

## Severe cyclone Dana moves closer to Odisha coast, evacuation efforts expedited

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** Severe cyclonic storm Dana lay within 200 km of the Odisha coast Thursday afternoon, as several parts of the state experienced heavy rain and squally winds, with the sea condition remaining rough, the IMD said.

The state government also expedited evacuation efforts in the coastal districts, as Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi held a review meeting and directed officials to ensure "zero casualty" due to the natural calamity.

The cyclone is likely to make landfall between Puri and Sagar Island close to Bhitarkanika National Park and Dhamra Port in

Odisha early Friday with wind speeds of up to 120 kilometres per hour (kmph), the Met Department said.

The weather system over the Bay of Bengal moved north-northwestwards with a speed of 12 kmph during past the six hours, and lay centred about 210 km southeast of Paradip (Odisha), 240 km south-southeast of Dhamra (Odisha) and 310 km south of Sagar Island (West Bengal), the IMD said its latest bulletin.

"It is very likely to move north-northwestwards and cross north Odisha and West Bengal coasts between Puri and Sagar Island close to Bhitarkanika National Park and Dhamra Port in

during midnight of 24th to morning of 25th October as a severe cyclonic storm with a wind speed of 100-110 kmph gusting to 120 kmph," it said.

Reports about uprooting of trees have been received from some areas of Balasore, Bhadrak, Bhitarkanika and Puri, leading to blocked roads, officials said.

Majhi said about three lakh people have been shifted to various cyclone shelters and the operation is continuing.

A total of 7,285 cyclone centres have so far been set up, and 91 medical teams deployed.

The authorities have also engaged 19 teams of the NDRF, 51 teams of the



ODRAF and fire services personnel in shifting people and clearing blocked roads, the officials said. The highest rainfall of 62 mm was recorded at Paradip, while Rajnagar in Kendrapara district received 24 mm rain, in the last four hours, the Met office said.

Moderate to intense rain and thunderstorms with wind speeds of 30-40 kmph are likely to lash some parts of Bhadrak, Balasore, Jajpur, Cuttack, Khurda, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapada and Puri districts during the day, it said.

Director of the Regional Meteorological Centre, Bhubaneswar, Manorama Mohanty said: "The severe cyclonic

storm is likely to re-curve slightly towards west and west-southwards after landfall, triggering rain in southern Odisha around October 26. However, the landfall and wind speed predictions remain unchanged." Meanwhile, the IMD issued a 'red warning' (take action) for heavy to very heavy rainfall in seven districts – Mayurbhanj, Cuttack, Jajpur, Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur – Thursday.

An 'orange warning' (be prepared to take action) has been sounded in five districts for heavy rain, including Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh and Dhenkanal for the period.

**Scientists suggest ways to Odisha paddy farmers for minimising loss due to Cyclone Dana**



## Cyclone Dana: Odisha CM Mohan Majhi says all necessary preparations completed to face impact



**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Thursday said that all the necessary preparations to achieve zero casualties and tackle the impact of the impending severe cyclonic storm 'Dana' has been completed.

CM Majhi held discussions with the Collectors of Ganjam, Puri, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Bhadrak, Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Cuttack, Khordha and Jajpur over the progress regarding preparations for cyclone 'Dana' which is fast approaching the Odisha coast.

While addressing the mediapersons after reviewing the cyclone preparations here Thursday, CM Majhi said that the Central government has contacted the state administration and assured to provide all the necessary assistance.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held discussions on

the cyclone 'Dana' and the preparations by the Odisha government to tackle the situation during the Union Cabinet meeting in Delhi on Thursday.

The Union Ministers apprised the Prime Minister about the situation.

The Prime Minister also expressed satisfaction over the preparations made by the state government.

He said the Centre has also provided the number of NDRF teams sought by the state. The NDRF units have reached and have already been deployed in the affected

places. CM Majhi also noted that 1,653 villages in 38 blocks, and 26 wards in nine municipalities in 11 districts are expected to experience the impact of the severe cyclonic storm 'Dana'.

The government has targeted to evacuate 3,62,000 people residing in the low-lying and vulnerable areas in the affected districts.

The Chief Minister also asserted that more than 3 lakh people have safely been shifted to the cyclone shelters till Thursday 11am.

He assured that the

evacuation process would be completed within the next few hours.

CM Majhi said that 2,338 pregnant women have also been shifted to the nearest hospitals and medical facilities.

As many as 842 permanent cyclone shelters and 6,443 temporary relief centres have been made operational to accommodate the evacuated people.

Notably, 'Dana' lay centred over the Bay of Bengal, about 180 km southeast of Paradip, 210 km south-southeast of Dhamra (Odisha) and 270 km south of Sagar Island (West Bengal) is very likely to move north-northwestwards and cross Odisha and West Bengal coasts between Puri and Sagar Island close to Bhitarkanika and Dhamra (Odisha)

During the midnight of October 24 to morning of October 25 as a severe cyclonic storm with a wind speed of 100-110 kmph gusting up to 120 kmph.

cyclonic storm 'Dana', hasn't been developed yet.

Mohapatra said that the 'eye' is formed when a cyclonic system becomes very strong. The cyclonic storm

formed over the Bay of Bengal has remained a severe cyclone and continued to move forward as predicted by the IMD.

As many as 19 National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), 51 Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) and 220 Odisha Fire Services teams have been deployed in affected districts. This apart, 157 platoons of the state police force have also been stationed in these districts.

Meanwhile, India Meteorological Department (IMD) Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said that the 'eye' (centre of the cyclonic storm) of severe cyclonic storm 'Dana' has not yet formed. The cyclonic storm 'Dana' is expected to move north-northwestwards and cross Odisha and West Bengal coasts between Puri and Sagar Island close to Bhitarkanika and Dhamra (Odisha) during the midnight of October 24 to morning of October 25 as a severe cyclonic storm with a wind speed of 100-110 kmph gusting up to 120 kmph.

Security has been tightened at the airport, he added.

## Bomb hoax at Bhubaneswar airport, security beefed up

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):**

A threat about the presence of bombs on an Akasa Air flight in Bhubaneswar airport was received on social media, but it later turned out to be a hoax, an official of the airport said Thursday.

Security was beefed up at the Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here after the incident, he said.

"We have received a hoax threat on 'X' that bombs have been fixed on an Akasa Air flight. Following standard operating procedure (SOP), we have cleared the flight and it departed for its destination," BPIA Director Prasanna Mohanty said.

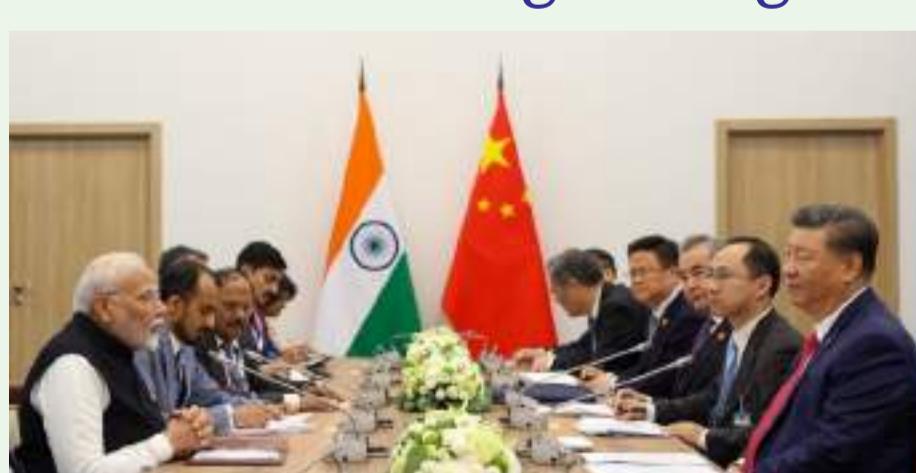
Security has been tightened at the airport, he added.

