The patients who died Tuesday night were admitted to the hospital in a critical condition. Prima facie, the deaths seem not to have been caused by any wrong injection. However, we will inquire into the allegations," SLNMCH's superintendent Sahu said. Director of Medical Education and Training (DMET) Santosh Mishra also confirmed the development.

Sahu said the patients in the ICU were in a serious condition and were administered the injection to control their dropping blood pressure. "We suspect they died due to bleeding and septicemia. The fourth patient was being treated for stage-4 cancer, and the fifth was an accident victim, who was referred from Jeypore," Sahu said.

Meanwhile, the Opposition BJD and Congress demanded action against the erring officials and alleged collapse of the health service system in the state.

Calling the death of patients at the medical college hospital as "murder", Congress Legislature Party leader Rama Chandra Kadam demanded ₹25 lakh each as compensation for the families of the deceased.

## ANOTHER YOUTUBER HELD OVER PAK LINKS

**Chandigarh:** A Punjab-based YouTuber alleged to be in close touch with influencer Jyoti Malhotra, who is in custody on charges of spying for Pakistan, has been arrested after a "terror-backed espionage network" linking him to Pakistani intelligence and army officials was unearthed, police said Wednesday. Punjab Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said Jasbir Singh alias Jaan Mahal (41) was allegedly spying for Pakistan's ISI.

## RAMP UP COVID-19 PREP, STATES TOLD

**New Delhi:** All states have been instructed to ensure availability of oxygen, isolation beds, ventilators and essential medicines in view of rising cases of Covid, official sources said Wednesday. A series of technical review meetings were held June 2 and 3 under the chairmanship of Director General of Health Services (DGHS) Dr Sunita Sharma. The meeting was held with representatives of Disaster Management Cell, EMR Cell, NCDC, ICMR, IDSP and Central government hospitals in Delhi and with representatives from all states.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Sir, I'm outside with a secure line in case you want to stop Russia-Ukraine war again

# Census, caste count March '27

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 4:** India's 16th Census with caste enumeration will be carried out in 2027 with the reference date of October 1, 2026 in snow-bound areas like Ladakh and of March 1, 2027 in the rest of the country.

It has been decided to conduct Population Census-2027 in two phases along with the enumeration of castes, the Union Home Ministry announced Wednesday.

The Census is being carried out after a gap of 16 years as the last one was held in 2011. Over 30 lakh enumerators and their supervisors are likely to be engaged to carry out the mega exercise.

The government recently de-

- ### IN A NUTSHELL
- 16 years of gap since 2011 Census
  - 2 phases of enumeration
  - Over 30 lakh enumerators
  - Budget over ₹13,000 crore

cidated that it will carry our caste enumeration along with the census. It will also be the first digital census giving the citizens an opportunity to self-enumerate. The entire Census exercise is likely to cost the government over ₹13,000 crore.

The population of the country as per the Census 2011 was 1,210.19 million of which 623.72 million (51.54 per cent) were

males and 586.46 million (48.46 per cent) were females.

"The reference date for Population Census - 2027 will be 00:00 hours of the first day of March 2027. For the Union Territory of Ladakh and the non-synchronous snow-bound areas of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir and states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, the reference date will be 00:00 hours of the first day of October 2026," the ministry said in a statement.

The Home Ministry said the notification for the intent of conducting the Population Census with the reference dates will be published in the official gazette "tentatively on 16.06.2025, as per provision of section 3 of Census Act 1948".

# Monsoon session of Parl from July 21 to August 12

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 4:** The Monsoon session of Parliament will be held from July 21 to August 12, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju said Wednesday.

The Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs, chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, has recommended the dates, he told reporters here.

The recommendation will be sent to the President for convening the session, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister said.

The announcement by Rijiju comes against the backdrop of a demand for special session by Opposition leaders to discuss



Operation Sindoor.

"Every session is a special session for us," he said, adding that under the rules, "all important matters" can be discussed during the Monsoon session. He underlined that the business advisory committee of both the Houses will take a call on the issues to be discussed.

# Majhi launches ₹308-cr projects in Dhenkanal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dhenkanal, June 4:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Wednesday launched development projects worth ₹308 crore in Dhenkanal district.

During his day-long visit to the district, the Chief Minister inaugurated 12 projects worth ₹112 crore and laid the foundation stone of 10 other projects worth ₹76 crore. He also participated in the ground-breaking ceremony for Bajji Rout Sports Complex worth ₹120 crore, an official statement issued by the CMO said.

On this occasion, Majhi also laid the foundation stone of four industrial projects worth over ₹50,000 crore, including ₹30,000-crore projects related to solar energy generation.

"Our goal is to make Dhenkanal district a solar energy-rich district. We will use solar energy as the main energy source not only for our state but also for the entire country," Majhi said adding that these projects will generate direct and indirect employment for 26,400 people.

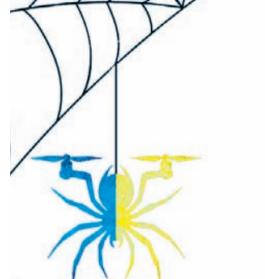
Asserting that his government was committed to meeting the aspirations of the people, Majhi said, "The new government has eight days left to complete one year in office. But, promises made to the people are being fulfilled quickly. We will never break the trust of people."

He said the Bajji Rout Sports Complex will have a football field, synthetic athletic track, hockey training centre, indoor stadium, swimming pool, a hostel and other facilities.

# Kyiv's daring drone strikes shake Kremlin's air power

*In a stunning display of evolving war tactics, Ukraine's latest drone strikes on Russian airfields were both a strategic and symbolic blow to the Kremlin. The operation not only disrupted Russia's long-range bombing capabilities but also showcased Kyiv's ability to adapt under pressure, leveraging innovation and asymmetric warfare to strike far beyond the front lines. It signalled that despite troop shortages and limited resources, Ukraine can still impose serious costs on Moscow, shifting the psychological and operational dynamics of the war. The boldness and precision of the attacks echo earlier signature successes and mark a new phase in Ukraine's fight for control and credibility*

## OPERATION SPIDER'S WEB



aged—a figure Russia disputed. Still, even conservative Russian military bloggers estimated a dozen strategic bombers were hit, a major blow given Russia's limited ability to replace such aircraft.

Justin Bronk, an airpower expert at the Royal United Services Institute, said the opera-

tion could "significantly impact" Russia's capacity to launch regular cruise missile attacks. Ben Hodges, former commander of US Army Europe, called the operation a "real dent" in Russia's strike capability.

This operation, reportedly overseen by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Ukraine's SBU intelligence chief Vasyl Malyuk, involved smuggling FPV drones deep into Russian territory. They were hidden in wooden crates with self-destruct mechanisms, transported on trucks near airfields, and then remotely launched to bypass traditional air defences.

Ukraine's strategy reflects a broader shift: targeting the 'archer' rather than intercepting the 'arrows'. With limited troops and international aid wavering, Ukraine is leveraging drone tech and innovation

to keep Russia off balance—mirroring past successes like the sinking of the Moskva and Black Sea drone raids.

Despite the tactical success, analysts warn the strike is unlikely to shift Russian President Vladimir Putin's political calculus. But as The Times notes, it sends a symbolic message: Ukraine can still strike at the heart of Russia's war machine.

Zelenskyy called it a move to force diplomacy: "Pressure is truly needed—pressure on Russia that should bring it back to reality." Yet the operation also raises risks of escalation and could test the resolve of Ukraine's Western allies. Still, experts like retired Australian Gen. Mick Ryan see it as a sign that "success in war favours those who learn and adapt fastest."

*Based on reporting by the New York Times*

# leisure



## GUADAGNINO IN TALKS TO DIRECT ARTIFICIAL

Filmmaker Luca Guadagnino is in negotiations to helm *Artificial*, a true-life film about artificial intelligence company OpenAI and its CEO Sam Altman. Actors Andrew Garfield, Monica Barbaro and Yura Borisov, who starred in Oscar-winning movie *Anora*, are circling the project which comes from Amazon MGM Studios.

## BLAKE LIVELY'S CASE FACES SETBACK

A dramatic development took place in the legal battle between Blake Lively and Justin Baldoni. A federal judge has ruled in favour of Justin, dismissing Blake's claims of emotional distress in their ongoing lawsuit.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Some cheerful news could put you in really high spirits today. The news could either be of a personal or professional nature - perhaps about your career, or a social gathering, or some monetary profit. You always give your best, and Ganesha says today it will lead to rich dividends.

**TAURUS**  
The stars are very auspiciously disposed towards you, announces Ganesha. You have an exceptionally bright and enjoyable day ahead of you. All events and situations will work in your favour. If you are pursuing higher studies you will perform brilliantly. Those appearing for competitive examinations are likely to score very high.

**GEMINI**  
A fun and frolic filled day awaits you. You will have a lot of fun with your family members, especially children. You will help your children with their work. Marital life will be blissful. Relations with your spouse will be romantic today. A pleasure filled day awaits, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
Today, you will shift your entire focus on the problems plaguing your personal life, feels Ganesha. Your ability to nip a problem in the bud has helped you to have a good personal life so far. And today, you will have to use your skills to mend the strain in your relationship with your loved ones. You may realise that complete renouncement of your habit of staying in control is the only way out of this personal mess.

**LEO**  
You will attempt to reschedule your daily routine to be able to make the most of your day. While it is easy to make plans, implementing them and sticking to them depends on your own discipline and determination. You will become more aware about health issues and pay closer attention to your diet.

**VIRGO**  
Today is the right time to start a new project, while older projects which had been postponed will be finished. Over the next week you will try to boost your energy levels. Parties will lead to a lot of entertainment and joy. Ganesha says children will bring home pride which will put you in even higher spirits.

**LIBRA**  
The clock ticks on, but chances are it can hardly beat you in the race, thanks to your prompt and sincere efforts. Today, you shall be a paragon of excellence. However, Ganesha waves the red flag of caution: it always pays to be safe rather than sorry. Keep your eyes open and pay attention to the fine print before signing any contract or paper.

**SCORPIO**  
A creative thought or an innovative idea may spice up your routine work. Apparently, you may seem all worked up and disorganised, but actually you may be quite systematic when it comes to your work. Keep the enthusiasm in you alive to make life happier, tips Ganesha.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Hedge your bets carefully, says Ganesha. Solving problems will come naturally to you. But, beware, as you may face the music from certain disgruntled individuals. Worry not, and keep the spring in your step.

**CAPRICORN**  
Mark this date on the calendar as today is going to be one of the most important days of life, the reason being you are going to meet somebody who is will stay with you through out your life. Though it may some time bore you, but your relationships will keep you busy today. Visits to religious places are on the cards for you. Most of the day you will spend time with your friends and family.

**AQUARIUS**  
Meditate, and tune in to your inner sanctum. As you do this, you will realise you don't need others' advice all the time. Your boss will cooperate with you, while your loved ones will encourage you. An exciting date should close the day on a lovely note, says Ganesha.

**PISCES**  
You will need broad shoulders to deal with the added responsibilities which will be heaped on your plate today. And while the work will be draining, the satisfaction of a job well done will more than ease your stress. A pleasant surprise probably awaits you back home, later in the evening, says Ganesha.

# Sam lands in soup

**Mumbai:** Samantha Ruth Prabhu has once again found herself at the center of a social media controversy, facing sharp criticism from Dr. Cyriac Abby Philips, widely known as The Liver Doc. The doctor recently called out the actress on Instagram for promoting a supplement brand that claims to contain NMN (Nicotinamide Mononucleotide), which Samantha says helps restore declining NAD+ levels and boost energy, recovery, and focus with age. Dr. Philips, however, dismissed these claims as pseudoscience, accusing Samantha of spreading misinformation and calling her "science illiterate." He labeled the supplements "fraudulent" and warned the public against trusting celebrity-backed health products lacking scientific validation.

What adds fuel to the fire is that Samantha isn't just endorsing the brand—she's a co-founder. She maintains the brand stands for "showing up for your future," not shortcuts, and ensures products undergo rigorous third-party testing for safety and quality. Despite the criticism, Samantha has not issued a public response.

This isn't their first clash. The Liver Doc had previously slammed her for endorsing hydrogen peroxide nebulisation. Their ongoing feud highlights the larger debate around celebrity wellness endorsements and the importance of relying on evidence-based medical guidance over popular influence.

AGENCIES



**Mumbai:** Actress Hina Khan has made it official with her husband, Rocky Jaiswal. The couple announced their union Wednesday as they took to their Instagram, and shared a joint post.

The post features several pictures from their special day including them embracing each other, close-up shots of Mehendi, them signing the marriage document. The actress shared that for the occasion, she donned a custom made wedding outfit by designer Manish Malhotra.

They wrote in the caption, "From two different worlds, we built a universe of love. Our differences faded, our hearts aligned, creating a bond to last lifetimes. We are our home, our light, our hope and together, we transcend all barriers. Today, our union is forever sealed in love and law. We seek your Blessings and Wishes as Wife and Husband. #MM'sMinimalistBride #TwinFlame #OurLoveStory #SoulBound A special piece from the one and only MM".

For the occasion, the actress chose the handloom saree in opal green, with gold and silver threads tracing age-old motifs across its weave. It has a light blush border, embroidered with threadwork and zardozi, framed the drape with quiet intricacy.



## HINA TIES NUPTIAL KNOT



## Bhumi on breaking stereotypes

**Mumbai:** Bollywood actress Bhumi Pednekar has completed a decade in Hindi cinema. The actress made her debut with the breakout hit *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*, in which she was paired opposite actor Ayushmann Khurrana. The actress shared that she is always drawn to stories that challenge her thought-process, and give her the window to grow as a person.

In 10 years of her cinematic career, the actress has taken up some brave choices like *Sonchiriya*, *Shubh Mangal Saavdhan*, *Badhaai Do*, *Govinda Naam Mera*, *Bhakhshak* and others.

The actress spoke with the news agency recently, and shared it's the 'meaningful stories' that appeal to her the most.

Bhumi said, "I just want to be a part of stories that are meaningful, that give me an opportunity to do diverse kinds of roles, that give me an opportunity to challenge whatever my thinking is, because as humans, it's very limited. Stories and cinema most times have helped me expand my world and my universe"

She continued, "Those stories have humbled me deeply as a person. I am a Bombay-born girl. I could have never imagined playing somebody who is from Chambal or Morena. Those are the kind of stories that I want to do. Stories that humble me, stories that let the empathy in me only grow and give me an opportunity to truly challenge myself".

AGENCIES



## Shilpa takes trip down memory lane

**Mumbai:** Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty recently took a trip down memory lane as she stumbled upon a heartwarming moment on the streets of London.

The *Hungama 2* actress posted a video capturing a street performer playing the soulful tune of her iconic track *Dil Ne Yeh Kaha Hain Dil Se* from her blockbuster movie *Dhadkan*. Clearly moved, Shilpa recorded the scene while panning the camera to show the performer and the bustling surroundings — reliving the magic of one of her most memorable film moments. Shilpa also turned the camera toward herself smiling and swaying gently to the melody, visibly enjoying the tune that once defined a major chapter of her film career.

Sharing the clip on her Instagram stories, she wrote, "Surprises #London diaries."

*Dhadkan*, released in 2000, was directed by Dharmesh Darshan and produced by Ratan Jain. The romantic musical drama also featured Suniel Shetty, Akshay Kumar, and Mahima Chaudhry in leading roles.

Meanwhile, the 49-year-old actress was last seen in the action-packed web series *Indian Police Force*, helmed by Rohit Shetty and Sushwanth Prakash.

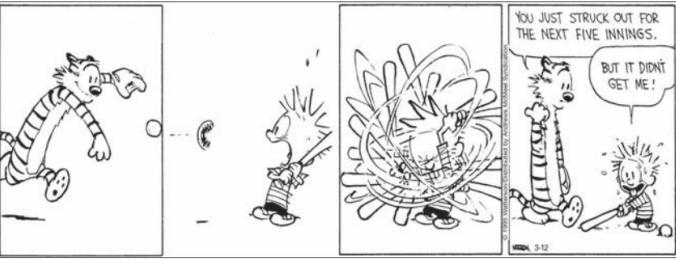
Up next, Shilpa is gearing up for her role in the Kannada action drama *KD - The Devil*, directed by Prem.

