



LIFE MANTRA

Actor Shilpa Shetty says fame is a double-edged sword but one needs to take the cons in stride

LEISURE P2



CRISIS DEEPENS

Russia attacks Ukrainian capital Kyiv in the early hours of Sunday, striking at least two residential buildings

INTERNATIONAL P10



MAIDEN TITLE

Madhya Pradesh create history by winning their maiden Ranji Trophy defeating Mumbai by six wickets in the final

SPORTS P12

Naxal hideout busted in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawaniapatna, June 26: A Maoist hideout has been busted in Kalahandi district, and arms and ammunition seized, the police said Sunday.

The action came after a Naxal camp was busted by the special operations group (SOG) and the district voluntary force of the Odisha Police in Madanpur Rampur block in Bhawaniapatna sub-division Thursday, the police said.

Two improvised explosive devices and detonators were recovered. Operations were intensified as the police suspected the presence of senior Maoist leaders in the area.

The hideout in the Mundamuska Reserve Forest was busted Saturday during a combing operation, an officer said. Twenty-two live ammunition and several arms have been seized, Superintendent of Police Abilash G said.

In Sundargarh district, a gunfight had broken out between the Odisha Police and two persons near Rourkela Saturday, resulting in their arrests and the seizure of an AK-47 assault rifle and other firearms from their possession.

Police are investigating whether the duo has links with any Maoist outfit or the Jharkhand-based People's Liberation Front of India.

Last Tuesday, three CRPF personnel were killed in a Maoist attack in Nuapada district.



THE G-7: Clockwise from left, Fumio Kishida (covered), Prime Minister of Japan, Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, Charles Michel, President of the European Council, Mario Draghi, Prime Minister of Italy, Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, Emmanuel Macron, President of France, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, US President Joe Biden and Boris Johnson, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, sit at the first working session in Castle Elmau in Kruen, near Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, Sunday. The Group of Seven leading economic powers are meeting in Germany for their annual gathering Sunday through Tuesday.

Maha battle goes to SC

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 26: Rebel Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde has moved the Supreme Court challenging the disqualification notices issued by the Maharashtra Deputy Speaker to 16 party MLAs and also the appointment of Ajay Choudhari as Shiv Sena Legislature Party leader.

The matter is likely to be mentioned Monday for urgent hearing before a vacation bench of the Supreme Court.

Maharashtra has been facing a political crisis after Shinde and rebel MLAs left the state, protesting against the alliance with the Congress and Nationalist Congress Party. The rebel MLAs have been camping in a hotel in Assam's Guwahati for the past few days.

The Deputy Speaker has issued notices to the 16 rebel MLAs on the disqualification plea by CM Uddhav Thackeray's team.

The plea said the petitioner is aggrieved by the notice/summon dated June 25 which is grossly illegal, unconstitutional and in utter disregard of the judgment of this Court in the matter of Nabam Rebia & Bamang Felix VS Dy. Speaker, Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly in (2016).

Meanwhile, NCP chief Sharad Pawar Sunday said that the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi government is set to sack ministers who have joined rebel Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde in Guwahati.

Assembly likely to get new LoP

PNN / AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 26: The BJP legislative party is likely to pick a new Leader of Opposition (LoP) for the Odisha Assembly before the commencement of the Monsoon session this year, said party MLA Kusum Tete Sunday.



She said that the Assembly will have a new LoP in view of the ailing health of incumbent LoP Pradipta Kumar Naik.

The legislator from Sundargarh further said that the party MLAs have sent a proposal to party president JP Nadda and state unit president Samir Mohanty citing the necessity of a new LoP to raise important issues in the upcoming session. Speaker Bikram Keshari Arukha has called an all-party meeting June 29 ahead of the Monsoon session.

The Monsoon session of the Odisha Assembly will begin July 2 and continue till August 4. The annual State Budget will be presented by Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari in the House on the first day of the session.

SP, AAP lose bastions

■ Tripura CM Manik Saha among victorious BJP candidates in bypolls to 3 Lok Sabha and 7 Assembly seats spread across five states and the national capital

AGENCIES

New Delhi/Lucknow/Agartala, June 26: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha was among the victorious BJP candidates in the by-poll results announced Sunday as the party bagged three out of four assembly seats in the eastern state and wrested the Samajwadi Party strongholds of Rampur and Azamgarh Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh, while the AAP lost Punjab's Sangrur Parliamentary constituency.

However, there was some cheer for Arvind Kejriwal's AAP as it retained Rajinder Nagar Assembly seat in the national capital.

The Congress won a seat each in



Tripura, where it opened its account after drawing nil in the last Assembly polls, and Jharkhand, while the ruling YSR Congress emerged victorious in Atmakuru Assembly seat in Andhra Pradesh. Counting of votes was held Sunday for the June 23 by-election to three Lok Sabha and seven Assembly seats spread across five states and Delhi.

In Uttar Pradesh, ruling BJP candidate Ghanshyam Lodhi won the Rampur Parliamentary seat by a margin of over 42,000 votes.



Lodhi defeated SP's Mohd Asim Raja, considered close to senior SP leader Mohd Azam Khan who won the seat in 2019 but vacated it after being elected to the Assembly. In Azamgarh, also a pocket borough of the SP and vacated by party chief Akhilesh Yadav after his election to the state Assembly, BJP candidate Dinesh Lal Yadav 'Nirahua' defeated Dharmendra Yadav of SP by a margin of 8,679 votes.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath attributed the victory to the work done by the 'double-engine' gov-

ernment of the BJP. "People have sent a message they aren't ready to accept dynastic and casteist parties who incite communal tension," he said.

In Delhi's Rajinder Nagar, AAP's Durgesh Pathak defeated BJP candidate Rajesh Bhatia by a margin of over 11,000 votes, officials said.

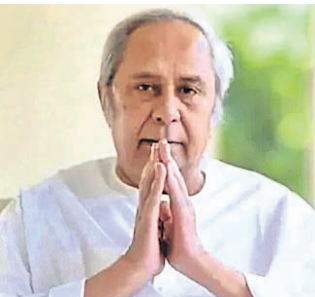
"People defeated their dirty politics and appreciated our good work. Thank you Rajinder Nagar, thank you Delhi," Chief Minister and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal said. The party, however, suffered a jolt in Punjab as SAD (Amritsar) leader Simranjit Singh Mann won the Sangrur Lok Sabha seat defeating AAP's Gurmail Singh by a margin of 5,822 votes. The seat was won twice by AAP leader and Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann.

The defeat came just three months after AAP registered a resounding victory in the Assembly elections when it won 92 of the 117 segments. Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) president and candidate Mann, 77, has been elected from Sangrur nearly 23 years after winning from the seat in 1999.

Continued on P4

PREZ POLL

CM assures 'every' vote from Odisha in Murmu's favour



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 26: Chief Minister Naven Patnaik Sunday wished Droupadi Murmu the very best for the Presidential election and said that her candidature is indeed a proud moment for the people of Odisha.

Taking to his Twitter account, the CM said: "Spoke to Smt Droupadi Murmu ji and wished her all the very best for #PresidentialElection. Her candidature is indeed a proud moment for people of #Odisha. I have reiterated that we will work towards getting every vote from #Odisha, in her favour."



Patnaik had earlier announced the BJD's support for Droupadi Murmu, who belongs to Mayurbhanj district, calling her candidature a proud moment for the people of the state. He also had a telephonic discussion with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in this regard.

The Odisha CM was the first leader of any political party to extend support to Droupadi Murmu.

Patnaik had earlier also urged all members of the state Assembly to extend unanimous support to Droupadi Murmu as the Presidential candidate as she is the "daughter of Odisha."

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



We should request NDRF to rescue our MLAs who are stranded in Assam due to floods

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX	35.6°C	33.5°C
	MIN	26.0°C	25.5°C
Humidity	77%	85%	Forecast
Rainfall	NIL	NIL	Light rain very likely

Growing space tourism worsening climate damage: Study

■ According to researchers, black carbon (soot) particles emitted by rockets are almost 500 times more efficient at holding heat in the atmosphere than all other sources of soot combined - resulting in an enhanced climate effect

AGENCIES

London, June 26: The recent race for space tourism by Virgin Galactic, Blue Origin and SpaceX with several rocket launches is having a harmful effect on climate and increasingly contributing to global warming, according to a study. Researchers from the University

of Cambridge and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) showed that black carbon (soot) particles emitted by rockets are almost 500 times more efficient at holding heat in the atmosphere than all other sources of soot combined (surface and aircraft) - resulting in an enhanced climate effect.

While the study revealed that the current loss of total ozone due to rockets is small, current growth trends around space tourism indicate potential for future depletion of the upper stratospheric ozone layer in the Arctic in spring. This is because pollutants from solid-fuel rockets and re-entry heating of returning spacecraft and debris are particularly harmful to stratospheric ozone, according to the findings published in the journal Earth's Future.

"Rocket launches are routinely compared to greenhouse gas and air pollutant emissions from the air-



craft industry, which we demonstrate in our work is erroneous,"

said Dr. Eloise Marais from UCL. "Soot particles from rocket launches

While the study revealed that the current loss of total ozone due to rockets is small, current growth trends around space tourism indicate potential for future depletion of the upper stratospheric ozone layer in the Arctic in spring

This is because pollutants from solid-fuel rockets and re-entry heating of returning spacecraft and debris are particularly harmful to stratospheric ozone

have a much larger climate effect than aircraft and other Earth-bound sources, so there doesn't need to be as many rocket launches as international flights to have a similar impact. What we really need now is a discussion amongst experts on the best strategy for regulating this rapidly growing industry," Marais added.

To calculate the findings, the researchers collected information on the chemicals from all 103 rocket launches in 2019 from across the world, as well as data on reusable rocket and space junk re-entry; and the recent demonstrations by space tourism companies Virgin Galactic, Blue Origin and SpaceX and proposed yearly offerings of at least daily launches by Virgin Galactic.

These data were then incorporated into a 3D atmospheric chemistry model to explore the impact on climate and the ozone layer:

The team showed that warming due to soot is 3.9 mW m-2 from a decade of contemporary rockets, dominated by emissions from kerosene-fuelled rockets. However, this more than doubles (7.9 mW m-2) after just three years of additional emissions from space tourism launches, due to the use of kerosene by SpaceX and hybrid synthetic rubber fuels by Virgin Galactic. Under a scenario of daily or weekly space tourism rocket launches, the impact on the stratospheric ozone layer threatens to undermine the recovery experienced after the successful implementation of the Montreal Protocol - adopted in 1987, the global ban on substances that deplete the ozone layer.

The study calls for immediate mitigation practices to regulate the environmental impact of the space launch industry to minimise harm to the stratospheric ozone layer and climate.

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
If you are involved in monetary matters, today you will find yourself weighing the benefits. A loan that you have applied for may be sanctioned. Look at a range of choices, says Ganesha, and you will end up feeling very happy about it.

TAURUS
This day you will have an urge to take a trip, be it a small one. Ganesha sees you enthusiastically making detailed plans and arrangements, arranging for funds and getting in touch with all those you desire to take along. It is possible that you may ultimately scrap your plans and choose to stay at home. However, be sure you'll be making that trip in due course.

GEMINI
Today may not be very meaningful and productive for you, though you will get to spend plenty of quality time with yourself in the afternoon, which may not necessarily be to your liking. By evening, you may feel a little extra sensitive. A lonely day, or as an optimist would put it, you've got the whole day to yourself; it could have been worse (For instance, a day alone with your nagging mother-in-law!).

CANCER
You are likely to be at your inventive best today, feels Ganesha. You are likely to taste success, much to the delight of your colleagues at work and loved ones back home. However, experience counts, and if you are a beginner at something, you may face problems in your new venture.

LEO
A challenging day awaits you. You will face some tensions and problems, however this doesn't mean you will not be able to complete all your work successfully. Your personal life will proceed as usual, however expectations from you at the work-front will increase. You need to maintain a balance between your home and work-place, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Children will be a source of a lot of appreciation today, in and out of the classroom. Your logical abilities will become stronger. Ganesha advises you to stay peaceful, flow with the tide and enjoy yourself, regardless of what happens in the day.

LIBRA
Ganesha says today is a fortunate day for starting new work. You will win the hearts of everyone with your amazing charm. Your house and its arty interior decoration will impress people

SCORPIO
Do your deeds and don't expect returns is what Indian mythology has taught us since time immemorial. Now, it's time to implement it, especially at work. You may have to wait a little longer in terms of your business and joint venture. However, don't lose hope as the fruits of patience are sweet.

SAGITTARIUS
Good Samaritans around you may give unsolicited, but valuable advice. Take it as a hint, and consider it for your betterment. Take your decision after following the advice, and this may definitely yield benefits, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN
Though less, you will get money from your investments and other resources. Don't ignore pending projects; complete them at the earliest so that you will have clear picture about your requirements and responsibilities, advises Ganesha. Once you are done with them, you will enjoy happy times with your friends and family in the evening.

AQUARIUS
There are no short-cuts to success. You know this very well and work you socks off to get what you want. Colleagues, friends and family - all of them will acknowledge and appreciate your efforts and achievements. Though you will be apprehensive about it, you will have to take some risks to bring the desired change in your life, says Ganesha.

PISCES
Interactions with those of the opposite sex will mark your day. It is also a good day to strike up friendship with those of the opposite sex. For those in love, today is a good day to spend time with your partner. For those looking for love, now is the best time to pop the question to that special someone you've secretly admired for long, says Ganesha.

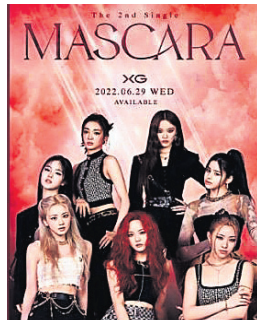


'PRINCE WILLIAM PERFECT CANDIDATE FOR NEXT BOND'

Producer Barbara Broccoli has quipped that Duke of Cambridge, Prince William is the perfect candidate to become the next James Bond. Broccoli and her sibling Michael Wilson were honoured with CBEs from the Duke at the Buckingham Palace this week, reports [aceshowbiz.com](#).

XG TO DELIVER THEIR FIRST EVER LIVE PERFORMANCE JUNE 29

HipHop/R&B girl group XG have announced they will perform live for the first time. This will take place on YouTube June 29, the release date of XG's second single, *Mascara*. A watch page was added to XG's YouTube channel titled XG Mascara Live Stage.



Shilpa talks about cons of stardom

Mumbai: Shilpa Shetty Kundra, who made her big screen comeback with the latest release *Nikamma*, said fame is a double-edged sword.

Talking to *IANS* about the cons of stardom, Shilpa said: "Fame is a double-edged sword but you have to appreciate it and the cons are something that you need to take in your stride... It would be the end of your career or stint in the industry if people allow you to eat 'pani puri' without bothering you, I would say that would be something that would be worrisome."

Shilpa said she is "grateful for all the love and appreciation."

She added: "It does get a little daunting where people don't know when to draw the line because we are not monkeys in a zoo, we are here to entertain and I have a heartfelt gratitude for all the love that comes my way. "But some-

times when you have worked very hard and you try to take a break with your family and sometimes when you are at the airport and you are holding your two-year-old's hand and somebody just comes in and wants a selfie... It is scary sometimes but otherwise it is all the part and parcel of the fame game."

Shilpa will next be seen in Rohit Shetty's *Indian Police Force*, a cop action drama web series streaming on Amazon Prime Video.



Pride parade returns to City after two years

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF RAINBOW PRIDE WALK 2022 WAS TO RAISE AWARENESS ON THE RIGHTS OF LGBTQ+ MEMBERS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar: Hundreds of people belonging to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and allies (LGBTQA+) community and their supporters assembled at Master Canteen Square here Sunday to be part of the Pride parade held in the City. The event couldn't be held in the last two years due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Titled *Rainbow Pride Walk 2022*, the main objective of the walk was to demand equal rights, social acceptance for its community members. Walking together, they carried rainbow flags, wore clothes with rainbow print, and made rainbow marks on their cheeks.



Members of Rainbow Pride Walk and their supporters

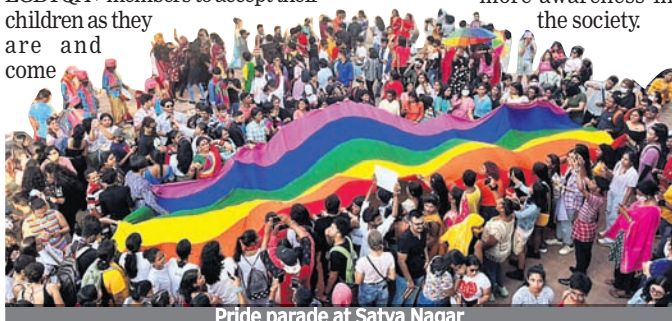


Venkatesh from Kolkata attended the walk

The event was co-organised by several LGBTQ and voluntary organisations of Odisha including The Parichay Collective, Rainbow Collective, Sakha, SAATHII, Third Gender Welfare Trust, Tarit foundation and others.

Abhilash Patra, a member of The Parichay Collective, said, "Making the community members join the mainstream of society is a major

challenge. We want to create awareness among the parents of LGBTQ+ members to accept their children as they are and come



Pride parade at Satya Nagar

Mumbai: Actress Esha Gupta has embraced her career and pitfalls with the same confidence as she's accepted her dark complexion and Indian features. She's unabashed about her choices and her looks. In a recent interview with a portal the *Rustom* actress talked about 'White Supremacy' and common Indian views on fair skin and a lot more.

"Some Indians have the mindset where we think like white supremacy. White supremacy means people who have dark colour or dark skin, are meant to be slaves because those who are fair think God made them as the ones who are supposed to rule," she said. Elaborating more, she went to add, "We still believe that fair skin is superior; fair girls are prettier; fair people get their way. That's what we show in our ads, too. You put on a cream and the guy will accept you. Who wouldn't want to marry you? You apply the cream and you'll get that dream job."

"But when you take your Indian skin tone, without makeup, with your real textured and voluminous hair, which is all Indian, and go anywhere abroad, in Europe and the people there will say, you're the most beautiful girl we've seen. That's when you realise there's a space for everyone all over the world." AGENCIES

There's space for everyone: Esha



Mumbai: Singer Adnan Sami's latest pictures from his Maldivian holiday have taken over social media as it seems he has undergone a huge weight loss transformation.

Sami took to Instagram to share a glimpse of his holiday with family, which took the fans and social media users by surprise.

He shared a picture with his daughter while chilling in the pool. He captioned the picture: "There's absolutely no time to waste & so Let The FUN Begin



PARTY-POOPER-DISCLAIMER- It's NON-ALCOHOLIC Sparkling Grape Juice."