**Cuttack(KCN):** Apprehending that paddy farmers in the coastal districts of Odisha would suffer heavy losses due to the rain-induced by cyclone Dana, agriculture scientists have suggested ways to reduce damage to the standing and harvested crops.

At least eight districts of the state – Ganjam, Puri, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Bhadrak, Balasore and Mayurbhanj – are likely to experience heavy rainfall and the standing paddy crops in those areas may be submerged. In view of this, the National Rice Research Institute (NRRI) under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research has come out with an advisory in which the scientists have urged the paddy farmers to take precautionary measures to minimise crop loss.

NRRI Director Dr AK Nayak said the farmers should not panic over the situation and follow the advisory sincerely. Among others, scientists have asked farmers to keep drainage channels open in non-mature paddy crops to drain the excess water out of fields to minimise the loss due to waterlogging. "Harvested rice should also be properly stacked at safer places and covered with tarpaulin to avoid further damage due to prolonged rainfall," the advisory said. It suggested that after the rain stops, the farmers should immediately dry the rice grains under the sun for one or two days to reduce the moisture content and then store the grains in good quality bags to retain their quality, texture, colour, aroma and taste for a longer period.

## Modi, Xi meeting in Kazan carries 'great significance' to improve ties: China



**Beijing(KCN):** China Thursday said the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Russia's Kazan Wednesday carries a 'great significance' as they reached an "important common understandings" to improve the bilateral ties.

"They reached important common understandings on improving and developing China-India relations and set the course to steer bilateral relations back on the path of steady development", Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a media briefing here.

Replies to a question on how Beijing viewed the outcome of the meeting, Lin said, China stands ready to work with India to view and handle the

bilateral relations from a strategic height and long-term perspective. China is also ready to step up communication and cooperation, enhance strategic mutual trust, properly handle differences, and bring bilateral relations back to the path of steady development as soon as possible, Lin said.

Modi and Xi, who met on the sidelines of the BRICS summit at Kazan, endorsed Monday's India-China agreement on patrolling and disengagement along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

Following it, directions were issued to revive various bilateral dialogue mechanisms, signalling attempts to normalise ties that were hit by a deadly

military clash in 2020. Asked about a Chinese official media report stating that "Modi made suggestions on improving and developing the relationship, which Xi agreed to in principle", Lin said "both sides were of the view that this meeting is constructive and carries great significance".

"They agreed to view

and handle China-India relations from a strategic height and long-term perspective, prevent specific disagreements from affecting the overall relationship, and contribute to maintaining regional and global peace and prosperity and to advancing multipolarity in the world," he said.

The two sides agreed to strengthen

mechanism on the China-India boundary question, ensure peace and tranquility in the border areas, find a fair and reasonable settlement, step up communication and cooperation in multilateral fora, and safeguard the common interests of developing countries," the spokesperson said.

The Special Representative mechanism, currently headed by National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, played a key role in the past to develop and improve the relations since it was set up in 2003 with 22 meetings to address the boundary question. The last meeting between Doval and Wang under the

mechanism was held in 2019.

Relations between the two countries nosedived after the May 2020 incursion by the Chinese military in eastern Ladakh in which the People Liberation Army (PLA) moved a large number of troops exercising in the vicinity to the LAC, which was followed by the fierce clash in the Galwan Valley that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades. Monday, India and China firmed up an agreement on patrolling and disengagement of troops along the LAC in eastern Ladakh, in a major breakthrough to end the over four-year standoff. On the meeting between the two leaders, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri,

at a media briefing at Kazan, said that both Modi and Xi stressed that India and China can have a "peaceful, stable and beneficial bilateral relationship" with maturity and wisdom, and by showing mutual respect for each other's sensitivities, interests, concerns and aspirations. Referring to New Delhi's consistent position on the eastern Ladakh row, Misri said restoration of peace and tranquillity in the border areas will create space for returning towards the path of normalisation of bilateral relations between the two sides. In the coming weeks and months, both the countries are expected to revive the ties with a flurry of high-level visits to improve the relations on all fronts.

# Community Radios of Odisha Go Full Throttle as Cyclone DANA Approaches

**Bhubaneswar, (KCN):** As Cyclone DANA inches closer to the Odisha coast, the state's coastal community radio stations have shifted into high gear, working tirelessly to safeguard vulnerable communities. These grassroots media outlets, led by the Odisha Community Radio Association and its President, S. A. Safique, are at the forefront of disaster communication, actively broadcasting critical updates, safety advisories, and government instructions. Key stakeholders, including prominent stations such as Radio Namaskar (Konark), Radio Outreach (Tirtol), Radio Swaraj (Jajpur), Radio Sampark (Nischintakoli), and Radio Bulbul (Bhadrak), reinforced their commitment to providing reliable information and coordinating relief efforts. Senior broadcaster and community radio specialist N. A. Shah Ansari and association secretary Subrat Kumar Pati contributed

significantly to this operation. The participating stations have been working closely with the government agencies to ensure that communities, especially in remote and cyclone-prone areas, receive accurate and timely information. With Cyclone DANA predicted to make landfall tonight, their efforts have intensified. **Coastal Community Radios in Action** Since the cyclone warnings began, these community radios have been disseminating life-saving messages on evacuation routes, shelter locations, and emergency contacts. The stations are actively collaborating with local administrations and disaster response teams to ensure that people in at-risk areas are well-prepared for the cyclone's impact. Many of these radios are also engaging with local listener groups, who are volunteering in cyclone shelters to assist their communities. These listener groups, equipped with training in disaster preparedness, are helping

to manage evacuation procedures and ensuring that the most vulnerable individuals, including the elderly and disabled, are given priority. **Radio Namaskar (Konark)**, a leader in disaster communication, has been relaying important announcements from the Revenue Department, OSDMA and Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) to over 700 villages, reaching thousands of residents with vital updates. Similarly, Radio Smile (Baliapal) and Radio Sparsh (Basta) are

actively communicating with residents in the northern coastal regions, where the cyclone's effects are expected to be severe. **Combating Misinformation** One of the most pressing concerns during any disaster is the spread of misinformation, which can cause panic and confusion. Recognizing this, the community radio stations have collectively committed to a "no fake news" policy. Each station is verifying all information with official government sources before broadcasting,

ensuring that their audiences receive only accurate, fact-checked updates. This coordinated effort to curb the spread of rumors is a critical component of the cyclone response strategy. By promoting trust and delivering clear, authoritative information, the radios are playing a key role in keeping people calm and informed as the cyclone approaches. **Collaboration with Government and Agencies** Throughout the pre-cyclone phase, community radios have been calling for stronger

support and coordination from government authorities. While they continue to work in close collaboration with local disaster management teams, the stations have urged the state government for more direct access to real-time data and emergency updates. Such coordination, they argue, will enhance the speed and accuracy of the information they can relay to the public. These stations are also advocating for more comprehensive integration into the state's official disaster

communication plans, given their unique ability to reach isolated communities where mainstream media may be inaccessible. **Community** With their hyper-local focus, these community radio stations continue to serve as a lifeline for Odisha's coastal communities. Their tireless efforts in the face of Cyclone DANA showcase the pivotal role that grassroots media can play in disaster response and community resilience. As senior broadcaster N. A. Shah Ansari put it, "Community radios are the first line of communication for our most vulnerable populations. In times of crisis like Cyclone DANA, we are not just broadcasters—we are lifelines. Our mission is to ensure that every person, no matter how remote, is informed, prepared, and protected."

