

● POLITY

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POLITY & GOVERNANCE

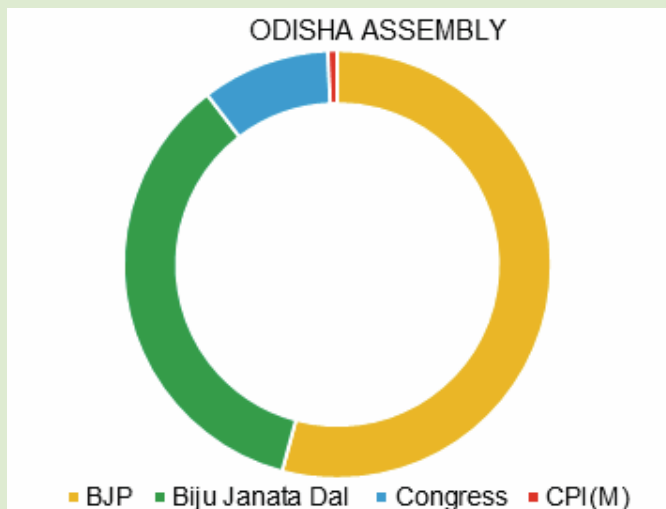
Mohan Majhi, BJP's tribal face, picked as Odisha CM

CONTEXT: Mohan Charan Majhi, a four-time MLA and tribal leader, will be sworn in as Chief Minister of Odisha on Wednesday.



The BJP, which won 78 seats in the 147-member Assembly, is forming the government for the first time on its own in Odisha. The party also has the support of three Independent MLAs. The Biju Janata Dal secured 51 seats, Congress 14, and CPI(M) one. Mr. Majhi, previously the BJP's chief whip in the 16th Odisha Legislative Assembly, was elected BJP Legislature Party leader. Veteran BJP leaders K.V. Singh Deo and Pravati Parida will serve as Deputy Chief Ministers.

Preparations for the swearing-in of the Chief Minister and his Cabinet colleagues were in full swing. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in the ceremony at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar. Chief Ministers of several BJP-ruled States, Union Ministers and top BJP leaders are expected.



POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Nominate sufficient number of IPS officers for deputation, says Centre

CONTEXT: The Union Home Ministry has notified 24 states except Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, and the eight Union Territories for not nominating enough Indian Police Service (IPS) officers for Central deputation, causing numerous vacancies in Central Police Organisations (CPOs) and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).



As of June 3, there were 129 vacant Superintendent of Police (SP) posts, 81 Deputy Inspector-General (DIG) vacancies, and 25 Inspector-General vacancies against the sanctioned strengths of 129, 256, and 147, respectively. The Union Home Ministry's recent communication follows a December 14, 2023 letter urging states to nominate more IPS officers for Central deputation. The letter from Additional Secretary R.K. Singh explained that 40% of senior duty posts in each cadre are designated as Central Deputation Reserve (CDR) posts, determining how many officers can be sent to the Government of India. However, many states' offer lists have not met the required CDR levels. Consequently, states need to sponsor more officers to fill IPS-reserved posts in Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Central Police Organisations (CPOs).

In February 2022, the government amended the IPS tenure policy, removing the mandatory requirement for empanelment of IPS officers at the Deputy Inspector-General (DIG) level. The new policy states that officers with a minimum of 14 years of experience will be eligible for appointment as DIG by the Centre.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Lt. Gen. Upendra Dwivedi to take over as Army chief

CONTEXT: The Union government on Tuesday announced the appointment of Lieutenant-General Upendra Dwivedi as the next Chief of the Army Staff. He is now the Vice-Chief and will take over from General Manoj Pande on June 30.



Lt. General Upendra Dwivedi, currently serving as Vice Chief of the Army Staff, has been appointed as the next Chief of the Army Staff, effective from the afternoon of June 30, 2024, succeeding General Manoj C. Pande. General Pande, whose term was extended to June 30 from his original retirement date of May 31. Lt. Gen. Dwivedi, born on July 1, 1964, joined the Army in 1984 and has held various command roles, including leading the 18 Jammu & Kashmir Rifles Regiment and the 26 Sector Assam Rifles Brigade. He has also served as Inspector General in Assam Rifles (East) and 9 Corps. In his role as Lieutenant-General, he has held key positions, including Director-General, Infantry, and General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command, from 2022 to 2024, before becoming Vice Chief of the Army Staff.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Will work faster to double income of farmers, says Agriculture Minister

CONTEXT: Senior BJP leader Shivraj Singh Chouhan took charge as the Union Agriculture and Rural Development Minister on Tuesday.



