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weather report

Kolkata Weather

31 °C | °F

Precipitation 75%

Humidity 89%

Wind 13 km/h

Mostly cloudy with a t-storm



Indian Indices

NIFTY 50		
25244.75	200.40	0.80
SENSEX		
82755.51	700.40	0.85
NIFTY BANK		
56621.15	159.25	0.28
NIFTY IT		
39046.30	628.35	1.64
BSE SMALLCAP		
53897.25	844.25	1.59

Gold Rates

Today gold price in Kolkata

98,950 90,700

»

Today gold price in Bangalore

98,950 90,700

»

Today gold price in India

98,950 (₹-270) 90,700 (₹-250)

THURSDAY, 26 JUNE 2025. KOLKATA VOLUME 3 ISSUE 56 . PAGES-8 . RS : 4/- MORNING DAILY

Suvendu Adhikari Highlights Puri Maha Prasad Distribution in Tamluk During Rath Yatra Festivities
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Rajkummar Rao Opens Up on Sourav Ganguly Biopic
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Kharge Slams BJP for Using Emergency Narrative to Distract from Governance Failures
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Gautam Gambhir Reasserts Jasprit Bumrah Will Feature in Only Three Tests
–Pg : 8





Secretary (East) P. Kumaran and Vietnamese Deputy Foreign Minister Nguyen Manh Cuong co-chair the 13th India-Vietnam Political Consultation and 10th Strategic Dialogue, in New Delhi on Wednesday.

"Is Speaking Bengali a Crime?" Mamata Banerjee Secures Release of Migrant Workers from Rajasthan



Kolkata, 25 June: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee successfully intervened to secure the release of nearly 400 Bengali-speaking migrant workers who had been detained in Rajasthan, accused of being illegal Bangladeshi nationals despite having valid Indian documentation. The incident has ignited a fierce debate over linguistic profiling and migrant rights, compelling both state and national governments to address deep-seated prejudices and administrative oversights. The controversy first erupted when around 300 to 400 workers from Itahar in Uttar Dinajpur district—alongside a similar number from Assam—were reportedly rounded up and confined in Rajasthan's Bhiwadi area. These individuals had been living and working in the state, predominantly in construction roles, for years. Complaints began pouring in after their families and local leaders noticed their absence and reached out, questioning their whereabouts. The detention, apparently triggered solely because the workers spoke Bengali, highlighted a pattern of linguistic suspicion in BJP-ruled states, according to Chief Minister Banerjee. Banerjee decried the treatment of her constituents, saying, "Is speaking Bengali a crime? Should Tamil speakers be sent to Sri Lanka or Nepali speakers to Nepal?" Her statement underscored a growing trend of migrant workers from other states being harassed despite carrying Aadhaar, PAN cards, and other valid documents. She emphasized West Bengal's inclusive ethos—where over 1.5 crore migrant workers from across India are employed without prejudice—and questioned why her own people were being stigmatized elsewhere. The Chief Minister directed West Bengal Chief Secretary Manoj Pant to coordinate with his Rajasthan counterpart, Sudhanshu Pant. The move followed briefing from Itahar MLA Mosaraf Hossain, who received distress calls from detained workers. Banerjee also stated she would escalate the matter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, suggesting the central administration might be unaware of the grave implications of such detentions. Banerjee drew attention to parallel instances of Bengali migrants being wrongfully deported from Maharashtra and Maharashtra, where their documents were overlooked and they were forced into Bangladesh before being hastily repatriated. This, she argued, established a disturbing pattern of linguistic discrimination in states under BJP rule. On Wednesday, following direct state-to-state intervention, the Rajasthan government released all detained workers. According to Ainul Haq, one of the released migrants, approximately 200 workers from West Bengal and another 200 from Assam returned to work the next morning, offering gratitude to the West Bengal government, and especially to Banerjee. Despite their release, Banerjee did not let the incident rest.



Minister of State Shobha Karandlaje receives 224 Indian nationals who returned from Israel under Operation Sindhu upon their arrival by an Indian Air Force aircraft in New Delhi, Wednesday,

"Disguised as a Swamiji": New Book Sheds Light on PM Modi's Covert Role During the Emergency

New Delhi, 25 June: On the 50th anniversary of the declaration of the Emergency in India, a new book titled The Emergency Diaries – Years That Forged a Leader offers a riveting, previously untold account of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's clandestine resistance during the turbulent years of 1975–77. Published by BlueKraft Digital Foundation and marked by a foreword from former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, the volume presents compelling first-person narratives and archival evidence that illuminate Modi's role in sustaining an underground network against the authoritarian crackdown initiated by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.Readers discover that Narendra Modi, then a young RSS pracharak and general secretary of the Gujarat Lok Sangharsh Samiti,operated under a cloak of secrecy to evade police arrests and continued grassroots activism. When the RSS was banned shortly after the Emergency was issued, Modi went underground across Gujarat, adopting various disguises that included a Sikh preacher, a French-bearded monk, and a "Swamiji." Such identities enabled him to attend secret meetings, distribute subversive pamphlets, and coordinate resistance networks without detection. One of the most dramatic anecdotes involves a daring visit to Bhavnagar jail in September 1976. As detailed by journalist Vishnu Pandya, Modi—under the garb of a spiritual guru—secured brief access to political detainees. He spent an hour conversing with inmates on matters ranging from jail administration to family welfare, and strategizing the continued dissemination of anti-Emergency literature. "No one suspected it was Modi," Pandya recalled. The text documents Modi's inventive methods of underground activism. He employed unconventional distribution strategies, stashing pamphlets in barber shops and using trains instead of the postal service to circulate banned material—tactics designed to evade authorities. He is also said to have communicated through code names like "Chandan ka Karyakram" and sought refuge only in residences with concealed exit routes, should raids occur. The Emergency Diaries emphasizes how Modi collaborated with senior RSS figures like Nath Zagda and Vasant Gajendragadkar to maintain community outreach even as the organization was outlawed.

"Kamaal ki ride": Shubhanshu Shukla's Triumphant "Jai Hind, Jai Bharat" as Axiom-4 Launches



New Delhi, 25 June: At exactly 12:01 pm IST on Wednesday, the world watched breathlessly as the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket, carrying the Axiom-4 mission, launched from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida, vaulting India back into the realm of human spaceflight after an interval of 41 years. Aboard, clad in the emblematic Indian tricolour on his shoulder, Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla—the second Indian citizen and first Indian to pilot to the International Space Station (ISS)—delivered a message steeped in emotion and national pride the moment the rocket cleared the launchpad . "Namaskar, my dear countrymen! What a ride! After 41 years, we are back in space," Shukla, who hails from Lucknow and serves in the Indian Air Force, began his transmission. "We are orbiting Earth at 7.5 km/s, and on my shoulder I have the Tiranga—it tells me I am with all of you." He continued, "This journey is not only the start of my voyage to the ISS but marks the beginning of India's human space programme. Let your chest swell with pride… Jai Hind! Jai Bharat!" . The mission's launch—initially scheduled for June 11 but postponed six times due to technical and environmental factors—finally succeeded under optimal conditions on June 25, firmly securing its place as a milestone in space history . The Falcon 9 rocket separated flawlessly, and its first stage booster touched down safely back on Earth, making way for the Crew Dragon capsule to continue its journey toward the ISS with Shukla and his international crewmates: veteran NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson, Polish ESA astronaut Sławosz Uznański-Wiśniewski, and Hungarian scientist Tibor Kapu . The magnitude of this achievement did not go unnoticed in India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President Droupadi Murmu, various ministers, and the Indian Air Force publicly extended their congratulations. Addressing the nation on social media, PM Modi conveyed his pride and reassurance: "The Indian Astronaut, Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, is on the way to become the first Indian to go to the International Space Station. He carries with him the wishes, hopes and aspirations of 1.4 billion Indians," he wrote . President Murmu praised Shukla's flight as a landmark moment for the country, reminding citizens that "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam"—the world is one family—was being embodied in space . The Indian Air Force called the launch "a journey from conquering the skies to touching the stars" . While Shukla follows in the illustrious footsteps of Rakesh Sharma, India's first spacefarer in 1984, his mission is distinct in several ways.

"Why Don't PM Modi and Amit Shah Resign Over Pahalgam Attack?" MP Abhishek Banerjee Questions Centre's Silence and Accountability



Kolkata, 25 June: Trinamool Congress national general secretary and Member of Parliament Abhishek Banerjee launched a blistering attack on the central government, directly questioning Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for not resigning after the devastating terrorist attack in Pahalgam. Speaking at a public rally in Satgachia, Banerjee accused the top leadership of the BJP-led central government of gross negligence, moral failure, and using political narratives to divert attention from national security lapses.

The attack on April 22 in the Baisaran area of Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir claimed the lives of 26 civilians, including several tourists from West Bengal. The assailants, believed to be members of the banned terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba operating under the alias The Resistance Front, stormed the popular tourist site and opened fire indiscriminately. The incident, considered one of the worst in recent years, has ignited fierce criticism of the central government's counter-terror and intelligence operations.

Abhishek Banerjee did not mince his words as he lashed out at the Modi government. He demanded to know why, after such a major intelligence failure, no resignations had come from those in power. He questioned why the Home Minister or the National Security Advisor had not been asked to step down and why senior intelligence officials had not been held accountable. Instead of facing consequences, Banerjee pointed out, some officers had been rewarded with tenure extensions.

Banerjee said the silence of the Centre was deafening. He asked how five heavily armed terrorists managed to infiltrate a high-security tourist zone without being intercepted by either intelligence or security agencies. According to him, the attack was not just a lapse but a complete collapse of the system, one for which the political leadership must take responsibility. He further asked if this incident had occurred under a different government, would there not have been uproar and demands for resignations from the opposition benches.

Addressing a crowd filled with local supporters, Banerjee drew a parallel with the Centre's track record of using the Enforcement Directorate, CBI, and even Pegasus spyware against opposition leaders. He questioned why such extensive surveillance mechanisms, often used to track political rivals, were not used to stop terrorists. He remarked that if these tools were used more against threats to national security than against political opponents, such tragedies could be prevented.

He also launched a sharp critique of the BJP's attempts to politicize the tragedy. Referring to what he called "sindoor politics," Banerjee said the central leadership was busy playing with religious sentiments while avoiding real questions about internal security. He argued that instead of offering sincere condolences to the families of the victims, the government used the situation to spread communal narratives and distract from the administrative failure.

In a pointed comment on foreign policy, Banerjee asked what India had achieved by engaging in dialogue with 33 nations after the attack if it could not secure a strong condemnation of Pakistan's role. He cited that the IMF recently released funds to Pakistan even after the attack, and no global platform had publicly named Pakistan as a state sponsor of terrorism in this context. He implied that either India's global diplomatic influence was weak, or the government lacked the intent to push for accountability.

The Trinamool MP also questioned the enormous expenditure of over ₹2 lakh crore by the Ministry of External Affairs in the past decade. He said that the people of India deserve to know what such a massive budget had achieved, especially when India had to tolerate cross-border terrorism and diplomatic ambiguity regarding terror outfits operating from Pakistan.

Shifting focus briefly to Bengal, Banerjee said that his constituency, Diamond Harbour, had set an example of transparent governance and development. He listed achievements including over ₹500 crore spent on road infrastructure and ₹6,000 crore spent on public welfare programs. He challenged the BJP to replicate this model in any of the states it governs. He added that while his party focuses on real development, the BJP survives on propaganda, divisive politics, and using government agencies as tools of political suppression.

Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan Transforms PM Modi & CM Yogi's Agricultural Vision into Realities

Lucknow, 25 June: The agricultural landscape of Uttar Pradesh (UP) is undergoing a profound metamorphosis, with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath asserting that the state's progress under the Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan is breathing life into the visions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Launched as a pivotal campaign to bridge the gap between scientific research and field-level farming, this initiative is already delivering tangible benefits in animal husbandry, dairy, crop diversity, water resource management, and farmer welfare.

CM Adityanath emphasised that the campaign—a brainchild of the double-engine government since 2014—is enabling UP to realise its longstanding agricultural potential. According to him, previous administrations had overlooked critical sectors such as animal rearing and dairy production, prompting a decline in livestock quality and output.

Now, as farmland becomes more fertile and irrigation systems expand, the effects of the Sankalp Abhiyan are being felt across villages and farms, reflecting Modi's vision for a Viksit Bharat built on agricultural excellence. Adityanath highlighted that under the Emergency-era neglect, livestock backwardness crept in, but the current government's focused strategies are now reversing that trend.

The Sankalp Abhiyan, he said, is reawakening dairy and animal husbandry as robust sources of farmer income while increasingly tying in modernised irrigation and breeding techniques.

India to Present Vision for Global Peace and Security, Says Rajnath Singh Ahead of SCO Defence Meet

New Delhi, 25 June: With the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' meeting set to begin in Qingdao, China, India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has expressed his strong intent to articulate India's perspective on international peace and security. In a statement on his X account today, Singh emphasised that he is "eagerly looking forward" to representing India's vision before his counterparts from SCO member states, pledging to advocate for the complete eradication of terrorism. This gathering, scheduled for June 25–27, marks Singh's first official visit to China since the Galwan Valley skirmishes in 2020. He will lead the Indian delegation in discussions covering a spectrum of regional and global security challenges. Among the key agenda points are bilateral defence engagements with China and Russia, along with broader issues such as peacekeeping, border management, and terrorism. Singh's anticipated meetings in Qingdao come at a critical juncture. India and China have been cautiously working to restore diplomatic ties, but formal de-escalation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) remains elusive. Singh's presence at the SCO defence conclave is being interpreted as a strategic move to rebuild trust while maintaining clarity on India's uncompromising stance regarding its territorial integrity. In his message on X, Singh underlined India's resolute position on eliminating terrorism. "I will call upon everyone to completely uproot terrorism from the



earth," he wrote, reinforcing the government's commitment. The defence minister's statement implicitly sends a strong message to Pakistan, reminding the global community of India's readiness to respond decisively to terror threats—a sentiment mirrored by his earlier warning that "Operation Sindoor is not over" and that any further terror incidents would trigger "disastrous" consequences for Pakistan. Beyond counterterrorism, Singh is set to present India's comprehensive vision for bolstering global peace through collaborative defence efforts and an emphasis on collective security frameworks. India's enduring commitment to the SCO aligns with its broader foreign policy of strengthening multilateral cooperation in defense, economic development, and counterterror initiatives. Singh's attendance reflects India's unwavering role as a regional security anchor, advocating for robust multilateral mechanisms. Bilateral talks with Chinese Defence Minister Li Shangfu and his Russian counterpart are expected to cover a range of issues. Alongside defence collaboration, both sides aim to explore measures to enhance military transparency, streamline border communications, and prevent unintended confrontations between their forces. Discussions may also probe avenues for restoring civil aviation links, reviving visa processes, and managing transboundary water resources. Such talks would signal China's willingness to advance ties, while India is poised to reinforce its strategic autonomy and national security priorities. The enduring significance of the Galwan border clashes cannot be understated. Those violent exchanges in 2020 severely strained India-China trust, leading to a substantial military presence on both sides of the LAC in sectors such as Demchok and Depsang.

Calcutta HC Grants Bail to Former Education Council President Kalyanmoy Ganguly in ED's Money Laundering Case Linked to Recruitment Scam

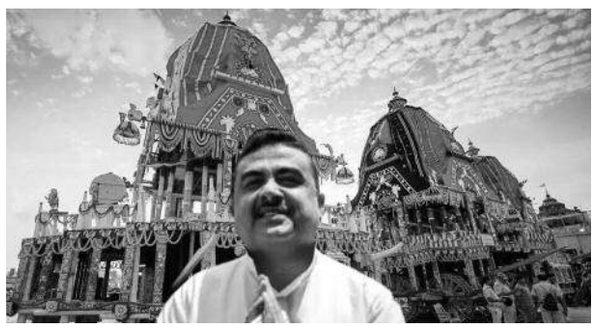
Kolkata, 25 June: BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari has drawn attention to a unique devotional initiative that unfolded in Tamluk, East Midnapore. For five consecutive days, devotees in the region were offered the revered Maha Prasad of Lord Jagannath, specially brought from the Puri Jagannath Temple in Odisha.

Addressing a local gathering of devotees and supporters during the yatra celebrations, Adhikari emphasized the spiritual significance of the offering and the logistical efforts involved in bringing the Maha Prasad from the famed 12th-century shrine to West Bengal. According to him, the sacred food was distributed free of cost to thousands of devotees, marking a rare and auspicious event that linked Bengal's cultural devotion with the Jagannath cult of Puri.

In a deeply religious yet politically charged atmosphere, Adhikari thanked the organizers, temple volunteers, and community leaders for their contribution to what he described as an act of "bhakti and seva." He also invoked the divine blessing of Lord Jagannath for peace, unity, and righteousness in the state.

The distribution, which began on the day of the chariot procession and continued through the festival period, saw enthusiastic participation from local residents as well as pilgrims from nearby districts. Temporary counters were set up at key points in Tamluk town, where volunteers managed the arrangements, including queue systems, hygiene, and ritual protocol. The Maha Prasad, which is considered sacred by devotees of Lord Jagannath, was transported in sealed containers from Puri under traditional guidelines, preserving both sanctity and freshness.

"This is not just food; it is an offering that carries divine energy. Those who partake in Maha Prasad are believed to be blessed by the Lord himself. It is our privilege to have been able to bring it here," said one of the local organizers associated with the initiative.



The offering consisted of traditional Jagannath Temple items such as khichdi (rice and lentils cooked with vegetables), dalma, sweet dishes like malpua and khaja, and a variety of dry prasadam items. Each packet was carefully portioned and handed out with reverence. Several women from self-help groups and youth volunteers also joined in the process, treating it as part of their spiritual service.

Residents described the event as unprecedented in recent years. "We have always heard of Maha Prasad being served in Puri during Rath Yatra, but to have it here in Tamluk for five whole days—it feels like the Lord himself has come to us," said a local elderly devotee with folded hands, visibly moved after receiving the food offering.

While the event had a clear devotional core, it also carried symbolic weight in the current political context. Suvendu Adhikari, who has been increasingly vocal about cultural and religious heritage issues, used the occasion to underline a broader narrative of tradition and faith as an integral part of public life.