As the cyclone approaches, the coordinated work of these stations alongside government bodies is expected to minimize the cyclone's impact, saving lives and ensuring that the people of Odisha are equipped to weather the storm.

A Lifeline for the



## Paralakhemundi Railway Station: A Key Amrit Station Development Underway



**Paralakhemundi, (KCN):** The Paralakhemundi Railway Station, one of the 57 Amrit Stations announced by the Ministry of Railways, is undergoing significant development with a total investment of about ₹12 crore. This initiative aims to enhance connectivity and improve passenger amenities in this historically rich region of Odisha. Paralakhemundi station is strategically located

near the Andhra Pradesh border, with the River Mahendra separating it from the neighboring town of Pathapatnam. The city is well-connected via State Highway 4 and National Highway 326A, linking key areas within Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. The railway connectivity is facilitated by a 90 km long broad gauge line from Gunpur to Naupada, part of the East Coast Railway network, which

plays a crucial role in regional transportation. The proposed development plan for Paralakhemundi Railway Station includes: A new Station Building (Ground Floor) covering 1375 sqm, featuring a commercial area of 72 sqm. A 12.0 m wide Foot Over Bridge, providing single-span access between platforms 1 and 2. Improvements to the circulating area spanning

14,326.9 sqm. A well-planned parking area accommodating 2711.9 sqm. Raising existing platforms to high level for enhanced accessibility. Platform shelters totaling 8 bays (6 bays on PF-1 and 2 bays on PF-2). Premium lounge (64 sqm), First Class Waiting Hall (36 sqm), and Second Class Waiting Hall (48 sqm). A new premium toilet block (104 sqm). As of now, the project has achieved 80% physical progress. This development underscores the commitment of Indian Railways to enhance infrastructure and services at key stations, ensuring that communities benefit from improved transportation facilities.

## JS (Broadcasting) informs on Formalities Regarding Auction of Third Batch of Private FM Radio Phase-III Channels in City

**Kolkata, (KCN):** For the rollout of 730 Private Radio channels in 234 uncovered new cities in India covering States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and so on, the Centre has issued a notice inviting applications from the prospective bidders for E-Auction of third batch of private FM Radio Phase-III channels, said, Joint Secretary (Broadcasting), Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Shri Sanjib Shankar here today. In West Bengal, the cities to be covered under this included, Alipurduar, Barampore, Balurghat, Bangaon, Bankura, Bardhaman,



Darjeeling, Dhulian, English Bazar (Malda), Kharagpur, Krishnanagar, Purulia and Raiganj. Annual License Fee of FM channels in these cities shall be charged as 4% of Gross Revenue excluding GST. The reserve price for auction of channels in these cities is as per the TRAI recommended prices of 2022. The last date for submitting applications is November 18, 2024. The

notice inviting applications was issued on October 14, 2024, Shri Shankar said. Auction will be held four days after the mock auction which will be held four or five days after pre-qualification of the bidders (December 20, 2024 or completion of requisite formalities, whichever is later. The complete Notice and the FM Phase-III Policy Guidelines is available on the website of Ministry of



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## Boman Irani wins Best Actor award at IFFSA Toronto film festival for The Mehta Boys



Veteran actor Boman Irani bagged the Best Actor Male award at IFFSA Toronto Film Festival for The Mehta Boys. The film also marked his directorial debut.

The Mehta Boys, co-written with Alexander Dinelaris Jr, releases on Prime Video soon

Bollywood actor Boman Irani has been awarded the Best Actor Male in the feature film category at the International Film Festival of South Asia (IFFSA) Toronto Film Festival for his outstanding work in his latest film The Mehta Boys.

After being honoured with the South Asian Film Association (SAFA) award at the Chicago South Asian Film Festival on September 20, now Irani has added another accolade to his name for The Mehta Boys.

In The Mehta Boys, Boman Irani delivers a compelling performance, capturing the complex emotional dynamics of a father-son relationship with humour and depth. His powerful portrayal has resonated with audiences, earning him well-deserved recognition at various film festivals.

Boman shared a post on Instagram after having won the prestigious award. The caption read, "Best Actor Male Feature Film – Boman Irani for The Mehta Boys. Boman Irani brings to life a complex character with a deft blend of humour and depth, engaging audiences from the very first scene (sic)."

Boman Irani not only directed but also wrote and produced the Prime Video Original film. He co-wrote it with Oscar-winning writer Alexander Dinelaris Jr, known for his work on the 2014 Oscar-winning film Birdman.

## Actor Anjini Dhawan on Salman Khan's Sikandar, working with 'bhaiya' Varun



Actor Anjini Dhawan, who also happens to be Bollywood star Varun Dhawan's niece, spoke to India Today Digital about her debut film, working with Salman Khan and more in an exclusive chat. The actor expressed her desire to work with Varun Dhawan, Ranbir Kapoor and Ranveer Singh. Actor Anjini Dhawan made her big screen debut with Binny And Family. The actor received praise for her

acting in the film, also starring Pankaj Kapur and Himani Shivpuri. Even before she made her showbiz debut, Anjini was signed on to feature in Salman Khan's Sikandar. In an exclusive chat with India Today Digital, Anjini reacted to reports of her being in Sikandar, her family's reaction to her debut performance, Anjini shared that everyone was emotional. Anjini's cousin and Bollywood star Varun Dhawan accompanied Anjini during the trailer launch of the film. Anjini described that

be an "emotional" moment for her. She said, "I needed him that day. I was so scared. That was the day I was most nervous. First time facing the media, I was all over the place that day."

Elaborating on his and family members' reaction to her performance, the junior Dhawan added, "I think everyone in the family was very emotional watching the movie. They all came out crying."

Lastly, when asked about her bucket list of actors to work with, Anjini said that she wants to work with everyone. However, when prodded to give names, she said, "I want to work with Ranbir Kapoor, Ranveer Singh, Vikrant Massey. I, of course, want to work with Varun bhaiya. I think we would have so much fun in a film together. I think someone should make that film."

Binny and Family is currently in theatres.

## Leo Advance Booking: Vijay's Action-Thriller To Become Highest Tamil Opener In UK



surpass the current single-day earnings for an INDIAN film in #UK, a record presently held #PS1. #Leo is targeting to

The Lokesh Kanagaraj premiere shows. As directorial has begun on an excellent start and has already crossed USD 100K in the US for the

gross. 'Leo' is all set to arrive in theatres worldwide on October 19. The much-awaited film stars Vijay and Trisha, alongside Sanjay Dutt, Arjun Sarja, Gautham Vasudev Menon, Mansoor Ali Khan and Mysskin. The film was officially announced in January 2023 with tentative title 'Thalapathy 67', as it is Vijay's 67th film as a lead actor. Apart from Tamil, it is expected to be released in dubbed versions including Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi languages.

## Aditi Rao Hydari: 'Been told I'm fragile like glass'



of the way I look or the way I am or the parts I have played, usually the fragile, feminine, petite girl. Often people say, 'oh, she will just blow away.' Or 'oh she is like glass, if you touch, she will break.' Today, I own it and I am what I am. It is not a burden for me, but if it is for you, then you need to figure it out. Secondly, my vulnerability is my strength.' Aditi then elaborated on why she feels Bhansali manages to show women with their flaws, strength and vulnerabilities alike: "I also feel it is also about directors who bring that out in an actor. To have a vision and say that there are different kinds of strengths. I'm so happy that I lived this life of Bibbo Jaan because it was literally like 'here is a girl who

'silly' things actresses hear for any project they are offered, like 'you are too beautiful'. Responding to it, she shared, "That's so silly. It is somebody's insecurity that is speaking because it is such a silly thing to say about somebody. A person is how they look, but there is more to the person. There are directors who create very beautiful female characters, and in this case, like Sanjay Bhansali, he doesn't look at a woman as a one-tone character. Bibbo could have been a sweet and obedient girl, but the fact that she has this arc, shows how he looks at women as complete beings."