AGENCIES

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

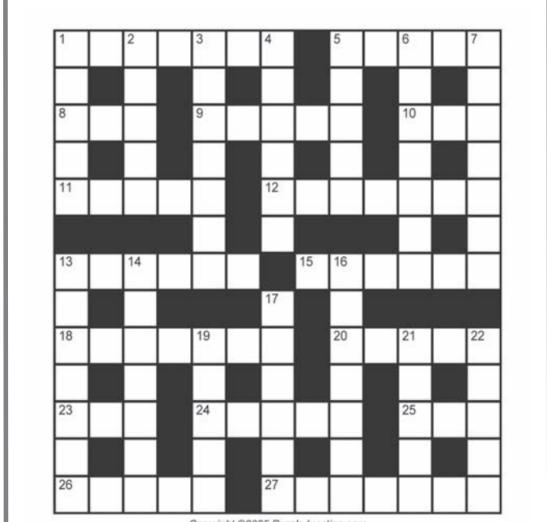


### BREVITY



### FUN POST

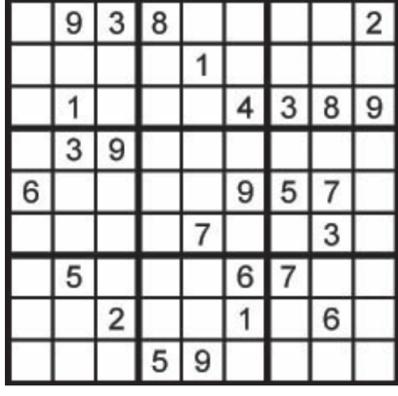
### CROSSWORD



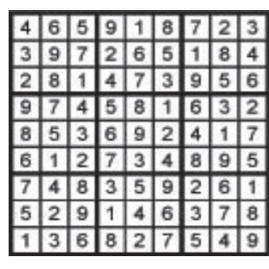
- Across**
- 1 Zinfandel, e.g. (3,4)
  - 5 Wizardry
  - 8 Salon application
  - 9 Concentrate
  - 10 Make public
  - 11 Point of greatest despair
  - 12 Kings and queens, e.g.
  - 13 Fish group
  - 15 Stiff
  - 18 West Indies music
  - 20 Cupcake topper
  - 23 Tolkien beast
  - 24 Trunk
  - 25 Meadow
  - 26 Obstreperous
  - 27 Computer screen
  - 28 Like some old trees
  - 29 Luggage designation (5,2)
  - 30 Assistance in time of difficulty
  - 31 Expression of surprise (4,3)
  - 32 Sinister
  - 33 Impassioned
  - 34 Trifling
  - 35 Arm of the sea
  - 36 Clutch
- Down**
- 1 Inert gas
  - 2 Great fear
  - 3 Wildfire
  - 4 Date participant
  - 5 Stale

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

## Newlywed couple found hanging in Rayagada



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rayagada, June 4:** A newly-married couple was found dead under mysterious circumstances in this district. The couple, who had tied nuptial knots seven months ago after a relationship, were found hanging from a tree late Tuesday night at Paikakupakhhal under Maikanch panchayat of Kashipur block.

The deceased have been identified as Abhi Jhodia, 27, and his wife Amita Jhodia, 24, residents of Paikakupakhhal. According to reports, the couple had been living separately from their families following

their marriage. Villagers spotted their bodies hanging from a tree near the village Wednesday morning, and immediately informed the Andirakanch police.

Police reached the scene, recovered the bodies, and sent them to Kashipur community health centre (CHC) for post-mortem. The bodies were later handed over to the respective families. "A case (3/25) has been registered at Andirakanch police station, and an investigation is underway," said the police.

In written complaints to the police, both families confirmed that the two were in a relationship before getting married. However, the reason behind their reported suicide remains unclear. Locals have expressed concern and are demanding an impartial investigation, as suspicions of possible foul play have not been ruled out. Police said further clarity would emerge after a detailed inquiry.

## Woman cop in Vig net while accepting bribe



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, June 4:** Vigilance sleuths Wednesday arrested a woman assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of police for accepting a bribe of ₹10,000 from a complainant, an official said.

According to the Vigilance, the woman police officer was demanding ₹10,000 bribe from

the complainant to help him and his mother involved in a domestic violence case registered earlier in Mahila police station, Berhampur as she was the investigating officer.

The ASI was threatening to arrest the complainant in the case if he did not pay the demanded bribe. Finding no other ways, the complainant reported the matter to the anti-corruption authorities, the official said.

The Vigilance laid a trap Wednesday and nabbed the ASI inside the Mahila police station while taking the bribe from the complainant, he said.

A case has been registered against the woman police officer at Berhampur Vigilance police station under Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018 and she has been arrested, the Vigilance officer said.

## 3.8 tonnes of looted explosives recovered

**Bhubaneswar:** The Odisha Police Wednesday claimed to have so far recovered 3.8 tonnes of the five tonnes of explosives looted by Maoists from near a stone quarry in Sundargarh district May 27. DGP YB Khurana said of the 3.8 tonnes of explosives, one tonne of gelatin was recovered Tuesday night. He said the Odisha Police, with assistance from CRPF, COBRA, Jharkhand's Jaguar, and Odisha's SOG and DVF, had launched the search operation in the nearby forests on the night of May 27. Around 2.5 tonnes of explosives were recovered Monday, DIG (Western Range) Brijesh Rai said, adding that the explosives were buried in the dense jungle.

## People's trust gives us strength to work: Majhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, June 4:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Wednesday said on this day, a year ago the people of Odisha chose development and blessed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to form a 'people's government' in the state, ending the 24-year rule of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) headed by Naveen Patnaik.

This was the victory of truth, the victory of Odia

Asmita (pride), he said. "A year ago, on this day, you chose development; you wanted positive change in Odisha and blessed the Bharatiya Janata Party to form a people's government. This was the victory of truth, the victory of 'Asmita' (Odia pride)," Majhi said in a post on X.

He said, "Your trust gives us strength to work. Your trust inspires us to fulfil all our promises. In honour of the trust, confidence and hope you have

placed in us, our government has been and will continue to strive to build a prosperous and developed Odisha by serving the people of Odisha."

The BJP formally formed its government in the state June 12, 2024, after the saffron party was declared winner June 4 by getting 78 seats in the 147-member Odisha Legislative Assembly while the BJD won 51 seats, followed by Congress (14), CPI(M) (one) and Inde-

pendents (three). "Though BJP formed government in Odisha due to number game, the people have cast more votes in favour of BJD than the saffron party candidates. The people have trust in Naveen Ji and his leadership," BJD senior vice-president Debi Prasad Mishra said.

Mishra said the BJD is performing its role as a "responsible" Opposition party in Odisha.

# No one in Odisha will remain landless: CM



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 4:** Reaffirming the state government's commitment to making land administration modern and people oriented, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Wednesday said no one in Odisha will remain landless.

Speaking at the State Revenue Officers' Conference and Workshop here, Majhi said, "No one in Odisha will remain landless. Even those who own less than four decimals of land will be considered landless and will be provided with land by the government."

Majhi highlighted the crucial role of revenue officers in implementing this initiative effectively.

Describing tehsildars as the backbone of revenue administration, the Chief Minister urged them to listen to the grievances of the people and address them promptly.

"Your office should not be a place of fear for the people —

**A clean and corruption-free revenue administration is our goal. We must work with this vision in mind**

**MOHAN CHARAN MAJHI | CHIEF MINISTER**

it should be a place of trust," Majhi said. He advised the revenue officers to reach out to the marginalised sections of society and ensure timely and fair services in villages.

The Chief Minister also expressed concern over the encroachment of valuable government land and instructed officials to reclaim and protect such land.

"In the coming days, the government will introduce reforms across various revenue sectors to ensure swift resolution of submission-rejection cases and other land acquisition matters within set deadlines," Majhi said.

He emphasised the need for complete transparency in handling land acquisition cases. Addressing irregularities in the purchase and sale

of land by tribals and Scheduled Castes, the Chief Minister stressed that there should be no exceptions in addressing such disputes.

"If there is any lapse in this regard, the officer in question will be held accountable," he warned, adding that the government has a zero-tolerance policy towards such issues.

The Chief Minister also urged officials to be honest and sincere, cautioning that corruption will not be tolerated. "Officers who perform well will definitely be rewarded," he added.

"A clean and corruption-free revenue administration is our goal. We must work with this vision in mind," Majhi concluded.

Revenue Minister Suresh Pujari said that since the new government came to power, major reforms have been introduced in revenue administration, making these services more accessible to the people.

## Four fall ill in ammonia gas leak at ice factory

PNN & AGENCIES

**Paradip, June 4:** Four persons, including an elderly woman, fell ill following an ammonia gas leak incident at an ice factory in Paradip, according to reports.

All the afflicted persons were admitted to Biju Memorial Hospital and discharged after receiving treatment.

It took around three and half an hour for the state Fire and Emergency Services personnel to contain the gas leak, according to the officials.

"A swift and coordinated response by our personnel averted a major industrial mishap following an ammonia gas leak at the Paradip Ice Factory," a statement by the department said.

The fire brigade was informed regarding the incident at about 11:03am and a team from Kujang Fire Station, led by station officer Kartik Kumar Biswal, reached the site by 11:19am and immediately

began emergency containment operations, which continued until 2:05pm. Two ammonia cylinders, each containing 60 kg, were found to be leaking. These were safely relocated from the premises. The ice factory had a total stock of eight cylinders (480 kg), but only the two leaking units were affected, an official said.

As a precautionary measure all factory personnel were promptly evacuated, and entry to the premises was strictly restricted during the operation.

The fire team operated under chemical safety protocols using fire proximity suits, breathing apparatus sets, helmets, gumboots, and continuous water spray to dilute the concentration of ammonia and minimise exposure risk.

"Fortunately, there was no fire or explosion, and no human injuries or casualties," the official said, adding that support was also extended by fire units from PPL and IFFCO.



## Sick in train, man declared dead in hosp

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, June 4:** A 57-year-old passenger of Howrah-Puri Vande Bharat Express died Wednesday after falling ill in the moving train, officials said.

The passenger, identified as H Bhowmik, 57, fell ill while the train was travelling from Howrah to Puri around 12:30pm, and he was rushed to a private

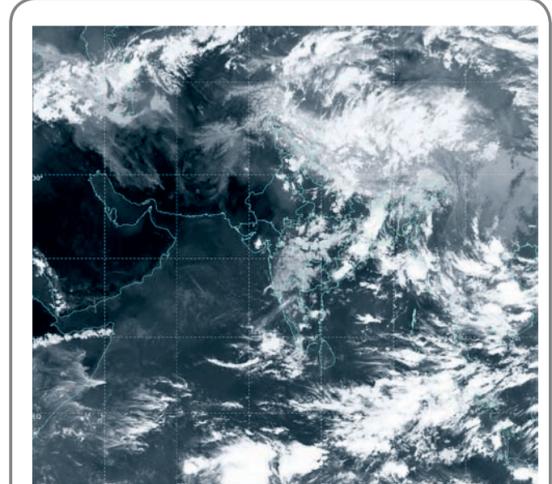
hospital from Bhubaneswar railway station in an ambulance, they said.

Personnel of Railway Protection Force (RPF) at Bhubaneswar accompanied Bhowmik while he was being taken to hospital.

He was, however, declared dead by doctors in the hospital, the officials said.

The body has been sent for post-mortem examination.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	85.98 ▲ 0.25	SENSEX	80998.25 ▲ 260.74	GOLD	₹96,850 ▲ ₹325
EURO	98.02 ▲ 0.19	NIFTY	24620.20 ▲ 77.70	SILVER	₹101,289 ▲ ₹73



WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	38.8°	37.8°	Partly cloudy sky
Min Temp	24.0°	27.0°	
Humidity	74%	71%	
Rainfall	57.2mm	Nil	

# Ex-jawan trains youth to join Indian Army

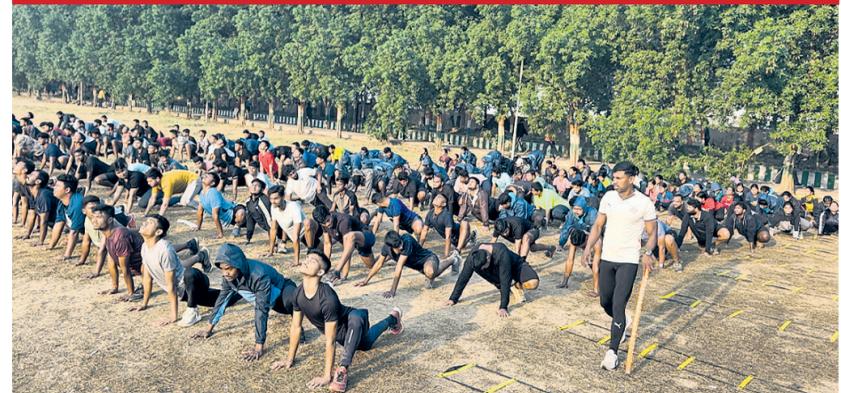
POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, June 4:** Simanchal Barik, a retired Indian Army jawan, has established Berhampur Physical Academy at Anantanagar here to train youths who aspire to join the armed forces. What began with just four unemployed youths has now grown into a thriving training centre. Today, the academy trains more than 500 aspirants, including over 80 girls from Odisha and other states.

Reports indicate that Simanchal comes from a poor family. His father Pitambar Barik had moved his family from neighbouring Gajapati district to the outskirts of Ganjam, eventually settling in Ramnagar near the railway station. Among his six children Simanchal is the fifth, whose early life was marked by poverty and struggle.

Despite financial woes, Pitambar enrolled Simanchal in Class I at the Government Municipal High School in Berhampur's Courtpetta area. Pitambar somehow could gift his son a single school uniform and a few books each year. When the uniform tore, it was stitched and reused. Ashamed of his worn clothes, Simanchal often hesitated to attend school.

## FROM POVERTY TO PERSEVERANCE



Yet he harboured a dream to support his mother financially and make her happy. He frequently skipped classes to work and help her, gradually drifting away from school. Despite this, he managed to reach Class IX and even appeared Class X exam. Though unprepared, he passed, thanks to one of his friends who gave him a guidebook and encouraged him to memorise the lessons.

Later, motivated by another friend, Simanchal applied to join the Indian Army. It was January 15, 2001 when he ap-

peared for a recruitment test that included a 1,600-metre race. While others dropped out after three rounds, Simanchal completed all the four rounds, and cracked the test.

However, fate had something else in store as just days into the training his family received a phone call claiming Simanchal had been shot dead. Though the news turned out to be false eight days later, the initial shock snatched the life of his mother, who died of a cardiac attack. The loss devastated the family. Though tempted to

return home, Simanchal chose to continue driven by his love for the country and concern for his father.

In 2015, the Army honoured him with the Best Physical Instructor Award which is an exceptional recognition among thousands of sepoy, havildars, and officers. Despite the accolade, the family's financial challenges persisted. In 2020, he took voluntary retirement and returned home. Still guided by purpose, Simanchal competed at the Asian Masters Athletics

Championship in Philippines in 2023, winning a silver and a bronze medal.

Then he established Berhampur Physical Academy at Anantanagar, 6th Lane in the Silk City, to train the Army aspirants. What began with just four unemployed youths has grown into a thriving training centre.

The academy has also become a hub for general fitness. Over 180 boys and 30 girls are enrolled for weight reduction and fitness training. The academy runs a YouTube channel 'Barik Command Fitness' offering online coaching and motivational content.

Significantly, no fee is charged for physical training. Only aspirants who opt for academic coaching to clear the written exams are required to pay ₹7,000 valid until selection. Hostel accommodation costs ₹4,500 per month, with a one-time admission fee of ₹1,000. Currently, five hostels in the city house the trainees.

Several students from the academy have already been recruited into the armed forces. Simanchal said their mission to inspire and prepare youth for service in the Indian Army will continue in the years ahead.

FOCUS WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

# PERILS OF PLASTIC



**It is estimated that around 8.8 million tonnes of plastic waste are dumped into the sea every year. This is equivalent to the dumping of nearly one truckload of plastic garbage into the sea every minute**

With a goal to create awareness about the menacing effect of plastic pollution in our daily life and to join hands for a global campaign in combating plastic pollution by providing tangible solutions for a sustainable future, the theme of the World Environment Day 2025 has been chosen as 'Ending Plastic Pollution Globally.'

Plastic has been an important part of our daily life ever since it was synthesized and patented by the Belgian chemist Leo Bakeland in 1907. We daily wake up to brush our teeth with plastic, bathe with tubs of plastic, drink water with bottles of plastic and sleep with pillow covers of plastic. Plastic is easy to mold to different shapes of our choice, cheap and durable and that is why its popularity in society has been constantly on the rise. Plastic is primarily manufactured from fossil fuel raw materials like crude petroleum oil and is chemically a synthetic long-chain polymer.

However, plastic has a very long life span in our biosphere and, therefore, is not biodegradable. Disposal of plastic items in an eco-friendly manner without causing harm to the environment has created an enormous challenge for our scientists in recent times. The world plastic production as of 2019 has been 365 million tonnes per year with 51 per cent produced in Asia alone having China as the largest producer of plastic. If the trend continues, the global annual plastic production will touch the 1100

million tonnes mark by 2050 according to one estimate. Of the total world production, only 9 per cent is recycled and 12 per cent is incinerated and the rest is dumped in nature causing severe damage to our fragile environment. India produces 3.4 million tonnes of plastic waste in a year out of which only 30 per cent is recycled. India ranks as the fifth largest producer of plastic in the world.

The most alarming impact of plastic pollution is in the seas of the world. It is estimated that around 8.8 million tonnes of plastic waste are dumped into the sea every year. This is equivalent to the dumping of nearly one truckload of plastic garbage into the sea every minute. These plastic materials break into fine particles over the years called microplastic that enters into the marine food chain to

eventually make their way to animals like whales, dolphins, turtles and aquatic birds. It chokes their stomach greatly reducing their food ingestion ability ultimately leading to their death. It is estimated that nearly one lakh sea birds die each year as a result of plastic pollution of the sea.

Similarly, plastic pollution has also cast its footprints on land. Many animals eat away plastic items mistaking them as food that ultimately choke their food path and intestines. The microplastic materials also enter the bloodstream in humans which causes diseases like cancer and triggers hormonal imbalances leading to retarded growth and reduced cognitive ability. It is estimated that nearly one lakh land animals die every year as a result of plastic pollution. Plastic contamination also reduces soil fertility and affects

the water retention capability of the soil. Another devastating dimension of plastic usage is the proliferation of Single Use Plastic (SUP) items which has been greatly infused into today's busy urban lifestyle.