Without making overt political remarks, he hinted at the need to preserve spiritual identity and respect for ancient customs amidst what he

ED Seizes ₹27 Crore Worth of Assets Linked to Prasanna in Ongoing Recruitment Scam Probe

Kolkata, 25 June: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has seized assets worth ₹27 crore allegedly linked to Prasanna Kumar Roy, a key figure under investigation in connection with the multi-crore recruitment scam that has rocked West Bengal's education sector. The seizure marks a fresh escalation in the central agency's pursuit of financial trails associated with illegal appointments across various state-run institutions. According to officials familiar with the development, the attached properties include a mix of high-value real estate, luxury apartments, commercial land holdings, and substantial bank deposits. Several of these assets were reportedly acquired during the years when the alleged scam was at its peak, suggesting that they may have been purchased using illicit earnings from manipulated recruitment processes.

The ED's move comes after months of sustained investigation, including analysis of financial records, interrogation of suspects, and digital forensic examination. Sources indicate that the properties linked to Prasanna were spread across Kolkata, Salt Lake, and other prominent urban zones, some of which were registered under the names of family members or shell entities — a tactic commonly used to conceal illegal wealth. ED officers conducted coordinated raids across multiple locations over the past week, seizing documents, digital storage devices, and transaction records believed to be crucial to the case. The agency has invoked provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), which allows it to provisionally attach properties suspected to be proceeds of crime pending adjudication.

Prasanna Kumar Roy, whose name has surfaced in several testimonies and internal inquiry reports, is accused of playing a central role in manipulating examination results, orchestrating fraudulent job recommendations, and accepting hefty bribes in exchange for secure government posts. The recruitment scam has so far implicated a growing list of bureaucrats, education officials, and middlemen, with Roy allegedly acting as one of the linchpins in the network.

While Roy has previously denied any wrongdoing, the ED's asset seizure is being viewed as a significant step toward tightening the legal net around him. Legal experts suggest that the scale and timing of the seizure indicate that the agency is close to filing a supplementary charge sheet, potentially expanding the scope of the probe to include new names and money trails.The recruitment scam itself has sent shockwaves through the state over the past year, with thousands of allegedly illegal appointments coming to light across schools, municipal bodies, and state departments. Candidates with higher merit were reportedly sidelined in favor of those who could pay bribes or wield political influence, leading to widespread protests by job seekers and public criticism of the system.

The political ramifications of the scam continue to reverberate through the state. While ruling party leaders have attempted to distance themselves from the accused, opposition parties have seized upon the scandal to target the administration, demanding resignations and judicial intervention. The ED's recent action is expected to further fuel the political debate in the lead-up to upcoming civic and assembly polls.Meanwhile, officials say the probe is far from over. The ED is reportedly examining a broader pattern of transactions involving educational boards, recruitment agencies, and financial intermediaries, with a focus on how funds were laundered or parked in investments.

West Bengal Declares Half-Day for Government Offices on July 1 in Honor of Doctors' Day

Kolkata, 25 June: The West Bengal government has officially announced a half-day holiday for all state government offices, local bodies, and public sector undertakings on July 1 to mark the occasion of National Doctors' Day. The decision, welcomed widely across the state, is seen as a gesture of gratitude and respect towards the medical community for their relentless service to society, especially in challenging times.

National Doctors' Day, observed every year on July 1, commemorates the birth and death anniversary of Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy — a legendary physician, freedom fighter, and the second Chief Minister of West Bengal. Revered as a pioneer in Indian medical history, Dr. Roy remains a towering figure in Bengal's public consciousness.

This year, the West Bengal administration has taken a symbolic step to honor medical professionals by declaring a half-working day for all government departments. As per the directive, official work will conclude at 2 PM across most state-run institutions, allowing employees to participate in observances and public functions that recognize the role of doctors in building a healthier society.

According to government sources, the decision was made to allow citizens and public officials alike to reflect on the importance of medical ethics, the tireless labor of physicians, and the essential role of healthcare in public life. "This is not just a formal holiday. It is a mark of respect to those who stand between life and death for millions. It is a reminder of how critical our doctors are—not just during pandemics, but every single day," a senior government official said. In government hospitals and healthcare units across the state, Doctors' Day is set to be celebrated with a series of events including felicitation ceremonies, health awareness programs, blood donation drives, and free medical camps.

RPF Cyber Cell Achieves Success Using CEIR Portal: Stolen Mobile Phone Recovered

Kolkata, 25 June: In a major step forward following the recent empowerment of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) to access the Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) portal, the RPF Zonal Cyber Cell of Eastern Railway has achieved a significant breakthrough by recovering a stolen mobile phone—marking one of the first success stories under this new initiative.

On 24th May 2025, Shri Anjar Islam, a passenger traveling from Katihar to Sealdah by Train No. 13170, reported the loss of his mobile phone after discovering it was missing upon arrival. Acting promptly, he contacted Railway Helpline 139 and registered a complaint via the Rail Madad platform.

An alert RPF officer immediately guided the complainant to fill out the CEIR portal form, a crucial step that enables authorities to digitally block and trace lost or stolen mobile devices. As per the updated guidelines authorizing RPF to take action through the CEIR system, the RPF Zonal Cyber Cell initiated digital surveillance to trace the device.



Using advanced digital tools and strategic communication, the team successfully located the person currently in possession of the phone and persuaded them to voluntarily surrender it. The recovered mobile was handed over to the RPF Post at Ranaghat.

After verification of ownership and identity, the phone was officially returned to Shri Anjar Islam, who expressed deep gratitude to the RPF Cyber Cell for their quick and efficient action.

This recovery reflects the RPF's evolving digital capability in combating cyber-related thefts and delivering technology-driven solutions to passenger grievances. It also reinforces public trust in the responsiveness, professionalism, and adaptability of the Railway Protection Force in the digital age.

Eastern Railway remains committed to safeguarding the interests of passengers through proactive, technology-enabled policing and swift grievance redressal.

Continuation of running of kolkata - kanpur central – kolkata special

Kolkata, 25 June: To clear the extra rush of passengers, Railway has decided to continue the service of 04153/04154 Kanpur Central – Kolkata – Kanpur Central Special. 04153 Kanpur Central – Kolkata special will leave Kanpur Central at 13:00 hrs. on every Thursday & Monday between 3.7.2025 & 14.8.2025 (13 trips) to reach Kolkata at 07:50 hrs. on the next day and 04154 Kolkata – Kanpur Central Special will leave Kolkata at 10:45 hrs. on every Friday & Tuesday between 4.7.2025 & 15.8.2025 (13 trips) to reach Kanpur Central at 04:30 hrs. on the next day.

The special train will stop at 14 stations including Barddhaman, Durgapur & Asansol stations in both directions enroute over Eastern Railway jurisdiction.

The special train will have general second class, sleeper class and air-conditioned accommodations.

State Government Launches Ambitious Project to Construct 18 New Bridges Over Damodar in Howrah

Kolkata, 25 January: The state government has initiated the construction of 18 new bridges over the Damodar River in Howrah district. This ambitious undertaking is set to significantly transform transportation across the region, easing traffic congestion, linking remote villages, and boosting economic activity in multiple blocks adjacent to the river.

According to officials familiar with the project, the initiative has been planned to address long-standing connectivity issues faced by residents living on either side of the Damodar. For decades, seasonal floods and lack of reliable bridges have disrupted road transport and access to essential services in large parts of rural and semi-urban Howrah. With the new bridges, those days may finally be coming to an end.

The project, under the direct supervision of the state Public Works Department (PWD), is being executed in phases. A combination of small-span concrete structures and large multi-lane bridges are being built, depending on the geographical features and local population needs in each area. Sites have been identified after detailed topographical and technical assessments, with inputs from local panchayats and district authorities.

Officials have stated that the bridges will not only cater to vehicular movement but also include provisions for pedestrian crossings and, where feasible, separate lanes for two-wheelers and slow-moving vehicles. This integrated approach is expected to ease daily travel for farmers, students, traders, and healthcare workers who often face difficulties reaching towns or markets due to the river's natural barriers.

Funding for the project has come through a mix of state budget allocations and financial assistance under various rural infrastructure development schemes. While the overall cost is estimated to run into several hundred crores, officials argue that the long-term benefits — economic, social, and logistical — will far outweigh the expenditure.

One of the key objectives behind the project is to unlock economic potential in areas that remain underdeveloped due to poor accessibility. In many parts of Howrah's western and southern fringes, agricultural produce often fails to reach urban markets on time due to the absence of efficient transport routes. With new bridges in place, it is expected that produce from these areas can be transported more swiftly, thereby increasing farmer income and encouraging local entrepreneurship.

Additionally, schools, health centers, and government offices located across the riverbanks are expected to see improved attendance and service reach. Residents will no longer need to depend on ferries or travel several kilometers for the nearest bridge — a daily hardship that has affected quality of life for generations.

The plan also accounts for environmental considerations. Each bridge is being constructed with modern engineering practices that minimize ecological disruption to the riverbed and surrounding land. During construction, measures are being taken to ensure that fish migration routes, river flow patterns, and agricultural irrigation channels are not obstructed.

Kolkata Metro Saves Over ₹8 Crore Through Self-Generated Electricity in Landmark Green Initiative

Kolkata, 25 June: The Kolkata Metro has successfully saved over ₹8 crore this year by generating a substantial portion of its own electricity, officials said. The achievement highlights a broader commitment by the city's rapid transit network to embrace renewable energy and optimize operational costs while maintaining uninterrupted services for lakhs of daily commuters.

This remarkable financial saving stems from an ambitious push toward self-sufficiency in energy needs, primarily through solar power installations and regenerative braking systems that harness and recycle energy from metro trains. Over the past few years, Metro Railway Kolkata has been steadily integrating green infrastructure into its network, and this year's performance stands as a testament to that long-term vision.

Sources within the metro administration confirmed that a considerable portion of the electricity used for station operations, lighting, ventilation, and auxiliary systems across multiple stretches of the metro network has been generated internally. This includes the North-South and East-West corridors, where solar panels have been installed on depot rooftops, administrative buildings, and station premises.

Notably, the regenerative braking technology fitted in modern rakes has played a crucial role in this achievement. Each time a metro train slows down, the braking system converts kinetic energy back into electrical energy, which is then fed back into the system to power other trains or station utilities. This form of energy recycling significantly reduces overall dependence on external electricity sources, especially during peak hours. Kolkata Metro's push toward sustainable energy began gaining momentum with the commissioning of rooftop solar projects in recent years. With technical support from central agencies and energy partners, the metro has gradually scaled up its solar capacity, now running into multiple megawatts. These installations are not only reducing carbon emissions but are also providing a buffer against rising electricity costs in an era of volatile energy pricing.



Today's Horoscope

ARIES: There are chances that there will be some disappointing moments today, foretells Ganesha. Your own recklessness may well be the cause. Ganesha says it's good to take inspiration.

TAURUS: You will tackle your problems with a human touch as your inner self reigns supreme today, predicts Ganesha. Worries and troubles will chide you but let the barking dogs lie.

GEMINI: There are strong indications that you will find it easy to assume a leadership role and set the agenda at work today, says Ganesha. In the afternoon, you will be busy looking for an expensive.

CANCER: You are likely to be in good spirits throughout the day. With you brimming with confidence and positive energy, others around you will also feel upbeat.

LEO : With Lady Luck smiling down on you, today promises to be rather special, forecasts Ganesha. Expect to find favourable conditions and come out with flying colours in whatever task you undertake.

VIRGO: There is an indication that you may assume a leadership role and dictate the agenda at work today, predicts Ganesha. You may spend your afternoon window-shopping,

LIBRA: Ganesha predicts that today you will receive that much-awaited good news from abroad. At the workplace, you will remain completely focused.

SCORPIO: It is quite likely that you will have an outstanding field day today, predicts Ganesha. At the workplace, you will possibly feel that you are stuck in the rut doing regular activities day after day.

SAGITTARIUS: Work while you work and play while you play, says Ganesha. On the professional front, you will outclass your rivals with sheer brilliance, leaving them flabbergasted.

CAPRICORN: You will settle for nothing less than excellence in whatever work you choose to take up, says Ganesha. In fact, working extra hours may leave you a little exhausted in the afternoon.

AQUARIUS: The explorer that you are, today your restlessness will get the better of you! Your plans will finally take off, whether it is a new entrepreneurial or educational course or a trip.

PIECES: There is a lot of brain-racking in store for you today, as you try to conjure up ways to convert your extraordinary brilliance into exceptional performance.

No Suit In White House, Zelensky Goes Formal For Latest Trump Meet

Kyiv, 25 June: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has returned his wardrobe since a disastrous Oval Office meeting with Donald Trump in February, switching his typical khaki military-style tee-shirts and long-sleeved tops for more formal, but still rugged, black suit-style jackets and shirts.

The media-savvy leader had wanted to show solidarity with the troops fighting Russia on the frontline. But he was chided by a US reporter for not wearing a suit at the White House event, which descended into a shouting match over whether he was showing sufficient gratitude for U.S. wartime support.

Since then, Zelensky has worked to rebuild relations with Washington, whose military help Kyiv still badly needs, even though the U.S. president has shown no sign of resuming the donations of weaponry that his predecessor Joe Biden, had instituted.

When Zelenski met Trump at Pope Francis's funeral in Rome in April, he wore a heavy black field jacket and black shirt buttoned to the collar, with no tie.

He sported a similar look when meeting British Prime Minister Keir Starmer in London on Monday, and again at the dinner hosted on Tuesday by the Dutch king that preceded Wednesday's NATO summit in The Hague.

Although he was not invited to the meeting itself, he met with Trump afterwards, with an agenda including a wish-list of arms purchases.



The subtle switch, stopping short of a white shirt or tie, has captured attention on social media and from the Ukrainian edition of ELLE magazine, which on Wednesday described his changed look as "visual diplomacy of a new kind".

The negative focus on Zelenskiy's attire at the White House was widely criticised by Ukrainians, who have largely rallied around their leader since Moscow's February 2022 invasion.

A communications adviser for the president's office did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

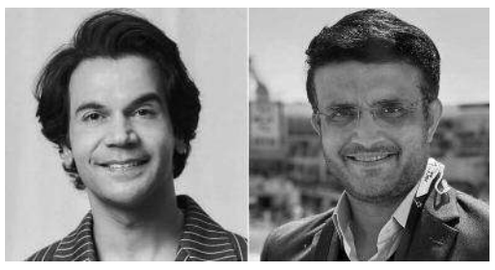
Donald Trump - intent on brokering at least one peace deal between warring nations - declared Tuesday he turned down Vladimir Putin's offer of help with the Iran-Israel conflict, instead reminding the Russian President he needs his help to bring the war in Ukraine to an end.

Trump, interacting with reporter aboard Air Force One en route to a NATO summit in the Netherlands, claimed Putin called him and asked, "Can I help you with Iran?" The United States President said he shot back, "No, I don't need help with Iran. I need help with you."

A reality TV star-turned-politician, Trump has been front-and-centre in ceasefire talks to end Tel Aviv and Tehran's 12-day conflict, which at times threatened to spiral out of control and trigger an all-out war in West Asia, to add to the three years of death and destruction in Ukraine.

Trump and his team reportedly spoke to Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu and Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to settle terms of the ceasefire, but still had to talk tough after both sides appeared to violate the deal within hours of it being announced.

Rajkummar Rao Opens Up on Sourav Ganguly Biopic: Hints at Talks, Expresses Admiration for the Cricket Legend



Mumbai, 25 June: One of India's most iconic cricket captains, has taken a fresh turn as acclaimed actor Rajkummar Rao broke his silence on the speculation about his involvement in the project. Amid growing curiosity over who would step into the shoes of the legendary former Indian skipper, Rajkummar has finally acknowledged that there have indeed been conversations regarding the role, though he stopped short of confirming anything definitive. In a recent media interaction during the promotion of one of his upcoming films, Rajkummar Rao was asked directly about the Sourav Ganguly biopic and whether he would be portraying the charismatic and often fiery cricketer on screen. The actor responded with characteristic restraint and humility, stating that he has immense respect for Ganguly and considers him one of the greatest captains in Indian cricket history. He revealed that talks have happened, indicating that the possibility is indeed being explored. However, he emphasized that until things are finalized and confirmed, he cannot offer a clear answer. The idea of a biopic on Sourav Ganguly has intrigued both fans of cinema and cricket alike. Known for his bold leadership and aggressive style that transformed Indian cricket in the early 2000s, Ganguly's life offers all the ingredients of a compelling cinematic journey — from his early days in Kolkata to his stellar debut at Lord's, his captaincy that redefined Indian cricket's attitude, the controversies he braved, and his eventual transition into a respected cricket administrator and BCCI President. Rajkummar Rao, known for his versatility and dedication to embodying the characters he plays, seems like a fitting choice for such a layered role. Over the years, he has built a formidable reputation through performances in films such as Shahid, Trapped, Newton, and Stree, where he displayed his ability to completely immerse himself in the psyche of his characters. Taking on the role of Sourav Ganguly would certainly require a similar level of commitment, as portraying a real-life icon demands both authenticity and a deep emotional connection with the subject's life and legacy. In his comments, Rao reflected on what it would mean to portray a figure like Ganguly. He noted that Dada, as Ganguly is fondly called, is not just a sporting figure but a symbol of fearless leadership and resilience. He shared that he grew up watching Ganguly play and leading the Indian team with passion and strategy. To play someone of that stature, he acknowledged, would be a great responsibility and a dream opportunity for any actor who admires cricket. While he remained tight-lipped about the casting specifics, Rao did mention that he would be thrilled to work on a project that celebrates Ganguly's journey. He added that if the opportunity came his way officially, he would approach it with the same sincerity and depth he brings to all his roles. He also mentioned that preparations for such a role would be intensive — not just in terms of learning cricket techniques but also understanding Ganguly's persona, body language, and mindset, both on and off the field. The biopic, backed by Luv Ranjan and Ankur Garg's production banner Luv Films, has been in the works for quite some time now. Sourav Ganguly himself has confirmed that he is closely involved in the scripting process to ensure the story remains true to the events of his life. He had earlier expressed his desire that the film not only depict his cricketing highs and lows but also showcase his personal battles, including his controversial exit from the Indian team and his return as a statesman of the sport. While speculation continues over who will ultimately land the lead role, fans have taken to social media in support of Rajkummar Rao, with many suggesting that his acting chops and dedication to craft make him an ideal candidate to portray the Prince of Calcutta.



Actress Jacqueline Fernandez New Glam Stills.