The actor also

questioned why many in the industry fail to look at an artist as an artist: "I have 100 per cent been told that you are too beautiful for this role. But I am a person. I am a sum total of many things."

Aditi quipped, "Also, why is this a problem? You don't tell somebody that 'you act too well'. It doesn't make sense. But that is also being heard now, oh 'that girl is too good an actor, she will outshine the others.' It has not been told to me, but I have heard this as well. It just doesn't make sense. It means your intentions aren't pure."

'Heeramandi' is currently streaming on Netflix. It also features Manisha Koirala, Sonakshi Sinha, Sanjeeda Shaikh, Richa Chadha and Sharmi Segal in pivotal roles.

# Save the Endangered Fishing Cat



The fishing cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*) is listed as "Vulnerable" on the IUCN Red List, with populations facing a continuing decline due to habitat destruction, poaching, and human-wildlife conflict. The Sunderbans, a unique mangrove ecosystem spanning West Bengal (India) and Bangladesh, is one of the most crucial habitats for this species. Here's the current status of fishing cats across the region:

#### West Bengal (India)

**Habitat:** The Sunderbans of West

Bengal offer an ideal environment for fishing cats due to the extensive wetlands and dense mangrove forests. Fishing cats are adept at living in this environment, thriving near water bodies and wetlands. Population Trends: Recent studies suggest that while fishing cats are present in the region, their population has faced a decline due to habitat fragmentation caused by human settlements, agriculture, aquaculture (shrimp farming), and deforestation.

**Conservation Efforts:** The West Bengal government, along with local NGOs and wildlife organizations like the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and the

Population Trends:

Fishing Cat Project, is working on conservation initiatives, including habitat protection, awareness programs, and mitigating human-wildlife conflict. Camera trap surveys and community engagement have been crucial in tracking populations and reducing threats to fishing cats.

#### Bangladesh

**Habitat:** In Bangladesh, the fishing cat's range overlaps with the Bangladeshi Sundarbans, an extensive mangrove ecosystem. However, like in West Bengal, their habitat is also shrinking due to human encroachment, agricultural expansion, and aquaculture.

**Conservation Efforts:** The West Bengal government, along with local NGOs and wildlife organizations like the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and the



Saikat Kumar Basu

Research on fishing cats in Bangladesh has been limited. However, recent assessments suggest a similar decline as in West Bengal, with fishing cats increasingly coming into conflict with humans. This is largely due to the loss of wetland habitats and retaliatory killings by local communities when the cats prey on

livestock or partnerships, have focused on aquaculture farms. Conservation Efforts: Conservation work in Bangladesh is focused on habitat restoration, preventing poaching, and educating local communities about the importance of preserving the species.

**Threats Across the Sunderbans**

**Habitat Loss:** Rapid expansion of human settlements, aquaculture

(especially shrimp farming), and conversion of wetlands into agricultural fields are major causes of habitat destruction. Human-Wildlife Conflict: Fishing cats often prey on poultry and fish from farms, leading to retaliatory killings by locals. Poaching: Though illegal, poaching for pelts and the pet trade is a concern.

**Climate Change:** Rising sea levels and increased salinity in the Sunderbans, a consequence of climate change, threaten the mangrove ecosystem, further reducing suitable habitats for the fishing cat.

**Conservation Outlook**

Despite ongoing threats, there is hope

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# Let's be aware about polio



a great need for people's awareness and people's cooperation. In this fight to eliminate polio, where every country works for its citizens, there is brotherly support for those countries, which are still struggling with the disease of polio. Polio is still not completely eradicated, so on this day important information related to polio is conveyed to the people and it is told that work is going on to eradicate polio. It is a matter of happiness for us that our country India Polio free was declared in January 2014 and this has been possible only by the health department carrying out effective medicine to the children by going door to door with great care and responsibility.

**History of World Polio Day:** World Polio Day is celebrated on 24th October to commemorate the memory of Jonas Salk on his birthday. Jones Salk was the first person to form the first team to develop an inactivated polio vaccine. This day is celebrated all over the world. On this day, health department as well as many organizations and community leaders play their role in polio awareness and the main objective of all countries is to eradicate polio from their respective countries.

Could polio make a comeback? Vaccines are effective. There are discussions regarding the concepts of "enhancing our

**By: Surjit Singh Flora**

school, there are numerous exemptions available. There are a greater number of unvaccinated individuals, which increases the likelihood of someone who is not immune being exposed to the virus. Especially since an individual can board a plane and visit locations where polio vaccination has not

realized. Endeavors are underway, and victory is within reach. The eradication of tuberculosis presents significant challenges, yet it remains an attainable goal. A considerable number of nations have approached their objectives with remarkable proximity. The Government of

experiencing a resurgence. There are compelling grounds for optimism, as we may soon triumph over these ailments, much like we have successfully done with smallpox, neonatal tetanus, and several others. Will polio continue to exist in 2024? It is 2022, and indeed,

inactivated polio vaccine (IPV), created by Jonas Salk in 1954, which is given via injection and provides immunity with a single dose, and the oral polio vaccine (OPV), developed by Albert Sabin in 1961, which includes live strains of the virus and is simpler to administer compared to the Salk vaccine.

I stood in a long line of school kids gathered to receive a new "polio vaccine." As children, we were not pleased with that. We were quite taken aback when we walked into the gymnasium and found tables adorned with sugar cubes, each embellished with a splash of red liquid, lol. Indeed, administering the OPV polio vaccine is considerably simpler. No need for refrigeration, no tears evoked.

Regrettably, the older attenuated OPV polio vaccine that I received had a tendency to result in approximately 3 cases of paralysis for every million doses administered. This is the reason we transitioned to an inactivated polio vaccine in 2000, which does not carry that risk. In comparison, the polio virus leads to approximately 5000 instances of paralysis for every million cases.

It's important to ensure your children receive their polio vaccination. What is polio? Polio is a deadly disease that spreads quite rapidly. This disease mostly affects children. Polio directly attacks the brain and spinal cord. Due to this disease, a



are designed to serve that purpose. The adaptive immunity generated through an antibody response to the polio vaccine has significantly contributed to the near extinction of polio worldwide. However, vaccines are effective only when they are administered to individuals. Polio is making a comeback due to the vastness of the world and the numerous locations where the virus can stay concealed. Polio has not been completely eradicated. At the same time, while the polio vaccine is required for children to attend public

been universally administered. We have observed groups of unvaccinated individuals, including those with religious and health exemptions, among whom outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases such as whooping cough, measles, and mumps are, unfortunately, happening more frequently. Polio is on the verge of eradication. Had certain hardliners comprehended the seriousness of the situation and had additional efforts been exerted, eradication could have been

India is exerting comprehensive efforts to overcome this significant adversary of humanity. The primary elements of this initiative encompass early detection, appropriate notification, and adherence to treatment protocols. The identification and management of drug-resistant cases present a significant challenge, as these individuals are likely to contribute to the emergence of new and complex cases. It is inaccurate to assert that Polio and Tuberculosis, once considered diseases of the past, are it continues to exist. This situation arose mainly because a few countries were reluctant to vaccinate their children, as many individuals believed that their DNA was being taken. Health workers were indeed attacked and killed! I have my eyes on you, Afghanistan and Pakistan. In those two countries, it remains endemic. Given the absence of a cure for polio, public health officials have concentrated their efforts on mass immunization to manage the disease. There are two widely used polio vaccines: the

