

THE INDIAN MAIL

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Harish alleges massive corruption in education, borrowings, Future City project

Former minister and BRS deputy floor leader Harish Rao launched a sharp attack on the Congress government, alleging large-scale corruption in the education sector, reckless borrowing... **02**

TDP and Janasena candidates elected unopposed as Rajya Sabha MPs!

It appears that four candidates from the TDP and Janasena have been elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha from Andhra Pradesh. Reports indicate that their election became uncontested as the deadline for the withdrawal of nominations passed with only four candidates remaining in the fray for the four seats.



Amaravati, June 11 : It appears that four candidates from the TDP and Jana Sena have been elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha from Andhra Pradesh. With the deadline for the withdrawal of nominations having passed and only four candidates remaining in the fray for the four seats, their election has been confirmed as unanimous. Sana Satish, Bashyam Ramakrishna, and Chintakayala Vijay are the can-

didates from the TDP, while Lingamaneni Ramesh filed a nomination representing Jana Sena. However, with only four candidates remaining in the fray, their election appears all but certain. Shortly, Returning Officer Vanitha Rani will officially present the certificates of election (Form-22) to the elected candidates. On June 1, the Election Commission of India announced the election schedule for Rajya Sabha seats across 10 states, in-

cluding Andhra Pradesh. The Commission stated that elections for a total of 27 Rajya Sabha seats would be held on June 18. The terms of 24 Rajya Sabha members are set to expire in June and July. Additionally, by-elections are to be held for three other seats that fell vacant before the completion of the members' terms. The Election Commission announced that nominations will be accepted from June 1 to June 8. It scheduled the scrutiny of nominations for the 9th of this month and set the deadline for withdrawal of nominations for the 11th. The Commission also stated that the election process would be completed by June 20.



Empowering India's youth remains a priority: PM Modi

New Delhi, June 11 : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said that empowering India's youth remains a priority as they will be the "driving force" in the country's journey towards Viksit Bharat. Chairing the NITI Aayog Governing Council meeting here, PM Modi said: "India's demographic dividend is a historic opportunity that we cannot afford to lose. Creating the right

ecosystem for our youth through quality education, demand-driven skilling, and employment opportunities must remain a priority. Empowered youth will be the driving force behind our journey towards Viksit Bharat."

Jagan demands CBI probe into irregularities in DSC exam, recruitment



Amaravati, June 11 : Former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and YSR Congress Party President Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy alleged large-scale irregularities in the Mega District Selection Committee (DSC) exam and recruitment process and demanded a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Addressing a press conference on Thursday, he said that all the facts coming to light regarding the Mega DSC for recruitment of teachers are extremely shocking.

Future skills for students through AI learning and quantum technology: CM Chandrababu

New Delhi, June 11 : Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu stated that a new population management policy would be introduced in the state. He also mentioned that AI learning, quantum technologies, and advanced programs would be brought

in for students. CM Chandrababu attended the 11th Governing Council meeting of NITI Aayog held in Delhi on Thursday.



Hyderabad needs an IIM: CM Revanth appeals to the Centre

New Delhi, June 11 : Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy remarked that education and healthcare form the strong foundation for the country's development. He participated in the 11th NITI Aayog Governing Council meeting held in Delhi on Thursday under the chair-

manship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Speaking at the NITI Aayog forum, he outlined Telangana's development model in the context of the caste census. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister stated that education—rather than money or land—is the key factor influencing social backwardness. He referred to the details of the caste survey (SEEEPC) during his address. He invited Chief Ministers and officials from any state in the country to visit Telangana and see the 'Young India Schools' being constructed there.



Uttam directs officials to vigorously pursue Sitarama project clearances



Hyderabad, June 11 : Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Thursday directed officials to vigorously pursue and fast-track the environmental.



BJP rising, Cong-BRS losing public trust : Ramchander Rao

Hyderabad, June 11 : Telangana BJP President N. Ramchander Rao on Thursday asserted that the BJP is steadily expanding in the state while the Congress and BRS are rapidly losing public confidence. It was during the tenure of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari

Vajpayee and under the governance of Narendra Modi that India received true recognition worldwide, he claimed. Addressing party workers at the two-day 'Deen Dayal Prashikshan Taragathulu' (training classes) in Siddipet, Rao ac-

cused both Congress and BRS of corruption and alleged that the two parties were protecting each other's interests. He demanded transparent investigations into the Kaleshwaram project and Formula-E car race controversies.

CM Revanth has not yet reviewed the Agriculture Department: Kavitha

Nalgonda, June 11 : Kalvakuntla Kavitha, President of the Telangana Rakshana Sena, lashed out at the Revanth Reddy government, calling it a "shameless" administration that has extorted 1,200 crore from farmers under the guise of deductions and transportation charges. A round-table meeting addressing farmers' issues was held in Nalgonda on Thursday. Speaking at the meeting, Kavitha alleged that a conspiracy is underway to scrap free electricity for farmers under the pretext of the "Rythu DISCOM" initiative. He criticized CM Revanth Reddy for not holding a review meeting on the Agriculture Department since assuming office. He expressed anguish that agriculture is being left to fate, with 'Mother Earth' being treated lightly. He empha-



sized that if governments possess iron-willed determination, they can work wonders in the agricultural sector. On this occasion, Kavitha suggested to the government that agriculture be recognized as an industry and that farmers be extended the same facilities provided to entrepreneurs. She explained that the Telangana Rakshana Sena would undertake a special action plan to make the farmer a 'king'.



Delhi court defers decision on framing charges against Lalu Yadav in money laundering case

New Delhi, June 11 : A Delhi court on Thursday deferred, till July 16, the pronouncement of its decision on framing of charges against Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad Yadav, his family members and others accused in the alleged money laundering case linked to the IRCTC hotel scam being probed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Devi, and their son and Leader of Opposition in the Bihar Assembly, Tejashwi Yadav. The ED case relates to the alleged laundering of proceeds of crime arising out of the IRCTC hotel scam registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The agency has alleged that irregularities were committed in the awarding of contracts for the operation of IRCTC hotels during Lalu Prasad Yadav's tenure as the Railway Minister between 2004 and 2009. According to the prosecution, the hotel maintenance contracts were allegedly awarded without following prescribed norms to a private company linked to close associates of the RJD supremo.

It has further been alleged that, in return, three acres of prime land were acquired through a benami company allegedly linked to the family members and associates of Lalu Prasad Yadav. The accused in the case include Lalu Prasad Yadav, his wife Rabri Devi, sons Tejashwi Yadav and Tej Pratap Yadav, daughters Misa Bharti and Hema Yadav, besides others. Earlier, the special court judge had reserved the order on framing of charges after hearing detailed arguments advanced by counsel appearing for the accused persons and the ED. The Delhi High Court is also seized of criminal revision petitions filed by Lalu Prasad Yadav, Rabri Devi and Tejashwi Yadav challenging the trial court order directing the framing of charges against them in the corruption case linked to the same alleged scam. In October last year, the Rouse Avenue Court framed charges against the accused persons for offences related to cheating, criminal conspiracy and corruption under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Prevention of Corruption Act after they pleaded not guilty. Lalu Prasad Yadav has consistently denied the allegations and maintained that the tenders for the IRCTC hotels were awarded in a fair and transparent manner.