He also shared a selfie, where he is seen flaunting a big smile at the camera with a picturesque view of the ocean and the sky in the background. According to reports, when Sami stepped into the industry, he weighed a whopping over 200 kilos. He is popular for his songs such as *Bhardo jholi*, *Lift Karadey* and *Sun Zara*, among many others. IANS



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

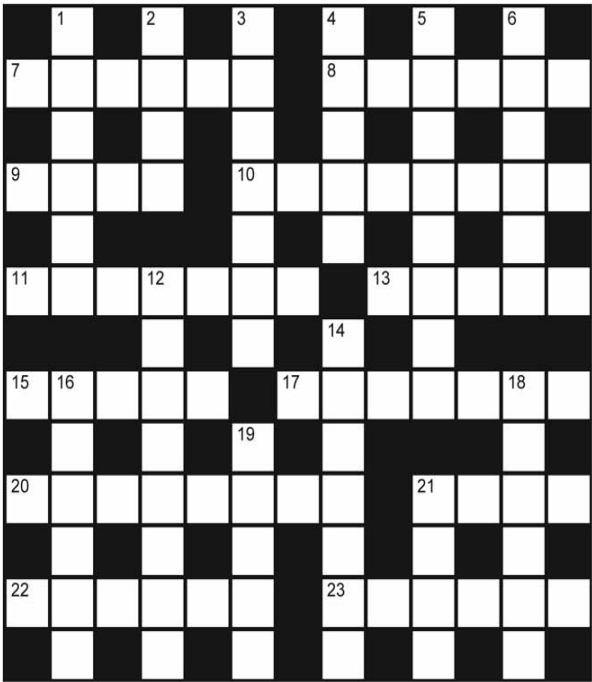


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD

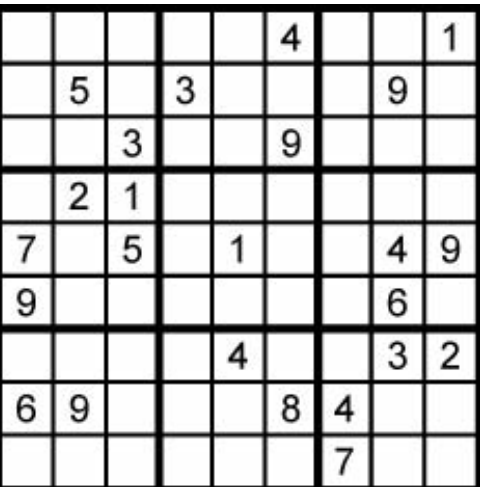


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- Across**
7 Robin Hood, for one
8 Bouquets
9 Make cookies
10 Place for a statue
11 Pathetically inept person (3,4)
13 Sweetener
15 Sacred hymn
17 Destitution
20 Larders
21 Oracle
22 Leafy vegetable
23 Songbird
Down
1 Naval unit
2 Clarified butter
3 Hot zone
4 Domestic
5 Chinese restaurant staple (3,5)
6 Crescent-shaped yellow fruit
12 Answer
14 Birthplace of Napoleon Bonaparte
16 Dashing
18 Hypothesis
19 "Same here!"
21 On its way

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

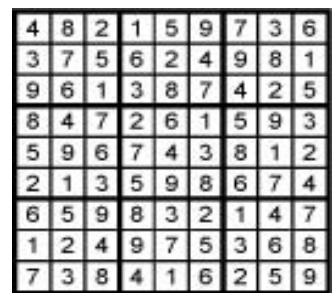


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

HC: Ownership rights for ryots cultivating govt land for 30 yrs

AGENCIES

Cuttack/Bhubaneswar, June 26: In a landmark judgement, the Orissa High Court has stated that any farmer cultivating on government land for 30 years will be entitled to get the ownership right. The Odisha government should come up with a relevant policy in this regard, said the High Court.

The HC gave this directive while hearing a petition filed by several cashew farmers from Balikuda block in Jagatsinghpur district. The farmers, who have been cultivating since 1983, had moved the court against the encroachment case lodged by the administration.

The High Court has directed the state Agriculture department to prepare the policy within six months. The State government should bring out the policy before February 2023, and till then, the status quo should be maintained on the concerned land, the court's order read.

It is pertinent to mention here that the petitioners have reportedly received the land for cashew plantations under the rehabilitation scheme of the Centre some 30 years back. The scheme was implemented by the State government. However, they had moved the HC after they were asked to vacate the land.

In its affidavit, Balikuda Tehsildar had mentioned that around 52 acres of land in Keupada, Brahmanidih and Tentulipadari villages was identified and the district soil conservation department had decided to go for cashew plantations. Out of the total land, 2 acres of land was allotted to each of 26 beneficiaries in February 1986 and since then the farmers have been cultivating cashew nuts on the land.

The Tehsildar had stated in his affidavit that the beneficiaries concerned do not have any ownership



THE HC GAVE THIS DIRECTIVE WHILE HEARING A PETITION FILED BY SEVERAL CASHEW FARMERS FROM BALIKUDA BLOCK IN JAGATSINGHPUR DISTRICT

THE FARMERS, WHO HAVE BEEN CULTIVATING SINCE 1983, HAD MOVED THE COURT AGAINST THE ENCROACHMENT CASE LODGED BY THE ADMINISTRATION

THE HC HAS DIRECTED THE AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT TO PREPARE A POLICY IN THIS REGARD WITHIN SIX MONTHS

right on the patch of the land and their claim over the properties is not acceptable. The Tehsildar had also urged to the court for registration of an encroachment case and collection of penalty from the beneficiaries.

Later, the HC had ordered a status quo on the land while taking up the petitions in March 2003. The court during its previous hearing had directed the administration to formulate a policy for registration of the land in the



ANNIVERSARY FETE

Artistes present a cultural show at the first anniversary of Rays Foundation at Saheed Bhawan in Cuttack, Sunday

Lord Jagannath gives deep human messages: PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, June 26: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday said Lord Jagannath gives deep human messages to people through his journey during the Rath Yatra, which is scheduled to be held July 1.

The Prime Minister made this observation while addressing the 90th episode of his monthly radio address 'Maan Ki Baat'.

In just a few days, the famous Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath is going to start in Puri, and efforts are made by the people to have the good fortune of visiting Puri on this occasion, Modi said.

"Be it Ahmedabad or Puri, Lord Jagannath gives us many deep human messages through this journey. Bhagwan Jagannath is the Lord of the world and the poor and down-trodden have a special participation in his journey."

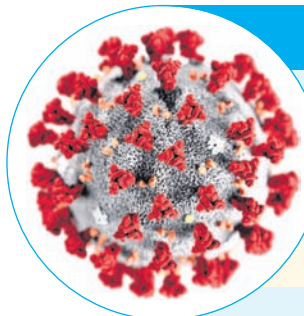
"Similarly, in all the journeys that take place in our country, there is no such distinction between poor and rich, high and low. Rising above all discrimination, the journey itself is paramount...", the PM said.

Noting that this time a large number of devotees participated in the Chardham Yatra, Modi said from time to time, different Dev (divine)-Yatras also take place in our country.

In Dev Yatras, not only the devotees but also Gods go on a journey, he said.

"Bhagwan Jagannath Yatra begins on Dwitiya, the second day of the month of Ashadha. In our texts 'Ashadhasya Dwitiya divase, ...Rath Yatra', this is how the description is found in Sanskrit shlokas," Modi said.

In Ahmedabad, Gujarat too, every year Rath Yatra begins from 'Ashadh Dwitiya', he said, adding "I was in Gujarat, so I also used to get the privilege of serving in this Yatra every year."



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	54,88,41,855	52,37,40,546	63,50,634
India	4,33,89,973	4,27,72,398	5,24,999
Odisha	12,89,259	12,79,693	9,126

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Murmu as President pick, but tribal & women devpt a far cry

KULDEEP SINGH, OP

New Delhi, June 26: The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) move to pick Droupadi Murmu, a tribal leader from Mayurbhanj district of Odisha, as the NDA Presidential candidate is being considered as a masterstroke by the saffron party to consolidate its base among the tribal communities and women voters. However, the situation is not rosy for tribals when it comes to literacy rate, dropouts, health facilities, industrial displacements and other factors.

If elected, the 64-year-old leader would be the second woman and the first from the tribal community to occupy the highest post in the country.

While announcing Murmu's nomination, BJP president JP Nadda said the ruling coalition at the Centre has decided to have a woman from tribal community, particularly from the eastern region, as its Presidential candidate.

Many BJP leaders are of the opinion that Murmu's nomination is in accordance with Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas slogan of the saffron party. Many political observers believe that through Murmu's nomination, the BJP leadership is trying to attract tribal voters in the upcoming Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan.

The decision to field a tribal woman for the Presidential polls has garnered a lot of appreciation for Prime Minister Narendra Modi in social media. Murmu's nomination is being hailed as a 'befitting tribute to tribal communities' and a 'progressive march on the path of women empowerment'.

As per the available data, the representation of tribal communities in legislatures is around 10 per cent. Around 550 MLAs out of the total 4,120 across the country are from tribal communities. Of the 10.8 lakh votes in Electoral College for the Presidential poll, the Scheduled Tribe votes are around 78,000 only.

The literacy rate among tribal people is just 59 per cent against the national average of 73 per cent as per the 2011 census. The dropout rate at secondary level among tribal children was 24 in 2019-20.

The successive governments have also failed to provide proper



Representational image

Literacy rate among tribal people is just 59% against the national average of 73% as per the 2011 Census

Dropout rate at secondary level among tribal children was 24 in 2019-20

Successive governments have also failed to provide proper healthcare in remote and tribal-dominated areas

healthcare in remote and tribal-dominated areas. There is a shortfall of over 6,000 sub-centres and over 1,000 primary health centres (PHCs) across the country till March 2020, sources said.

It is also a well-known fact that the members of tribal communities usually bear the brunt of displacement due to mining and industrial activities. It has been alleged that rampant mining activities have been depriving the tribal people of their basic rights like access to clean air and water in states like Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal and Assam.

As per government records, hardly 39 per cent tribal households across the country have been provided with tap water connections till March this year. This apart, many tribal people in different parts of the country are yet to get basic facilities like electricity and telecommunication.

As per the data, in the home state of NDA's Presidential candidate, over 1,000 families have been displaced due to mining and industrial activities in a decade. A total of 64 mining projects have led to the diversion of 10451.39 hectares of forest land over last 38 years in Keonjhar district alone. The state has also rejected over 89,000 review claims under Forest Rights Act between July 2019 and August 2021. As per reports, around 80,000 claims were rejected during the pandemic-induced lockdown.

Murmu's nomination is being hailed as a big push to women empowerment and gender equality. At present, women's representation is 14 per cent in Lok Sabha and 12 per cent in Rajya Sabha, even though they comprise around 49 per cent of country's population. Their representation in state Assemblies stands around 10 per cent.

A Bill seeking 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and state Assemblies was passed in the Rajya Sabha in 2010. But, the same is yet to get approval of the Lok Sabha even though a decade has elapsed since then.

The BJP-led NDA government at the Centre has brute majority in Lok Sabha but it has failed to pass the Women's Reservation Bill.

In its reply to queries regarding the fate of the Bill, The ruling alliance has been saying that the issue needs 'careful consideration on the basis of consensus among all political parties'.

FESTIVAL AHEAD



Chariot construction for this year's Rath Yatra entered its last phase in Puri, Sunday

OP PHOTO

NEP blending of tradition & tech, says NCERT director

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 26: NCERT Director Dinesh Prasad Saklani, during his visit to Bhubaneswar Sunday said that the National Education Policy (NEP) is a thoughtful blending of tradition and technology. It will be designed in such a way that our nation would be able to be at par with other nations.

He said that new courses like coding and vocational education will be introduced. Apart from this, the existing curriculum will be re-structured, as per requirement.

"The aim is not to make the children learn by rote but to make them understand things. The ultimate aim is to produce good human beings. Given the progress,

I believe we will implement it across the nation at the earliest," said Saklani.

Asked about private schools not using NCERT books, he said, "To do away with this issue, both the Centre and states should work in tandem and steps should be taken to ensure that students don't read from duplicate books."

"The NCERT is preparing books for the entire nation. They should be purchased, he emphasized.

When asked about the language through which education is to be imparted to students, Saklani said, "The NEP offers multilingualism. If a child learns more than one language, it will be more beneficial to them. Parents shouldn't have ifs and buts in this regard."

Cycle-A-Thon to spread awareness on Save Soil movement

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 26: 'No soil, no food'. 'Be a voice for soil'. 'Save Soil', these slogans echoed on the roads of smart city Bhubaneswar Sunday morning as the students and faculty members of Asian Institute of Public Health (AIPH) University Bhubaneswar led 'Save Soil' global movement through a Cycle-A-Thon.

Hosted by AIPH University, a leading public health university of the region, in collaboration with Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL), the event was flagged off by the vice chancellor of the university, Padma A P Dash from Damana Square at 7.30 in the morning. Riders comprising students and faculty of AIPH University, cycling enthusiasts, volunteers of

ISHA foundation and others rode with zest and fervour till Raghunathpur and cycled back to the starting point.

The Save Soil movement is initiated and promoted globally by Indian yoga guru and proponent of spirituality, Sadhguru to draw the global attention towards soil crisis and measures to improve soil health. He founded the ISHA foundation in 1992.

The students did a dance performance at the opening of the event on Save Soil theme song drawing attention of the passers-by. The cyclists also displayed various messages on placards throughout their ride to sensitize the public on the global subject.

"Air, water, soil, environment and climate are all serious drivers of public health. Some people say the third world war will be fought



for water. To me, the next world war will be for soil. Fertile soil is the primary requirement to sustain plants and feed the human and animal kingdom. So, it is the duty of all citizens to take serious action, especially the younger generation that might face the catastrophic

impact of infertile soil," said Pinaki Panigrahi, the President of Board of Governors, AIPH University in a message. He is also a professor at Georgetown University in USA.. While addressing the students and cycle enthusiasts at the program, AIPHU vice chancellor Dr AP Dash

briefed the aim of the University behind organising Cycle-A-Thon. He called upon the youths to support the cause.

The cycles used in this occasion were provided by the Mo Cycle initiative of the Government of Odisha.

Focus on road safety need of the hour: CJ Muralidhar



POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, June 26: There is a need to focus on road safety issues like safety of pedestrians, drowsy driving, overloading by goods carriers and roadworthiness of vehicles, said Orissa High Court Chief Justice S Muralidhar while attending the award ceremony of National Road Safety Short Film Festival-2022 at Town Hall here.

The Chief Justice, who graced the event as chief guest Saturday, is hopeful that the National Road Safety Short Film Festival-2022 will create awareness on safe driving habits and subsequently reduce road mishaps.

“Involvement of children in these movies reflecting major road safety issues is very encouraging. There’s a need to focus on road safety issues like safety of pedestrians, drowsy driving, overloading by goods carriers and roadworthiness of vehicles,” the Chief

Involvement of children in these movies reflecting major road safety issues is very encouraging. There’s a need to focus on road safety issues like safety of pedestrians, drowsy driving, overloading by goods carriers and roadworthiness of vehicles

S MURALIDHAR | ORISSA HIGH COURT CHIEF JUSTICE

Justice said, adding that the film festival is nothing less than an eye-opener for judiciary.

Attending the event, Justice Murahari Sri Raman urged all to focus on first party insurance for vehicles, free treatment for trauma patients during the first 48 hours of the road mishap, blood donation and well equipped ambulance

at regular intervals on roads.

Addressing the gathering, Director General of Police (DGP) Sunil Kumar Bansal said movies can have a significant impact on the public.

“Film festivals like this [National Road Safety Short Film Festival-2022] will help us spread awareness about road safety,” Bansal said, urging all to wear helmet while on two-wheelers as it will help save precious lives.

‘Rakhi’, a film on brother-sister bond directed by Manmay Dey from Balasore, won the best film in the Odia category, while ‘The Power of 2 Sec’, directed by Pankaj Gupta from Bangalore, received the best film award in Non-Odia category. They were felicitated by Justice Muralidhar.

The festival was organised in a bid to spread awareness on road safety issues as it would go a long way reducing the road mishaps and fatalities as well.

On the occasion, all the jury members including former OFDC chairman Kuna Tripathy, popular actor and former MP Sidhanta Mohapatra, national award winning filmmaker Rajesh Touchriver, entrepreneur and philanthropist Dharitri Patnaik and Bakul Foundation’s Sujit Mohapatra were also felicitated.

Among others, Transport Commissioner Arun Bothra, and Additional Transport Commissioner Srinibas Behera were present.

As many as 230 entries were received from across the country for the contest.



Twin City Police Commissioner Saumendra Priyadarsi graced the observation of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day organised by Federation of Senior Citizens’ Association of Odisha at Buddha temple in Bhubaneswar

Brown sugar worth ₹1.20cr seized



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 26: The Special Task Force (STF) of Odisha Police has seized brown sugar worth Rs 1.20 crore and arrested four persons in this connection, an officer said Sunday.

The seizure of over 1.30 kg of brown sugar and arrests were made in Khurda town Saturday.

The accused persons have been

identified as Rakesh Kumar Barik and Biranchinarayan Sahoo of Kochilabana Sahi under Khurda police station, Jagabandhu Biswal of Swapneswar Sahi, Samantarapur in Bhubaneswar and Santosh Routray of Saguan Bagicha under Khurda police limits, the officer said.

The STF has registered a case under NDPS Act 1985 in this connection and further investigation is on.

The task force has seized more than 55 kg of brown sugar/heroin, 202 gm cocaine, more than 111 quintal of ganja and 750 gm of opium and arrested more than 156 drug dealers and peddlers since 2020, according to an official statement.

Murmu suffered many personal losses during her journey to top post



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi/Bhubaneswar, June 26: NDA Presidential candidate Draupadi Murmu has suffered several personal losses during her journey from Mayurbhanj, a tribal dominated district in Odisha, to the country’s top constitutional post. Murmu has been through many struggles in her life.

In just six years between 2009 and 2015, Murmu lost her husband, two sons, mother and brother. She had three children - two sons and a daughter. One of her sons died in 2009 and the second son died in a road accident three years later. Earlier, she had lost her husband Shyam Charan Murmu due to cardiac arrest. Her daughter Itishree works in a bank in Odisha.

According to reports, during that time Murmu became a keen practitioner of meditational techniques of Brahma Kumaris, a movement she took to after her personal losses. It was around 13 years ago when she first got connected with the Brahma Kumari Sansthan in Mount Abu.

Born June 20, 1958 in Odisha in a simple Santhal tribal family,

Murmu started her political career in 1997. She was elected councillor of the district board in Rairangpur in 1997.

Prior to joining politics, Murmu worked as an honorary assistant teacher at Sri Aurobindo Integral Education and Research, Rairangpur and as a junior assistant in the Irrigation Department.

She has been MLA twice in Odisha and also got a chance to work as a minister in the Naveen Patnaik government, when the BJP was in coalition with the Biju Janata Dal (BJD). Murmu was also awarded the Neelkanth Award for best legislator by the Odisha Legislative Assembly.