Since the production of plastic from its source of fossil fuels and its disposal techniques by incineration amount to the release of vast amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, plastic has greatly contributed to global warming and climate change over the years. It is estimated that the carbon emission due to plastic pollution alone will amount to 14 per cent of the total global emissions by 2050 leading to vast climatic catastrophe.

As a way out of this menacing problem, we should minimise the consumption of plastic products in our daily life. The use of SUP items should be completely banned from public life. Scientists should come up with the discovery of new biodegradable plastic materials which should also be cost-effective at the same time to promote their mass use. New innovative methods for disposal of plastic items without affecting nature should also be explored. Most plastic items should be recycled into new utility products rather than making them anew from raw materials again. Our mantra should be Reduce, Recycle and Reuse with a far-reaching goal of transition to a plastic-free society and eco-friendly lifestyle.

*The writer is Education Officer, Regional Science Centre, Bhopal.*



Nikunja Bihari Sahu

**CARBON EMISSION DUE TO PLASTIC POLLUTION ALONE WILL AMOUNT TO 14 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL GLOBAL EMISSIONS BY 2050**



Navroz K. Dubash

**The most effective climate policy over the long term might be one that shapes structural choices regarding urbanisation and industrialisation, rather than one that focuses narrowly on regulating emissions**

SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

## It's time to rethink how we really live

Plastic is abundantly present everywhere, starting from the North Pole to the South Pole. It takes a variety of forms, from synthetic fishing nets to single-use items like water bottles and trash bags. If all plastic waste in the ocean were collected, it would fill 5 million shipping containers which can stretch 30,000 kilometres if placed end to end. And because plastic is not at all biodegradable, it simply breaks apart into smaller and smaller pieces over time, creating what's known as micro- or nanoplastics.

Despite being tiny in size, microplastics and nanoplastics pose a massive threat to human health and the health of vital ecosystems. These microplastics act as little sponges and come with a lot of different chemicals that get absorbed, all these affect our health system and can cause endocrine alterations. When you look at the human health impacts of plastics, some of them have been linked to possibly being cancerous.

They also infiltrate and contaminate every part of the planet, from everyday things like our clothing and laundry to remarkable places like the summit of Mount Everest or

the depths of the ocean. When disposing of plastic, there's no such thing as "away," because everything must go somewhere. It's in our phone, in our credit card, in our clothes and it's now in our blood. Health professionals and medical associations agree that plastic poses an ongoing crisis for human and planetary health that demands urgent global action.

And it's not just humans who are being negatively impacted; ocean ecosystems are harmed as well. Plastics have been shown to affect reproduction abilities in animals, which has serious implications not only for our food chain but also for communities that rely on those ecosystems for their livelihoods.

As a fast-growing source of greenhouse gas emissions, United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) estimates that plastic production, use, and disposal could account for 19 per cent of the total global carbon budget by 2040. Still, it is entirely possible to meet UNEP's ambitious goal of reducing plastic waste by 80 per cent in the next two decades. A systems change is needed to address the cause of plastic pollution. It combines reducing the most problem-

atic and unnecessary plastic uses with three shifts – Reuse, Recycle, and Reorient and Diversify – and actions to deal with the plastic pollution legacy. Significant reduction in the use of plastic can be achieved, e.g., by redesigning the way in which products deliver their function to society, e.g., substituting dry products for liquified ones so we do not need to transport water and the products can then be packed in simpler materials. Reuse refers to the transformation of the 'throwaway economy' into a 'reuse society' where reusing products and refilling them makes more economic sense than throwing them away. Reorient and diversify refers to shifting the market towards sustainable alternatives, which will require a shift in the way products and packaging are produced, consumer demand, regulatory frameworks and costs. Finally ensuring that where plastics are produced, they are designed to be recyclable in the market where they are sold and that waste management and the recycling market become more viable ventures. Today, only nine per cent of plastics produced are mechanically recycled.

If we can reduce production that would significantly help. And then hopefully, as behavioural change occurs, we then use alternatives, or we go back to what we used in the past. We need to identify which are the plastics that we still need, and we need to improve infrastructure to recycle. We cannot rely solely on recycling to fix the problem. Not all plastics are made the same either. So, identifying what type of materials can be recycled and where is key. A variety of economic, social, and cultural reasons are part of why recycling isn't always ideal.

In addition to government action, there is urgent need of efforts to raise advocacy and awareness. Individuals and communities must continue to use their voices to talk about the need to end plastic pollution and put their values into practice by supporting businesses striving to reduce single-use plastic products in their supply chains. Anyone can participate. Anyone can make a difference locally. Anyone can take their advocacy efforts to the next level.

*The writer is deputy director (forest), Lokayukta Odisha.*



Sasmita Lenka

**REUSE REFERS TO THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE 'THROWAWAY ECONOMY' INTO A 'REUSE SOCIETY'**

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: [edit@orissapost.com](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)



### Crackdown on freedom

Sir, The Tiananmen Square crackdown of 4 June, 1989 stands as a defining moment in modern Chinese history, symbolising the tension between state authority and democratic aspirations. What began as a peaceful movement led by students, intellectuals, and workers seeking political reform, freedom of expression, and an end to corruption, soon escalated into a nationwide call for change. Initially met with passive tolerance, the Chinese government imposed martial law and deployed the People's Liberation Army to forcibly suppress the demonstrators. On the night of June 3-4, troops and tanks moved into central Beijing, opening fire on unarmed civilians. The death toll remains uncertain, with credible estimates ranging from several hundred to several thousand. The consequences of the crackdown were both immediate and enduring. Reform-minded leaders such as Zhao Ziyang were sidelined, while figures like Jiang Zemin emerged to consolidate a more conservative and authoritarian trajectory for the Communist Party. In the aftermath, the state initiated aggressive censorship policies, erasing references to the incident from educational curricula, media discourse, and digital platforms—a strategy that has rendered the event virtually unknown to younger generations within China. The image of the anonymous "Tank Man" remains an iconic symbol of individual defiance, even as Chinese authorities continue to censor its memory.

*Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH*

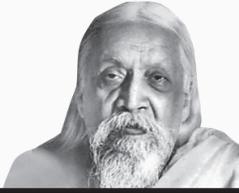
### Wake-up call

Sir, Plastic pollution is one of the world's most pressing environmental crises, with over 400 million tonnes produced annually—half of it for single use and less than 10% recycled. From landfills and oceans to human bloodstreams and placentas, plastic has invaded every part of the Earth. With plastics lasting for centuries, the consequences will burden generations unless urgent and unified action is taken. World Environment Day, observed on 5 June, serves as a global platform to promote environmental action. In 2025, hosted by the Republic of Korea, the spotlight is on beating plastic pollution—timed with the UN's ongoing Global Plastics Treaty negotiations. Governments, industries, communities, and individuals all have a role to play—from policy reforms and circular economy models to local clean-ups and eco-friendly choices.

*Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD*

When Reason died, then Wisdom was born.

SRI AUROBINDO



## Challenge & Opportunity

When climate change is framed as a global problem requiring collective regulation of greenhouse-gas emissions, developing-country governments see little reason to prioritise the issue over others. After all, the rich, industrialised countries who contributed disproportionately to the problem are themselves backing away from decarbonisation and climate-finance commitments, while low-income countries bear the brunt of the costs of climate change. Decision-makers in developing countries understandably conclude it may be more rational to hunker down and focus on climate resilience rather than emissions reductions.

But this is not the only way to frame the problem. While climate change undoubtedly poses a global collective-action problem, in practice climate outcomes are shaped by myriad decisions concerning development objectives such as industrial development, urbanisation, job creation, and local pollution management. Because late developers often have not entirely locked into energy systems, transport infrastructure, urbanisation plans, and energy consumption patterns, they have greater flexibility to steer investment and consumption choices toward lower-carbon and climate-resilient options.

In other words, the climate challenge can be framed as a choice among alternative development pathways. In many cases, development choices are also climate choices, and in a world where being a low-carbon economy confers a competitive edge, the absence of structural lock-in could be turned into an advantage.

Pursuing a climate-as-development approach is not easy or foolproof. It requires considerable state capacity, strategy-setting capabilities, and full mobilisation of the necessary technologies and finance. Importantly, it does not negate concerns about climate equity. Developing countries may opt to pursue the climate-as-development opportunity, but rich countries that disproportionately caused the problem remain on the hook to support this transition. Yet, this perspective offers an alternative to the zero-sum framing of climate policy and a basis for nationally specific visions.

An important starting point is that elites internalise and support low-carbon development as a potential opportunity, with climate resilience as a necessary component. Climate objectives cannot trump development goals, but, equally, development innocent of climate considerations is no longer viable. To be politically feasible, any strategy must be rooted in the national context. Low-carbon development pathways are not easily replicable and need to be tailored to geography, local capacities, and other variables. And, as with any long-term structural change, a durable, widely shared national narrative is needed (South Korea's "green growth" in the 2010s is a useful example).

Shifting from narrative and vision to policy and implementation requires high levels of state capacity. Technical capabilities, along with the ability to identify climate-as-development opportunities and sources of climate vulnerability, are necessary, but by no means sufficient. In addition, as sociologist Peter Evans' analysis of East Asian industrial policy reminds us, the state must be simultaneously "embedded" to engage and support private-sector players, and maintain sufficient "autonomy" to avoid capture.

In practice, this means building institutions that can set the strategy, coordinate across sectors and at different scales, and provide trusted platforms to mediate conflict, ideally enshrined in law. All too often, climate policymaking is entrusted to relatively weak or siloed environmental ministries that cannot organise or enforce an all-of-government approach. Moreover, because broad structural changes can introduce distributional concerns and leave some communities behind, deliberative bodies—such as South Africa's Presidential Climate Commission—can help to entrench low-carbon options by mediating social frictions and maintaining broad-based political buy-in.

Another major challenge for developing and emerging economies facing high capital costs is mobilising adequate finance for capital-intensive low-carbon development. There are no easy answers here. According to BloombergNEF, global investment in the low-carbon energy transition in 2024 was only around one-third of the annual amount required through 2030, and there were wide disparities in spending. Developing countries have experienced few tangible gains from multilateral initiatives to scale up climate finance and reform the international financial architecture. Holding advanced economies to their financing commitments should remain a priority; but developing countries also need to mobilise more domestic finance and develop credible investment programmes to attract global capital.

Recent efforts to create "country platforms"—government-led coordination mechanisms that articulate a vision and identify financing pathways to achieve it—suggest one way forward. In preparing to host this year's United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30), Brazil is seeking to lead the way with a comprehensive multisectoral development programme to mobilise investment. Independent research suggests that Brazil has all the ingredients for a successful green industrial transformation: a strong resource base, a legacy of advanced manufacturing, and a large market. Such models are worth exploring elsewhere, provided that they reflect a national vision, not donor-driven objectives.

One common criticism of nationally led, multi-objective development strategies is that the urgency of the climate crisis demands more direct action focused on emissions reduction, rather than on the indirect pathways suggested here. But this view ignores political reality. If climate action is seen to be at odds with other development objectives, it will lose. The only option is to devise strategies that can realise both sets of goals. The most effective climate policy over the long term might be one that shapes structural choices regarding urbanisation and industrialisation, rather than one that focuses narrowly on regulating emissions.

With the scope for global cooperation receding in today's fraught geopolitical environment, these arguments should not be interpreted as a call for atomisation. On the contrary, developing national visions for low-carbon, resilient economies would benefit from mutual learning and enhanced coordination rooted in attention to local contexts.

Moreover, deploying low-carbon technologies will require investment in stable value chains, which depends on political and economic predictability. Developing countries, in particular, will have to be strategic and nimble in finding a niche for themselves. And the provision of finance at the necessary scale will still depend on a threshold degree of global cooperation.

But there is only one foundation that can support all these elements: a domestically developed vision of a low-carbon, competitive, and resilient economy.

*The writer is Professor of Public and International Affairs at the High Meadows Environmental Institute at Princeton University.*

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

# Maharaja Pratap Singh's dream turns a reality

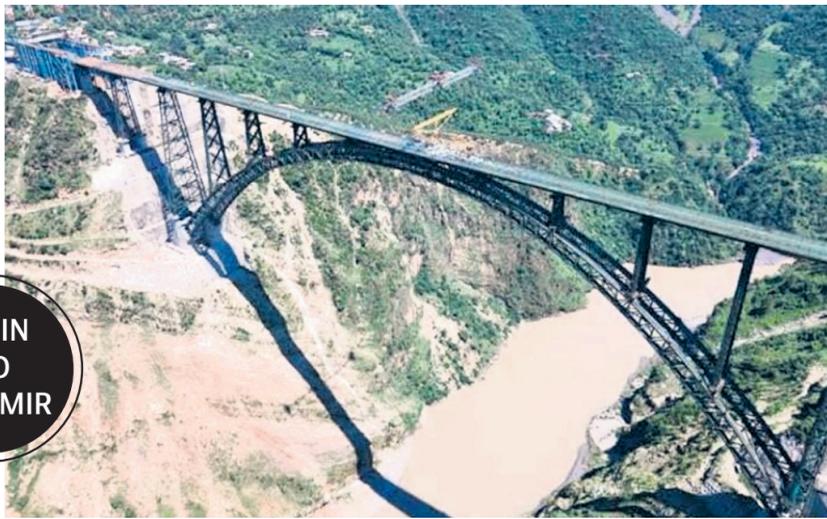
Modi will also inaugurate the Chenab bridge, which will be the world's highest railway arch bridge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Reasi, June 4:** A century-old dream of connecting the Kashmir Valley by rail is finally turning into reality as Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to flag off the first Vande Bharat train from Katra to Kashmir Friday. He will also inaugurate the Chenab bridge, the world's highest railway arch bridge, marking a historic milestone in India's infrastructure development.

The vision dates back to March 1, 1892, when Maharaja Pratap Singh of the Dogra dynasty proposed a railway line to Kashmir. British engineers were engaged to survey the treacherous terrain, and between 1898 and 1909, three detailed reports were submitted. The first, by DA Adam, suggested a narrow-gauge electric railway, but was rejected due to elevation challenges. The second, by WJ Weightman, proposed a route from Abbottabad along the Jhelum River, which was also declined. The third report, by engineer Wild Blood, recommending a route along the Chenab River through Reasi, was finally accepted.

Plans to power electric trains and establish power stations were explored but later



TRAIN TO KASHMIR

dropped. British engineer Col DE Bourel and geologist TD La Touche were then tasked with studying coal reserves to support rail operations. However, the death of Maharaja Pratap Singh in 1925 and the intensifying freedom movement led to the shelving of the project.

The idea was revived in 1983 when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi laid the foundation for the Jammu-Udhampur-Srinagar rail line, then estimated to cost 50 crore and expected to be completed in five years. But progress was slow—only 11 km

of track was built in 13 years, costing 300 crore.

In 1996 and 1997, PMs H D Deve Gowda and I K Gujral laid foundation stones at Udhampur, Qazigund, and Baramulla for a broader Udhampur-Katra-Baramulla railway project. Construction officially began in 1997, but severe geographical and weather challenges caused repeated delays and escalated the cost to over 43,800 crore.

Recognising its strategic and national significance, the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla

Railway Line (USBRL) was declared a national project in 2002. So far, 209 km of the 272 km stretch has been commissioned in phases: Qazigund-Baramulla (2009), Banihal-Qazigund (2013), Udhampur-Katra (2014), and Banihal-Sangaldan (2023). The final link from Katra to Sangaldan was completed in February 2024.

This engineering marvel includes 38 tunnels and 927 bridges, with the Chenab bridge as its crowning glory—standing 359 metres above the riverbed, 35 metres higher than the Eiffel

**The Kashmir rail project—once a royal ambition—is now a symbol of India's engineering excellence and commitment to inclusive development**

Tower.

"This railway is not just about connectivity; it's about national integration and pride," a senior railway official said. Vikramaditya Singh, grandson of Maharaja Hari Singh, expressed his pride in seeing the Dogra ruler's vision come to life, calling it a moment of national significance.

The project also brought transformative changes to remote and previously inaccessible areas. Over 215 km of approach roads were built, improving connectivity to 70 villages such as Dugga, Surukot, and Hingni. This has spurred economic activity, with new marketplaces, eateries, and services emerging, benefiting around 1.5 lakh people.

The Kashmir rail project—once a royal ambition—is now a symbol of India's engineering excellence and commitment to inclusive development.

# Eid animal sales slump in Kashmir after attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, June 4:** Shadow of the Pahalgam terror attack loomed over Eid-ul-Azha shopping in different parts of Kashmir, including Srinagar, with sales of sacrificial animals remaining sluggish so far.

Most people here link the sluggish trade to the Pahalgam terror attack, which killed 26 people April 22, saying people now want to hold on to their cash.

The deadly terror attack with cross-border links triggered a military response by India, which targeted multiple terror hideouts in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir under Operation Sindoor.

"Only last month, India and Pakistan almost went to war. In such a scenario, people are avoiding spending unnecessarily, leading to lesser economic activities over the past one-and-a-half months," Jamal Ahmad, a local businessman, said.

Livestock dealers from across Jammu and Kashmir have descended on Srinagar, the summer capital of the Union Territory, in the hope of selling the sacrificial animals even as they find fewer takers.