From Naxalbari to near extinction: How Modi govt crushed Maoist menace in India

New Delhi, June 11 : In 1967, a peasant uprising in West Bengal's Naxalbari village gave rise to a far-left movement in India. What began as a movement claiming to protect the land rights of rural communities, resist tribal exploitation, and address governance gaps gradually evolved into a violent movement sustained by extortion and intimidation. For years, it was projected as a people's movement, drawing support from sections of the local population and sympathisers who viewed it as a struggle against social and economic injustice. Later, the Naxalite movement spread across parts of West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh. Alongside its expansion, reports of violence,

coercion and attacks on civilians and security personnel became common. An official said that while the red rebels maintained their presence in remote villages, they also benefited from support networks in urban areas, where certain sympathisers and activists allegedly sought to justify or promote the movement through propaganda. When the National Democratic Alliance government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power at the Centre in 2014, it resolved to tackle the Left-Wing Extremism (LWE). An official said that national security planners believed it was necessary not only to address the threat on the ground but also to counter the narratives and ideological messaging targeting youths.



Retired Pune IT professional duped of Rs 4.43 crore in investment scam

Pune, June 11 : A major cyber fraud case involving more than Rs 4.43 crore has surfaced in Pune, where a retired IT professional was allegedly duped by fraudsters posing as investment experts on WhatsApp and Telegram. The accused reportedly lured the victim with promises of extraordinary returns through stock market investments and displayed fictitious profits worth over Rs 26 crore on a fake online trading platform before demanding additional payments in the name of service charges. According to the complaint, the victim, 46-year-old Ujjwal Digambar Chaudhary, is a resident of Roseland Residency in the Pimple Saudagar area of Pune and a retired IT professional.

Christian leaders at the United Christian Protection India Council (UCPIC) round table meeting

Vijayawada, June 11 : Christian leaders organized a round table meeting at a hotel in Vijayawada on Thursday under the auspices of the United Christian Protection India Council (UCPIC) demanding that the government take immediate action by focusing on the attacks

and disturbing situation on Christians in Andhra Pradesh. On this occasion, they discussed the attacks and disturbing situation on Christians in the state. The founder and national president of the United Christian Protection India Council, Dr., who participated as the chief guest in the meeting, Kola Prasad

An inquiry should be conducted into the attacks on Christians in the state and Protection should be provided to Christians

said that attacks on Christians and Christian places of worship have increased in the state. He expressed his concern over incidents that violate the religious

freedom of Christians. He said that according to the Constitution, every citizen has freedom of religion.. but.. incidents are taking place today that violate religious freedom.



Hyd to host global logistics leaders at ICSL 2026

Hyderabad, June 11 : The Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI), in association with MPL Logistics, will host the International Conference on Shipping & Logistics of Commerce and Industry (ICSL) 2026 on June 12 at Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre.

ternational Conference on Shipping & Logistics of Commerce and Industry (ICSL) 2026 on June 12 at Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre.

Transferring Brahmin Corporation to Endowments is a historic decision



Vijayawada, June 11 : The Andhra Pradesh Purohita Brahmin Samakha has expressed happiness over the state government issuing a GO transferring the Andhra Pradesh Brahmin Welfare Corporation from the EWS department to the Endowment Department. On this occasion, a delegation of the Samakha participated in a press conference organized at the Samakha members' residence in Satyanarayanapuram, Vijayawada on Thursday and thanked CM Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan and Brahmin Corporation Chairman Brahmasri Buchi Ramprasad. Speaking on this occasion, the founder of the Samakha, Yamijala Narasimhamurthy, said that the ill-considered decision taken by the previous YSRCP government to transfer the Brahmin Corporation from the Endowment Department to the BC Welfare Department had seriously damaged the sentiments of the Brahmin community. Brahmin Corporation Chairman Brahmasri Buchi Ramprasad said that it is commendable that the coalition government has taken the appropriate decision and released this GEO as a result of the continuous struggle they have been waging since then. He

said that by bringing the Brahmin Welfare Corporation back under the purview of the Endowment Department, the path has been paved for the implementation of the main promise in the coalition manifesto, namely, 'the government will recognize priesthood as a Brahmin caste profession'. Recalling his memories of working as the director of the Brahmin Corporation in the past, Yamijala Narasimha Murthy said that this will be a great relief to the 1.20 lakh priests in the state and their families. He said that if there was a Brahmin Corporation under the endowment department officials would be managing directors, they would give a big role to priests.

Public Notice For E-Auction Cum Sale. Table with columns: Bidder(s) / Guarantor(s), Demand Notice Date and Amount, Description of the Immovable Property/ Secured Asset, Date of Physical Possession, Reserve Price, and Earnest Money Deposit (EMD). Includes details for multiple properties and a section for Terms and Conditions.

Vistaar Financial Services Private Limited. Appendix IV [See rule 8 (1)] POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property). Includes details for multiple properties with columns for Name of the Borrower(s), Outstanding Amount, Demand Notice Date, and Description of the Immovable Property.

OPINION MAIL



NDA defies doom predictions, stays united as Modi 3.0 turns two

When the 2024 Lok Sabha election results were announced in June, naysayers rubbed their hands in glee; not because the mandate returned the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as the single largest party in the Lower House of Parliament, but that it ran short of an absolute majority by a few seats. When the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) partners, including Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United) and the Chandrababu Naidu-led Telugu Desam Party (TDP), again extended their support to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the total strength of the Treasury benches rose to 293 seats in the 543-member Lok Sabha. Though the alliance comprised some 44 member-parties, the naysayers still dismissed the new government as "short-lived".

Two years later, the nation is celebrating the anniversary of Modi 3.0 at the Centre; the NDA remains a cohesive front, while the Opposition bloc crumbles. The 75-year-old veteran JD(U) leader has since moved to the Centre as a Rajya Sabha member, voluntarily vacating his position with blessings for his successor, Bihar's new BJP Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and another ally, former Prime Minister and Janata Dal (Secular) leader H.D. Deve Gowda, penned paeans on Modi's leadership while celebrating an uninterrupted three-term governance, now completing 12 years. Incidentally, the nonagenarian JD(S) leader has reportedly announced retirement from electoral politics, opting out of the Rajya Sabha race and ending a seven-decade-long Parliamentary career.

In an article in The Times of India, he reflected that Modi becoming the longest continuously serving democratically elected Prime Minister after surpassing the record of Jawaharlal Nehru reflects both the strength and evolution of Indian democracy, while crediting his leadership for what he described as uncompromising protection of national interest and sustained public support.