**veteran journalist  
and freelance writer  
based in Brampton  
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# Cabinet approves two Railway projects worth Rs 6,798 crore to be completed in 5 years

Projects to provide connectivity, facilitate ease of travelling, minimize logistics cost, reduce oil imports and lower CO2 emissions

**New Delhi, (KCN):** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved Two Railway projects of Ministry of Railways with total estimated cost of Rs.6,798 crore (approx.). Two approved projects are – (a) doubling of Narkatiaganj-Raxaul-Sitamarhi-Darbhanga & Sitamarhi-Muzaffarpur Section covering 256 kms and (b) construction of new line between Errupalem and Namburu via Amaravati covering 57 kms to be completed in 5 years. The projects will generate direct employment for about 106 lakh human-days. The doubling of Narkatiaganj-Raxaul-Sitamarhi-Darbhanga & Sitamarhi-Muzaffarpur Section will strengthen



the connectivity to Nepal, North-east India and Border areas and facilitating movement of passenger trains along with goods train resulting in the socio-economic growth of the region. The new rail line project Errupalem-Amaravati-Namburu traverses through NTR Vijayawada and Guntur districts of Andhra Pradesh and Khammam district of Telangana. The Two projects covering 8 Districts in 3 States i.e., Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and

## Field School visited Palta Water Treatment Plant: Navigating River Sustainability

**Kolkata, (KCN):** In a significant event hosted by the ICAR-Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute (CIFRI), a Field School focused on the intricate Food-Energy-Water Nexus in River Ecosystems took place, shedding light on the sustainable management of the River Ganga. The session featured a compelling presentation by Dr. Basanta Kumar Das, Director, ICAR-CIFRI, who outlined the institute's initiatives aimed at preserving this vital waterway River Ganga. The discussions highlighted the complex socio-ecological conflicts arising from competing demands on the Ganga's resources, stressing the critical need for community engagement in decision-making processes. Scientists from the institute emphasized that involving local communities is essential



These models are vital for understanding how to manage the river's resources effectively, especially given the increasing pressures from various sectors. Additionally, the importance of trade-off analysis was discussed as a means to balance development needs with conservation efforts. This approach aims to navigate the complexities of resource allocation while ensuring the long-term

health of the river ecosystem. Participants had the opportunity to visit the Palta Water Treatment Plant facility, gaining first-hand insight into the River Ganga's role in providing drinking water, which is a crucial provisioning service for millions of people. This experience reinforced the river's significance not just as an ecological resource, but also as a lifeline for local communities. Overall, the field school provided an insightful platform for discussing the vital work being undertaken to foster the sustainable development of the Ganga, highlighting the collaborative efforts needed to ensure its health and viability for future generations. As the challenges facing River Ganga continue to evolve, initiatives like this one play a crucial role in promoting informed decision-making and sustainable practices among stakeholders.

## National Tax Conference 2024: Uniting the Tax Professionals of India

**Kolkata, (KCN):** The All-India Federation of Tax Practitioners (AIFTP) in collaboration with GSTPAM, Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce Industry & Agriculture, Tax Consultants' Association, is organizing National Tax Conference on October 26th & 27th, 2024, at Hotel Sayaji, Kolhapur. It will be inaugurated by Shri Lalit Gandhi, Chairman of the Jain Minority Economic Development Corporation, and Chief Guest is Advocate Narayan Jain, National President, AIFTP. Guests of Honour are Adv. Samir Jani. Deputy President & Adv. Vinayak Patkar, National Vice President. Adv. Narayan Jain said that AIFTP is having more than 11000 members and it aims to build a brighter future for tax professionals, where each member benefits from collective wisdom and innovation. Jain said the theme of 2 day conference is "Panchganga Dnyan Sangham"—a confluence

of Indian Railways. The multi-tracking proposal will ease operations and reduce congestion, providing the much-required infrastructural development on the busiest sections across Indian Railways. The projects are in line with Prime Minister's Vision of a New India which will make people of the region "Atmanirbhar" by way of comprehensive development in the area which will enhance their employment/ self-employment opportunities. The new line proposal will provide direct connectivity to "Amaravati" the proposed Capital of Andhra Pradesh and improve mobility for industries and the population, providing enhanced efficiency and service reliability for

The projects are result of PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan for multi-modal connectivity which have been possible through integrated planning and will provide seamless connectivity for movement of people, goods and services.

## Critical Minerals to Play Key Role in Decarbonization and Achieving Net Zero: Deputy Director General GSI

**Kolkata (PARTHA ROY):**

Critical minerals play a significant role in de-carbonization and achieving the net zero target of India, said Dr Sudip Bhattacharyya, Deputy Director General GSI, Government of India in the 17th Global Mining Summit held in Kolkata. He further mentioned that the Ministry of Mines has initiated measures to accelerate the exploration of critical minerals in India.

Highlighting the importance of a circular economy, he emphasized that India possesses significant deposits of critical minerals and rare earth elements, which are often lost during the mineral exploration process. Therefore, recycling mineral waste is crucial, and investment in research and development within this sector will play a key role in preserving these valuable resources.

Riding on the figures that the major cause of fatal accidents in Coal Mines since last 5 years are transportation machinery (32 percent) followed by ground movement (17 percent) and falls (16 percent), Mr

N Bala Subrahmanyam, Director of Mines Safety (Mining), Directorate of Mines Safety said that there has been a lack of vigilance and avoidance of safety laws which have led to a high fatality rate in the Indian mining.

Mr Srinivasan Rama bhadran, Managing Director, Asia Pacific, dss+, informed the gathering about the newly introduced Carbon Mapper, a public-private partnership that uses satellites to track emissions including methane emission.

Ms Michelle Burich, Senior Mining Application Engineer, Komatsu emphasized the significance of optimizing system resources and productivity.

Mr DB Sundara Ramam, Vice President (Raw Materials), Tata Steel Ltd spoke about waste utilization and improving resource use efficiency.

Mr Senthil Kumaar T, DGM, Mining Product Sales, FLSmidth promoted the Mission Zero Mine initiative, which aims to achieve around 30 percent overall power reduction and encourage water conservation. He also

highlighted the introduction of new grinding technology and the digitalization of the process flow sheet.

Ms Anoma Basu, Head (Sustainable Mining), Aditya Birla Group recommended localizing the supply chain for biomass and biofuel, along with the effective implementation of green credit initiatives. The carbon market exchange and the importance of quantifying the correlation between investment and its impact were key points of discussion.

Besides Global Mining Summit, CII also organised the 17th edition of International Mining and Machinery Exhibition (IMME) 2024. IMME 2024 served as a catalyst for impactful B2B engagements, bringing together industry leaders and key stakeholders for high-level discussions aimed at shaping the future of mining. An impressive 284 meetings took place at the B2B Lounge and exhibition booths, establishing a dynamic and collaborative atmosphere for the event.

## Police organises Volleyball Match in honour of Bravehearts in Anantnag



of knowledge that brings together tax professionals from across the nation. Vinayak Patkar said that session Chairman and Eminent Speakers include PC Joshi, Nikita Badheka, Ruchi Rathod, Vipul Joshi, Abhay Desai, Deepak Shah, G. Baskar, Ratan Samal, Santosh Sharma, Dhananjay Akhade, Siddeshwar Yelamali, Deepak Bapat, Janak Vaghani, Kiran Nandedkar, and Sujata Rangnekar. They will delve into key topics on Income Tax, GST, and the future of taxation. The organisers are actively helped by Ashvin Acharya, Mahesh Madkhalkar, S. Mithaiwala, Pravin Shinde, Narendra Sonawane, Anil Chavan, Dhiraj Shah & other office bearers.