"The business has been on the slower side ever since the outbreak of the Covid pandemic. However, the sales this year are simply the lowest," Mohammad Asim, a goat trader from Samba district, told PTI at the makeshift livestock market in Tengpora.

Asim, who said he has been



coming to Srinagar with his flock for the past 15 years, said the business was never so bad.

"With less than three days to go for Eid, we would usually be planning our trip back home. Even last year, the sales were not very good but we still managed to sell more than half the livestock by this time," he said.

Mohammad Akhtar, a Bakewell from Poonch, said he might have to take some of his animals back to his village if the sales do not improve.

"I have slashed the rates by ₹50 per kg in the hope of doing some business. Last year, I sold sheep for ₹380 per kg, but this year the customers are bargaining even at ₹350 per kg," Akhtar said.

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
Tender No. MCSW-Scrap-DIS-25-26-06  
**Name of the Work: DISPOSAL OF ACCUMULATED ZERO VALUE/VERY LOW WASTE INSIDE WORKSHOP PREMISES AT CARRIAGE REPAIR WORKSHOP, MANCHESWAR.**  
Advised Value: ₹ 21,95,826/-, EMD: ₹ 43,900/-, Period of Completion: 06 Months.  
Bidding start date: 14.06.2025, Tender closing date & time: at 1200 hrs. of 26.06.2025.  
Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.  
Complete details & tender documents will be available at website www.ireps.gov.in  
By, Chief Mechanical Engineer (POH-II)/PR-196/Q/25-26 CRW/Mancheswar

# Hathras satsang stampede: Next hearing June 13

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hathras (UP), June 4:** A court in Hathras district Wednesday briefly heard arguments in connection with the July 2024 stampede during a satsang of preacher Surajpal that claimed 121 lives and scheduled the next hearing for June 13.

During the day's proceedings, Supreme Court lawyer AP Singh appeared on behalf of the accused event organisers and told the court that the incident was a "conspiracy" and that they would expose the truth through a petition.

The incident had taken place July 2 during the satsang of Surajpal alias Bhole Baba alias Narayan Sakar Hari in Bulgarhi village in the Sikandra Rao tehsil. "What happened July 2 was not an accident but a planned conspiracy. We will file a petition naming those responsible for triggering the chaos and spraying toxic substances that led to the deaths," Singh said.

"All 11 accused in the case are currently out on bail," Singh told PTI.

"Except for Sanju Yadav, all were present in court today. Arguments are currently ongoing on the framing of charges," he added. According to Singh, there is evidence and facts supporting the claim that outsiders orchestrated the stampede for political gains after seeing the large gathering.

# AYODHYA'S RAM TEMPLE VISIT

## One of the best things I've ever done: Musk's father

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ayodhya (UP), June 4:** Errol Musk, father of tech billionaire Elon Musk, visited the Ram temple in Ayodhya Wednesday afternoon and described the experience as "wonderful" and one of the "best things" he has ever done.

Errol also paid obeisance at the Hanumangarhi temple nearby. He was initially scheduled to visit the Taj Mahal in Agra as well but the plan may be dropped due to extreme heat in the region.

"It's wonderful, absolutely wonderful (Ayodhya visit). It's one of the best things I've ever done."

"I'm so glad I came to see it and can't wait till the temple gets completed, the big temple, it's going to be something like a wonder of the world," Errol told PTI Videos.

Separately, talking to reporters after visiting both temples, he said, "My experience here in India has been wonderful. I'm here (in India) to begin working with Servotech and am looking forward to spending a lot of time in the country. The temples are marvellous and so are the people."

Accompanied by his daughter Alexandra Musk, Errol arrived at Ayodhya airport around 2.30 pm and left after 4 pm. He was wearing kurta-pyjama during his visit to the Ram



**My experience here in India has been wonderful. I'm here (in India) to begin working with Servotech and am looking forward to spending a lot of time in the country. The temples are marvellous and so are the people**  
ERROL MUSK | FATHER OF TECH BILLIONAIRE ELON MUSK

temple. Security was on high alert in the temple town during the visit.

"There is already a three-layered high-level security cover in place in Ayodhya, which includes round-the-clock deployment of high-tech anti-drone systems capable of detecting and neutralising unauthorised aerial activity," a police officer said.

He added that security arrangements in and around the temple area include CCTV sur-

veillance, regular checking of visitors and deployment of specially trained personnel.

"However, no additional security cover will be extended officially for this visit as the existing measures are adequate," he said.

Errol, who is the Global Advisor to Servotech Renewable Power System Ltd, began his India trip on June 1 and will be in the country till June 6, a spokesperson for the Haryana-based company said in a

# Devotees flock to witness Ram Darbar Pran Pratishtha ceremony

Thousands of devotees gathered in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, for the second day to witness the Pran Pratishtha ceremony of the Ram Darbar at the grand Ram temple. The three-day consecration ritual, which began June 3 (Tuesday), is set to conclude June 5, coinciding with Ganga Dussehra, an auspicious day in the Hindu calendar. The ceremonial installation of Lord Ram, Sita, Lakshman, and Hanuman on the first floor of the temple is being conducted in accordance with age-old Vedic traditions and customs. Saint Mithilesh Nandani Sharan, who is closely associated with the rituals, emphasised the spiritual significance of the occasion. "After Shri Ram Lalla was ceremoniously enthroned in the main sanctum (Garbhagriha) on the ground floor of the temple, devotees across the country eagerly awaited the consecration of the rest of the complex, particularly the Ram Darbar on the first floor," said Saint Mithilesh Nandani Sharan. "Following the proper Vedic rituals and traditional procedures of Pran Pratishtha, with utmost devotion, Lord Sita-Ram, the divine couple, are being installed, accompanied by Hanuman Ji Maharaj and Lakshman Ji."

statement.

"His visit is squarely focused on accelerating India's burgeoning green technology and electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure development," the company said.

Servotech managing director Raman Bhatia is also expected to visit the Ram temple Wednesday.

# Shubhanshu Shukla's family, friends count the days to space odyssey

The 39-year-old Lucknow boy's much anticipated space voyage, scheduled June 10 from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, will also mark India's return to human spaceflight after Rakesh Sharma's 1984 odyssey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, June 4:** His countdown to space, the final frontier, has begun. And Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla's family and friends are anxiously ticking off the days before he lifts off on board SpaceX's Falcon-9 rocket that will propel him into history as the first Indian to step onto the International Space Station (ISS).

The 39-year-old Lucknow boy's much anticipated space voyage, scheduled June 10 from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, will also mark India's return to human spaceflight after Rakesh Sharma's 1984 odyssey.

"It's true that as our son stands on the brink of history and is set to represent India in NASA's AXIOM-4 mission to the ISS. It's an immensely proud moment not just for us

but for the country, and we are praying for the success of this space mission each day," Shukla's Lucknow-based father Shambhu, a retired government employee, told PTI.

"He calls us up each day to check on our well-being and to make us feel comfortable before his space trip that holds its own significance for the country," he added.

The family hasn't seen him in a year and a half as he has been in intensive training.

According to his elder sister Suchi Mishra, there is so much talk of the space mission that don't mention it very much during their conversations. "We keep our conversation as normal as possible. We are eagerly waiting for the mission's success and for our brother to be back home with us."

She recalled that her brother would talk excitedly about

**WAITING FOR LIFT-OFF**



aircraft as a child and this is a dream come true.

"As a child he had once been to an air show, and he later told me how he was fascinated by the speed and sound of the aircrafts. Then he had spoken of his dream to fly, but of course there was no telling at the time how quickly he would embrace

his dream.

"As an Indian and as his sister, it's definitely a very proud moment, for this space journey of my brother is carrying with them the hopes and blessings of a billion Indians," Suchi told PTI.

The 14-day space flight is being seen as preparatory to the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) own Gaganyaan human-spaceflight programme.

The City Montessori School (CMS), where Shukla studied right from the beginning to primary classes to class 12, is also agog with excitement. Ensuring that its students don't miss out, the management is making special arrangements to watch the action live.

More than 62,000 students from across all its branches will be watching to celebrate Shukla's journey from class-

rooms to space, said CMS manager Geeta Gandhi Kingdon.

"We are all behind Shubhanshu and praying for his success, as his journey also embodies our motto of 'Jai Jagat' one that will inspire each student to aim for the stars," Kingdon told PTI.

Nageshwar Prasad Shukla, Shukla's Maths teacher at CMS's Aliganj branch in Lucknow, is currently on the Char Dhaam Yatra pilgrimage in Uttarakhand and said he was praying for the success of the space mission of one of his brightest, most focused students.

"As a teacher, I am delighted at the way he has progressed through sheer hard work and is now set to embark on a space odyssey to the ISS that no Indian has ever undertaken before," Nageshwar told PTI over the phone.

# PLASTIC A TICKING BOMB

## MICROPLASTIC A threat to aquatic life & fishermen



Microplastic pollution, an emerging environmental crisis, endangers aquatic ecosystems and human livelihoods. Formed when plastic waste in water bodies breaks down into particles smaller than 5 mm through weathering and erosion, microplastics blend into oceans, becoming nearly impossible to remove.



SOUMYA RANJAN BISWAL

"Microplastics are highly reactive and infiltrate the food chain, affecting both nature and humans," says environmental scientist Manish Kumar. Coastal populations and global shipping contribute significantly to ocean plastic waste, which degrades into microplastics over time, disrupting marine ecosystems. Aquatic animals ingest these particles, which humans later consume, posing risks to the natural food chain.

Environmentalist Soumya Ranjan Biswal highlights the severe impact on marine life, particularly Olive Ridley sea turtles, whose mortality rates have surged near Devi river mouth due to plas-

Addressing microplastic pollution demands collective action—reducing plastic use, enforcing regulations, and developing solutions to protect oceans, aquatic life, and the livelihoods of fishermen



RANJAN PANDA

young to participate in ocean cleanup initiatives.

Likewise, Kumar advocates for natural fiber products and innovative technologies to filter microplastics from water bodies. Addressing microplastic pollution demands collective action—reducing plastic use, enforcing regulations, and developing solutions to protect oceans, aquatic life, and the livelihoods of fishermen.

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP



As Odisha aligns with the global call to beat plastic pollution, it sets a strong example of how government action, civil society, and individual responsibility can come together to drive a meaningful change. The road ahead may be challenging, but with continued effort, awareness, and innovation, a cleaner and more sustainable future is well within reach

As countries across the globe are gearing up to observe World Environment Day June 5 with the United Nations theme "Beat Plastic Pollution", Odisha has stepped up its battle against one of the most pressing environmental issues of our time—plastic waste. From stringent enforcement to innovative community-driven initiatives, the state is adopting a comprehensive approach to reduce its plastic footprint.

Plastic pollution, particularly from single-use items, has become a global crisis. It affects marine ecosystems, wildlife, and even human health. Underscoring the gravity of the issue, environmentalist JK Panigrahi of Orissa Environmental Society (OES) said, "Every year, over 430 million tonnes of plastic are produced globally, and 13-17 million tonnes end up in the oceans. Plastics don't biodegrade. They break down into micro-



JK PANIGRAHI

plastics that enter our food chain and harm health." To address this crisis, Odisha has been enforcing a state-wide ban on single-use plastics in urban areas since October 2, 2018. The ban includes polythene carry bags, PET bottles under 200 ml, disposable cutlery, and similar items. The state also strengthened its crackdown further by extending the ban to protected areas like wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, and tiger reserves, effective April 1, 2024.

A Special Task Force (STF), headed by the Chief Secretary and supported by a state-level monitoring committee, has been ensuring compliance. Between March and June 2024 alone, enforcement agencies confiscated over 12,596 kg banned plastic and imposed fines to the tune of Rs 12.84 lakh.

Back in Capital city, rather than relying solely on punitive measures, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has taken a more proactive approach by distributing cotton bags to vendors. This initiative aims to encourage long-term behavioral change instead of short-term compliance, officials say.

While enforcement has been successful in urban centres, challenges persist in rural and remote areas. "The monitoring and awareness in villages are still inadequate," said



SATYBRATA SAMAL

Panigrahi. He called for more outreach programs and community engagement to fill the gaps.

Climate activist and founder of an environmental impact startup, Celba Green Solutions Neelima Mishra, highlighted the importance of waste segregation. "When plastic and organic waste are mixed, they produce toxic leachate and increase greenhouse gas emissions," she said. Mishra emphasised that source segregation makes recycling easier and composting more effective, protecting both public health and the environment. She also encouraged people to follow the 5R—Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rot—and avoid over-packaged products.



NEELIMA MISHRA

Odisha's environmental movement is also being powered by motivated individuals.

Environmentalist Sanjukta Basa calls for stronger focus on domestic waste management to protect health and environment. Basa emphasised the need for families to adopt reducing, reusing, recycling, and proper disposal practices as a key step in tackling plastic pollution and safeguarding public health.

Individuals.



BAPI GOCHHYAT

Bapi Gochhyat, a well-known crusader, has cleaned Paradip beach 300 times, collecting nearly 5 tonnes of plastic waste. "It's not just about observing one day. Swachh Bharat is a continuous revolution, and every citizen must take ownership," he said.

Another activist, Trilochan Sahoo, advocated replacing plastic with biodegradable alternatives like bam-

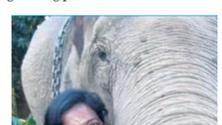


TRILOCHAN SAHOO

boo, hemp, and stainless steel.

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SANJUKTA BASA

Satyabrata Samal, founder and director of Saatvick Soul Founda-

tion—the largest plogging community in eastern India based in Odisha—shared insights on waste collection efforts.

Samal said, "On an average, we collect around 80 to 100 kg waste daily from various locations during plogging activities. Waste segregation and

raising awareness among youth must be prioritised both at schools and at home by parents to effectively stop pollution in the future."

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## Over 3.2cr disaster-hit displaced in a decade

India recorded 32.3 million (3.23 crore) internal displacements due to disasters, such as floods and storms, between 2015 and 2024, the third highest in the world after China and the Philippines, according to a new report.

The report by the Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) said disasters triggered 284.8 million internal displacements or forced movements across 210 countries and territories during this period.

East and South Asia were the most affected regions.

"At the country level, Bangladesh, China, India, the Philippines and the US recorded the highest figures over the past decade," the report said. China recorded 46.9 million internal displacements and the Philippines 46.1 million.

The report said nearly 90 per cent of global disaster displacements were the result of floods and storms.

"Storms triggered most of the world's disaster displacements between 2015 and 2024, accounting for 120.9 million movements," it said. Floods triggered 114.8 million displacements during the same period.

Cyclones, including Amphan in 2020, accounted for about 92 per cent of all storm displacements globally.

The report said disasters have triggered an increasing number of internal displacements since 2015, the result in part of more frequent and intense hazards but also improved data at the national level and better monitoring capacity at the global level.

In 2024 alone, 45.8 million internal displacements were recorded, the highest on record and far above the decadal average of 26.5 million. India recorded 5.4 million (54 lakh) displacements last year due to floods, storms and other disasters, the highest figure in 12 years.

The report said many of the displacements were preemptive evacuations, testimony to the efforts of governments and local communities in disaster-prone countries to save lives and prevent injuries.

However, "millions of people remain displaced for months or years after fleeing major storms, floods and other natural hazards".

The IDMC emphasised that disaster displacement "affects the most vulnerable more severely". "They are often forced to flee repeated-

ly and for longer periods of time, which heightens their pre-existing vulnerabilities and reinforces social inequalities," it said.

It warned that under current climate conditions, an annual average of 32 million people worldwide are likely to be displaced by riverine and coastal floods, drought and cyclonic winds in any given future year.

"That risk increases by 100 per cent if Earth's average temperature rises by more than 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to the start of the indus-

trial revolution (1850-1890), it said. The 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold is a target that countries agreed to at the Paris climate conference in 2015 to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

"Left unaddressed, disaster displacement will be a major obstacle to the achievement of global goals, such as those set by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," the report said. ■

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## Fast fashion bane of Mother Earth

The global appetite for fast fashion—low-cost, trend-driven clothing, primarily synthetic textiles—has led to an unsustainable surge in textile waste, posing significant threats to ecosystems, water resources, and even human health.

According to industry data, textile sales have doubled from 100 to 200 billion units annually, yet the average number of times a garment is worn has decreased by 36 per cent. The result: A staggering 92 million tonnes of textile waste generated each year, with 11.3 million tonnes ending up in landfills.

Experts say the industry is responsible for dumping or burning the equivalent of one garbage truck full of clothes every second.

The environmental burden doesn't stop at waste. The fashion industry is a massive consumer of water as production of a single cotton shirt requires around 2,700 litres of water, while a pair of jeans consumes approximately 7,600 litres. Textile dyeing is now the second-largest polluter of clean water globally.

"Microplastics from synthetic textiles—tiny particles under 5 mm—pose serious threats to marine ecosystems," warned MG Sujana, chief

scientist at the Environment & Sustainability Department, Institute of Minerals & Materials Technology. "These microfibres, released during manu-

facturing and laundering, physically harm marine organisms and carry toxic chemicals that disrupt aquatic life. They even find their way into the human food chain, raising health concerns."

Dr. Sujana added that dyes and chemical treatments degrade soil and water microbiomes.