Murmu becomes the first woman tribal leader to contest for the country’s highest constitutional post and also holds the record of being the first tribal woman Governor in the country. Her tenure as the Governor of Jharkhand for more than 6 years has not only been non-controversial, but also memorable. After the completion of her tenure, she left Jharkhand Raj Bhavan for her village in Odisha’s Rairangpur July 12, 2021 and has been living there since then.

SP, AAP lose bastions

Continued from P1

The BJP consolidated its position in Tripura winning three of the four Assembly seats. Chief Minister Manik Saha secured 17,181 votes, which is 51.63 per cent of the total votes polled.

“The people who voted for me, I thank them. This is the victory of BJP workers. I expected the margin to be a bit more. However, the results prove the understanding between the CPI(M) and Congress. We will work accordingly in the future, but people did not take this understanding in a good way,” the chief minister told reporters.

The TMC, which was looking to make inroads in the northeastern state, performed dismally with its candidates losing deposits in all the seats. Congress candidate Sudip Roy Barman won the Agartala seat by a margin of 3,163 votes. He secured 17,241 votes, which is 43.46 per cent of the total votes polled. The CPI(M) lost its citadel of Jubarajinagar to the BJP by a margin of 4,572 votes. BJP candidate Malina Debnath got 18,769 votes (51.83 per cent), while CPI(M)’s Shailendra Chandra Nath secured 14,197 votes (39.2 per cent).

In Surma, BJP’s Swapna Das won by a margin of 4,583 votes, securing a total of 16,677 votes (42.34 per cent). Her nearest rival Baburam Satnami of TIPRA Motha got 12,094 votes (30.7 per cent).

The ruling YSR Congress retained the Atmakuru Assembly seat in SPS Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh by a huge margin of 82,888 votes.

YSRC’s Mekapati Vikram Reddy secured 1,02,241 votes against his rival G Bharat Kumar Yadav of the BJP, who managed to get only 19,353. Congress candidate Shilpi Neha Tirkey won from Jharkhand’s Mandar seat, defeating BJP’s Gangotri Kujur by margin of 23,517 votes.

68 new Cov cases

Bhubaneswar: Odisha recorded 68 new Covid-19 cases Sunday, taking the tally to 12,89,259, the state Health department said in a bulletin. The toll remained at 9,126 as there were no fresh deaths. There are 431 active Covid cases in the state at present. In the last 24 hours, 47 more people recovered from the disease.

HOMAGE TO THE DEPARTED



Members of artistes’ association Ama Kalakar paid tribute to the departed artistes of the state at Rotary Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

Fifth All India conference of P&TAFOA held in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 26: The fifth All India Conference of Postal and Telecom Accounts and Finance Officers Association (P&TAFOA) was held in the Conference Hall of KIIT University here from June 23 to 25.

Welcoming the dignitaries to the open session June 24, Odisha Circle Secretary Srikanta Mahapatra expressed his happiness in hosting the prestigious conference. Senior Deputy Director General (Postal Accounts & Finance) of Department of Posts headquarters Gopal Krishna Padhy presided over the open session and delivered a speech on conduct of officers citing spiritual history.

Chief Guest Dilip Padhey, Member (Finance), Department of Telecom, said that the Association does not belong to the member officers only, but superior officers too are stake holders in it. He assured to look after the demands holistically.

Need to monitor arsenic contamination in food trade: Experts

In the season of mangoes and lychees from Bihar flooding the domestic markets and some of it, especially the Shahi Lychee, lined up for exports, arsenic contamination through food trade remains a lesser discussed issue.

This season, a private carrier has carried 100 tonnes of lychee from Darbhanga in Bihar to various parts of the country, which is about four times the quantity carried as compared to the last year.

While drinking water is known to create significant health risk in arsenic hazard areas, the role of exposure to arsenic through food intake is less well understood, including the impact of food trade. But this is not a problem restricted to India and, in fact, a study has highlighted the need to better understand the relative risk of arsenic exposure through food intake, considering the influence of growing trade and increased groundwater reliance for crop production across the globe.

Long term ingestion of arsenic is reported to lead to several adverse human health effects, including cancer, skin lesions, developmental effects, cardiovascular disease, neurotoxicity, and diabetes. There is clear evidence that irrigation with groundwater contaminated with geogenic arsenic causes arsenic to accumulate in soil and subsequently in crops through the water-soil-plant uptake pathway, a study, ‘Human arsenic exposure risk via crop consumption and global trade from groundwater-irrigated areas’ said.

The researchers used the best available datasets on crop production, irrigation, groundwater arsenic hazard, and international crop trade flows, to estimate that globally 17.2 per cent of irrigated harvested area (or 45.2 million hectares) of 42 main crops are grown in arsenic hazard areas, contributing 19.7 per cent of total irrigated crop production, or 418 million metric tons (MMT) per year of these crops by mass.

Two-thirds of this area is dedicated to the major staple crops of rice, wheat, and maize (RWM) and produces 158 MMT per year of RWM, which is 8.0 per cent of the total RWM production and 18 per cent of irrigated production.

“Trade plays a critical role in redistributing risk, with the greatest exposure risk borne by countries with a high dependence on food imports, particularly in the middle-east and small island nations for which all arsenic risk in crops is imported,” it said.

The intensifying climate variability and population growth may increase reliance on groundwater irrigation, including in arsenic hazard areas and that the results show that RWM harvested area could increase by 54.1 million hectares (179 per cent increase over current risk area), predominantly in South and Southeast Asia.

“India’s eastern states have a lot of arsenic problems, especially West Bengal, Bihar, eastern Uttar Pradesh etc. while the northwestern plains - that see major exports - comprising Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh witness comparatively lesser problem of arsenic,” said Soumya Dutta, an activist with Beyond Copenhagen, a



“More than 25 per cent of RWM consumed in the South Asian countries of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, where both arsenic hazard and degree of groundwater irrigation are high, originate from arsenic hazard areas,” the research, published in IOPScience Journal, had pointed out.

think tank, who has also kept track of WTO deals especially with water and agriculture.

In eastern India, there are certain fruits such as mangoes and Lychee / litchi that are exported, Dutta said and added, “These need to be tested for arsenic contamination, lest the end-user, even if in the domestic market, is kept in the dark.”

However, Piyush Mohapatra, senior programme coordinator with Toxic Links, a research organization, tried to dissuade the fears. We have robust regulations as promulgated by the Food Safety and Standards Association of India (FSSAI). It includes restrictions about arsenic levels in wide ranging food items. So, anyone importing or exporting any food items will need to follow this regulation.”

But, whether or not it is implemented, that needs to be investigated, he said. “If not being done, there should be periodic monitoring and it should be widely publicised for public consumption.”

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Fake teachers galore in Nayagarh; action far cry



POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, June 26: At a time when School and Mass Education (S&ME) department is conducting verification of certificates of teachers, action taken against the fake teachers is a far cry, even as complaints of over 500 fake teachers working in Nayagarh district have come to the fore.

The department had recommended action against some fake teachers June 8, but no action has been taken till date.

Reports said hundreds of teachers are still serving in the district, but they are allegedly being protected. Some officials are reportedly not maintaining transparency in verification of certificates.

It was alleged that over 500 teachers have got jobs by submitting forged certificates in eight blocks and five civic body areas. The number of fake teachers is high in Nayagarh, Odagaon, Nuagaon, Dasapalla and Ranpur blocks. There are instances of teachers having two certificates in one academic year and getting promotion too.

IT WAS ALLEGED THAT OVER 500 TEACHERS HAVE GOT APPOINTMENT BY SUBMITTING FORGED CERTIFICATES IN EIGHT BLOCKS AND FIVE CIVIC BODY AREAS

THE NUMBER OF FAKE TEACHERS IS HIGH IN NAYAGARH, ODAGAON, NUAGAON, DASAPALLA AND RANPUR BLOCKS

THE S&ME DEPARTMENT HAD RECOMMENDED ACTION AGAINST SOME FAKE TEACHERS JUNE 8, BUT NO ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN TILL DATE

Though complaints have been made against these teachers in different times, no action is being taken.

Here is an example in Odagaon block. A youth of this area, Kartikeswar Panda, was appointed as an untrained teacher after voluntary retirement of his father July 11, 1989.

He has got CT training certificate as well as Plus III certificate from Utkal University in 1990-91. A teacher pursuing CT training and his degree course in the same academic year warrants an investigation, locals said, adding that either of his certificates may be forged.

It was also alleged that fake teachers are bribing officials at the block and district levels to scuttle their certificate verification to save themselves.

Some leaders of teachers' association said that many fake teachers stay away during the cluster point verification and later go to the block education officer and pay bribe.

It was alleged that some block-

level officials are, in fact, scuttling the verification process and that there is no transparency.

It was seen that Xerox copies of certificates are verified by officials in most cases. As a result, the genuineness of the certificates will not be ascertained.

As for the issue, district education officer (DEO) Akrura Barik said that detection of fake teachers has been intensified. Those involved in the fraud will be taken to task.

Bharat Kumar Behera, member of Zilla Parishad Education Standing Committee-7, said that the issue will be raised at the meeting of the education standing committee and action will be taken against fake teachers.

Chairperson of Zilla Parishad Education Standing Committee-7, Rameswar Satpathy said the issue will be discussed at the meeting and action will be recommended.

AWARENESS RALLY



ASHA workers and others took out an awareness rally on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and illicit Trafficking in Sambalpur, Sunday

Huge quantities of Phailin rice rotting in panchayat godown

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bahanaga, June 26: More than 200 quintal of rice sanctioned for distribution of relief among the residents affected by cyclonic storm Phailin is rotting in the godown of Bahanaga panchayat in Balasore district though eight years and six months have passed since the storm caused loss of lives and properties in the district.

The calamity struck Odisha coast October 12, 2013. Around a million people were evacuated while several lives were lost and houses and properties destroyed in the calamity. Considering the loss, the state government decided to distribute rice for free among the families affected by the calamity.

Hundreds of quintals of rice were transported to various panchayats in the state for distribution as relief in the presence of a magistrate by the state Food Supplies and Supply department.

Residents raised questions as to how the panchayat authorities were left with over 200 quintal of rice that was meant for distribution among the affected families.

The rice stored in the godown has allegedly been attacked by moths



Sarpanch Brajendra Kumar Panda has submitted a written complaint to Bahanaga BDO and district Collector regarding the missing key of the panchayat godown

while the presence of rats and snakes in the godown cannot be ruled out. No one in the panchayat office has any answer regarding the key of the godown.

Sarpanch Brajendra Kumar Panda said that he does not have the key of the godown. He said after taking charge as sarpanch he enquired about the key from the former sarpanch but he had no answer.

Meanwhile, Panda has submitted a written complaint to the Bahanaga BDO and the district Collector regarding the missing key but they are yet to take any steps in this regard.

The incumbent sarpanch had submitted a written complaint to

the former Collector K Sudarshan Chakraborty May 23 but no step was taken in this regard.

When contacted, BDO Susant Kumar Barik of Soro block who is also in-charge BDO of Bahanaga block refused to speak on the issue stating he has been here only for last 15 days. He also ruled out receiving any complaint in this regard. He said that only the then BDOs, tehsildars and sarpanchs who were in office in 2013 can only comment on the issue.

The sarpanch said that no one is taking any step regarding his complaint for which he will soon file a complaint with the state relief commissioner (SRC).

Man hacks elder brother to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, June 26: In a horrific incident, a man reportedly hacked his elder brother to death following a heated argument at Madhapur village under Baripada police limits in Mayurbhanj district late Saturday night.

The deceased has been identified as Meghray Saren, 45, elder brother of the accused Laxman Saren.

According to sources, Meghray was an alcoholic and often created disturbance in the family. As usual, he returned home in an inebriated state Saturday night.

Meghray was an alcoholic and often created disturbance in the family

A verbal duel ensued between Meghray and his younger brother Laxman Saren which later escalated into a heated argument. In a fit of rage, Laxman took a sharp-edged weapon and attacked Meghray leading to his death on the spot.

Informed, police rushed to the spot, arrested the accused and seized the weapon used in the crime. The body was sent for post-mortem to a nearby hospital.

Ghost beneficiaries plague MGNREGS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Saintala, June 26: Wages under MGNREGS are allegedly being embezzled in the names of dead persons and ghost beneficiaries. One such incident has come to the fore in Karatmala panchayat under Saintala block in Bolangir district.

Locals alleged that projects under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) are supposed to be executed through gaon sathis, but a contractor was awarded the work.

As per reports, ₹10 lakh was sanctioned for renovation of Mugurumunda pond near Limapada in 2021-22. Instead of executing the work, the panchayat handed it over to a contractor.



Information plaque about the project was not put up near the project, it was alleged.

It was learnt that the project has created in 523 workdays for which ₹17,213 has been credited into the bank accounts of the job

card holders as wages May 27, 2022.

However, one of the job card holders was found to be a dead person – Fatu Rana, wife of Sarada Rana of Limapada. Fatu died one and half year ago but a job card has been created in her name and ₹2,664 towards wages for two weeks has been credited to her bank account in Saintala branch of Union Bank of India. Villagers alleged that work worth ₹20,000 to ₹25,000 has been done while lakhs of rupees have been embezzled.

Locals alleged that lakhs of rupees have been plundered through unholy nexus among gaon sathis, gram rozgar sevaks and junior engineer. APO Banajabasini Das said that the irregularities will be investigated.

Dhaba cook forces wife to sleep with owner, nabbed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Purushottampur, June 26: A woman has brought serious allegations against her husband stating that the latter was forcing her to sleep with his employer. When she refused to fall in line, her husband and his employer held her captive in a room, and allegedly tried to kill her.

Acting on her complaint, police registered a case and detained the man and the dhaba owner. The heinous incident has been reported from Purushottampur in Ganjam district.

The accused duo has been identified as Mohammed Laik from Ramkrushna Nagar in Berhampur and Arun Kumar Nayak, owner of Purushottampur-based Narayani Dhaba.

According to the complainant, Mohammed has been in a relationship with her since the last

four days. However, he refuses to marry her and lives with her in a rented house in Berhampur. He is a cook by profession and works in the eatery owned by Nayak in Purushottampur.

Friday, he called the victim to his workplace on some pretext and took her to a house where he forced her to sleep with the dhaba owner. When she refused, the two first tried to force themselves on her. When she resisted, they locked her inside the house and beat her up mercilessly.

Somehow, the victim managed to escape from their clutches and returned to Berhampur by a bus where she approached the Mahila police station and narrated her ordeal. Police admitted her to a hospital. Later, Purushottampur cops conducted a raid and arrested Mohammed and Nayak. Further investigation is on, police said.



A demolition drive underway for road expansion works at Budhi Thakurani Square in Angul, Sunday

Amrut Sarovar creates jobs in Jagatsinghpur



POST NEWS NETWORK

Raghunathpur, June 26: A pond project under the Centre-sponsored Amrut Sarovar scheme was launched at Bidyadharpur under Raghunathpur block in Jagatsinghpur district. The scheme aims at providing workdays to local labourers and facilitating water conservation through pond digging.

In the first phase, 112 labourers were engaged in the excavation of a sprawling pond at Badaganda. The work is underway.

To make the scheme successful, sarpanch Saheda Tabsum has been visiting villages and encouraging job card holders to take advantage of the scheme.

The scheme is expected to bring great relief for people who have been sitting idle due to lack of jobs during and after Covid-19.

Job card holders are happy to get scope of earning, said the sarpanch.

Samiti member Sagarika Tarei said that special focus is being given on how to engage more and more people in the scheme and given them earning scope. She added that ponds to be dug under the scheme will be instrumental in conserving rainwater and recharging the groundwater.

The Union government has provided funds for Amrut Sarovar for eight panchayats under this block. The scheme was launched in Bidyadharpur panchayat.

Boat owners net Ghol fish to earn a fortune

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paradip, June 26: Catching a rare variety of marine fish known as Ghol or Telia fish has changed the fate of some fishermen and boat owners in this port town as it brought them a fortune.

Even a single catch of Ghol fish always hogs the headline for the astounding price it fetches in the market. The fishermen in a majority of the boats and trawlers are now mostly catching Ghol fish after restrictions were lifted allowing the fishermen to venture into the sea to catch fish from June 15.

The matter came to fore after a fisherman caught a 3.850kg Ghol fish and sold it for ₹13, 500, Friday. The fish is auctioned at a much higher price than other varieties



of fish. Fish export agencies are making a beeline to buy the fish known for its high medicinal and therapeutic value at the fish depots at Baliput and near Nehru

bungalow in this port town. A kg of Ghol fish is sold at ₹6,000. Last year, a boat owner was able to catch 18 Ghol fishes and earned ₹23 lakh by selling them.

THE FISH IS FOUND IN INDO-PACIFIC REGION AND IS RICH IN IRON, IODINE, MAGNESIUM, FLUORIDE, SELENIUM AND TAURINE CONTENTS

PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES MAKE USE OF THE FIN AS WELL AS SKIN OF THIS RARE VARIETY OF FISH

Reports said Telia or Ghol fish is found in deep sea. Its biological name is protonibea diacanthus. It is also known as black-spotted croaker. The fish is found in the Indo-Pacific region and is rich in iron, iodine, magnesium, fluoride, selenium and taurine contents.

The fish variety is sought after for medicinal values by pharma-

ceutical companies which make use of its fin as well as skin. It is also used in making various medicinal products, cosmetics and in wine manufacturing industry.

Marine fisheries officer Manoranjan Mohapatra said the fish lives in the deep sea and several of its body parts like intestine, fins and air bladders are used in pharmaceutical industry as it is said to be rich in Omega fatty acid.

The fish traders take it from Paradip and process it at Kolkata or Visakhapatnam. They take out its intestine, fins and air bladders and sell the flesh in open market. The flesh of the fish is sold like that of common fish.

It is all a matter of luck to catch this exotic and rare fish, they added.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

E-AUCTION PROGRAMME FOR AUGUST-2022 FOR DEPOT & DIVISIONS

SCHEDULE OF E-AUCTION

Month	HQ/DIVISION	Date
August-2022	Depot Mancheswar	02.08.22, 10.08.22, 17.08.22 & 30.08.22
	Khurda Road Division	05.08.22, 12.08.22, 22.08.22 & 29.08.22
	Waltair Division	03.08.22, 10.08.22, 18.08.22 & 25.08.22
	Sambalpur Division	04.08.22, 11.08.22, 19.08.22 & 31.08.22

Condemned rolling stocks (Loco, Coach, Wagon), Scrap rail, Miscellaneous P.Way fittings (switches, crossings, fish plates, sleepers, fish bolt etc.), miscellaneous workshop scrap (drums, bogie frame, buffer casing, buffer plunger, turning and boring etc), Miscellaneous ferrous, Non-ferrous, Non-metallic scrap, condemned machinery and plants, condemned vehicles, condemned office equipments of Sambalpur, Khurda Road & Waltair divisions and scrap materials of Railway Electrifications are expected to be offered on "AS IS WHERE IS" basis. Railway administration shall be at liberty to include other items too in the e-auction and the complete details of materials and terms and conditions will be as per Auction Catalogue, which shall be available with the respective auction conducting authority of East Coast Railway or from our website www.ireps.gov.in within 07 (seven) days prior to the date of auction.