Nehru's first term as the Prime Minister of Independent India was not through direct popular votes; the general election to elect the first Lok Sabha was held between 1951 and 1952. Though he won three consecutive elections, he spent two years in office after the 1962 Parliamentary poll.

Deve Gowda also observed that the Congress at that time functioned as a dominant political force with minimal opposition, while by the time Modi assumed office in 2014 and returned for a third term in 2024, India had transformed significantly in terms of diversity and economic complexity. He said it would not be exactly prudent to suggest that becoming Prime Minister in 1952 was easier than in 2014 or 2024, adding that even by 1996, when he himself became Prime Minister, India's political environment had already become more competitive, questioning, and mature.

He also stressed the fact that, unlike dynastic or privileged political backgrounds, leaders such as PM Modi and himself did not have access to inherited political capital, patronage, or social advantage that could serve as a springboard into national leadership.

Meanwhile, Naidu, penning his thoughts in The Indian Express, hailed Modi's tenure as having rediscovered India's cultural pride and national self-belief. He heaped praise on the Prime Minister and asserted that this milestone reflects the enduring trust that millions of Indians have placed in a model of governance anchored in the principle of "Nation First". History, he mused, will remember this period not merely for economic growth or political stability, but for the restoration of India's confidence in itself. The TDP chief also believed that this is India's defining moment, the beginning of a golden era for India. Despite the naysayers, the Modi government has completed 12 years at the helm. The administration looks secure and confident under him; strong performance has exceeded expectations, with alliance partners standing committed under the Prime Minister's leadership. That commitment is reflected in the fact that the NDA government has successfully steered several major bills through Parliament, ranging from economic reforms and social legislation to constitutional amendments.

the indian mail EDITORIAL

Praful Patel, Tatkare regain clout in NCP amid leadership tussle

The nomination of Rajendra Jain to the Rajya Sabha and Aniket Tatkare's election to the state council have enabled Praful Patel and Sunil Tatkare to reassert their authority within the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) led by Sunetra Pawar.

Ahead of the party's 27th anniversary on June 10, the developments signal that their influence in the organisation remains intact.

The brief but intense attempt to sideline Praful Patel and Sunil Tatkare within the NCP recently marked a major flashpoint in the party's internal evolution. Following the tragic passing of Ajit Pawar, the sudden rise of the "Pawar Gen-Next" cohort -- centered around Parth Pawar and newly appointed party president Sunetra Pawar -- threatened to centralise all decision-making authority within a tight familial orbit.

The rift became public when Sunetra Pawar submitted a list of national office-bearers to the Election Commission (EC) on April 29, which conspicuously omitted both Patel and Tatkare. Although both Patel and Tatkare were inducted into the newly constituted national working committee, their designations as the party's national working president and Maharashtra unit chief, respectively, were missing. Instead, Patel was mentioned as the NCP leader in the Rajya Sabha and Tatkare as the NCP leader in the Lok Sabha.

However, within a matter of weeks, the veteran duo pulled off an institutional counter-manoeuve, firmly re-establishing their hold and prominence over the party's machinery.

Pakistan reactivates 70 terror launchpads in PoK, 800 terrorists ready for infiltration

New Delhi, June 11 : Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and its army have reactivated at least 70 terror launchpads across the Line of Control and International Border, planning a mass infiltration of nearly 800 terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir, intelligence sources revealed on Thursday. The Pakistan establishment aims to exploit the current global focus on the Middle East conflict and the ongoing state elections in India to facilitate the infiltration, an official said. Global attention has largely been centred on developments in the Middle East following the conflict between the US, Israel, and Iran. Even as Pakistan attempted to facilitate talks between the US and Iran, which failed, its Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), along with the army, has directed the reactivation of terror launchpads in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). Amid these global developments and the ongoing assembly elections in various states in India, the Pakistan establishment is believed to be seeking an opportunity to step up infiltration efforts, an official said. The numbers have been rising steadily, with several terrorists being moved into Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and kept ready on the launchpads for infiltration into Jammu and Kashmir. Intelligence inputs indicate that at least 70 launchpads are active across the border, including around 10 along the International Border and the rest along the Line of Control (LoC). Estimates suggest that nearly 800 terrorists are currently waiting for an opportunity to infiltrate. An official from the Intelligence Bureau said that the infiltration strategy has been revised after several attempts to enter Jammu and Kashmir in recent months were foiled due to heightened vigilance by security forces along the borders. "The plan now is to attempt coordinated infiltrations from multiple entry points to stretch security forces. Groups of 10 to 15



terrorists may be pushed in simultaneously, with the expectation that at least a few will manage to get through," the official said. He added that Pakistan is seeking to take advantage of ongoing developments in India and abroad, in the hope that any operational gap could be used to facilitate infiltration.

A sense of urgency has reportedly set in after Operation Sindoor in May last year, in which Indian armed forces targeted and destroyed terror infrastructure in Pakistan and PoK. The operation was carried out in response to the Pahalgam attack in April last year that left 26 Indian tourists dead. Since then, Indian forces and security agencies have thwarted multiple infiltration attempts. Sources indicate that Pakistan's ISI and the army are facing pressure from terrorist groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba over the lack of operational activity in Jammu and Kashmir.

Officials said Jammu and Kashmir remains central to the functioning of these groups, making continued unrest a key objective for the Pakistan establishment, particularly in the context of local dynamics.

India can play key role in helping Africa's green energy push

New Delhi, June 11 : India can play a key role in helping Africa scale up its renewable energy, as the country has, over the last decade, successfully added over 130 gigawatts of solar and wind capacity, with renewables now accounting for just over half of installed electricity capacity, according to an article.

Across Africa, the energy transition is not a distant policy target; it is a practical attempt to turn sunlight, wind, and mineral wealth into hospitals with steady power, farms that can irrigate after sunset, and factories that can plug into something more reliable than expensive diesel generators, according to the India Narrative article. It points out that 600 million

people in Africa are still without electricity, although access rates are increasing and renewable energy projects are being set up. It sees immense potential for India to provide technology and institutional experience to drive this transition ahead. "India's expansion has been driven by competitive auctions, clear policy signals, and a focus on distributed solar



that reaches small town grids and rural households. For African governments, some of those lessons -- transparent tenders, predictable tariffs, and a strong domestic engineering base -- are transferable.



Nashik case flags emerging radicalisation pattern, PFI's Vision 2024 parallels under lens

New Delhi, June 11 : Radicalisation has become one of the biggest threats facing India. The agencies warn that radicalisation camps can come up at unassuming locations as they largely remain off the radar. The TCS case is one such example where the police found that professional seniority was used as a leverage to allegedly radicalise and also convert vulnerable junior employees between 2021 and 2026. While the probe is

ongoing, the agencies are set to look into a larger pattern. More such modules may be in the works in various other places and firms, and the agencies will study the patterns and possible links to the Nashik case, an official said. Another official said that it is becoming increasingly clear that the larger design is to set up more such radicalisation centres. The focus is more on radicalisation and changing the mindset of society rather than going in for conventional terror attacks. Outfits such as the Popular Front of India (PFI), Islamic State and Al-Qaeda have long focused largely on radicalisation.