PM Kisan Nidhi

Speaking to presspersons, the former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh underlined that Prime Minister Narendra Modi began his day in office by authorising the release of the 17th instalment of PM Kisan Nidhi, benefiting 9.3 crore farmers and distribute around ₹ 20,000 crore. The BJP leader won the Vidisha Lok Sabha seat for an impressive sixth time, securing a record margin of 8.21 lakh votes.

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ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

BPCL eyeing a new refinery, says Puri

CONTEXT: State-owned Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (BPCL) is looking to build a new oil refinery to meet the rising demand for fuels like petrol and diesel, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said Tuesday as he took charge of the ministry for the second time.



The government's top priorities in the energy sector include reducing India's import reliance by increasing oil and gas production, promoting green hydrogen, expanding the use of natural gas, and developing refining and petrochemical industries. Efforts to attract investors for oil and gas exploration, including unique tenders like ONGC's search for a foreign partner for Mumbai High, are a key focus. Additionally, the government aims to promote green hydrogen as an emission-free alternative to fossil fuels and encourage the use of biofuels.

Securing supplies

India has diversified its sources of crude oil supplies, including from Russia, and has become the largest buyer of Russian sea-borne oil, purchasing barrels at a discount after some Western nations stopped purchases following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. BPCL is planning to build its fourth oil refinery in the country, aiming to increase its refining capacity from 39 million tonnes per annum to 45 million tonnes.

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POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Facts in fiction

CONTEXT: The Karnataka government's two-week ban on the Hindi film "Hamare Baarah" violates freedom of expression, despite its aim to prevent communal tension.

The Bombay High Court lifted an initial stay on the film's release after the producer agreed to remove controversial dialogues. The court highlighted that allowing individuals to block certified films would set a negative precedent. A film should not face further scrutiny, after certified by the Central Board of Film Certification. The Supreme Court of India has ruled that freedom of expression cannot be suppressed due to threats of protests or violence, as in the 1989 S. Rangarajan vs. P. Jagjivan Ram case regarding the film "Ore Oru Gramathile."

Emphasizing freedom of expression doesn't mean endorsing films with distasteful or propagandistic content. The film "Hamare Baarah" is criticized for its communal overtones, suggesting that the Muslim community is responsible for population growth and forces women to bear many children, disregarding their health. While proponents claim it spreads awareness on population control, it follows a trend of stereotyping Muslims in contemporary filmmaking. Films promoting such claims likely aim to appeal to communal segments and their political supporters. A free society shouldn't suppress viewpoints but should counter sectarian propaganda with facts and constitutional methods.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

The social sciences, a shelter for the 'excluded' student

CONTEXT: In developing economies like India, there is a significant mismatch between the demand for and supply of education. Some courses and institutions have an excess of seats, while others face shortages, leading to exclusion from the education system. This exclusion often results in certain disciplines, particularly in the social sciences, becoming the last resort for higher education for many students, creating a large reservoir of excluded individuals in these fields.

The reasons

In higher education, demand-supply mismatches arise from disparities between student and parental aspirations and the availability of courses and seats, influenced by market forces in private institutions and government policies in public ones. This leads to three types of exclusions: excessive competition for premier institutions, financial barriers in private institutions, and limited subject/course options. Premier institutions face intense competition due to limited seats and high social prestige, while private institutions often have dynamic fee structures. Public institutions, facing reduced government grants, resort to self-financing, exacerbating financial barriers. Additionally, regional concentration of courses and institutions leads to systemic exclusion. These exclusions ultimately weaken the quality of human capital in the long term.

The 2021-22 All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) shows a 4.1% growth in undergraduate (UG) enrolment and 5.9% growth at the postgraduate level from 2017-18 to 2021-22. The

Bachelor of Arts (BA) programme, with the highest UG enrolment, saw a 15% increase, while the Master of Arts (MA) programme saw a 26.5% increase. BA programmes account for 51% of total enrolment in BA, BSc, and BCom in regular mode, and 75% in distance mode. For MA, the shares are 12% (regular) and 42% (distance). The larger share and lower transition rates suggest BA programmes serve as a generic pool, accommodating many students excluded from other courses.

