



KIARA'S LOVE AFFIRMATION

Kiara Advani expresses her belief in true love and describes husband Sidharth as her home and best friend

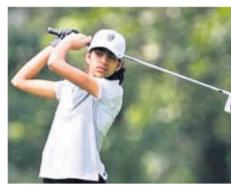
LEISURE P2



RUSSIAN REBELS PULL OUT

Heavily armed Russian mercenaries pull out of the southern Russian city after a deal was brokered

INTERNATIONAL P10



STERLING SHOW

Golfer Diksha Dagar becomes second Indian after Aditi Ashok to win a title in an LET event

SPORTS P12

Egypt's highest honour for Modi



AGENCIES

Cairo, June 25: Prime Minister Narendra Modi was Sunday conferred with the 'Order of the Nile', Egypt's highest honour, by President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi here.

Instituted in 1915, the 'Order of the Nile' is conferred upon heads of states, crown princes, and vice presidents who offer Egypt or humanity invaluable services. The 'Order of the Nile' is a pure gold collar consisting of three-square gold units comprising Pharaonic symbols.

The first unit resembles the idea of protecting the state against the evils, the second one resembles prosperity and happiness brought by the Nile and the third one refers to wealth and endurance. The three units are connected to one another by a circular gold flower decorated with turquoise and ruby. Hanging from the collar is a hexagonal pendant decorated with flowers of the Pharaonic style, and turquoise and ruby gems. In the middle of the pendant, there is a protruding symbol representing the Nile that brings together the North and the South.



NO LET-UP: Two goods trains collided with each other that resulted in the derailment of several boggies near West Bengal's Bankura, in the wee hours of Sunday

PTI PHOTO

China aiding Pak build defence infra along LoC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 25: China has been helping the Pakistan Army build its defence infrastructure besides providing Unmanned Aerial and Combat Aerial Vehicles, setting up communication towers and laying underground cables along the Line of Control, officials said.

This, according to the officials, is part of efforts to further shore up China's position as an all-weather friend of Pakistan while ensuring the safety of the growing Chinese enclaves on Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) set up on the pretext of securing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) road and hydel projects built in the occupied territory.

The officials said that the recently developed SH-15, a 155 mm truck-mounted howitzer gun, has also been spotted at some places along the LoC after it was displayed on Pakistan Day last year.

Some intercepts suggested that Chinese troops and engineers were setting up infrastructure along the LoC, including building underground bunkers, the officials said.

The Army has officially maintained silence on the issue but has been constantly updating the intelligence agencies, sources said.

Fraud racket in name of NCB, ED, CBI busted



GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 25: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Crime Branch has claimed to have busted a cyber fraud racket involved in duping gullible people of crores of rupees by faking courier services and black-mailing victims in the name of NCB, CBI, ED and other agencies.

The EOW registered a case on the basis of a complaint filed by Ratna Tripathy of Nayapalli area here and froze 17 bank accounts involved in the financial fraud. Tripathy received a phone call from a person, who introduced himself as an employee of FedEx, Hyderabad, telling her that a parcel containing six passports, a laptop, five ATM cards and 150 gm drugs had been sent to her but have been intercepted

by NCB, Mumbai officials.

When she denied ordering any parcel, the caller asked her to come to NCB Cell of Mumbai to prove her point or she can connect to one Gill, purported head of NCB Mumbai, over Skype. The caller threatened her by saying that if she ignores this she would be prosecuted under NDPS and money laundering cases. A scared Tripathy soon connected to Skype site of Mumbai NCB and a person introducing himself as Gill told her that a case of money laundering and drugs smuggling has been filed against her.

He suggested that if she wants to prove her innocence, she has to send ₹1.5 lakh to the account number of RBI's FDRBI unit for verification. She was also assured that the money would be returned to her account within 15 minutes, if nothing illegal or suspicious is found in her bank transactions.

A panicked Tripathy sent the amount from her bank account through UPI, only to be duped.

Tribals against UCC

Several tribal bodies apprehend that UCC might dilute their customary laws and rights

AGENCIES

Ranchi, June 25: More than 30 tribal organisations in Jharkhand Sunday decided to urge the Law Commission to withdraw the idea of Uniform Civil Code (UCC), as it may put tribal identity in danger in the country. They also decided to launch an agitation against the fresh consultation on the UCC by the Law Commission.

Representatives of more than 30 tribal organisations gathered in Ranchi under the banner of Adivasi Samanwai Samiti (ASS) to discuss UCC. They expressed apprehensions that the UCC might dilute several tribal customary laws and rights. The 22nd Law Commission of India June 14 sought fresh suggestions

VEXED ISSUE

- If their demand was not considered, tribals from across the country would stage a demonstration in New Delhi
- They fear that two tribal laws -- the Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act and the Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act -- may get affected due to UCC. The two laws provide protection to tribal lands

As per some tribal customary laws, women are not given ancestral land rights after marriage. After UCC, this law may get diluted

from various stakeholders, including public and religious organisations on the UCC.

"In the meeting, we have decided to write to the Law Commission urging it to withdraw the idea of UCC, as it may put the identity of tribals in danger across the country," ASS member Dev Kumar Dhan told PTI. The tribal bodies would stage a demonstration against the UCC near Jharkhand Raj Bhavan July 5 and submit a memorandum to the Governor. "We will urge the Governor to request the Centre for withdrawal of the idea of UCC," he said.

Dhan, who is also the con-

vener of Adivasi Mahasabha, alleged, "It appears to be a conspiracy to abolish tribal customary laws, Chotanagpur Tenancy (CNT) and Santhal Pargana Tenancy (SPT) Acts, Wilkinson Rule, PESA law, rules for Fifth Schedule Area, marriage and divorce laws of tribals on the pretext of UCC."

Dhan said that if their demand was not considered, the tribals from across the country would also stage a demonstration in New Delhi.

Tribals are deeply connected with their lands. CNT and SPT provide protection to tribal lands.

2/3rd of ₹2,000 notes returned in a month

Of the total money that has come back to the system, 85 per cent are in deposits and the rest in currency exchanges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 25: Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das has said that within a month of the recall order, more than two-thirds of the ₹2,000 currency notes have returned to the system.

In a surprise move, but as part of the clean note policy, the Reserve Bank had May 19 ordered the recall of the ₹2,000 banknotes worth around ₹3.62 lakh crore.

June 8, announcing the second monetary policy review of the fiscal, Das had said around ₹1.8 lakh crore worth of the ₹2,000 notes have been returned, accounting for approximately 50 per cent of the notes in circulation as of March 31, of which 85 per cent were in deposits and the rest in exchange.

"More than two-thirds or ₹2.41 lakh crore worth of the ₹3.62



lakh crore (as of March 31, 2023) of the now-recalled 2000 banknotes have come back to the system as of mid-last week," Governor Das told PTI Bhasha in an interview at the RBI headquarters last week.

Of the total money that has come back to the system, as much as 85 per cent are in deposits and the rest in currency exchanges, he explained.

Though the central bank has set September 30, 2023, as the last day for exchange/deposits, Das said the deadline is not something cast in stone and that, people need not hurry.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I was like all of you. Then the govt increased electricity tariffs for night time and I had to change

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
TEMP		29.5°C	28.4°C
MAX		29.5°C	28.4°C
MIN		25.3°C	24.0°C
Humidity		98%	97%
Rainfall		0.5	5.4
	Forecast	Heavy Rainfall	Rainfall

Spoken by lakhs of tribals, Soura awaits recognition

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, June 25: Seven decades after Independence, Soura, a tribal language spoken by over five lakh people of a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) of Odisha, is awaiting its place in the 8th Schedule.

Odisha has the third highest tribal population in the country and is home to 62 types of Scheduled Tribe communities, of which 13 are of PVTGs. The Soura tribe is one of them and they reside mainly in the districts of Rayagada, Gajapati and Koraput. They are also present in Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam districts of Andhra Pradesh.

According to the local tribal community leaders, the indigenous language is being used by the community from one gen-

eration to another. The idea for writing a Soura script came to Malia Gomango but was invented by his son-in-law Mangei Gomango.

It is believed that the Sorang Sompeng alphabet came to Mangei Gomango in a vision June 18, 1936. He also founded a religious order dedicated to Akshara Brahma, a stone scripted with Soura letters.