Srinagar, (Aasif Malik) : In a heartfelt tribute to the brave Police martyrs, Police in Anantnag organised a volleyball match between the Ice Blockers VB Club Furrash and Ball Busters Anantnag. The event aimed to honour the supreme sacrifices made by the Bravehearts who have laid down their lives in the line of duty. This event not only commemorates our fallen heroes but also fosters community spirit and encourages healthy competition. Police extend their gratitude to all participants and spectators for making this event a success.``

# Mining Sectors lays Foundation for Growth of Indian Economy, Driving States' Manufacturing Growth to 7.2 Percent

**Kolkata, (KCN):** With the theme "Viksit Bharat: Role of a Sustainable Mining Industry" the Global Mining Summit organised by Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) delved into the significant growth and emerging trends within the Indian mining sector.

Besides the Global Mining Summit, CII also organised the 17th edition of International Mining and Machinery Exhibition (IMME) 2024. GMS and IMME have been organised in association with the Ministry of Mines and the Ministry of Steel. Government of Odisha- the Partner State and the event is supported by West Bengal Mineral Development Corporation. The Indian Construction Equipment Manufacturer's



Association (ICEMA) is the Sector Partner and Australia is the Partner Country at IMME 2024. Shri Ujjwal Tah, Director General, Directorate General of Mines Safety informed the gathering about the constant depletion of mineral resources and advocated for the conservation of minerals. He advocated for the increase in R & D investment in deep sea mining and further emphasized the need for larger mining companies to support smaller players in transitioning towards sustainable mining practices.

While talking about the smart green mining, Mr Shantanu Roy, Chairman & Managing Director, BEMI underscored the necessity for opting green technology by leveraging automation. He applauded the success of

Committee on Mining and CEO, Hindustan Zinc Ltd, stated that from an environmental standpoint, the mining sector is uniquely positioned to demonstrate how India can achieve the aspirations in minerals while nurturing and conserving our environment. He further emphasised the importance of creating an investor-friendly showcase ecosystem to attract more investments, enabling the development of the necessary infrastructure to fully tap into the potential of critical minerals.

Shri B Thiagarajan, Chairman, CII Trade Fair Council spoke on the importance of the IMME platform which provides opportunities to

The next edition will immensely grow in size and promise an unprecedented showcase of innovation and opportunity. This growth not only enhances the experience for visitors but also provides exhibitors with a larger platform to connect, collaborate, and explore new business prospects.

Shri S K Behera, Chairman, CII Eastern Region, observed that the eastern region has the largest share in the national mineral production. India boasts significant reserves of iron ore, bauxite, chromium, manganese ore, baryte, rare earth, and mineral salts. Mineral production in India has shown a robust growth from US \$ 9.7 billion in FY19 to US \$ 14.23 billion in FY23.

# Cyclone 'Dana': Naveen Patnaik appeals to people to cooperate with Odisha govt

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** Leader of the Opposition in the Odisha Assembly, Naveen Patnaik Wednesday urged people not to fear Cyclone 'Dana' and to take necessary precautions for their safety.

Patnaik emphasised that awareness and caution are key to protecting residents from the impending storm. He also called on people to cooperate with the administration in handling the cyclone's impact.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Cyclone 'Dana' is likely to make landfall between Bhitarkanika National

Park and Dhamra Port early Friday.

"Odisha has faced numerous cyclones in the past and our people have bravely weathered them. Let's take every precaution to stay safe this time too. Caring for ourselves and our loved ones is essential," Patnaik said.

Having come to power after the devastating super cyclone in 1999, which resulted in over 10,000 fatalities, Patnaik has consistently aimed for "zero casualties" during disasters.

Odisha's five-time former Chief Minister also urged all the elected peoples'



representatives to stand with the people in this time of crisis.

"Help people. I strongly believe, together we can weather the storm like never before," Patnaik

said. Earlier, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi instructed all MLAs to visit their respective Assembly segments and

assist with rescue and relief efforts.

Majhi has assigned nine ministers to districts expected to be heavily impacted by Cyclone 'Dana'.

early Friday, another deputy CM Pravati Parida will monitor cyclone management in Puri district.

Other ministers who have been deputed in different districts are Commerce and Transport Minister Bibhuti Jena (Ganjam), Food and Civil Supplies Minister Krushna Chandra Patra (Keonjhar), Industries Minister Sampad Chandra Swain (Jagatsinghapur), Panchayati Raj Minister Rabu Nayak (Balasore), Sports Minister Suraj Suryabansi (Bhadrak)

and Housing and Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mahaapatra (Mayurbhanj).

This apart, the government has deputed six senior IAS officers — K Sudarshan Chakravarthy, Trilochan Majhi, Balwant Singh, Vineet Bhardwaj, Yamini Sarangi and Samarth Verma — to supervise cyclone management in the districts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Puri, Mayurbhanj, Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapada districts respectively.

## Female member of CPI (Maoist) surrenders in Odisha's Kalahandi



**Bhawanipatna(KCN):** A 22-year-old female member of the proscribed CPI (Maoist) surrendered before the police in Odisha's Kalahandi district Wednesday, a senior officer said.

Debe Sari, also known as Geeta, was a member of the Kalahandi-Kandhamal-Boudh-Nayagarh division of CPI (Maoists), DIG (SWR) Niti Shekhar said.

A resident of Sukma in Chhattisgarh, Geeta

became a member of Chitra Natya Mandali in 2018 and later joined the banned outfit. After working in Chhattisgarh for three years, she was sent to Odisha in 2022. She used to operate in the Boudh district before

surrendering, the DIG said. She was involved in five gunfights with the police — two in Nuapada and three in Boudh district. She mainly provided first aid to injured Maoists, police said.

## Internal Vigilance Mechanism of SHAS on action mode against irregularities 5 Hospitals de-empanelled from the List

**Bhubaneswar (KCN):** The grievance redressal and internal vigilance mechanism of State Health Assurance Society (SHAS), the nodal agency of the State for implementation of Gopabandhu Jana Arogya Yojana is on action mode against any irregularities committed by the empanelled private hospitals. All kinds of irregularities and complaints are being enquired into thoroughly,

and frauds are being dealt mercilessly. Available data shows, five empanelled private sector hospitals have been delisted today by orders of Chief Executive Officer, SHAS. Out of these, four are from outside Odisha and one from inside the State. The delisted hospitals are Mittal Hospital, Banthia hospital, Soni hospital and Babuji care hospital in Raipur district of Chhattisgarh; and

Samaleswari Nursing home in Deogarh district of Odisha.

Sources say, the internal vigilance mechanism of SHAS from their regular watchful analysis of the grievances received from people, claims submitted by the hospitals and feedback received through 104 call centre detected irregularities like use of false referral slips in name of Govt hospitals for admission of patients

under referral packages, submission of fabricated documents in claim folders, demand of cash from the poor innocent patients, and adoption of fraudulent means for instigating beneficiaries to take admission in their hospital etc.

Government in

Health and Family Welfare Department have warned that any such fraudulent activity will be dealt with more severely in coming days.