Akasa Air to launch new Gwalior-Delhi-Bengaluru flights: Jyotiraditya Scindia

New Delhi, June 11 : Union Communications and Development of Northeastern Region Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia said on Thursday that regular flight services of Akasa Air connecting Gwalior with Delhi and Bengaluru will soon commence from the Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia Airport in the Madhya Pradesh city.

In a post on X, Scindia said that the new Akasa Air services, namely Gwalior-Delhi-Bengaluru and Bengaluru-Delhi-Gwalior, will further strengthen the connectivity of the Gwalior-Chambal region, offering passengers faster and more reliable access to major cities. He said the services will also provide fresh momentum to opportunities in trade, industry, education and employment.

"Our resolve to connect the region to national-level air facilities through a modern airport is now taking concrete shape. I am fully confident that this initiative will play a pivotal role in propelling Gwalior's overall development to new heights," he said.





'Illegal and unacceptable': UN Special Rapporteur condemns detention of Afghan women over dress code

Kabul, June 11 : The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, has expressed concern over the detention of Afghan women for violating the Taliban's dress code, terming the action "illegal and unacceptable" and calling for their immediate release. Bennett's statement comes after Taliban morality police detained at least 21 women and girls in Herat for alleged non-compliance with the dress code, Amu TV reported, citing local sources. In a post on X, Bennett stated, "I am deeply alarmed that for a 3rd consecutive day, scores of women in Herat continue to

be arbitrarily arrested and detained for violating the Taliban's dress code. It is illegal and unacceptable. The arrests must stop, and the women must be released immediately." The sources revealed that Afghan women and girls were detained in several parts of Herat, including the southern road, Almas Market and the Qasr area, as per the report. The women who have been detained reportedly include a nurse who worked at Herat Regional Hospital. The arrest of Afghan women and girls comes after the Taliban's Directorate for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Herat issued a directive, which ordered male family members to ensure that women follow the Taliban's interpretation of Islamic dress requirements. According to the directive, women seen in public without a prayer veil, uncovered faces, or wearing tight clothes or makeup could face detention and will be taken to a women's detention facility, Amu TV reported. The latest incident comes amid reports of increased implementation of the Taliban's morality law in several parts of Afghanistan.

South Korean prosecutors seek arrest warrant for chief of Army Special Warfare Command in martial law probe

Seoul, June 11 : South Korea's prosecutors on Thursday sought an arrest warrant for the head of the Army Special Warfare Command over his role in President Yoon Suk Yeol's short-lived imposition of martial law. Lt. Gen. Kwak Jong-keun is accused of sending troops to the National Assembly when martial law was imposed on December 3, and allegedly colluding with Yoon and former Defence Minister Kim Yong-hyun to incite a riot to subvert the Constitution. Prosecutors sought the arrest warrant on charges of insurrection and abuse of power. The National Assembly voted on Saturday to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol over his botched imposition of martial law, suspending him from his duties until the Constitutional Court decides whether to reinstate him or remove him from office.



Survivors of Iranian naval vessel depart Sri Lanka

Colombo, June 11 : Survivors of IRIS Dena, the Iranian naval vessel sunk in a US attack in early March, have left Sri Lanka for Iran, a senior Sri Lankan military official said. According to Aruna Jayasekara, deputy defence minister of Sri Lanka, 32 survivors were repatriated alongside more than 200 personnel on board IRIS Bushehr, another Iranian naval vessel. The personnel were said to have departed Sri Lanka on a special flight on Tuesday, reports Xinhua news agency. IRIS Dena was attacked and sunk by a US submarine near Sri Lankan waters in the early days of the military conflict in the Middle East. During the rescue operation, the Sri Lankan Navy recovered 87 bodies and rescued 32 people. IRIS Bushehr sought permission

to enter Sri Lankan waters in early March. On March 6, personnel on board the vessel were evacuated to Colombo Port by the Sri Lankan Navy and have been under Sri Lankan custody ever since. Meanwhile, another Iranian naval vessel, IRIS Lavan, had docked in Kerala's Kochi after India granted emergency permission following a reported technical malfunction, even as the sinking of another Iranian warship by an American torpedo has triggered wider geopolitical ripples. The Iranian warship reached Kochi on March 4 after the Union government approved Tehran's request to allow the vessel to make an urgent halt for technical reasons. The ship had earlier detected a fault while operating in the region and sought India's assistance to dock for necessary checks and support.



North Korea's economy entering recovery phase amid closer ties with Russia, China: Seoul

Seoul, June 11 : North Korea's economy has entered a recovery phase thanks to closer relations with Russia and China, overcoming a period of recession, the unification ministry in Seoul said on Thursday. The unification ministry made the assessment in its five-year plan for inter-Korean relations, covering 2026 to 2030, submitted to the National Assembly's Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee, reports Yonhap news agency. The unification ministry said that North Korea has "formed and is maintaining cooperative ties" similar to an alliance with Russia, including in

high-tech weapons and technology transfers, while seeking a practical recovery in relations with China, a trend that is putting the national economy on a recovery path. North Korea, in particular, is seeking to boost its "strategic autonomy" and "negotiating power" by leveraging the growing Sino-US rivalry while boosting diplomacy with countries in traditional friendship with the regime, the unification ministry said in its assessment. The blueprint for inter-Korean relations is drafted every five years.

Brunei, Singapore advance ties on agri-tech food zone

Bandar Seri Begawan, June 11 : Brunei's Ministry of Finance and Economy (MOFE), in collaboration with Singapore's Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment and the Singapore

Food Agency, will conduct a joint feasibility study on establishing a Brunei-Singapore Agri-Tech Food Zone (ATFZ). According to a press statement issued by MOFE on Saturday, the ATFZ aims to strengthen food

supply resilience for both countries, attract high-value agri-food investments, create employment opportunities, and build local capabilities within the agri-food sector, Xinhua news agency reported. It also fosters agri-technology in-



novation and positions Brunei and Singapore as regional leaders in sustainable and technology-driven agri-food production.

South Korean PM says suffrage is foundation of democracy amid outrage over ballot shortages

Seoul, June 11 : South Korean Prime Minister Kim Min-seok said on Thursday he seriously takes the shocking shortage of ballot papers at dozens of polling stations in last week's nationwide local elections, stressing that suffrage is the foundation of democracy. Kim made the remark at the start of a youth policy meeting with related ministers, saying he was ashamed of the incident. "We should have been more sensitive to such issues and should've responded more quickly to come up with solutions, but we couldn't. It was truly regrettable and it reinforced our sense of responsibility," Kim said, Yonhap News Agency reported.

