



The Union Minister of Tribal Affairs, Shri Jual Oram and the Minister of State for Women and Child development, Smt. Savitri Thakur attend Bharat Tribes Fest 2026, in New Delhi

## Supreme Court Defers Hearing On Dara Singh Release Plea To May 13

New Delhi(KCN): The Supreme Court of India on Wednesday heard a petition seeking the release of Dara Singh, convicted in the 1999 murder of Australian missionary Graham Stewart Staines and his two minor



sons. A two-judge bench comprising Justices Justice Manmohan and Justice Manoj Misra heard the matter and posted the next hearing for May 13. Appearing for the petitioner, advocate A.K. Singh argued that Dara Singh, also known as Rabindra Kumar Pal, has already undergone over 26 years and six months of imprisonment. He contended that the convict has spent more than 25 years in custody, exceeding what he described as the "maximum period" for life imprisonment, and has maintained

good conduct throughout his incarceration.

Citing jail records, the counsel submitted that Singh has led a disciplined life in prison, engaging in yoga and religious activities, and has not been involved in any acts of violence or indiscipline during his incarceration. He urged the court to consider his release under the remission provisions in the law and the state's remission framework.

Representing the Odisha government, Advocate General Pitambar Acharya informed the court that reports from district authorities and jail officials regarding the convict's possible release are currently under review. He further submitted that the case is being examined in accordance with the Odisha Prisoner Remission Policy-2022. All relevant aspects will be scrutinized before a final decision is taken by the Odisha Sentence Review Board, he added.

Taking note of the submissions, the apex court granted time until May 13 for the Review Board to arrive at its decision and adjourned the matter to that date.

## Naveen Clarifies On 'Biju-Naveen Inspirational Foundation' Amid Political Controversy

Bhubaneswar(KCN):Biju Janata Dal (BJD) president and Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik broke his silence on Wednesday regarding the controversy surrounding the 'Biju



Naveen Inspirational Foundation', a charitable trust established in the name of his late father, Biju Patnaik. Addressing the media, Patnaik explained that the trust was formed during a personal health crisis, just before he underwent a serious neck (cervical spine) surgery in Mumbai in June 2025. Prior to the operation, he visited Delhi to seek advice from legal and financial experts on establishing a public charitable trust. "I decided to open a trust in Biju Babu's name for the benefit of

the people of Odisha," Patnaik stated. He highlighted his father's legacy of philanthropy, including the establishment of the Kalinga UNESCO Award to promote science, and noted that he and his siblings had previously donated Anand Bhawan in Cuttack for public use. The former Chief Minister emphasized that the foundation was initiated with his personal contribution of Rs 1 lakh and has no connection whatsoever with the BJD or any other political party.

"No funds from the Biju Janata Dal or any political party will be used for the trust," he clarified, adding that it is solely dedicated to the welfare of Odisha's people. Patnaik described the clarification as necessary due to "negative stories" and misleading reports circulating in certain sections of the media about the trust's formation and purpose.

The trust, registered in New Delhi on May 9, 2025, has drawn scrutiny recently, particularly after documents surfaced and allegations were raised by some former BJD members regarding its intent, registration location, and possible links to party figures.

## SCB New Clinical Unit Building To Be Fully Functional By June 30: Minister Harichandan

Cuttack: Odisha Works Minister Prithviraj Harichandan conducted an on-site review of the ongoing under-construction projects at Sriram Chandra Bhanja (SCB) Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack on Wednesday.

The minister was accompanied by senior secretaries, departmental officers, and officials from the executing agencies. During the inspection, the minister assessed progress on key infrastructure developments, including the new clinical unit building towers and residential complexes aimed at modernizing the state's premier healthcare institution. Expressing dissatisfaction over delays, Harichandan noted that the residential complex was expected to be completed by March as per commitments made in the previous review meeting. "The timeline set earlier has not been met, and this delay is unacceptable," he stated, urging accelerated efforts to avoid further setbacks. On a positive note, the minister announced that the new clinical unit building (Towers 1 and 2) has seen substantial completion of construction works. "All major structural work on the clinical unit towers is now finished, and the building is slated to become fully functional by June 30," he confirmed.

Once operational, this facility is expected to significantly enhance patient care capacity and ease pressure on existing infrastructure. The minister also addressed concerns related to a recent fire incident at the hospital premises.



## SCB Medical fire: Four officials face suspension over negligence

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Wednesday suspended four officers for dereliction of duty, two days after a fire at SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack killed 12 patients, officials said. The suspended officials include three personnel of Odisha Fire Service and one from the electrical department. Preliminary investigations suggest the fire may have been caused by a short circuit in the air-conditioners. In the wake of the horrific fire incident at the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack, which resulted in the loss of many lives, Majhi has taken strong action by placing four officers under suspension, the chief minister's office said in a statement. Sources said the action was taken based on preliminary findings of the fact-finding committee headed by development commissioner DK Singh. The suspended officers are deputy fire officer Prakash Kumar Jena, assistant fire officer Sanjib

Kumar Behera (both Cuttack circle), station officer of SCB Medical and Hospital Abhinav Prusty, and assistant executive engineer of SCB sub-



division under Cuttack GED, Ranjan Kumar Biswal. The fire broke out in the trauma care ICU on the first floor of the hospital's trauma care block around 2.30-3 am on March 16. At the time, 23 patients were admitted. Twelve patients died, and at least 11 staff were injured during rescue and evacuation operations. Majhi, who visited the site about an hour after the fire, had ordered a judicial probe and announced an ex gratia of Rs 25 lakh for the next of kin of each deceased patient.

## Thunderstorms, Hail Likely Across Odisha Till March 22

Bhubaneswar: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Wednesday forecast widespread thunderstorm activity accompanied by lightning, gusty winds, and hail across several districts of Odisha over the next five days, with Orange and Yellow warnings issued for multiple regions. According to the Midday Weather Bulletin issued by the Meteorological Centre Bhubaneswar, a trough extending from southeast Rajasthan to north Chhattisgarh is influencing weather conditions over the state, triggering instability and convective activity.

Day 1 (till March 19 morning): Thunderstorms with lightning and gusty winds (30-40 kmph) likely in districts including Nuapada, Bolangir, Ganjam, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Koraput, and Malkangiri under a Yellow warning.

Day 2 (March 19-20): Orange warning issued for Kalahandi and Nabarangpur districts for thunderstorms with lightning, hail, and winds up to 40-50 kmph. Several southern districts remain under Yellow alert.

Day 3 (March 20-21): Intensification expected, with Orange warning for Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, and Sambalpur districts, forecasting hailstorms and winds reaching 50-60 kmph.

Day 4 (March 21-22): Continued Orange alert for northern and coastal districts including Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Balasore, and Bhadrak, with risk of hail and strong winds up to 60 kmph.

Day 5 onward: Thunderstorm activity likely to persist in coastal and northern districts, though intensity may reduce,



with only Yellow warnings in place.

The IMD said there will be no significant change in maximum temperatures over the next two days, followed by a gradual fall of 2-3°C across Odisha in the subsequent five days. For Bhubaneswar and adjoining areas, partly cloudy skies are expected over the next 24 hours, with temperatures likely to hover around 34°C (maximum) and 22°C (minimum). Authorities have advised residents, particularly in interior and northern districts, to remain alert for lightning strikes, gusty winds, and possible hailstorms. Farmers have been cautioned to take necessary precautions to protect standing crops.

## India's 1st digital census to begin in Odisha from April 1

Bhubaneswar, March 18, 2026 (KCN Bureau): The Directorate of Census Operations, Odisha, in coordination with the state's Revenue and Disaster

and Supervisors will visit households and collect data from April 16, 2026 to May 15, 2026.

The unique feature of this digital census allows citizens to submit

have been trained at the Gopabandhu Administrative Academy of the Government of Odisha in two phases. These Trained Master Trainers have further trained 1,552 Field

Towns, starting from March 15, 2016.

In this program, District Collectors and Municipal Commissioners are serving as Principal Census Officers, while Additional District Collectors are functioning as District Census Officers. Additionally, under the supervision of the District Collector, the Executive Officers of each Urban Local bodies and Tahsildars of Tehsils are working as Charge Officers. Primary school teachers from the School and Mass Education Department of the state will be appointed as Enumerators, while High School teachers will serve as Supervisors. Eminent sand artist Sudarshan Patanayak has been roped in as the brand ambassador of this digital census programme.



Management Department, is all set to commence the first phase of India's 1st digital census in all 30 districts of the state. This program will be conducted from April 1, 2026 to May 15, 2026.

Trained\* Enumerators

their own information through the self-enumeration (SE) Portal while the House Listing and House Operations (HLO) will be conducted through field visits using a mobile application.

As many as 67 Master Trainers

Trainers in the state. These Field Trainers are, in turn, training 100,875 Enumerators and 17,282 Supervisors across 30 districts, including 91 Notified Area Councils, 48 Municipalities, 5 Municipal Corporations, and 2 Industrial

# Half-Light on the Riverbank: Fragments of love, memory and an unfinished self



Krushna Kumar Mohanty

By **Krushna Kumar Mohanty** **book review**

*Some books arrive quietly. They do not announce themselves with spectacle. They ask instead for patience. The Half-Confession is such a collection. We chose it for Horizon because it stands at an intersection that interests us deeply: the meeting point of private memory and collective history, of emotional vulnerability and cultural inheritance. This is not a book that offers easy clarity. It unfolds in fragments, sometimes hesitant, sometimes intense. The reader must participate in completing it.*

## The Incomplete Confession

The title poem, *The half-confession*, introduces the emotional climate of the collection. The speaker situates his birth in a moment of political fracture:

"I was born in a December cold/ with marks on my walls of faith / Bengal became two parts / fractured lives and separated siblings." (The half-confession/p. 23)

These lines do not dramatize history; they internalize it. Partition

quiet depth.

## The Father's Presence

If rivers represent movement, the father represents grounding. In *My Father's House*, the poet revisits inherited discipline and expectation:

"Searching under these old books of Mathematics / for the last place where the long /journey with my father's hopes is complete-" (My Father's House/p. 19)

The image of mathematics books is precise. It evokes order, logic and

## Myth as Inner Dialogue

Sarangi frequently invokes mythic and historical figures. *Arjuna, Karna and Krishna* appear not as ornamental references but as psychological presences. When he says, "I meet Arjuna, Karna and Krishna in my dreams," (Speaking with My Unspoken Words/p. 13) the epic battlefield transforms into an inner conflict. Questions of loyalty, rivalry and moral choice surface subtly. The myth becomes introspective theatre.