PR-219/N/22-23

Principal Chief Materials Manager, Bhubaneswar

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Sin and virtue are a game of resistance we play with God in His efforts to draw us towards perfection.

SRI AUROBINDO



War On Women

The US Supreme Court’s overturning of the landmark court ruling Roe vs Wade nearly half a century ago giving the country’s women constitutional protection for abortion indicates dark times. It undermines women’s rights over their own bodies and personal family choices. The US SC verdict reflects the political divide in America and sends a wrong signal to the rest of the world. The irony is democracy has been used to trample women’s fundamental rights to bodily autonomy, reproductive health, safety and health equity. The verdict was pronounced after six judges ruled there is no constitutional right to abortion in the United States. The vote was 6-3, but Chief Justice John Roberts did not join his conservative colleagues in overturning the ruling. He wrote that there was no need to overturn the broad ruling validating abortion. Justices Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan — representing the liberal wing of the court — gave a dissenting note to the majority judgement. Their observation is pregnant with meaning for the plight of women in the US. “With sorrow — for this Court, but more, for the many millions of American women who have today lost a fundamental constitutional protection — we dissent,” they wrote, warning that abortion opponents now could pursue a nationwide ban “from the moment of conception and without exceptions for rape or incest.”

Former US President Donald Trump, who during his presidency had approved of the induction of the three conservative judges who were among those who gave the ruling, hailed the verdict. Predictably, President Joe Biden called the verdict a sad development. Echoing the President’s concern, Attorney General Merrick Garland assured American women that the Justice Department will protect providers and those seeking abortions in states where it is legal and “work with other arms of the federal government that seek to use their lawful authorities to protect and preserve access to reproductive care.”

More than 90 per cent of abortions take place in the first 13 weeks of pregnancy, and more than half are now done with pills, not surgery, according to an American research group that supports abortion rights. Almost half the US states are likely to implement the ban. This will force abortion seekers to travel to the other states ruled by Democrats for termination of pregnancy. But, those who cannot afford the expenses would have to seek illegal routes which will only make abortion risky. According to a World Health Organisation report, nearly half of pregnancies worldwide are unwanted. Abortion ensures women’s reproductive health is not further impaired. The US apex court ruling robs American women of that right.

What is worse is that this is the beginning of the end of several other rights gained through protracted struggle for years on end because of a conservative majority now in the US SC. This is clear from the exhortations by Justice Clarence Thomas, part of the majority favouring the ban, to his colleagues to overturn other court rulings protecting same-sex marriage, gay sex and the use of contraceptives.

After the verdict, a number of multinational companies have announced that they would defray the cost of travel to other states for abortions by their employees. At the same time, several states ruled by Democrats have reportedly started augmenting facilities for abortion to handle the expected additional rush. At the same time, this verdict will have devastating and fatal impacts on women from racially and economically backward sections of American society, costing their lives, liberties and futures.

This majority judgement will be remembered as a deeply regressive step for American girls and women. The condemnation of a large number of world leaders, including those in Europe, shows the retrograde step has besmirched the reputation of the justice system of one of the world’s oldest modern democracies. However, this extreme Right conservative mindset is not limited to the US SC alone. The Indian government too, while pushing for the Aadhaar identification system had, during the arguments delivered by the attorney general Mukul Rohatgi claimed that the citizen does not have “absolute right” over one’s body. This mindset of depriving the individual of basic human rights and the right to live as one chooses is a danger that has cropped up in most countries ruled by fascist thoughts.

WISDOM CORNER

- “

Until you are happy with who you are, you will never be happy with what you have.

ZIG ZIGLAR
- “

Think of all the beauty still left around you and be happy.

ANNE FRANK
- “

If you spend your whole life waiting for the storm, you'll never enjoy the sunshine.

MORRIS L. WEST

WORDSWORTH

Tontine

The tontine is a system of annuities in which the benefits pass to the surviving subscribers until only one is left. It’s named after Lorenzo Tonti, a Neapolitan banker who started such a scheme in France in 1653, though it has been said that they were known in Italy earlier. Each subscriber paid a sum into the fund, and in return received dividends from the capital invested; as each person died his share was divided among all the others until only one was left, reaping all the benefits. In the original scheme, the capital reverted to the state when the last subscriber died, so it was really a kind of national lottery. The idea was taken up enthusiastically in France and later in Britain and the USA; it was used to fund buildings and other public works. (There are still several hotels and other buildings in Britain and the USA with the word in their names.) Later there were private schemes in which the last survivor got the capital as well. Tontines were eventually banned in Britain and the USA, because there was too much incentive for subscribers to bump each other off to increase their share of the fund, or to become the last survivor and so claim the capital. For that reason, it has been a wonderful plot device for detective story writers, who can use it as a motive for serial murder; it was the theme of *The Wrong Box* by Robert Louis Stevenson and his stepson Lloyd Osbourne in 1889 (made into a film in 1966). The concept survives in a limited way in France.

Tosticated

Like so many slang or dialect words of previous generations, this one is now very rarely encountered. It gained some publicity in 2011 through being listed by the publishers of Chambers Dictionary as a word with a pleasing sound. When it appeared in the language — in the middle of the seventeenth century — it was a sadly incompetent attempt to say intoxicated, perhaps under the influence of drink (“I’m not so tosticated as you think I am”). An influence may have been the even older tosspot, a person who habitually tossed back his pot of drink, hence a heavy drinker or drunkard. *I fancy thou art a little intoxicated tonight. Tosticated! Tosticated! I scorn your words, cries Deborah. I defy the best man in Bath, to say black is my eye; or that I was ever consarned in liquor, since my name was Deborah. Tosticated! No; God help me! I have drunk nothing to-day, but a little tea for breakfast, and half a pint of ale at my dinner.* — The Spiritual Quixote: or, the Summer’s Ramble of Mr. Geoffrey Wildgoose, by Richard Graves, 1773. Rather later, the symptoms of that state became confused — under the influence of the first syllable of the word perhaps — with those of being tossed about, and took on the idea of being perplexed or distracted. Variouslly spelled, as tossedicated or in other forms, recorders of English dialect near the end of the nineteenth century found it to be widely distributed, from Cumberland and Yorkshire down to Somerset and Devon. But by then it had vanished from the printed word. Chambers is the only British dictionary that continues to include it (apart from the Oxford English Dictionary, which never deletes anything).

FOCUS ECONOMY

THE GREAT FPI PULL-OUT

Developments such as the US’ deep recession, Federal Bank rate hikes, European Union uncertainties and Russia-Ukraine war are bleeding the stock markets of Rs 2.71 lakh crore over the past eight months, posing a big challenge to the Indian economy, risking public deposits.

The warning is clear: If the western economies slip into a recession, the Indian economy will need to face an additional challenge. Its exports prospects can be severely hit. “This is an anticipated outcome of their policy response of raising interest rates to manage the unprecedented inflation levels that they are currently experiencing,” Ernst and Young explains in its recent update. The risk of the US economy tumbling into recession over the next year has doubled following the Federal Reserve’s 75 basis-point interest-rate hike last week, says Goldman Sachs. In a note it says that the chance of a recession hitting in the next 12 months has risen from 15 per cent before the rate hike, to 30 per cent as of this week.

As the economy slumps and the interest rates are hiked, foreign portfolio investors (FPI) are moving their investments back to the US. The ongoing FPI selling in Indian equities is turning out to be the highest selling spree since the global financial crisis (GFC) of 2008 at \$36 billion against \$28 billion during the GFC. However, inflows from domestic institutional investors into the shaky market have been constant, while benchmark indices are down just around 10 per cent compared to more than 50 per cent in 2008.

The sell-off that began in August, 2021 and with a brief lull in September continues since October. The FPI pull-out has hit the rupee, with its exchange rate against the dollar falling to Rs 78.18 despite heavy intervention by the RBI. Bankruptcy in the Euro region is deeper than explained. The latest voyage of the world’s biggest unfinished cruiser to the ship-



The FPI pull-out has hit the rupee, with its exchange rate against the dollar falling despite heavy intervention by the Reserve Bank of India

breaking yard due to lack of a buyer is a testimony that the malaise is deeper. The European economy is getting into the throes of crisis with clogging of gas supplies from Russia, an expected food crisis and wrecking of its growth and economy for just sitting with NATO. The US has yet not found a counter to checkmate Russia except giving some arms to Ukraine.

India, despite being a friend of both the US and Russia, is unable to save itself from the hazards. India is singled by high global inflation, higher domestic inflation, high debt, falling rupee vis-a-vis the dollar. India’s external debt has risen by \$11.5 billion in October-December 2021 to stand at \$614.9 billion at the end of the quarter, according to data released by the Ministry of Finance. The IMF has issued a warning. It says external debt, by supplementing domestic savings, can help countries grow faster. But a large stock of external debt can potentially create vulnerabilities and dent growth prospects. Since the onset of the pandemic, many countries have expanded public spending to support the recovery, which has led to a build-up of their external debt.

In other words, it warns to check external debt in particular.

As India aims at higher, sustainable and inclusive growth, the RBI warns of keeping external debt flows within the estimated threshold limit for preserving overall macro-stability to ward off external vulnerability. It’s a stern warning, more so as savings is also not growing to meet the critical demands.

The FPI investment is not considered staple investment. But it is a kind of hedge against external borrowings, forex reserves as also the need to maintain rupee stability. The majority of the external debt is private. General government external debt stood at \$131.4 billion as on December 31, down from \$132.0 billion as at the end of September 2021. Non-government commercial external debt, meanwhile, rose to \$483.6 billion, 36.8 per cent from \$471.4 billion. The official borrowings are from international institutions on soft terms with the lowest risks. During fiscal 2021-22, India borrowed the most from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development at Rs 22,362 crore, followed by Asian Development Bank at Rs

16802 crore and the Government of Japan at Rs 9835 crore.

During the week ending February 25, India’s foreign currency assets declined by \$2.22 billion. Since then much more was lost in managing the rupee and the external sector. The rupee remains under pressure. This is a clear call for severe caution. The void of the FPIs is being filled up by domestic institutional investors (DIIs), led by the LIC, mutual funds and insurance companies. They are absorbing most of the FPI sales to keep the stock market maintain a semblance but it is an artificial support for virtually subsidising the domestic companies, whose valuations are on an apparent roll. In other words, public money is being pumped into shaky private operations further debilitating the public institutions.

The institutions are supposed to take independent decisions. But this kind of operations pushing them into risky operations is questionable. Most of these organisations, now particularly LIC, are in high risk of losing people’s deposits. The RBI, SEBI and other regulators need to step in to check such deals and purchases, as the market value of many corporates with high ECBs as also domestic borrowings are suspect.

What appears as an innocuous withdrawal of some foreign companies is causing a deep sense of hurt. This calls for a decision at the level of top regulators as also the Ministry of Finance to check the quality of investments being made in the risky assets. Stock prices are mostly notional and speculative – based on the premise that it would have gains. Since 1992, the innumerable crashes or scams were based on these premises. Severe caution is needed at this hour as even an innocuous repeat of a failure can shear the Indian economy of billions, if not trillions.

What looks like a US or Euro recession, if not treated cautiously, could have deleterious effect. Remember the adage ‘a stitch in time saves nine’.

INFA

SPECTRUM DEFENCE

Agnipath shouldn’t become a fancy experiment

Agniveer is a fancy name which will spellbound the audience in a cinema hall if yelled by an actor like Akshay Kumar while chewing mangoes. How this name will match with the other wings of professional soldiers who have had long years of training in war crafts is yet to be known. How much the short-trained boys will be trusted in the war front is a matter of doubt. They will not use the core fire-power since at least seven years service is necessary to handle medium machine guns, anti-tanks missiles and rocket launchers.

The fighting officers leading a rifle company will not have the confidence to lead from the front without having highly trained and experienced gunmen. Many officers had terrible experience with soldiers from Territorial Army sent to war fronts. A good number of soldiers on short jobs ran away from war fields. A major or Lieutenant Colonel can trust soldiers who have at least 10 years of job security.

Developing soldier-like personality at an early age is appropriate since teen minds can be molded easily in any manner. Late entrants in military behave in a cautious manner and are lesser dare devils. Crime gang leaders hence catch boys at an early age

and turn them into dare devils. At that age it’s easy to set enemies. Many a political groups also catch their radical cadres at that age. In military they set their enemies as external aggressors; criminals set enemies as police and police informers; religious radicals set enemies as people from other religions. There is a well known saying that “a young lieutenant with a rifle can be the most dangerous person.” At that age they don’t think much about the consequences but jump to the ring.

The writer once asked a young Colonel if he was taking retirement if he did not get a promotion. The Colonel replied: “I am a trained warrior, what else I can do? I will continue to be in army as long as I can.” The Agniveer soldiers will be trained in warfare. What skills will they have to become entrepreneurs? In fact their personalities will be far away from satisfying a customer. In India a good number of soldiers retire after reaching the rank of a Colonel or its equivalent since the structure becomes pyramidal at that rank. Many of them prefer reengagement in administrative jobs at the same rank and those who do not take such extensions start security agencies. But they get secured business from public sector organisations. Rarely these well trained officers from the

elite armed forces start independent enterprises.

The USA and Israel have an income security system for all, and a jobless person can have a decent life with allowances. In China getting work is a fundamental right and basic rights are met by the community. In India, our pensions and jobless allowances are paltry amounts. In Israel, they have industrial complexes where a lot of ex-military persons are engaged. Government assures market to these enterprises like the NSO group which made the Pegasus malware. These units work in close cooperation with the military and are like semi-military units. Besides assured income the military environment is available in these complexes.

In the USA, the job markets are different. People can join police services at the lowest rank and go up in the ladder depending on their IQ, knowledge and efficiency. A degree may not matter. Many young men don’t study beyond schools since they can get decent jobs with basic education.

One has to review about the consequences of these young energetic boys trained in warfare going without employment. Will it be good to have trained warriors in police which is basically a part of the justice system? Can the young warriors trained to kill the enemy

give justice to human rights and democratic movements of citizens?

Most of the ex-military persons who get jobs in banks or PSUs belong to the service corps, not the fighting forces. The highly trained commandos after their retirement in late thirties opt to become security guards. In the present day recruitment system in India the ex-Agniveers cannot compete with their friends who have attended regular classes in colleges for clerical jobs or for the post of SI in police.

The government has not done proper homework hence they have changed the age limit and have committed to change the recruitment policy. More homework is necessary before alluring our young men and women to the fancy-name venture. A lot more policy changes are essential in economic and industrial sectors to go for such innovative experiments.

Change is inevitable. But it should not be like demonetization, pink notes, GST or farm laws which caused a lot hardship to people. May be the fancy name has attracted the ruling class to jump at it. But for the betterment of the nation the project can be launched after proper planning.

The writer is an author and social worker. Views are personal.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

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Day for handshakes

Sir, Among many ‘days’ observed by countries across the globe, the National Handshake Day practiced in the United States (US) on the last Thursday of June is significant. Handshake or Shake Hand – holding of hands between two men or women – that initially started as a symbol of peace to reveal no weapons in the hands, assumed broader ramifications over the decades. It is an ancient art of greeting one another, and was said to be propagated by Ivan Zupa who called upon the world to “place its hands in the sea and shake hands with the world.” The 5th Century BC has records to show two soldiers shaking hands ostensibly to check for weapons like daggers though the origin of the handshake can be traced to 2nd century BC. Since women did not carry weapons during the medieval days, they shook hands less. When two hands of two different men or women are clasped tightly, the self-confidence and friendliness of the protagonists are on display. An expression of goodwill and appreciation, mutual trust and respect towards each other are written all over most handshakes. The up and down movement of a handshake, generally seen in business meetings, exemplifies the successful conclusion of an agreement, and the inclination of the two hand shakers to keep up the spirit of the agreement. Right hand is almost always used for shaking of hands; it is regarded proper etiquette. Born left-handers are sometimes exempted. Also, handshake while seated is considered bad manner. In many countries like Russia, women do not shake hands and in some other countries it is considered courteous to shake the hands of women first. In some nations, handshakes between opposite sexes are not encouraged; in few they are strictly prohibited. The style of handshake is said to reveal a lot about one’s personality.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Clean chit to Modi

Sir, The Supreme Court has upheld the clean chit given to the then Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi and 63 others in the Gujarat riots triggered by the burning of a railway coach in which kar sevaks were burnt alive. It is easy, and right too, to say two wrongs cannot make one right. But mob frenzy going at an unprecedented scale would cause immense damage before the situation is brought under control. The SIT closure report giving clean chit to Modi and 63 others was challenged by Zakia Jafri, wife of slain Congress leader Ehsan Jafri. Sympathy goes to Zakia. She has fought a relentless legal battle to get ‘justice’ for the death of her husband.

KV Seetharamaiah, BANGALORE

of the day quote

I am happy that Rajasthan government is also starting mohalla clinic. We all have to learn good works from each other and implement them across the country. Only then the country will progress

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CM

The BJP is indulging in horse-trading in Maharashtra as it did in Madhya Pradesh and in Rajasthan

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

The Delhi government aims to provide dignified education spaces to all children in government schools

MANISH SISODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CM

SHORT TAKES

Four killed

Raisen: Three children in the 5-14 age group and a man were killed and four persons injured in a wall collapse on Sunday afternoon in Raisen in Madhya Pradesh, a police official said. The incident occurred at Chandan Pipariya village under Silwani police station area, some 110 kilometres from the district headquarters, after the area experienced rain and thunderstorms for two hours, said Sub Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP) Rajesh Tiwari.

Man dies

Mumbai: A man died after saving his three children from a fire that broke out in his bungalow in Navi Mumbai's Panvel area on Sunday morning, a police official said. Rajesh Vishnu Thakur (38), who kin claimed was a small time actor, died in the fire that engulfed the ground-plus-one structure located in Akurli village, the Khandeshwar police station official said."Thakur managed to alert his three children, and guided them safely out of the house. He then went back to his first floor bedroom to gather his laptop, scripts, documents etc, but got trapped in the blaze and died after being rushed to a nearby hospital. His wife was not at home," he said.

Eight arrested

Shimla: The Himachal Pradesh Police raided a rave party and arrested eight people for possession of drugs in Kullu district, an official said Sunday. A little over Rs 4 lakh cash, over 200 bottles of liquor, 88 gm charas and other drugs were recovered from their possession late on Saturday, the official said. The party organiser, identified as Kashish Gulyani (24) from Rajasthan's Alwar, had obtained permission to play music at the party in Shilha village located in the popular Parvati Valley, but the police seized several drugs during the raid, Kullu Superintendent of Police Gurdav Sharma said. All the accused are in the age group of 23-29 years. Of these, five are from Karnataka, and one each from Delhi and Himachal Pradesh, he said.