Ballot shortages led to the temporary suspension of voting at 26 stations in Seoul and elsewhere in the June 3 elections, something unheard of in South Korea's election history. The incident sparked public outrage and younger voters in their 20s and 30s have been holding protests around a ballot counting place in Seoul's southern district of Jamsil for the fifth day on Tuesday.



South Korean President Lee Jae Myung has pledged a thorough investigation and measures to overhaul the National Election Commission. On Sunday, Lee Jae Myung expressed deep regret over ballot shortages that disrupted last week's local elections and ordered the launch of a thorough joint investigation by prosecutors and police into the matter. "The people's right to vote is a constitutional right that must not be restricted or infringed upon for any reason, and this is a serious issue that undermines the foundation of popular sovereignty," Lee wrote in a message on X, formerly Twitter, calling the National Election Commission (NEC) "an institution that lost public trust." "As a citizen and as the president responsible for the government, I express my deep regret." He requested the National Assem-

bly to launch a parliamentary inquiry to clearly determine what happened, devise measures to prevent a recurrence and discuss institutional reforms for the election watchdog. "The government will also take all possible measures at the executive level in light of the gravity of the situation," he said. "I have instructed the formation of a joint investigation task force involving prosecutors and police to clearly establish responsibility and thoroughly investigate the full scope of the case." A dozen locations in Seoul, including the eastern Songpa district, reported ballot shortages during Wednesday's elections, prompting the temporary suspension of voting at affected polling stations.

Mango clothing chain founder Isak Andic dies in cliff fall in Spain

Madrid, June 11 : Isak Andic, the founder of the global fashion chain Mango, passed away after falling off a cliff in Spain, the company announced. The 71-year-old billionaire reportedly slipped and fell 150 metres while walking with his wife and son in the Salitre de Collbato caves, close to Barcelona, at around 13.00 local time (1200 GMT). "It is with deep regret that we announce the unexpected death of Isak Andic, our non-executive chairman and founder of

Mango, in an accident that occurred this Thursday," said Mango Chief Executive Toni Ruiz in a statement, Xinhua news agency reported. Ruiz praised Andic's lifelong dedication to Mango, saying that his departure 'leaves a huge void'. Spain Prime Minister Pedro



Pak stares at \$1.2 billion of vaccine import bill by 2031 as India halts supply

New Delhi, June 11 : The disruption in affordable pharmaceutical imports from India, especially vaccines, has sharply increased Pakistan's financial burden and the country stares at an annual import bill of \$1.2 billion by 2031, according to reports. The disruption due to last year's military clashes exposed Islamabad's heavy reliance on foreign manufacturing and donor support for routine immunisation as the country provides 13 vaccines free of cost but with zero domestic vaccine production, reports said. Pakistan Health Minister Mustafa Kamal said a halt in Indian vaccine shipments is already hurting the economy and the situation could be more dire when international support for vaccine procurement ends by 2031.





'House of cards collapsing': NDA leaders on 20 Trinamool MPs writing to LS Speaker

New Delhi, June 11 : Amid reports that around 20 rebel Trinamool Congress MPs have extended support to the NDA government, leaders across the ruling alliance have launched a sharp attack on the party, alleging a deep internal crisis and lack of democracy within the West Bengal-based outfit. Reacting to the development, Rajya Sabha MP and JD(U) National Working President Sanjay Kumar Jha said the situation in the Trinamool reflected a breakdown of internal order. He said, "Booth capturing was something that the TMC was accused of doing, but now everything is coming out openly."

Amritpal's detention immune from judicial review, rules Punjab and Haryana HC

Chandigarh, June 11 : The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Thursday dismissed Khadoor Sahib MP Amritpal Singh's plea challenging the legality of the third successive detention order issued against him under the National Security Act (NSA). "It is clear as daylight that the impugned order of preventive detention passed against the petitioner is immune from the powers of judicial review. Consequently, the petition stands dismissed," a Bench headed by Chief Justice Sheel Nagu observed while pronouncing the order in the court. Amritpal Singh, in his petition, had claimed that the detention was "arbitrary, void of jurisdiction and violative of constitutional safeguards under Articles 21 and 22".

His counsel had submitted that Amritpal Singh had remained under preventive detention since April 2023 despite the absence of any supporting material for continued incarceration. Self-styled Khalistani preacher Amritpal Singh, who claimed that he is inspired by slain Khalistani leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, was arrested on April 23, 2023, two months after an attack at the Ajnala police station, after 36 days of cat-and-

mouse chase across several states. Lodged in the Dibrugarh Central Jail in Assam since his arrest under the NSA, Amritpal Singh, who won the Lok Sabha poll from the Khadoor Sahib constituency in Punjab in 2024. Amritpal Singh was briefly granted a four-day parole to take oath in the Lok Sabha, a move cleared after the National Investigation Agency (NIA) offered no objection.



'Rename it Andhkaar scheme': Opposition slams reduction in Ujjwala LPG subsidy refills

New Delhi, June 11 : Opposition leaders on Thursday criticised the government's decision to reduce the number of subsidised LPG cylinder refills available under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) from nine per year to four, with some quipping that it should now be renamed the "Andhkaar Scheme". Talking to IANS, Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit said the decision reflected the government's failure to sustain welfare support for citizens. "What this means is that PM

Modi first took over Congress-era schemes, under which we used to provide almost unlimited subsidies. Later, the number was reduced to around eight or nine cylinders, and then it was rebranded as the Ujjwala scheme. Now, however, this scheme should be called the 'Andhkaar Scheme'," he said. Dikshit argued that the government could have continued providing subsidies on at least six to nine cylinders annually. "The government often claims that the work done in the last 12 years surpasses what was achieved in 70 years."

Govt unveils 'Jalvahak' to boost inland waterways

New Delhi, June 11 : Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal on Thursday unveiled a major policy for cargo promotion -- 'Jalvahak'. Jalvahak is aimed at incentivising the movement of

long-haul cargo via National Waterways 1 (river Ganga) as well as for National Waterways 2 (river Brahmaputra) and National Waterways 16 (river Barak). "The government has made a concerted effort to realise the tremendous potential of our rich

network of inland waterways. With its advantage of being an economical, ecologically sound, and efficient mode of transportation, we want to boost cargo movement via waterways, to decongest the railways and roadways," Sonowal said.



Jharkhand: Ayushman Bharat cards in demand, Sahebganj residents rush to the centre

Ranchi, June 11 : Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (PM-JAY), since its launch in 2018 has evolved into a game-changer scheme, playing an instrumental role in transforming the country's health landscape. Over the years, lakhs of people and their families have benefitted from the scheme, also called Ayushman Bharat. In Jharkhand's Sahebganj district, thousands of people have got their Ayushman Bharat cards issued under the PM-JAY scheme while thousand other applications are in the pipeline. Scores of people are making formal applications for getting Ayushman Health cards issued for them as well as their families.