The Soura or Sabar community people believe that the script is God's gift to them. Now, it has been developed as the temple of Matarabnam in Marichaguda which played a great role in the invention of the script.

Mangei Gomango was instrumental in promoting it by setting up a letterpress which produced many books. So, his community people give respect to him as their Guru and he is popularly known as Pandita

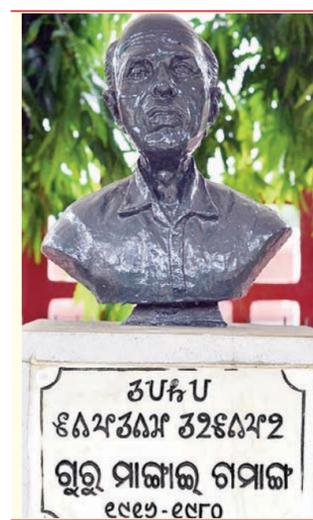
Sabara Mangei Gomango. He passed away in 1980.

Each of Sompeng's 24 letters is named after a god or goddess of the Hindu religion. Like most native scripts of India, Sorang Sompeng is an abugida where alphabetic letters have a single inherent vowel that can be replaced by the presence of another vowel character. There are 10 digits in the language from 0 to 9.

From the invention of the script, Mangei and other leaders of the tribal community have been demanding inclusion of the language in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India.

Former Odisha Chief Minister Giridhar Gamang, ex-minister late Bhagirathi Gamango, prominent researcher Gabriel Boya and others have contributed to the promotion of the language.

In 2020, Giridhar Gamang had written a letter to Prime Minister



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- There are 10 digits in the language from 0 to 9
- From the invention of the script, Mangei and other leaders of the tribal community have been demanding inclusion of the language in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India

Narendra Modi to include the language in the Eighth Schedule. The ex-CM had also raised the issue in the Parliament during his tenure as an MP.

Recently, the Odisha government has taken up the issue seriously and the state Cabinet led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik June 21 decided to recommend the proposal for inclusion of the tribal Soura language in the 8th Schedule.

"The language has become a major obstacle to the development of education. So, it is time to recognise the language," said Phalguni Sabar, a language activist and local community leader. Digasming Gomango, a Soura language expert and activist, said language has no religion or caste.

Everyone should join hands for the uplift of the Soura sompeng, he said.

leisure



HAYLEY SAYS SHE TRUSTS CO-STAR CRUISE COMPLETELY

Actor Tom Cruise is back as Ethan Hunt in the upcoming film, *Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One*. A new entrant in this franchise is actor Hayley Atwell who plays the character of Grace, revealed how she had complete real sense of trust in him for the action scenes.

AL PACINO HAS NO PLANS TO MARRY NOOR ALFALLAH

Actor Al Pacino recently welcomed his first child with his 29-year-old girlfriend Noor Alfallah. Now, as per reports, it has been revealed that the 83 year-old veteran actor has no plans on marrying Noor and feels trapped into a relationship with her.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Good news may bring cheer to you today! A job, a wedding, some profit... it could be personal or professional. Giving your best is almost a habit with you, says Ganेशha, and it will pay off today.

TAURUS
Ganेशha predicts that today, you will be successful in money matters. There is, at best, only an outside chance that any stimulating event or thrilling escapade will occur today. In short, the day may be boring. Fret not as the dreary day may change into an exhilarating evening, feels Ganेशha.

GEMINI
You will long for some privacy today, says Ganेशha. You may end up earning a large amount of money, mostly through some private venture. The day will be a greatly profitable one for cashiers, money lenders and those in retail business. Keep working hard to achieve success.

CANCER
Today, there is a strong possibility that you may face unexpected job changes. You are likely to spend lavishly to please family and friends. You may feel we make money to spend on loved ones. Still it would probably be a good idea to count every penny before using it, says Ganेशha.

LEO
Being good to oneself is not vanity. To Ganेशha, it seems as if you take this statement to heart, since it looks quite possible that you make your personal care number one priority today. On the flip side though, you become aware of the fact that the harder you try the more it seems you have to.

VIRGO
The time today is ripe to venture into a new business. Projects that have been put-off will finally be completed. Looking into the week ahead, you are most likely to give yourself an energy zap. Parties will be all fun and entertainment.

LIBRA
The Bhagavad Gita says, "Do your duty without expecting the fruit." Remember this important lesson and strive hard to put in extra efforts to finish off whatever you undertake to do. Worrying about results will only hamper your progress. Go with the flow and let results come to you. You may want to discuss some urgent matters with your close friend today, says Ganेशha.

SCORPIO
Life is the best teacher, they say. And today, you even experience this. You may learn to survive the neck-tight competition in the market. This may invite a lot of envy, but nothing shall bother you. Ganेशha reminds you of the adage, "To err is human, to forgive is divine," so, it's fine even if you commit some errors.

SAGITTARIUS
Today shall be a rather decisive day, speculates Ganेशha. Situations that have pushed you into a corner will force you to make rash decisions. But take stock of the situation and assess the long-term consequences of your actions beforehand, advises Ganेशha.

CAPRICORN
Mark this date on the calendar as today is going to be one of the most important days of life, the reason being you are going to meet somebody who is will stay with you through out your life. Though it may come time bore you, but your relationships will keep you busy today. Visits to religious places are on the cards for you. Most of the day you will spend time with your friends and family.

AQUARIUS
You may rave and rant, but all you'll get from colleagues or juniors are wishy-washy excuses for a job not done. Ganेशha advises that you take care to finish your own work before you help others.

PISCES
You will need broad shoulders to deal with the added responsibilities which will be heaped on your plate today. And while the job will be draining, the satisfaction of a job well done will more than ease your stress.

Kiara Advani on finding true love

Mumbai: Actress Kiara Advani has called her husband-actor Sidharth Malhotra her 'home' and herself lucky as she spoke about true love and marriage. She said that since she had a love marriage, she obviously believes in true love.

The *Govinda Mera Naam* actress said, "I got married recently. It was a love marriage. So naturally, I believe in true love."

She also added, "Ghar do logon se banta hain. And main bohot khush kismat hoon ki jo mere saathi hain, the man I've chosen to live my life with... Mera jo pati hain (A home is made by two people. I am very lucky that my partner...my husband), he is my best friend. Mere liye (For me) he is everything. He is my home. Wherever we are, chaa-

hein kahin bhi ho duniya mein jis bhi city mein, mere liye wahi mera ghar hai (wherever we are in this world, in whichever city, for me he is my home)."

Sidharth and Kiara tied the knot in an intimate ceremony on

February 7 this year at Suryagarh Palace in Rajasthan.

On the workfront, Kiara will be seen in the upcoming romantic musical drama *Satyaprem Ki Katha*, and *Game Changer*.



AGENCIES

Mumbai: Actor Gulshan Devaiah has lauded his co-actor Rajkumar Rao as the flag-bearer for the actors of his generation.

Actors Gulshan Devaiah and Rajkumar Rao have reunited, this time for a web series *Guns & Gulaabs* with Raj and DK. Gulshan said, "His craft and career are benchmarks for us and he's an inspiration for all. I have immense respect and admiration for him, he's a flag bearer of sorts for a generation of actors. He blackmailed and assaulted me

Gulshan dubs Rajkumar as flagbearer

in *Shaitan*, we romanced in *Badhaai Do* and let's just leave it as a surprise as to what we'll be up to on screen this time around."

Gulshan and Rajkumar were seen together in *Shaitan*, *Badhaai Do*, and now will be seen again in *Guns & Gulaabs*.

On the workfront, Gulshan was last seen in *Dahaad* with Sonakshi Sinha, and *8 A.M. Metro* opposite Saiyami Kher.

AGENCIES

Los Angeles: Actress Maitreyi Ramakrishnan has a complex relationship with social media where she has received both love and merciless trolling and has

Maitreyi rejects social media validation

stopped seeking validation from the virtual world. "Social media can be very stressful and anxiety inducing," says Ramakrishnan, adding, "It allows people to make opinions all the time and be very cruel because we forget that there's a real human being behind the screen. People on social media like to misinterpret things, make fake stories and just judge others."