Esha Gupta Addresses Rumours of Dating Hardik Pandya After His Divorce



Mumbai, 25 June: Bollywood actress Esha Gupta has found herself at the centre of a fresh round of rumours—this time involving Indian cricketer Hardik Pandya. Whispers suggesting a romantic link between the two began circulating shortly after reports of Hardik Pandya's alleged divorce from his wife Natasa Stankovic began to surface. As the conjecture gained momentum online, many fans and gossip portals began pairing Esha and Hardik as a possible new couple. However, Esha Gupta has now stepped forward to set the record straight, addressing the matter with clarity and dignity.The rumours caught fire earlier this month when netizens noticed a perceived digital closeness between the Bollywood beauty and the flamboyant cricketer. Speculations intensified after both were spotted at some high-profile events around the same time, albeit not together. Still, in the world of social media, all it takes is a few assumptions, cryptic comments, or coincidental appearances to ignite a rumour mill. Amid growing curiosity, many wondered whether Esha was the reason behind the cricketer's alleged split with Natasa, with some even going as far as to suggest a budding romance between the two.

Putting an end to the speculation, Esha Gupta has now responded in a recent interaction with the media. The actress, known for her boldness on-screen and her elegance off it, dismissed the rumours as baseless and firmly denied any romantic involvement with Hardik Pandya. She emphasized that there was no truth to the dating reports and that such gossip was both misleading and disrespectful—not only to her but to everyone involved.Esha categorically stated that she had never dated Hardik Pandya, neither before nor after the rumours of his divorce came to light. She expressed surprise and disappointment over how easily such narratives are created without any factual foundation. "It's strange how people connect dots that never existed in the first place," she said, adding that she had never even interacted with Pandya on a personal level to begin with.

The actress, who has always maintained a low profile regarding her personal relationships, shared that she finds it unfortunate how public figures are often dragged into unfounded controversies purely for clicks and social media traction. She acknowledged that being in the public eye comes with a certain level of scrutiny, but insisted that there must also be a line that shouldn't be crossed in the name of entertainment or curiosity. Esha further clarified that she is currently focused on her career and personal growth, and is in a committed relationship with her longtime boyfriend, Spanish businessman Manuel Campos Guallar. The two have been together for several years, and Esha has often shared glimpses of their relationship on social media, receiving love and admiration from fans for their cross-cultural romance. Her strong bond with Manuel and their public presence together have been widely covered, making the rumours linking her to Hardik Pandya all the more puzzling to those who follow her regularly.

While Esha has cleared the air regarding her own involvement, the status of Hardik Pandya's marriage with Natasa Stankovic remains somewhat ambiguous. The couple, who had a whirlwind romance during the COVID-19 lockdown and soon welcomed their son Agastya, have not made any public declarations confirming or denying their separation. Their noticeable absence from each other's social media accounts in recent months and their lack of public appearances together have only added fuel to the rumours.However, neither Hardik nor Natasa has spoken publicly about the status of their relationship, choosing instead to maintain silence amidst the swirling speculation. Some believe the couple may be going through a rough patch but are choosing to deal with it privately, while others are convinced that a formal separation has already taken place.

Esha Gupta's straightforward dismissal of the dating rumours highlights the growing concern among celebrities about the proliferation of misinformation and speculative reporting. In an age where social media narratives often take precedence over verified facts, her decision to directly address and dispel the rumours is a notable example of setting boundaries and protecting personal integrity.Esha Gupta has no romantic connection with Hardik Pandya and that the circulating gossip lacks any basis in reality. Her composed response not only put an end to the baseless link-up but also served as a reminder of the importance of responsible media coverage and informed public discourse in the lives of public figures.

Vijay Varma Reacts to Dating Rumours with Fatima Sana Shaikh



Mumbai, 25 June: Actor Vijay Varma has finally broken his silence regarding rumours of his alleged romantic involvement with fellow actor Fatima Sana Shaikh. The two, both known for their critically acclaimed performances in Hindi cinema, were recently linked together by gossip columns and social media users, sparking widespread speculation about a possible romance brewing between them. However, Vijay Varma has now addressed the buzz and firmly put the record straight. The rumours began gaining traction after fans noticed the duo appearing at similar events and casually interacting on social media. Some posts, interpreted as flirtatious or too familiar, were picked up by gossip portals and magnified into headlines. Several entertainment blogs even carried speculative stories suggesting that Vijay and Fatima had grown close over the past few months and were spending time together off-camera. These reports quickly went viral, with fans eager to know whether another Bollywood couple was on the rise. Vijay Varma, however, has come forward to dismiss these claims, stating that the stories surrounding his personal life are completely unfounded. In a recent interaction with the media, he clarified that there is no truth to the reports of him dating Fatima Sana Shaikh. He expressed surprise at how people tend to create narratives out of the thinnest threads, often without verifying facts or considering the consequences of such speculation. The actor, who is usually known for keeping his private life away from public glare, stated that he shares a cordial professional relationship with Fatima and respects her as a fellow artist. He added that the two have met on a few occasions, often in industry circles or public events, but there is nothing romantic going on between them. He also pointed out that people often assume things just because two actors are seen in the same vicinity or leave a comment on each other's posts. Fatima Sana Shaikh, who rose to fame with her powerful performance in Dangal, has also not commented directly on the rumours. However, sources close to the actress indicate that she, too, finds the speculation amusing and unfounded. Both Vijay and Fatima have had busy professional schedules recently, focusing on new film projects, brand work, and personal development — none of which suggest they've been romantically involved. Vijay Varma, known for his compelling roles in Gully Boy, She, and Darlings, has been increasingly in the public eye, not just for his acting talent but also due to rumours surrounding his love life. Earlier, his name had been linked with another actress, Tamannaah Bhatia, which eventually turned out to be true after both acknowledged their relationship publicly. Given this background, the moment he was seen even casually interacting with Fatima, fans and tabloids jumped to conclusions, assuming a new romance might be in the making.

Diljit Dosanjh's Manager Raises Questions Amid Ongoing Controversy: Sparks New Debate in Music Industry



Mumbai, 25 June: The Punjabi entertainment industry has found itself caught in the eye of a storm, with singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh unexpectedly being pulled into controversy after his manager made public statements that have raised eyebrows. The remarks, which surfaced during a recent interview and quickly gained traction across social media and entertainment portals, have sparked speculation, debate, and concern among fans and industry insiders alike. The manager, who had previously worked closely with Diljit Dosanjh during some of the most defining years of the artist's career, has raised a number of concerns and questions about the singer's current trajectory and decisions. While the manager did not directly accuse Dosanjh of any wrongdoing, the tone and implications of his comments have led to intense discussions regarding transparency, loyalty, and the ethics of stardom. According to the former associate, there are unresolved issues stemming from their past professional relationship, which, until now, had been largely kept private. He hinted at a shift in Diljit's behaviour and decision-making once the singer achieved significant fame on both national and international stages. Though the manager did not go into great detail, his remarks suggested a growing disconnect between Diljit and the people who helped him rise through the ranks in the music and film industry. The controversy comes at a time when Diljit Dosanjh has been riding a wave of global popularity. Following his landmark performance at Coachella, his crossover into Bollywood blockbusters, and his presence in international media, the artist has become a cultural symbol for Punjabi music worldwide. With back-to-back hits and collaborations with global artists, his star has only continued to rise. However, this latest revelation from someone so closely linked to his past has created a ripple effect of doubt and scrutiny. The former manager stopped short of making any legal accusations but questioned the direction and values Diljit seems to represent today. He hinted that certain promises may have gone unfulfilled and that a lack of communication over the years led to a gradual deterioration of trust. He emphasized that his intention was not to create drama but to bring attention to the broader treatment of professionals behind the scenes in the industry. Fans of Diljit Dosanjh, fiercely loyal to the singer, have reacted strongly on social media.

Shruti Haasan's X (Twitter) Account Hacked: Actress Alerts Fans and Regains Access

Mumbai, 25 June: Shruti Haasan found herself in an unexpected digital crisis after her official X (formerly Twitter) account was compromised by unknown hackers. The incident, which surfaced earlier this week, left her fans surprised and concerned when unusual activity and unfamiliar content began appearing on her handle. The actor, who is known for being active on social media and engaging directly with her followers, quickly addressed the issue and reassured fans that she had taken swift action to resolve the situation.

Shruti Haasan, who commands a large fan base across platforms, revealed through her verified Instagram Stories that her X account had been hacked. With her signature calm yet firm tone, she shared that she was not in control of her Twitter account and urged fans not to respond to any messages or posts originating from it during the compromised period. She confirmed that her team was already working with the platform's technical support to recover access and secure the account.

The breach came to public attention after followers noticed several strange tweets that did not align with Shruti's usual style or tone. Some of the posts were promotional in nature and appeared suspiciously out of character, raising red flags among netizens who immediately began sharing screenshots and tagging the actor for clarification. Shruti's absence of response on the platform added to the speculation, prompting many to believe something was amiss.

In her statement, Shruti thanked her followers for their concern and quick reactions, which helped her team detect the unauthorized activity early. She reminded everyone that cybersecurity is an ongoing challenge, even for public figures who take preventive measures. She urged her fans and followers to be cautious and not fall for any suspicious links or direct messages that may have been sent from her account during the time it was compromised.

Later, she updated her fans that her team had regained control of the account and that security measures had been updated to prevent future incidents. She expressed relief at having the situation under control and reiterated the importance of online safety in an age where digital identities are increasingly vulnerable to breaches.

This is not the first time a celebrity's social media account has been hacked. Over the past few years, several public figures from both Bollywood and the South Indian film industry have found themselves victims of cyberattacks, prompting widespread discussions about the need for stronger account protection and awareness. Shruti's quick acknowledgment and transparency about the incident were widely appreciated, as she took the initiative to address the confusion directly, rather than letting rumours fester.

In an era where celebrities often use platforms like X to promote their work, interact with fans, and express personal views, the hacking of such an account not only disrupts communication but can also cause reputational damage. Shruti's case serves as a reminder that even verified accounts are not immune to cyber threats and that constant vigilance is essential.



Shruti Haasan, who has had a successful career across Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi cinema, is also known for her music and independent artistic ventures. She frequently uses her social media presence to share updates on her films, music collaborations, travel diaries, and personal thoughts. Her fans value the candidness with which she engages with them, making her a widely admired figure both on and off-screen. This recent disruption in her digital presence momentarily cut off that connection, but her prompt response helped restore faith and order.

Shruti Haasan's X account hack serves as a timely reminder about the importance of digital security, especially for public figures. Her openness in communicating with fans during the crisis, as well as her team's swift actions in regaining control, reflect not only her professionalism but also her commitment to maintaining trust with her audience. With the account now safely back in her hands, Shruti is expected to resume her usual engagement online, continuing to share her creative journey with the same energy and honesty that her followers have come to admire.

Dev to Reprise His Role in 'Prajapati 2': Shooting for the Much-Awaited Sequel to Begin Soon

Kolkata, 25 June: Bengali cinema's leading actor Dev is all set to return to the big screen with the sequel to his 2022 hit film Prajapati, much to the excitement of his fans and followers. Titled Prajapati 2, the film has officially entered the pre-production phase, with shooting scheduled to begin in the coming weeks. The announcement has sparked a fresh wave of enthusiasm across the Bengali film industry, as audiences gear up to witness another emotionally resonant and entertaining chapter in the story of Gour Chakraborty, the character played by Dev in the original film. Prajapati, directed by Avijit Sen and released in December 2022, was a heartfelt family drama that struck a chord with viewers through its blend of humour, emotion, and a deeply rooted social message. The story revolved around a bachelor son and his ageing mother, highlighting generational gaps, the importance of relationships, and the subtle conflicts of modern life. Dev's performance, coupled with veteran actress Mamata Shankar's portrayal of his mother, received wide acclaim and made the film a box office success. Its warmth and relatability led many to call it one of the most touching family entertainers of recent years in Bengali cinema. With the success of Prajapati, speculation around a sequel had been quietly brewing for some time. However, the official confirmation has now come directly from Dev himself, who took to social media to share the news. In a recent post, he expressed his excitement about returning to the role and mentioned that the entire team behind the first film would be reuniting for the second part. Fans immediately began flooding the comments with messages of support and anticipation, eager to see what new developments await in the story. While plot details are being closely guarded, sources close to the production suggest that Prajapati 2 will continue to explore themes of family, identity, and personal growth. This time, the narrative is expected to delve deeper into Gour Chakraborty's journey, possibly exploring new dynamics in his personal and professional life. There is also speculation that the sequel may introduce a few new characters while retaining the essence and emotional depth that made the first film so popular. Director Avijit Sen, who is returning to helm the sequel, has shared that the story for Prajapati 2 has been carefully crafted to meet the high expectations set by the original. He revealed that while the pressure of making a sequel is always immense, the love received for Prajapati has been a guiding force.



EDITORIAL

Safeguarding Humour : A Democratic Necessity, Not a Luxury

One of humanity's most essential tools for both dissent and unity — humour — is under siege. In India and across the world, what was once a vital part of cultural and political commentary is increasingly becoming a casualty of political control, religious orthodoxy, and growing intolerance. This slow death of laughter, and more critically, the freedom to laugh at power, deserves the urgent attention of democratic societies. Humour is not simply entertainment; it is a democratic necessity and a basic human right. From ancient court jesters who ridiculed kings under the guise of loyalty to modern stand-up comedians who critique governments and societal norms, humour has always played a paradoxical yet powerful role — speaking truth to power while masking it in wit. In India, too, satire has had a rich lineage, be it in classical Sanskrit literature, colonial resistance through cartoons, or post-independence political satire. But the recent years have witnessed an alarming erosion in the public space available for humour, particularly when it targets the powerful. In democratic societies, humour should ideally thrive. After all, democracy rests on the twin pillars of freedom of expression and the ability to question authority — and satire is a potent form of such questioning. However, today's world paints a grim picture. Comedians are being arrested, booked under harsh laws, silenced by online mobs, or worse, driven to self-censorship due to threats of violence. This chilling effect extends beyond performers to cartoonists, writers, and even ordinary citizens on social media. The weaponisation of laws such as sedition, defamation, and anti-terror legislation against comedians or satirists reflects a deliberate strategy: to blur the line between dissent and crime. The Indian context is particularly illustrative. The episode involving stand-up comedian Munawar Faruqui — arrested preemptively on the assumption that he might hurt religious sentiments — marks a new low in the treatment of satire. This wasn't an isolated incident. Several other comics have had shows cancelled, venues intimidated, or sponsors threatened. The net result is the shrinking of spaces where humour can breathe freely. When jokes become dangerous, democracy itself begins to suffocate. The threat doesn't come only from the state. In the era of social media-driven outrage, armies of self-appointed moral guardians are quick to label satire as blasphemy, sedition, or an attack on tradition. The rise of majoritarian politics globally has meant that humour that mocks dominant ideologies is often portrayed as a threat to national or religious identity. This distortion of priorities — where the dignity of powerful entities outweighs the right to free expression — is symptomatic of a deeper authoritarian impulse. But humour is not just political commentary; it is also a means of social healing. It offers a way to cope with trauma, to challenge societal taboos, and to confront uncomfortable truths. It brings people together across divides, often succeeding where more serious discourse fails. Suppressing humour, then, is not merely about silencing critics; it is about denying society its emotional and psychological release valves.Internationally, this trend is mirrored. From cartoonists being murdered in Paris, to comedians facing court cases in Turkey, to censorship in authoritarian regimes like China or Iran, the message is the same: those in power fear laughter because it reveals their vulnerability. It punctures the illusion of authority, often with a single sharp line. And because humour can travel faster than serious criticism — through memes, videos, and satire — it poses a unique threat to those who seek control over public discourse. Legal systems have not kept pace with this reality. In India, outdated colonial-era laws like Section 295A of the Indian Penal Code (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings) or the ever-abused sedition law continue to be used against humourists. There is a pressing need to reform such laws to ensure that they are not misused as tools of political repression. Equally important is judicial clarity on the limits of satire, balancing freedom with responsibility. It must be made clear that offence cannot be grounds for criminalisation in a liberal democracy. The media, too, bears responsibility. Too often, sensationalised reporting and loud TV debates on "offensive" comedy fuel public outrage rather than defending the comedian's right to express. Instead of framing satire as a democratic right, it is presented as a provocation, often leading to targeted harassment.

Emergency's Shadow Still Looms

PM Modi's Address Revives Debate on India's Darkest Hour

Fifty years have passed since India witnessed one of the most controversial and transformative chapters in its democratic journey—the Emergency of 1975. Yet the spectre of that time continues to cast a long shadow over national memory and political discourse. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a speech marking the 50th anniversary of the Emergency, reignited the discussion with strong words, portraying it as a period of institutional suppression and constitutional subversion. Addressing a gathering of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders and supporters, Modi emphasized that the Emergency was not just a political event, but a calculated attempt to strangle democracy itself. According to him, it was a moment when power was consolidated through fear, dissent was criminalised, the press was muzzled, and the judiciary was subverted. The Prime Minister made a passionate appeal to citizens, especially the youth, to study and remember this period to guard against any future attempts to compromise India's democratic ethos. Modi's remarks were laced with historical references and ideological sharpness, painting the Emergency as a premeditated assault on the values enshrined in the Constitution. He directly linked the imposition of Emergency to a single family's hunger for power, a clear allusion to the Congress party and particularly Indira Gandhi, under whose leadership the decision was made. While he did not name her directly, the implication was unmistakable. This framing is not new but has been a recurring narrative in BJP's articulation of modern Indian political history.