Bangladesh unrest has delayed execution of some vital projects : Tripura CM



Agartala, June 11 : The ongoing unrest in Bangladesh has delayed the execution of various projects involving the neighbouring country, Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha said here on Thursday. Laying the foundation

stone of seven projects at Udaipur in southern Tripura's Gomati district, the Chief Minister said the 'Maitri Setu' built over the Feni River connecting India and Bangladesh by road was ready for operation but due to unrest in the neighbouring country cannot be utilised yet. Besides the 'Maitri Setu', there are other projects which have also been delayed in view of the unrest in Bangladesh, he said, adding that the double-lane bridge would be the gateway for all the northeastern states.

Jagdambika Pal criticises Akhilesh Yadav over Ram Temple donation remarks

New Delhi, June 11 : Political controversy intensified on Thursday over Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav's remarks regarding alleged irregularities in donations received at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, with the BJP strongly attacking him while opposition leaders from the Congress and CPI called for an independent inquiry into the matter. BJP MP Jagdambika Pal accused

Akhilesh Yadav and the Samajwadi Party of having a long history of opposing the Ram Temple movement. He said, "Akhilesh Yadav and Mulayam Singh Yadav have always opposed that temple. The way bullets were fired at Ram devotees is well known. Today, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, a 500-year-old blot has been erased and the grand temple of Lord Shri Ram has been built.



People from all over the world are coming there. They are hurting the sentiments of crores of people..." Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit, however, said the allegations raised by the Samajwadi Party chief were serious and warranted an impartial investigation. He said, "This is a very serious allegation, and if a senior leader like Akhilesh Yadav has made such an allegation."

OPS, welfare initiatives to continue despite financial crunch, says Himachal CM

Shimla, June 11 : Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu on Thursday reaffirmed the state's commitment to the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) and various public welfare initiatives, despite the Central government's withdrawal of the Revenue Deficit Grant (RDG). Chief Minister Sukhu emphasised the government would continue these schemes by mobilising its own resources, ensuring that the rightful entitlements of the people remain protected under all circumstances. Refuting the Opposition's stance, the Chief Minister told the media here that had the BJP been in power, they would have replaced the OPS with the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), effectively ending the security currently enjoyed by government employees. Drawing from his own

background in a common family, he expressed a deep understanding of the concerns of the public and vowed that his administration would never compromise on their interests. He said while the Finance Department managed the technicalities of the state's fiscal health, the government's priority remained the enhancement of resources to drive the state forward. CM Sukhu levelled allegations against the previous BJP government led by Jai Ram Thakur, accusing it of gross financial mismanagement between 2018 and 2021. CM Sukhu pointed out that during its five-year tenure, the previous government received a substantial Rs 54,000 crore as RDG and Rs 16,000 crore as GST compensation. However, he said these funds were misused to favour contractors and cited the expenditure of nearly Rs 1,000 crore on the construction of buildings that currently stand vacant and

underutilized. In contrast, the Chief Minister said the present government has received only Rs 17,000 crore in RDG over the past three years but has successfully maintained strict economic discipline. He said the government has generated Rs 26,683 crore from its own resources and plans to implement further stringent measures to bolster the economy. Stressing that the interests of the state must transcend party lines, he urged the BJP to support the state's pursuit of its rights before



the Central government rather than deceiving the public. Addressing the critical nature of the Revenue Deficit Grant, which is being provided under Article 275 (1) of the Constitution to bridge the revenue-expenditure gap, the Chief Minister warned that the annual loss of Rs 10,000 crore would severely constrain the budget of a small hill state like Himachal Pradesh. CM Sukhu characterised the withdrawal of the grant as "step-motherly treatment" by the Centre, asserting that Himachal Pradesh, by its geographical and economic nature, remains a revenue-deficit state. He declared his resolve to meet with the Prime Minister to seek the restoration of the RDG.



Bima Sakhi Yojana empowering hordes of women in Maharashtra's Palghar

Mumbai, June 11 : The 'Bima Sakhi Yojana', launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is empowering the women in Palghar district of Maharashtra by providing them specialized training in key areas of interest and enabling them to become self-sufficient. Many women beneficiaries expressed their gratitude to the government while highlighting on how the scheme is helping them achieve their dreams and become financially independent.

Talking to IANS, Purnima Pandey, a woman from Palghar, said, "I want to thank PM Modi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for this scheme. It is truly empowering women. Through this scheme, we are gaining knowledge and receiving stipends, which are helping us fulfill our dreams as well as those of our children. It is a step towards our empowerment." Sachin Singh, another local resident, referred to the initiative as a 'gift' for women ahead of the New Year.

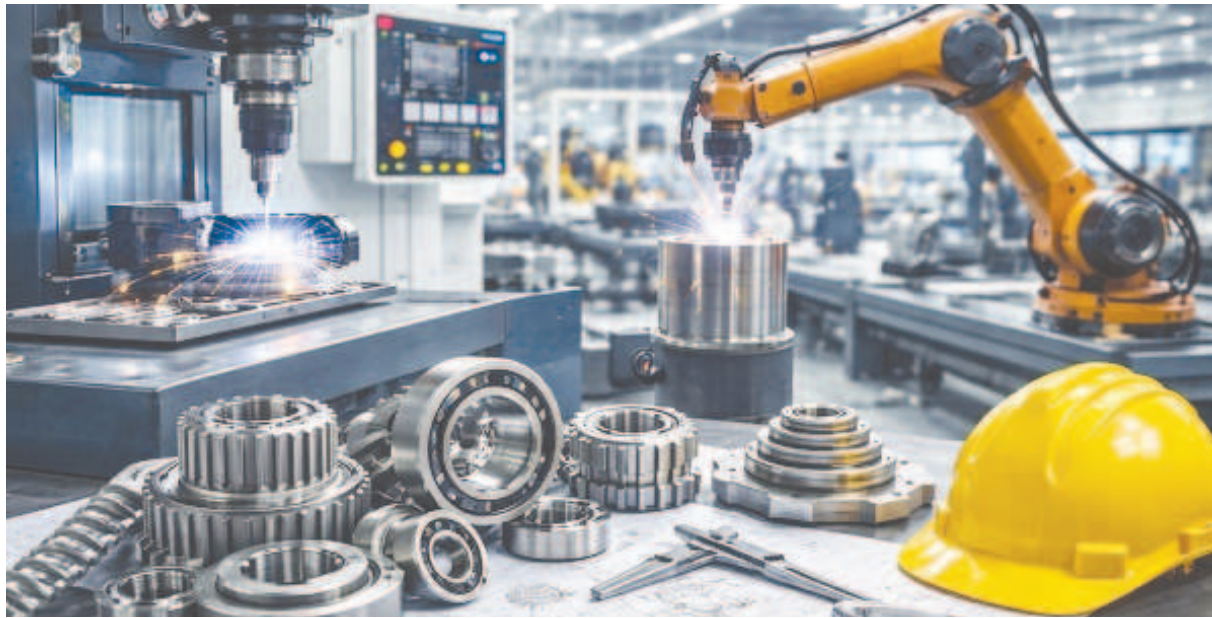
Gold, silver edge higher on hopes of West Asia de-escalation