Bhubaneswar-based fashion designer Pritam Nayak, a proponent of 'slow fashion', believes that the shift must start at both ends—industry and consumer. "We design timeless garments focused on quality and emotional value so they last for years," he said. "Consumers must move away from impulsive buying and value well-crafted, ethically made clothing."

"Polyester, nylon, and acrylic are among the most harmful fabrics—they're synthetic, non-biodegradable, and release microplastics when washed," he said.

Environmentalist Soukar Behera, former honorary wildlife warden of Puri, added "Fast fashion fills landfills and microplastics. Nearly 90 per cent of clothes are dumped after minimal use. Youth must make re-wearing a trend. Fashion brands must shift to circular, eco-friendly practices. True style lies in sustainability, not speed."

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## KILLER INDOOR AIR POLLUTION

Indoor environment conditions contribute greatly to human wellbeing as most people spend around 90 per cent of their time indoors, mainly at home or in the workplace. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), indoor air pollution is responsible for 3.8 million premature deaths annually.

Activities inside houses (or buildings) like cooking, smoking, and use of incense sticks, mosquito repellents and room fresheners contribute to indoor air pollution by releasing pollutants like carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds, particulate matter, aerosol and biological pollutants.

Resultantly, over the past decade, research on indoor air pollution control has begun to shift from outdoor to indoor environments as both short and long-term exposure to indoor air pollution can cause a wide range of diseases.

Citing an example of indoor air pollution caused by daily activities, environmental scientist Boopathy R said, "We are familiar

with mosquito repellents. They release harmful particulate matter, which contribute to indoor air pollution, increasing the risk of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases." It's high time people started addressing the issue, Boopathy pointed out.

According to Trupti Das, an environment scientist, awareness is the key to tackling the issue.

"Properly ventilated rooms with small plants can go a long way in limiting the effects of indoor air pollution. We also need to keep our home and environment clean. Moreover, a lot of awareness is needed to tackle the issue as many are still clueless about indoor air pollution," Das said.

Urging people to avoid burning wastes, Das said, "Burning of wastes, including plastics, produce a lot of toxic substances in the form of smoke. When inhaled, it impacts our health severely. Instead of waiting for the government to intervene, we should start acting on it."

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

research has attracted significant interest, including from those in the packaging sector.

Scientists worldwide are racing to develop innovative solutions to the growing plastic waste crisis, an effort championed by awareness campaigns such as World Environment Day taking place June 5.

Plastic pollution is set to triple by 2040, the UN Environment Programme has predicted, adding 23-37 million tonnes of waste into the world's oceans each year.

"Children cannot choose the planet they will live on. It is our duty as scientists to ensure that we leave them with the best possible environment," Aida said. Aida said the new material is as strong as petroleum-based plastics but breaks down into its

original components when exposed to salt. Those components can then be further processed by naturally occurring bacteria, thereby avoiding generating microplastics that can harm

aquatic life and enter the food chain. As salt is also present in soil, a piece about five cm (two inches) in size disintegrates on land after over 200 hours, he added.

REUTERS

## Plastic that dissolves in seawater within hours

Researchers in Japan have developed a plastic that dissolves in seawater within hours, offering up a potential solution for a modern-day scourge polluting oceans and harming wildlife.

While scientists have long experimented with biodegradable plastics, researchers from RIKEN Center for Emergent Matter Science and the University of Tokyo say their new material breaks down much more quickly and leaves no residual trace.

At a lab in Wako city near Tokyo, the team demonstrated a small piece of plastic vanishing in a container of salt water after it was stirred up for about an hour.

While the team has not yet detailed any plans for commercialisation, project lead Takuzo Aida said their

research has attracted significant interest, including from those in the packaging sector.

Scientists worldwide are racing to develop innovative solutions to the growing plastic waste crisis, an effort championed by awareness campaigns such as World Environment Day taking place June 5.

Plastic pollution is set to triple by 2040, the UN Environment Programme has predicted, adding 23-37 million tonnes of waste into the world's oceans each year.

"Children cannot choose the planet they will live on. It is our duty as scientists to ensure that we leave them with the best possible environment," Aida said. Aida said the new material is as strong as petroleum-based plastics but breaks down into its

original components when exposed to salt. Those components can then be further processed by naturally occurring bacteria, thereby avoiding generating microplastics that can harm

aquatic life and enter the food chain. As salt is also present in soil, a piece about five cm (two inches) in size disintegrates on land after over 200 hours, he added.

REUTERS

REUTERS

REUTERS



NHAI projects worth Rs 35,000 crore are ongoing in Delhi, while projects worth Rs 64,000 crore have been completed

UTTARAKHAND GOVT ISSUES COV ADVISORY

Amid the rising number of Covid cases in several states, the Uttarakhand government Wednesday issued an advisory asking the district administrations to strengthen the monitoring system and ensure availability of oxygen and essential medicines in hospitals. However, it said the COVID-19 situation is completely normal in the state at present



of the day quote

If water has entered people's homes, then probe why it happened. The government's job is to find Pakistani terrorists (involved in the Pahalgam attack) and not to interfere in (celebration) of festivals

AADITYA THACKERAY | SHIV SENA (UBT) LEADER

Hindi is not our national language. It is one of the many Indian languages, like those spoken in other states. Why was it being imposed? Was the government under some kind of pressure?

RAJ THACKERAY | MNS CHIEF

For Assamese people, BJP is a compulsion. BJP follows Assamese culture and tradition. The Assamese people for the first time got their own government

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

Stampede triggered by fan chaos, official lapse

AGENCIES

Bangalore, June 4: "I don't know what we did wrong...we had tickets," an exasperated RCB supporter wondered outside the Chinnaswamy stadium, watching what was meant to be a day of celebration become a day of mourning after 11 fans were killed in a mad scramble to attend the team's IPL victory party here.

Thirty three of the team's injured supporters had to be hospitalised after a chaotic day. "When one organises a victory celebration of this magnitude...safety and security measures need to be taken," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia told PTI, taking note of the lack of preparedness to deal with the lakhs who crowded the streets, desperate to catch a glimpse of their favourite stars, including the enigmatic Virat kohli.

The tickets for the hastily-arranged engagement programme were sold in a jiffy, but the fans crowded all the gates 12, 13 (main gates) and 10 (club house entrance) with not enough security to control them. The number swelled to unexpected levels around 3.30pm and it forced the police and stadium security officials to close all the gates to prevent the ticket-less from squeezing in along with the ones who had valid tickets.

"We came to watch our stars. I bought tickets for the function but was not even able to enter the stadium. Police suddenly blocked all the roads and closed



Absolutely heartrending: PM

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday described the stampede in Bengaluru during the victory celebrations of Royal Challengers Bangalore's IPL triumph as "absolutely heartrending". Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said 11 persons died while 33 were injured due to the stampede near the Chinnaswamy Stadium where a large number of people had gathered to participate in RCB's victory celebrations. In a post on X, Modi said, "The mishap in Bengaluru is absolutely heartrending. In this tragic hour, my thoughts are with all those who have lost their loved ones. I pray that those who are injured have a speedy recovery."

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh also expressed deep anguish over the loss of lives. Several ticket-holders had no choice but to make a retreat from the venue albeit thankful that they escaped unscathed from what became a stampede.

Even from a distance, it was disturbing to see women fainting and some others getting crushed under the feet of jostling fans. The fan engagement function lasted close to an hour and the team went back to the hotel around 6.30 pm but the fans still remained near the stadium creating further traffic block and chaos, before slowly moving away after a tragic day.

At around 4.30 pm many more came from the nearby Cubbon Park metro station, worsening the situation and the police had to resort to mild use of force to disperse the huge gathering. At Gate No. 10, the situation was grimmer as women and children were shoved around forcefully, and even this reporter was pushed to a corner by a police official with a lathi who also hurled some swear words in local dialect.

Several ticket-holders had no choice but to make a retreat from the venue albeit thankful that they escaped unscathed from what became a stampede. Even from a distance, it was disturbing to see women fainting and some others getting crushed under the feet of jostling fans. The fan engagement function lasted close to an hour and the team went back to the hotel around 6.30 pm but the fans still remained near the stadium creating further traffic block and chaos, before slowly moving away after a tragic day.

A list of major stampedes in India

Here is a list of some other tragedies that have taken place in the country in recent years:

Over 50 people have been killed in stampedes this year at temples, railway station and at the Maha Kumbh among others.

On February 15, a stampede broke out at New Delhi Railway Station's platform number 14 and 15. Eighteen people were killed and 15 injured, mostly pilgrims visiting Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj.

During the Maha Kumbh, a stampede January 29 at the Sangam area as millions as pilgrims were jostling for space to take a holy dip on the auspicious occasion of Mauni Amavasya resulted in the death of 30 people and injuries to 60.

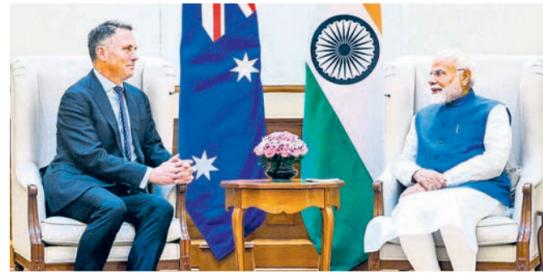
May 3, 2025: Six persons died and around 100 people injured in a stampede in the early hours during an annual festival of Sri Lairai Devi temple at Shirgao village in Goa.

December 4, 2024: A 35-year-old woman died and a boy was injured at Sandhya Theatre in Hyderabad in a stampede where Allu Arjun's blockbuster 'Pushpa 2' was screened.

July 2, 2024: At least 121 people, including women and children, were killed after a stampede broke out at a 'satsang' (prayer meeting) organised by self-styled godman, Bhole Baba aka Narayan Saakar Hari, in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras.

March 31, 2023: At least 36 people died when the slab constructed on top of an ancient 'bawdi' or well collapsed during a 'havan' ceremony held on the occasion of Ram Navami at a temple in Indore city.

Australia backs India's fight against terrorism



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 4: Australia backs India's fight against terrorism and it considers ties with New Delhi crucial for Canberra's national interest, Australian Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles said Wednesday.

During talks with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Marles welcomed the cessation of military actions between India and Pakistan, and described it as "an act of Indian leadership".

In the meeting, India and Australia agreed to expand their strategic cooperation for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific. The Pahalgam terror attack and Pakistan's support to cross-border terrorism figured in the Singh-Marles talks.

In his remarks, Singh hailed Canberra's unequivocal support to New Delhi's resolute response to the Pahalgam attack. "We acknowledge and welcome the stoppage in military activity. We see this as an act of Indian leadership," Marles said in his televised opening remarks.

On his part, Singh highlighted India's right to respond in self-defence against Pakistan-backed terrorism and its actions following the dastardly attack were measured, non-escalatory and responsible. The Australian leader said Canberra's relationship with New Delhi is of the "highest priority" and that it is profoundly significant to Australia's national interest.

The visit to New Delhi by Marles coincides with the fifth anniversary of the firming up of India Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership that facilitated deeper bilateral defence ties. Singh, and Marles, who is also Australia's defence minister, agreed to intensify and diversify defence-industrial collaboration.

In a separate meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Australian leader reiterated Canberra's support to India's fight against cross-border terrorism, according to an official statement. Modi congratulated Marles on the historic victory of the Australian Labor Party in the recent federal elections, it said.

Allahabad HC denies relief to Rahul over remarks on Army

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, June 4: Freedom of speech is subject to reasonable restrictions and it does not include the freedom to make defamatory statements against any person or the Indian Army, the Allahabad High Court has said, rejecting Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's plea to quash summons against him for alleged derogatory remarks during his Bharat Jodo Yatra in 2022.

Justice Subhash Vidyathi of the Lucknow bench, in his May 29 verdict, observed that there was a prima facie case against Gandhi for making defamatory statements against the Indian Army and upheld the lower court order issued in February summoning the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha to face trial.

"No doubt, Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India guarantees freedom of speech and expression, this freedom is subject to reasonable restrictions and it does not include the freedom to make statements which are defamatory to any person or defamatory to the Indian Army," the judge said in the detailed order released later.

The case stems from a complaint filed by Udai Shanker Srivastava, a retired Director from the Border Roads Organisation (a position equivalent to a Colonel in the Indian Army). Srivastava alleged that on December 16, 2022, during his 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' in Lucknow, Gandhi made disparaging comments about a face-off between the Indian and Chinese armies in Arunachal Pradesh December 9, 2022. Srivastava contended that Gandhi's statement was "false and baseless" and made with "evil intention of demoralising the Indian Army and to damage the faith of the Indian population in the Indian Army."

He highlighted that the official statement from the Indian Army on December 12, 2022, confirmed that "PLA troops contacted the LAC in Tawang Sector which was contested by our troops in a firm and resolute manner. This faceoff led to minor injuries to a few personnel from both sides."

Rahul Gandhi holds meetings with Haryana Cong leaders



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, June 4: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday held a meeting with senior party leaders from Haryana, and the All India Congress Committee (AICC) and Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) observers here as part of an organisation rejuvenation campaign.

With the party's Haryana unit plagued by factionalism in the past, Gandhi's clear message was that when it comes to any work for the party, no "gutbazi" (factionalism) should come in the way and if any complaint comes, action will be taken. While addressing a meeting of the appointed observers, Gandhi stressed the need to nurture promising, ideologically committed leadership across

all districts of the state. The Congress, which has been out of power in Haryana for over a decade, has not had a formal organisational structure in the state for the past 11 years and Gandhi's visit was to set the process in motion as the party begins revamping the state unit.

Gandhi, leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, reached the Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee (HPCC) headquarters here at noon, half an hour after he reached the airport, as part of the party's 'Sangathan Srijan Abhiyan'.

During his two-and-a-half-hour stay, Gandhi held a meeting with the party's senior leaders, with over 20 of them taking part. It was followed by another meeting with AICC and PCC observers. After this, he also held one more meeting with AICC observers separately.

Briefing reporters in the evening, Congress leader in-charge of party's Haryana affairs, B K Hariprasad, said Gandhi gave a clear message which is to strengthen the Congress.

It was also felt that factionalism in the state unit had delayed the appointment process of District Congress Committee (DCC) presidents, Hariprasad said.



Members of the tri-services team that carried out the 'Samudra Pradakhshina', an all-women sailing expedition from Mumbai to Seychelles and back, during the team's flagging-in ceremony, in Mumbai

9 killed as trailer overturns on van in Jhabua

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jhabua (MP), June 4: Nine persons, including five minors, were killed and two others injured after a cement-laden trailer truck overturned and crushed a van in Madhya Pradesh's Jhabua district in the wee hours of Wednesday, police said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Mohan Yadav expressed grief over the incident and announced fi-

ancial assistance for the victims' kin.

The trailer was crossing an under-construction rail over-bridge through a temporary road near Sanjeli railway crossing when it overturned on the van, Jhabua Superintendent of Police (SP) Padmavilochan Shukla told PTI. Nine persons were killed and two others injured in the accident, he said. "Deeply anguished by the loss

of lives due to an accident in Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh. Condolences to those who have lost their loved ones. May the injured recover soon," said the Prime Minister's Office on X, quoting the PM. "An ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh from PMNRF (Prime Minister's National Relief Fund) would be given to the next of kin of each deceased. The injured would be given Rs. 50,000," it said.

'Most Delhiites want urgent steps to tackle air pollution'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 4: Delhi residents want the government to prioritise immediate action to reduce air pollution by focusing on curbing stubble burning in neighbouring states, covering construction sites, and ensuring regular cleaning of roads, according to a new survey by online survey platform LocalCircles.

According to the survey, 8 out of 10 residents support urgent measures to check stubble burning outside Delhi, which is one of the key triggers of poor air quality during the winter months. It also found that around 70 per cent of the respondents want stronger enforcement against open garbage burning.



The findings come at a time when the Delhi government has announced a 25-point action plan, 'Shuddh Hawa Sabka Adhikar - Pradushan Par Zordar Prahar', under the Air Pollution Mitigation Plan 2025 launched ahead of World Envi-

ronment Day (June 5). Out of over 11,700 residents who responded to the question on pollution measures, 70 per cent called for stronger coordination with the neighbouring states to curb stubble burning. The same percentage of re-

spendents also supported mandatory covering of construction sites and mechanised street cleaning during the critical October-December period, according to LocalCircles.

The survey highlighted that 67 per cent of the respondents wanted the authorities to strictly enforce the ban on waste and

garbage burning.

Another 67 per cent respondents to another question wanted the use of dual-fuel kits in diesel generator sets across Delhi, while 33 per cent supported plans to reduce vehicle use on city roads by half during the peak pollution months, according to the survey.

The survey mentioned that despite the government's new plan, only one-third of the residents believe it is actively taking steps to bring pollution lev- els down significantly this year.

In another poll conducted by LocalCircles among over 14,700 people, 58 per cent said the government was not doing enough to curb air pollution, 33 per cent said steps were being taken, while 9 per cent respondents were unsure.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit before the Executive Magistrate, Chillika on Dt.13.05.2025 I, Sarat Sahu, S/o. Mochiram Sahu, Vill.: Badanairi, P.O.: Sananairi, P.S.: Nachuni, Dist.: Khordha solemnly affirm that I have changed my former name Fsharat Sahu to Sarat Sahu. Henceforth I will be known as Sarat Sahu in all purposes. Sd./- Sarat Sahu.