## RI in Vigilance net for accepting Rs 20K bribe



**Sonepur (KCN):** Vigilance sleuths here Wednesday arrested Vivekananda Tripathy, assistant RI, in-charge Sindurpur Revenue Circle, under Binika tehsil in Subarnapur district, while accepting a bribe of Rs 20,000 from a complainant for conversion of his land from agricultural to non-agricultural. Complainant Surya Kumar Mahakud of Balaranga village under Sindurpur revenue division had applied for conversion of his land and issuance of RoR. Binika tehsildar then sent a letter to the in-charge RI of Sindurpur to conduct a field visit and

provide the report. However, the accused ARI demanded Rs 60,000 from the complainant to provide the report to the tehsildar. Finding no other way, Mahakud lodged a complaint against the ARI with the Vigilance Department Tuesday. The anti-corruption wing of Sambalpur registered a case (26/2024) in this

regard and laid a trap to nab Tripathy. The ARI was putting the cash amounting Rs 20,000 in his pocket when Subarnapur Vigilance DSP Ritanjali Pradhan and inspector Dillip Kumar Pradhan, who were present there as per an earlier plan, caught him red-handed. The Vigilance sleuths also seized 40 pieces of



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# Add a Healthy Twist to Holi: Make Almonds Your Go-To Festive Snack

**Bhubaneswar (KCN):** Holi is a joyous festival celebrated with vibrant colours, symbolizing the spirit of togetherness as families and friends unite in cheerful gatherings. During this festive occasion, exchanging gifts and relishing delicious meals with loved ones are cherished traditions. However, amidst the festivities, it's crucial to exercise caution against overindulging in unhealthy snacks and foods, recognizing their potential long-term impact on our health. Therefore, practicing mindfulness while celebrating Holi becomes imperative. Incorporating a handful of almonds into your diet during this time can enhance taste as well as provide essential health benefits, ensuring a balanced and enjoyable celebration.

Almonds, rich in 15

essential nutrients like vitamin E, magnesium, protein, riboflavin, and zinc, are renowned for their ability to provide numerous health benefits, including supporting heart health, managing weight, and regulating blood sugar levels. Incorporating these powerhouse nuts into Holi celebrations can elevate the festivities. Whether presented as gifts, incorporated into traditional recipes, or enjoyed as snacks, almonds symbolize prosperity and well-being. Their delicious taste and satisfying crunch enhance the flavors of various Holi dishes, from sweet gujiya to savory almond chaat. Moreover, gifting almonds expresses good wishes for health and happiness. By embracing almonds in Holi festivities,

everyone can enhance the joy of the occasion while embracing a healthier lifestyle. Sharing thoughts on the celebration of Holi, Bollywood actress, Soha Ali Khan said, "Like everyone else, I cherish celebrating Holi with my loved ones. I love hosting Holi parties at home, where family gathers to indulge in festive delicacies. As a tradition, I always prepare healthy almond brittle for my family, a delightful fusion of taste and nutrition. This dessert not only enhances our enjoyment of the festival but also promotes overall health by providing a healthier alternative to sugary treats."

ritika Samaddar, the Regional Head-Dietetics, Max Healthcare – Delhi said, "During Holi celebrations, making mindful choices about snacks can significantly impact our health. Opting

for nutritious options like almonds instead of unhealthy snacks not only adds to the festive spirit but also enhances our well-being. Almonds, loaded with good fats and proteins, are an ideal addition to any weight-loss plan, providing satiety and valuable nutrition. Moreover, studies suggest that incorporating almonds into our daily diet may help reduce dyslipidemia, a critical risk factor for

cardiovascular disease. This highlights the importance of including almonds in our Holi festivities. By savoring Holi delicacies mindfully and enjoying the sensory experience with a handful of almonds, my family and I not only celebrate the joy of the festival but also prioritize our health."

Speaking about how to maintain skin health during Holi, Skin Expert and Cosmetologist, Dr.

Geetika Mittal Gupta said, "It is crucial to take precautions during the festival of Holi due to its vibrant colors and festive spirit, which can potentially harm the skin. Synthetic dyes used in the festival often contain harsh chemicals, leading to irritation, dryness, and allergic reactions, particularly in sensitive skin types. My advice is to gently cleanse the skin post-celebrations with a mild, hydrating cleanser

to remove color traces and sweat without stripping away natural oils. Additionally, I recommend moisturizing the skin thoroughly and staying hydrated by drinking plenty of water to restore hydration levels and promote skin healing. Furthermore, I suggest incorporating a handful of almonds into the diet, as they are rich in vitamin E, copper, zinc, and polyphenols, which can contribute to overall well-being and support a healthy immune system. Therefore, I prefer to gift my family and friends something that promotes fitness during these festive occasions, and that is where almonds come to my rescue."

Fitness Expert and Celebrity Master Instructor, Yasmin Karachiwalasaid, "During festivals like Holi, where physical activity may decrease due to socializing, almonds can be a valuable addition to maintain cardiovascular health and overall well-being.



## Ashok Leyland launches industry first 8-wheeler truck – AVTR 2620

**Chennai:** Ashok Leyland, flagship of the Hinduja Group and India's leading commercial vehicle manufacturer, today, launched the industry first 8 wheeler truck – AVTR 2620. With this launch of AVTR 2620, Ashok Leyland becomes the first and only player in the country to have a full range of trucks based on lift axle technology from GVW of 25.5 to 47.5T. This new product can be operated as 25.5 T (6x2) truck with the lift axle down (offering

payload closer to regular 6x2 MAV truck) and a 4x2 truck (18.5T GVW) with lift axle up (lower fuel and operating cost similar to 4x2) during light load/partial load/return empty. This new product thus offers an excellent operational flexibility to customers to choose the option based on their load, offering best-in-class Total Cost of Operation (TCO) benefits.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Sanjeev Kumar, Head - M&HCV, Ashok Leyland, said, "Ashok

Leyland has a history of introducing products which have disrupted the CV industry. AVTR 2620 with its unique lift axle configuration offers higher TCO advantage to our customers operating in Ecom, Parcel & tanker. AVTR 2620 is a testament of Ashok Leyland's technological prudence & our commitment towards providing better logistical solutions to our customers, aligning with our philosophy of Appkijeet, HamariJeet."

engaged in the Promotion, Financing and Development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).

Under the MoU, Union

Bank of India would consider Joint financing/

Co-Financing with SIDBI to Projects/Units in the MSME. This MoU

identification of viable

products and term loan and working capital financing to MSMEs.

Initially the arrangement

would be at specific

centers and once the

arrangement stabilizes at

these centers, more

locations would be

covered.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Lal Singh, Chief General Manager, Union Bank of India and Shri Vivek Kumar Malhotra, Chief General Manager, SIDBI. SIDBI is

country's principal

financial institution

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# Exclusion of major sports from Commonwealth Games 2026 disappointing: PT Usha

**New Delhi:** The Indian Olympic Association president, PT Usha, voiced concerns over the exclusion of wrestling, hockey, and badminton from the 2026 Commonwealth Games. Usha highlights the necessity of cost reduction and reassures the possibility of these sports returning in future editions.

Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president, PT Usha, has expressed her disappointment at the exclusion of several key sports, including wrestling, hockey, and

badminton, from the 2026 Commonwealth Games (CWG) programme. Usha acknowledged the impact this decision will have on India's medal prospects but also emphasized the need for cost reduction to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Games.

Speaking to the press, Usha explained that while the exclusion of these sports is unfortunate, the move is aimed at reducing operational and financial risks. She highlighted that Glasgow, the new host city, took over after the

original host, Victoria, Australia, withdrew due to cost concerns. Glasgow now has under two years to prepare for the event, which will run from July 23 to August 2, 2026.

"The reduction in the sports programme is disappointing, but it's essential to understand that the 2026 Games are a bridge to the future of the Commonwealth Games," Usha stated. She pointed out that the trimmed-down schedule of 10 sports, held at four venues within an eight-mile radius, aims to lower environmental impact and



reduce costs.