The 21-year-old, who shot to fame playing an Indian

taking validation from the virtual world.

"Racists are online. I don't need their approval. I'm okay. There are absolute sexist and bigots online. I'm totally okay without the approval of the homophobes. So, I take that all with a grain of salt," explains the Tamil-Canadian actor. "I don't put my validation in social media. I just treat it like a fun thing, by posting cool stuff such as video game stuff, or photo shoots to keep it real. And then I go to my friends and my loved ones to tell and remind me of the person I am," concludes the actor.

AGENCIES



Int'l film festivals are looked down in India: Nandita

Mumbai: Filmmaker Nandita Das talks about being a part of the main jury at the Shanghai International Film Festival, and the responsibility that comes with it, feels such film festivals provide a democratic space to creators, something, which India still lacks.

"In our country, we either think of film festivals as the ultimate benchmark for films, or we look down upon them as a space for arty-farty elite. I think these festivals provide a great open space for filmmakers and film lovers," Nandita comments.

"Attending film festivals offer opportunities to connect with fellow professionals, sparking engaging discussions and potential collaborations. Additionally, it provides a chance to explore various locations, big and small, that may otherwise remain unexplored,"

says the director, whose last release, *Zwigato*, travelled to several film festivals.

Sharing about her experience, the *Manto* maker says "In today's era, multiple festivals captivate young audiences familiar with global films via streaming services. One such festival showcased *Zwigato*, drawing a packed theater of attentive viewers who stayed till the end. As a filmmaker, it's immensely rewarding to share your work with an engaged audience, and I was thrilled to experience this in a city that had intrigued me," she elaborates.

"While serving on a diverse jury assessing films, I prioritize objectivity over national representation, relying on personal experiences and perspectives," Nandita concludes. She also admits that whenever she goes to a foreign land, she inevitably carries a part of India with her, symbolized by her brown skin, dark hair, and Indian attire, making her a representation of her country. AGENCIES

FUN post

PEANUTS



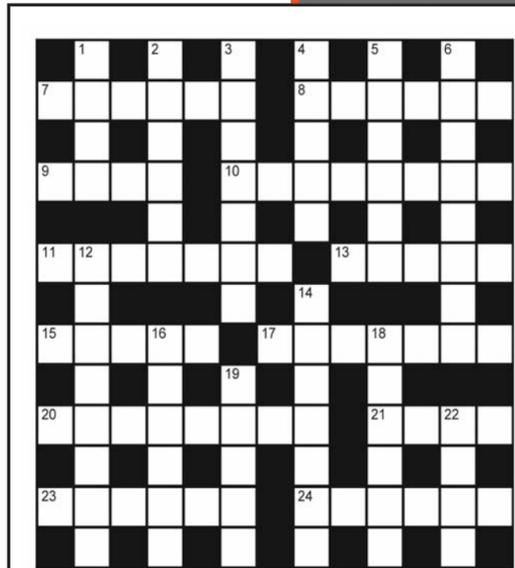
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



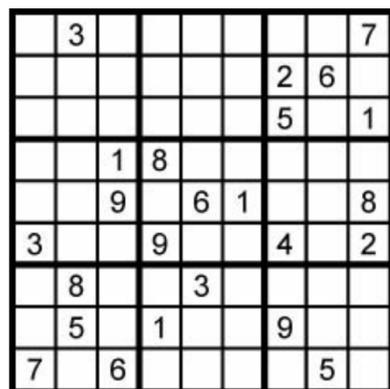
CROSSWORD



- Across
- 7 Fix
 - 8 Spanish capital
 - 9 Parking place
 - 10 Martini ingredient
 - 11 Delivery aid (3,4)
 - 13 Off-center
 - 15 Incursion
 - 17 Spurs
 - 20 Pitiful
 - 21 German automaker
 - 23 Anise cordial
 - 24 Mal de mer, e.g.
- Down
- 4 On the ball, intellectually
 - 5 Detestable
 - 6 Abuse
 - 12 Remote
 - 14 Swordplay
 - 16 Capital of Greece
 - 18 Uris novel
 - 19 Short musical composition
 - 22 Shangri-la

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



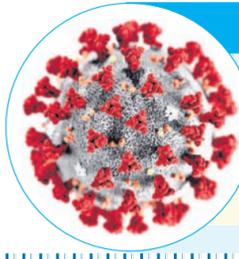
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



OFFERING HOMAGE

Guests paying tributes to first BMC mayor Jagannath Mohapatra on his 12th day of passing away at Saheed Nagar in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	69,00,68,151	66,24,96,191	68,89,432
India	4,49,92,293	4,44,57,720	5,31,886
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

Denial of freedom fighter pension: NHRC for action

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 25: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the Chief Secretary of Odisha to initiate an inquiry and take appropriate action against the officials responsible for denial of freedom fighter pension to Meera Devi, who died of Covid after being deprived of her legitimate right. The commission issued the order while hearing a petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer and rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy in June 2021.

February 8, 2023, the apex rights panel had directed the Bhadrak Collector to provide complete administrative assistance to 87-year-old Meera Devi, spouse of Late Gour Chandra Mohapatra and the youngest daughter-in-law of Late Laxmikanta Mohapatra, the writer of the state anthem "Vande Utkala Janani", to do the needful as per the requirements of Freedom Fighters and Rehabilitation (FFR) Division, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). The copy of the proceeding



was also forwarded to MHA and the Chief Secretary for information and ensuring compliance of direction of the commission.

The Bhadrak Collector informed the commission that the requisite documents of the victim have been submitted to the under secretary of FFR Division for grant of dependent SSSY Pension in favour of Meera Devi.

The MHA under secretary acknowledged the receipt of requisite documents, but expressed his inability towards the sanction of grant as the complainant stated in his letter submitted December 15, 2022 that the victim had died during the pendency of her complaint before this commission. The DM & Collector, Bhadrak, has also been asked to verify the same.

"In pursuant to further direction of the NHRC, report dated 18.04.2023 of ADM, Bhadrak and report dated 17.05.2023 of DM, Bhadrak was received," Tripathy said.

The Collector, during inquiry, found that Meera Devi had expired June 15, 2021 at AMRI Hospital, Bhubaneswar - just a day after the NHRC took cognisance of the case. He also allegedly mentioned in the report that complete administrative assistance has been provided to Meera Devi.

"It raised the question as to how the signature and related documents of a dead person could be attested by a revenue authority," Tripathy alleged.

The documents duly attested by Deputy Collector includes attested copy of specimen signature, identification marks, self photograph, affidavit, date of birth, family details etc.

"These reports are really contradictory in nature. The Chief Secretary of Odisha is recommended to look into the same and take appropriate action against the officials, if found guilty," the rights body said.

GIRL CHILD CUSTODY

SC stays part of Orissa HC order

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

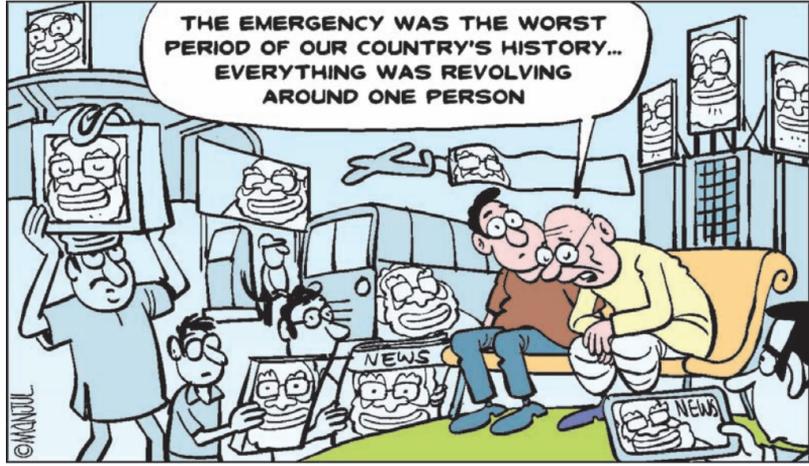
New Delhi, June 25: Taking note of the fight over the custody of a girl child, the Supreme Court has stayed a part of the Orissa High Court order which had directed the adoptive parents to handover the kid to her biological father.