Bodies found

Kannauj (UP): Two bodies, including that of a woman's, was found in a Srinagar village under Thatthia police station area of the district, police said Sunday. According to the police, the body of a man was found hanging from a tree in the courtyard of his in-law's house here and that of woman's was lying in a pool of blood in a room. They were husband and wife. The incident came to light when their three-year-old son started crying after failing to wake up his mother in the morning. Hearing the commotion, the villagers entered the house and found the bodies.



The need of the hour is to bring comprehensive law and order reforms. The government will soon introduce witness protection Bill and modify jails of the state into high-security jails

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

EMERGENCY LANDING

A helicopter carrying Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had to make an emergency landing at the police lines in Varanasi, minutes after take-off. Sources said that the chopper was brought back to the base as a precautionary measure after a reported bird hit



With Murmu's nomination, BJP hopes to garner tribal votes

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 26: By fielding Draupadi Murmu, a tribal woman in the Presidential polls, the BJP is trying to make inroads into the community ahead of the next parliamentary election. The party is also hoping to win their support in this year's Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh assembly polls.

On June 21, The BJP announced the name of former Jharkhand Governor Murmu as the NDA presidential candidate. BJP chief J P Nadda made the announcement

at a press conference. "Detailed discussion was held on 20 names and it was decided to have a candidate from the eastern part of the country. It was also discussed that someone from the tribal community must be made President of India. After discussion, the Parliamentary Board decided to name Draupadi Murmu as President candidate," Nadda had said while announcing her name.

A senior party leader said that the message is clear that after making inroads among all sections of society, now the Bharatiya Janata

Party leadership has decided to make inroads among the tribal communities across the country.

"The decision to name Murmu as NDA candidate for the post of the President will benefit the party electorally in the upcoming polls which include assembly polls and the 2024 Parliamentary election," he said. In Gujarat the tribals traditionally vote for the Congress and they did the same in the last assembly polls in 2017. Similarly, in Himachal Pradesh they play a role in state politics.

"Tribal communities have a de-



cisive role in upcoming Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh assembly

polls. The community also holds political importance in other states like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan in which assembly polls will be held next year. Murmu becoming President of India, will definitely benefit the party in the upcoming assembly polls and parliamentary elections. With her as our presidential candidate, we are hoping to strengthen our position among the tribal voters," he said.

A functionary noted that it is a strategic move with an eye on the 2024 Lok Sabha polls as there are

47 reserved Scheduled Tribes (ST) constituencies. Murmu is likely all set to become the first tribal woman President of the country next month.

"By naming Murmu, BJP is wooing the tribal voters, which can play an important role in strengthening the party's position in the upcoming state and national polls. After making Ram Nath Kovind President of the country five years ago, the nomination of a tribal woman leader now is a big political message to the SC/ST communities," a party insider said.

SIT to probe case against Teesta, two ex-IPS officers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, June 26: A Special Investigation Team (SIT), to be headed by Gujarat ATS DIG, will probe the case against activist Teesta Setalvad and former IPS officers RB Sreekumar and Sanjiv Bhatt who have been accused of abusing the process of law by fabricating evidence to frame innocent people in connection with the 2002 Gujarat communal riots, a senior official said Sunday.

Earlier in the day, the Ahmedabad crime branch had arrested Setalvad, a day after she was detained in Mumbai and shifted to Gujarat.

Ex-Gujarat DGP Sreekumar was arrested Saturday while the process is on to get a transfer warrant for custody of Bhatt, who is serving a life sentence in a custodial death case at a jail at Palanpur, in connection with the FIR lodged against them.

The SIT will be headed by Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Gujarat Anti Terrorist Squad (ATS) Deepan Bhadran and will have Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) of Ahmedabad Crime Branch, and Superintendent of Police (SP) of Gujarat ATS as its two members, the official said.

The investigation will be carried out by the Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) of the Ahmedabad Special Operations Group (SOG), Gujarat ATS DIG Bhadran said.

Setalvad and Sreekumar were arrested by the crime branch, and a process has been initiated to bring Bhatt - who is serving a life sentence in a custodial death case at a jail at Palanpur in the state's Banaskantha



district - to Ahmedabad on a transfer warrant, DCP (Crime), Chaitanya Mandlik had said.

The city crime branch registered an FIR against Setalvad, Sreekumar, and Bhatt on Saturday, a day after the Supreme Supreme Court dismissed a petition challenging the clean chit given by the SIT to the then chief minister Narendra Modi and others in 2002 post-Godhra riots cases.

The trio has been accused of abusing the process of law by conspiring to fabricate the evidence in an attempt to frame innocent people for an offence punishable with capital punishment in connection with the 2002 Gujarat riots.

While dismissing the plea of Zakia Jafri, wife of slain former Congress MP Ehsan Jafri who was killed during riots, the apex court observed that 'At the end of the day, it appears to us that a co-alesced effort of the disgruntled officials of the State of Gujarat along with others was to create a

sensation by making revelations which were false to their own knowledge."

Setalvad, Sreekumar, and Bhatt were booked under sections 468, 471 (forgery), 194 (giving or fabricating false evidence with intent to procure conviction of capital offence), 211 (institute criminal proceedings to cause injury), 218 (public servant framing incorrect record or writing with intent to save a person from punishment or property from forfeiture), and 120 (B) (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code.

The complaint is mainly based on the documents of proceedings and other materials to make out a case of cognizable offence. It drew on various submissions made before the Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed by the Supreme Court to investigate the 2002 Gujarat riots cases and the Justice Nanavati-Shah Commission of Inquiry appointed by the Gujarat government to probe these cases.

FOR A CATCH



Fishermen spread fishing nets while sailing in the Hooghly river in Nadia

19 hurt in clash between BJP, Cong

Police fired tear gas to disperse the mob, which clashed after the results of the by-elections for four Assembly seats were declared

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, June 26: At least 19 people including Tripura PCC chief Birajit Sinha were injured in a clash between Congress and BJP supporters in front of Congress Bhavan here Sunday. Police fired tear gas to disperse



the mob, which clashed after the results of the by-elections for four assembly seats were declared. BJP won three seats and Congress one. The entire Post Office Chowmuhani area where Congress Bhavan is located wore a deserted look after the clash.

"Jubilant Congress supporters returned to Congress Bhavan with

the winning candidate in Agartala assembly seat, Sudip Roy Barman, from the counting hall around 1 pm. "When they were preparing for lunch, a strong group of BJP supporters attacked Congress Bhavan. The Tripura Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president was hit by bricks on his head while one Congress worker, identified as Romi Miah, was stabbed by BJP supporters," Congress media-in-charge Asish Kumar Saha said.

He alleged that BJP supporters led by a Yuva Morcha leader rained bricks on the building and damaged several motorcycles parked in front of it.

STRIKING DESPAIR

Lightning claimed 1,700-plus lives over 10 yrs in Jharkhand

Lightning has caused so much destruction in this village as the name Bajarmara suggests, that probably this is the only village in the country where lightning strikes more than 500 times a year

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ranchi, June 26: Whenever lightning strikes, the people of Bajarmara village, located in Namkum block of Ranchi, tremble with the fear that something un-

toward may have happened.

Lightning has caused so much destruction in this village as the name Bajarmara suggests, that probably this is the only village in the country where lightning strikes more than 500 times a year.

There is hardly any family in this village, which has not suffered loss of life or property due to lightning. Similarly, an ancient fort located in Pithoria village of Ranchi is also hit by lightning several times every year. This fort, which has collapsed and turned into ruins, belonged to Jagatpal Singh, who was the king of this area about 200 years ago.

Jharkhand is also one of the six



states of the country that have been identified as the most sensitive by the India Meteorological Department with regard to the dangers of thunder and lightning. According to the data of the Meteorological Department, there

has been 4,39,828 incidents of lightning in Jharkhand in 2021, it was about 4.5 lakh in 2020.

According to the data, Madhya Pradesh reports the highest number of lightning strikes in the entire country. Last year, there were more

than 6.5 lakh lightning strikes in Madhya Pradesh, while Chhattisgarh had about 5.7 lakh, Maharashtra 5.4 lakh, Odisha 5.3 lakh and West Bengal more than 5.1 lakh.

Report suggests that the maximum number of lightning occurs during the pre-monsoon period of May-June. This year, so far 28 people have died in Jharkhand due to lightning in the last 20 days. In the last 10 years, there have been more than 1,700 deaths due to lightning here. The number of deaths due to lightning in any year since 2011 has not been less than 150. In 2017, the death toll due to lightning was recorded at 300. Similarly, there were 270 deaths in 2016 and 277 in 2018.

‘Admin yet to reach all affected in Silchar’

Over 96,000 people under Silchar revenue circle of Cachar district are reeling under the deluge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Silchar (Assam), June 26: With Silchar town in Assam’s Cachar district submerged in flood waters for a week now, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma Sunday conceded that the administration has not been able to reach all the marooned people yet.

He said instructions have been issued to agencies involved in the relief and rescue operations to maximise their reach and ensure help for all affected population at the earliest.

Sarma waded through the waters on foot at places and sailed in a NDRF rubber boat, as he interacted with the local populace to get a first-hand understanding of their situation.

Cabinet Minister Parimal Suklabaidya, Silchar MP Rajdeep Roy, several MLAs and officials of local civil and police administration accompanied the chief minister during the visit. The CM held a review meeting with district administration officials on the situation and the measures being taken for rescue and relief operations.

Speaking to reporters later, Sarma accepted that the administration has not been able to reach out to all affected people thus far.

“In many areas, we have not been able to reach out to the marooned people. We are not denying it. I have issued instructions on how to maximise our reach. We are also open to suggestions on the



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma interacts with locals during his visit to inspect the damage in the aftermath of floods, in Silchar

PTI PHOTO

matter,” he said. Sarma appealed to people to stand by each other during this time of distress and appreciated the philanthropic activities by individuals and groups in Silchar.

“About 50 per cent work of the administration is being done by philanthropic organisations and people,” he stated.

“People are overall happy with the relief operations. It is not possible to get to each and every person, but more or less we have reached out to everyone who has sought help,” Sarma claimed.

He said medical camps will be organised in the town from Monday or the day after, and doctors from Guwahati and Army will assist in running these camps.

“The water level at Barak river is still flowing above the danger level. It has to reduce considerably before the damage can be repaired. There is forecast of more rain. We are now trying to ensure that there is minimum further damage in case of more rainfall,” the chief minister maintained.

Talking about a damaged dyke at Betkundi area, due to which the

BJP govt busy serving ‘cocktail-mocktail’ to Shiv Sena MLAs: Cong

Guwahati: Senior Congress leader Ajoy Kumar Sunday alleged that the BJP-led Assam government was busy serving ‘cocktail-mocktail’ to dissident Maharashtra MLAs camping in a luxury hotel here but was not able to even provide free drinking water to flood-affected people in the state. He claimed that people had to pay money to receive their rightful relief materials. The BJP-led government in Assam is serving cocktail-mocktail to the Shiv Sena legislators, but it doesn’t have money to provide even drinking water to the flood-affected people, he told reporters here. Kumar claimed there were videos of people having to pay Rs 30 to receive water bottles as part of their due relief in some parts of the state. “This is the condition of politics in Assam...When people elect such representatives, this is bound to happen,” the former Jharkhand Pradesh Congress president said.

town has been largely submerged, the CM said repair work will take some time.

Houses of around two lakh people in the town, considered to be the gateway to Barak Valley, have been

affected following the damage of the dyke at Betkundi, allegedly by some miscreants.

“Inspected the magnitude of flood & extent of damage at Rangirkhari, Silchar on a boat during my second visit to the flood-hit town,” Sarma tweeted following the visit.

“During my more-than-one-hour inspection, saw the hardships faced by people as most areas are still reeling under floodwaters. Our government stands firmly with the people of Silchar and we are unwavering in our efforts to lessen their sufferings,” he added.

The CM had Thursday made an aerial survey of the marooned town, which has a population of approximately three lakh, visited a few relief camps and reviewed the situation with public representatives and district officials.

Sarma is set to visit flood relief camps at Hajo in Kamrup district later Sunday.

Over 96,000 people under Silchar revenue circle of Cachar district are reeling under the deluge, as per Assam State Disaster Management Authority bulletin Saturday evening.

The overall flood situation in the state also remained critical Sunday with more than 25 lakh people in 27 districts still affected, although water level have started receding at some areas.

Altogether 121 people have been killed in floods and landslides in the state this year.

‘Goa wasted time & money on litigations’, CM says need to talk



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Panaji, June 26: Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has said that there was a need to talk to anti-government and anti-industries NGOs as a lot of money and time has been wasted fighting litigations in Supreme Court and NGT.

Sawant Saturday was speaking at the 114th AGM of Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

“If we (government) talk to them, then these NGO’s will say that the government is criticising them. Hence, somebody needs to talk to them. I have only to say that if we want to develop (the state) then we have to speak to NGO’s across the table. Industries should start talking to NGO’s. Even we are ready to talk,” Sawant said.

We want to take the state ahead. We have to go forward in tourism and other sectors like a Singapore model. We have to invite investors. Goa is a world known brand. Goa itself is a brand. Hence, we have to think in this direction

PRAMOD SAWANT | CHIEF MINISTER, GOA

He said that a few NGOs were filing cases on every project of the government, be it Mopa International airport, third bridge on Mandovi, second bridge on Zuari, electronic city, tourism building or any other project. Not a single project they have spared. “We have wasted a lot of time and a lot of money. We are fighting in the Supreme Court, we are fighting in NGT,” he said.

“We want to take the state ahead. We have to go forward in tourism and other sectors like a Singapore model. We have to invite investors. Goa is a world known brand. Goa itself is a brand. Hence, we have to think in this direction,” Sawant said.

He said that to resume sustainable mining, the government has taken the steps. Definitely, we will do it and we will resume sustainable mining, he said.

He also urged industrialists to opt Solar power. For new renewable energy the government will give all the support, Sawant said.

Goa to spotlight its anti-colonial struggle by restoring old forts



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Panaji, June 26: After making budgetary provision to restore temples demolished during the Portuguese colonial rule in Goa, the state’s BJP government has announced plans to restore and beautify forts and memorials having historical importance.

It has also focused on passing the history of Goa liberation to the next generation by including it in textbooks.

The portion of Aguada fort has been converted into a museum drawing tourists to this historical place, thus promoting and fostering tourism activities. Not depending only on the concept of ‘Sea, Sand and Sun’, the government is putting efforts to divert tourists to other scenic and historical sites.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has urged the students to visit Aguada fort so that they can get information about freedom fighters’ struggle. The Portuguese had used this fort as a jail in which the freedom fighters were lodged.

The Portuguese rule in Goa lasted for 450 years, during which they demolished the temples.

Sawant has announced plans to rebuild these temples and has directed concerned departments to act.

Not only rebuilding the temples, but now the government has decided to restore the forts and memorials having historical importance. The restored Aguada fort has now become a tourist attraction, which also gives historical information to visitors.

The Goa government has also asked its Archives and Archeological department to work on translating the documents of sites, which has link with the liberation movement.

While commemorating the coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji

Maharaj at the Betul Fort in South Goa, Sawant had commended the Archives and Archeological department for translating Portuguese documents related to the history of the Betul Fort, which was built by Shivaji Maharaj.

Not only forts, but the government has decided to give equal attention to memorials in the state.

Sawant recently laid the foundation stone for upgrading the martyrs memorial in the memory of Hirve Guruji and Sheshnath Wadekar at Terekhol (Tiracol) fort in North Goa. Both hailing from Maharashtra were shot dead by the Portuguese for unfurling the national flag on fort August 15, 1955. They had participated in Satyagrah to liberate Goa.

Many freedom fighters from across India felt that Goa should get liberation from Portuguese and hence they came here to fight against Portuguese. All the 127 freedom fighters who had come to Terekhol fort, were told to go back to India by the Portuguese. But they were firm on their decision to liberate Goa, some of them were later shot dead by Portuguese. They sacrificed their life to liberate Goa, hence this history should be passed to the next generation, Sawant said.

According to the Chief Minister, such memorials shall inspire the future generations to imbibe the values of nationalism in the service of the nation.

He said along with Cabo de Rama fort, Betul fort and memorials, having importance of Goa liberation, will be restored and beautified.

Sawant has also announced that the contributions of Azad Gomantak Dal, a local armed revolutionary group, National Congress (Goa) and other freedom fighters who played a vital role to liberate Goa, will be included in the history textbooks.

Radisson Blu closes bookings till June 30

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, June 26: Luxury hotel Radisson Blu Guwahati, where dissident Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde is camping along with other MLAs from Maharashtra, has stopped all new bookings till June 30.

Dissident legislators of Shiv Sena, which heads the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition government in Maharashtra, have been camping in Guwahati, around 2,700 km away from Mumbai, since June 22, resulting in a political crisis in the western state.

The five-star property’s official website, through which one can make reservations, has stopped taking new requests till June 30.

Reservation is, however, being allowed from July 1 on the website.

When contacted, a senior official of the hotel told PTI, “We are booked to capacity.” He, however, declined to comment anything related to the stay of the Maharashtra MLAs.

It is learnt that around 70 rooms have been booked for the Maharashtra MLAs and their associates. The hotel has closed the restaurants, banquets and other facilities for other non-resident guests. Radisson Blu Guwahati, opened in 2014, is the first five-star hotel in the Northeast.

Ambubachi Mela ends at Kamakhya temple

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, June 26: Doors of Kamakhya Temple atop Nilachal Hills here, one of the 51 Shakti peethas, were opened for devotees Sunday morning after a gap of four days, with the conclusion of the Ambubachi festival, during which the deity at the shrine is believed to undergo her annual menstrual cycle.

A four-day mela on the temple premises, held during the period, also came to a close, with the doors of the shrine opened for the resumption of public worshipping.

Devotees were allowed to participate in the fair after a gap of two years. Governor Jagdish Mukhi and his wife were among the first to pay obeisance to the goddess early in the morning.

“I along with the First Lady offered our prayers & obeisance to Maa #Kamakhya at the culmination of pious #AmbubachiMela. We prayed for the contentment & welfare of people of the State. May the divine blessings of Maa bring peace, prosperity & happiness in everyone’s life,” Mukhi tweeted.

Devotees and Hindu monks from across the country who throng the temple during this period waited in long queues for offering prayers



PTI PHOTO

Devotees gather to offer prayers at Kamakhya temple which reopened after the end of four-day Ambubachi Mela

to the goddess.

Authorities have stopped making provisions for VIP passes for visitors for the time being to enable

all devotees to visit the temple, officials said. Ambubachi, associated with the belief of fertility cult, is the most important reli-

gious event of the temple and also of the state’s tourism calendar with around 25 lakh footfalls usually recorded during the festival.