In the Prime Minister's telling, the Emergency was a cautionary tale about how democracy, if not zealously defended, can be dismantled not only by bullets and coups but also from within the constitutional framework itself. He invoked the arrest of opposition leaders, censorship of the press, and the alteration of constitutional mechanisms to illustrate the depth of democratic erosion. The Emergency, he argued, was not merely a moment of crisis, but an orchestrated regime of fear that repressed civil society and crushed voices of protest. This articulation serves both a historical and political purpose. It offers the BJP an ideological contrast to the Congress, portraying itself as a true guardian of democracy while casting its principal rival as authoritarian in origin and practice. In doing so, Modi's address did more than commemorate a historical milestone; it positioned the ruling party as the custodian of freedom, despite the growing criticism in recent years about media restrictions, political arrests, and shrinking civil liberties under its own tenure. The Emergency is indeed one of the darkest phases in India's post-independence history. Declared on June 25, 1975, and lasting for 21 months, it saw the suspension of fundamental rights, dissolution of opposition, and passage of constitutional amendments that gave unchecked power to the executive. Civil society, the judiciary, and the press were brought to heel, while forced sterilization campaigns and demolitions disproportionately targeted the poor. These excesses are well-documented and have been widely condemned across the political spectrum, including by members of the Congress in later years. However, invoking the Emergency also carries present-day implications. Modi's speech comes at a time when questions are being raised about the state of India's democratic institutions. Dissenting voices have been labelled anti-national, prominent activists and journalists have faced arrest, and the independence of various constitutional bodies has been increasingly scrutinized. In this context, while it is crucial to remember the horrors of the Emergency, it is equally important to reflect on whether some of its features—if not in form, then in spirit—are resurfacing under new guises. The Prime Minister's exhortation to youth to study the Emergency could indeed be a powerful call to civic engagement. But such remembrance must go beyond partisan narratives. It should lead to a more comprehensive understanding of democratic fragility and the continuous need for vigilance, transparency, and accountability in governance—regardless of which party holds power. The BJP has used the memory of Emergency as a political fulcrum to contrast its commitment to democracy. Yet history demands more than selective invocation; it requires introspection. In a country as diverse and complex as India, democracy is not sustained merely by electoral victories or legislative majorities but by safeguarding the spaces where dissent, dialogue, and disagreement can thrive.

It is worth noting that political parties across the spectrum, including those once aligned with the Congress, resisted the Emergency and paid a steep price. Many of them were imprisoned, tortured, or silenced. The Janata Party's rise in 1977 was a direct outcome of this resistance, a moment of democratic resurgence that reaffirmed people's power. But the memory of that victory, like the Emergency itself, should serve as a reminder not just of past threats but of future responsibilities. Prime Minister Modi's words about the Emergency find resonance in the broader global context as well, where democracies are increasingly confronting challenges from within—whether through executive overreach, populist nationalism, or disinformation. In this environment, the Indian experience holds valuable lessons about both the vulnerabilities and resilience of democratic structures. The Emergency should be remembered not just as a political failure but as a moral one—a time when the custodians of democracy betrayed their mandate. Modi's speech, while politically charged, does compel the nation to reflect. But that reflection must be honest, inclusive, and self-critical. The task of protecting democracy lies not just in remembering the Emergency, but in ensuring that its mistakes are never repeated, in any form, by any party.

Rath Yatra 2025 Unites Devotion, Culture, and Celebration

the sacred city of Puri in Odisha once again transformed into a living epic of devotion, spirituality, and cultural magnificence, as the grand Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath commenced with all its age-old splendor and renewed fervor. Amidst the resonant chanting of Vedic hymns, the rhythmic beats of mridangas and ghantas, and



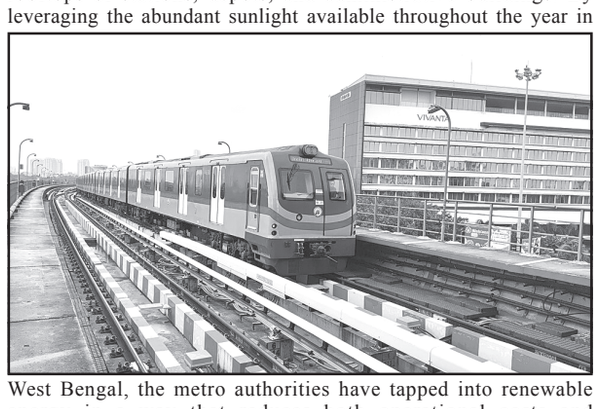
the unceasing chants of "Jai Jagannath," the divine siblings—Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, and Devi Subhadra—emerged from their centuries-old abode in the Jagannath Temple and began their majestic journey to the Gundicha Temple, their maternal home. As the massive wooden chariots slowly rolled through the densely packed streets of Puri, they carried not only the idols but also the hopes, faith, and prayers of millions of devotees from across the globe. This year's Rath Yatra held a special resonance, as it marked a return to unbridled celebration following years of health-related restrictions that had curbed public participation. With all limitations lifted, the 2025 Yatra became an unprecedented confluence of humanity—millions thronged Puri, shoulder to shoulder, many of them having walked for days or traveled from far corners of the world to witness this celestial procession. The city pulsated with energy and devotion, hosting a sea of pilgrims, spiritual seekers, cultural enthusiasts, and curious travelers, each drawn by the timeless magnetism of one of the world's most iconic spiritual festivals.The Rath Yatra, beyond its visible grandeur, is a deeply symbolic and spiritual event. It is the only time in the year when the deities step out of the sanctum sanctorum of the Jagannath Temple to mingle with the masses, signifying that divinity is not confined within temple walls but lives among the people. This singular act of the gods descending to the streets embodies the profound principle of divine accessibility. The towering chariots, carved meticulously over months by dedicated artisans, become not just vehicles but sacred spaces, linking heaven and earth, deity and devotee, in a spiritual communion that transcends caste, creed, and nationality.

Each of the three chariots—Nandighosha for Lord Jagannath, Taladhwaja for Lord Balabhadra, and Darpadalana for Devi Subhadra—was a testament to Odisha's rich artisanry. Adorned with intricate carvings and vibrant canopies, they were pulled by thousands of enthusiastic devotees using thick ropes, in a ritual act believed to cleanse sins and earn divine blessings. The movement of the chariots, slow yet powerful, evoked both awe and reverence. As the wheels turned and the deities advanced, chants filled the air and the atmosphere thickened with spiritual ecstasy. It was more than a spectacle—it was a journey of the soul. The Odisha government, in collaboration with the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration, played an instrumental role in managing the vast crowds with remarkable precision and sensitivity. Advanced planning led to the deployment of medical teams, mobile health units, drinking water stations, and crowd-control mechanisms. Surveillance drones and extensive CCTV networks provided real-time monitoring to ensure safety, while live broadcasts enabled millions more across India and the world to witness the divine event from afar. Volunteers and temple staff worked tirelessly, often without rest, embodying the selfless service that the Yatra itself celebrates.

Yet Rath Yatra is not merely a religious event. It is a celebration of Odia identity and India's diverse cultural tapestry. Every element—from the devotional songs echoing in the streets to the traditional foods sold by vendors, from the colorful textiles worn by pilgrims to the rituals performed in unison—speaks of a vibrant heritage that continues to thrive in the modern era. The preparation for the Yatra begins months in advance, particularly for the artisans who painstakingly construct the three massive chariots using sacred neem wood. Their work is not simply craftsmanship; it is an act of devotion. Generations of families are involved in this process, preserving skills and traditions passed down over centuries. The economic impact of the festival is equally significant. Local businesses—from flower sellers and street hawkers to hotels and transport operators—see a tremendous boost during the Yatra. For many, this is the most important season of the year, and the festival becomes not just a spiritual but also an economic lifeline. In this way, Rath Yatra sustains and nourishes the local community in more ways than one, proving that tradition and livelihood can walk hand in hand.A deeply poignant and symbolic moment in the festival is the ritual of *Chhera Pahanra*, in which the Gajapati King of Puri sweeps the chariot platforms with a golden broom. This gesture, where a royal figure assumes the role of a servant, carries a profound philosophical message about humility, equality, and the impermanence of worldly power. It is a reminder that before the divine, all are equal—kings and commoners alike. In a world often fractured by social hierarchies and divisions, this act offers a compelling lesson in human dignity and spiritual egalitarianism.The inclusive nature of the Rath Yatra is one of its most beautiful aspects. Unlike many religious rituals that are limited by boundaries of caste, class, or gender, here, everyone is welcome to participate. The ropes of the chariots are pulled by people of all backgrounds, and the path of the gods becomes a sacred meeting place for all. This universal embrace makes Rath Yatra a truly global celebration of faith and unity.

Sustainable Energy Generation Saves Over ?8 Crore in a Year

Kolkata Metro, India's first underground metro railway system and a lifeline of the City of Joy, has quietly achieved a remarkable feat that deserves both attention and applause. In a move that reflects its growing commitment to sustainable urban transit, Kolkata Metro has generated a significant amount of electricity over the past year through its innovative green initiatives — resulting in a substantial financial saving of more than ?8 crore. This transformation is not a coincidence but the outcome of strategic planning and focused execution. At the core of this achievement is the widespread installation of solar panels across multiple metro premises, including rooftops of stations, depots, and administrative buildings. By leveraging the abundant sunlight available throughout the year in



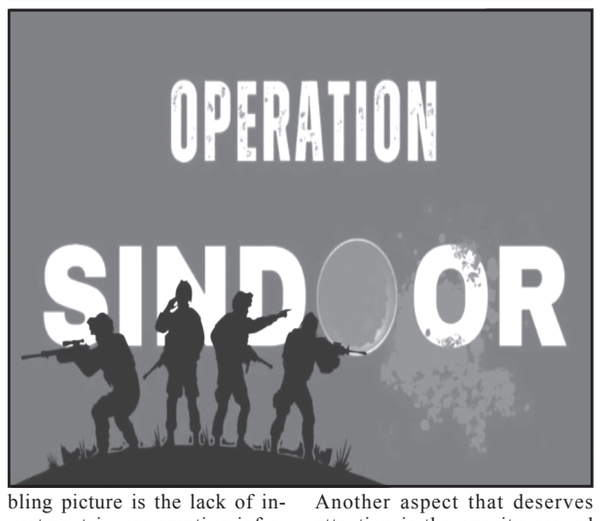
West Bengal, the metro authorities have tapped into renewable energy in a way that reduces both operational costs and environmental impact. The data speaks volumes. A massive quantity of electricity, generated internally through these solar projects, has replaced a sizable portion of the power Kolkata Metro would have otherwise drawn from conventional sources. The monetary savings are not merely a fiscal milestone but a symbol of what responsible public infrastructure can accomplish when sustainability becomes a priority. But this is not just about numbers or savings. Kolkata Metro's success is emblematic of a larger shift in India's public transport narrative, where environmental consciousness is increasingly being embedded in operational DNA. The transport sector, often criticized for contributing heavily to carbon emissions and urban pollution, is beginning to recognize its responsibility toward mitigating climate change. The metro's clean energy initiative is therefore more than just an internal policy — it is a public statement about the future it envisions. Interestingly, the choice of solar energy also aligns with broader national goals. India, under its various green energy missions, has been pushing aggressively for solar power adoption across sectors. Kolkata Metro's project dovetails seamlessly with these initiatives and sets a replicable precedent for other metro systems across the country. In densely populated urban settings, where land is scarce and air pollution is a pressing issue, turning station rooftops and underutilized spaces into green energy hubs makes pragmatic and ecological sense. Beyond infrastructure and policy, this shift also brings with it a powerful psychological effect. It demonstrates to daily commuters and citizens that climate-friendly choices can be part of their everyday journey. Riding a metro that is partly powered by the sun isn't just efficient or affordable; it's a small, yet meaningful, contribution to a cleaner city. Such symbolic value, when multiplied over lakhs of daily passengers, contributes to a cultural shift toward green responsibility. The ripple effect of these savings can also be transformative.

Shadow of Political Constraints on the Armed Forces

The daring and tragic rescue mission undertaken in Ladakh's treacherous terrain — Operation Sindoor — may have concluded, but the questions it raises about the preparedness, autonomy, and political oversight of India's armed forces are far from resolved. At the heart of the debate lies a stark paradox: the Indian Air Force, equipped with skill, bravery, and capability, was deployed to respond to a disaster, yet its hands were tied by circumstances that could and should have been anticipated. The result was a loss of lives that, many argue, might have been avoided had the system empowered the forces with the operational latitude they required. The incident in question — a devastating landslide near a road construction site in Ladakh — triggered an immediate response involving the IAF and the Indian Army. Reports indicate that several workers from Bihar and Jharkhand were buried under the debris, necessitating swift intervention. The Air Force helicopters that flew into the area for rescue work encountered not just the harsh physical environment, but logistical delays and administrative constraints that severely hampered their effectiveness. That the IAF responded with such speed and commitment is a testament to the professionalism and training of its personnel. However, despite this readiness, their hands were effectively tied. The need for approvals, clearances, and coordination with civilian authorities, including the Border Roads Organisation and local administration, consumed precious time — time that could have meant the difference between life and death. Such bureaucratic entanglements in the face of an emergency expose a recurring institutional weakness: in matters of civilian-military coordination during crisis, India still struggles with establishing clarity of command and pre-established protocols.

This is not the first time questions have been raised about the degree of autonomy granted to India's armed forces in non-combat operations. In situations of natural disasters or emergencies in remote terrains — especially in regions like Ladakh where geography is both unforgiving and geopolitically sensitive — the military often plays the primary role in response and recovery. Yet, without a robust framework that empowers them to act swiftly and decisively, their capabilities are undercut by indecision and red tape. The argument is not for bypassing democratic oversight, but for recognising that in high-altitude disaster zones, every moment counts. The Indian Air Force cannot be expected to deliver miracles if it has to wait for multiple nods from various quarters before acting decisively. When the political system does not move with the urgency that a crisis demands, the burden falls squarely on the personnel on the ground — soldiers and airmen who must improvise in real time, sometimes without institutional backing or adequate information. Adding to this troubling picture is the lack of investment in pre-emptive infrastructure. The BRO, though working tirelessly across India's strategic frontiers, is often hampered by equipment shortfalls, limited manpower, and outdated practices. The tragic site of the landslide in Ladakh was a known risk zone. Yet, safeguards, worker protection measures, and terrain stability assessments appear to have been inadequate. When such predictable hazards are not mitigated, the military becomes the fallback for rescue and rehabilitation — again with insufficient preparation or resources earmarked for these roles.

Operation Sindoor



Another aspect that deserves attention is the opacity around what actually transpired during Operation Sindoor. Official statements have been sparse and sanitised. Families of the victims, as well as the broader public, are left with unanswered questions. Why were workers deployed in such dangerous conditions? What protocols were in place for an emergency of this scale? What were the orders given to the Air Force and how were they constrained? A full and transparent inquiry is not only essential for accountability but also to ensure that future operations are not similarly compromised. These issues touch on a broader concern: the politicisation of the military in India. While the government is quick to showcase military achievements for political mileage, it is less forthcoming when systemic failures are exposed — especially those that reflect poor civil-military synergy or inadequate disaster preparedness. If India is to genuinely respect its armed forces, it must allow them operational freedom when responding to crises and equip them with the resources and authorisation to act without waiting for bureaucracy to catch up. Moreover, Ladakh itself presents a unique challenge. As a high-altitude desert with limited infrastructure, frequent seismic activity, and military sensitivity due to its proximity to China, it requires a far more robust emergency response mechanism than what currently exists. The civil administration in the region must be empowered with better technology, real-time communication networks, and faster response systems that work in tandem with the armed forces. Instead of reactive coordination, what India needs is a proactive doctrine — one that clearly delineates the role of each institution during high-stakes emergencies.

Ultimately, the failure of Operation Sindoor was not in the bravery of those who participated in the mission, but in the system that put constraints on their ability to succeed. The political leadership must acknowledge this. It is not enough to express condolences after a disaster; the government must confront the hard truths about its own preparedness and willingness to cede control to those who are trained for exactly such operations. The lesson here is stark and urgent: modern rescue missions cannot be executed effectively under peacetime protocols. India's military, particularly the Air Force, needs the authority and independence to lead in such crises without being micromanaged or politically second-guessed. The very concept of "joint operations" between civilian authorities and the military must be revisited and revised in light of contemporary challenges and risks. If not, then each future disaster will only replay the same grim script: delayed responses, avoidable deaths, and a public left asking why our most capable forces were once again held back by the very institutions meant to support them. Operation Sindoor should serve as a turning point — not merely a moment of national mourning, but a catalyst for reform. The next time a disaster strikes in a remote region of our country, we should not have to wonder whether our armed forces will be allowed to do what they do best: act swiftly, bravely, and with full authority.

Vodafone Idea Shares Surge 14% in Four Sessions as Investors Await AGR Dues Resolution

Vodafone Idea Limited (Vi) has caught the attention of investors this week with a sharp 14% rise in its share price over the past four trading sessions. The rally comes amid heightened market speculation and growing anticipation around a possible resolution or relief regarding the company's long-standing Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) dues. The sudden spike in investor sentiment reflects optimism that the financially struggling telecom operator may be nearing a critical turning point in its prolonged battle for survival and revival. The stock, which has long been considered a high-risk investment due to the company's massive debt and regulatory liabilities, saw renewed interest after reports surfaced suggesting that government agencies may be evaluating options to reassess the AGR liabilities or provide some kind of deferred payment mechanism. While no official confirmation has been issued, the buzz alone has been enough to draw speculative buying and increase trading volumes sharply on the bourses. Vodafone Idea, which owes over □58,000 crore in AGR dues to the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), has been under intense financial stress for several years. The Supreme Court verdict in 2020, which upheld the government's definition of AGR, dealt a massive blow to telecom operators like Vi, forcing them to pay dues accumulated over more than a decade. While part of the dues have already been paid, a significant portion remains outstanding, with repayment timelines looming large. Market participants are watching closely for any signs of clarity from the government or the DoT, which could significantly impact Vi's future operations. The company has



been engaged in ongoing discussions with the authorities to seek relief and restructuring of the dues. Investors are hoping for a positive outcome, such as extension of payment timelines, interest waivers, or an adjustment of the final amounts payable based on recalculated figures. The recent rally in the share price also follows a broader uptick in sentiment towards telecom stocks, fueled by expectations of tariff hikes and improving industry dynamics. There are growing indications that all major operators, including Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel, may implement another round of tariff increases in the near future, potentially improving the average revenue per user (ARPU) for the sector. For Vi, whose ARPU still lags behind its peers, any improvement in tariff structures would directly enhance its cash flow and ability to service debt. Moreover, Vodafone Idea's recent equity infusion through a follow-on public offering (FPO) of □18,000 crore has helped alleviate some of its immediate liquidity concerns. The FPO, completed earlier this year, saw strong participation from institutional investors and has provided the company with fresh capital to invest in network expansion, particularly in 4G and 5G infrastructure. The proceeds are also expected to be used for spectrum payments and operational needs. Analysts tracking the stock believe the company's survival depends heavily on regulatory support, timely tariff corrections, and rapid execution of its capital expenditure plans. While the FPO has provided a temporary cushion, a more permanent solution for the AGR dues remains essential for long-term viability. The telecom operator is currently lagging in its 5G rollout compared to competitors, and bridging that gap would require sustained capital deployment and operational efficiency. Despite the recent rally, Vodafone Idea's stock remains highly volatile and speculative in nature. Many retail investors are viewing the stock as a potential turnaround story, while institutional players remain cautious, awaiting further clarity on key financial and regulatory hurdles. The company's debt remains a major overhang, with total liabilities exceeding □2 lakh crore, including spectrum payments, vendor dues, and bank borrowings. In recent public statements, Vodafone Idea's management has maintained that they are in constant dialogue with the government and remain hopeful of a positive resolution. They have reiterated their commitment to improving network quality, customer experience, and financial stability. CEO Akshaya Moondra has underlined the company's roadmap for digital transformation and long-term competitiveness, hinging largely on regulatory support and continued capital availability. Meanwhile, the government, which holds a significant equity stake in Vodafone Idea following the conversion of interest on AGR dues into equity, has thus far maintained a hands-off approach in day-to-day operations. However, any favorable policy decision—whether in the form of relief, recalculation, or restructuring—could have a material impact on the company's valuation and investor sentiment. For now, investors are cautiously optimistic. The recent share price surge indicates a renewed sense of belief that a breakthrough may be near. However, the stock remains sensitive to news flow, and a definitive resolution on the AGR front is likely to determine the direction of the next big move. Vodafone Idea's 14% gain over four sessions underscores rising investor hopes of a positive development on the AGR dues front. With the broader telecom sector showing signs of revival and Vi's recent capital raise bolstering its near-term liquidity, the company finds itself at a critical juncture. All eyes are now on the government and the DoT for a decision that could either reinforce or derail this fragile turnaround narrative.