At times, however, the density of references slightly burdens the poem. Some metaphors crowd each other. A few lines feel hurried or syntactically loose. Yet these uneven patches do not diminish the sincerity of the voice. Rather, they reveal a poet writing from urgency rather than calculation.

## Craft and Vulnerability

The strength of *The Half-Confession* lies in its emotional honesty. It does not attempt polished perfection. The language is direct, sometimes raw. The structure is fragmentary, mirroring the fractured experiences it narrates.

There are moments where tighter editing could have sharpened the impact. Some repetitions could be trimmed. Yet the expansiveness also reflects the poet's refusal to confine himself to neat forms.

This is a book written by someone still searching. That search becomes its aesthetic principle.

## Final Reflection

In the end, this collection leaves the reader with a sense of incomplete closure. The rivers continue to flow or dry. The father's house stands as memory. Love persists in silence.

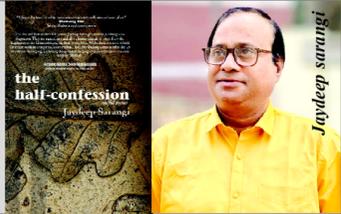
*Jaydeep Sarangi* offers not a solution but a sharing of fragments. That sharing feels intimate and authentic. For readers willing to enter its layered terrain, *The Half-Confession* becomes less a book to finish and more a book to return to.

It asks us to examine our own half-confessions, the parts of ourselves we carry but rarely articulate. And in that quiet recognition, the poetry finds its lasting space.

## About the author:

*Jaydeep Sarangi* has established himself as an important presence in contemporary Indian English poetry. A bilingual poet, editor and academic, his writing carries the texture of Bengal while remaining open to global references. His poems travel from village landscapes to ancient civilizations, from the father's courtyard to mythic battlefields. In this volume, that range becomes both a stylistic signature and a thematic tension.

*Sarangi* writes as someone who has lived through transitions, both personal and historical. His poetry often feels like a bridge between eras.



Jaydeep Sarangi

► **The Half-Confession**  
► **Author :** Jaydeep Sarangi  
► **Publisher:** Penprints India  
► **Pages:**  
► **Price :** 350.00  
► **1st Edition :** 2026

is not described through statistics or slogans. It appears as a mark on the wall of faith. The metaphor is quiet but lasting. The child grows up within that fracture.

Later, the poet reflects on his age, his disquiet, his unresolved longing. The confession remains 'half' because identity itself remains unsettled. The poem suggests that a complete confession may be impossible. Life offers no final statement.

## Rivers as Emotional Geography

One of the strongest recurring motifs in the book is the river. Rivers appear not merely as landscape but as emotional markers.

In *Where are the Rivers Gone?* the poet writes: "I bathed in the Euphrates when I was a child / I heard the singing of the Nile when grew up / I took my love to the Ganges in youth / I rushed to Beas when declined to speak /Dulung lulled me to a painless sleep."(Where are the Rivers Gone?/p. 48)

The sequence is striking. Childhood, youth, silence and rest are mapped onto rivers across continents. The Euphrates and Nile stand beside the Ganges and the modest Dulung. Geography dissolves into memory. The poem creates a symbolic cartography of the self.

At the same time, the question *Where are the Rivers Gone?* suggests emotional drought. When love falters or communication breaks, the inner river seems to vanish. The ecological anxiety of drying rivers subtly mirrors the erosion of intimacy.

This blending of personal and planetary concern gives the poem

measured thinking. Against this stands the poet's restless temperament. Yet the tone is not rebellious. It is reflective, almost grateful.

Later he writes: "More agonies I lift, lull the rough storms inside, / learning to make fire under an empty sky / among the human ruins, I rediscover my father's house." (My Father's House/p. 20)

The father's house becomes symbolic. It is no longer merely a building. It becomes resilience, moral strength and the ability to endure emotional storms. These lines carry genuine poignancy.

## Love, Silence and Distance

Much of the collection revolves around love strained by distance. The poems do not indulge in melodrama. Instead, they capture small gestures of protest and vulnerability.

In *Amor Vincit Omnia*, the poet writes: "In protest of her moving out / I am on fast today. No poem, I go for / a silent mode for some hours tonight, painfully." (Amor Vincit Omnia/p. 34)

The act of fasting and silence suggests both devotion and helplessness. Love here does not conquer easily. It negotiates absence.

In another poem, *The Window Seduces My Love*, he confesses: "If I am on a death bed, / leave the window open." (The Window Seduces My Love/ p. 35)

The simplicity of the request deepens its emotional resonance. The open window becomes a metaphor for unfinished longing. Even at the edge of death, the desire for openness remains.

## FLINT STONE Gangadhar Biswal



You say: failure is a stepping stone to success. Do not chase the limelight; ignore neglect and keep helping others. The colour of the heart fades like a rainbow; yet it returns after rain-like schoolchildren arriving again in their bright uniforms.

Faithful hearts in love take no holiday. They spend long hours in quiet thought, trying to know each other across distances, across unseen realms-like a silent stone waiting for a spark.

Forget, for a while, what is right or wrong. Bear the wounds of life without bitterness, and remain grateful for every gesture of sympathy. (Original written in English)

● Balasore-756001, Odisha, Cell: 9437129265

## WOMAN Gajanan Mishra



Woman is her own glory. Let me give her the value and freedom of mind and soul.

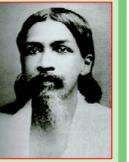
But who am I to give? Everything is already given to her by the Almighty.

The harsh truth is this: I, as a man, am often incapable of facing my own challenges and yet I call her guilty. (Original written in English)

● Tapobana, Titilagarh, Odisha, Cell:8249085509

## Quotation of the day

**POETRY IS THE RHYTHMIC EXPRESSION OF THE SOUL.**



~ Sri Aurobindo

## First Light

3

*First Light* is a segment in *Horizon* that introduces poems by emerging voices whose writing reflects sensitivity, reflection, and promise. This week the space features **Dr. Mausumi Pattanayak**, a Lecturer in English at Prayash Classes, Balasore. She recently earned her Ph.D. from C V Raman Global University, Bhubaneswar. Dr. Pattanayak has published five research articles in different English journals and writes primarily in English. She has recently begun exploring poetry as a creative form of expression.



Her poem *The Woman She Wants to Be* reflects a thoughtful engagement with the inner struggle for identity and self-definition. Through calm yet assertive lines, the poem speaks about a woman's quiet resistance to imposed expectations and her journey towards self-realisation. With its reflective tone and contemporary sensibility, the poem gently affirms the courage to live truthfully and claim one's own voice. We wish her positive vibes in her creative journey ahead. *Horizon* will be with her all along, encouraging her poetic voice as it continues to grow.

## THE WOMAN SHE WANTS TO BE Mausumi Pattanayak

They tell her who she should become-soft-spoken, patient, endlessly kind, a woman shaped by quiet obedience, a life arranged by another mind.

They teach her early how to smile, how silence earns a woman grace, how dreams must fold their fragile wings when duty takes their place.

Yet she has watched the mirrors closely, noticing cracks in borrowed roles. Every reflection feels uncertain, a stranger walking through her soul.

Why must her worth be measured by how gently she obeys? Why must her strength stay hidden behind polite displays?

They whisper careful instructions—be humble, careful, small. Yet inside, a restless spirit refuses those narrow walls.

The woman she wants to be is not a perfect disguise, not a shadow of tradition or a story built on lies.

She wants thoughts that question loudly, a voice that will not fade, a courage strong enough to shatter every silent barricade.

She dreams of walking freely without judgment in her way,

of speaking truth without apology for the things she dares to say.

No crown of easy approval can define her growing flame; praise that demands surrender is only another chain.

She gathers every broken label others forced upon her name and scatters them like ashes into the wind of change.

She learns that strength is not harshness and freedom is not pride. It is choosing her own path with nothing left to hide.

The woman she wants to be is neither distant nor divine-only real, flawed, and breathing, yet fiercely, deeply mine.

And when the world grows louder with rules she must outlive, she remembers one quiet truth: a woman is born to live.

(Original written in English)

● Balasore, Odisha

## SEPTEMBER MORN! Monalisa Parida

In the early hours of the morning, The glorious sun is gleaming.

The rays give sparkling gold, A soft zephyr whispers stories untold.

The indigo sky promising a fine day, The trees dance and leaves sway.

In a serene moment of contemplation, Free from the instruction of distraction.

The wind is softly blowing, Scented aroma spreading.



The birds sing along, Soothing cheery song.

Filled with mirth and pleasure, In the charm of nature.

It is a fabulous day, Everything is beautiful on display. (Original written in English)

● Assistant professor, English Templecity Institute of Engineering and Technology, Taraboi, Khordha, Odisha

## Dhurandhar 2 is birth of new cinematic order; Spielberg should catch 1st show: RGV

Filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma on Wednesday shared yet another note predicting the massive success of Dhurandhar: The Revenge. In his latest X post, the filmmaker revealed that he watched the film on Tuesday night. Appreciating its cinematic grammar, he called the film the "birth of a new cinematic order" and urged acclaimed international filmmakers like Steven Spielberg and Christopher Nolan to catch the film's first day, first show.

The Aditya Dhar directorial is hitting theatres today, with special premieres this evening ahead of a wider release tomorrow.



The 63-year-old, who has been on a Dhurandhar appreciation spree for months, also said the Ranveer Singh starrer will make Hindi classics like "Sholay and Mughal-e-Azam look like TV series."

"After last night's watch of #Dhurandhar2 in terms of its sheer cumulative impact in every which way,

whether on its expected collections, audience euphoria, social influences, cinematic grammar breaking, and above all the psychological audio visual impact, it will be a SHOLAY x 100 level magnificence and is bound to make all the greatest films made so far starting from MUGHAL E AZAM.

onwards look like TV SERIALS (sic)," he wrote in the post.

RGV added in the post, "This is the BIRTH of a NEW CINEMATIC ORDER and the ruthless extinction of everything that ever existed http://before.in the previous WORLD of CINEMA (sic)."