Despite the exclusion of several medal-rich sports for India, such as badminton, wrestling, and hockey, Usha defended the decision, stressing that financial responsibility and sustainability are key priorities for the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF). She also reassured Indian sports fans that this decision does not set a precedent for future editions, as CGF president assured her of the possibility of these sports returning in the future.

"The historical programme of the

Commonwealth Games featured around 10 sports, and since 1998 it expanded to 15-20 sports. Flexibility in the future will be crucial for hosts, and I believe we can return to that in the coming years," she said.

The 2026 Commonwealth Games will feature Athletics, Para Athletics, Swimming, Para Swimming, Artistic Gymnastics, Track Cycling, Para Track Cycling, Netball, Weightlifting, Para Powerlifting, Boxing, Judo, Bowls, Para Bowls, and 3x3 Basketball.

## Maharaj confident of South Africa getting the job done

**New Delhi:** South African spinner Keshav Maharaj is confident of South Africa's chances of taking the series lead in the ongoing first Test against Bangladesh in Dhaka. The hosts up a strong fightback in the second half of the third day to stay in the game but South Africa continued to be in the box seat, albeit not by a big margin.

Mehidy Hasan and Jaker Ali's 138-run stand for the seventh wicket paved the way for Bangladesh to clear the first innings deficit and head to stumps at 283 for 7 in a rain-marred third day. The duo came together at a time when Bangladesh were imploding towards a potential innings defeat. The hosts now hold an 81-run lead with Mehidy still unbeaten on 87 while Jaker got out making 58. The weather forecast suggests that rain could play spoilsport across the next two days due to depression in the Bay of Bengal but despite the uncertainty and Bangladesh's resistance,



Maharaj seemed unfazed.

"Yeah, obviously Bangladesh has done really well today. Conditions got a little bit better, if I'm honest, with a slightly used ball. But I think we're still ahead, obviously, Bangladesh have a lead and we've got three wickets more to go," Maharaj told reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium on Wednesday.

"So obviously if we can restrict them as much as possible, but I still feel we'll be in the box seat, considering the good work that we did with the batsmen in our first innings," he said.

"I think yesterday was probably the day that we went a little bit searching,

if I'm honest. And then we got the three wickets, and I think Mehidy and Jaker Ali played really well. We threw everything at them, and I don't think it was a case of us taking our foot off the gas. I think they played really well, and you must give credit towards the batters in that situation," he said.

"I think when I first saw the wicket, it seemed very much like our Durban wicket that we play on at Kingsmead. It was quite hard. Obviously there'll be variations of turn as the game goes on, but I think with a little bit of moisture in the air and the constant rolling, it has got a little bit better. Especially once that shine comes off the

ball," he said. "Look, ideally we'd like to restrict Bangladesh to 100 or below, but it's important that we start well in the morning and then assess from there," he added.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh's spin bowling coach Bangladesh Mushtaq Ahmed hopes that his side can take inspiration from their performances in the Pakistan series as they prepare to take the fight to South Africa on the fourth day.

Bangladesh were 26-6 against Pakistan in the second Test but a rearguard effort from Litton Das and Mehidy Hasan helped them post a healthy total. That partnership proved to be game-defining and eventually turned out to be decisive in Bangladesh sealing a historic series win. The situation seems tougher in the ongoing Test match in Dhaka against South Africa but Mushtaq sounded as optimistic as ever about his side's chances of winning.

and leaving WI tottering. That's when Rutherford (80 off 82) and Motie (50\* off 61) initiated a stunning counterattack. Rutherford benefited from two dropped catches (on 23 and 72) and kept the scoreboard ticking with boundaries. Motie, more known for his bowling prowess, played a composed knock, reaching his ODI fifty off 61 balls. Their efforts dragged West Indies from the brink of collapse to a total over 100.

Rutherford eventually fell when he flicked a full toss from Fernando the man in the deep and Hasaranga eventually wrapped up the innings, getting rid of Jayden Seales with a googly and finishing with figures of

4 for 40. WI were bowled out for 189 with eight overs left in their innings.

In reply, Sri Lanka lost Avishka Fernando to Alzarri Joseph early and Kusal Mendis followed him back to the pavilion soon after, bowled by Motie. But a 62-run stand between Nishan Madushka (38) and Sadeera Samarawickrama (38) helped steady the run-chase which was always on the cards.

When both the set batters fell, Madushka bowled by a slow offcutter from Joseph and Samarawickrama miscuing a paddle shot against Roston Chase - Asalanka played the captain's hand, scoring at run-a-ball and taking his side to an unassailable lead of 2-0 in a three-match series.

**Brief Scores:** West Indies 189 in 36 overs (Shefane Rutherford 80, Gudakesh Motie 50\*; Wanindu Hasaranga 4-40, Maheesh Theekshana 3-25, Asitha Fernando 3-35) lost to Sri Lanka 190/5 in 38.2 (Charith Asalanka 62\*; Alzarri Joseph 2-30) by 5 wickets (DLS)

## 'Learning from Southee and Henry massive' - O'Rourke on early Test success

**New Delhi:** Will O'Rourke has had a great start to his Test career, picking 26 wickets in his first five Tests. His first one in India turned out to be a memorable one as well as he ended with a seven-wicket haul that has put New Zealand in a position of comfort heading into the final day. It's a start that he hadn't seen coming while preparing for the tour, but the conditions in Bengaluru have allowed for a soft landing, admitted the pacer.

"My first time here, [the pitch] had a little bit more bounce, a bit more pace than what we probably expected coming over here which obviously suits a bowler like me. So far I've really enjoyed it," he said at the end of the fourth day.

He didn't have to wait long to taste success and a sweet one at that. In his first over, a wicket-maiden, he had Virat Kohli gloving to leg-slip. It's a wicket that brought about a smile when recollecting. "It's obviously pretty special getting someone so great, one of the greats of our game, out like that. You grow up watching those guys. So, to come here and take that wicket, it's probably right up there as one of the wickets I've got," said the 23-year-old fast bowler.

The sailing hasn't been all smooth, however. After wiping India out for 46 in the first innings, New Zealand were made to work hard for their wickets in the second with India's top-order stitching up valuable

partnerships in succession. "I think credit to them. They batted very well and put us under a lot of pressure. I think we were a bit looser than what we probably wanted to be. I think with that softer ball we wanted to be nice and tight, tight to the stumps. Try and create as much pressure as we could and then the spinners could maybe attack a little bit more. But yeah, credit to them. They played really well. So we just wanted to create as much pressure as we could and hopefully get a few breakthroughs. But had to wait until the new ball for that one," he said.

Having gained instant success in the longest format, the 6'4 pacer was even preferred ahead of Matt Henry in Sri Lanka



where New Zealand played two Tests. He ended up bagging a five-wicket in his first outing there at Galle, cementing a spot in the pace department for the near future. O'Rourke credited the groundwork

done and the support from his teammates for his success. "We had a few wickets that were a bit drier than probably what we're used to at that time of the year in New Zealand. And learning from guys like Matt

Henry, Tim Southee, who's been here before and done it before, it's been massive for me coming here," he said and added that the advice from the New Zealand coaching set-up had been to keep things simple. "I

think the message from Steady [Gary Stead] and Jake [Jacob Oram] was just to go there and be myself. And that's sort of what I bring, is a bit of balance, which is a little bit different to Matt [Henry] and Tim [Southee]. So, yeah, I think it was more about being myself and trying to come out there and do what I do. And if that works out, it's good."

Adapting to the SG Test ball which is used exclusively in India has also been smooth so far for O'Rourke. "I think as pace bowlers we've really enjoyed it. It's got a bit more of a pronounced seam than the Kookaburra, so it seems to be nice and hard to start with. So, it goes through nicely. And big seams are always a big