Forest conservation was not only essential for climate protection, but also directly linked to increase in catchment areas of water bodies, prevention of soil erosion, biodiversity protection and means of livelihood

ED ARRESTS 'MASTERMIND' IN MULTI-CRORE GOA LAND 'SCAM'

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Wednesday said it has arrested an alleged mastermind in a multi-crore land 'scam' in Goa. Rohan Harmalkar, who contested the 2022 Goa Assembly elections from Cumbharjua as an Independent, was taken into custody Tuesday night under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the federal probe agency said



of the day quote

The BJP people were making a film for their hero for the last 11 years - 'Muqaddar Ka Sikandar'. But when the film was ready, it turned out to be 'Narender Ka Surrender'. Actually, there is no injection of bravery, but it is in-built in the character of a person. The history of BJP-RSS people has been of cowardice

Last year, two out of seven months arrears were paid just before the Lok Sabha polls. This year, one month's arrears is being paid just before the by-poll

June 4 is a historic day when the people's revolution ended oppressive rule (erstwhile YSRCP government) and restored democracy and peace in Andhra Pradesh

Punjab YouTuber in contact with influencer Jyoti Malhotra arrested

Chandigarh, June 4: A Punjab-based YouTuber alleged to be in close touch with influencer Jyoti Malhotra, who is in custody on charges of spying for Pakistan, has been arrested after a "terror-backed espionage network" linking him to Pakistani intelligence and army officials was unearthed, police said Wednesday. Punjab Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said Jasbir Singh alias Jaan Mahal (41) was allegedly spying for Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Singh, a resident of Mahlan village in Rupnagar, was running the YouTube channel "JaanMahal Video" with over 11 lakh subscribers, ostensibly posting travel and cooking vlogs, said police.

He was found to be associated with Pakistani Intelligence Operative (PIO) Shakir alias Jutt Randhawa, who was in contact with a recently-expelled Pakistan High Commission official on charges of spying and had met Pakistan Army officials during one of his three visits to the neighbouring country, Yadav said. A Mohali court sent Singh to three-day police remand after he was produced before it. Singh also maintained close contact with Ehsan-ur-Rahim alias Danish, the expelled Pakistan High Commission official, said Yadav. Investigation found that Singh attended the Pakistan National Day event in Delhi on Danish's invitation, where he met Pakistani Army officials and vloggers.

India wins presidency of International Institute of Administrative Sciences

New Delhi, June 4: In a first, India has won the presidency of the Belgium-based International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS), an official statement said Wednesday. The IIAS, a global non-profit organisation, is a federation of 31 member countries, 20 national sections and 15 academic research centres jointly collaborating for scientific research on public administration. The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) has represented India as a member state of the IIAS since 1998.

For the 2025-2028 presidency of IIAS, Prime Minister Narendra Modi nominated the Indian candidacy of DARPG Secretary V Srinivas in November 2024. The hearings for the IIAS presidency were held in February 2025 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. Four nations - India, South Africa, Austria and Bahrain - submitted their nominations for the IIAS presidency for the period 2025-2028 and participated in the hearings before the Council of Administration of IIAS, which were held on the sidelines of the Annual IIAS Conference 2025. Following the hearings, the candidacy of India, South Africa and Austria was forwarded to the General Body of IIAS for the next round by the Council of Administration, according to the statement issued by the Personnel Ministry.

Early monsoon session to dodge Pahalgam row: Cong



AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 4: The Congress Wednesday alleged that the government has announced the start of the Monsoon session of Parliament 47 days before it is due in order to run away from the demand of the party and INDIA bloc for an immediate special session to discuss the Pahalgam attack and the Centre's failure to bring the terrorists to justice. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju Wednesday said the Monsoon session of Parliament will be held from July 21 to August 12. The Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs, chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, has recommended the dates, he told reporters here. In a post on X, Congress general secretary, communications, Jairam Ra-

mesh, said normally the dates for a Parliament session are announced a few days in advance, but "never have the dates been declared 47 days before a session is due". "This has been done solely to run away from the demand being made repeatedly by the Indian National Congress and the INDIA parties for an immediate special session to discuss the brutal Pahalgam attacks and the failure to bring the terrorists who did the killings themselves to justice, the impacts of Operation Sindoor and its blatant politicisation, the revelations of the CDS in Singapore, the hyphenation of India and Pakistan, the embedding of China in the Pakistan Air Force, the continuous claims of President Trump on mediation, and the numerous failures of our foreign policy and diplomatic engagements,"

'No reason to delay Census'

New Delhi: Soon after the Centre announced the Census schedule, the Congress Wednesday said there is no reason to delay the exercise for another 23 months and alleged that the Modi government does not meet deadlines. The 2027 Census with caste enumeration will be carried out with the reference date of October 1, 2026 in snow-bound areas like Ladakh and of March 1, 2027 in the rest of the country, the Home Ministry announced Wednesday. In a post on X, Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh said, "There is really no reason to delay the Census that was due in 2021 for another twenty three months. The Modi Government is capable only of generating headlines, not meeting deadlines."

he said in his post. "The monsoon session will, however, still be dominated by these issues of supreme national importance. The PM has run away from a special session but will have to answer very tough questions six weeks from now," the Congress leader said. The announcement by Rijiju comes against the backdrop of a demand for a special session by opposition leaders to discuss Operation Sindoor.

Illegal mining near Kaziranga intensified despite SC ban: CEC



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 4: The Central Empowered Committee (CEC) has told the Supreme Court that illegal mining has continued and intensified in Assam's Parkup Pahar area near the Kaziranga National Park, despite a 2019 top court order banning all mining and related activities in and around the park's eco-sensitive zone. Kaziranga, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is home to around 65 per cent of the endangered one-horned rhino population in the world. It forms part of an important wildlife corridor between the Brahmaputra floodplains and the Karbi Anglong hills.

The Supreme Court, acting on earlier findings by the CEC, had prohibited all mining and related activities in this region to prevent degradation of critical wildlife habitats and forested landscapes. Based on a complaint from an anonymous government employee in Assam and field-level verification, the CEC submitted a fresh report dated May 30 to the SC, saying that mining activities in the region have "continued and intensified" despite the apex court's ban ordered on April 4, 2019. Rampant mining continues, particularly in the Parkup Pahar Range, a declared wildlife sanctuary forming the southern boundary of the Kaziranga National Park, the report said.

The complaint received from the government employee in December 2024 contained Google Earth imagery from 2018 to 2024 and site-specific data. The images reportedly showed that mining, which had stopped following the SC's 2019 ban order, resumed and intensified after 2021. The CEO forwarded the complaint to the Assam forest and police departments, requesting a factual report.

The principal chief conservator of forests, Assam, submitted a detailed report February 5, outlining the actions taken, including the suspension of mining leases. The report confirmed that stone mining was occurring close to the Borjuri Waterfall and its surrounding streams, which flow towards Kaziranga. In its response, the CEC said that since the leases fall within a draft eco-sensitive zone, they should have been cancelled altogether.

It also said the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) gave fresh permissions for dozens of mines in the forest areas and in the proposed eco-sensitive zones, violating the SC ban and without the required approval from the standing committee of the National Board for Wildlife and the Central government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. The panel said KAAC had no authority to issue such permissions.

Kaziranga, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is home to around 65 per cent of the endangered one-horned rhino population in the world. It forms part of an important wildlife corridor between the Brahmaputra floodplains and the Karbi Anglong hills

POST OF THE DAY

When you are a kid, you are bound by your parent's dreams. When you become an adult, you are bound by other's responsibilities. You get up. You work. You earn. So that, you feel more in control. If you win, you smile. If you lose, you cry. Irrespective: your burdens do not fade. Whether you are a kid Or an adult. You are responsible for "something". What shackles you also gives you love. What loves you also gives you responsibilities. Depends on how you see life.

SHORT TAKES

IIT student found dead in hostel

New Delhi: A second-year student at the Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi was found dead under mysterious circumstances inside his hostel room on the campus Wednesday, police said. The body of the second-year undergraduate student pursuing biomechanical engineering had no visible injury marks, though vomit was found on the floor near the bed, suggesting possible medical complications, a senior police officer said.

Gangster involved in rival's murder nabbed

New Delhi: A 23-year-old sharpshooter associated with the Himanshu Bhau gang, wanted in connection with a recent murder in Haryana's Rohtak, was nabbed after a gunfight in Rohini's Sector 35 area, police said Wednesday.

Two feared trapped as building collapses

New Delhi: Two people are feared trapped after a three-storey commercial building collapsed in the Rohini area of northwest Delhi Wednesday, officials said. They said one person was injured in the incident that occurred at D-12 in Sector 7. Delhi Fire Services (DFS) chief Atul Garg said the department received a call at 4.04 pm that a ground plus two-storey commercial building collapsed.



Rag pickers look for recyclable materials as greater adjutant storks sit nearby, at a waste disposal site ahead of World Environment Day, at Boraogon on the outskirts of Guwahati, Assam

Assam flood toll rises to 19; nearly 6.8 lakh people affected

Guwahati, June 4: The flood situation in Assam worsened Wednesday with the death toll increasing by two, while the number of affected people went up to nearly 6.8 lakh in 21 districts, an official bulletin said. Nine major rivers, including the Brahmaputra, were flowing above the danger level across the state, with the Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) in Guwahati predicting heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places in the state.

Dhubri, South Salmara-Mankachar, Goalpara and Kokrajhar are likely to witness thunderstorms with lightning and gusty wind with a speed of 30-40 kmph, the RMC said. Road, train and ferry services continued to be affected in several parts of the state. An Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) bulletin said that the two deaths were reported from Nagaon and Cachar districts. One person was reported missing in Cachar. With the latest casualties, the death toll in this



year's floods and landslides has reached 19. The number of affected people was over 6.5 lakh in 21 districts on Tuesday. Sribhumi remained the worst hit with 2,59,601 people affected, followed by Hailakandi

(1,72,439) and Nagaon (1,02,716). More than 41,000 displaced people were taking shelter in 190 relief camps, while another 215 relief distribution centres were also operational. A total of 14,977 hectares of cropland has

been inundated, the ASDMA bulletin said. The Brahmaputra was flowing above the danger level at Neamatighat, Tezpur and Dhubri, Burhidihing at Chenimari and Khowang, Koppil at Kampur and Dharamtul, Barak at Fulertal, BP Ghat and AP Ghat, Sonai at Amraghat, Rukni at Dholai, Dhaleswari at Gharmura, Katakhal at Matizuri and Kushiyyara at Sribhumi. Damage to roads, bridges, educational institutions, Anganwadi centres, electricity poles and other infrastructure was also reported from different parts.

Covid surge: States told to ensure oxygen availability

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 4: All states have been instructed to ensure availability of oxygen, isolation beds, ventilators and essential medicines in view of rising cases of Covid, official sources said Wednesday. A series of technical review meetings were held June 2 and 3 under the chairpersonship of Director General of Health Services (DGHS) Dr Sunita Sharma. The meeting was held with representatives of Disaster Management Cell, Emergency Management Response (EMR) Cell, National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Indian Council of Medical Research

(ICMR), Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (ID-SP) and central government hospitals in Delhi and with representatives from all states and Union territories to evaluate the current Covid situation and preparedness measures. According to the sources, state and district surveillance units under IDSP are closely monitoring Influenza Like Illness (ILI) and Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI). "Testing is recommended for all admitted SARI cases and 5 per cent of ILI cases as per guidelines and positive SARI samples are sent for Whole Genome Sequencing through the ICMR VRDL network," an official source said. As of June



4, India reported 4,302 active cases, with an increase of 864 cases in the past 24 hours. The official sources said most cases are mild and managed under home care. Since January 1, 44

deaths have been reported, primarily among individuals with pre-existing illnesses, they said. "States have been instructed to ensure availability of oxygen, isolation beds, ventilators, and essential medicines," the source said. A mock drill assessing oxygen supply systems (PSA plants, LMO tanks, MGPS lines) was conducted June 2. Facility-level preparedness mock

drills are planned for Wednesday and Thursday. The official sources advised people to practise hand hygiene, cough etiquette, and avoid crowded places when unwell and that individuals with acute respiratory illness should self-monitor and seek medical care if symptoms worsen. Trusted sources such as health ministry's website and PIB releases should be followed to avoid misinformation and rumours, they said. "Union health ministry continues to closely monitor the situation and remains committed to ensuring public health safety through timely interventions and effective communication," the source asserted.

AS OF JUNE 4, INDIA REPORTED 4,302 ACTIVE CASES, WITH AN INCREASE OF 864 CASES IN THE PAST 24 HOURS. THE OFFICIAL SOURCES SAID MOST CASES ARE MILD AND MANAGED UNDER HOME CARE. SINCE JANUARY 1, 44 DEATHS HAVE BEEN REPORTED, PRIMARILY AMONG INDIVIDUALS WITH PRE-EXISTING ILLNESSES, THEY SAID



The alleged actions of these Chinese nationals, including a loyal member of the Chinese Communist Party, are of the gravest national security concerns

## CHANCES OF REVIVAL OF CONFLICT WITH INDIA 'REMOTE': PAKISTAN

Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar Wednesday said that the chance of revival of an armed conflict between Pakistan and India is remote but warned of a befitting response in case of any such development



### of the day quote

Through pragmatic diplomacy based on national interests, we will turn the crisis posed by the major shift in global economic and security landscapes into an opportunity to maximise our national interests



Whether Khartoum is captured or not captured, it's irrelevant. There is no military solution to this. No side will be able to have outright victory



ARR has also done our own talent good over the years, by giving them their valuable exposure. Our Indian music and cultural talent, from classical to the most contemporary and edgy, are naturally a minority in the local scene. But they make Singapore's multiculturalism all the more special



### SHORT TAKES

#### PIO jailed for cheating contractors in Singapore

Singapore: An Indian-origin man was Wednesday sentenced to two-and-a-half years' jail after he pleaded guilty to 21 out of 62 charges of cheating. Arivalagan Muthusamy, 40, cheated at least 61 victims of around SGD 3,10,000 (\$2,40,000) over about half a year, according to a Channel News Asia report. He would pretend to be a representative of the building management of commercial venues and ask contractors to pay a sum of money as a security deposit or for other purposes before work commenced.

#### 5 inmates killed in Ivory Coast prison

Abidjan (Ivory Coast): Five inmates at an Ivory Coast prison were killed when a routine search turned into a violent clash, authorities said Wednesday. Prisoners in Bouake, the country's second largest city, reacted with "hostility" to a routine search for prohibited items Tuesday, public prosecutor Abel Nangbele Yeo said in a statement. Five prisoners were killed and 29 people, including six prison officers and 23 prisoners, were injured, the statement added.

#### 5 Indians held for online gambling

Kathmandu: Nepal police have arrested 17 individuals, including five Indian nationals, from Lalitpur Metropolitan City for their alleged involvement in online gambling. The accused were found to be using online betting sites involving Nepalese nationals after contacting them through various social media sites such as Telegram and WhatsApp, said a Nepal police statement issued Wednesday. A team from the Crime Investigation Bureau of Kathmandu Valley Police arrested the five Indians and 12 Nepalese after conducting a raid at their rented flats in Nakhu area of Lalitpur district.

#### India thanks Iran for rescuing its 3 nationals

Tehran: India Wednesday thanked Iran for safely rescuing its three nationals who went missing in the country last month, saying Tehran's support reflects the "true spirit of friendship" between the two nations. They were "freed in a police operation against the hostage takers in Varamin in south Tehran," the Tehran-based Tasnim news agency reported Tuesday.

# Pak-India intelligence collaboration can reduce terrorism, says Bilawal

The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman, who is currently leading a high-powered delegation to the US as part of a global diplomatic push to seek support following its recent conflict with India, was speaking at a press conference at UN Headquarters Tuesday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, June 4: PPP chairman and former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has said that cooperation between Pakistan and India's intelligence agencies could significantly reduce terrorism in South Asia.

The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman, who is currently leading a high-powered delegation to the US as part of a global diplomatic push to seek support following its recent conflict with India, was speaking at a press conference at UN Headquarters Tuesday, the Dawn newspaper reported.

"I am completely confident that if ISI and RAW were ready to sit down and work together to fight these forces, we would see a significant decrease in terrorism in both India and Pakistan," Bhutto-Zardari was quoted as saying by the newspaper Wednesday.

He also urged the global community to remain engaged in South Asia, warning that the risk of conflict between nuclear-armed neighbours had grown, not diminished, after the recent ceasefire.

"With the intervention of the international community — and I would like to mention particularly the role played by the US President Donald Trump and his team led by Secretary of State Marco Rubio — we did manage to achieve a ceasefire between India and Pakistan. This is a welcome first step,



but it's only a first step," Bhutto-Zardari said.

Tensions between India and Pakistan escalated after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, with India carrying out precision strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in the early hours of May 7.

Trump claims that the US

has stopped India and Pakistan from fighting.

However, India has been consistently maintaining that the understanding on cessation of hostilities with Pakistan was reached following direct talks between the Directors General of Military Operations (DG-MOs) of the two militaries.

Bhutto-Zardari emphasised

that diplomacy and dialogue were the only "viable path to peace," and reiterated Pakistan's willingness to engage in a broad dialogue with India — including cooperation on counterterrorism.

"Pakistan would still like to cooperate with India to combat terrorism. We can't leave the fate of 1.5 billion, 1.7 billion people in the hands of non-state actors and terrorists... For them to decide, at a whim, that (when these) two nuclear-armed powers will go to war," he said.