Hindalco to Acquire US-Based Specialty Alumina Firm AluChem for $125 Million in Strategic Global Expansion

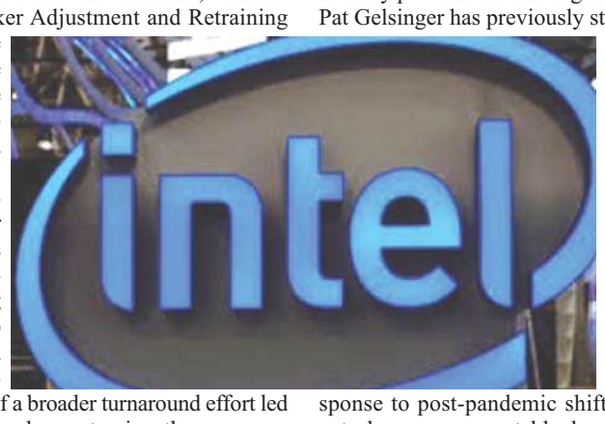
Indian metals giant Hindalco Industries has announced the acquisition of US-based specialty alumina producer AluChem LLC in a deal valued at $125 million. The strategic buyout marks a decisive step by the Aditya Birla Group company to enter the high-margin, niche specialty alumina market in the United States and North America. The acquisition, made through Hindalco's wholly owned subsidiary Novelis, will help the company tap into AluChem's established presence in North America, particularly in the supply of calcined alumina, activated alumina, and other high-performance alumina materials used in a wide range of industrial applications. These include catalysts, ceramics, refractories, and lithium-ion batteries—sectors that are currently witnessing exponential growth driven by clean energy transitions and advanced manufacturing needs. AluChem, headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio, is regarded as a leading independent supplier of specialty alumina products. The company has built a reputation over the years for its technological capabilities, customer-focused innovation, and tailored solutions across several industrial verticals. Its client base spans critical sectors such as petrochemicals, electronics, energy storage, water purification, and environmental applications. With this acquisition, Hindalco aims to leverage AluChem's technical know-how, local market access, and strong customer relationships to further accelerate its global ambitions. In a statement released following the announcement, Hindalco's Managing Director Satish Pai said the acquisition aligns with the company's long-term vision of building a resilient and sustainable business driven by value-added products. He noted that specialty alumina is a fast-growing segment, with global demand expected to rise in tandem with the development of green technologies and electric mobility. Pai emphasized that AluChem's offerings complement Hindalco's existing capabilities and open the door to new opportunities in both developed and emerging markets. The $125 million transaction will be financed through a combination of internal accruals and debt, and is expected to close following customary regulatory approvals and closing conditions. The deal structure includes acquiring AluChem's manufacturing assets, technology, customer contracts, and a highly experienced management and operations team. Hindalco officials confirmed that the existing leadership team at AluChem will continue to manage the company post-acquisition, ensuring continuity and a seamless integration process. This acquisition comes at a time when Hindalco is actively focusing on expanding its value-added product segment and reducing its dependence on commoditized products like primary aluminium. In recent years,



the company has increased its investments in downstream businesses and green technologies, aligning with global sustainability trends and evolving customer needs. With AluChem under its umbrella, Hindalco expects to significantly enhance its product differentiation and drive margin improvement across its global operations. Industry experts have welcomed the move, noting that the acquisition makes strategic sense from both a market penetration and technology access perspective. The North American market for specialty alumina is growing rapidly, supported by demand from battery manufacturers, clean-tech industries, and electronics companies. By acquiring a home-grown US firm, Hindalco avoids the steep costs and regulatory hurdles of building capacity from scratch in a foreign market. Additionally, AluChem's proximity to key customers and established supply chain logistics offer Hindalco a ready-made platform to scale operations. In India, the deal also reinforces Hindalco's position as a forward-looking global player willing to invest in innovation-led growth. The company has already been exploring various applications of specialty alumina in energy storage and sustainable infrastructure, and with AluChem's integration, it plans to enhance its R&D initiatives to meet the fast-evolving needs of these sectors. The broader context of the acquisition also reflects an ongoing trend among Indian corporates seeking inorganic growth in overseas markets to secure new capabilities and customer bases. With global aluminium markets becoming more competitive and volatile, companies are increasingly turning to specialty segments that offer better pricing power and stability. For AluChem, the acquisition by Hindalco is seen as a strategic partnership that will allow it to scale up and invest in next-generation manufacturing technologies. Representatives from the US company expressed optimism about the future under Hindalco's stewardship, highlighting that both companies share a commitment to quality, innovation, and customer satisfaction. As the metals and materials landscape shifts globally towards more specialized and sustainable solutions, Hindalco's acquisition of AluChem positions it well for the future. With a growing portfolio that now includes access to one of North America's most trusted specialty alumina producers, the company is set to accelerate its journey from a commodity-based producer to a global leader in advanced materials.

Intel Begins Workforce Reductions with 107 Layoffs; Up to 20% Cuts Expected in Some Factory Divisions

Intel Corporation, one of the world's largest semiconductor manufacturers, has initiated a significant round of layoffs, beginning with the elimination of 107 positions as part of a broader cost-cutting strategy. The move, officially confirmed through state regulatory filings and internal sources, is part of the company's efforts to streamline operations amid ongoing economic challenges and shifting priorities within the global chip industry. The initial wave of layoffs has affected roles in California, with notifications filed under the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act. These cuts are believed to be just the beginning of a wider workforce reduction plan, with some reports suggesting that Intel could slash up to 20% of jobs in certain manufacturing and factory-related departments in the near future. The affected positions span across engineering, technical support, and manufacturing operations, underscoring a deep restructuring underway within the organization. Intel's cost-reduction initiative comes as part of a broader turnaround effort led by CEO Pat Gelsinger, who has been steering the company through a multi-year strategy aimed at regaining technological leadership in semiconductor design and fabrication. With increasing competition from rivals like AMD, NVIDIA, and Taiwan's TSMC, as well as macroeconomic headwinds including inflation, supply chain disruptions, and fluctuating consumer demand, Intel is under pressure to rebalance its internal resources and improve financial efficiency. The company had previously announced its intention to cut billions in costs over the next few years. These workforce reductions are now emerging as a visible outcome of that commitment. While Intel has not publicly confirmed the full scale or timeline of future layoffs, internal communications and industry analysts point to significant changes ahead, particularly within its manufacturing ecosystem, which forms the backbone of the company's global operations. Employees impacted by the layoffs have reportedly been offered severance packages, outplacement services, and continued benefits for a limited period. While the company has emphasized that these decisions were not made lightly, the news has understandably caused concern among staff across several campuses, especially those tied to Intel's fabrication units and support teams. Sources familiar with the matter indicated that the layoffs



are part of a reassessment of resource allocation, especially within business segments that have seen declining margins or slower growth. Intel's shift in focus toward high-performance computing, artificial intelligence, and foundry services is likely driving the redistribution of talent and investment across different verticals. Despite these cuts, Intel maintains that it remains committed to its long-term vision of transforming into a global foundry powerhouse and regaining its technological edge. CEO Pat Gelsinger has previously stated that the company's strategy includes large investments in new fabs in Arizona, Ohio, and Germany. These massive infrastructure projects are still underway, but the layoffs suggest a tactical tightening of costs in other areas to sustain such capital-intensive developments. The tech industry at large has been witnessing a wave of layoffs over the past two years, with major players like Google, Amazon, Meta, and Microsoft all downsizing workforces in response to post-pandemic shifts in business dynamics. Intel's cuts, however, are notable due to the company's long history of employment stability and its central role in the global technology supply chain. Analysts view this move as a necessary, though painful, measure to navigate the current environment. Intel's earnings have faced pressure in recent quarters, and cost management is seen as crucial to preserving profitability while investing in future growth areas. According to market observers, trimming operational excess and focusing resources on cutting-edge R&D and manufacturing efficiency will be key to Intel's resurgence. In a statement, Intel reiterated its commitment to treating all impacted employees with respect and providing comprehensive support during the transition. The company also highlighted that while certain roles are being phased out, it continues to hire selectively in strategic areas, including AI, software engineering, and advanced chip design. As the semiconductor industry undergoes rapid transformation—driven by growing demand in AI, edge computing, and data centers—legacy manufacturers like Intel are being forced to evolve swiftly. The current layoffs reflect not only short-term financial pressures but also a larger strategic recalibration as Intel positions itself to compete more aggressively in a fast-changing market.

Sensex Ends Higher; These Stocks Surged Over 15% on BSE in Today's Trade

Sensex closing significantly higher as investor sentiment turned bullish on the back of strong global cues, easing crude oil prices, and optimism around domestic macroeconomic data. While blue-chip stocks led the indices into the green, several midcap and smallcap counters on the BSE delivered standout performances, with multiple stocks surging over 15% in a single trading session. The Sensex closed with a gain of over 500 points, finishing the day above key psychological levels. Market participants attributed the rally to a combination of favourable economic indicators, including sustained GST collections, better-than-expected monsoon forecasts, and expectations of steady interest rates from the Reserve Bank of India. With risk appetite returning to the market, broader indices also participated in the rally, with the BSE Midcap and Smallcap indices registering healthy gains. Among the top gainers of the day were a number of lesser-known but high-momentum stocks that saw sharp upward movement, driven by a mix of positive news flows, earnings optimism, and technical breakouts. These included stocks from sectors such as capital goods, renewable energy, infrastructure, chemicals, and real estate, all of which have been witnessing increased investor interest in recent weeks. One of the most notable performers was Apar Industries, which surged more than 17% on the BSE after the company reported robust order wins and reiterated its strong guidance for FY26. The stock has been on a steady uptrend and attracted fresh buying interest from both institutional and retail investors. Market watchers believe the company's focus on exports and energy transmission has helped it position itself as a key player in the sector, contributing to investor confidence. Another big gainer was IRB Infrastructure Developers, which rallied over 16% in intraday trade. The infrastructure firm's stock jumped following an announcement of new highway project wins under the Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) and expectations of increased government spending on roads and expressways ahead of the Union Budget. Analysts are upbeat on the company's order book visibility and its potential to benefit from the National Infrastructure Pipeline. RattanIndia Power also featured on the list of top gainers, recording a sharp 18% surge after heavy volumes were seen early in the session. Though the company has had a volatile history, the recent turnaround efforts and focus on debt reduction have led to speculative interest, particularly among retail traders. In the renewable energy space, Ujaas Energy and KP Energy posted gains exceeding 15% as investors continued to bet on green energy themes. With the government's ambitious target of achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030, stocks from the renewable and clean tech sectors have seen significant upward momentum over the past few months. KP Energy in particular has been under the spotlight for its growing order book and expansion into hybrid wind-solar projects. Meanwhile, Venus Pipes & Tubes, a recent debutant on the bourses, also saw a sharp rally of nearly 20% amid strong quarterly earnings and growing export demand. The stock was one of the highest traded on the Smallcap index, with investors cheering the company's capacity expansion plans and stable margins despite input cost pressures. The real estate sector was not left behind either, with Signature Global rising more than 16% after reports indicated a sharp rise in property registrations in key markets including the National Capital Region (NCR) and Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR). With interest rates stabilizing and homebuyer sentiment improving, real estate stocks have seen a steady revival over the past few weeks.

This Power Stock Promises Over 30% Upside: Analysts Turn Bullish Amid Robust Growth Prospects

As India's power and energy sector undergoes significant transformation driven by rising demand, infrastructure expansion, and a clean energy push, several companies are emerging as top picks for investors seeking high-growth opportunities. Among them, one particular stock is grabbing the attention of market analysts due to its strong fundamentals, expansion plans, and the potential for substantial returns — with projections of over 30% upside in the medium term. Leading brokerage firms and equity research analysts have recently turned bullish on JSW Energy, highlighting it as a strong buy within the power segment. The company, a key player in India's power generation sector, has increasingly shifted focus toward renewable energy, aligning itself with the government's clean energy goals. Analysts tracking the stock suggest that JSW Energy is well-positioned to benefit from the next phase of India's energy transition, making it a lucrative opportunity for long-term investors. In their recent reports, brokerage houses such as Motilal Oswal and HDFC Securities have assigned a "Buy" rating to JSW Energy, with target prices indicating a potential upside of more than 30% from current levels. Their optimism is backed by a combination of operational efficiency, expanding capacity, and a strong pipeline of green energy projects.

E-TENDER NOTICE

Memo No: 242/BHIM/2025, dt: 20/06/2025 The Prodhan, Bhimpur Gram Panchayat invites interested agencies or bidder or participator to participate for the tender Id: 2025_ZPHD_867825, Published dt-20/06/2025, Bid submission closing date-28/06/2025. The details information and uploading/ downloading are available in the website: http://wbtenders.gov.in

Sd/- Prodhan
Bhimpur Gram Panchayat
Bhimpur, Nadia

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Memo No: 241/BHIM/2025, dt: 20/06/2025 The Prodhan, Bhimpur Gram Panchayat invites interested agencies or bidder or participator to participate for the tender Id: 2025_ZPHD_867797, Published dt-20/06/2025, Bid submission closing date-28/06/2025. The details information and uploading/ downloading are available in the website: http://wbtenders.gov.in

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Bhimpur Gram Panchayat
Bhimpur, Nadia

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Sd/- Prodhan
Bhimpur Gram Panchayat
Bhimpur, Nadia

Notice Inviting E-Tender

Tender Ref: PANCHLA/JGP/e-NIT-07/25-26, PANCHLA/JGP/e-NIT-08/25-26, PANCHLA/JGP/e-NIT-09/25-26, PANCHLA/JGP/e-NIT-10/25-26, PANCHLA/JGP/e-NIT-11/25-26 DATE:24-06-2025 BID SUB. CLOSING DT:04-07-2025 AT 11:00AM Technical bid opening DT 07-07-2025 AT 11AM Electronic Tenders are hereby invited by the Prodhan, Jujarsha Gram Panchayat, Panchla Block for implementation of TEN(10) No. work within Jujarsha Gram Panchayat, Howrah. Details are available in (http://wbtenders.gov.in & http://etender.wb.nic.in) and Office Notice Board.

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Jujersha Gram Panchayat

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা জানানো যায় যে, আমরা ১। শ্রী সন্ন্যাসী দাস এবং ২। নিমাই দাস এ. ডি. এস.আর শ্রীরামপুর, দলিল নং- ২৫৬৪ / ২০২২, তাং-১১.০৪.২০২২, আমমোক্তার নং.IV-০১৫১৭ / ১৪ তাং- ২৬.০২.২০১৪ A.R.A. III কোলকাতা হইতে জেলা-হুগলী, থানা-শ্রীরামপুর, মৌজা-চাতরা জে.এল. নং-১০, এল আর খতিয়ান নং-১৬০, ২৪৩, ৮২০, ১৩৬৬, ১৭২৭, এল আর.দাগ নং-৮০৯, থেকে ০১ কাঠা ০৪ ছটাক জমি খরিদ করিয়াছি। উক্ত আমমোক্তার দাতাগন হলেন ১। দুর্গাচরণ লাহা, ২। কুমারী বেবী লাহা, ৩। কুমারী অপর্না লাহা, ৪। গৌতম লাহা ৫। সুকুমার লাহা, ৬। কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র লাহা, ৭। পৃথ্বীরাজ লাহা, ৮। কয়েন লাহা, ৯। কুমারী গোপালা লাহা ১০। ভানুমতি লাহা আমমোক্তার গ্রহীতা হরিদাস পাল, পিতা-কমল পাল ঠিকানা-সুকান্তনগর, শেওড়াফুলী হুগলী উক্ত আমমোক্তার বিষয়ে কাহারও কোন ও আপত্তি থাকলে আগামী ১ মাসের মধ্যে শ্রীরামপুর বি. এল. আর. আফিসে যোগাযোগ করিবেন।

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা জানানো যায় যে, আমি সেখ সাদ্দাম হোসেন পিতা-মহঃ আলাউদ্দিন গত ইং ২৯.০১.২০১৮, তারিখে আমোমোক্তার নং-IV-১৮২০১৮ এ.ডি.এস.আর. শ্রীরামপুর দ্বারা আমার বিক্রেতা- আমমোক্তার দাতা-বি. এস. ডেভলপার্স প্রাঃ লিঃ এর পক্ষে আমমোক্তার গ্রহীতা- জয় নাথ, পিতা- মানিক চন্দ্র নাথ সাং-৮এ, সতীশ চন্দ্র ঘোষ লেন, মাহেশ হুগলী নিকট হইতে এ. ডি. এস. আর. শ্রীরামপুর দলিল নং- ১৪৯৭ /২০২১ তাং-১৩.০৪.২০২১ দ্বারা নিম্ন তপশীল সম্পত্তি - খরিদ করিয়াছি। জেলা- হুগলী থানা-শ্রীরামপুর, মৌজা-বেলুমিল্কী, জে. এল.নং-১১, এল আর খতিয়ান ৪৫৫৭ এল আর দাগ- ১০৪০, জমির পরিমান-১০ ছটাক। উক্ত আমমোক্তার বিষয়ে কাহারও কোনও আপত্তি থাকিলে অদ্য তাং হইতে আগামী ১ মাসের মধ্যে শ্রীরামপুর বি. এল.আর. অফিসে যোগাযোগ করিবেন।

Notice

It is hereby notified to all public that 1. Pali Roy D/O Lt. Rajkrishna Roy 2. Smt. Natika Das W/O Mr. Haripada Das 3. Smt. Papi Das W/O Mr. Sudhir Das all residing at Nabadwip Tegharipara, P.O & P.S Nabadwip, Dist. Nadia executed a power of attorney Deed vide. Regs. No. IV-32/07 on 21/05/07 at Nabadwip A.D.S.R office to Mr. Hilton Roy S/O Lt. Rajkrishna Roy residing at Vill & P.O- Parulia, P.S- Purbasthali, Dist.- Purba Bardhaman. That my client 1. Arjun Das S/O Lt. Kanu Das 2. Shampa Sarkar Das W/O Mr. Shyamal Das 3. Soham Roy S/O Mr. Hilton Roy 4. Anita Roy W/O Mr. Hilton Roy all residing at Vill & P.O- Parulia, P.S- Purbasthali, Dist.- Purba Bardhaman purchased property situated at District Purba Bardhaman, J.L No. 85, Mouza Parulia on 24/04/25 at District Sub Registrar-I Purba Bardhaman from the said power of attorney holder on the strength of Deed No. I-2979/25 where Plot No. 421/608, Area-0.60 Decimal; Deed No. I-2973/25 where Plot No. 421/608, Area- 4.125 Decimal; Deed No. I-2975/25 where Plot No. 248, Area- 6.1875 Decimal; Deed No. 2974/25 where Plot No. 248, Area-6.1875 Decimal respectively. If the land owner or any person interested in this matter can raise objection within one month after this publication before the concern BL & LRO Purbasthali office, otherwise the work will be done as per the rules.