The Rangeela and Satya director further praised Aditya Dhar, claiming that history is being written for him. "The very spelling of the word DIRECTOR will start from @adityadharfilms name, and it will be prudent and wise for even STEVEN SPIELBERG and CHRISTOPHER NOLAN to drop everything they are doing,

and catch #Dhurandhar2 FIRST DAY FIRST SHOW (sic)," he concluded.

Dhurandhar: The Revenge is the sequel to Dhurandhar, which released to a massive response in December last year. It is one of the most anticipated films of the year and is expected to challenge several top performers at the domestic box office. The film's pre-sales have already crossed Rs 150 crore gross worldwide, and expectations continue to soar.

The film also stars R Madhavan, Arjun Rampal, Rakesh Bedi, Danish Pandor, Sara Arjun and Gaurav Gera, among others.

## Ustaad Bhagat Singh: Pawan Kalyan, Ugadi and the making of blockbuster magic

There are very few certainties in Telugu cinema. In the post-Covid-19 era, box office predictions have become increasingly unreliable, audience tastes shift without warning, and even the biggest stars have their off days. But if there is one constant that Telugu cinema has returned to time and again, it is this: when Pawan Kalyan shows up, he never truly disappoints. On March 19, Pawan Kalyan returns to the big screen with Ustaad Bhagat Singh, directed by Harish Shankar. The film arrives on Ugadi — the first day of the Hindu



calendar, celebrated with great fervour by Telugu and Kannada communities — one of Telugu cinema's most coveted release windows. It steps into a slot vacated by Yash's Toxic, which was postponed due to Iran's ongoing conflict with the US and Israel. What remains is a direct clash with Ranveer

Singh's Dhurandhar: The Revenge, a collision that sets the stage for one of the most anticipated box office battles of 2026.

Pawan Kalyan is not merely a film star. He is a cultural phenomenon — one of those rare figures whose appeal transcends the screen and settles deep in the hearts of people across generations.

## Anil Kapoor buys copyrights for Nayak; Alia Bhatt collaborates with Prime Video to produce 'Don't Be Shy'

Anil Kapoor has reportedly bought the rights to his 2001 cult film Nayak and is keen on producing a sequel nearly 25 years after its release. Anil Kapoor's 2001 political drama Nayak may be heading towards a comeback nearly 25 years after its release. According to reports, the actor has reportedly bought the rights to the cult classic and is keen on producing a sequel, reviving a film that has only grown in popularity over the years.

Citing a source, Bollywood Hungama reported, "Producer Deepak Mukut of Sanam Teri Kasam fame held the rights to Nayak. It is said that Anil Kapoor has bought the rights from him. He plans to hold the rights as it's a film close to his heart. Also, he aspires to make a sequel to it."



The source further added, "He is fully aware of the love he has garnered for the film over the years and believes that the subject of Nayak has tremendous potential for a second part." However, there is no official confirmation yet regarding Nayak 2. Originally produced by A.S. Rathnam, Nayak told the story of a fearless journalist who becomes the Chief Minister of

Maharashtra for a day and uses the limited time to bring sweeping reforms. Though the film received mixed responses upon release, it steadily found a strong connect with audiences and went on to achieve cult status over time.

Directed by Shankar, Nayak was the Hindi remake of his 1999 Tamil film Mudhalvan. The film starred Anil Kapoor

alongside Rani Mukerji, with memorable performances by the late Amrish Puri, Paresh Rawal, Saurabh Shukla, Johnny Lever, Shivaji Satam and Neena Kulkarni. Pooja Batra appeared in a cameo, while Sushmita Sen featured in a special song. The film's central theme - a common man challenging corruption and systemic failure - remains relevant even today, which is said to be one of the key reasons behind Anil Kapoor's interest in revisiting the story. While the idea of Nayak 2 is still at an aspirational stage, any potential sequel is expected to be shaped not just by nostalgia but by contemporary political realities.

For now, fans will have to wait for an official announcement, but the possibility of Nayak returning to the big screen has already sparked excitement among audiences.



Actor Alia Bhatt has teamed up with streaming platform Prime Video to produce an upcoming film, titled Don't Be Shy. Described as an original romantic comedy, the film will be produced by Alia and Shaheen Bhatt under the banner of Eternal Sunshine Productions

alongside Grishma Shah and Vikesh Bhutani, according to a press release.

It follows the story of Shyamili 'Shy' Das, a 20-year-old girl who thinks she has everything figured out until her perfectly planned life takes an unpredictable turn, and things begin to

spiral out of her control. Alia, whose first production was Darlings, which released in 2022, said the aim of the banner is to produce stories which "feel honest and voices that feel their own". "This film immediately spoke to us because of its sincerity and coming-

of-age lens, and Sreeti's passion and energy naturally fed into the spirit of the story. It's an incredibly special project for me and for Eternal Sunshine. And with Prime Video, we found partners who consistently take bold creative calls and genuinely support distinctive storytelling, which felt like a natural meeting of minds, and the right place for this story to find its audience," she said in a statement.

Nikhil Madhok, director and head of Originals, Prime Video, India said he is thrilled to collaborate with Alia and Shaheen on "extremely fun yet warm romantic comedy". "Alia's innate instinct for stories that are emotionally rich, deeply relatable, and immensely entertaining shines through in this young adult story," he added.

## Ranveer-Akshaye's film sets new record, beats KGF 2

Aditya Dhar's spy thriller 'Dhurandhar', starring Ranveer Singh, has become the fifth Indian film to surpass the Rs 1200 crore mark at the global box office. The film overtook the lifetime collection of 'KGF Chapter 2'.

Aditya Dhar's film Dhurandhar achieved a major milestone by crossing the Rs 1200-crore mark at the worldwide box office in exactly one month since its release. This accomplishment places the film among an exclusive group, as it has become only the fifth Indian film to reach this global total. The movie's financial success also sees it overtaking the lifetime collections of Yash starrer KGF Chapter 2, previously held as one of the highest-grossing Indian films internationally. Dhurandhar stars Ranveer Singh in the lead role as Hamza, an Indian operative involved



in an undercover mission in Karachi. The ensemble cast also includes Akshaye Khanna, Arjun Rampal, Sanjay Dutt, and R Madhavan, all of whom play pivotal roles in the action-packed narrative. The film's director, Aditya Dhar, has received praise for maintaining a fast-paced thriller that has drawn both critical attention and significant commercial

returns since its release. Domestically, the film has demonstrated strong performance. Over its fifth weekend, the film collected more than 33 crore net within three days, bringing its total domestic net to Rs 772.25 crore and gross to 926.7 crore after 31 days, as per early estimates. The movie managed to remain at the top of the Indian box office, even in the face

of competition from new releases including Avatar: Fire and Ash, Ikks and Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri. As per Sacnilk, the film's ability to sustain momentum at the domestic box office can be attributed to positive word-of-mouth and repeat viewings. Despite expectations of a decline in box office earnings on the following Monday, the film's overall standing as

the leading title domestically remains unchallenged.

Internationally, Dhurandhar has established itself as a prominent performer, earning \$31 million in overseas markets. This accomplishment is especially noteworthy because the film was not released in the Middle East due to a ban, which reportedly impacted its total overseas collections by at least \$10 million. Nonetheless, the worldwide gross now stands at Rs 1207 crore. The film's global achievements have drawn comparisons with other major Indian box office successes. On Sunday, the film surpassed the lifetime worldwide collections of KGF Chapter 2, which had grossed 1200 crore in 2022. The movie now moves closer to the next benchmark set by S.S. Rajamouli's RRR, which earned Rs 1230 crore worldwide in the same year.

## Singer Maan Panu on quitting college, iPopstar journey and viral hit I'm Done

In an era of trends and evolving music tastes, there are only a few singers who manage to capture the audience's interest. Maan Panu, who was a finalist in iPopstar, is one such exciting voice in the indie pop space. The 25-year-old's song, I'm Done, has received a lot of appreciation online for its heartfelt lyrics.

Panu, who dropped his latest track, The Last Letter, on February 27, told India Today in an exclusive interview that he wants to be a storyteller before anything else. Tracing the origins of his musical career, Panu said, "I dropped out of college. I then started learning guitar. I used to listen to lots of ghazals. I started singing and writing during lockdown." This period proved to be significant and shaped his approach to songwriting. Busy with film names: Onir's dig at CBFC silence over new Nora Fatehi song Overcoming challenges in the music industry Panu recalled the uncertainty of breaking into the music industry and said, "It had quite a



few ups and downs. I had a job on the side, which was related to music. I didn't have the resources, so I started producing the songs myself. I used to write multiple romantic songs. From there, my writing got sharper, and I got more clarity on how to write better songs."

He also admitted he had pressure from home, saying he has an elder sister. "There were responsibilities at home," the singer said. Panu credits the reality show iPopstar for bringing his work to a wider audience and transforming his personal and professional outlook. He described the experience, saying, "It changed a lot. I get more work opportunities now,

and I have gained more clarity about my career because of the show. When I got feedback from the audience, I got to know what they liked. My parents are so proud. Everyone in my family now believes that a career in music is possible."

Asked about the competitive environment of reality shows, Panu emphasised his focus was on growth rather than rivalry. "I didn't see it as a competition. Everyone was different; they had different genres and vibes. I focused on myself," he said. This mindset helped him concentrate on his artistry, regardless of the pressures of reality TV contests.

# How To Lighten Your Dark Underarms?

Shahnaz Husain



**Are dark underarms** making you feel conscious and stopping you from wearing your favourite sleeveless outfits? Dark underarms are extremely common and usually harmless, but they can make you feel self-conscious. Dark underarms can be a source of embarrassment and insecurity for many

individuals. Underarm darkening is commonly linked to friction, hair-removal methods, or skin irritation, not hygiene.

While it could just be your genetics or the products you use, dark underarms can also be a sign that something else is going on with your health.

Dark underarms often trigger insecurity, particularly while wearing sleeveless clothes or during warm weather.

If you're searching for a dark underarms remedy or safe underarm whitening ideas that actually work, you're not alone.

The good news: simple, consistent home care can often help more than

aggressive shortcuts.

1---Lemon----

Lemon is a natural bleaching agent that can brighten the skin, including that in the armpits. Lemon also contains antiseptic properties that can help eliminate foul underarm odour.

Lemon contains vitamin C and citric acid, making it a natural brightening powerhouse.

You can rub lemon slices under your arms. Wait 10 minutes and then rinse the area with cool water and let it dry.