Mumbai, June 11 : Gold and silver prices rose on Thursday even after US President Donald Trump's remarks on easing geopolitical tensions and the opening of the Strait of Hormuz. On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures (June 5

contract) climbed as much as 0.67 per cent or Rs 1,042 to hit an intraday high of Rs 1,54,990 by 10.57 a.m. Silver futures also jumped up to 1.58 per cent or Rs 3,993 to Rs 2,55,735, logging an intraday high. The yellow metal was trading at Rs 1,54,911, up Rs 963 or 0.63 per cent, after touch-

ing an intraday low of Rs 1,54,501, up 0.35 per cent or Rs 553. The white metal was trading at Rs 2,54,997, up Rs 3,255 or 1.3 per cent, after hitting an intraday low of Rs 2,53,720, up 0.78 per cent or Rs 1,978. The surge in precious metals comes after Trump hinted at hopes of an end to the

West Asia conflict. According to commodities experts, sentiment remains mildly positive, with macroeconomic factors offering support, although momentum is still developing and would require confirmation for a sustained uptrend. "Gold is trading in the Rs 1,54,500-Rs 1,55,000 range with buying interest at lower levels. A sustained move above Rs 1,57,000-Rs 1,58,000, while a break below Rs 1,54,000.



India's engineering goods exports hit record of \$122 billion in FY26

New Delhi, June 11 : India's engineering goods exports reached an all-time high of \$122.43 billion in FY 2025-26, surpassing the previous record of \$116.75 billion in FY2024-25 and posting a growth of about 5 per cent, industry body EEPC India said on Thursday.

The body called the achievement a testament to the sector's resilience amid an exceptionally challenging external environment. The record was achieved against a backdrop of geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions stemming from the West Asia conflict, shifting trade policies under the Trump administration, and elevated freight and energy costs, headwinds that the engineering sector navigated through market diversification, new product lines, and strategic use of free trade

agreements, it said.

Even in March 2026, when one of the key sea routes was disrupted due to the West Asia conflict, engineering exports recorded a marginal growth of 1.1 per cent, rising to \$10.94 billion from \$10.82 billion in March 2025.

The ability to maintain positive growth during peak supply chain stress was cited by EEPC India as evidence of the sector's adaptability. EEPC India Chairman Pankaj Chadha attributed the record performance to a combination of industry initiative and timely policy support.

"The engineering community, while dealing with these issues, also identified new opportunities and went into the market as well as product diversification," he said.

Free trade agreements provided

the framework for the sector to pivot to new geographies as traditional trade routes came under pressure.

Looking ahead, EEPC India said it remains cautiously optimistic on the export growth outlook for FY 2026-27.

The West Asia conflict -- which erupted on February 28 -- has caused sustained supply chain disruptions, pushed energy prices sharply higher, and contributed to raw material inflation.

"We expect the geopolitical tensions to ease and conflicts to settle, paving the way for robust engineering exports growth in the current fiscal," Chadha said, while flagging that the inflationary environment and global uncertainty warranted a measured outlook.

TCS row: Infosys dismisses social media allegations over harassment at Pune facility

New Delhi, June 11 : Amid the ongoing workplace harassment probe at TCS Nashik, IT bellwether Infosys has dismissed social media allegations of workplace harassment at its Business Process Management (BPM) facility in Pune.

The clarification comes amid heightened scrutiny of Maharashtra's IT sector, following a separate investigation into Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in Nashik over allegations of workplace harassment and forced religious conversion.

The Infosys controversy emerged after a series of posts on social media platform X alleged inappropriate behaviour towards female employees at its Pune facility. However, the posts were later deleted. Maharashtra minister Nitesh Rane said the government has taken note of the allegations.

Infosys said it follows a zero-tolerance policy towards harassment and discrimination.

"Infosys maintains a zero-tolerance approach to any form of harassment or discrimination," the company said. The IT firm added that any issue reported is treated seriously and investigated by an independent committee, and that it promotes a "speak-up culture" encouraging employees to report concerns through multiple channels. The company also stated that it has activated internal processes and preventive mechanisms in line with its global Code of Conduct to examine the matter.



S. Korea's economy grows 1.8 pc in Q1, faster than earlier estimate

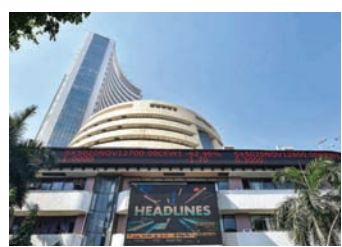
Seoul, June 11 : The South Korean economy grew at the fastest pace in more than five years in the first quarter, supported by strong exports and solid domestic demand, central bank data showed on Thursday.

The real gross domestic product (GDP) rose 1.8 percent in the January-March period from the previous quarter, 0.1 percentage point higher than the earlier estimate, according to preliminary data from the Bank of Korea (BOK), reports Yonhap news agency.

The reading marked the strongest quarterly growth since the third quarter of 2020, when the economy grew 2.3 percent.

On a yearly basis, the economy expanded 3.8 percent in the first quarter, a sharp pickup from the 1.6 percent growth recorded in the fourth quarter of last year. The on-year growth was the highest since the fourth quarter of 2021, when the economy grew 4.5 percent from a year earlier.

The BOK said the 0.1 percentage-point upward revision to first-quarter GDP came as updated statistics related to facility investment and private consumption were reflected in the latest figures.



Indian market opens in green amid positive mixed global cues

Mumbai, June 11 : The Indian stock market jumped more than 600 points in early trade on Thursday amid positive mixed global cues. At around 9:29 am, Sensex was trading at 78,665.83 after gaining 624.24 points or 0.80 per cent, while the Nifty was trading at 23,773.45 after gaining 185.95 points or 0.79 per cent.

The market trend remained positive. On the National Stock Exchange (NSE), 1,223 stocks were trading in green, while 494 stocks were in red. According to experts, in the short run, there will be market rebounds which may be followed by renewed FII selling. "A sustained rally is possible only when we have indications of a growth revival in the economy. This is likely in early 2025," they said.

Adani Energy Solutions signs pact to buy IntelliSmart in Rs 3,050 crore deal

Ahmedabad, June 11 : India's leading energy solutions provider, Adani Energy Solutions Limited (AESL), on Thursday announced that it has signed a binding securities purchase and subscription agreement (SPSA) to acquire a 100 per cent stake in smart metering company IntelliSmart Infrastructure

Private Limited in a transaction valued at Rs 3,050 crore.