Sd/- Mihir Karmakar
Advocate, Kalna Court
F/996/826/2014

NOTICE

My client Smt. Swatilekha Bhattacharya, D/O Late Samiran Bhattacharya, Resident of Saptarshi apartment, flat no. C-1, 1st floor, Military road, Shibmandir,, P.O. N.B.U. P.S. Matigara, District-Darjeeling, Pin-734013, alongside Shatabdi Banerjee and Sukla Bhattacharya being the lawful owner of the below schedule property sold the same to Sri Utpal Saha S/o Late Baidyanth Saha, Smt. Arpita Saha, W/O Utpal Saha, Sri Subhadeep Saha, S/O Utpal Saha, all are residing at Raj Rajendra Narayan road, Ward no.7, PS. Kotwali, P.O. & District- Coochbehar vide registered deed of sale being no. I-4103/2025, dated 14/05/2025 registered at the office of the D.S.R. Coochbehar. That Smt. Sukla Bhattacharya, W/O Late Samiran Bhattacharya has executed this deed as Constituted Attorney namely of my client, vide Registered GPA Document Number I-3211 of year 2025, registered at the office of A.D.S.R. Bagdogra, West Bengal on 28/04/2025 for the below schedule property. If any person, body, authority bank, financial institution etc have any objection or claim in whole or any part thereof whatsoever in nature for the above intended transaction of Sale or below mentioned land, must contact the concerned BL&LRO Officewith the documentary proof sustaining his/her objections/claims within the stipulated time of 1 month from the date of publication of this notice. Smt.Sukla Bhattacharya is the legal Power of Attorney holder of Smt. Swatilekha Bhattacharya. SCHEDULE OF THE LAND: Total land measuring 0.018362 acres i.e. 801.23 Sq. Ft. in appertaining to L.R. Khatian no. 22994, 22995, 22996, L.R. Plot no. 5265, J.L.No.130, situated at Mouza- Sohor Coochbehar within Ward no.7, Coochbehar Municipality, P.S. Kotwali, P.O. Coochbehar, B.L. &L.RO. Coochbehar, District- Coochbehar, pin- 736101.

RAHUL HOARE
ADVOCATE, JALPAIGURI

Name Change

I, SAMIR KUMAR MAJI (Old Name) S/O ANIL MAJI Residing at VILL - Paruibaid, P.O - Durlavpur, P.S - Gangajalghati, District - Bankura, Pin - 722133 West Bengal, India have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as SAMIR MAJI (New Name) as declared before the Notary public govt of West Bengal at Bankura court vide affidavit no 274/24 Vol No I dated 22-11-2024. SAMIR KUMAR MAJI (Old Name) and SAMIR MAJI (New Name) both are same and identical person.

Name Change

I, ANIL CHANDRA MAJI (Old Name) S/O GOPAL MAJI Residing at VILL - Paruibaid, P.O - Durlavpur, P.S - Gangajalghati, District - Bankura, Pin - 722133 West Bengal, India have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as ANIL MAJI (New Name) as declared before the Notary public govt of West Bengal at Bankura Sadar Affidavit Register No-3 Sl-no 215 dated 22-01-2025. ANIL CHANDRA MAJI (Old Name) and ANIL MAJI (New Name) both are same and identical person.

Name Change

I, ABUBORKOT (Old Name) S/O HAJI ABUL HOSSAIN Residing at VILL - Paltadanga, P.O - Sondalia, P.S - Shasan, District - North 24 Parganas, Pin - 743423 West Bengal, India have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as MD ABU BARKAT HOSSAIN (New Name) as declared before the Ld. Judicial Magistrate 1st Class at Barasat vide affidavit no 4633 dated 22-05-2024. ABUBORKOT (Old Name) and MD ABU BARKAT HOSSAIN (New Name) both are same and identical person.

ILLAMBAZAR GRAM PANCHAYAT

ILLAMBAZAR, BIRBHUM
under Illambazar Panchayat Samity
e-Tender Notice

Prodhan, Illambazar Gram Panchayet, Birbhum , West Bengal invites e-NIT No- 1, 2, 3/IGP/2025-26 Dt 23.06.2025 & e-NIT No-4/IGP/2025-26 Dt 25.06.2025 Its Tender ID:-2025_ZPHD_ 868346, 868347, 868348 & 870278 for Eighteen Nos works. Works details will be available in the website: wbtenders.gov.in

Sd/-Prodhan
Illambazar Gram Panchayet

Abhishek Banerjee Intensifies Campaign in Satgachhia and Diamond Harbour Amid Growing Political Heat

Kaliganj , 25 June: Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader and Member of Parliament Abhishek Banerjee has kicked off a high-voltage campaign in Satgachhia and Diamond Harbour, aiming to consolidate support ahead of the upcoming electoral battle. With these areas being part of his political stronghold, Banerjee's visit carries both symbolic and strategic importance, especially as political rivals try to make inroads in South 24 Parganas.Over the past few days, Abhishek has been seen crisscrossing the lanes and rural pockets of the region, directly engaging with residents, holding roadshows, and conducting street-corner meetings that have drawn significant crowds. Emphasizing local development and public welfare schemes, he has sought to remind voters of the Trinamool government's achievements and the need to continue their support for Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's leadership.

The Diamond Harbour MP's campaign has been marked by high energy and a tone of both assertion and warning. Addressing public gatherings, he reiterated his stance on governance with a grassroots approach and dismissed opposition narratives as hollow rhetoric. "Those who never stood by the people in difficult times are now coming to ask for votes. Where were they during the pandemic, the cyclone, or when people needed ration?" he asked during one of his speeches in Satgachhia, a region closely associated with Mamata Banerjee's early political journey.

The campaign trail has been carefully choreographed to reach every segment of the electorate. From fishermen in the coastal belts to farmers and self-help group members in rural hamlets, Banerjee's message is consistent—development must not be derailed by forces that are "only visible before elections." His speeches often highlight initiatives like 'Duare Sarkar', health insurance under 'Swasthya Sathi', and the 'Lakshmir Bhandar' income support scheme for women as proof of the TMC's commitment to the welfare of the people.



Beyond welfare, the MP has also touched on infrastructure achievements, including road connectivity, drinking water projects, and digital education programs. "The opposition talks about change, but we have delivered transformation," he said, stressing that TMC's track record should speak louder than slogans.Security and law and order, which have been points of contention raised by opposition parties, also featured in his speeches. Banerjee countered these charges, claiming that the BJP and its allies are trying to paint a distorted image of Bengal to suit their agenda. "Diamond Harbour is one of the safest and fastest-developing regions in the state. The people here know the truth and will not fall for propaganda," he stated confidently.

Apart from public meetings, Banerjee has also been visiting local markets, temples, and community halls—interacting informally with shopkeepers, elderly residents, and young first-time voters. His campaign team has adopted a hyper-local outreach model, incorporating both traditional canvassing and digital micro-campaigns aimed at mobile and internet-savvy youth.

Political observers view Abhishek Banerjee's intensive campaigning in Satgachhia and Diamond Harbour as a deliberate move to reinforce the TMC's base in an area considered a bastion, while simultaneously testing new messaging strategies that may be replicated in other districts. With the state political climate heating up over issues of federalism, governance, and economic recovery, the Trinamool leadership seems to be relying heavily on direct voter engagement to maintain its edge. Interestingly, Banerjee has largely avoided personal attacks during this round of campaigning, choosing instead to focus on governance and delivery.

Shravani mela preparations in full swing: er ensures safety & passenger comfort at key stations

Kolkata, 25 June: In view of the forthcoming Shravani Mela 2025, Eastern Railway has intensified its preparedness to ensure the safety and convenience of passengers. As part of these proactive efforts, a comprehensive inspection focusing on safety protocols and passenger amenities was conducted today at Tarakeswar and Seoraphuli Junction Station by Divisional Railway Manager, Howrah Division, accompanied by all concerned branch officers.



The Shravani Mela, beginning from 10th July 2025, is expected to draw a large number of pilgrims to Tarakeswar, one of Eastern India's most significant pilgrimage destination. Seoraphuli Junction, being a crucial transit hub for devotees enroute to Tarakeswar station, is also anticipated to witness heavy footfall throughout the holy month.

To effectively manage the expected surge in crowd and ensure a smooth passenger experience, Eastern Railway is implementing a series of arrangements at both the stations, including:

• -Dedicated entry and exit gates for streamlined crowd movement

• Availability of potable drinking water and clean toilet facilities

• Enhanced cleanliness and housekeeping measures

• Functioning train display boards and clear audio announcements

• Additional ticket counters to reduce passenger wait times

• Well maintained Foot Over Bridge (FOB) and escalator services

• Provision of First Aid and Medical Camps for emergency support

• Improved station lighting for better visibility and safety

Eastern Railway remains committed to providing a safe, secure, and comfortable travel experience for all passengers and devotees during this auspicious period. The Division appeals to all travellers to extend their cooperation to the Railway administration and strictly adhere to safety guidelines.

"Serving the Devotees is Our Duty – Eastern Railway is Always With You"

Madan Mohan Rath Taken Out for Trial Run in Cooch Behar Ahead of Annual Festival

Cooch Behar, 25 June: Madan Mohan Rath was taken out for a trial run on the streets of Cooch Behar on Tuesday, marking a significant moment ahead of the grand annual Rath Yatra celebrations. The ceremonial procession, though smaller in scale than the main event, attracted hundreds of devotees and curious onlookers who gathered to witness the auspicious movement of the deity's chariot through parts of the historic town.

The Madan Mohan Temple, an iconic spiritual landmark in Cooch Behar, holds immense cultural and religious importance for the region. Every year, thousands come together to take part in the Rath Yatra, which sees Lord Madan Mohan—considered an incarnation of Lord Krishna—taken out in a magnificently decorated chariot pulled by devotees. But before the grand festival, a trial run is carried out to inspect the readiness of the chariot, the coordination of temple authorities, and to ensure smooth execution of the main event. As the wooden chariot adorned with traditional motifs and vibrant cloth coverings rolled through the town, it was greeted with chants of "Jai Madan Mohan" from devotees lining both sides of the street. The trial journey, although brief, is treated with deep reverence. It is not only a rehearsal in the technical sense, but also a spiritual preview of the joy and devotion that marks the final day of Rath Yatra.

Temple priests and members of the royal family of Cooch Behar, who have historically maintained strong ties with the temple and its rituals, were present to oversee the proceedings. Accompanied by temple musicians and drummers, the chariot moved slowly under tight supervision, ensuring that the wheels and structure were functioning without fault. Special attention was given to the turning radius of the rath and the pulling arrangements to avoid any mishaps during the larger gathering later this week.

Security was visibly heightened during the trial run, with personnel from local police stations deployed across the route to manage the crowd and maintain order. Barricades were placed at key intersections to ensure smooth passage for the chariot and to avoid any last-minute disruption. Ambulance services and emergency medical units were also kept on standby, as part of precautionary measures. Residents of Cooch Behar, especially those living near the temple, took part in the event with enthusiasm.



An artist gives finishing touches to wooden idols of Lord Jagannath ahead of the Rath Yatra festival in Kolkata on Wednesday.

Fake Ticket Examiners Detected at Barddhaman Station: Swift Action by Commercial Staff of Howrah Division



Kolkata, 25 June: In a significant step towards upholding the integrity of railway operations, the Commercial Department of Howrah Division successfully detected two individuals impersonating Ticket Examiners at Barddhaman station. The incident occurred around 11:30 hrs on 25.06.2025, when the vigilant and proactive approach of Shri Balyogeshwar Prasad, TIC/Barddhaman, along with Shri Prem Kumar Paswan, Head TE/Barddhaman, and Shri Purushottam Kumar, CCTC/Barddhaman, led to the identification of suspicious behavior on the Foot Over Bridge (FOB) at the station.

Upon closely observing the activities of the two individuals who were checking tickets, the officials approached and conducted an immediate on-the-spot inquiry regarding their appointment credentials and service details. The subsequent verification process revealed that both persons were engaged under fake appointments and had no legitimate association with Indian Railways.

Recognizing the seriousness of the matter, the imposters were promptly handed over to the RPF/Barddhaman for detailed investigation and further legal action. This prompt action underscores the commitment of Howrah Division to maintaining transparency, discipline, and passenger trust within the railway system.

Eastern Railway remains steadfast in its mission to ensure safety, authenticity, and accountability across all departments and warns against any attempts to exploit public services through fraudulent means.

Rajbhasha Award for BOI Howrah Zone!

Kolkata , 25 June: At the Rajbhasha Conference 2025, Bank of India, Howrah Zone was honoured with a prestigious award for outstanding implementation of the Official Language during FY 2024–25.

The award was presented by -

1. Executive Director Shri Rajeev Mishra

2. General Manager Shri Lokesh Krishna

3. Assistant General Manager (Rajbhasha) Ms. Mou Maitra

Congratulations to the entire Howrah Zone team for this remarkable achievement!



Hotels in Digha Face License Cancellation Threat Over Excessive Room Charges

Kolkata , 25 June: One of West Bengal's most popular seaside tourist destinations, have been issued a stern warning by the local administration: charging guests exorbitant room rents could now cost them their operating licenses. The move comes amid growing complaints from tourists and consumer rights groups about unjustified pricing practices, especially during peak travel seasons and holidays.The recent announcement by the district administration has sent ripples through the local hospitality industry. Authorities have clarified that the warning is not merely advisory but a formal directive that will be enforced with vigilance. Surprise inspections, audits of tariff structures, and swift action against violations are all on the table as part of the administration's renewed focus on tourism regulation.

With summer vacations in full swing and a surge in tourist inflow to the coastal town, hotel bookings have reached their annual high. However, alongside the influx of visitors has come a spike in grievances. Several tourists have alleged that hotels and guesthouses, particularly those close to the beach, have been quoting inflated rates, sometimes many times higher than the average tariff, taking advantage of high demand and limited accommodation availability. In recent weeks, the district tourism office and consumer grievance cells have received numerous complaints from vacationers, some of whom claimed to have been charged rates not displayed publicly, with arbitrary "service fees" added to bills. These allegations prompted district officials to launch a preliminary inquiry, which revealed multiple instances of rate manipulation, lack of transparency, and even collusion among certain hoteliers.

Raidighi Police Station holds an urgent meeting on Rath Yatra

Raidighi, 25 June: Rath Yatra will be held on June 27. In order to maintain peace and order in the area on the day of the Rath Yatra, an emergency meeting was held by Raidighi Police Station at a local complex from 10 am today on the orders of the Sundarbans Police District. Along with the administration officials and panchayat representatives, more than a hundred prominent people from both communities of 11 gram panchayat areas under Raidighi Police Station were present in that meeting. This emergency meeting was mainly aimed at maintaining harmony in the area on the day of the Rath Yatra and ensuring that the Rath Yatra is celebrated smoothly. This meeting lasted for about two hours. District Council member Uday Halder, Mathurapur No. 2 Panchayat Samiti President Joyprashan Bhandari, Vice President Sankirtan Shikari, Block President Prashant Sarkar, Mandirbazar SDPO Subir Kumar Bagh, Raidighi Police Station IC Manas Chatterjee and other police officers were present.

Locals Protest Over Dilapidated Road Conditions in Cooch Behar, Demand Immediate Action from Authorities

Cooch Behar, 25 June: The arrival of the monsoon season has once again exposed the sorry state of infrastructure in parts of Cooch Behar, particularly in the Guriahati No. 2 area, where residents, frustrated by years of administrative apathy, blocked a road on Wednesday to demand urgent repairs. The protest took place near the Adarsh Sangha Club, where hundreds of residents gathered to voice their discontent over the dangerously broken and waterlogged roads that have remained unrepaired for many years.

Residents, including women, children, and elderly individuals, took to the streets early in the day, bringing traffic to a halt for nearly three hours. Their message was loud and clear—after enduring years of hardship, they could no longer wait for hollow promises. The condition of the road, especially during the monsoon, becomes unbearable. Even after a light shower, water collects in large potholes, making it impossible for pedestrians and cyclists to pass without risking injury. Many have resorted to carrying bicycles on their shoulders to cross the worst sections. For students, the elderly, and those heading to work, this has become an everyday ordeal.