Apply fresh lemon juice to the affected area. Wait 10 minutes and then rinse the area with cool water and let it dry.

Mix lemon juice with

turmeric to make a paste for your underarms. Apply to your underarms and wait 30 minutes before washing off with cold water.

2--- Baking Soda-----One of the best home remedies for dark underarms is baking soda. Baking soda contains exfoliating and bleaching agents that help lighten the dark underarms.

Mix 2 tablespoons with water to make a paste, and apply the thick paste on the armpit for 5 minutes. Apply it twice a week.

Add 1 tablespoon of baking soda to the rosewater, and stir this mixture evenly. Then, apply this solution to your armpit area and wait for about 10 minutes before rinsing it off with

lukewarm water. You can practice this trick twice a week for lighter underarms. However, its high alkalinity may cause skin irritation, burns, or increased sensitivity.

3-----Coconut Oil:-- --Coconut oil is one of the most sought-after ingredients used as a dark underarm remedy. Coconut oil has Vitamin E, which is known to lighten skin.

It moisturises while gently lightening dark areas. This moisturising approach is particularly beneficial if dryness contributes to your underarm concerns. Massage a few drops of coconut oil onto your underarms. Gently

massage it, and leave it on for 10-15 minutes. Rinse it off with lukewarm water. You can try this 2-3 times a week. The lauric acid in coconut oil also has antimicrobial properties, helping to keep bacteria at bay.

4---Aloe Vera Gel:-- -- Aloe vera is infused with aloin and aloein.

While aloin is a natural depigmenting component that helps in lightening the dark patches, aloein helps in preventing the production of excess melanin, thereby reducing skin hyperpigmentation. Aloe vera gel has skin-soothing properties and may aid in skin lightening. Fresh aloe vera gel is incredibly

gentle yet effective for sensitive underarm skin. It contains antibacterial properties which help soothe and lighten your skin. Cut into a fresh leaf of aloe vera and extract the gel. Apply a thin layer to clean underarms and let it absorb naturally. Then, rinse it off with lukewarm water. You can apply it daily for better results. Apply aloe vera over the pigmented areas before bedtime and wash it off with lukewarm water the next morning daily.

**The author is an internationally famous beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India**

## Arunachal Pradesh Budget 2026–27: A Fiscal Mandala of Development, Welfare, and Sustainable Aspiration



The Budget of Arunachal Pradesh for the financial year 2026–27, presented by Chowna Mein, represents a strategic fiscal blueprint aimed at harmonising economic growth, infrastructural expansion, social welfare, and administrative reform. With a total outlay of ₹36,607 crore, the budget reflects a vision of inclusive development grounded in fiscal prudence and socio-economic empowerment. The present article provides a critical and analytical exploration of the budget's philosophical underpinnings, fiscal architecture, sectoral priorities, and developmental implications, interwoven with Sanskrit aphorisms and classical Indian wisdom traditions.

1. Prologue: Fiscal Dharma and the Architecture of Governance

Ancient Indian political philosophy envisioned governance as a sacred responsibility, where the king—or the state—was entrusted with the welfare of the people. The celebrated Sanskrit maxim declares: The Arunachal Pradesh Budget 2026–27 resonates with this classical doctrine of Rajadharma. It seeks to balance developmental imperatives with fiscal discipline, ensuring that growth is inclusive and sustainable. The state assembly approved a ₹36,607 crore budget, prioritising infrastructure, education, healthcare, entrepreneurship, and governance reforms. Although slightly smaller than the previous fiscal year's budget of ₹39,842 crore, the financial plan reflects strategic recalibration due to changes in central tax devolution recommended by the 16th Finance Commission.

2. Fiscal Structure of the Arunachal Pradesh Budget 2026–27

2.1 Key Fiscal Indicators

Fiscal Parameter	Budget Estimate
Total Budget Size	₹36,607 crore
Revenue Receipts	₹30,733 crore
Capital Receipts	₹5,873 crore
State Own Revenue	₹5,208 crore
Share of Central Taxes	₹20,665 crore
Fiscal Deficit	₹701 crore (1.7% of GSDP)
Estimated GSDP	₹41,314 crore

These figures indicate that the fiscal deficit remains within the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) norms, reflecting responsible financial governance.

The philosophical resonance of fiscal prudence finds reflection in the Sanskrit dictum: (arthasya mulam rajyam, rajyasya mulam arthah- Economic strength is the foundation of the state, and the state sustains economic prosperity.)

3. Six Strategic Pillars of the Budget

The budget is structured around six thematic pillars, which together form the developmental philosophy of the state.

1. Strengthening Foundations of the Future

Infrastructure expansion remains central to the state's development strategy.

Key initiatives include:

Road connectivity expansion in remote districts

Rural infrastructure development

Border village development programmes

Hydropower and energy infrastructure

For instance, road and connectivity projects

complement larger strategic initiatives such as the Arunachal Frontier Highway, which aims to enhance connectivity along border regions and stimulate regional economic integration.

2. People-Centric Development

The budget emphasises social welfare, reflecting the classical Indian idea of (May all be happy).

Allocations include:

Education expansion programmes

Healthcare infrastructure strengthening

Women and child welfare schemes

A notable provision is the construction of working women's hostels across 26 districts, aimed at empowering female professionals and students.

Additionally, schemes such as Dulari Kanya Yojana provide financial incentives for girl child welfare.

3. Sustaining Economic Growth

Economic growth strategies focus on entrepreneurship, tourism, agriculture, and MSME development.

Key programmes include:

ARUN MSME Mission

Arunachal Pradesh Startup Manch

Promotion of traditional handicrafts and textiles

An allocation of approximately ₹630 crore supports initiatives in agriculture, tourism, and industrial promotion.

The Sanskrit wisdom reminds us:

(Udyoginam puruṣaṣimham-upaiti lakṣmīḥ - Prosperity approaches the industrious and courageous.)

Thus, entrepreneurship becomes the economic yajña through which prosperity manifests.

4. Human Development and Capacity Building

Human capital development forms a crucial dimension of the budget.

Important allocations target:

Skill development programmes

Youth employment schemes

Sports development initiatives

A significant programme includes the Chief Minister's Athletics Coaching and Empowerment Scheme, designed to nurture sporting talent in the Himalayan state.

Such initiatives echo the Upanishadic philosophy: (Vidhyaya amrutam ashnute - Through education/knowledge, one attains immortality.)

5. Resource Mobilisation and Fiscal Stability

The budget emphasises strengthening revenue mobilisation through:

Tax reforms

Improved financial management

Efficient governance mechanisms

The state seeks to reduce dependency on central transfers while improving internal revenue generation.

Despite fiscal challenges, the deficit is projected at only ₹701 crore, demonstrating fiscal prudence.

6. Governance and Administrative Reforms

Digital governance and administrative transparency form another key pillar.

Important reforms include:

Digital public service delivery

Transparent budgeting mechanisms

Institutional strengthening

Such reforms embody the ancient Indian principle: ("Dharmo rakshati rakshitah" - "Dharma protects those who protect it")

When governance protects righteousness, righteousness protects the state.)

4. Sectoral Analysis of Major Budget Allocations

4.1 Infrastructure Development

Infrastructure receives a significant push with approximately ₹2,038 crore allocated for strengthening connectivity and public infrastructure.

Projects include:

**BK Prof. (Dr.) Jayadeba Sahoo**

Road construction

Border connectivity

Urban infrastructure

Rural electrification

Improved connectivity is vital for a geographically challenging state like Arunachal Pradesh, where mountainous terrain historically limited economic integration.

4.2 Education Sector

Education remains a core investment area.

Budget priorities include:

School infrastructure development

Digital learning initiatives

Expansion of higher education institutions

Such investments align with the national vision of transforming India into a knowledge economy.

Arunachal's Healthcare Renaissance:

Kalidasa's Kumārasambhava (5.33), speaks ("Śarīramādyam khalu dharmasādhanam") - The body is the primary instrument for achieving spiritual goals.

emphasizes that a healthy body is essential for performing all tasks, duties, and spiritual pursuits. The Arunachal Pradesh Budget 2026-27 has allocated ₹3,320 crore for people-centric development, with a focus on health infrastructure, public health, and medical education.

Key Initiatives:

- Strengthening Healthcare Infrastructure: Upgradation of district hospitals, construction of a state cancer hospital, and establishment of cancer day care centers.

- Digital Health Ecosystem: Comprehensive digital health initiative to improve healthcare services.

- Human Resource Development: Compulsory rural posting for TRIHMS graduates, recruitment of specialists, and nursing officers.

- Mobile Medical Units: 40 units to provide primary healthcare services in remote and border areas.

- Diagnostic Infrastructure: Laboratories in 256 sub-centers, 82 PHCs, 25 CHCs, and 64 block public health units.

The budget aims to improve healthcare accessibility, reduce out-of-pocket expenditure, and enhance the overall quality of life for Arunachal Pradesh's population.

The budget allocates ₹3,320 crore for people-centric sectors such as health and education.

Key initiatives include:

Upgrading district hospitals

Telemedicine expansion

Strengthening primary healthcare services

Healthcare investment becomes crucial for remote tribal communities residing in mountainous regions.

4.4 Agriculture and Rural Economy

Agriculture remains an important livelihood source. The budget emphasises:

Organic farming promotion

Agro-processing industries

Irrigation development

The state also promotes horticulture and bamboo-based industries.

In traditional Sanskrit agrarian wisdom:

("Kṛṣiḥ mūlam jagataḥ" - Agriculture is the root / foundation of the world.)

4.5 Tourism and Cultural Economy

Arunachal Pradesh possesses immense tourism potential due to its pristine Himalayan landscapes, tribal cultures, and biodiversity.

The budget emphasises:

Eco-tourism infrastructure

Cultural heritage preservation

Adventure tourism development

Tourism expansion also complements the growing infrastructure network and improved connectivity.

5. New Schemes Introduced in the Budget

Several innovative schemes have been introduced, including:

ARUN MSME Mission – boosting small industries

Donyi Polo Mission – preserving indigenous cultural traditions

Arunachal Pradesh Startup Manch – promoting entrepreneurial ecosystems

Mission Olympics – supporting sporting excellence

These initiatives aim to integrate economic growth with cultural preservation, a distinctive feature of the state's developmental philosophy.