Referring to India, the PPP leader said "linking any terrorist attack in the region to the threat of war with Pakistan" is "untenable". "You can't have no dispute resolution mechanisms between two nuclear-armed countries," he said.

He proposed the establishment of a mutually agreed platform where both sides could raise complaints, investigate terrorist incidents jointly, and work together to ensure accountability.

## Bilawal called out by journalist at UN

Pakistan's former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was called out here by a journalist on his comments about alleged "demonisation" of Muslims in India. The former Pakistan foreign minister, who is leading a team of experts to inform the world about the recent conflict with India, was briefing the media about their perspective Tuesday. During the question-answer session, Egyptian-American journalist Ahmad Fathi, UN correspondent of American Television News (ATN), asked Bilawal about his comments on India's treatment of Muslims and reminded him that it was an Indian Muslim military officer who was briefing the media during the conflict. "Let me start with a statement you made today, saying that the recent terrorist attack in Kashmir is being used as a political tool to demonise Muslims in India. Sir, I have watched the briefings on both sides, and as far as I recall, there were Muslim Indian military officers who were conducting the briefing on the Indian side," Fathi said. He was about to ask his second question when Bilawal stopped him mid-sentence. The Pakistani leader then went on to criticise India and continued his usual rhetoric.

### SNIPPETS

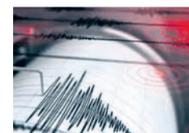
#### Vietnam scraps 2-child policy

HANOI: Vietnam abolished its long-standing two-child limit Tuesday to try and reverse declining birth rates and ease the pressures of an aging population. The National Assembly passed amendments scrapping rules that limit families to having one or two children, state media Vietnam News Agency reported Wednesday. The rules were usually stricter for Communist Party members, who could miss out on promotions or bonuses if they had a third child. Vietnamese families are having fewer children than ever before. The birth rate in 2021 was 2.11 children per woman, just over the replacement rate required for a population to avoid shrinking over the long term. Since then, the birth rate has steadily declined: to 2.01 in 2022, 1.96 in 2023 and 1.91 in 2024. Vietnam isn't the only Asian country with low fertility. But, unlike Japan, South Korea or Singapore, it is still a developing economy.



#### Over 20 'mild' quakes rattle Karachi

KARACHI: Pakistan's biggest city has experienced at least 21 earthquakes of mild intensity over the last two days but experts were divided Wednesday over a potential major earthquake later in the week. The tremors in and around Karachi since Sunday night were classified as low to moderate in intensity and ranged from magnitude 2.1 to 3.6. The strongest tremor, measuring 3.6, was recorded Sunday night, which led to a wall of the Malir Jail in the city collapsing and around 216 prisoners escaping from the prison. Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has advised the citizens to not panic as its officials claim the intensity of the quakes will reduce soon. "The earthquake tremors of mild intensity will continue for the next two to three days and the situation will improve as the intensity of the quakes will reduce," said PMD Director General Mahr Sahibzad Khan.



Tanks make their way while helicopters fly as soldiers take part in the U.S.-led Immediate Response 25 military exercise in Petrochori, northern Greece Wednesday

# Hungry wild elephant raids Thailand grocery store for snacks

Videos of the incident showed the huge male elephant, known as Plai Biang Lek, briefly stopping in front of the shop, located next to a main road near the Khao Yai National Park in northeastern Thailand, before ducking his whole body inside

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bangkok, June 4: A hungry wild elephant caused havoc in a grocery store in Thailand Monday when he strolled in from a nearby national park and helped himself to food on the shelves.

Videos of the incident showed the huge male elephant, known as Plai Biang Lek, briefly stopping in front of the shop, located next to a main road near the Khao Yai National Park in northeastern Thailand, before ducking his whole body inside.

The elephant stopped in front of the shop's counter, calmly snatching and chomping snacks, and did not flinch as the national park workers



tried to shoo him away. The elephant later backed out of the shop still holding a bag of snacks with his trunk. He left

little damage behind, except mud tracks on the floor and the ceiling of the shop. In a video posted on social

media, Kamploy Kakaew, the shop owner, appeared amused as she described the moment the elephant rifled her shop. She said he ate about nine bags of sweet rice crackers, a sandwich and some dried bananas she had bought that morning.

Kamploy said the elephant left without hurting anyone after getting his snacks.

Danaei Sookkanchat, a volunteer park worker familiar with the elephant, said Plai Biang Lek, who is about 30 years old, is a familiar sight in the area and has been known to enter people's houses in search of food. This was the first time he had seen him going into a grocery store.

"After he left the shop, he

# Khamenei dismisses US nuclear proposal



REUTERS

Dubai, June 4: Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Wednesday that abandoning uranium enrichment was "100%" against the country's interests, rejecting a central US demand in talks to resolve a decades-long dispute over Tehran's nuclear ambitions.

The US proposal for a new nuclear deal was presented to Iran Saturday by Oman, which has mediated talks between Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi and President Donald Trump's Middle East envoy, Steve Witkoff.

After five rounds of talks, several hard-to-bridge issues remain, including Iran's insistence on maintaining uranium enrichment on its soil and Tehran's refusal to ship abroad its entire existing stockpile of highly enriched uranium - possible raw material for nuclear bombs.

Khamenei, who has the final say on all matters of state, said nothing about halting the talks, but said the US proposal "contradicts our nation's belief in self-reliance and the principle of 'We Can'".

"Uranium enrichment is the key to our nuclear programme

and the enemies have focused on the enrichment," Khamenei said during a televised speech marking the anniversary of the death of the Islamic Republic's founder, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

"The proposal that the Americans have presented is 100% against our interests... The rude and arrogant leaders of America repeatedly demand that we should not have a nuclear programme. Who are you to decide whether Iran should have enrichment?," he added.

Tehran says it wants to master nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and has long denied accusations by

Western powers that it is seeking to develop nuclear weapons.

Reuters reported Monday that Tehran was poised to reject the US proposal as a "non-starter" that failed to soften Washington's stance on uranium enrichment or to address Tehran's interests.

Trump has revived his "maximum pressure" campaign against Tehran since his return to the White House in January which included tightening sanctions and threatening to bomb Iran if the negotiations yield no deal.

KHAMENEI CALLS US 'RUDE AND ARROGANT' IRAN'S LEADERS GRAPPLING WITH MULTIPLE CRISES FIVE ROUNDS OF NUCLEAR TALKS HAVE NOT BRIDGED GAPS

## Doubled US tariffs on steel, aluminium kick in as deadline hits

REUTERS

Paris, June 4: Trade talks between the European Union and the United States are going in the right direction, the two sides' top trade negotiators said Wednesday, although the Europeans said the doubling of US metals tariffs did not help with the negotiations.

The new tariffs on steel and aluminium imports kicked in Wednesday, the same day President Donald Trump's administration wants trading partners to make "best offers" to avoid other punishing import levies from taking effect in early July.

Meanwhile, in another sign of disruptions to global trade, concerns about the damage from China's restrictions on critical mineral exports deepened, with some European auto parts plants suspending output and German carmaker BMW warning that its supplier network was affected by shortages of rare earths.

In terms of tariff talks, the 27-nation EU's trade negotiator Maros Sefcovic said his meeting with US Trade Representative Jamie Green in Paris early Wednesday was constructive.

"We both concluded that we are advancing in the right direction, at pace," Sefcovic told reporters after the meeting. Technical talks are ongoing in Washington, he said, and high-level contacts will follow.

"What makes me optimistic is I see the progress... the discussions are now very concrete," Sefcovic said. He stressed that he and Greer had agreed to restructure the focus of their trade talks, after having been "approaching it from different angles."



**Low-priced imports from China and Vietnam persist across numerous industries, including stainless steel. In this context, it is essential that we collectively take a stand to protect our industry, particularly MSMEs, and the livelihood of our people. I request the government continuous support in this regard**

**RATAN JINDAL** | CHAIRMAN, JINDAL STAINLESS

**CAIT, META TO UPSKILL WOMEN TRADERS**

The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) and Meta have launched an initiative to equip 25K women traders across India with digital skills using the WhatsApp Business App. The first phase of 'Vyaapar Sakhi' will run from June to November 2025, offering in-person training sessions in multiple Indian languages. The initiative aims to help women entrepreneurs build a credible online presence



**of the day** **QUOTE**

**Gold showed a slight positive trend Wednesday due to persistent uncertainties related to trade, along with economic concerns and geopolitical risks, continue to support the safe-haven appeal of the precious metal**

**SAUMIL GANDHI** | SENIOR ANALYST, HDFC SECURITIES

**We are very excited and hoping that we can resume the negotiation of the expansion of the free trade agreement between India and Mercosur**

**SANTIAGO PENA PALACIOS** | PRESIDENT, PARAGUAY

**A lower interest rate regime, supported by targeted liquidity measures, can meaningfully strengthen credit flow to MSMEs and NBFCs, especially those serving rural and semi-urban regions**

**DEEPAK AGGARWAL** | CO-FOUNDER, MONEYBOX FINANCE

**SHORT TAKES**

**Quick Routes Int'l exits Zinka Logistics**

**New Delhi:** Quick Routes International Tuesday exited Zinka Logistics Solutions by selling a 9 per cent stake in the company for ₹672 crore through open market transactions. Zinka Logistics Solutions is the parent entity of logistics unicorn Blackbuck. According to the bulk deal data available on the NSE, Quick Routes International sold more than 1.59 crore shares in two tranches, representing a 9 per cent stake in Zinka Logistics. The shares were offloaded in the price range of ₹420.06-420.25 apiece, taking the combined transaction value to ₹671.76 crore. In a separate transaction on the NSE, Peak XV Partners' affiliate Peak XV Partners Investments VI disposed of 12.10 lakh shares in Zinka Logistics Solutions for ₹53 crore. The shares were sold at an average price of ₹444.71 per piece, taking the deal size to ₹53.84 crore.

**IEX electricity trade volume rises 14%**

**New Delhi:** The Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) Wednesday said it has logged over 14 per cent growth in electricity traded volume at 10,946 million units (MU) in May as compared to the year-ago period. IEX had achieved monthly electricity trade volume of 9,568 MU in May 2024, the company data showed. A total of 17.43 lakh Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) were traded during the month, marking a 65 per cent year-on-year increase, an IEX statement said. Market clearing price in the Day Ahead Market was at ₹4.12/unit during May 2025, a decline of 22 per cent year-on-year. Market clearing price in the Real Time Market fell 28 per cent year-on-year at ₹3.43/unit last month. The Day-Ahead Market (DAM) achieved 3,510 MU volumes last month as compared to 4,371 MU volume in May 2024, a decline of 20 per cent. The Real-Time Electricity Market (RTM) reported highest ever monthly traded volume in May 2025 when the volume increased to 4,770 MU from 3,352 MU a year ago, an increase of 42 per cent. Day Ahead Contingency and Term-Ahead Market (TAM), comprising contingency, daily & weekly and monthly contracts up to 3 months, traded 1,684 MU in May 2025 as compared to 1,221 MU a year ago.

## Private cos remain sturdy, invest \$50bn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, June 4:** Indian enterprises are well positioned to handle the impact of tariffs and geopolitical tensions, Moody's Investors Service and its local arm ICRA Ratings said Wednesday.

India Inc, however, will be "measured" in making investment decisions in the new fiscal because of the external headwinds, they said.

"Indian non-financial companies are not directly affected by US import tariffs due to their focus on domestic consumption and low dependence on exports," a statement from Moody's said.

It further noted that government initiatives to boost private consumption, expand manufacturing capacity and increase infrastructure spending will help offset the weakening outlook for global demand.

Indian corporates will continue investing in new capacity to cater to the sustained growth in domestic consumption, and Moody's estimated that non-financial companies rated by it



will spend around \$50 billion annually in capital spending over the next two years.

It said most companies will spend from internal accruals, and the average portfolio leverage will continue to remain at 3 times the operating profit.

Moody's Ratings managing director Vikash Halan said India's manufacturing growth will be constrained by challenges such as inadequacy of skilled labor, evolving logistics infrastructure and complex land and labor laws.

Select auto parts categories, cut and polished diamonds,

and seafood exports have notable exposure to US market and may face headwinds from demand moderation or rising competition, it said, adding that the textiles sector is expected to benefit from its comparative advantage over China.

Geopolitical tensions, particularly the India-Pakistan conflict, may weigh on near-term demand for travel and hospitality services. Nonetheless, India's overall exposure to these risks remains moderate, it said.

Icra's chief rating officer K Ravichandran said after being muted in FY25, urban consump-

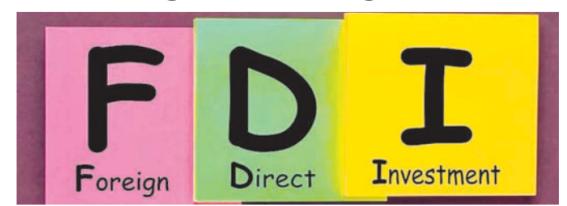
tion is expected to recover in FY26 supported by income tax relief, further rate cuts, and easing food inflation, and the same will benefit automobiles, consumer goods, and services sectors.

Meanwhile, on the infrastructure creation front, Icra forecasted a slowdown in road construction activity in the near-term, whereas other segments like ports and data centers will continue to witness significant investments, benefiting from solid government support, healthy capital outlays and a large pipeline of projects.

The rating agencies said the country needs massive investments to meet its 2070 net-zero pledge, explaining that the country is grappling with the trilemma of energy security, affordability and transition.

Over the next decade, these investments are projected to constitute 2 per cent of real GDP for the electricity value chain, encompassing power generation, storage, transmission and distribution, it said.

## No changes in FDI policy for neighbouring nations



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 4:** The government has not made any amendments to the foreign direct investment (FDI) policy for countries sharing land border with India, sources said Wednesday.

In 2020, the government issued Press Note 3 (PN3) under which investors from these land bordering countries have to mandatorily take prior approval of the government for making investments in any sector.

The PN3 is applicable to all the land bordering countries of India in an equal manner, the sources said. The countries are China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar and Afghanistan. All FDI proposals from these nations undergo the

similar process of scrutiny and examination as per standard operating procedure for the processing of investment proposals from these nations.

"After issuance of this press note, no amendment has been undertaken in the FDI policy relating to investments from countries sharing land border with India," a source said.

These remarks are important as certain reports have stated that the approval process for FDI applications from China has been streamlined. Currently, there is an inter-ministerial committee headed by the Home Secretary to consider applications under PN3.

The bulk of FDI coming into India falls under automatic approval route.

## Stock markets rebound



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, June 4:** Sensex and Nifty snapped the three-day losing streak and settled in the positive territory Wednesday, mirroring a rally in global markets and supported by buying in blue-chips Reliance Industries and HDFC Bank.

Market analysts said Indian equities closed with gains on better-than-expected US job market data and optimism over trade talks between the US and Chinese President this week also added optimism to markets recovery. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 260.74 points, or 0.32 per cent, to settle at 80,998.25. During the day, it jumped 349.78 points, or 0.43 per cent, to 81,067.29.

The NSE Nifty went up 77.70 points, or 0.32 per cent, to 24,620.20.

From the Sensex firms, Eternal climbed 3.32 per cent. Bharti Airtel, IndusInd Bank, Tech Mahindra, Reliance Industries, Tata Motors, HDFC Bank, Tata Steel and Hindustan Unilever were the other major gainers. However, Bajaj Finserv, Axis Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, Titan and Larsen & Toubro were among the laggards.

The BSE midcap gauge jumped 0.76 per cent and small-cap index climbed 0.58 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, telecommunication jumped 1.35 per cent, utilities (0.99 per cent), teck (0.75 per cent), energy (0.69 per cent), commodities (0.56 per cent), oil & gas (0.53 per cent) and metal (0.51 per cent). Bankex and realty were the laggards. As many as 2,071 stocks advanced while 1,933 declined and 151 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 0.14 per cent to USD 65.72 a barrel. FIIs offloaded equities worth ₹2,853.83 crores Tuesday, according to exchange data.

## NCLAT refuses interim relief to Gensol entities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 4:** Insolvency appellate tribunal NCLAT Wednesday declined to stay the NCLT order directing to freeze assets of Gensol, its promoters, and related entities.

It has directed ride-hailing service unit BluSmart and Matrix Gas and Renewable to approach the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) with their plea, where the matter has been listed initially.

Passing an order on the plea filed by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), a vacation bench of the NCLT had direct-

ed to freeze assets of Gensol, its promoters, and related entities on May 28. They had contended that NCLT passed the order without giving them a proper hearing.

However, their plea was opposed by the MCA officials during the proceedings. They submitted there are specific allegations in the petition filed before the NCLT by the government and such allegations have been duly considered by the tribunal while passing the order.

On unfreezing the account request, the NCLAT said, "In view of the above, we dispose of these two appeals by request-



ing the NCLT to treat these two appeals as applications of the appellants for vacation of stay granted vide order dated May 28, 2025 and its consequent orders; while keeping open all the submissions which may

be made before the NCLT by either parties."

"On perusal of the materials placed on record, this Tribunal notes serious allegations of fraudulent conduct, including diversion of company funds

by the promoters of Gensol Engineering (Respondent No. 1) and related entities, violation of corporate governance norms, manipulation of financial statements, default in loan repayments despite false declarations, and illegal alienation of company assets," the NCLT order said.