Local resident Anushree Roy voiced the collective frustration of the area's people, stating that despite repeatedly raising the issue with both the local administration and political representatives, no action has been taken. She said the condition of the road has been deteriorating for years, and the authorities seem indifferent to the suffering of the people. Each monsoon worsens the situation, with water accumulation leading to frequent accidents. According to Roy, the panchayat chief was informed multiple times, yet no tangible steps were taken to address the problem.

Supporting the agitation, local Panchayat President Makul Roy acknowledged the legitimacy of the residents' demands. He confirmed that the road had indeed been in poor shape for a long time and said the demand for repairs is completely justified. Roy further explained that while a tender for a drainage project in the area has already been issued, the road renovation work is also essential and should follow soon. He assured the protesters that he would speak with higher administrative officials to accelerate the process. Highlighting the gravity of the issue, he mentioned that nearly 1,000 people use that road every day, and its dangerous condition puts lives at risk—particularly those of schoolchildren and elderly residents.

The stretch of road in question has turned into a nightmare for commuters. Its surface is riddled with deep potholes, which become invisible under stagnant rainwater. Several incidents of injuries have already been reported this season. Locals said that they feel neglected despite living close to Cooch Behar town, and questioned why no action had been taken when the state government claims to be actively addressing road construction across Bengal.

Amid rising tensions, Panchayat Samiti member Chandrana De Bhowmik arrived at the protest site and held discussions with the agitators. After assessing the situation and hearing the grievances of the locals, Bhowmik assured that immediate temporary measures would be taken. He promised that the road would be repaired with stones and sand within the next few days to make it at least passable. He also explained that the ongoing work of laying a gas pipeline beneath the road surface had delayed permanent repair, but assured that once the pipeline project was completed, a new road would be constructed.

This assurance led the local residents to temporarily withdraw their blockade. However, they issued a stern warning, stating that if visible progress is not made within the next seven days, they will resume their protest with greater intensity. Residents made it clear that their patience has run out and they are no longer willing to accept promises without action.

The protest in Guriyahati is not just a local issue—it mirrors the larger infrastructure crisis that many parts of rural and semi-urban Bengal continue to face. Despite being located in close proximity to the district headquarters, residents of this area still struggle with basic amenities like usable roads. The incident has highlighted a growing disconnect between administrative promises and ground realities. With the monsoon just beginning, the urgency for repair work has never been greater.

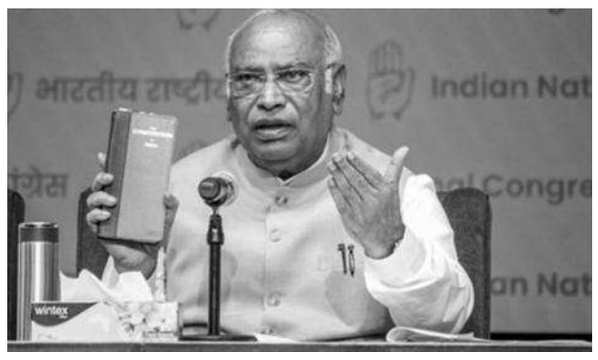
As local representatives attempt to pacify the people with assurances and plans, the residents remain skeptical but hopeful. For them, the blockade was not merely a protest, but a desperate cry for dignity, mobility, and the right to live without fear of injury from something as basic as using a public road. Whether the administration responds swiftly this time will determine if peace will prevail—or if more such agitations will be needed to finally bring change.

Kharge Slams BJP for Using Emergency Narrative to Distract from Governance Failures

New Delhi, 25 June: Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge has launched a sharp attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), accusing the ruling party of misusing historical events—particularly the Emergency imposed in 1975—to mask its own administrative shortcomings and ongoing challenges in governance. In a strong-worded statement, Kharge alleged that the BJP's repeated focus on the Emergency is not about preserving democracy but a calculated strategy to divert public attention from present-day issues affecting the nation.

Speaking amidst growing political commentary around the 49th anniversary of the Emergency, Kharge dismissed the BJP's commemoration efforts as theatrical and opportunistic. According to him, the party's selective memory of history is being used as a tool for political gain rather than as a lesson in democratic responsibility. He argued that invoking the Emergency every year, especially when the country faces pressing economic, social, and institutional crises, has become a ritual of deflection rather than reflection.

Kharge further remarked



that the true emergency today lies in rising unemployment, inflation, erosion of press freedom, misuse of central agencies, and a growing environment of intolerance. He said these are the urgent realities that demand attention, not what he termed the BJP's "obsession with an era long gone." According to him, the government has failed to address the fundamental concerns of the people and has instead resorted to a politics of distraction.

The Congress leader also accused the BJP of deliberately distorting the past and trying to weaponize it to attack political opponents. He emphasized that while no one in the Congress Party has ever denied that the Emergency was a dark period, the party has atoned and evolved from that experience. He contrasted this with the BJP's alleged unwillingness to admit or correct its own transgressions in democratic practices, especially in recent years.

Kharge's comments come at a time when the BJP has launched a fresh campaign marking the anniversary of the Emergency, calling it one of the darkest chapters in independent India's history. Top leaders from the party have used the occasion to criticize the Congress for what they describe as authoritarian behavior during the Emergency period. In speeches, social media posts, and public events, BJP leaders have sought to draw parallels between that period and what they claim are present-day threats to democracy under the Congress and its allies.

However, Kharge countered that the real threat to democracy now comes not from a decades-old proclamation but from systematic undermining of institutions, stifling of dissent, and the concentration of power within a few hands. He warned that draping oneself in democratic rhetoric while simultaneously eroding its very foundations is the greatest irony of the current political scenario.

The Congress chief also raised concerns over the state of parliamentary democracy under the current regime. He pointed out that the voice of the Opposition is being regularly curtailed in Parliament, legislations are being passed without adequate debate, and federal structures are being weakened by central overreach. According to Kharge, such actions are far more dangerous to democratic health than symbolic references to the past.

Further criticizing the government's communication strategy, Kharge claimed that the BJP's political discourse has become increasingly centered on symbolism rather than substance.



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar plants saplings on the premises of Kumaun University in Nainital, Uttarakhand, Wednesday.

CBSE Introduces Biannual Board Exams for Students from 2026

New Delhi , 25 June: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has announced that students of Classes 10 and 12 will now have the option to appear for board examinations twice a year, starting from the academic session 2025-26. The move aligns with the broader vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes a student-centric, stress-free, and holistic approach to learning and evaluation.This major shift in the examination system was officially confirmed by CBSE following directives from the Ministry of Education. Under the new format, students will have two chances in an academic year to take their board exams. The best score out of the two attempts will be considered as their final result, giving them an opportunity to improve performance without having to wait an entire year.

According to CBSE officials, the first set of board exams will be held around November or December, while the second opportunity will follow the traditional schedule around February or March. While both sets of exams will cover the complete syllabus, the timing of the first examination is expected to give students an early assessment of their preparation, helping them identify areas where they need improvement before attempting the second round.

CBSE clarified that students are not obligated to appear for both examinations. They can choose to appear in only one, depending on their preparedness. However, the board will offer the option of a second attempt to ensure those who wish to enhance their scores can do so within the same academic year, thereby eliminating the psychological burden of having only a single high-stakes chance.

This decision has already sparked wide-ranging responses from educators, parents, and students. Many school principals have welcomed the move, describing it as a progressive step that mirrors international assessment models and prioritizes student well-being. The dual-exam structure, they argue, will particularly benefit students who may face illness, anxiety, or other unforeseen challenges during a single exam window. For students aspiring to pursue higher education in competitive streams, this change could also be a game-changer. A single poor performance in board exams often negatively impacts college admissions, despite students having consistent academic records throughout the year.

Kerala High Court Criticizes State Government Over Delay in Enacting Law Against Black Magic

New Delhi, 25 June: The Kerala High Court has expressed serious displeasure at the state government's inaction in formulating a dedicated law to combat black magic and related superstitious practices, emphasizing the urgent need for legal safeguards to protect vulnerable citizens from exploitation and abuse in the name of ritualistic faith.During a recent hearing, the division bench of the High Court underscored the growing concern over the prevalence of harmful practices carried out under the guise of traditional beliefs and spiritual healing. While Kerala has often been hailed as a progressive and literate state, the court observed that alarming incidents involving black magic, human sacrifice, and ritual abuse continue to surface, revealing a dangerous undercurrent that the legal system must confront decisively.

The court's concern was rooted in several recent cases where individuals, including women and children, were subjected to physical and psychological trauma by self-styled godmen and practitioners of black magic. In some cases, victims suffered grievous injuries or even death. The absence of a specific law to criminalize such acts has allowed perpetrators to escape with minimal punishment, often prosecuted only under general provisions like assault or fraud.

While some Indian states—such as Maharashtra and Karnataka—have already implemented stringent anti-superstition laws, Kerala continues to rely on a patchwork of existing penal codes, which judges say are insufficient to address the complex and often covert nature of such crimes. The High Court, echoing growing public sentiment, said it was high time the government recognized black magic as not just a cultural concern but a serious threat to public safety and human rights.

The bench reportedly reminded the state that promises had previously been made to introduce a bill addressing this issue, but little progress had been seen on the legislative front. The judges questioned whether there was a lack of political will or a hesitation to offend certain cultural sentiments, adding that the protection of human dignity must take precedence over appeasing outdated beliefs.Activists and legal experts following the case have echoed the court's frustration. They point out that in the absence of focused legislation, victims of black magic have little legal recourse. Often, fear of social stigma or retaliation from so-called spiritual leaders discourages families from approaching the police. Even when complaints are filed, the lack of a legal framework tailored to identify and penalize these specific crimes makes prosecution difficult.

Social workers and women's rights groups have also been demanding comprehensive legal action. They argue that marginalized communities, especially women, are disproportionately affected by superstitious practices. From exorcism rituals to so-called purification ceremonies, these actions are frequently performed without consent, often amounting to physical abuse or sexual exploitation.

Meanwhile, the state government has maintained that it is studying models adopted by other states and has not ruled out introducing its own version of anti-black magic legislation. However, critics argue that such responses have been repetitive and non-committal over the years. The court's latest remarks could now accelerate legislative momentum and push the issue higher on the political agenda.

In its comments, the High Court suggested that enacting such a law would not infringe upon freedom of religion, as guaranteed by the Constitution, but would rather safeguard individuals from criminal actions that exploit faith for personal gain or sadistic intent. The court clarified that genuine religious or spiritual practices carried out within the bounds of law and human dignity would remain unaffected. The proposed legislation, in its essence, would target acts that result in physical or psychological harm under the pretense of supernatural intervention.

Pakistani Officer Linked to Abhinandan's Capture Killed in Clash with TTP Militants

New Delhi, 25 June: A Pakistani Army officer, previously identified as playing a key role in the capture of Indian Air Force Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman in 2019, has reportedly been killed during a violent encounter with militants from the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

The officer, a serving Major in the Pakistan Army, was among several security personnel deployed in a high-risk counterinsurgency operation in Pakistan's restive tribal regions. The area, long considered a volatile hotspot for extremist activity, has witnessed a sharp uptick in attacks by TTP militants in recent months. According to reports emerging from local media and military sources, the operation quickly escalated into a deadly firefight, resulting in casualties on both sides.

The Major, who once rose to prominence following the downing of an Indian MiG-21 Bison jet during the Indo-Pak aerial confrontation in February 2019, had been stationed in the troubled region as part of an intensified effort to suppress growing militant activity. Though Pakistan's military establishment has remained largely tight-lipped about his identity in the context of the recent operation, tributes pouring in from his regiment and former colleagues confirm his background and involvement in the high-profile capture of the Indian pilot.

Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman was taken into custody after his aircraft was shot down during an intense dogfight over the Line of Control, following the Balakot airstrikes carried out by the Indian Air Force. His brief captivity and subsequent release had become a focal point of diplomatic discourse between India and Pakistan. The officer killed in the recent encounter had reportedly been one of the senior Pakistani personnel tasked with interrogating and securing Abhinandan during those crucial hours, a fact that had earned him both commendation and controversy.

The news of his death has ignited strong reactions across the region. While the Pakistan Army paid homage to him as a brave officer who laid down his life in the line of duty, the incident also serves as a stark reminder of the continuing internal security challenges facing the country. Despite numerous operations and military campaigns over the years, the TTP continues to maintain operational capabilities in key regions, especially along the western frontier.

Odissa High Court Denounces 'Bulldozer Justice', Orders ₹82 Lakh Compensation for Illegal Demolition

New Delhi, 25 June: The Odissa High Court has directed the government to pay a compensation of ₹82 lakh to a citizen whose property was razed without due process. The court's ruling has ignited a broader conversation around the use—and alleged misuse—of executive power in the name of law enforcement, often dubbed "bulldozer justice."

Delivering its judgment, the High Court emphasized that the state machinery cannot act above the law, no matter how serious the allegations against an individual may be. The bench made it unequivocally clear that any punitive action against private property must follow established legal procedures, including notice, hearings, and opportunities for appeal. By bypassing these steps, the court observed, the government had not only violated constitutional rights but also set a dangerous precedent of arbitrary action.

The case revolved around the demolition of a residential and commercial structure by local authorities who claimed the building was constructed without proper permits. However, the owner of the property challenged this assertion in court, stating that the structure had been standing for several years and that necessary permissions had either been granted or were under consideration. Moreover, the demolition was carried out suddenly and without prior notice, rendering the family homeless and causing significant financial loss.

After reviewing the facts, the High Court found that the administration had failed to produce any concrete evidence justifying the urgency or legality of the demolition. No warning had been issued, no opportunity was given to the owner to present their case, and no official order was placed on record at the time of the action. The court took particular note of the absence of basic procedural safeguards, calling the demolition "an act of brute force cloaked as governance." The bench added that allowing such actions to go unchecked would embolden a culture of impunity, where constitutional rights can be trampled under the guise of swift justice. It warned that the rule of law cannot survive if state power is exercised whimsically, especially in matters involving property, livelihood, and personal dignity.



The ₹82 lakh compensation ordered by the court includes the estimated value of the demolished property, the cost of reconstruction, and damages for mental agony and loss of livelihood. The High Court has directed the concerned district administration to ensure that the amount is paid to the affected party within a stipulated period. If the payment is delayed, the court ruled, interest would be levied and disciplinary action against responsible officials would follow.

This landmark verdict comes at a time when several states across India have drawn criticism for resorting to demolition drives as a punitive tool, particularly in politically sensitive or high-profile cases. While governments argue that these actions are taken to enforce urban planning norms or remove encroachments, critics claim the bulldozers often roll in without adherence to legal protocols and disproportionately target vulnerable communities or political opponents.

Civil rights groups have welcomed the Orissa High Court's ruling, calling it a timely reminder that justice cannot be administered by force. Several lawyers and activists praised the verdict for upholding the sanctity of constitutional safeguards and delivering a strong message to administrative authorities who may be tempted to take the law into their own hands.

In recent months, the term "bulldozer justice" has become synonymous with a style of governance that favors headline-making, muscular action over quiet legal procedure. The Orissa High Court's decision, therefore, is seen as a judicial counterbalance—reasserting that justice must always be served through lawful means, not spectacle.

Legal experts believe this ruling could set a precedent for other courts dealing with similar cases. It signals that compensation alone may not suffice if state actors violate due process, and accountability—both financial and administrative—must follow. Some have even suggested that repeated instances of illegal demolitions should be viewed as contempt of constitutional order, inviting stricter penalties and oversight mechanisms. The court urged the government to undertake a comprehensive review of its enforcement policies and ensure that future demolitions are carried out only after meeting all legal requirements.

Election Commission Launches Special Electoral Roll Revision in Bihar, Demands Proof of Birthplace

New Delhi, 25 June: The Election Commission of India (ECI) has initiated a fresh round of special intensive revision of electoral rolls in Bihar, marking the beginning of a major exercise ahead of upcoming civic and general elections. In a significant development, this year's revision comes with a key procedural shift—voters will now be required to provide documented proof of their place of birth, a move aimed at enhancing the accuracy and authenticity of voter records in the state.

This large-scale operation, which is expected to span several weeks, is being rolled out across all districts of Bihar. It aims to clean up the electoral rolls by identifying and removing discrepancies, duplicate entries, and unqualified voters, while also facilitating the inclusion of new eligible citizens. What sets this revision apart from previous ones is the ECI's directive to collect additional proof to verify the birthplace of each applicant or voter, signaling a stricter standard in voter identification and data validation.

Officials involved in the exercise have indicated that the new requirement for birthplace documentation is intended to bring greater transparency and accountability to the voter registration process. While proof of age and residence has long been part of the application requirements, the addition of birthplace verification introduces a new layer of scrutiny. The Commission believes this will help resolve ongoing issues related to bogus voters, multiple entries, and contested claims over voter eligibility, particularly in areas near state borders or regions with high rates of internal migration.

This intensified verification procedure is being carried out with the support of district election officers, booth-level officers (BLOs), and other administrative machinery. Door-to-door visits, public awareness campaigns, and local-level coordination meetings are underway to ensure that citizens are informed of the new documentation requirements and the deadlines to comply. In addition to manual data collection, digital tools and mobile apps are being employed to streamline the verification and registration process, aligning with the Commission's broader goal of modernizing electoral systems across India.

Public reaction to the new measure has been mixed. While many have welcomed the Election Commission's efforts to strengthen the electoral framework, concerns have been raised over the practicality and implications of the new rule. In rural and remote areas, where official documents such as birth certificates or hospital records are often unavailable or difficult to retrieve, residents fear being excluded from the rolls despite being longstanding voters.

Civil society organizations and political parties have begun voicing these apprehensions, with some accusing the new requirement of potentially disenfranchising large sections of the population, especially those from marginalized communities. In response, election officials have clarified that a range of acceptable documents will be permitted as proof of place of birth, including certificates issued by local authorities, school records, and affidavits. The Commission has also assured that no genuine voter will be left out due to lack of documentation, as each case will be reviewed with sensitivity and discretion.

The Commission has emphasized that the special revision exercise is not just a bureaucratic routine, but a crucial step toward ensuring the sanctity of elections. With Bihar's history of political volatility and the constant need for fair and inclusive polls, the ECI appears determined to address long-standing structural flaws in the voter database.