"There shall be an interim stay of the direction of the High Court directing the petitioners herein to handover custody of the minor child, namely... To respondent No.2 (the biological father) until further orders," a vacation bench comprising Justices B V Nagarathna and Manoj Misra said in its order Friday.

The top court was hearing an appeal filed by the adoptive parents of the girl, who is now about 12-year old, assailing the Orissa High Court order of April 3 asking them to handover the child to her biological father.

Deciding to examine the plea in the interest of the child, the top court issued the notice to the person, who claims to be the biological father. Earlier, the father had moved the high court seeking custody of the child by filing a plea of habeas corpus (bring the person) under the 'parens patriae' (parent of the nation) jurisdiction.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



WORLD DRUG DAY

Exercise, resoluteness can rout drug abuse: Experts

SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 25: On the eve of International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking or World Drug Day, a few experts and fitness freaks opined that regular exercise, counselling and a resolute stand to quit substances can help prevent drug abuse.

World Drug Day is observed June 26 every year to strengthen action and cooperation in achieving a world free of drug abuse. This year's theme is "People first: Stop Stigma and Discrimination, Strengthen Prevention".

The consequences of drug abuse are far-reaching, leading to deteriorating health, broken relationships, and a loss of productivity. The United Nations General Assembly, by the resolution 42/112 of December 7, 1987, decided to observe June 26 as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking as an expression of its determination to strengthen action and cooperation to achieve the goal of an international society free of drug abuse.

The aim of this year's campaign is to raise awareness about the importance of treating people who use drugs with respect and empathy; providing evidence-based, voluntary services to all; offering alternatives to punishment; prioritising prevention; and leading with compassion. The campaign also aims to combat stigma and discrimination against people who use drugs by promoting language and attitudes that are respectful and non-judgemental.

Orissa POST spoke to a couple of experts who have successfully helped many people quit addiction and offered them a second chance of life. Samarpan, an initiative towards drug rehabilitation in Bhubaneswar since 2007, has helped heal a lot many. Founder-director of Samarpan, **Prabhu Dutt Patel** said, "As per research and experience, 10-



Twin city police commissioner Soumendra Priyadarshi and Odia film actor Siddhanta Mahapatra flagging off a bike rally on the eve of World Drug Day in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

25 years is the age group when adolescents and youths try substances like alcohol and tobacco. But then they never come to us. They come to us when they attend a chronic stage of alcoholism."

It is very important for both the patient and the family to step out of denial mode and make life better. Societal and family denial is what makes it all worse, Patel added.

Priyanka Singhdeo, a fitness enthusiast, said, "Regular exercise is a powerful tool for drug addicts who are struggling to overcome the bad phase. It will redirect their focus towards a positive outlet. Engaging in physical activities not only improves overall health but also helps in rebuilding self-confidence, reducing stress and enhancing mental well-being. As per studies, it has been observed that regular workouts can alter dopamine processing, potentially making exercise feel more pleasurable than drugs. By embracing fitness, individuals battling addiction can find solace, strength and a new sense of purpose on their path to recovery. If a person is working towards overcoming the addiction, he or she should get involved in workouts and program it meaningfully to allow it to work."

Pratik Behera, a final year B-

tech student of Bhubaneswar, said, "I was a victim of drug addiction, I've done it for 10 years during my college life and it took me six weeks on and off to quit it. I would say it is all in mind when you're absolutely determined to quit. Fitness and psychological support have been of great help for me throughout. After quitting, I've never felt withdrawal syndromes."

Renowned psychiatrist of the Capital city Amrit Pattajoshi said, "Alcohol and drug addiction affect one's brain and behaviour. When you're addicted to drugs, you can't resist the urge to use them, no matter how much harm the drugs may cause."

Drug addiction isn't about just heroin, cocaine, opioids or any other illegal substance. You can get addicted to alcohol, nicotine and other legal substances, he added. "Our brain is wired to make us want to repeat experiences that make you feel good," said Pattajoshi. Drugs flood your brain with a chemical called dopamine. This triggers a feeling of intense pleasure, he added. "When you use drugs for a long time, it can cause changes in the brain's chemical systems and circuits as well. If drug use is out of control or causing problems, please consult a doctor," he stated.



JATRA RITUAL: Darpadalana, chariot of Goddess Subhadra, being pulled towards Nakachana Dwara as part of 'Dakhina Moda' ritual in Puri, Sunday

Three day Bhumi Pujan ceremony of Ekamra Prakalp begins today

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 25: The Bhumi Pujan ceremony for Ekamra project, scheduled from June 26 to 28, promises to be a momentous occasion showcasing the rich cultural heritage and traditions of the Ekamra Kshetra. The foundation stone laying ceremony, slated for June 28 will be graced by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

A press meet was held Sunday in BMC office Ekamra Conference Hall on the EKAMRA Prakalp Bhumi Pujan. VC-BDA cum Chief Coordinator EKAMRA Prakalp Bhumi Pujan, Collector Khurda, BMC Commissioner, DCP-Bhubaneswar, MD OBCC briefed the media on 3-day programme.

The Bhumi Pujan will take place Monday evening at 7:30pm with Yagna rituals. This auspicious ceremony will be live-streamed on various television

channels and social media networks. The Lingaraj temple, Ananta Basudev temple, Mukteswar Temple, Bindu Sagar and other smaller temples will be decorated on this occasion.

There will be an exhibition featuring a project model and information display which will enlighten visitors about the remarkable endeavours taking place within Ekamra Kshetra. Renowned artists such as Hariharan Anantha Subramani, Abhilipsa Panda, Ananda Nanda and Nilandri Kumar will perform on this occasion.

The Ekamra Project, also known as the Ekamra Kshetra Amenities and Monuments Revival Action plan, was launched by the state government in 2019. With an allocated area of 80 acres around the Lingaraj temple, the project aims to recreate the magnificence of this ancient heritage site. The phase-1 development

will encompass the restoration of Ekamra Kshetra's architectural and archaeological heritage. To improve vehicular movement, a 12-18 meter wide mixed traffic lane will be developed alongside 4-10 meter wide shaded walk-way to ensure smooth pedestrian flow. Parking facilities will be relocated to the outer periphery of Ekamra Kshetra to alleviate congestion.

Moreover, interconnected landscaped open spaces will be created, providing safe gathering areas for devotees while a 300 sq meter temple facility will be constructed for the convenience of pilgrims. A 1,600 sq meter information and control centre will be developed to cater to emergency services. To facilitate easy access to ritual spaces and Ekamra Van, a dedicated pedestrian path around Bindusagar will be constructed.

'Dakhina Moda' ritual for holy trinity begins

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 25: With the Hera Panchami and Dakhina Moda rituals over, now preparations are underway for the Bahuda Yatra of Lord Jagannath and His sibling deities Lord Balbhadra and Devi Subhadra from their sojourn to the Gundicha Temple to Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri Sunday.

As a part of the preparations, the 'Dakhina Moda' ritual began Sunday wherein the three chariots parked on Saradhabali in front of Gundicha Temple are being turned towards Jagannath Temple in the south. Subsequently, the chariots will be parked near Nakachana Dwara, the eastern gate of the shrine.

The chariot of Goddess Subhadra, Darpadalana, was first to be turned towards the south. It was followed by Lord Balabhadr's Taladhawaja and Jagannath's Nandighosha.

The 'Dakhina Moda' ritual started after Sakala Dhupa was offered to the Holy Trinity by the servitors who brought ajnamallyas to serve it to the Biswakarmas. Sunday morning, Mangala Alati of the Lords was delayed as Goddess Mahalaxmi returned to Shree Jagannath Temple around 5:40am after receiving the ajnamallyas (the consent garland).

Servitors carrying representative Goddess Mahalakshmi in a bedecked palanquin reached the Gundicha Temple around 3:20am Sunday. Lord Jagannath's consort Goddess Mahalakshmi is peevish over Him for not taking her along on the annual sojourn.



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IMD predicts rainfall due to Lopar for next 5 days



Fishermen are advised not to venture into sea along and off Odisha coast, North Bay of Bengal, and adjoining areas of West Central Bay of Bengal during the period

Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Angul, Deogarh, Keonjhar, Sundargarh and Jharsuguda June 26, said the weather agency, issuing orange warning.