The surge of empirical orientation

Preferences for courses within the social sciences vary significantly, influenced by several factors. Firstly, there is a growing preference for courses with empirical orientation, such as economics, due to perceived higher employability. Secondly, there is an emphasis on acquiring policy intervention skills, leading to narrower specializations within social sciences. Thirdly, the emergence of private universities offering global education in India has created demand among the affluent for courses like anthropology, sociology, and political science, which are less popular in public institutions. This trend has created a dichotomy where private universities cater to higher-quality education for the affluent, while public institutions see lower demand for these courses.

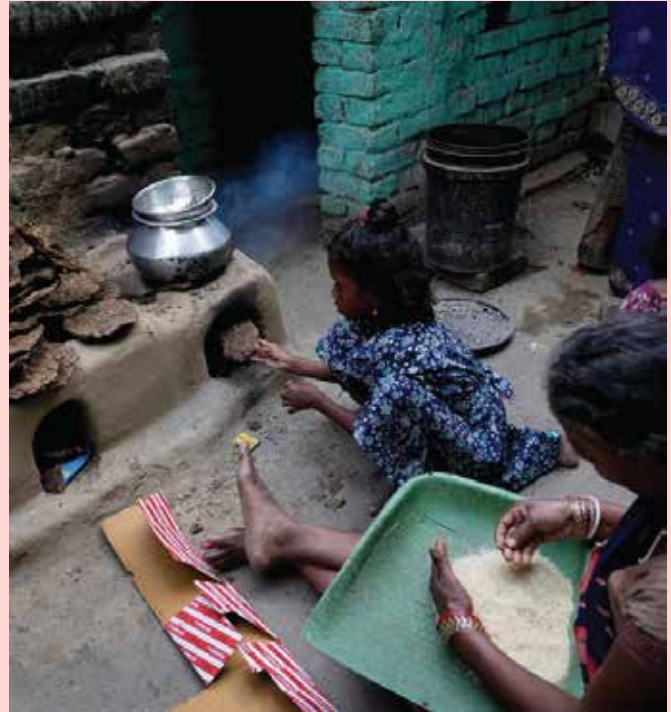
Improving quality

Higher education in the social sciences requires a comprehensive overhaul to align with contemporary societal, economic, and political changes. While there has been a quantitative expansion to include more students, there is a need for a focused effort on improving quality. This includes enhancing teaching quality and updating course content. The emphasis on policy and empirical skills has marginalized certain disciplines, while financial barriers have widened inequalities and led to the emergence of elite educational enclaves. Leveraging the vast pool of youth studying social sciences is crucial for India's demographic dividend, particularly in the context of ongoing social changes and rapid technological advancements like generative artificial intelligence.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Bihar's call for special category status

CONTEXT: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has reiterated the State's long-standing demand to be granted the special category status by the Centre, a move that would increase the amount of tax revenues that the State gets from the Centre.



What is the special category status?

The special category status, introduced in 1969 based on the Fifth Finance Commission's recommendations, aims to aid States disadvantaged geographically, socially, or economically. States with hilly terrain and sizable tribal populations are eligible, receiving more funds and tax concessions from the Centre. These States get 90% funding for Union government-sponsored schemes, compared to 60-80% for others. Initially granted to Jammu & Kashmir, Assam, and Nagaland, the status now extends to 11 of India's 28 States, including Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Why is Bihar demanding the special category status?

Bihar, with a per capita income of around ₹60,000 and lagging in human development indicators, faces economic challenges worsened by the state's bifurcation, insufficient irrigation water, and frequent natural disasters. The 2022 caste-based survey shows nearly a third of its population lives below the poverty line. Bihar's government argues for special category status to receive more Central funds, aiming to spend ₹2.5 lakh crore over five years on welfare and infrastructure. Supporters believe this is justified by the state's need to uplift the poor and invest in development. Critics, however, argue that allocating more funds to poorer states like Bihar encourages bad policies and penalizes developed states with better governance. Historically, poor rule of law in Bihar has hindered growth and investments.