6. Socio-Economic Implications of the Budget

6.1 Balanced Regional Development

The budget aims to reduce regional disparities across districts through improved infrastructure and welfare programmes.

6.2 Employment Generation

MSME promotion, tourism development, and infrastructure projects are expected to generate significant employment opportunities.

6.3 Strengthening Tribal Economy

Many schemes are designed to empower indigenous communities through sustainable livelihood programmes.

6.4 Strategic Border Development

Improved connectivity and economic development in border regions strengthen national security and regional stability.

7. Critical Evaluation

While the budget is visionary, certain challenges remain:

Strengths

Balanced sectoral focus

Strong infrastructure push

Fiscal discipline within FRBM limits

Emphasis on entrepreneurship and innovation

Challenges

High dependence on central transfers

Difficult terrain affecting infrastructure implementation

Limited industrial base

Nevertheless, the fiscal framework demonstrates a pragmatic approach to developmental governance.

8. Epilogue: The Final Flourish: Summarizing

Arunachal Pradesh's Budgetary Odyssey

The Arunachal Pradesh Budget 2026–27 emerges as a thoughtful synthesis of economic pragmatism, social welfare, and cultural preservation. By emphasising infrastructure, human development, and entrepreneurship, the state government has laid a foundation for long-term prosperity.

Indeed, the budget represents a collective aspiration—an economic yajña—through which the people of Arunachal Pradesh seek to build a future of prosperity, dignity, and sustainable development.

The Budget provides a clear path for balanced development while addressing the aspirations of our people. Congratulations Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister Shri Chowna Mein Ji for presenting a thoughtful and forward-looking Budget for the State. To conclude, in the luminous words of the Rig Veda (10.191.2):

Samgacchadhvaṃ samvadadhvaṃ sam vo manāmsi jānatām." -

(Let us move together (in harmony), speak together (in unison), and understand together.)

**Faculty, Brahma Kumaris & Professor (Ex-Dean & Head), Dept of Education,**

**Rajiv Gandhi (Central) University, Itanagar;**

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## Patiala House Court Discharges Accused in Rape Case Due to Lack of "Grave Suspicion"

**New Delhi(KCN):** In a significant development, the Court of the Learned Additional Sessions Judge (Fast Track Court) at Patiala House Courts has discharged the accused in a case registered under Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code arising out of FIR No. 91/2024. The order, dated 12 March 2026, was passed after the court heard arguments on the point of charge. The Hon'ble Court observed that the material placed on record did not disclose the level of "grave suspicion" required for framing charges against the accused. The defence team was led by Advocate Harish Kaushik and Advocate Maneesh, along with



Advocate Maneesh



Advocate Harish Kaushik

Himanshi, Himanshu Kaushik, and Mohsin, who presented detailed submissions during the hearing. The defence argued that the material available on record did not

legally justify proceeding to trial. After examining the case records and hearing submissions from both sides, the Court concluded that

the prosecution had failed to cross the legal threshold necessary for framing charges. Accordingly, the accused was discharged under Section 227 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Speaking on the development, Advocate Maneesh stated that the order underscores the importance of careful judicial scrutiny at the stage of framing charges, reiterating the legal principle that criminal proceedings should proceed only when sufficient material exists to warrant a trial. The decision was delivered after the Court considered the entire case record and the legal principles applicable at the stage of charge.

## Meghalaya Extends Curfew In West Garo Hills Amid Fresh Violence Fears

**Shillong(KCN):** Authorities in Meghalaya have extended the night curfew in West Garo Hills district for an additional day amid concerns over a possible escalation of tension following recent violence, officials said on Wednesday. As per an order issued by the District Magistrate and Deputy Commissioner, the curfew will be enforced from 6 p.m. on March 19 until 6 a.m. on March 20. However, a 12-hour relaxation has been allowed from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. to enable residents to carry out essential and routine activities. During the relaxation period, schools, colleges, government and private offices, banks and other establishments will be permitted to function, though authorities said strict monitoring will remain in place to prevent any untoward incidents.

The curfew was first imposed on March 17 under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita



after incidents of violence disrupted public order in parts of the district. The unrest was reportedly triggered by protests against a notification that barred non-tribal individuals from participating in a tribal council election process.

## Unique Personality Dambarudhar Chanda Defies Age with Remarkable Marathon Feat

\* Completes 75-km Run in 11 Hours;  
\* Secures Sixth Place in Sikkim Marathon

**Balasure, 18/3(Krushna Kumar Mohanty):** Determination has proved stronger than age for 56-year-old marathon runner Dambarudhar Chanda of Balasure, who recently completed a challenging 75-kilometre marathon in just over eleven hours and secured the sixth position in a major race held in Gangtok, Sikkim. The marathon event required participants to finish the 75-km distance within twelve hours. Chand completed the race in 11 hours, 10 minutes and 55 seconds, earning the sixth position and winning a medal. Notably, he was the only athlete from Balasure and Odisha to participate in this demanding competition. The race was particularly challenging as it was conducted in the snow-covered mountainous terrain of Sikkim, making endurance and mental strength essential for the runners. Following his return to Balasure, Chanda was felicitated by the Balasure Marathon Association in recognition of his achievement. A resident of Nutipatna village in the Kuruda area of Balasure town, Dambarudhar Chanda

previously worked at Birla Tyres. Alongside his job, he began running regularly and gradually developed a passion for marathon racing. Although he started running about two years ago, he began actively participating in



marathon competitions in August 2024. Since then, Chanda has taken part in numerous marathons across the country. Within just one and a half years, he has participated in marathon events in 24 states of India, with the Sikkim race marking his 24th state. In several competitions across different states, he has secured positions and won medals. In September last year, he became the first Odia runner to secure second place in a marathon held

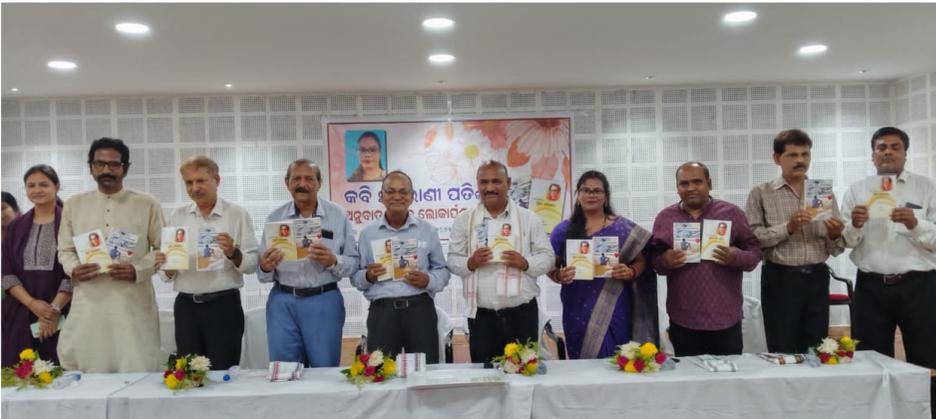
in Ladakh, bringing further recognition to his achievements. Apart from Odisha, he has been honoured with cash awards and recognitions in states such as West Bengal, Ladakh, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Delhi, and Jharkhand. Chand continues to pursue his passion for long-distance running. He is scheduled to participate in the Patna Marathon next Sunday, followed by another marathon event in Haryana the following week. Looking ahead, Chanda has set an ambitious goal to participate in marathon events across all 28 states and 9 Union Territories of India by 2026, aiming to win a medal from each region. He has also been selected for the Boston Marathon, which would qualify him for participation in world-level marathon competitions. Despite his achievements, Chanda faces a major challenge in training. As there is no proper ground or suitable training space in the city, he has to practise running on public roads, which he says can often be risky. Nevertheless, his determination continues to drive him forward in the world of marathon running.

## "Translation Bridges Languages and Regions": Two Translated Books of Chhabirani Pati Released

**Balasure, March 18 (Krushna Kumar Mohanty):** "Translation is an independent literary art, and the faithful reflection of the original thought forms the foundation of successful

Sahitya Samaj. Engineer Prabhakar Swain, founder of Sarala Sahitya Sansad and a distinguished senior translator, attended as the chief guest. Former President of Utkal

programme began with Vedic chanting by artist Guruprasad Rath, followed by a welcome address by educationist Kshirod Kumar Sahu. Brahmananda Biswal, Vice-



translated literature. Through translation, literature travels wider and creates bridges between languages and regions," observed speakers at the release ceremony of two translated books by Chhabirani Pati, held on Tuesday evening at Sarala Bhavan. The programme was presided over by Rajib Kumar Sadangi, General Secretary of Utkal

Sahitya Samaj and eminent litterateur Tarun Kumar Sahu joined as the guest of honour, while former administrator and noted writer Dhananjay Swain delivered the keynote address. On this occasion, translator Chhabirani Pati shared her reflections on the art of translation, while publisher Tarini Prasad Mohanty expressed his views on the publication. The

President of Utkal Sahitya Samaj, introduced the guests. Poet and artist Pramod Das delivered the vote of thanks. The event was conducted with the support of Suresh Das, Niranjan Pati, Pitambar Mohapatra, Shubhra Das, Bijayalakshmi Pati, Shubhranshu Das, Chandana Nayek, and Brahmananda Mohanty, among others.

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## Innovative Programme 'Rabindra Darshan Jatra' of Odia Bhasa Bikash Andolana (OBBA) Concluded

**Balasure, March 18 (Krushna Kumar Mohanty):** A literary delegation comprising seventy members from the Odia Bhasa Bikash Andolana (OBBA) undertook a journey from Balasure to Shantiniketan from February 4 to 7. The programme, titled "Rabindra Darshan Jatra," was organized in collaboration with the Department of Odia Language and Literature at Visva-Bharati. The event featured a symposium, a collective poetry-writing and reading session, and a theatrical performance titled "The Saga of Dhurjati and Bhanusingha."

Members of the organization and students of Visva-Bharati jointly composed poems within just ten minutes on the theme "I



spread my wings to fly — but where is the sky?" A compilation of these collective poems was formally released last Sunday evening during the

concluding ceremony held at the auditorium premises of Srasta Natyalaya in Balasure. Under the guidance of the President of OBBA, Dr.

Choudhury Satyabrata Nanda, and his spouse Prof. Rashmirekha Pati, the day-long programme began with an inaugural song written

by poet Deepak Bose and directed by Kalyani Nanda. The song was performed collectively by Sunamani Jena, Basanti Dey, Pushpalata Chakraborty, Kabita Jena, Shanti Bishi, Archana Kar, and Shantilata Panda.