The proposed acquisition will strengthen AESL's position in the smart metering segment and take its total smart meter portfolio to more than 4.7 crore meters -- India's largest smart metering platform, according to the company. AESL said the transaction includes the acquisition of the en-

tire equity share capital of IntelliSmart as well as the redemption of optionally convertible debentures held by NIIF. The completion of the deal remains subject to regulatory approvals and other customary closing conditions. IntelliSmart is a leading smart metering joint venture between the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF).



India poised to lead global race towards 6G: COAI

New Delhi, June 11 : India is poised to lead the global race towards 6G, with an exciting opportunity to drive technological leadership, the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said on Thursday.

UPI-NPI linkage goes live for real-time cross border payments in Nepal

New Delhi, June 11 : NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) -- the international arm of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) -- on Thursday announced the launch of a cross-border payment linkage between India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Nepal's National Payments Interface (NPI), enabling real-time, low-cost and secure money transfers between the two countries. With this integration, users in India and Nepal will be able to undertake seamless person-to-person (P2P) transactions using mobile numbers, virtual payment addresses (VPAs) or UPI IDs, without the need to share sensitive bank account details.

The facility is currently live through select banks and is expected to be expanded to a wider network of financial institutions in the coming phases.

According to NPCI, the linkage represents a significant step towards strengthening cross-border digital payments and enhancing financial inclusion, while further deepening economic and digital connectivity between India and Nepal. In addition, the project aligns with broader global efforts, including the G20 agenda, to make cross-border payments more accessible.



If you don't win the first match, you're in a difficult position: SA coach Broos ahead of FIFA WC opener against Mexico

Mexico City, June 11 : South Africa manager Hugo Broos said his side is ready and motivated ahead of its FIFA World Cup opener against co-host Mexico on Friday (IST), insisting his players must focus on winning the opening game and not be intimidated by the atmosphere at the Azteca Stadium.

Broos acknowledged that Mexico have quality throughout their squad and will enjoy strong backing from the home crowd, but said South Africa would take the field with the belief that they can get a positive result.

"They play good football. They have very good play-



ers, players who can decide a match. And playing in front of their own fans gives them a boost," Broos told reporters on Thursday. With South Korea and the Czech Republic also in Group A, Broos stressed the importance of making a strong start to the tournament.



'One Last Dance': Five icons set for their FIFA World Cup swansong

New Delhi, June 11 : As the FIFA World Cup 2026 approaches, fans around the world are preparing for a month of unforgettable moments and dramatic finishes, but beyond the race for football's biggest prize, the tournament is also expected to mark the end of an era.

For several of the game's most celebrated names, this World Cup could be the final chapter of careers that have inspired millions and defined a generation of football. Some have already lifted the trophy, others are still chasing the one achievement, but all will step onto the field know-

ing this could be their last appearance on the sport's grandest stage. Here are five football legends who are likely playing their final FIFA World Cup.

1. Lionel Messi (Argentina) After completing football's ultimate dream by leading Argentina to World Cup glory in 2022, Lionel Messi returns for what is expected to be his final appearance at the tournament.

The eight-time Ballon d'Or winner ended decades of debate by lifting the trophy in Qatar and now has a chance to achieve another historic feat, helping Argentina become the first nation since Bra-

zil in 1962 to successfully defend the World Cup title. Regardless of how far Argentina go, Messi's legacy as one of football's greatest players is already secure.

2. Cristiano Ronaldo (Portugal) Few athletes have redefined longevity quite like Cristiano Ronaldo. The Portuguese superstar has enjoyed a remarkable international career spanning more than two decades and remains his country's biggest inspiration.

The World Cup is the only major trophy missing from Ronaldo's collection, making 2026 one final opportunity to complete football's ultimate challenge.



Fresh off IGPL Congo triumph, Aryan Anand looks forward to his International Series Morocco debut

Rabat, June 11 : Aryan Roopa Anand, who made a breakthrough in the Indian golf scene with consecutive victories at the prestigious All India Amateur titles, finally secured a win in professional golf at the scenic Lubumbashi Golf Course in Congo during the IGPL Tour.

Women's T20 WC: Australia coach Nitschke 'hopeful' for Litchfield to play opener amid injury concern

New Delhi, June 11 : Australia's preparations for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup have been clouded by a fitness concern surrounding Phoebe Litchfield, but the defending champions remain optimistic that the young batter will be available for their opening fixture against South Africa. Litchfield did not feature in Australia's warm-up games af-

ter experiencing discomfort in her quad, prompting team management to take a cautious approach ahead of their campaign opener. With the six-time champions set to begin their quest for a record seventh title in Manchester on Saturday, head coach Shelley Nitschke expressed confidence that the left-hander would be ready when it matters most. Yeah, we hope so. Obviously, she had some quad awareness, and it was just on the conservative side to leave her out of these two games.



'I demanded that': Tuchel happy as England beat Costa Rica in FIFA WC warm-up

New York, June 11 : Thomas Tuchel was pleased with what he saw from his team, as England swept aside Costa Rica in Orlando to take one more step towards the FIFA World Cup 2026.

Although the kick-off in Orlando was delayed for an hour after a torrential storm flooded the pitch, England produced a crisp and aggressive performance, in contrast to Saturday's lackluster outing against New Zealand.

An early goal from Declan Rice set the Three Lions on their way, before a second-half penalty from Anthony Gordon and a late header from Ollie Watkins sealed the victory. "I wished for that, I demanded that; I said before the match we want to push it to the next level, from intensity, commitment, cohesion, and we did that," said Tuchel as quoted by Xinhua.



Delhi-born Nikhil Chaudhary added to Australia squad for Bangladesh T20I

Sydney, June 11 : Australia have added Delhi-born uncapped spinner Nikhil Chaudhary to their squad for their upcoming T20I series against Bangladesh. The 30-year-old drafted into the squad following Travis Head's withdrawal on personal leave.

Chaudhary could become the only Indian-born male player to play for Australia in more than 60 years after the Hobart Hurricanes all-rounder was called up for the T20I series against Bangladesh. Chaudhary, currently playing for JB Bruges in the EUT20 competition in Belgium after a stint with Delhi Capitals in the IPL, is set to join the Australian squad in Dhaka on Friday.

Bhavika Ahire to lead India U19 as BCCI unveils squads for SL U19 white-ball series

Mumbai, June 11 : India's pathway programme for emerging women's cricketers will take centre stage later this month as the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced the squads and schedule for the upcoming Under-19 white-ball series against Sri Lanka at home.

The six-match assignment, comprising three T20s in Chennai and three One-Day matches in Puducherry, is set to provide another important testing ground for players pushing to establish themselves in India's growing youth cricket ecosystem. The announcement highlights



Bhavika Ahire's elevation as wicketkeeper-batter and captain in both formats, reflecting her leadership qualities and recent age-group cricket performances. Supporting her will be Mahak Narwase, appointed vice-captain for both the T20 and One-Day teams.