The Met office also predicted that heavy rainfall (7 to 11cm) is very likely at one or two places over the districts of Nabarangpur, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Nayagarh, and Khurda June 26 and issued yellow warning for these districts.

Under the influence of low-pressure area, squally weather with gusty surface wind speed reaching 45 to 55 kmph is very likely over North Bay of Bengal adjoining west central Bay of Bengal, along and off Odisha coast during mornings of June 26 and to June 27.

Fishermen are advised to not venture into sea area of along and off Odisha coast, North Bay of Bengal adjoining West Central Bay of Bengal during the period.

Heavy Rainfall (7 to 11cm) very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Sundargarh, Deogarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Angul, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Kandhamal, Rayagada, Koraput and Malkangiri June 26 to June 27 morning, informed IMD, issuing yellow warning for these districts and sounded orange warning for Bolangir, Nuapada, Kalahandi, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Sonepur, Boudh and Nabarangpur.

How Murmu missed the most important call

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jun 25: Droupadi Murmu was not a frequent mobile phone user and probably "missed the most important call of her life" - that from the Prime Minister's Office to inform her about her nomination as the official NDA candidate for the president's post, claims a new book.

But her former officer on special duty in Jharkhand, Bikash Chandra Mohanto, came running to Murmu's house with his phone in hand, saying he had received a call apparently from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and was asked to connect with her.

This incident of June 21, 2022 finds mention in the biographical work "Droupadi Murmu: From Tribal Hinterlands to Raisina Hill" by journalist Kasturi Ray, published recently by Rupa.

Through interviews and analysis, Ray tracks Murmu's life, following her through school and college, from being a teacher to social worker, councillor to minister, from taking charge as the governor of Jharkhand to becoming India's first tribal president. On that day in June last year, Murmu was in Odisha's Rairangpur, 14 km from her native village Uparbeda and nearly 275 km from capital Bhubaneswar. The BJP was to announce the NDA's presidential candidate. All were waiting for an official announcement.

"Unfortunately, Murmu and her family were not able to watch the news because of a power cut. Yet the indications were apparent. The sense of serendipity was palpable," the book says.

A little later, television channels started broadcasting the news. "Not a frequent mobile phone user, she had kept hers away and probably missed many calls, including the most important one of her life. But as her daughter Itishree's phone was constantly ringing, Murmu managed to respond to a few," the book says.



DANCE OF DEVOTION: Artistes perform at a cultural programme organised near Sri Gundicha Temple in Chandini Chowk locality of Cuttack, Sunday

Organs of brain-dead patient save four lives

The police created a green corridor in Bhubaneswar for transporting the organs in two ambulances from the hospital to the Biju Patnaik International Airport from where they were flown to Kolkata and New Delhi accompanied by outstation medical teams

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 25: In a first in the state's medical history, multiple organs retrieved from a brain-dead patient at the SUM Ultimate Medicare (SUMUM) hospital here were rushed to three different cities, for transplantation Saturday, providing a new lease of life to four critical patients.

Multiple organs, including two kidneys, lungs and a liver were retrieved from Prasenjit Mohanty, the brain dead patient, with the approval of his family, while excellent coordination through government agencies enabled the organs to be flown to two private hospitals in New Delhi and Kolkata for transplantation, informed SUMUM

Chief Executive Officer Swetapadma Dash Sunday.

The police created a green corridor in Bhubaneswar for transporting the organs in two ambulances from the hospital to the Biju Patnaik International Airport from where the same were flown to the two cities accompanied by outstation medical teams.

Of the two kidneys, one was transplanted on a waiting patient at SUMUM last night while another was taken to the SCB Medical College and Hospital at Cuttack for transplantation on another patient.

The two lungs were flown to a private hospital at Kolkata to help the critical condition of a 16-year-old boy suffering from paraquat poisoning who has been

enduring a challenging 45-day wait for the organs while being supported by ECMO. The liver was transported to another private healthcare facility in New Delhi, saving another critical patient.

"Forty three-year-old Mohanty, who had suffered severe head injury after a fall, had been admitted to SUMUM June 22 and underwent emergency brain surgery," said Somnath Prasad Jena, Consultant Neurosurgeon at SUMUM.

"Though his condition somewhat improved following the surgery, it deteriorated subsequently and an Apnea test conducted June 23 yielded a positive result signifying that the patient was brain dead. A second test was done after six hours which confirmed the earlier report," Jena said.

Dash said when the family members were informed about the patient's medical status,

they offered to donate his organs as it could help to save the lives of others.

"It was a momentous decision and we salute Mrudumanjari Mohapatra, wife of the patient, for her bold decision to donate the organs as there is cultural resistance to such practice in the society," she said.

The hospital alerted the State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (SOTTO) and subsequently information reached the Regional Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (ROTTO) and National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO).

Medical teams from Kolkata and New Delhi reached SUMUM Saturday and a 20-member team comprising surgeons from SUMUM and outstation doctors retrieved the required organs following proper procedure which took four and half hours.

Biswanath Patnaik conferred APJ Abdul Kalam Inspiration Award

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 25: Odia investor Biswanath Patnaik has been conferred with the prestigious APJ Abdul Kalam Inspiration Award by Topnotch Foundation New Delhi as the 'Most Iconic Business Leader of the Year for his remarkable contribution towards ethical investment.

Patnaik is chairman of Finnest Group of Companies and founder of BNP Venture Capitals, the same group which had made headlines recently for its investment towards setting up of Odisha's first Hydrogen based EV locomotive manufacturing plant with an amount of around Rs 450 crore and bio bag manufacturing plant, investing Rs 50 crore in the state.

The APJ Abdul Kalam Inspirational Award is given to individuals who have made significant contributions to their field and have inspired others. The award ceremony took place June 23, 2023, at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, in the presence of dignitaries including Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan and Union Cabinet Minister Mahendra Nath Pandey.

Expressing his gratitude for the prestigious award, Patnaik stated, "It is an immense honour to be recognized with the prestigious APJ Abdul Kalam Inspiration Award in the field of ethical investment. I am deeply humbled by this acknowledgment, and it reinforces my commitment to promoting ethical investment practices and making a meaningful difference in society. I believe that through responsible investment and philanthropy, we can create a more equitable and sustainable future for all."



BUDDING VOCALISTS: Children participate in Sangeet Suravi programme organised by Itikili Mitikili as part of its silver jubilee celebrations at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

OVSA deliberates ways to improve veterinary services

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 25: With a goal to deliberate ways to improve the quality of veterinary services in the state, Odisha Veterinary Service Association (OVSA) organised a discussion at the Odisha Veterinary Council conference hall here Sunday.

Indian Veterinary Service Council president Umesh Chandra Sharma, secretary Bimal Bhatt, and executive member Gurucharan Dutt joined as guests while many doctors currently in-service and some retired veterinary doctors from other organisations participated in the programme.

Sharma inaugurated the programme and students of Odisha Veterinary and Animal

Husbandry College recited state song.

Odisha Veterinary Service Association president Jadunath Parida spoke about the current situation of veterinary services in Odisha, about the inadequacy of infrastructure and the various challenges faced by the service personnel. He urged the participants to further deliberate on these topics in detail.

Furthermore, guests deliberated on other topics like ways to strengthen the Veterinary Council, necessary amendments to Veterinary Service Act, modernisation of Veterinary Service Institute and setting up a special-purpose veterinary university. Sharma assured the gathering to keep in mind all the issues raised in the programme.

Similarly, all guests presented their thoughts on enhancement of quality of veterinary services and discussed with the participants the various initiatives that have been undertaken. Odisha Veterinary Service Association general secretary Sankarshan Mahanta presented his views on the Odisha Veterinary Service.

Sushant Kumar Dash and Balaram Sahu were felicitated for their extraordinary contribution to the services. Odisha Veterinary Service Women Wing joint secretary Sanjivani Patel delivered vote of thanks. Other dignitaries present at the programme were Odisha Veterinary Service Association vice president Sailesh Mohanty and joint secretary Simphony Mohanty.

The folly of making art with text-to-image generative AI

Making art using artificial intelligence isn't new. It's as old as AI itself.

What's new is that a wave of tools now let most people generate images by entering a text prompt. All you need to do is write "a landscape in the style of van Gogh" into a text box, and the AI can create a beautiful image as instructed.