Moreover, this intensified roll revision comes at a time when debates around electoral reforms, voter ID linking with Aadhaar, and migrant voting rights are gaining momentum nationwide. Bihar, with its complex demographic profile and migratory trends, serves as a testing ground for new electoral procedures. The results of this exercise may well influence future revisions across other Indian states.

As part of the ongoing drive, citizens have been urged to cooperate fully with BLOs and ensure timely submission of all required documents. Special help desks and information centers have been set up in many districts to assist people in understanding the procedures and resolving any technical or legal difficulties. In some urban centers, camps are being organized at ward levels, while in rural belts, community-based outreach is being used to reach those without easy access to administrative offices.In the coming weeks, the Election Commission will publish draft rolls for public inspection, inviting objections and suggestions from the electorate. Final rolls will be published after necessary corrections and additions, with eligible voters receiving updated voter ID cards.

This revised process is expected to significantly impact the voter list ahead of the next elections, potentially shaping electoral outcomes across many constituencies. While the Commission's emphasis on integrity and authenticity is widely appreciated, the rollout will require careful management, especially to ensure that genuine voters are not inadvertently sidelined.

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INDIAN INFO EXCHANGE

Gautam Gambhir Reasserts Jasprit Bumrah Will Feature in Only Three Tests: Concerns Over Workload Management Intensify



New Delhi, 25 June: Gautam Gambhir has once again stirred the cricketing conversation by asserting that ace pacer Jasprit Bumrah is unlikely to play more than three Test matches in any given series moving forward. Gambhir's remarks, made during a recent media interaction, have reignited the debate around player workload management, especially for fast bowlers like Bumrah who are vital across all formats of the game.

Gambhir, who is known for his forthright opinions, emphasized that the Indian team management will have to prioritize Bumrah's longevity by restricting his appearances in longer formats. According to him, the demands of modern cricket, combined with Bumrah's unique action and history of back-related injuries, mean that the pacer's participation in all five Tests of a long series is neither practical nor sustainable.

Jasprit Bumrah, widely regarded as one of the finest fast bowlers in world cricket today, has had a carefully managed workload ever since he made his Test debut in 2018. His ability to bowl with pace and precision across formats has made him indispensable to the Indian side. However, that very versatility has also required selectors and team physios to make difficult choices regarding his availability, particularly for the demanding five-day format. Gambhir pointed out that India's upcoming tours, which include long Test series as well as crucial white-ball assignments, will necessitate rotational strategies for bowlers. He explained that India can no longer afford to risk the long-term fitness of players like Bumrah by pushing them through every single match, especially given the team's ambitions in ICC tournaments across formats.

His comments come at a time when Bumrah is expected to lead India's bowling attack in the upcoming five-match Test series against a formidable opponent. Fans have been anticipating his full participation, but Gambhir's statement suggests that the team might take a more conservative approach. It's worth noting that in recent years, Bumrah has often been rested or rotated after two or three Tests, especially during home series where India's bowling depth allows for tactical substitutions without compromising overall team strength.

Gambhir's views have found both support and opposition among cricket analysts and fans. Supporters of his opinion argue that preserving Bumrah for key matches is crucial to India's success in ICC tournaments, particularly the World Test Championship final and ODI and T20 World Cups. They point to the example of England's management of James Anderson and Stuart Broad, who were rotated strategically throughout their careers to extend their longevity.

On the other hand, critics believe that limiting Bumrah to just three Tests could hurt India's chances in longer series, especially in overseas conditions where his ability to exploit seam and bounce gives India a rare edge. Some also argue that Bumrah himself is a professional athlete capable of managing the rigors of the format, and that decisions regarding his availability should be made based on his fitness and form rather than blanket workload assumptions.

Regardless of the divided opinions, one cannot ignore the larger trend in international cricket toward player management and rest cycles. With the global calendar becoming increasingly packed and bilateral series often overlapping with franchise tournaments like the IPL, cricket boards are being forced to rethink traditional player utilization. The focus has shifted from quantity to quality, and players like Bumrah, who have already faced stress fractures in the past, are seen as high-priority cases for conservation. Bumrah's previous injuries, including a prolonged break due to a stress reaction in his lower back, have already served as cautionary tales for the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).



Antonio Rudiger had a verbal exchange with Pachuca's Gustavo Cabral.

Neeraj Chopra Strikes Gold at Ostrava Golden Spike With Commanding Javelin Throw

New Delhi, 25 June: India's golden boy of athletics, Neeraj Chopra, once again stamped his authority on the world stage by clinching the gold medal at the prestigious Ostrava Golden Spike meet in the Czech Republic. The reigning Olympic and World Champion dominated the javelin event with a best throw of 88.67 meters, showcasing his impeccable form ahead of a busy international season and igniting hopes for another historic year in Indian track and field.

Held annually, the Golden Spike is one of the most respected events on the European athletics circuit and has often served as a testing ground for elite athletes gearing up for global championships. For Chopra, this win reaffirms his status as one of the most consistent and fearsome competitors in the javelin discipline. Despite wet and slightly windy conditions in Ostrava, he looked unfazed and delivered a series of high-quality throws, eventually sealing the gold on his third attempt.

Chopra began the competition with a modest start, throwing just over 82 meters on his first attempt. However, by his third throw, he found the rhythm that has become synonymous with his name. Launching the javelin to a distance of 88.67 meters, he surged ahead of the rest of the field and never looked back. The mark was not only enough to secure the top podium finish but also served as a strong signal to his global competitors in what is expected to be a packed 2025 athletics season.

The victory in Ostrava comes at a crucial juncture for the 26-year-old, who has been strategically managing his season to peak at the right time. With the Paris 2024 Olympics just around the corner and the World Athletics Championships later this year, Chopra's performance sends a clear message that he is on track to defend his titles and further elevate India's standing in the global athletics community.

Speaking after his win, Chopra expressed satisfaction with his performance, especially given the tricky weather conditions. He credited his team for helping him maintain fitness and focus throughout the year and noted that every meet he participates in is part of a broader strategy to fine-tune his technique and mental preparedness.

The Ostrava meet also saw a strong lineup of competitors, including seasoned throwers from Germany, the Czech Republic, and Finland, many of whom have medaled at previous European and World Championships. However, none were able to breach the 88-meter mark, allowing Chopra to comfortably cruise to victory. His closest rival managed a best of 86.32 meters, well short of the Indian athlete's winning distance.



With this performance, Chopra has now recorded another throw above 88 meters in his career, an impressive statistic that underscores his consistency at the elite level. The mark also puts him among the top throws in the world so far this season, reaffirming his status as a frontrunner for the upcoming major competitions.

Virat Kohli's Former Girlfriend Back in Spotlight Amid Sudden Social Media Buzz

Mumbai, 25 June: Indian cricket icon Virat Kohli has found herself back in the limelight after years away from public attention. While Kohli has long since moved on and built a highly publicized life with Bollywood actress Anushka Sharma, the renewed interest in his past relationship has sparked widespread discussion on social media platforms, drawing curiosity and commentary from fans and followers alike.

The individual in question, whose association with Kohli dates back to the early days of his cricketing career, was once a frequent subject of tabloid speculation during his rise to national fame. However, after the relationship reportedly ended well before Kohli's international stardom fully took flight, she had chosen to maintain a low profile, stepping away from both the media and entertainment circles. Now, with her recent reemergence on digital platforms, including a series of viral posts and a refreshed public appearance, netizens have reignited interest in her identity and past link to the Indian cricket star. Her Instagram updates and short-form video content have gained massive traction, with followers engaging in speculation about her comeback and possible ventures in the fashion, fitness, or influencer domains.

"Not Up to Test Standards": Sunil Gavaskar Slams Shubman Gill and Batting Unit After Crushing Defeat

Mumbai, 25 June: Indian cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar has delivered a stinging critique of the national team's performance following their defeat in the recent Test match, singling out young batter Shubman Gill and the rest of the batting unit for failing to meet the standards expected at the international level. Speaking after India's collapse, Gavaskar did not mince words as he questioned the temperament, shot selection, and application of several players who, in his view, failed to demonstrate the grit required to succeed in the longest format of the game.

India's loss came in dramatic fashion, with the team crumbling under pressure and falling well short of a competitive total in both innings. While much of the focus post-match has been on England's clinical bowling and strategy, Gavaskar turned the spotlight inward, pointing to what he described as fundamental failures in India's batting approach — especially from players who were expected to step up in the absence of seasoned veterans.

Among those under the microscope was Shubman Gill, who has long been touted as one of India's brightest batting prospects. Despite his early promise and impressive performances in Australia and at home, Gill has struggled to deliver consistent scores in recent outings. Gavaskar, speaking on a leading sports broadcast, expressed disappointment in Gill's lack of composure and inability to adapt to testing conditions. He criticized the batter's shot selection, particularly in the second innings, when Gill perished to what Gavaskar described as "an irresponsible and avoidable stroke at a crucial juncture." Gavaskar's assessment went beyond individual dismissals. He questioned whether the young batters were truly prepared for the rigors of Test cricket — a format that demands patience, technique, and mental toughness. According to the former India captain, several players seemed more suited to limited-overs cricket in their mindset, showing an inclination to go for flashy strokes rather than settling in and playing long innings.

"What we saw today is not the kind of batting that wins you Test matches," Gavaskar said bluntly. "Some of these players are incredibly talented, no doubt about that. But they are not up to the standard of Test cricket if they continue playing like this. You cannot survive at this level without applying yourself, without understanding the value of your wicket."Gavaskar, who amassed over 10,000 Test runs during his career, emphasized that India's batting failures were not about lack of skill but rather about approach and mindset. He recalled how the hallmark of successful Test cricketers has always been their ability to dig deep, bat for long periods, and wear down the opposition — attributes he believes are currently missing from India's younger generation of batters.

Rishabh Pant Achieves Career-Best Test Ranking After Stellar Show at Headingley

New Delhi, 25 June: Indian wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant has scaled new heights in his cricketing career by reaching his highest-ever position in the ICC Test Batting Rankings following his brilliant performance in the Headingley Test. The International Cricket Council (ICC) confirmed that Pant's consistent displays with the bat have earned him a significant leap in the rankings, pushing him into the top tier of global Test batsmen.

Pant's latest feat comes on the back of a gritty, counter-attacking innings at Headingley, where he stood tall against a formidable English bowling attack in challenging conditions. His contribution not only kept India competitive during the match but also reaffirmed his reputation as one of the most dangerous and unorthodox middle-order batsmen in the modern game. The innings, marked by calculated aggression and composure under pressure, played a crucial role in India's overall fightback during the Test.

With this performance, Pant has now moved to sixth position in the ICC Men's Test Batting Rankings — the highest position he has ever occupied since his debut in 2018. The 26-year-old has surpassed several established names on the list and is currently the highest-ranked Indian wicketkeeper-batsman in the format. His rise up the rankings is seen as a testament to his growing maturity and consistency, traits that were previously seen as fluctuating in his early years. The latest ICC update sees Pant gaining significant points, thanks to his Headingley innings where he scored 85 crucial runs in the second innings. That knock was particularly lauded for its timing and technique, as it came when India were under scoreboard pressure and required a dependable presence at the crease. Pant, blending flair with responsibility, ensured that India not only avoided a collapse but also added valuable runs to shift the momentum.

Experts and former players have praised Pant's evolution as a Test cricketer. Once viewed as a high-risk, high-reward player, he has gradually added stability to his stroke play. While his aggressive intent remains intact, he now tempers it with greater awareness of match situations. This blend of instinct and intelligence was on full display in Leeds, where Pant's stroke-making included precise footwork, well-judged shot selection, and an unflinching temperament against both pace and spin. Pant's journey to the top ranks has not been without challenges. Having faced scrutiny for his wicketkeeping skills and batting consistency early on, he has since silenced critics with match-winning performances in Australia, England, and at home.

Chelsea Advance to Knockouts, Benfica Stun Bayern: Club World Cup Qualification Race Heats Up

Madrid, 25 June: European football delivered another dramatic twist this week as Chelsea secured their place in the knockout stages of the UEFA Champions League, while Benfica pulled off a sensational victory over German giants Bayern Munich. These key results not only altered the complexion of the ongoing continental tournament but also intensified the qualification race for the expanded FIFA Club World Cup, scheduled to debut in its new format in 2025.

Chelsea's progression to the knockouts marks a vital achievement in what has been a season of rebuilding under manager Mauricio Pochettino. The London club, despite an inconsistent domestic campaign, demonstrated tactical maturity and resilience in Europe, where they sealed advancement with a controlled performance and crucial win in their final group stage fixture. The victory comes as a significant boost for the club, which has heavily invested in talent over the past two transfer windows and has faced mounting pressure to justify its spending with tangible success.

Chelsea's qualification also bears larger implications, particularly in terms of their chances to feature in the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup. The revamped edition of the tournament, set to take place in the United States, will feature 32 of the world's best club teams, with Europe receiving a significant share of the slots. Teams are being selected based on their performances in the Champions League across a four-year cycle, and Chelsea's consistent presence in the latter stages of the competition has now positioned them favorably in that race.

While Chelsea celebrated progress, another headline-grabbing result came from Portugal, where Benfica stunned Bayern Munich in one of the biggest upsets of the season. The Lisbon-based club defied expectations by toppling the six-time European champions in a tense, high-octane encounter. The victory not

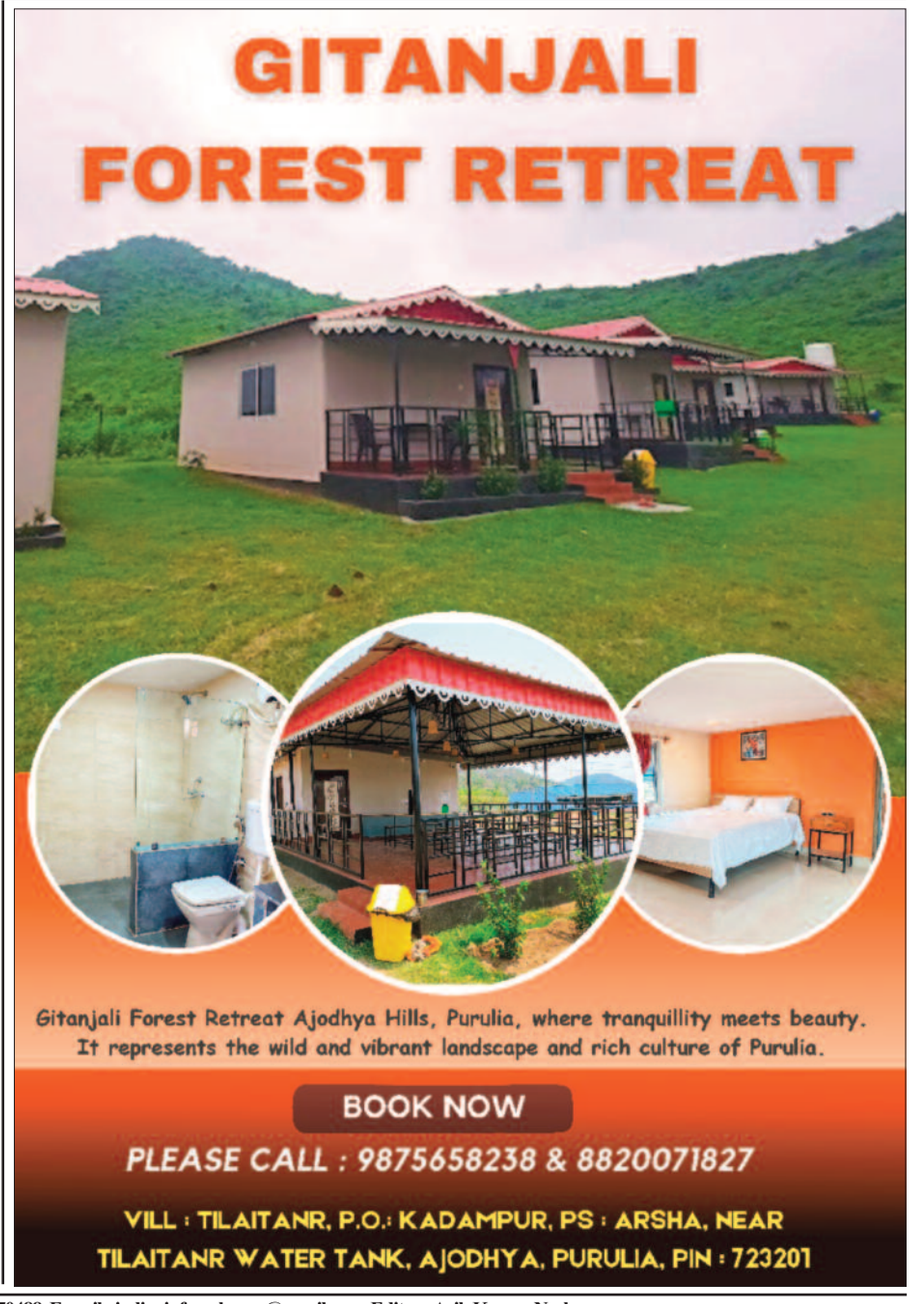


only lifted Benfica's hopes in the Champions League but also elevated their points tally and coefficient ranking, both of which are being closely monitored for Club World Cup qualification purposes.

Bayern, meanwhile, despite having already booked their passage to the knockouts before this defeat, appeared off pace and defensively vulnerable. The result will not jeopardize their Champions League ambitions, but it raises questions about their recent form and preparedness heading into the crucial knockout rounds. For Benfica, however, the win could prove invaluable in boosting their standing within UEFA's performance metrics, which could potentially secure them one of the coveted Club World Cup spots.

FIFA's qualification model for the 2025 Club World Cup allocates places based on both historical performance and recent achievements. UEFA has been granted 12 slots in total, with automatic entries going to Champions League winners from the past four years. The remaining spots are awarded through a ranking system that favors teams with the best records over this period. As things stand, clubs like Chelsea, Bayern Munich, Real Madrid, and Manchester City are frontrunners, while teams like Benfica, Paris Saint-Germain, and Inter Milan are locked in a tight race for the remaining positions.

The FIFA Club World Cup's new format promises a month-long competition featuring elite clubs from all six confederations, effectively creating a tournament on par with the World Cup in terms of structure and commercial appeal. Scheduled for June-July 2025 in the United States, the competition is expected to feature group stages followed by knockout rounds, with significant prize money on offer. Clubs are already strategizing not just for continental glory but also with an eye on the global platform the tournament will provide.



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