Rhino habitats facing threat from invasive plant species

EXPERTS HAVE SOUGHT IMMEDIATE MEASURES FOR ENSURING LONG-TERM CONSERVATION OF ALL GRASSLAND-DEPENDENT SPECIES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, June 26: Assam’s three major habitats for one-horned rhinoceros are facing threat, not just from poachers but also from several invasive plant species that are posing a grave danger to the grasslands, prompting interventions in some areas to save the fodder for the animals.

Various invasive plant species that tend to destroy the grasslands have been found in abundance in Kaziranga and Manas National Park as well as the Pobitora Wildlife sanctuary; home to rhinoceros, elephant, swamp deer among other animals.

In Kaziranga National Park (KNP), authorities, under the Wildlife Institute of India’s project ‘Management of Invasive Species’, have sought permission for experimental culling, cutting, slashing, uprooting, and girdling of vegetation.

KNP Field Director Jatindra Sarma told PTI, “We have come across several species of plants of invasive nature, mostly annual or perennial herbs, identified as weeds, which adversely impact the grasslands. Besides, there are some plants that have a toxic impact under water.”

Some of the 18 invasive species



of plants identified in the park are Bombax ceiba, Trewia nudiflora, GuterB Crataeva nurvala, Lagerstroemia speciosa and Cestrum diurnum, Sarma pointed out.

KNP, along with Wildlife Institute of India and leading NGOs, is working on a project to weed out the invasive species which are seriously affecting the flora and fauna of the park, he said. The KNP field director, however, pointed out that one particular weed, ‘Cestrum diurnum’, has high medicinal value.

“Being a source of Vitamin D-3, ‘Cestrum diurnum’ is often smuggled out by unscrupulous traders. I have already contacted a Delhi-based manufacturing company for commercial cultivation of the species,” he maintained.

In Manas National Park (MNP), a habitat restoration project is already underway by biodiversity organisation ‘Aaranyak’, in collaboration with the biosphere reserve authorities and forest department. Bibhuti Prasad Lahkar

We have come across several species of plants of invasive nature, mostly annual or perennial herbs, identified as weeds, which adversely impact the grasslands. Besides, there are some plants that have a toxic impact under water

JATINDRA SARMA | FIELD DIRECTOR, KAZIRANGA NP

of ‘Aaranyak’ said plans are afoot to extend the project to Pobitora once the flood waters recede.

“We found that approximately 30 per cent of the grassland habitat in Manas has been affected due to the invasion, primarily by two species ‘Chromolaena Odonta’ and ‘Mikania Micrantha’,” he added.

Using Species Distribution Modelling (SDM) approach, we inferred that immediate management intervention was needed for ensuring long-term conservation and benefit of all grassland-dependent species, he told PTI.

Lahkar, who is leading the habitat restoration initiative at MNP, said that they had applied three treatments initially -- manually uprooting the invasive plants, cutting the invasive plants

above-ground and cutting or burning of the invasive plants -- to find out which one works the best.

“We identified manual uprooting as the best method to arrest invasion and promote the growth of native grass species. On an experimental basis, we had selected a grassland plot of one hectare which was completely invaded by Chromolaena and applied the manual uprooting method for three consecutive years,” he said.

Uprooting was carried out just before the flowering of these invasive plants in September to control the wind dispersal of seeds, and with each annual cycle, the abundance of the species decreased, he explained.

“During the restoration work, we have learned that the site needs to be maintained for at least three to five years, protecting it from livestock grazing and other anthropogenic disturbances. After the removal of invasive plants in the first year, it may be followed by plantation of native grass species for better results,” Lahkar said.

“We are also planning to take this initiative to Pobitora, which has the highest concentration of one-horned rhinos and where invasive species have led to habitat destruction,” Lahkar added.

of the day quote

The BJP cannot tolerate opposition parties. It doesn't even respect disagreements. It tramples, crushes and wants to end (those who oppose it). This is a democratic country and such acts (of attempting to destabilise governments) will not be tolerated. The BJP will have to face the consequences

BHUPESH BAGHEL | CHHATTISGARH CM

The Modi government is implementing the National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project in eight coastal states with an outlay of over Rs 4,900 crore to reduce the sufferings caused to the coastal community by cyclones and other calamities

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

Whenever something wrong happens, the BJP uses this community (Kashmiri Pandits) to defame us

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP CHIEF

SHORT TAKES

3 women arrested

New Delhi: One woman has been arrested while two others have been apprehended for allegedly impersonating themselves as executives of Bajaj Finance Limited and Bajaj Finserv and cheating people, the police said Sunday. Manisha Ahirwal -- the prime accused of the fake call centre scam, was arrested while two others -- Kalpana (21) and Reema (23) were bound down. Furnishing details, DCP Sameer Sharma said a complaint was lodged by one Deepak Kumar stating that he received a call from an unknown number. The caller represented herself as an executive from Bajaj Finserv and called regarding issuing a credit card.

SP MLA booked

Pratapgarh (Uttar Pradesh): Samajwadi Party MLA R.K. Varma has been booked for damaging the government property. The SP MLA was inspecting an under-construction engineering college in Pratapgarh last week when he gave a push to a half-constructed wall which crumbled on the spot. The manager of Amarontrans Infotech Noida firm filed a case against R.K. Verma, SP MLA from Raniganj on Saturday night. Six named and 45 unknown supporters of the MLA have been booked in the case at Kadhai Kotwali.

Fire breaks out

New Delhi: A fire broke out at a plastic factory in the Badli area of the national capital on Sunday, a fire department official said. So far there have been no injuries or casualties in the incident. The official informed that they received a call about the fire incident at 2.10 a.m. in a plastic dana factory at A 69, near Haiderpur Metro station in northern Delhi after which as many as five fire tenders were immediately pressed into the service.

Woman cop, home guard held

Kanpur: A woman sub-inspector (S-I) posted in the office of the ADCP, a home guard and one other person were arrested in Kanpur on charges of blackmailing two traders. The accused had tried to extort money from two Jalaun-based businessmen by threatening them after they were caught with prostitutes. The two businessmen were also arrested and booked under charges of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act.

Apprehension remains on 'Agnipath' scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 26: Apprehension continues to remain over the future of soldiers to be recruited under the 'Agnipath' scheme as the Centre and several state governments are yet to roll out a comprehensive plan for their rehabilitation once they retire after four years of service in the armed forces.

Adding to the anxiety of the youths, none of the states ruled by the opposition parties announced any favourable recruitment scheme for 'Agniveers' to be hired under the scheme, while a few demanded that it be completely withdrawn.

After the June 14 announcement of the 'Agnipath' scheme, at least 18 states and Union Territories - Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi - witnessed protests, some of them violent.

While BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand and Assam announced that they would give preference to 'Agniveers' in the recruitment for police, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said it has decided to reserve 10 per cent vacancies in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and



Economic inequality and social injustice is increasing. The rich are getting richer, poor are getting poorer. Intolerance and hatred have destroyed social harmony. Constitutional institutions are being weakened

AKHILESH YADAV | SP CHIEF



The IAF has received 56,960 applications under the Agnipath recruitment scheme till Sunday, within three days of the registration process getting under way on Friday

Assam Rifles for 'Agniveers'. However, experts believe that the process would not be so simple. A state police recruitment board head said reservation cannot be more than 50 per cent in employment and most of the 'Agniveers' will be in the unreserved category as the Army has no reservation system. "So, the idea that they can be

absorbed in CAPFs and state police may not work. They have to be considered only against 50 per cent of unreserved vacancies. It will also mean that meritorious and better-educated non-Agniveers will find it difficult to join the police. This will impact the efficiency of the police." So, how does the policy of Army recruitment reconcile with the system of reservation in the civilian sector of the government," the state police recruitment board head asked.

Experts also believe that the entire process may come under legal scrutiny as it is not clear whether the pay of a retired 'Agniveer' after the four-year-stint in the armed forces will be protected and seniority maintained. "This will be a tight rope walk for the government as this needs to be cleared to avoid any

disgruntlement among the constables recruited directly by the state police," an expert said.

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said youths who will serve the nation under the 'Agnipath' scheme would be given guaranteed 'Group C' (non-gazetted posts) or Haryana Police jobs. However, the state government is yet to spell out how much percentage of the government jobs will be reserved for the 'Agniveers'. Similarly, the Uttarakhand government plans to adjust 'Agniveers' in police, disaster and 'Char Dham' management departments.

"The idea is to use the services of the young and skilled 'Agniveers' in different sectors," Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami had said. However, no specific quota has been announced for the 'Agniveers' in Uttarakhand government jobs.

The Uttarakhand government already has a scheme to give jobs to retired defence personnel and their dependents as per their abilities in different departments through the Uttarakhand ex-servicemen welfare association or Uttarakhand Poorva Sainik Kalyan Nigam Limited (UPNL). About 30,000-35,000 ex-servicemen and their dependents have been given jobs through UPNL in the state, former chief secretary Subhash Kumar said.

Uddhav offered CM post to Shinde in May: Aaditya



"On May 20, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had called Eknath Shinde to 'Varsha' (CM's official residence) and asked whether he wants to become the Chief Minister. However, he had sidestepped the issue then. But a month later, on June 20, whatever had to happen, happened," Aaditya said while referring to Shinde's rebellion

rebellion. He should have demanded the post directly on the face instead of running away to Surat and Guwahati, the Worli MLA said. Meanwhile, in his weekly column 'Rokhtok' published in the Sena mouthpiece 'Saamana' on Sunday, Sena MP Sanjay Raut said, Shinde had a good chance of becoming the state chief minister had he continued in Shiv Sena.

"Shinde would have been the chief minister if the BJP hadn't gone back on its word of rotational chief minister's post. It is surprising that Shinde wants to go to BJP," Raut said.

The Shiv Sena and BJP had parted ways after the 2019 Assembly poll results following Sena's insistence that the two parties share the top post.

The Sena later joined hands with the NCP and Congress to form the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in November 2019. Uddhav Thackeray assumed the top post after being asked to do so by NCP chief Sharad Pawar. Sanjay Raut has claimed that had the BJP accepted the Sena's offer for sharing the CM's post on rotational basis, then Uddhav Thackeray had Shinde in mind as the Sena's choice for the post.

Uday Samant joins rebel camp

Mumbai: In another setback to the besieged Shiv Sena, Maharashtra Higher and Technical Education Minister Uday Samant Sunday went to join the party rebels in Guwahati. Samant, who was in Mumbai for the past few days and had taken part in all the Sena brainstorms, abruptly left for Surat and from there, took a flight to Guwahati. This makes him the 8th Minister who has shifted allegiance even as Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Minister Aaditya Thackeray warned that "traitors" will not be taken back to the party they have back-stabbed and left.

Boy kills grandparents over liquor money

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 26: Denying money to buy liquor proved costly for an elderly couple who were killed by their grandson in Damri village of Budaun district in UP, police said Sunday.

The police have found the decomposed bodies of the elderly couple from two separate room of a house in Damri village. The police said that the grand son who is on the run allegedly killed the elderly couple after an argument over liquor.

"The accused, Himesh (20) came here (UP village) to attend a wedding ceremony along with the grandparents. They had been living in Delhi. The family has lodged a complaint with us accusing Himesh killing his grandparents," said the police.

Modi's hands to drop him. Technically, Singh can continue until July 7 when he retires from the Rajya Sabha. But politically, Nitish Kumar has reasons to be upset and Singh should have resigned from the Union Cabinet after he was denied the RS ticket. Whether Modi sacks RCP Singh or allows him to retain his ministerial position even if he is not an MP could be anybody's guess.

Hunt for new Principal DG, PIB

Search is on for a new Principal Director-General (DG) of the Press Information Bureau (PIB), a key official of the entire government's publicity arm. As current incumbent Jaideep Bhatnagar is retiring this month, speculations have started doing rounds as to who will be the new Principal DG, PIB.

SPREADING AWARENESS



Social activists and health workers during an awareness rally organised by Madhya Pradesh Social Justice & Disabled Welfare department, on International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Bhopal

PTI PHOTO

EC seeks power to de-register parties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 26: Amid an ongoing cleanup exercise to identify unrecognised parties involved in corrupt practices, the Election Commission has made a renewed push to get powers to de-register political parties.

The election law provides the poll panel power to register an association of people as a political party, but does not give it the authority to de-register. At a recent interaction with the Union Legislative Secretary, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar is learnt to have pushed for this power to withdraw registration of political parties.

The poll panel had been writing to the government to grant it power under the Representation of the People Act to de-register a politi-



The election law provides the poll panel power to register an association of people as a political party, but does not give it the authority to de-register

cally party on certain grounds. The poll panel believes that many political parties get registered, but never contest election. Such parties exist only on paper.

The possibility of forming political parties with an eye on availing the benefit of income tax exemption also cannot be ruled out, the Election Commission (EC) feels.

A senior official said the Commission which has the power

to register political parties is also empowered to de-register in appropriate cases. He said adequate safeguards can be put in place while giving EC this authority.

Under the constitution, the Election Commission is required to function independently and ensure free and fair elections. An enquiry into non-compliance with the conditions for the grant of registration might involve the

Lals and their kin to vote for the BJP supported candidate.

The RCP Singh riddle

All eyes are now set on the fate of Union Steel Minister RCP Singh. Once a blue-eyed boy of Nitish Kumar, his rise has been rather meteoric. He was PS to Nitish Kumar in the Railway Ministry in 2003 and was given a Rajya Sabha seat later. Nitish even elevated him as JD(U)'s national president. As if this was not enough, Nitish Kumar nominated him under the JD(U) quota to be the party's lone representative in the Union Cabinet under Modi. But equally tumultuous is his fall from grace. No one has a clue as to what happened between the two leading to Singh's fall from grace. Nitish was so angry with him that he denied him a Rajya Sabha ticket forcing PM



PM's new headache

The BJP has bitten more than it can chew. It managed to handle the Nupur Sharma backlash, much to the discomfort of hardliners in the Sangh Parivar, rather well. The controversy is dying a slow death. The Agnipath controversy surfaced at a time when the BJP is in the midst of seeking

support of its allies and others for its Presidential candidate. The Prime Minister is visiting Germany to add a feather to India's cap at the G7 summit. Therefore, he wanted an end to these controversies before his departure. But Modi has a new headache in hand - growing tension between BJP and the JD(U) though efforts are on to douse the fire. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is becoming vocal against the BJP and the state BJP leaders are giving him back in the same coin.

When 3 Lals came together

The BJP has done the unthinkable in Haryana. When it supported Kartikeya Sharma, an Independent candidate for Rajya Sabha seat, it was clear that winning the seat will be a Herculean task given the intricacies of politics. But it

happened. First, it told Kartikeya Sharma that he should get in touch with Dushyant Chautala, JJP leader and deputy Chief Minister who has ten votes in the kitty. Chautala was in London who agreed to support him. He was also a kin of Late Devi Lal to support Kartikeya Sharma. Then came the turn of his uncle and rival INLD's lone MLA Abhay Chautala who too lent his support to Sharma. Both Abhay and Dushyant don't see eye to eye. But he too votes for Sharma. This was the second kin of the late Devi Lal. Then came the turn of Kuldeep Bishnoi, son of late Bhajan Lal. He was a prominent Congress leader. But he too dumped the party and voted for BJP supported Sharma. But there was more in store. It was the turn of late Bansil Lal's daughter-in-law to chip in, as alleged in the media. Kiran Chowdhury also voted in a way that led to helping Sharma. Thus, Sharma brought all three

international

of the day quote

We have been exploring diplomatic channels. The last ship which was due to arrive was a Russian vessel. Our first letter of credit was rejected by international banks because the ship was owned by a Russian company

KANCHANA WIJESKERA | SL'S POWER AND ENERGY MINISTER

It was an excellent government that relied, yes, on a complicated coalition. And here in this room there is a group of people that knew how to put aside ideological disagreements, to rise above, and to work for the state of Israel

NAFTALI BENNETT | ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER

We have a commitment in Canada to ensure, first of all, that every woman has full, safe legal access to the full suite of sexual health and reproductive services, including safe and legal abortions and we've been working hard to increase access to women across the country

JUSTIN TRUDEAU | CANADIAN PRIME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

17 found dead in SA nightclub

Johannesburg: Police in South Africa Sunday said that 17 people were found dead in a nightclub in the southeastern city of East London. "We do not want to make any speculations at this stage, our investigation is continuing," Xinhua news agency quoted police spokesperson Tembinkosi Kinana as saying to the local media. "We are hoping that at a proper time before the end of the day, we will know what exactly made the accident," the spokesperson added.

Pride parades march on with new urgency

New York: Parades celebrating LGBTQ pride kick off in some of America's biggest cities Sunday amid new fears about the potential erosion of freedoms won through decades of activism. The annual marches in New York, San Francisco, Chicago and elsewhere take place just two days after one conservative justice on the Supreme Court signaled, in a ruling on abortion, that the court should reconsider the right to same-sex marriage recognized in 2015. That warning shot came after a year of legislative defeats for the LGBTQ community, including the passage of laws in some states limiting the discussion of sexual orientation or gender identity with children.

Cholera outbreak in Kathmandu

Kathmandu: Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal is now facing another outbreak of cholera. At least 12 people have been infected with the disease as of Sunday and officials are struggling to contain the outbreak. The cases of cholera have been found in several parts of the city and health officials are still unaware of the source of the outbreak.

Floods kill 82 in Bangladesh

Dhaka: Floods triggered by heavy seasonal rain and overflowing of rivers in Bangladesh have killed 82 people since last month, authorities said. According to the daily flood report of the Health Emergency Operation Centre and Control Room, most victims drowned but some died due to snake bites, lightnings and other reasons between May 17 to June 25, reports Xinhua news agency. At least nine deaths were reported in the last 24 hours.



Ankara's concerns over Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO were not responded to with any substantial steps

RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN | TURKISH PRESIDENT

MONKEYPOX NOT A GLOBAL HEALTH EMERGENCY: WHO

Monkeypox virus that has been identified in more than 50 countries with over 3,000 cases since the early May, is an "evolving threat" but does not currently present a global health emergency, said the World Health Organization (WHO)



Abortion pills the next battleground in US reproductive fight

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN HAS ORDERED HEALTH OFFICIALS TO MAKE SURE ABORTION PILLS WERE AVAILABLE TO AMERICAN WOMEN

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Washington, June 26: As conservative US states rush to enact abortion bans following the Supreme Court's bombshell decision, the fight over reproductive rights in America is poised to shift to a new battleground: abortion-inducing pills.

With little other means at its disposal, the Biden administration will focus on expanding access to abortion pills for women

living in states where the procedure is banned or restricted - while those states and powerful conservative groups are sure to mount legal challenges to prohibit their use.

Hours after the high court shredded 50 years of constitutional protections for abortion rights Friday, President Joe Biden ordered health officials to make sure abortion pills were available to American women. "I will do all in my power to protect a

woman's right in states where they will face the consequences of today's decision," he said in televised address to the nation.

The pills, which can be used without significant risk to terminate a pregnancy up to 10 weeks' gestation, already account for half of all abortions carried out in the United States.