The investigation reports and regulatory findings from MCA, Security Exchange Board of India (SEBI), and Serious fraud investigation office prima facie support the government's claims of systemic fraud involving substantial public interest, it said.

**Quick Routes Int'l exits Zinka Logistics**

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## Khimji crowned 'Most Trusted Jewellery Chain'



**BHUBANESWAR:** Khimji Jewellers, a popular jewellery brand in East India has just added another sparkling feather to its cap! The iconic brand was named 'Most Trusted Jewellery Chain of the Year' at the prestigious Times Now Business Excellence Awards, East 2025.

The glittering award ceremony saw Rootesh D Shah, CEO of Khimji Jewellers, accept the honour, on behalf of Khimji Jewellers, from acclaimed Bol-

lywood actress Nimrat Kaur. This recognition celebrates Khimji's unwavering commitment to innovation, top-notch quality, and an unmatched customer experience.

The brand was founded in 1936 by Khimji Dayabhai. Khimji Jewellers has been synonymous with trust and artistry for nearly nine decades. Their exquisite range, spanning traditional, contemporary, and bespoke pieces continues to set new standards for elegance and luxury across Odisha.

Shah said, "This award is a testament to the visionary leadership, the passion of our team and the loyalty of our customers. At Khimji Jewellers, we don't just create jewellery—we craft memories that celebrate life's most cherished moments. This honour inspires us to keep innovating and delivering excellence. We are truly humbled by this recognition from Times Now,"

Times Now Business Excellence Awards East 2025 shine a spotlight on organisations that are redefining their industries through innovation, resilience, and visionary leadership.

## Flipkart exits ABFRL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 4:** Flipkart Wednesday exited Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail (ABFRL) by selling its entire 6 per cent stake in the fashion retailer for ₹588 crore through an open market transaction. The shares were disposed of at an average price of ₹80.32 apiece, taking the transaction value to ₹587.71 crore.

Details of the buyers of Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail's shares could not be identified on the National Stock Exchange (NSE). US-based retail giant Walmart is the parent entity of Flipkart. Just after this, shares of Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail slumped 10.37 per cent to close at ₹77.08 apiece on the NSE. In October 2020, ABFRL announced a fundraising of ₹1,500 crore from the Flipkart Group.



Last month, ABFRL said its consolidated net loss narrowed to ₹23.55 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 2025, from a net loss of ₹266.36 crore a year ago.

## Vedanta Aluminium begins decarbonisation initiatives



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhawanipatna, June 4:** Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest aluminium producer, is driving a bold sustainability agenda through a comprehensive series of decarbonisation initiatives. As global climate concerns intensify, the company is emerging as a leader in sustainable practices within the aluminium industry.

A key step is its partnership with Serentica Renewables to source 1,335 MW of green energy for operations in Odisha and Chhattisgarh. This will help the company meet its goal of using 30% renewable energy by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Vedanta has also partnered with GAIL (India) Ltd. to use natural gas in its casthouses and adopted biomass co-firing

using agricultural residue. At its Lanjigarh refinery alone, 20 tonnes of biomass are co-fired daily, cutting over 10,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually and creating rural livelihood opportunities.

The company plans to decarbonize its entire light vehicle fleet by 2030. It operates India's largest electric forklift fleet and has launched EV initiatives with Let's DriEV in Jharsuguda. Biodiesel trials are also underway.

Vedanta integrates sustainability with community outreach through awareness campaigns and education. It ranks second globally in the 2024 S&P Global Corporate Sustainability Assessment for aluminium firms. With Aluminium Stewardship Initiative certifications and EPD verification, Vedanta is setting new standards for green industrial growth in India.

## Indian businesses' data challenges amid AI boom

Despite the rise in AI-driven innovations, Indian enterprises are struggling to align data quality, sustainability, and resilient practices with growing AI demands. Several findings highlight that there is a need to keep the data secure amid rise in technology

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 4:** Indian businesses are at the forefront of generative AI, transforming adoption into return on Investment (ROI), according to Adobe's 2025 AI and digital trends India snapshot.

The survey, which reached out to 345 executives and 841 consumers in India, found nearly a quarter (23 per cent) of Indian businesses demonstrate measurable results from



**Indian businesses are setting the global pace for realising ROI on AI initiatives as most are improving scale, speed and efficiencies**

**PRATIWA MOHAPATRA** | MD, ADOBE INDIA

generative AI adoption, which was the highest in Asia Pacific. It said executives reported significant benefits from generative AI adoption, including greater volume and speed of

content ideation and production (73 per cent) and increased productivity and efficiency (67 per cent).

"Indian businesses are setting the global pace for realising ROI on AI initiatives as most are improving scale, speed and efficiencies," said Pratitwa Mohapatra, Vice President and Managing Director of Adobe India.

For further growth, businesses will need to invest in solving data challenges and adopting agentic AI to free teams from

repetitive tasks and enable more meaningful interventions that deliver relevant and real-time personalised customer experiences, she added.

"Businesses also recognise the potential for customer journey optimisation while increasing efficiency in executing the repetitive tasks to drive broader business growth, nominating it as the top priority for 2025," the study said, adding this is followed by personalised experiences and leveraging AI.

# Kohli, Patidar dedicate win to faithfuls

**It is really special for me, for Virat Kohli, and all the fans. Those who have supported for years, they all deserve it. It's a great opportunity for me and a great learning for me to captain Kohli, he deserves it more than anyone else**

**RAJAT PATIDAR | CAPTAIN, RCB**

**It's for all of you - the fans, the people of this wonderful city, people who've supported RCB through thick and thin. I've never seen any fanbase of any team in the world like this franchise. I'm going to give the loudest cheer for him (captain Rajat Patidar)**

**VIKAT KOHLI | OPENER, RCB**



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, June 4:** Perhaps mindful of the tragedy outside the stadium, Virat Kohli was not his usual exuberant self but still managed to draw emotional roars from spectators who thronged the Chinnaswamy Stadium to be a part of Royal Challengers Bengaluru's maiden IPL trophy triumph celebrations here Wednesday.

At least four people died and several left injured in the stampede-like situation outside the stadium, where RCB did the fan engagement programme after their title win Tuesday.

"I'm going to start off by repeating what our captain (Rajat Patidar) said (during the trophy presentation ceremony on Tuesday night). It's no more ee sala cup namde, it's ee sala cup namdu," said Kohli to a rousing applause and roar from the gathered crowd.

Kohli then dedicated the victory to RCB fans who stood with the team for 17 long years without a trophy to show.

"It's for all of you - the fans, the people of this wonderful city, people who've supported RCB through thick and thin. I've never seen any fanbase of any team in the world like this franchise. I'm going to give the loudest cheer for him (captain Rajat Patidar)," added Kohli, who then invited Patidar to speak to the crowd.

Patidar too lauded the loyal RCB fan base.

"Whenever I come here, I always like to start with Namaskara Bengaluru. It was a great moment for us. From the start of the season, everyone was clear about what we had to do. You all deserve the trophy. We all love you," said Patidar.

Earlier, the Royal Challengers Bengaluru side landed in the city in the afternoon from Ahmedabad on a chartered

flight, and their first official assignment of the day here was to meet Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

The entire squad met the CM at his office in the Vidhana Soudha, along with Deputy CM DK Shiva Kumar.

After a short meeting inside the room, the players and the political leaders took their appointed place in the open dais in front of the state government headquarters.

The players were felicitated with the traditional Mysore Petta (turban) and garlands before they left for the stadium.

However, there was no open top bus parade as it was cancelled due to incessant rain and concerns surrounding crowd management owing to the chaos.

The players entered the stadium in the team bus with a large number of flag-waving fans running after the bus cheering them with slogans and chants.

## DREAM-COME-TRUE MOMENT, SAYS EX-RCB OWNER MALLYA

Former Royal Challengers Bengaluru owner Vijay Mallya recalled picking a young Virat Kohli 18 seasons ago in the players auction and said it was remarkable to witness the maestro staying loyal to the franchise, which has finally won a long-awaited IPL trophy. "When I founded RCB it was my dream that the IPL trophy should come to Bengaluru. I had the privilege of picking the legendary King Kohli as a youngster and it is remarkable that he has stayed with RCB for 18 years," Mallya wrote in a post on 'X'. RCB, which was bought by Mallya for \$111.6 million back in 2008, picked Kohli in the inaugural IPL auction in January 2008, and the batting superstar has only played for the Bangalore-based franchise since then. The UK-based Mallya lost ownership of the franchise in 2016 after defaulting on bank loans. The team is now completely owned by United Spirits. Mallya is, however, credited with playing major role in signing the cricketing giants like AB de Villiers, Chris Gayle, Jacques Kallis, and Anil Kumble among others for RCB. "I also had the honour of picking Chris Gayle the Universe Boss and Mr 360 AB de Villiers who remain an indelible part of RCB history. Finally, the IPL trophy arrives in Bangalore. Congratulations and thanks again to all who made my dream come true. RCB fans are the very best and they deserve the IPL trophy. Ee Sala Cup Bengaluru barthe! (This year, the cup is ours)," Mallya wrote. The liquor baron, who is accused of defaulting on loans worth several crores from Indian banks, including the State Bank of India (SBI), congratulated the entire RCB team management for the triumph. "RCB are IPL Champions finally after 18 years. Superb campaign right through the 2025 tournament. A well balanced team Playing Bold with outstanding coaching and support staff. Many congratulations !! Ee sala cup namde !!"



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## SHORT TAKES

### Karunakaran-Variyath keep India's hope alive

**Jakarta:** Sathish Kumar Karunakaran and Aadya Variyath entered the mixed doubles second round of the Indonesia Open Super 1000 badminton tournament but all other Indian pairs in the draw exited after opening losses here Wednesday. Karunakaran and Variyath rallied to beat Chinese Taipei's Ye Hong Wei and Nicole Gonzales Chan 15-21 21-16 21-17 in a tough opening round contest that lasted 45 minutes. But there was heartbreak for other Indian pairs in the event as they failed to progress to the next round.

### Eng rout West Indies

**London:** Late start, early finish. England needed just 30 of 40 available overs to beat the West Indies by seven wickets and achieve a 3-0 clean sweep of their one-day international series at the Oval Tuesday. Jamie Smith's maiden ODI fifty, 64 of the 93-run opening stand in seven overs, launched England's successful assault on the rain-revised target of 246. The game was delayed twice, first because a traffic lights outage trapped the West Indies bus long enough so the team wasn't even at the ground at the scheduled toss, and secondly for a 90-minute rain break.

## NORWAY CHESS ENTERS CRUCIAL PHASE

# Gukesh, Erigaisi in title contention

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Stavanger (Norway), June 4:** World champion D Gukesh and Arjun Erigaisi have caught the imagination of chess aficionados by queering the pitch for the likes of Magnus Carlsen and Hikaru Nakamura, as the Indian duo makes Norway Chess title bid when the tournament recommences Thursday after a rest day.

With eight rounds completed, and just two more to go, Gukesh - placed third with 11.5 points - and Erigaisi, with 10.5 points, are in contention for the title in a tournament which has never been won by an Indian.

Gukesh, after an unimpressive start in the tournament, has played some tenacious chess to stage a remarkable comeback in the six-player double round-robin tournament. He began with losses in his first two games - against world No.1 Carlsen and Erigaisi.

Just when Gukesh seemed to have hit a nice rhythm by beating Carlsen and Erigaisi in Round 6 and 7 respectively, the 19-year-old suffered a massive blow at the hands of Nakamura, who inflicted a morale-shattering blow to the Indian in Round 8 Tuesday.

The rest day would have



given Gukesh plenty of time to introspect and chart his next move, given that one more defeat in the tournament could make things virtually impossible for him.

Erigaisi, on the other hand, will meet Nakamura in Round 9, and would like to build on the success of beating the American player-cum-streamer in Round 5. The 21-year-old, playing in his maiden Norway Chess, has been tactful and quick on the board, thanks to his proficiency in rapid and blitz.

In the women's section, world rapid champion Koneru Humpy continues to be the frontrunner so far with 13.5 points and will

face Chinese world championship runner-up Lei Tingjie in Round 9, hoping to increase the lead.

R Vaishali, with 9.5 points, will take on Spanish International Master Sara Khadem, knowing well that one more defeat will end her title hopes.

### Pairings (Round 9):

**Open:** Hikaru Nakamura (USA) vs Arjun Erigaisi (Ind); D Gukesh (Ind) vs Wei Yi (Chn); Magnus Carlsen (Nor) vs Fabiano Caruana (USA).

**Women:** R Vaishali (Ind) vs Sara Khadem (Esp); Ju Wenjun (Chn) vs Anna Muzychuk (Ukr); Li Tingjie (Chn) vs Koneru Humpy (Ind).

## Women's compound archery team earns quarterfinal berth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Antalya (Turkey), June 4:** Madhura Dhamangaonkar continued her impressive run, finishing fourth in the compound women's qualification round, helping India secure the third seeding and a direct entry into the quarterfinals at the Archery World Cup Stage 3 here Wednesday.

Madhura, who made a remarkable comeback to the international circuit last month after three years, had bagged three medals - an individual gold, a silver in the women's team event, and a mixed team bronze with Abhishek Verma at the Shanghai Stage 2.

In Antalya, she finished just three points behind South Korea's Han Seungyeon (603).

With her top-four finish, Madhura has also earned a bye in the second round of the individual compound event.

Among other Indian women in the fray, Chikitha Taniparthi was the next best at 11th, while multiple World Cup gold medalist Jyothi Surekha Vennam had a modest outing, ending 19th in the rankings.

In the men's compound category, India secured fifth-place in team event.

## India lose to Thailand; reality check ahead of Asian Cup



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Pathum Thani, June 4:** A lacklustre India lost 0-2 against Thailand in an international football friendly in a reality check ahead of their crucial Asian Cup qualifying round match, here Wednesday.

Benjamin Davis and Poramet Arjvilai scored for Thailand in the 8th and 59th minutes respectively as the home side dominated the match at the Thammasat Stadium.

India had won the last two matches between the two sides before Wednesday's defeat but Thailand, ranked 99th in the world, were clearly the better side on the day. India are currently ranked at 127th.

The talismanic Sunil Chhetri, who had scored twice in India's 4-1 win against Thailand in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup, nearly scored in the 24th minute but his glancing header was saved by a diving Thailand goalkeeper Saranon Anui.

India had also beaten Thailand 1-0 in the Kings Cup in 2019.

The match was part of preparation for India's crucial AFC Asian Cup qualifying round match against Hong Kong on June 10 in Kowloon.

The same was also the case for Thailand as they face Turkmenistan in their AFC Asian Cup final round qualifier.

## French wild card Boisson stuns Mirra to reach semis

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Paris, June 4:** French wild-card entry Lois Boisson upset sixth-ranked Mirra Andreeva 7-6 (6), 6-3 Wednesday in front of a boisterous and largely partisan crowd at Roland-Garros to reach the semifinals of the French Open.

Andreeva repeatedly showed her frustration with the crowd, as excited fans chanted "Lois, Lois" between points, waved Tricolor flags, shouted during play, and even applauded the Russian teenager's errors.

The 22-year-old Boisson became the first woman to reach the semifinals at her debut Grand Slam tournament since 1989, when Monica Seles and Jennifer Capriati both did it at the French Open.

She is also the youngest French semifinalist at a Grand Slam event since Amelie Maures-



mo at Wimbledon in 1999.

The first set was marked by momentum swings and brilliant shot-making from both players. Boisson twice found herself down a break but fought back each time, using heavy spin and deep groundstrokes to trouble her Russian opponent.

Andreeva responded strongly at the start of the second set, racing to a 3-0 lead. But Boisson broke back with a thunderous backhand winner down the line, drawing a roar of approval from the lively crowd.

## CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FIASCO

# Football law on penalty kicks updated

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Zurich, June 4:** The laws of football on taking a penalty kick were clarified after Julián Álvarez's accidental double touch helped to eliminate Atletico Madrid from the Champions League.

The new interpretation will take effect in UEFA-organised games Wednesday when Germany plays Portugal in a Nations League semifinal in Munich, the European football body said Tuesday.

The update published by FIFA-backed rules panel IFAB means the kind of penalty Atlético forward Álvarez had disallowed after scoring in a shootout against Real Madrid in March should now be taken.

Álvarez slipped and kicked the ball against his standing left foot in the shootout in the Champions League round of 16.

After the looping ball beat Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois for an apparent score, the goal was ruled out by a video review and Atletico ultimately lost the shootout.

The laws of football relating to the penalty kick and penalty shootout were seen as correctly applied in Madrid though too vaguely worded. The incident was widely judged to have been unfair as Álvarez did not deliberately slip and take the double touch to gain an advantage.

"This situation is rare, and as it is not directly covered in Law 14, referees have understandably tended to penalize



the kicker," IFAB said in a statement.

"However, this part of Law 14 is primarily intended for situations where the penalty

that a penalty kick which is scored now after an accidental double touch should be retaken.

A double-touch penalty that is not scored will not be retaken. In a shootout, such a penalty "is recorded as missed," IFAB said, and during regulation time or extra time a free kick can be awarded to the defending team.

The clarified rule also will apply at the Club World Cup which starts June 14 in the United States. The 32-team lineup includes Atletico.

IFAB is comprised of FIFA plus the four British football federations. Rules can be changed with six of the eight votes which are distributed by four to FIFA and one each to the British.