Bihar, one of the fastest-growing states in India, has recently improved its per capita income and overall economy. In

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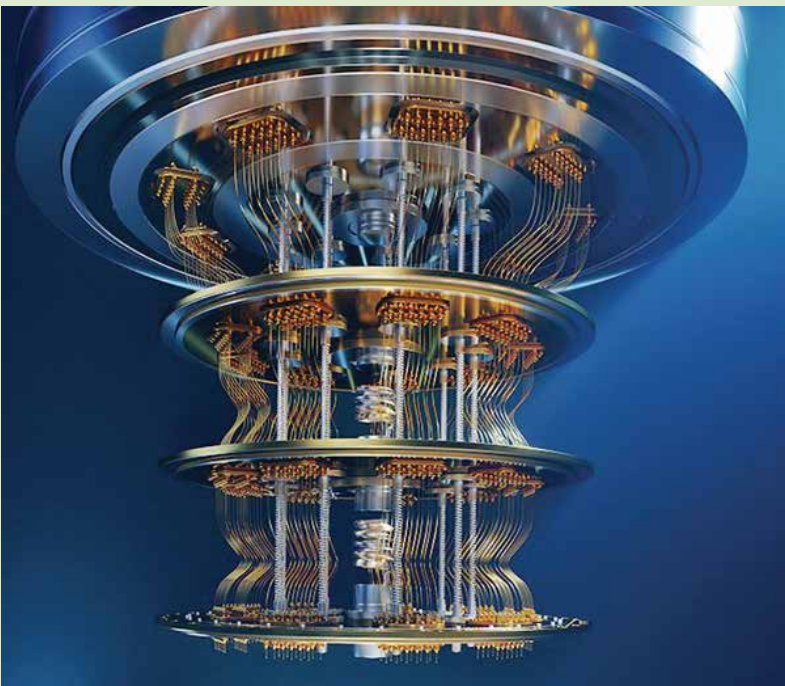


2022-23, Bihar's GDP grew by 10.6 %, surpassing the national average of 7.2 %, and its per capita income grew by 9.4 % the previous year. Analysts argue that instead of needing more fiscal help from the Centre, Bihar requires a stronger rule of law to continue its economic improvement.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

UN declares 2025 the Year of Quantum Science

CONTEXT: The United Nations has said 2025 will be designated the 'International Year of Quantum Science and Technology', a year-long global initiative that will be observed through activities at all levels aimed at increasing public awareness of the importance of quantum science and applications.



The proclamation of 2025 as the International Year of Basic Sciences for Sustainable Development is the result of a resolution led by Mexico in May 2023, which was joined by nearly 60 countries by November of that year and adopted by the UNESCO General Conference. In May 2024, Ghana submitted a draft resolution to the U.N. General Assembly, supported by over 70 countries, and the General Assembly approved it on June 7. The timing coincides with the upcoming centenary of Werner Heisenberg's publication of a paper that laid the foundation for quantum mechanics and introduced the uncertainty principle. According to the UN statement, the proclamation has also received the endorsements of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics, the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, the International Union of Crystallography, and the International Union of History and Philosophy of Science and Technology.

Quantum science and technologies, particularly quantum computers, have gained attention recently despite not yet being fully operational. The Government of India announced a 'National Quantum Mission' in April 2023, costing Rs 6,000 crore and to be implemented from 2023 to 2031 by the Department of Science & Technology. The mission focuses on quantum computing, quantum communication, quantum sensing and metrology, and quantum materials and devices. Functional quantum computers are expected to have transformative effects on electronics, clean energy, and drug development due to their superior computational abilities. The U.N. statement regarding the proclamation of 2025 as the International Year of Basic Sciences for Sustainable Development encourages increasing awareness about quantum science and technology, with a steering committee planning global initiatives and events for this purpose.



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ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

The contrasting behaviour of retail investors in the market crash

Riding the crests and troughs

The data for the charts were sourced from the National Stock Exchange



Chart 1: The chart shows the movement of the NSE Nifty-50 in the days leading up to the election result. On June 4, Nifty-50 tumbled by nearly 6%