Demand is set to soar further after 11 states mostly in the Republican-led conservative South moved to severely restrict or fully



ban abortion, with others set to follow suit. Already Saturday, some

activists rallying outside the Supreme Court in the US capital

Washington held up posters with instructions on where women can get abortion pills, while others chanted "My body, my choice."

Rebecca Gomperts, a Dutch physician who runs Aid Access, an Austria-based organization that provides abortion pills over the internet, is confident that the situation now faced by American women is not as tragic as it was 50 years ago, before the landmark Roe vs. Wade ruling of 1973 that enshrined abortion rights in America.

Russia strikes Kyiv as G-7 summit begins

REUTERS

Kyiv/Pokrovsk, Ukraine, June 26: Russian missiles hit an apartment block and kindergarten in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv Sunday, in strikes US President Joe Biden condemned as "barbarism" as world leaders gathered in Europe to discuss further sanctions against Moscow.

Up to four explosions shook central Kyiv in the early hours, in the first such attack on the city in weeks. Two more blasts were heard on the southern outskirts of the city later in the day, as per a source.

"The Russians hit Kyiv again. Missiles damaged an apartment building and a kindergarten," said Andriy Yermak, head of the president's administration.

Ukraine's police chief, Ihor Klymenko, said on national television that five people had been wounded, and police later said one person was killed.

Russia has stepped up air strikes on Ukraine this weekend, which has also seen the fall of a strategic eastern city to pro-Russian forces.

"It's more of their barbarism," said Biden, referring to the missile strikes on Kyiv, as leaders from the Group of Seven (G-7) rich democracies gathered for a summit in Germany. Ukraine's Foreign



Russian missiles strike central Kyiv
Officials say one killed, five wounded
G-7 countries announce Russian gold ban at start of summit

'It's more of their barbarism', says Joe Biden
Ukraine loses key city to pro-Russian forces

Minister Dmytro Kuleba said G-7 countries should respond to the latest missile strikes by imposing further sanctions on Russia and providing more heavy weapons to Ukraine.

As Europe's biggest land conflict since World War Two entered its fifth month, the Western alliance supporting Kyiv was starting to show signs of strain as leaders fret about the growing economic cost.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the West needed to maintain a united front against Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"The price of backing down, the price of allowing Putin to succeed,

to hack off huge parts of Ukraine, to continue with his programme of conquest, that price will be far, far higher," he told reporters.

MISSILES HIT CENTRAL CITY

Life had been returning to normal in Kyiv after fierce resistance held off Russian advances in the early phase of the war; although air raid sirens regularly sound across the city. There had been no major strikes on Kyiv since early June.

The city's mayor, Vitali Klitschko, said on the Telegram messaging app that Sunday's strike had partially destroyed a nine-storey apartment building in the historic Shevchenkivskiy district of central

Iran launches rocket as nuclear talks to resume

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tehran, June 26: Iranian state television said Sunday that Tehran has launched a solid-fueled rocket with a satellite carrier, a day after Iran and the European Union agreed to resume stalled talks over Iran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers.

It's unclear when exactly the rocket was launched, but the announcement came after satellite photos showed preparations at a desert launch pad. Iran had also acknowledged that it planned tests for the satellite-carrying Zuljanah rocket. State-run media claimed that the rocket launch was successful.

The news comes after the European Union's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, traveled to Tehran in a push to resuscitate stalemated negotiations over Iran's nuclear program and announced Saturday that the US and Iran would resume indirect talks in the coming days. Previous rocket launches have drawn rebukes from the United States, which says that such satellite launches defy a United Nations Security Council resolution calling on Iran to steer clear of any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

SL hikes fuel prices



AGENCIES

Colombo, June 26: Crisis-hit Sri Lanka has hiked petrol price by LKR 50 and diesel by LKR 60 respectively, the third price revision in over two months, as the country continues to reel under the worst economic crisis in decades due to a crippling shortage of foreign exchange reserves.

From Sunday, petrol will cost LKR 470 per litre and diesel LKR 460 per litre. The move comes after CPC informed the Sri Lankan government Saturday that there would be a delay in the arrival of fuel shipments due to banking and logistical reasons.

"Regret to inform that CPC has informed me that the suppliers that had confirmed petrol, diesel and crude oil shipments to arrive earlier this week and next week has communicated the inability to fulfill the deliveries on time for banking and logistical reasons," Sri Lanka's Power and Energy Minister Kanchana

Top US officials in Lanka

Colombo: A high-level US delegation arrived in Sri Lanka Sunday to hold talks with the country's top leadership and explore the "most effective ways" to help the island nation resolve its unprecedented economic crisis. During their four-day official stay, the top officials from the US Treasury and the State Department will meet a wide range of political representatives, economists, and international organisations to "explore the most effective ways for the US to support Sri Lankans in need, Sri Lankans working to resolve the current economic crisis, and Sri Lankans planning for a sustainable and inclusive economy for the future," the US Embassy said in a statement.

Wijesekera tweeted Saturday.

The minister said that until the next shipments arrive, priority would be given in diverting the existing stocks to public transport, power generation and industries, while diesel and petrol would be distributed at limited filling stations throughout next week.

Wijesekera requested citizens not to line up for fuel and announced the closure of refinery operations till the arrival of the next shipment of crude.



RAGING INFERNO: Flames rise from burning illegal narcotics during a destruction ceremony on the outskirts of Yangon, Myanmar. Myanmar authorities burned narcotic drugs worth over \$642 million across the country to mark International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

PTI PHOTO

Johnson claims to be on track to win next poll



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, June 26: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson Sunday angered many of his Conservative Party colleagues with bold claims

of being on track to lead the governing party at the next general election, despite a growing rebellion against his leadership following scathing defeats in two important by-elections.

Johnson has been putting up a strong defence in the face of criticism after voters punished the Conservatives over the partygate scandal and rising cost of living crisis by voting for Opposition Labour and Liberal Democrats in the by-elections earlier this week.

With these by-polls seen as a de facto referendum on his leadership, the UK PM was asked by reporters at the end of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Rwanda if he would like to serve a full second term in office until the next election expected in 2028-2029.

"At the moment I'm thinking actively about the third term and what could happen then, but I will review that when I get to it," he told reporters.

Destruction everywhere, help scarce after Afghan quake

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gayan (Afghanistan), June 26: When the ground heaved from last week's earthquake in Afghanistan, Nahim Gul's stone-and-mud house collapsed on top of him.

He clawed through the rubble in the pre-dawn darkness, choking on dust as he searched for his father and two sisters. He doesn't know how many hours of digging passed before he caught a glimpse of their bodies under the ruins. They were dead. Now, days after a 6 magnitude quake that devastated a remote region of southeast Afghanistan and killed at least

1,150 people and injured hundreds more, Gul sees destruction everywhere and help in short supply. His niece and nephew were also killed in the quake, crushed by the walls of their house.

"I don't know what will happen to us or how we should restart our lives," Gul told *The Associated Press* Sunday, his hands bruised and his shoulder injured. "We don't have any money to rebuild."

It's a fear shared among thousands in the impoverished villages where the fury of the quake has fallen most heavily — in Paktika and Khost provinces, along the jagged mountains that straddle



the country's border with Pakistan. Those who were barely scraping by have lost everything. Many have yet to be visited by aid groups and authorities, which are struggling to reach the afflicted area on rut-

ted roads — some made impassable by landslides and damage.

China pledged Saturday nearly \$7.5 million in emergency humanitarian aid, joining nations including Iran, Pakistan, South

AWARE OF ITS CONSTRAINTS, THE CASH-STRAPPED TALIBAN HAVE CALLED FOR FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AND SATURDAY APPEALED TO WASHINGTON TO UNFREEZE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN AFGHANISTAN'S CURRENCY RESERVES

THE UNITED NATIONS AND AN ARRAY OF INTERNATIONAL AID GROUPS AND COUNTRIES HAVE MOBILIZED TO SEND HELP

Korea, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar in dispatching a plane-load of tents, towels, beds and other badly needed supplies to the quake-hit area. UN Deputy Special

Representative Ramiz Alakbarov toured the affected Paktika province Saturday to assess the damage and distribute food, medicine and tents. UN helicopters and trucks laden with bread, flour, rice and blankets have trickled into the stricken areas. But the relief effort remains patchy due to funding and access constraints. The Taliban, which seized power last August from a government sustained for 20 years by a US-led military coalition, appears overwhelmed by the logistical complexities of issues like debris removal in what is shaping up to be a major test of its capacity to govern.

of the day quote

We are very rapidly progressing on developing our own 5G technology stack. There is a huge interest among the whole world community in having a good trusted and affordable technology source. The trust which India can bring, no other country can match

ASHWINI VAISHNAW | TELECOM AND IT MINISTER

India has exported 1.8 million tonne of wheat to a dozen-odd countries, including Bangladesh and Afghanistan, since the country banned exports of the grain on May 13

SUDHANSHU PANDEY | FOOD SECRETARY

Prior to the pandemic, digital sales from our own website and marketplaces like Amazon and Flipkart was around 25 per cent of the total sales. Now it has touched 35 per cent of the total business. It is still growing

RAJAT KHURANA | MD, ASICS INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA

SHORT TAKES

M-cap of TCS lead gainer last week

New Delhi: Nine of the 10 most valued firms added ₹2.51 lakh crore to their market valuation last week, with Tata Consultancy Services emerging as the biggest gainer. Last week, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,367 points or 2.66 per cent. HDFC Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever Limited and ICICI Bank were among the gainers while Reliance Industries was the sole loser in the pack. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) added ₹74,534.87 crore to its market valuation which stood at ₹12,04,907.32 crore at close Friday. In the ranking of top-10 firms, Reliance Industries remained the most valued company, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, ICICI Bank, LIC, State Bank of India, HDFC and Bharti Airtel.

Adani raises ₹6K-cr for copper plant

New Delhi: Ports-to-energy conglomerate Adani Group has forayed into copper manufacturing with tying up of finances from public sector lenders for a 1 million tonne a year unit at Mundra in Gujarat. The consortium of banks has sanctioned and signed an agreement for the entire debt requirement of ₹6,071 crore for the Phase-1 of the KCL Project. "Kutch Copper Ltd (KCL), a subsidiary of Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL), is setting up a greenfield copper refinery project for production of refined copper with 1 million tonne per annum in two phases," the company said in a statement. It has executed "financing documents with the consortium of banks led by State Bank of India (SBI). The other consortium members are Bank of Baroda, Canara Bank, EXIM Bank of India, Indian Bank, Punjab National Bank, and Bank of Maharashtra," the statement said.

Ex-SAIL chairman passes away at 97

New Delhi: V Krishnamurthy, a former chairman of the country's largest steel-making company SAIL, passed away Sunday at the age of 97 in Chennai. According to a SAIL statement, V Krishnamurthy was the chairman of the company from 1985 to 1990. "SAIL family deeply mourns the sad demise of Padma Vilbhushan Dr. Venkataraman Krishnamurthy, ex-Chairman, SAIL, on 26th June 2022," it said. He was Chairman of many other PSUs also, SAIL said.



There are 8,000 MW of capacities which don't have PPAs in thermal. States have been asked to send their electricity requirement, and accordingly bids will be invited

RK SINGH | POWER MINISTER

HPCL BOARD GETS NEW DIRECTOR

After over five months, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has finally got a director appointed on the board of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd -- a firm it had acquired for ₹36,915 crore. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas June 22, conveyed its consent for the appointment of Pankaj Kumar, Director (Offshore), ONGC as a director on the board of HPCL



G7 bans Russian gold import

Senior Biden administration officials said gold is Moscow's second largest export after energy, and that banning imports would make it more difficult for Russia to participate in global markets

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Elmou, June 26: President Joe Biden said Sunday that the United States and other Group of Seven (G7) leading economies will ban imports of gold from Russia, the latest in a series of sanctions that the club of democracies hopes will further isolate Russia economically over its invasion of Ukraine. A formal announcement was expected Tuesday as the leaders hold their annual summit.

Biden and the leaders of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan, plus the European Union, were spending Sunday in both formal and informal settings, including working sessions on dealing with the war's effects on the global economy, including inflation, and on infrastructure. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the ban on Russian gold will "directly hit Russian oligarchs and strike at the heart of Putin's war machine," a reference to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Biden and the allies aim to present a united front in support of Ukraine as the conflict enters its fourth month. "We've got to make sure we have us all staying together. You know, we're gonna continue



working on economic challenges that we face but I think we get through all this," Biden said.

Biden and his counterparts will huddle on the summit's opening day Sunday to discuss how to secure energy supplies and tackle inflation, aiming to keep the fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine from splintering the global coalition working to punish Moscow.

A senior German official, speaking on condition of anonymity consistent with department rules, said the US idea of price caps was being discussed intensely in terms of how it would work and how it

In recent years, gold has been the top Russian export after energy -- reaching almost \$19 billion or about 5% of global gold exports, in 2020

Of Russian gold exports, 90% was consigned to G7 nations. Of these Russian exports, over 90%, or nearly \$17 billion, was exported to the UK

US imported less than \$200 million in gold from Russia in 2019, and under \$1 million in 2020 and 2021

Among the issues to be discussed are price caps on energy, which will cut Russian oil and gas profits

Russia on the brink of first debt default since 1998

Moscow: Russia is on the brink of its first debt default since 1998 as the Sunday deadline to make a \$100 million interest payment seems certain to be missed, the media reported. Russia has the money and is willing to pay, but sanctions make it impossible to get the payments to international creditors, reports the BBC. The Kremlin has been determined to avoid a first default since 1998, and a major blow to the nation's prestige. The Russian government has said it wants to make all of its payments on time, and so far it has succeeded. About \$40 billion of Russia's debts are denominated in dollars or euros, with around half held outside the country. A default would be the first since 1998, at the chaotic end of Boris Yeltsin's regime, the BBC reported. The \$100 million interest payment was due May 27.

would fit with the US, EU, British, Canadian and Japanese sanctions regimes.

Biden is also set Sunday to formally launch a global infrastructure partnership designed to counter China's influence in the developing world. He had named it "Build Back Better World" and introduced the programme at last

year's G7 summit.

Kirby said Biden and other leaders would announce the first projects to benefit from what the US sees as an "alternative to infrastructure models that sell debt traps to low- and middle-income partner countries, and advance US economic competitiveness and our national security."

EXODUS CONTINUES

FPIs pull out ₹46K-cr from Indian equities in June so far

Net outflow by FPIs from equities reached ₹2.13 trillion until now in 2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 26: Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) continue to desert Indian equity markets and pulled out close to ₹46,000 crore so far this month following monetary policy tightening by the Reserve Bank and US Federal Reserve, high oil prices and volatile rupee.

According to the data, foreign investors withdrew a net amount of ₹45,841 crore from equities in June (till 24th). The massive selling by FPIs continued in June as they have been relentlessly withdrawing money from Indian equities since October 2021.

Given the policy normalisation narrative by the US Fed and other major central banks, coupled with



Interestingly, the bulk of FPIs selling is in performing segments like IT and financials and domestic institutional investors (DIIs) are absorbing this liquidity

FPIs are likely to sell more if the current trend of rising dollar and bond yields persists

high oil prices and volatile Rupee, FPIs are likely to stay away from emerging market assets, Hitesh Jain, Lead Analyst - Institutional Equities, Yes Securities, said.

On the other hand, FPIs invested a net amount of about ₹926 crore in the debt market during the period under review.

BDO India's Purohit is of the view that this short-term pace of negative volatility is likely to slow down in the coming weeks if not reversed completely.

"India is still on a better footing as compared to other global markets primarily on account of sustained growth patterns, better GDP numbers, recovering forex reserves, consistent demand from consumers and good financial numbers by large corporates," he added.

Apart from India, FPIs have been selling heavily in other markets like Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand.

Neelachal Ispat handover to Tatas to be completed by mid-July

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 26: The handover of Odisha-based Neelachal Ispat Nigam Ltd (NINL) to a Tata group firm is likely to be completed by mid of July, an official said.

Tata Steel Long Products (TSLP) had in January emerged as the winning bidder, putting in bids worth ₹12,100 crore for loss-making NINL, which is a joint venture of 4 CPSEs -- MMTC, NMDC, BHEL, MECON and 2 Odisha government

PSUs -- OMC and IPICOL.

Following that, in March TSLP signed a share purchase agreement with NINL.

"The transaction is in concluding stage and the handover should take place by the middle of next month," an official told PTI.

TSLP's bid was more than double the reserve or base price of ₹5,616.97 crore for NINL. Since the government does not hold any equity in the company, the sale proceeds would not accrue to the



exchequer and would instead go to the 4 CPSEs and 2 Odisha gov-

ernment PSUs.

NINL's 1.1 million tonne a year capacity steel plant at Kalinganagar in Odisha was shut in March 2020 due to continued losses.

Once completed, NINL would be the second successful privatisation by the current government. Incidentally, Air India -- the first company in privatisation list -- too was bought by Tata Group. It bid for ₹18,000 crore for Air India, higher than the reserve price of ₹12,100 crore.

The NINL transaction is on a "going concern" basis and the employees of NINL will continue to be the employees of the company in terms of the Share Purchase Agreement (SPA), which binds the buyer to have a lock-in period of one year.

NINL has huge debt and liabilities exceeding ₹6,600 crore as on March 31, 2021, including huge overdue of promoters (Rs 4,116 crore), banks (Rs 1,741 crore), other creditors and employees.

Explore fintech partnership, co-lending chances: FinMin to banks

According to the sources, banks were asked to sanction loans for productive sectors to accelerate the revival of the economy facing headwinds, including the Russia-Ukraine war

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 26: The Finance Ministry has asked public sector banks to explore fintech partnerships and co-lending opportunities to expand their business.

In the recently concluded performance review of PSBs by the

Finance Ministry, sources said, lenders were asked to focus on technology and data analytics to push their lending.

The ministry also urged the heads of the public sector lenders to strengthen IT security systems and cybersecurity to check fraud.

As per the RBI's latest data, growth in lending by PSBs has improved significantly to 7.8 per cent in March 2022 from 3.6 per cent a year ago. Some of the PSBs recorded 26 per cent growth.

Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) recorded a 26 per cent increase in gross advances to ₹1,35,240 crore at the end of March 2022. It was followed by the State Bank of India and Union Bank of India with 10.27 per cent and 9.66 per cent growth,



respectively.

The Pune-headquartered BoM witnessed a 16.26 per cent deposit growth and mobilised ₹2,02,294 crore at the end of March 2022.

Union Bank of India was the second with an 11.99 per cent growth in deposits (Rs 10,32,102 crore), while Indian Bank recorded a 10 per cent rise to ₹5,84,661 crore.

The meeting was held against the backdrop when all PSBs posted a profit in the second financial year in a row

PSBs have more than doubled their net profit to ₹66,539 crore in FY22. The collective profit of 12 state-owned banks together was ₹31,820 crore in FY21

The sources said banks were asked to expedite non-performing assets (NPAs) resolution and focus on the recovery of bad loans.