The power of this technology lies in its capacity to use human language to control art generation. But do these systems accurately translate an artist's vision? Can bringing language into art-making truly lead to artistic breakthroughs?

I've worked with generative AI as an artist and computer scientist for years, and I would

argue that this new type of tool constrains the creative process.

When you write a text prompt to generate an image with AI, there are infinite possibilities. If you're a casual user, you might be happy with what AI generates for you. And startups and investors have poured billions into this technology, seeing it as an easy way to generate graphics for articles, video game characters and advertisements.

In contrast, an artist might need to write an essaylike prompt to generate a high-quality image that reflects their vision - with the right composition, the right lighting and the correct shading. That long prompt is not necessarily descriptive of the image but typically uses lots of keywords to invoke the system of



what's in the artist's mind. There's a relatively new term for this: prompt engineering. Basically, the role of an artist using these tools is reduced to reverse-engineering the system to find the right keywords to compel the system to generate the desired output. It takes a lot of effort, and

much trial and error, to find the right words.

To learn how to better control the outputs, it's important to recognize that most of these systems are trained on images and captions from the internet. Think about what a typical image caption tells about an

image. Captions are typically written to complement the visual experience in web browsing.

For example, the caption might describe the name of the photographer and the copyright holder. On some websites, like Flickr, a caption typically describes the type of camera and the lens used. On other sites, the caption describes the graphic engine and hardware used to render an image.

So to write a useful text prompt, users need to insert many nondescriptive keywords for the AI system to create a corresponding image. Today's AI systems are not as intelligent as they seem; they are essentially smart retrieval systems that have a huge memory and work by association.

Is this really the sort of tool that can help artists create great work? At Playform AI, a generative AI art platform that I founded, we conducted a survey to better understand artists' experiences with generative AI.

We collected responses from over 500 digital artists, traditional painters, photographers, illustrators and graphic designers who had used platforms such as DALL-E, Stable Diffusion and Midjourney, among others.

Only 46 per cent of the respondents found such tools to be "very useful," while 32 per cent found them somewhat useful but couldn't integrate them to their workflow. The rest of the users - 22 per cent - didn't find them useful at all.

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Development still a misnomer in Tumuni village near Nagada

BASIC FACILITIES ELUDE OVER 280 PEOPLE OF 29 FAMILIES RESIDING IN TUMUNI VILLAGE CLOSE TO THE NAGADA CLUSTER OF VILLAGES



centre but the Anganwadi worker visits it once or twice a month. The Anganwadi centre, often remaining close, has deprived the women and children in the villages the benefits of government welfare schemes.

There is a ration centre at Naliadaba which is about three to four km from the village. However, the villagers do not visit the centre due to lack of communication facilities.

Most of them have received a job card under rural job scheme MGNREGS but they have failed to reap its benefit as a contractor Sanjay Mohanta has allegedly kept the cards with him and refusing to return those.

Villagers Tankar Pradhan, Khetra Pradhan, Madhusudan Pradhan, Jamuni Pradhan, Odia Pradhan, Bitu Pradhan, Buduni Pradhan, Dina Pradhan, Dashumatia Pradhan, Subuni Pradhan and Machu Pradhan alleged they have demanded their cards back several times but in vain as the contractor threatens them whenever they raise the issue with him.

This is indicative of serious irregularities plaguing the implementation of Centre-sponsored rural job scheme in the area.

The area is also home to large numbers of dropouts as there is no primary school in the village and nearest school is situated at a faraway place. Das has demanded before the state government to ensure drinking water supply, a good road, holding of regular health camps, keeping the Anganwadi centre open every day, recovery of the job cards of the poor villagers from the contractor and door to door supply of rations.

When contacted, Gyana Ranjan Nayak, executive engineer of rural works division in Jajpur said that he is not aware about construction of any road to Tumuni and Guhiasal villages and can only speak on the issue after making a proper enquiry.

rected the engineer-in-chief of Rural Works department to prepare a report on bringing in development in Tumuni area.

Meanwhile, a road has been constructed to Nagada three years after the malnutrition deaths. However, the residents of Tumuni and Guhiasal villages continue to live a cursed life of obscurity and drudgery.

According to ground zero reports of Mantu Das, over 280 people of 29 families reside in Tumuni village. Drinking water facility is yet to be available for which villagers continue to depend on the polluted water of a hilly stream. They are left without a drop of water when the hilly stream dries up during summer.

Risking their lives, they walk through a dense forest to fetch water from a nearby village. The villagers often lose their lives or get critically injured while travelling through the forest to fetch water from the nearby village.

Institutional delivery is a misnomer in this village due to lack of communication facilities. The death of two pregnant women Kandiri Pradhan and Jatri Pradhan during delivery due to lack of necessary healthcare facilities are cases in this point.

There exists a hospital at nearby Kaliapani which is about 21 km from the village. However, lack of awareness has deprived the villagers from availing the same.

The village has an Anganwadi



SEEDS OF HOPE: A farmer sowing paddy seeds after the first monsoonal rainfall at a village under Padmapur sub-division in Bargarh district, Sunday OP PHOTO

8 FT-LONG CROC CAUGHT IN NET

POST NEWS NETWORK

Basudevpur, June 25: An 8 feet-long salt water crocodile was fished out from Makei river near Basudevpur village in Bhadrak district, Sunday. Some fishermen of Sanaagapur village had spread nets in the Makei river to catch fish and found a giant crocodile trapped in the net, Sunday morning.

They carefully pulled the crocodile from the water to the bank of the river and informed the Forest department. A team of forest officials led by Basudevpur forest ranger Kapilendra Pradhan released it in the Baitarani river as per the direction of Bhadrak DFO Adhir Kumar Behera.

The weight of the reptile was approximately 50-60 kg, it was learnt. Owing to several instances of crocodile attacks in state, the fishermen were panicked after the incident.

Chh'garh STF raids Kalahandi village

Animal body parts, 6 country-made rifles seized; poacher arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, June 25: In yet another raid in a village under Kalahandi district Sunday, Chhattisgarh STF has seized six country-made rifles, bows and arrows, along with body parts of various animals. Reports said that a poacher was also arrested in this connection.

As per the report, a tip-off was received by the Chhattisgarh STF about supply of illegal firearms to poachers of Chhattisgarh by an illegal gun-making factory at Khaligarh under Dharmagarh range of the south forest division in the district.

Acting on the tip-off, Kalahandi forest officials along with Chhattisgarh STF personnel raided Khaligarh village. During their raid, they found body parts of various animals, as many as six country-made guns apart



from bows and arrows which were kept in most of the houses.

The arrested poacher was identified as Daitari Chalan of the village. Some other poachers of the village absconded after they came to know about the raid. Among the seized animal body parts, there are deer skulls, wild boar body parts and turtle

shells. Before this, Chhattisgarh STF at Mangalpur village of Jayapatna forest range, had arrested five poachers and seized gun making equipment. Later, STF came to know of a link between Mangalpur village with Khaligarh village which led to Khaligarh village being raided.

Blood-soaked body of youth recovered; Murder suspected

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bheden, June 25: Police recovered the body of a youth in a pool of blood from a closed room at Sanpipilipi village under Talmenda panchayat and Bheden police limits in Bargarh district late Saturday night.

The deceased was identified as Mantu Pradhan (40) of the village. His younger brother Rabi first informed the matter to the villagers and later the police were informed.

As the incident happened late Saturday night, the investigation could not be started. In the presence of the magistrate, police Sunday seized the body and kicked off an investigation.

A scientific team and dog squad were also pressed into action. As per the circumstances and a deep wound on Mantu's head, it seems to be a pre-planned murder, said the police. Police have seized a blood-soaked wooden plank and registered a case.

Police also detained Rabi, the younger brother of the deceased, and interrogated him as they suspected family feud might be the reason behind the gruesome murder. The incident has become a matter of discussion among villagers.



RISKY RIDE: Two boys hazardously ride a bicycle on the footpath along the second Mahanadi bridge in Sambalpur, Sunday OP PHOTO

Man accused of killing brother-in-law in Kerala

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mohana, June 25: In a shocking incident, a man from Odisha has been accused of killing his own brother-in-law in Kerala.