More than twenty members shared their memories and experiences of the Shantiniketan visit. A special programme titled "Known and Unknown Shantiniketan," conducted by organising secretary Tapan Roy, was also held.

Another special segment, "Frabachan," presented in a satirical style by editor Dr. Laxmikanta Tripathy, featured the participation of

Pandit Sanjay Panda, Jumarath Patra, Dr. Lakshman Charan Biswal, and Kalyani Nanda. An edited audio-visual presentation showcasing photographs and videos from the journey was also screened. The concluding evening was attended by distinguished guests including poet Bimal Jena, poet Dipti Das, short story writer Nibaran Jena, poet Srideb, Dr. Shirish Chandra Jena, Prashanta Das, and Dr. Manindra Mohanty, who shared their reflections.

On this occasion, Kalyani Nanda, a member of the organization, and Deepak Bose, the treasurer, were felicitated for their special contributions to the programme. The celebration was attended by hundreds of literary enthusiasts and lovers of literature.

## Senior Journalist Mihir Mohapatra Passes Away: Balasure Mourns the Loss

**Balasure, March 18 (Krushna Kumar Mohanty):** Mihir Mohapatra, widely known as a senior journalist of Balasure district, passed away on Tuesday at the age of 67 while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Bhubaneswar.

His mortal remains were cremated at Swargadwar in Puri. Senior journalists Sibdas Kundu, Dipta Kundu, Abhisek Kundu, and Kaushik Kar, among others, attended the funeral procession. His younger daughter, Meghajyoti, performed the last rites.

Following the news of his demise, the 'Balasure Dibamgata Sambadika Smruti Committee' (BDSSC) and representatives of various media organizations held a condolence meeting. Speakers expressed that Balasure has lost not only an experienced journalist but also a noble and compassionate human being.

Among those who attended and expressed their condolences were senior journalists Biplab Kumar Mohanty, Ranjan Kumar Baug, Samir Acharya, Laxminarayan Mohanty, Kishore Das, Bansidhar Jena, Rajendra Pattnaik, Ritendra Chhatoi, Ramaniranjan Das, Alok Barik, Ajit Mohanty, Manoj Kumar Biswal, Harishankar Jena, Arup Narayan Mohanty,



Binayak Mohapatra, Narayan Chandra Pradhan, Manas Kumar Dutta, Rabi Rout, Sibdas Kundu, Sandipta Das, Srustidhar Parida, Nirmalya Mohanty, Ujjwal Chandra Kar, Abhaya Kumar Das, Ratikanta Patra, Kalinga Sahu, Dhiraj Kumar Das, Sitaram Patra, Bansidhar Dalai, Mallik Rizwan, Azim Baleswari, Padmalochan Dutta, Sambit Kumar Behera, Kamalakanta Nayak, Lokanath Piri, Bhagaban Chandra Das, Shibashankar Bhoi, Surendra Mohan Jena, Sarat Kumar Barik, Purnachandra Behera, Trilochan Mohanty, Gagan Kumar Sethi, Debabrata Panigrahi, Sushanta Kumar Das, Maheswar Pradhan, Sarbeswar Das, Ardhendu Kumar Mishra, Tapan Kumar Das, Jiban Nayak, Ashutosh Mallik, Prasannajit Ash, Gangadhar Rout, Haider Khan, Sheikh Najim, Himanshu Kumar Das, Sanjuktarani Behera, Rajkishore

Behera, Aparna Mohapatra, Bhabesh Panigrahi, Kanjamani Swain, Ubachak Mohanty, Brahmananda Swain and many other media representatives.

The late Mohapatra was a well-known personality in Balasure. Apart from being an experienced journalist, he was also a former councillor of Gopalgaon. He had built a reputation as a skilled sportsperson, organizer, social worker, and patron of institutions. Actively associated with several organizations, he played an important role in many social initiatives.

At one time, he was also a frontline leader of the Congress party. He had established a school in the name of Rajiv Gandhi and was a senior member of the Balasure District Sports Association.

His wife, Prof. Mitra Paul Mohapatra, recently retired from Balasure Women's College. His elder brother, the late Kalinga Mohapatra, was also a senior member of the Balasure Sports Association.

His passing has cast a deep shadow of grief across Balasure. Several eminent personalities, including PCC Chief Spokesperson Arabinda Das and senior writer Krushna Kumar Mohanty, have expressed their condolences on his demise.

## 'K&N Performance Review' Campaign Launched by Manipal Hospital for Kidney Health Awareness

**Balasure, March 18 (Krushna Kumar Mohanty):** On the occasion of World Kidney Day, Manipal Hospitals, Bhubaneswar has launched a new public awareness initiative titled "K&N Performance Review."

The primary objective of this campaign is to raise awareness about the importance of kidney health and encourage people to undergo early health check-ups. The initiative focuses not only on treatment but also on prevention, helping individuals understand how well their kidneys are functioning and why regular screening is necessary.

The campaign was formally inaugurated on March 12, 2026, at the hospital premises. An interactive session organized on the occasion saw the participation of many people who learned about kidney health and also had their basic health parameters checked.

To make the initiative more engaging, the hospital has introduced two mascots named "Kid" and "Ney." Over the coming week, these mascots will visit busy areas in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack to spread awareness about kidney health. By scanning the QR code carried by the mascots, people can answer a few questions and determine whether they need to undergo a kidney

screening test.

To translate awareness into practical action, the hospital has also introduced special kidney screening packages for those who fill out the kidney risk assessment form. These packages will provide a comprehensive report on kidney



health. They are available in three categories—Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced—and will remain valid until March 31, 2026.

The campaign is being led by a team of experienced doctors, including urologist Dr. Manab Ranjan Pradhan and Dr. Subodh Dash, along with nephrologists Dr. Sai Prasad Sahu and Dr. Sukanta Kishore Dash.

Doctors involved in the campaign

have noted that many kidney diseases progress gradually and often show no clear symptoms in the early stages. As a result, they are frequently detected only when the condition becomes severe. Through the "K&N Performance Review" initiative, the hospital

aims to help people understand kidney health more easily and encourage them to monitor it regularly. With routine screening and preventive care, individuals can identify risks early and take appropriate steps to protect their kidney health.

For more information, the hospital has requested people to visit the Manipal Community Connect page.




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# India is entering new phase in global trade, says Piyush Goyal

NEW DELHI, (KCN)

UNION Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday said India's overall economic fundamentals remain strong, with exports holding steady and multiple factors supporting the country's external position.

Speaking in the Lok Sabha, the minister also said India is entering a new phase in international trade, which will help expand its global footprint and bring long-term economic benefits.

"While services exports continue to grow consistently every month, merchandise exports have remained flat till February,



which means they have not declined," he said.

In March, there was some weakness in the first week, but exports turned positive in the second week and are expected to stabilise by the end of the month, he added.

Highlighting the broader external sector, Goyal said the current account deficit comprises

(FDI), with the country setting new records year after year.

"Overall, India's economic situation and fundamentals are very strong. There is growing enthusiasm across the world to expand trade relations with India," the minister said.

Goyal added that in the past few years, India has expanded trade engagement with several developed nations, creating new opportunities for exporters.

He also stressed that earlier free trade agreements (FTAs) were often signed with competing economies, which posed challenges for domestic industries.

# Govt giving top priority to boost farmers' incomes: Shivraj Chouhan

NEW DELHI, (KCN)

UNION Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday that the government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has accorded the highest priority to farmers' income and security through a series of measures, including promoting profitable alternative crops in place of harmful crops like tobacco, ensuring historic procurement at minimum support price (MSP), introducing revolutionary reforms in the crop insurance scheme, and establishing a strict monitoring mechanism.

Replying to various questions raised by Members of Parliament in the Lower House,



Chouhan said that the government has not only appealed to farmers to move away from tobacco cultivation but has also identified strong and profitable alternatives in regions where tobacco is grown.

These alternatives include hybrid maize, chilli, sweet potato, cotton, potato, chia, feed beans, cowpea, ragi, red gram, sugarcane, soybean, sorghum and groundnut, so that farmers' cash income remains secure, he

mentioned.

The minister said that most farmers in the country have small landholdings, and in such circumstances, dependence on a single crop is risky. Therefore, the government has developed several models of integrated farming and initiated demonstrations of these models in different states.

Under these models, farmers can adopt a combination of activities such as cultivation of cereals (wheat and paddy), vegetables, fruits, animal husbandry, fisheries, beekeeping, goat rearing and agroforestry. By integrating these activities, farmers can ensure stable and higher income throughout the year.

# Total sown area in ongoing summer season crosses 36.2 lakh hectares

NEW DELHI, (KCN)

THE total area covered under summer crops in India has reached 36.22 lakh hectares (as on March 13) this year, with the sowing season in full swing, data released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare showed on Tuesday.



The normal summer area, calculated on the basis of average coverage from 2022-23 to 2024-25, is 75.37 lakh hectare. In comparison, the final summer area achieved in 2025 was significantly higher at 83.92 lakh hectare, suggesting that the current pace of sowing is aligned with previous expansion trends.

Rice remains the dominant summer crop, followed by pulses like mung and urad, oilseeds such as groundnut and coarse cereals like jowar bajra, ragi and maize.

The summer season in India spans from March to June, sandwiched between the rabi and kharif seasons, and plays a crucial role in boosting overall agricultural production.

# Postal department launches premium services with 24-hour

NEW DELHI: POSTS on Tuesday rolled out three premium services, with 24-hour and 48-hour delivery guarantees for urgent and time-sensitive consignments, as it seeks to reinvent itself against a growing field of courier services that promise delivery within hours. Launching the services -- 24 Speed Post, 24 Speed Post Parcel, and 48 Speed Post -- Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said India Post's revenue growth is encouraging, with a 20 per cent growth in the 11 months of FY26. Initially, these services are being rolled out in six cities -- Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad -- with the goal of providing nationwide coverage by March 2027. The department will utilise dedicated processing and priority air transport to adhere to delivery timelines. Scindia said the launch marks a moment of renewal for India Post and has outlined a massive underlying opportunity. The e-commerce market, he said, is set to grow to Rs 30 lakh crore by 2030, almost tripling from Rs 11 lakh crore at present.