The meeting took stock of asset quality and business growth plans of banks, the sources said, adding that non-performing assets (NPAs) of ₹100 crore and the recovery status were also discussed.

To improve the financial health

of PSBs, the government implemented a comprehensive 4Rs strategy -- recognition of NPAs transparently, resolution and recovery of value from stressed accounts, recapitalisation of PSBs, and reforms in PSBs and the wider financial ecosystem -- for a responsible and clean system.

Comprehensive steps were taken under the 4Rs strategy to reduce NPAs of PSBs.

As part of the strategy, the government has infused ₹3,10,997 crore to recapitalise banks during the last five financial years -- from 2016-17 to 2020-21, out of which ₹34,997 crore were sourced through budgetary allocation and ₹2,76,000 crore through issuance of recapitalisation bonds to these banks.

Growth sacrifice can't tame inflation: Varma



The inflationary episode has lasted longer than we would have liked and will continue to last longer than we would like, but, I have no doubt in my mind that inflation will be brought down to the target level in the medium term

JAYANTH R VARMA | MPC MEMBER, RBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 26: The Indian economy has barely recovered from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and it should be ensured that there is no "intolerable growth sacrifice" in attempts to tame inflation "too abruptly", according to RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) member Jayanth R Varma.

With a cautiously optimistic outlook for the country's economy, Varma Sunday said growth prospects for 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years are "reasonable" even after taking into consideration the possibility of a long-drawn-out period of geopolitical tensions and elevated commodity prices.

Amid inflationary pressures remaining high in recent times, the Reserve Bank of India's MPC is moving towards a hawkish stance, with the benchmark interest rate being hiked by 90 basis points to a two-year high of 4.90 per cent in a span of five weeks. A hike of 40 basis points was done earlier this month.

His comments come against the backdrop of concerns raised in certain quarters that the RBI could have started hiking rates to fight inflation a little earlier.

In an interview with PTI, Varma, an external member of the MPC, said the pandemic was the biggest test to the system so far, and the flexible inflation targeting regime proved itself equal to that task.

"The Indian economy has barely recovered from the pandemic, and we have to be careful not to impose an intolerable growth sacrifice in our attempt to tame inflation too abruptly," Varma said.

The RBI has the mandate to maintain retail inflation at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side. The central bank's six-member MPC headed by the RBI Governor decides on policy rates keeping this target in mind.

Varma, who is a professor of finance and accounting at IIM Ahmedabad, said he sees the risks to inflation as balanced at this point in time as both geopolitical and weather uncertainties could evolve in either direction.

Toyota announces two initiatives under 'Make in India' & 'Skill India'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, June 26: Toyota, a major auto-maker, Sunday announced two major initiatives, which are expected to strengthen the contribution to the country's vision of achieving self-reliance through 'Make in India' and 'Skill India'.

The projects include ground-breaking ceremony of Phase-II of Toyota Technical Training Institute (TTTI) that involves major enhancement of skilling infrastructure by Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM), said a statement from the office of the Minister for IT-BT, Science and Technology, and Skill Development Dr C N Ashwath Narayan.

The project aims to skill a larger number of people in the advanced automotive space, the statement said. It added that other initiative is Toyota Kirloskar Auto Parts (TKAP) announcing the line-off of its new e-drive (electrified component) manufacturing line.

The projects were inaugurated by the Union Minister for Heavy Industries Mahendra Nath Pandey and Ashwath Narayan, the statement said.

To create world-class manpower in advanced technologies and manufacturing, TKM has undertaken a major expansion of TTTI with capacity going up from 200 to 1,200 students (academic batch-wise), Narayan said.

He explained that this would be a major boost to the existing skill facility in its Bidadi plant with focus to scale-up students' skill-levels on advanced technology, by Toyota expert trainers (globally certified).

MP win maiden Ranji Trophy

UNDERDOGS HUMBLE 41-TIME CHAMPIONS MUMBAI BY SIX WICKETS



MOMENT TO CHERISH: Madhya Pradesh cricketers celebrate with the Ranji Trophy after their historic triumph, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

AGENCIES

Bangalore, June 26: Madhya Pradesh, not considered among cricketing elites during the past decade, created history Sunday as they won their maiden Ranji Trophy title defeating 41-time champions Mumbai by six wickets here. In the process Madhya Pradesh exorcised the ghosts of losing a final at this very ground 23 summers ago. It was the game where present coach Chandrakant Pandit had represented Madhya Pradesh as a professional even though he is originally from Mumbai.

On the final day, Mumbai could only manage 269 in their second innings, leaving MP with a paltry target of 108, and they did it in

style as Pandit won a record sixth national title as a coach.

Sarfraz Khan (45), who finished the season with 18 short of 1,000 runs and young Suved Parker (51) tried their bit, but with the need to attack at every opportunity, MP's Kumar Kartikeya (4/98) and the other bowlers knew that wickets would come their way.

As Madhya Pradesh completed the victory, Pandit was flooded with memories (not happy ones), which he hasn't been able to erase for over two decades and despite winning five trophies as a coach.

It was here at the Chinmaswamy Stadium in the summer of 1999 when MP, despite a first-innings lead of 75, failed to win the game as Pandit, a proud captain, fin-

ished his playing career in tears.

The Yash Dubeys, Himanshu Mantris, Subham Sharmas, Gourav Yadavs or Saransh Jains aren't players who would give you the feeling that they are India prospects, the classy Rajat Patidar being an exception. But they gave enough indication that they aren't ready to concede even a micro-millimetre without a good scrap.

MP's win once again proved that the Ranji Trophy is often won by sides that don't have too many superstars or India prospects with ambition or wherewithal to play top-flight cricket. They followed Pandit's 'Gurukul' style of 'My Way or HighWay' coaching philosophy to emerge triumphant.

Since 2010, the Ranji Trophy,

barring Karnataka's dominance for a few seasons and Mumbai winning it once, the title has been won by teams like Rajasthan (twice), Vidarbha (twice), Saurashtra (once) and Madhya Pradesh, who would never be in contention in the past.

Yet this season, Madhya Pradesh overcame teams like Bengal in the semifinals and then Mumbai in the final. Not only did they win in the final, Madhya Pradesh dominated the game for the better part of the match. And they were deserved winners. **Brief scores:** Mumbai 374 and 269 (Suved Parker 51, Kumar Kartikeya 4/98) lost to Madhya Pradesh 536 and 108 for 4 (Himanshu Mantri 37, Rajat Patidar 30 n o, Shubham Sharma 30, Shams Mulani 3/41) by six wickets.

SHORT TAKES

■ OFC sign Fernandes

Bhubaneswar: Odisha FC announced Sunday the signing of India midfielder Raynier Fernandes, an ISL winner with Mumbai City FC in 2020-21. The 26-year-old Mumbai player, who spent three fruitful seasons with the Islanders, came on board from MCFC on a season-long loan, OFC said in a statement. Fernandes made his international debut at the 2019 King's Cup in Thailand. India head coach Igor Stimac included him in the World Cup Qualifier against Afghanistan and he also got a start against Bangladesh.

■ Timings changed

London: The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has advanced the time for the rescheduled fifth Test between the hosts and India at Edgbaston from 11.00am to 10.30am in order to accommodate the viewers from the sub-continent. The match will commence July 1. A report in 'Daily Mail' said Sunday that the 'official' playing hours in Indian TV terms will now be 3.00-10.00pm, but the 'likelihood remains that the close will be 10.30pm each night as half an hour's grace is given to teams to complete the allotment of 90 overs per day'. The fifth Test was suspended for nearly 10 months after several Covid-19 cases were reported in the India camp in September.

■ Sai Swastik shines

Bhubaneswar: Young upcoming tennis player from Odisha, Sai Swastik Mohanty has won two tournaments on the trot recently. Mohanty first won the under-12 title at a tournament in Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh. Players from UP, Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Odisha and West Bengal participated in the event. Then in the under-12 singles final of the national tournament organised by the All India Tennis Association (AITA) at Dwarka in Delhi, Mohanty defeated Tamil Nadu's Pelayam Shiram 4-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7-4) to emerge champion. Mohanty, who trains under Lalit Das, an established coach of Cuttack CDTA Academy, has a bright future feel many former players.

AGENCIES

Fit-again Murray seeks redemption

SCOTTISH PLAYER PROMISES TO PLAY GOOD TENNIS

AGENCIES

London, June 26: Andy Murray has shaken off the abdominal injury which threatened his participation at Wimbledon, the former World No. 1 said Saturday before declaring that there was still a lot of 'good tennis' left in him.

Murray, who won the grass court Grand Slam in 2013 and 2016, sustained the injury during his Stuttgart Open final defeat by Italian Matteo Berrettini earlier this month. Prior to that Murray had notched up impressive wins over Stefanos Tsitsipas and Nick Kyrgios.

The problem forced Murray, ranked 51st now, to skip the Queen's Club event with doubts over his participation at Wimbledon but the Scot said things had improved since then.

"It's gone well," Murray, 35, told

reporters. "I've been able to gradually progress my training this week and got to play a few sets, a lot of points. The last few days have been good and I have been hitting the balls with conviction," he added.

Murray secured his first victory over a top-five opponent in six years with a 7-6 (7-4), 6-3 victory over Tsitsipas in Stuttgart. He reached the 70th final of his career and second of the year after a runner-up finish in Sydney.

"I think I showed a couple weeks ago that there was still good tennis left in me. I just will have to be at my best mentally," Murray said. "I beat a guy in the top five, I was neck-and-neck with Berrettini, who is one of the best grass court players in the world. I played well against Nick Kyrgios, as well. The first set was a good level of tennis," Murray pointed out.

“Having Ivan Lendl in my team helps. He still believes in me which many other coaches in the past have been reluctant to do

ANDY MURRAY

Chanu eyeing new WR at CWG

OLYMPIC SILVER MEDALLIST PLANNING TO GO PAST 120KG-MARK

AGENCIES

Patiala, June 26: It won't be surprising if the diminutive Mirabai Chanu stands atop the podium, flashing her radiant smile, after winning a weightlifting gold medal July 30 at the Commonwealth Games (CWG). After all, she will enter Birmingham, as the title favourite. Chanu's personal best is 207kg (88kg+119kg) which is far better than the best effort of Nigeria's Stella Kingsley, who will be her nearest rival and has managed only 168kg (72kg+96kg) till date.

Chanu's legend has only grown since the last edition of the CWG. She has added an Olympic silver medal, an Asian Championship bronze and a world record to her kitty.

It is not baffling when she said that she herself will be her real competition in Birmingham and not



her rivals.

"CWG should be easy for me. I will be fighting with myself," Chanu, who already has a silver (2014) and a gold (2018) at CWG, said politely. "There is not much competition

AGENCIES

London, June 26: Ranked a lowly 1,204 in the world and without a competitive singles match in 12 months, former World No. 1 Serena Williams will sweep into Wimbledon targeting what would be her greatest triumph. The seven-time champion at the All England Club will also be chasing down a record-equaling 24th Grand Slam title. The odds have rarely been so stacked against the great American who can become the first unseeded woman to win Wimbledon.

With her 41st birthday just three months away, Serena hasn't played a singles tie on tour since limping out of Wimbledon in tears in the first round against Aliaksandra Sasnovich in 2021. The American star has been frustratingly marooned on 23 Slams since winning a seventh Australian Open in 2017 while pregnant.

"I didn't retire. I just needed to heal physically, mentally. I had no plans. I just didn't know when I would come back. I didn't know how I would come back," the 40-year-old Serena said Sunday.

Serena warmed up for Wimbledon by playing doubles with Ons Jabeur at Eastbourne. She starts her All England Club

The only medal missing is one from the Asian Games. That is my main target now and I am going to give it my best shot

MIRABAI CHANU

in CWG, but that doesn't mean there is no competition. I have to give my best performance keeping in mind the future tournaments," she said during a candid chat Sunday at the NIS here.

Since there won't be competition, Chanu has bigger targets in mind. She is eager to rewrite her own clean and jerk world record of 119kg. "I am thinking of attempting 120kg in the CWG," Chanu said.

The former World Champion also wants to breach the much-anticipated 90kg mark in the snatch.

A 'Pandit' who has made winning national titles a habit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, June 26: Carrying the weight of a defeat that hurt more than most for over two decades, one couldn't fault Chandrakant Pandit for those moistened eyes as he folded his hands as a mark of respect towards the Mumbai dressing room.

After Rajat Patidar ran the most important single in the history of Madhya Pradesh cricket, it completed a cycle for head coach Pandit, 23 years after his failure to win the state side's maiden Ranji Trophy title as a player.

"Every trophy gives satisfaction but this one is special. I couldn't do it as an MP captain many years back (23 years). All these years, I have always felt that I had left something back over here. That's the reason I am a bit more excited and emotional about it," a visibly exhausted Pandit said after his latest Ranji Trophy triumph.

As a coach, Pandit has turned the corner literally, with an unprecedented six Ranji Trophy titles.

Pandit and Aditya Shrivastava, by the former's own admission, share a 'special bond', which is beyond the professional coach-captain relationship. "To reach the top, one has to make sacrifices. When



CELEBRATION TIME: Madhya Pradesh captain Aditya Shrivastava (left) and coach Chandrakant Pandit kiss the Ranji Trophy

PTI PHOTO

Aditya was getting married last year, he came to me and asked what should be a good time. I told him that I can release him for festivities for two days," Pandit informed.

Pandit has won six Ranji Trophy titles as a coach - three with his home state Mumbai, two with Vidarbha and now with Madhya Pradesh. He is the proverbial man with the magic wand in domestic cricket but Pandit himself admits that there is a method to his madness. And yes, remaining honest and humble counts for him.

Pandit understands that the young-

sters who are becoming professional cricketers in the era of T20 will have an inclination to bag IPL contracts.

But he has his way of tackling it. "There is no point trying to take them away from white ball cricket, but at the same time, make them understand that Ranji Trophy is the biggest domestic tournament," he said. "Even when Venkatesh (Iyer), Avesh (Khan), Rajat (Patidar) and (Kumar) Kartikeya were playing IPL, they were in touch with me and talking about preparations for Ranji Trophy," Pandit informed.

Dutee bags bronze

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Almaty (Kazakhstan), June 26: Ace sprinter Sekar Dhanalakshmi ran her personal best time to win the 200m gold at the Qosanov Memorial Athletics Meet here Sunday. Dhanalakshmi ran a creditable sub-23 second, clocking 22.89s to better her earlier personal best of 23.14s she had come up with last year. She had won a 200m gold in the national Inter-State Championships in Chennai earlier this month with a time of 23.27s. Dutee Chand finished third with a time of 23.60s.

INDIA MAKE EARLY INROADS

AGENCIES

Malahide (Ireland), June 26: Rain delayed the start of the India-Ireland T20 International here Sunday as the visitors put the hosts in after winning the toss. Speedstar Umran Malik is making his debut in the game. The match has been reduced to a 12 over contest because of the delay.

At the time of going to the Press, the hosts were 52 for the loss of three wickets after the end of six overs. The Irish wickets to fall were that of Paul Stirling (4),

skipper Andy Balbirnie (0) and Gareth Delany (8). Stirling was dismissed by Indian skipper Hardik Pandya, while Bhuvneshwar Kumar got the wicket of Balbirnie. The Ireland skipper was clean bowled by a Kumar delivery that nipped back off the seam. Avesh Khan got the wicket of Delany. At the crease was Harry Tractor (28 batting) and Lorcan Tucker (4 batting).

The match also saw the return of Suryakumar Yadav who had missed the South African series played in India due to injury.

Recurve archers finish with silver

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paris, June 26: The Indian women's recurve team of Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat and Simranjeet Kaur settled for a silver medal after the trio's fairytale run was halted by Chinese Taipei in a one-sided final at the World Cup Stage 3 here Sunday. India concluded their campaign with one gold and two silver medals - two of them coming in the compound section.

The women's recurve team failed to make much of an impact and lost to Chinese Taipei 5-1 (53-56, 56-56, 53-56) in straight sets. With Rio Olympics team bronze medallist Lei Chien-Ying in the lineup, third seed Chinese Taipei mounted early pressure with two 10s and four 9s as India shot a 7 in the first set that proved to be the turning point.

The Indian trio bounced back to level the second set but that was not enough as they again slipped in the third, while the opponents maintained their consistency to seal the gold.

Nevertheless it was a memorable return for World No. 3 Deepika, who returned with a team silver after being sidelined following her Tokyo Olympics debacle.



Serena Williams will try to create some magic of her own

Keys, Coric pull out with injuries

WIMBLEDON: Madison Keys, the 2017 US Open runner-up, and Borna Coric withdrew Saturday from Wimbledon because of injuries. Keys pulled out because of a hurt abdominal muscle. She was replaced in the field by Coco Vandeweghe. In the men's section Croatian Coric pulled out with a shoulder problem.

end, there's nobody that has done so much in tennis," Swiatek said.

ATKMB recruit Pogba's brother

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, June 26: Star defender Florentin Pogba expressed that he is looking forward to being a part of the ATK Mohun Bagan (ATKMB) set-up and can't wait to play in front of fans at the iconic Salt Lake stadium in this city. The defender has played in several countries like France, Turkey and the United States of America and thus comes in with bags of experience. Incidentally he is the brother of French international and World Cup medal winner Paul Pogba.

The 31-year-old defender said that he is looking for a 'new' challenge and to discover a 'new' country, and a 'new' championship with a 'new' club is quite exciting for him.

"I wanted a new challenge. Coming to India, to discover a new country, new championship, new clubs and new fans, I think it's such a good challenge for me. Above all, to be part of this big club's his-

tory. To be honest, I'm really happy and proud to be part of ATK Mohun Bagan, one of the biggest clubs in India," Florentin was quoted as saying by ISL website.

"Playing in different leagues (France, USA, Turkey) helps each player to grow, and improve his game but also helps him understand his teammates and competitors better," added the Frenchman.

Florentin also said that fans mean the world to him. "Fans are the heart and soul of a club. With them, we go further. I have always loved playing with the fervour of full stadium. Can't wait to join the team and play games in Kolkata to live and feel that special atmosphere," said the defender.

"I'm really happy to become a Mariner and I can promise you that I'll do my best to win trophies. Looking forward to meeting you all really soon in Kolkata," Florentin signed off.

Blow for India as skipper Rohit tests Covid +ve

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Birmingham, June 26: India skipper Rohit Sharma has tested positive for Covid-19 in a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) and placed in isolation ahead of fifth Test against England, the BCCI said Sunday. The Test is scheduled to begin July 1 here and if Rohit remains in six-day isolation, either pacer Jasprit Bumrah or wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant could be asked to lead the team.

"Team India captain Rohit Sharma has tested positive for Covid-19 following a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) conducted Saturday," BCCI secretary Jay Shah said in a media release.

"He is currently in isolation at the team hotel and is under the care of the BCCI medical Team. An RT-PCR test will be conducted Sunday to ascertain his CT value," the release added.