The deceased was identified as Abhay Bira of Bijipur village under Mohana police limits in Gajapati district and the accused as Manoj Kumar Nayak, the brother-in-law of the deceased.

Kerala police seized the body, arrested Manoj and kicked off an investigation. A pall of gloom descended in Bijipur village after the sad news spread.

According to sources, Abhay had gone to work as a migrant worker in Kerala's Katarakara area where his sister and brother-

in-law Manoj lived. He used to live with them and go to work.

On a fateful day, Abhay witnessed a quarrel between Manoj and his sister over some family dispute, Friday. Though he intervened to stop their fight, it led to a verbal duel between him and Manoj. Soon, the quarrel escalated and in a fit of rage, Manoj killed Abhay, alleged Abhay's brother Dipti and wife Katrina.

However, the deceased's family members are now a worried lot as they are very weak financially to bring their son's body back to the village. They have sought help of the administration and government to bring home the body so that the final rites can be conducted.

1 dead, 15 ill after having 'prasad'

Balasure: An elderly woman died and 15 others fell ill after they had prasad in Bahanaga area of Balasure district, Sunday. The deceased has been identified as Nilamani Sahu (63). Sources said, kheeri prasad was offered to the deities during Ratha Jatra at Talakurunia village under Bahanaga block of Balasure Saturday. A few villagers of Talakurunia partook the kheeri prasad today and also sent the same to their relatives in nearby Athilabaj village, sources added. At least 16 people of the two villages fell ill.

Engineer duped of ₹1 lakh online

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, June 25: An engineer was duped online here after fraudsters lured him to invest money in a scheme.

According to information, one Prem Panigrahi was duped by cyber fraudsters as he was trapped to invest Rs 1 lakh in a scheme where monetary benefits were very alluring. Prem received a business link on his Instagram account to invest. The link very clearly described the benefits of the scheme.

Prem became interested in it and invested Rs 1 lakh. However, when he was further pressed to invest more money he became suspicious and gradually learned that he had been cheated. Soon he lodged a complaint with the police Saturday evening at Chhend PS. Speaking on the incident, Chhend PS IIC Bijay Bihari said, "We have received the complaint. We have informed the bank and Paytm in this regard and are waiting for their response. After that, the investigation will continue."

WORK ON MUCH AWAITED KOEL RIVER BARRAGE BEGINS

The Koel barrage became a sentimental issue ever since the foundation stone was laid by CM Naveen Patnaik July 9, 2013 on the bank of Koel near Koelnagar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, June 25: In good news for Rourkela residents, work on the much awaited Koel river barrage has finally begun, thus ending the uncertainty over the fate of this vital project.

"The work on the barrage has started and it started sometime back," said Sanatana Sahu, executive engineer, Rukuda irrigation project who has the additional charge of Koel river barrage. Already 5 mts foundation work on the upstream cut-up point has started, informed the EE. "The work permit was given to two agencies September 21 and work will be completed on the project March 27, 2025. And they will do the work in EPC mode and this includes plan-

ning and designing." The total project cost is Rs 311 crore out of which Rs 4.5 crore is meant for maintenance for the next five years.

The Koel barrage became a sentimental issue ever since the foundation stone was laid by CM Naveen Patnaik July 9, 2013 on the bank of Koel near Koelnagar. This project will solve the water woes of a large area, including Koelnagar, some of the sector areas of Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP), NIT Rourkela, Jhirpani rural water supply project, Jagda, besides helping in irrigation and also for the new industrial park, which is coming up in Riun and Kacharu areas. It will be of immense help to over a lakh dependents solving their various demands.



However, the project got mired in controversy and a big question mark remained hung over its

certainty. Even it became a symbol of failure and the step-motherly attitude of the state gov-

ernment towards Rourkela thus causing much discomfort for the BJD here. At one point in time, the project was almost on the verge of cancellation. The plaque, which the CM had laid has even vanished from the pedestal. "I had never lost hope in it because I kept on fighting for the project even though it is not under my constituency. I kept on following it and had never lost hope in it because I have full faith in my leader," said Minister for Labour Sarada Nayak.

Finally, the project was shifted upstream nearly two kilometres to Hamirpur. The main reason for transferring it to another place was the lack of sufficient government land and also the water storage capacity. "Private

land acquisition would have led to many issues so the final decision was taken to shift it to a place where there will be least issues regarding land," said the minister. The EE speaking about the technicality of the issue explained, "The water storage capacity at its originally planned place was very less and here it is much more."

The height of the barrage is 7 meters. And the width is 7.5 meters. "There are twenty one barrage gates and eight sluice gates. And the water storage capacity if you look at the area wise then it will extend for more than four kilometres extending upstream. This will definitely help a very large area in irrigation even during peak summer," said the EE.

FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY

ENSURING FOOD FOR ALL



Food systems' profound inequality, structural discrimination, and systemic violence have persisted for too long, and ordinary citizens around the world are demanding change

CFS have stressed the need for a coordinated response to the ongoing food crisis. But, at the same time, civil society, indigenous peoples, and academics have warned against the corporate capture of food governance and called for a UN-wide corporate accountability framework.

There is growing momentum for change ahead of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which will be commemorated in December. And the right to adequate food and nutrition, in particular, could be at the top of the agenda. In late June, the German government will host the "Policies against Hunger" conference; this year's edition will focus on rights-based approaches to the transformation of food systems. With the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights having proposed a human-rights economy, and with Brazil preparing to assume the G20's rotating presidency in 2024, we may see ambitious proposals to advance the right to food internationally.

Food systems' profound inequality, structural discrimination, and systemic violence have persisted for too long, and ordinary citizens around the world are demanding change. A transformation on this scale requires close collaboration between the diverse mix of people who are engaging in creative forms of resistance, as well as progressive governments that are ready to listen to them and represent their interests. Respect for human rights must form the basis of any effort to reduce acute hunger. It is the only way to create a sustainable and equitable system that provides adequate food for all.

Michael Fakhri is UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. Elisabetta Recine is President of the Brazilian CONSEA.

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Be courageous, enduring, and vigilant and above all, be sincere, with perfect honesty. Then you will be able to face all difficulties.

THE MOTHER



Give and Take

South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa hit bull's eye when he slashed out at the rich countries for their failure to deliver the promised \$100 billion in annual climate finance by 2020. He was speaking at French President Emmanuel Macron's just concluded summit for a new global financing pact in Paris. It is true that a number of commitments made by developed countries towards climate change caused by their reckless carbon emissions have not been fulfilled. Ramaphosa was at his emphatic best when he said it is one thing for developed countries to promise to "make this available and that available" and another to translate the promise into action.

Developing nations at the summit called for a "transformation" of the world's financial system. The two-day summit organised in Paris to expedite efforts to unlock trillions of dollars required to tackle climate change barely addressed the underlying problems preventing developing countries from investing in development alongside climate measures, especially with their crushing debt levels. Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley, who co-hosted the summit alongside Macron, made the right noise when she called on the participants to chalk out a concrete path to transformation and not merely talk on reforming the global financial system.

The summit made several announcements such as the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) declaration of reaching the target of making \$100 billion in special drawing rights (SDRs), a reserve currency, available to climate-vulnerable countries. The World Bank also said developing nations hit by climate disasters would be able to suspend debt repayments.

The International Energy Agency had made it clear in 2021 that developing new fossil fuel resources struck at the root of efforts to restrict global heating to below 1.5C, a dangerous threshold beyond which lie the most disastrous climate impacts. Yet, the oil and gas industry does not seem to care. Last year alone, it pledged half a trillion dollars for new capital expenditure on future drilling and extraction. It made a profit of \$4 trillion. No one denies the fact that without energy development, aspirations and basic present and future needs cannot be fulfilled. But, producing it from coal, oil and gas without developing sustainable energy sources is one of the major causes of the current climate emergency. The right strategy would be to consider climate, energy and development as interconnected. But, this has become increasingly more difficult to achieve in the post-COVID situation which hit poor nations hard with record levels of debt. The Russia-Ukraine war has compounded matters in the form of rise in interest rates and cost of living. Some developing countries are reportedly spending nearly five times of their health budgets on meeting debt obligations.