# NPCI expands its UPI acceptance in Sri Lanka to boost economy, tourists' experience

NEW DELHI: NPCI International Payments Limited -- the international arm of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) -- on Tuesday said it is strengthening the acceptance of Unified Payments Interface (UPI) across Sri Lanka to enable a seamless payment experience for Indian tourists and support the island nation's digital economy. With more than 700 million QR touchpoints in India, the platform's interoperable architecture enables integration with global systems, including Sri Lanka's LankaPay-powered LankaQR infrastructure. India remains Sri Lanka's largest source market for the tourism sector. Over 4.16 lakh Indian tourists visited the country in 2024, which rose to 5.31 lakh in 2025.

# Maruti Suzuki India gets ₹5,786 crore tax notice

NEW DELHI: MARUTI Suzuki India Limited on Tuesday said it has received a draft assessment order from the Income Tax Authority involving a demand of Rs 5,786 crore. The company, however, clarified that the notice will not have any impact on its financial or operational performance. In a regulatory filing, the automaker said it will file its objections before the Dispute Resolution Panel as part of the due process. The draft order pertains to the financial year 2022-23, where the tax authorities have proposed certain additions and disallowances amounting to Rs 57,864 million to the company's reported income. "The company has received a Draft Assessment Order for the FY2022-23 wherein certain additions / disallowances amounting to Rs 57,864 million with respect to returned income (the income disclosed by the company in its Income Tax return) has been proposed," the carmaker said in its exchange filing.

# India starts sourcing LPG from multiple global channels, including US

NEW DELHI, (KCN)

INDIA has started sourcing LPG from multiple global channels, including the United States, to diversify supplies amid the ongoing Middle East conflict, the government said on Tuesday, adding that there is no 'dry out' at any LPG distributor and supplies remain smooth across the country.

Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry's Joint Secretary, Marketing and Oil Refinery, Sujata Sharma, said during an inter-ministerial briefing that most of the LPG is coming from the Gulf.

"Our OMCs have started taking LPG from the US. Government is putting all efforts to diversify sources of LPG too,"

said Sharma, adding that: "We are getting more crude today due to increased diversification."

Commercial LPG supplies have also been partially restored, with states resuming distribution.

To ease pressure on domestic LPG demand, alternative fuels such as kerosene and coal have also been activated.

Sharma noted that panic-driven demand is easing. "There is a downward trend in panic booking. On March 13, there were 89 lakh panic bookings. It has come down to 70 lakh today."

LPG refill distribution rate



remains the same as before the conflict, she said, urging consumers to avoid hoarding and avoid black market purchases.

According to the ministry, fuel availability remains stable, with refineries running at full capacity and sufficient stocks of petrol and diesel.

"There is no dry out at any LPG distributor, and supplies to consumers remain smooth," Sharma said. Also, a strong push toward digital platforms has improved booking patterns.

Meanwhile, the Indian-flagged liquefied petroleum gas

# SEBI mulls easing nomination norms for demat and mutual fund accounts

NEW DELHI, (KCN)

INDIA'S market watchdog, the Securities and Exchange Board of India, on Tuesday issued a consultation paper proposing changes to nomination norms for demat accounts and mutual fund folios, seeking public comments.

The regulator said the proposals aim to modify its January 10, 2025, circular on nomination facilities in the securities market to improve the ease of investor onboarding and align processes with banking norms.

Under the existing framework introduced last year, single-holding investors were allowed to authorise one nominee (excluding minors) to operate their accounts in case of physical incapacitation, provided they remain mentally capable of contracting.

However, nominees are



not permitted to update key account details such as bank information or contact details.

The current rules also mandate investors to provide at least one personal identifier of the nominee, such as PAN, driving licence number or the last four digits of Aadhaar, along with full contact details, relationship status, and date of birth in case of minors.

Investors can nominate up to 10 persons in a mutual fund folio, while Power of Attorney (PoA) holders are not allowed to nominate.

Moreover, the market

regulator has flagged implementation challenges and risks associated with allowing nominees to operate accounts. The SEBI noted that the industry has cited high compliance costs, difficulty in maintaining audit trails, and potential risks of fraud, misuse and legal disputes.

To address this, it has proposed allowing the existing Power of Attorney mechanism to be used in cases where an investor is incapacitated but still capable of entering into a contract.

The regulator has also proposed simplifying the nomination process by reducing mandatory details. It suggested that only the name of the nominee and the nature of the relationship with the investor should be compulsory, while other details can be provided optionally.

# Govt, RBI strengthen consumer protection measures against fraudulent loan apps

NEW DELHI, (KCN)

THE Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued regulatory guidelines on digital lending, including loans through mobile apps and online platforms, and operationalised a public directory of digital lending apps to help borrowers verify their associations with regulated entities, the government said on Tuesday.

"RBI has issued regulatory guidelines on digital lending, which aims at firming up the regulatory framework for digital lending, including loans through mobile apps, while enhancing customer protection and making the digital lending ecosystem safe and sound," Minister of State for Finance, Pankaj Chaudhary, said in Rajya Sabha.

The directory of Digital Lending Apps (DLAs) was made live on July 1, 2025 on Ministry's website.

"All the Regulated Entities (REs) are required to comply with the said guidelines on digital lending. Compliance to these guidelines is examined on sample basis during supervisory assessment



and any non-compliance observed is taken up for rectification apart from initiating supervisory or enforcement action," the minister said.

The ministry also cited other collaborative efforts with RBI to protect citizens from exploitation by unauthorised mobile loan apps.

It proactively engaged with the major internet intermediaries and messaging platforms to review the operations of unauthorised loan apps.

"Further, to disrupt the ecosystem of fraudulent digital loan apps, internet intermediaries have been instructed to institute stringent, technology driven vetting and real time enforcement mechanisms to detect and prevent malicious advertisement of illegal loan apps originating from offshore entities," the statement said.

The government has launched a National Cybercrime Reporting Portal and a National Cybercrime Helpline number "1930" for citizens to report cyber incidents including illegal loan apps.

# RBI wins global Initiative of the Year Award

MUMBAI, (KCN)

THE Reserve Bank of India has been selected for the prestigious 'Initiative of the Year Award' by London-based Central Banking in recognition for its launching the 'bank.in' domain, making India the first country globally to mandate a secure and exclusive Internet domain for the banking system.

The award recognises the initiative as a global benchmark in financial cybersecurity and digital infrastructure management.

The transition enhances consumer confidence, helps reduce digital payment fraud, and strengthens financial stability. This has been implemented through the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including the Indian government, the NIXI, the IDRBT, and banks, according to an official statement.

By mandating a domain name for the country's banks, the RBI has struck a major blow against cyber fraud. Only RBI-regulated entities are permitted to use the .bank.in domain, which helps to strengthen



cybersecurity and protect customers from phishing and look-alike website frauds. Banks were instructed to migrate to the new domain to boost trust in digital banking.

"Digitisation has transformed all aspects of financial infrastructure -- from the ways in which individuals and businesses make and receive payments, to the ways in which investment capital is allocated, and the performances of individual securities are monitored in real time. But it has come with a cost: a large increase in cybercrime," Central Banking said.

"In emerging economies such as India's, where digitisation is seen as a key tool for financial inclusion, the threats posed by cyber crime are particularly acute," the statement added.

The Reserve Bank of India has announced the exclusive .bank.in domain for all licensed banks in India to enhance cybersecurity and reduce phishing scams. Banks were mandated to migrate their net banking websites to this secure domain by October 31, 2025.

# SAIL, RSP signs contract with MECON Limited for greenfield expansion project



ROURKELA, (KCN)

SAIL's Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has signed a contract with MECON Limited, Ranchi on Monday for appointment of a consultant to prepare feasibility report (FR) and detailed project report (DPR) for its greenfield expansion project.

The contract was signed in the presence of Rahul Agarwal, CGM (Projects) and officiating ED (Projects), and AK Sahu, CGM (Proj-Commercial), along with other senior officers of RSP and MECON Limited.

The consultancy agreement envisages increasing RSP's crude steel production by 5.0 MTPA and hot metal production by 5.15 MTPA through a greenfield expansion project. The scope of work includes preparation of feasibility report and detailed project report, soil investigation, topographical survey and obtaining environmental clearance for the expansion.

MECON Limited, an engineering consultancy organisation, will carry out techno-economic evaluation and detailed planning for the expansion. The studies and surveys under the contract will provide necessary technical inputs and statutory clearances required for implementation of the project.

# Indian Americans rank as top earners in US among major ethnic groups: Report

NEW DELHI, (KCN)

INDIAN-AMERICAN households reported a median annual income of about \$151,200, far above the US median of roughly \$83,700 and ranked first among all major ethnic groups in the country, a new report has said.

The report from The Australia Today, which cited Pew Research Center findings, said that Indian-American households earn roughly \$67,000 more per year or nearly 80 per cent higher than the typical American household.

Indian Americans, roughly 4.8 million people, make up a relatively small portion of the US population, just about 1.4 per cent of the country's total population. Despite this modest share, their economic footprint, however, is significant due to high participation in professional, technical, and specialised fields, the report said, citing Pew findings.



a notable contribution to federal revenue. Indian American households collectively pay around 6 per cent of taxes, showing their concentration in top-income brackets and strong professional engagement, the report noted.

Taiwanese-American households rank second with a median income of about \$133,300, indicating that Indian-American households earn roughly \$17,900 more, or about 13-14 per cent higher. The combined median income for all Asian-American households is approximately \$105,600, still well below the average Indian-American household, the report added.

High income of Americans of Indian origin also translates into people of Indian origin, especially engineers, scientists and entrepreneurs have made and continue to make major contributions across industries in the United States. Addressing concerns in the US over immigrants stealing jobs from locals, Musk said his companies struggle to find highly skilled people and global talent helps him bridge the talent gap. The government had earlier this month said that India and the United States continue to remain engaged in discussions for a mutually beneficial bilateral trade agreement.