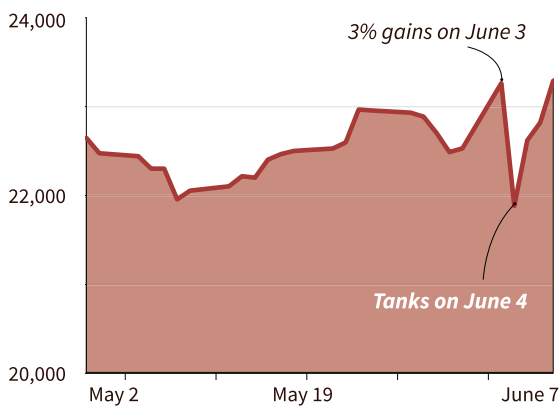


Chart 2: The chart shows the total traded value in ₹ crore. Market activity heightened on May 31 as trade value doubled from ₹1.1 lakh crore to ₹2.3 lakh crore

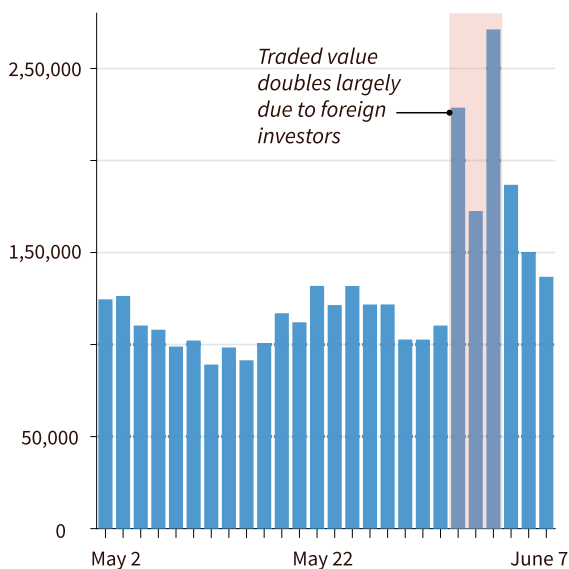
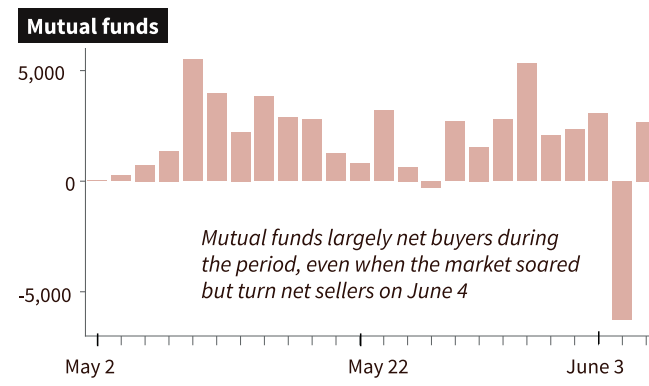
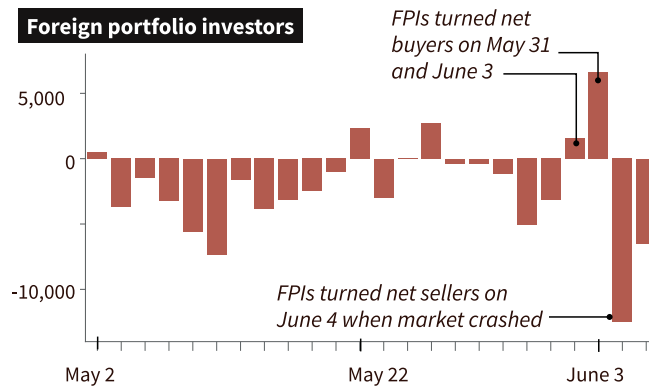
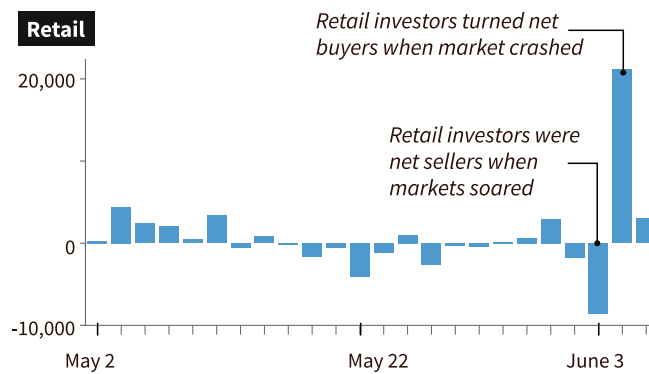


Chart 3: The chart shows the daily net turnover (shares bought minus shares sold) of different categories of investors such as retail investors, foreign portfolio investors and mutual funds





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