# Hazlewood, Cummins unlikely to play in early IPL 2026 fixtures

**NEWDELHI:** Defending Champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) look set to start their IPL 2026 campaign without champion fast bowler Josh Hazlewood. The seasoned star will miss the opening two games for his franchise as he continues his recovery from an injury-laden home summer, where he missed the entire Ashes series. Hazlewood, who suffered a hamstring injury before picking up an Achilles complaint during his recovery, was one of the keys to RCB finally breaking their IPL

title drought last year, picking up 22 wickets at 17.54, the most for his team. Hazlewood is likely to be joined on the late arrivals' list for the IPL by fellow Australian fast bowling elite in Pat Cummins, who too is not expected to feature in Sunrisers Hyderabad's opening few matches, which includes a clash against Hazlewood's RCB on the opening night of the season on March 28. The SRH captain only played a solitary Test during the Ashes, at the Adelaide Oval in mid-December, having been in



rehabilitation from a niggling back injury that he picked up last July in the Caribbean. Both Hazlewood and Cummins subsequently

had been ruled out of the T20 World Cup, where Australia bowed out eventually in the first round. The Cricket Australia medical staff

have monitored their two mainstays very closely over the last few months, and they continue to do so, leaving a bit of a cloud over the duo's exact

availability for their respective IPL franchises. Even if for now, they remain very much in the mix to play a decent chunk of the season. Hazlewood has emerged in the last few seasons as being one of the premier fast bowlers in T20 cricket. He also looked at his devastating best with the ball in the white-ball games against India prior to the Ashes. Cummins, meanwhile, has played a significant role as leader for the Hyderabad franchise, taking them to the final two years ago. And he forms a vital cog of their bowling

attack. Some reports in India have already suggested that the Sunrisers are looking for a stand-in to take over the reins in Cummins' absence. The Australian selectors were categorical in their support of the two senior players when it comes to them prioritising the national team over IPL commitments in the wake of them missing out on the World Cup. "It's a timing issue. If it was in reverse, the IPL was first and the World Cup was second, then they'd be missing the IPL to play in the World Cup. It's not going to be

frustrating for us at all. We know their commitment to want to play and succeed for Australia," selector Tony Dodemaide had said back in February. Australia will need Cummins and Hazlewood to be at their peak fitness from August onwards as they embark upon a hectic run for nearly 16 months, which will include away Test tours to South Africa, India and England alongside the 2027 ODI World Cup in Africa. Most of the other Australian players bound for the IPL are scheduled to fly out to India later this week, with a couple of them leaving on Saturday.

## CSK plan mega reunion at Chepauk on March 22

**NEWDELHI:** A Chennai Super Kings reunion will be held in Chennai on March 22, with the franchise inviting several of its former players, including those currently associated with other IPL teams. Among those who have confirmed participation are Muttiah Muralitharan (Sunrisers Hyderabad), Matthew Hayden (Gujarat Titans) and Dwayne Bravo (Kolkata Knight Riders).

There was an element of curiosity among the IPL teams when word got out about the planned function, leading to chatter that there, possibly, may be a major announcement. However, franchise officials were quick to clarify that it is merely a formal pre-IPL do, to mark the launch of the season.

"It is just a pre-launch for the season and an exercise in fan



engagement. There is nothing more to read into it," Chennai Super Kings CEO Kasi Viswanathan clarified to Cricbuzz, confirming that several former players - largely Indian and those who have represented the franchise over the past 16 seasons - will be present. Around 19-20 former players are expected to attend, in addition to the current squad and support staff. In typical Chennai Super Kings

style, the event is expected to be a grand affair, running from 4 pm to 9 pm at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, with a segment reserved for a performance by Oscar-winning music director AR Rahman. The franchise has reached out to other teams to check if their coaching staff can be released for a day. Muralitharan, who is currently in India for the SunRisers Hyderabad

camp, has confirmed attendance. "He will be travelling to Sri Lanka tomorrow and may attend on his return," a source close to the Sri Lankan legend said. CSK and SunRisers Hyderabad were recently involved in a court case over the use of Rajinikanth songs and alleged copyright infringement. Among others, Suresh Raina - a CSK legend popularly known as

'Chinna Thala' - has confirmed his presence, while R Ashwin, who began his career with the franchise, is unlikely to attend as he will be out of Chennai. "He will be out of town," Viswanathan said, a detail also confirmed by sources close to the player. By the day of the event, Sanju Samson and Shivam Dube - members of India's victorious T20 World Cup-winning side - will have joined the camp, which has been underway in Chennai since March 1.

The Super Kings begin their IPL 2026 campaign with an away fixture against Rajasthan Royals in Guwahati on March 30. Their first home fixture is against Punjab Kings on April 3. CSK are among the most popular franchises of the league, having won the title five times with their talisman MS Dhoni hailed as an all-time IPL great.

## India vs Pakistan set for Men's Hockey World Cup 2026, arch-rivals grouped together



**NEWDELHI:** The Indian men's hockey team are all set to renew their rivalry with Pakistan in hockey as the arch-rivals have been grouped together for the upcoming men's Hockey World Cup 2026 in August. India and Pakistan are in Pool D, alongside England and Wales, and will play their matches in the Netherlands. The Indian women's team also face a tricky lineup at the Women's World Cup, being drawn

in Pool D alongside China, England and South Africa. The full schedule is set to be announced soon, with all eyes on the date for the India vs Pakistan clash on the men's side of things. India have been unbeaten against Pakistan in men's hockey since 2016, with their last meeting coming during 2024 during the Asian Champions Trophy. Both teams were supposed to face off in the Asia Cup 2025 in Rajgir, Bihar, before Pakistan decided to pull

out of the tournament, citing security concerns. India went on to win the title and secure their spot in the World Cup. Pakistan hockey endured a testing past few months after the players were subjected to an embarrassing ordeal during the Australia tour of their Hockey Pro League leg. However, they were able to turn things around in Egypt during the World Cup qualifiers and made it to the tournament for the first time in eight years. India have a superior head-to-head record over Pakistan since 2013, winning 17 out of their 26 matches. The Indian women's team also secured their passage into the World Cup through the qualifiers and will look to continue their resurgence in Sjoerd Marijne's second stint as coach.

## Bangladesh's T20 WC snub: Sports ministry to form another committee for investigation

**DHAKA:** A day after Bangladesh Cricket Board asked the sports ministry to shut the investigation committee, Bangladesh state minister for youth and sports Aminul Haque announced that they will form another investigation committee to find out whether skipping the just-concluded ICC Twenty20 World Cup was a diplomatic failure. The announcement will surely come as a big blow for the BCB higher-ups as well as current board president Aminul Islam, considering he played a key role in stopping Bangladesh from taking part in the showpiece event, citing security reasons. Bangladesh were eventually replaced by Scotland in the showpiece event.

Aminul, who had earlier insisted that he is keen on reviving the relationship with India, said that the inquiry committee will focus on identifying the root causes of the snub,



with specific emphasis on finding out whether it was a failure on the sports diplomacy front. "I have already spoken about these issues - why we could not participate in World Cup cricket and where exactly our shortcomings in sports diplomacy lay. These are matters we must thoroughly examine." "Perhaps after Eid, I will form an inquiry committee (to find out the reason behind not taking part in the ICC T20 World Cup) and based on its findings, we will take the necessary steps," he said. "In my view, we need to further strengthen our sports diplomacy because sports is a platform

where, beyond all divisions and political ideologies, we can unite as a nation," he said. "So, we must ensure that such mistakes are not repeated in the future and that through sports diplomacy, we maintain friendly relations and preserve a healthy sporting environment," he said. Aminul added that they formed the investigation committee after receiving complaints from different stakeholders regarding irregularities in the last BCB election. "At this point, I would like to mention that during the previous government's tenure, there was direct interference in the cricket board elections from the

government's side - something you are all aware of. I myself spoke about this several times back then. But after we assumed responsibility, various complaints came in from stakeholders involved in cricket - from clubs and from district levels. Taking these into consideration, we formed an inquiry committee, and I am currently awaiting its report," Aminul said. "As I mentioned earlier, specific directives have already been given to the inquiry committee through the National Sports Council. They have been instructed to speak with everyone involved in the election process - including the election commission, the current cricket board

president, the directors, and the CEO," he said. "They have also been asked to consult district administrators who sent councillors from their respective districts. In some cases, we have seen that district administrators initially nominated one councillor and later changed their decision by sending another letter." "These are allegations and questionable issues that have come to our attention. In my opinion, these matters require a completely impartial investigation. Once the investigation is completed and the report is submitted, I will review it, consult with the members of the inquiry committee, and also speak directly with the ICC before taking any further steps," he added. "Once the report is submitted, we will review it carefully and then, after speaking with the ICC, take the next course of action. Until then, I believe it is best not to comment further on this matter," he added.

## Vinicius Jr hits brace as Real Madrid dump 10-man City out of Champions League

**NEWDELHI:** Vinicius Jr. scored a fantastic brace as Real Madrid eased past Manchester City 2-1 and dumped Pep Guardiola's team out of the UEFA Champions League. Arsenal reached the quarterfinals of the competition after they beat Bayer Leverkusen 2-0 at home and won the tie 3-1 on aggregate. Bodo/Glimt's fairytale run in the Champions League came to an end as Sporting Lisbon thrashed them 5-0 after extra-time to complete a 5-3 aggregate win. Defending champions Paris Saint-Germain piled on the misery on Liam Rosenior and Chelsea as they beat the Blues 3-0 to record an 8-2 aggregate win and move to the quarterfinals. The spotlight on Tuesday, March 17, was firmly on Vinicius and Los Blancos, who eliminated City from the competition for the third consecutive season. Busy with film names:



Onir's dig at CBFC silence over new Nora Fatehi song. The Brazilian put Madrid in front from the spot after Bernardo Silva was deemed to have handled the ball inside his own box. This also meant that the home side were reduced to 10 men. Vini jr. got a measure of revenge against the City fans as he celebrated with a crying gesture. In 2024, the City fans unveiled a banner telling the Brazilian to stop crying after Rodri won the Ballon d'Or. "The last time we came here, the Manchester City fans (who put up a banner that read 'Stop crying' after Rodri won the 2024 Ballon d'Or

ahead of the Brazilian) were making fun of me," Vinicius said. "I wasn't disrespecting City fans but it was a way for me to prove myself to them." But City weren't ready to give up without a fight. Erling Haaland levelled the score in the 41st minute, but the tie was heavily in favour of Alvaro Arbeloa's men, who had won their home leg tie 3-0. Second-half drama saw goals from Manchester City duo Jeremy Doku and Rayan Ait-Nouri, along with Real Madrid's Federico Valverde and Vinicius Jr, all ruled out. However, Vinicius had the final say, striking from close range in the 93rd minute to seal his brace.