The tardiness of the IMF in ensuring rich countries meet the target of setting up \$100 billion climate fund for poor countries is in sharp contrast to the trillions of dollars mobilised in an instant to bail out finance houses during the financial meltdown of 2008. It is unacceptable that years are needed to raise funds to address the climate emergency.

Efforts by leaders in North America and Europe of reshaping their energy systems by using key raw materials from poorer nations for producing clean energy should be based on give and take. Poorer countries possessing the minerals should be helped to overcome the three structural deficiencies that block their development, namely a lack of food and energy sovereignty and low value-added manufacturing. This can be done in return for sharing their minerals.

Unless a mechanism to this effect is created, the rush for clean energy would lead to corrupt deals as are done by fossil fuel companies which buy off politicians and recklessly damage the environment.

The French initiative as exhibited in the summit is only one step in the long journey of reconfiguring decades-old institutions to finance efforts to keep the earth's temperature below disaster levels.



Michael Fakhri & Elisabetta Recine

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS MUST FORM THE BASIS OF ANY EFFORT TO REDUCE ACUTE HUNGER

When former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro came to power in January 2019, one of his first acts in office was to abolish the National Food and Nutrition Security Council (CONSEA), a globally lauded body that had significantly reduced food insecurity. It was a huge step back for the country, which the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) had removed from its "hunger map" in 2014.

People immediately mobilised to protest Bolsonaro's decision, including by organising impressive public meals held on the streets of many cities – a national banquet. Gathered around tables laden with healthy food, communities' resistance simultaneously celebrated and reclaimed the right to adequate food and nutrition.

Immediately after Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was sworn in as Brazil's President in January, he reinstated CONSEA, which one of us (Recine) heads and which will meet the people's conference later this year to hear proposals.

This spirit of resistance – if replicated elsewhere – could transform food systems worldwide and ease the global hunger crisis that the pandemic, climate shocks, and conflict have exacerbated. As UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, another of us (Fakhri) attributed rising rates of hunger to "systemic violence and structural inequality in food systems," which are "a central feature of a global economy that is supported by relationships of dependence among individuals, countries, international financial institutions, and corporations."

An estimated 258 million people faced acute food insecurity in 2022, the highest number on record since the Global Report on Food Crises began reporting data in 2017. In his introduction to this year's GRFC report, UN Secretary-General

António Guterres said the current crisis required "fundamental, systemic change."

An approach based on human-rights principles is essential to bringing about this change. In Brazil, the scandalous increase in food insecurity during Bolsonaro's presidency resulted from policies that neglected marginalised people and violated their rights. As a result, the newly reinstated CONSEA is advocating for policies that fight hunger and address its root causes such as structural racism and gender inequalities. We cannot continue supporting unsustainable food systems that concentrate power and wealth in the hands of a few.

The UN's Right to Food Guidelines, adopted by FAO in 2004, outline how to address the structural causes of discrimination and inequality in food systems. These guidelines pioneered the implementation of economic, social, and cultural human rights and have inspired countless national policies and legal reforms. They also sparked the development of a full body of human rights-based norms and policies adopted by the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the UN General

Assembly, and other UN agencies, including for women, peasants, indigenous peoples, fishers, and other constituencies.

In Brazil, national and international efforts have translated these principles into a suite of domestic policies and programmes aimed at overcoming gender and racial discrimination, ensuring decent incomes and social protection, and securing the land and water rights of women, peasants, indigenous peoples, pastoralists, and fishers. These efforts have also resulted in agroecology and food-sovereignty initiatives that actively involve civil-society groups and ordinary citizens, as well as school-meal programmes sourced from family farms.

But Brazil is far from being an outlier: other governments are enacting similar reforms. Local, regional, and national food-policy councils are being established globally, and parliamentary alliances are working to enact right-to-food legislation in many countries.

Scaling up these efforts will require significantly greater policy coordination among all levels of government. The UN Human Rights Council and the

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

Universal sanitation: Where do we stand?



Jitamitra Behera

UNAVAILABILITY OF SANITATION FACILITIES CREATES A VICIOUS CYCLE OF ILLNESS AND POVERTY

A study of the WHO in 2012 estimated that a \$1 investment in sanitation tends to decrease \$5.5 health costs by preventing diseases. Similarly, the Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) of UNICEF and WHO reported that the same \$1 outlay in water and sanitation generates \$430 economic returns by increasing production efficiency. But when we evaluate the present settings of sanitation facilities, still 1.7 billion people worldwide do not avail basic sanitation facilities (WHO). Surprisingly, 494 million people globally defecate in the open. The situation is grave in developing countries like India. The recently published NFHS -5 report shows that about 19% of the total population (and 26% in rural areas) in the nation uses open space till now instead of latrines. It has also been documented that only 69% of the masses have access to improved sanitation facilities. Unavailability of sanitation facilities creates a vicious cycle of illness and poverty. The high incidence of infant mortality and significant wealth disparities has been predicted in many countries and states where open

defecation is most prevalent. Nearly 8,29,000 deaths occur due to improper sanitation, water, and hygiene in low- and middle-income nations annually. Among them, 4,32,000 deaths are outcome of poor sanitation.

Here the question arises that what are the factors that obstruct in accessing sanitation facilities? Firstly, a gap is observed between policy preparation and implementation process. Inadequate research on the aspects is the foremost reason which generates the policy gap. Second are the inconvenient policy interventions which are supply-prone rather than demand-driven. The deficiency of demand occurs because of a lack of awareness, insufficient subsidies, poorly planned distribution of subsidies, and lack of trust in government programmes. On the flipside, the supply side challenges arise because the policies are primarily government-led rather than people-centred. Considering the importance of sanitation, ensuring sustainable management of water and sanitation has been included as one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a target to achieve universal sanitation cov-

erage by 2030 with the end of open defecation. To work on the path and to provide basic sanitation facilities, the government of India has also been adopting various policy measures from time to time – Total Sanitation Campaign in 1999, Nirmal Gram Puraskar in 2003, and Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan in 2012. A very recent initiative of the present NDA government, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (2015), targeted universal sanitation and the end of open defecation by 2019. But the recently published JMP data shows that universal coverage of sanitation in schools needs a three-fold increment at current rates globally and about 100-fold in LDCs (JMP, 2022). However, under the Swachh Bharat Mission, 100 million toilets have been constructed in rural India which is appreciable. But from the operation perspective, the ease of use has not met the expectations.

The very common challenges are improper construction of bathrooms with meagre funds, the elevation of twin-pit latrine which needs emptying of toilets, and the absence of water supply. The other reasons are the less-decision-making power of women (patriarchal behaviour);

even though women are more sensitive towards sanitation relative to men. The prevalence of inferior belief, in which a few sections of the society believe that emptying the latrine tank is the work of a particular community, is also an issue in the installation and management of twin-pit latrines.

In view of the mentioned challenges, adequate research and investigation need to be commenced to comprehend people's awareness, attitude, and activities on the basis of region, class, category, income, and education. Technological interventions and social innovations (like advertisement through social media and nudging) are also essential to streamline the implementation process. Besides, understanding behaviour; constructing mental model are apposite for the success of programmes. Moreover, need-based intervention is indispensable to realise the objective of universal coverage as it generates a virtuous cycle in ensuring good health, well-being, and human resources development.

The writer is a research scholar at IIT Indore. Views are personal.

WISDOM CORNER

To know what you know and what you do not know, that is true knowledge. CONFUCIUS

Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others. MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO

Faith consists in believing when it is beyond the power of reason to believe. VOLTAIRE

WORDSWORTH

Labretifery

This rare word for the practice of wearing labrets just might be on the point of a renewed burst of usage because of the craze for body piercing. A labret, from the Latin for "lip", is an ornament worn through the upper or lower lip, originally used in reference to several South American, African and other peoples who wore such ornaments (often of stone, gold, or rock crystal). It seems to have been coined around 1884 by the American scientist Dr William Healey Dall, the first man to make a systematic exploration of the then new US territory of Alaska. A later appearance of the word name-checks him: *But Eskimo women, in company with their husbands, had a more barbarous fashion than tattooing, called by Dall "labretifery."* So far as is known, it was practised only by those living west of the Mackenzie River; indeed, the habit prevailed much more widely among the men (*Women of all Nations*, by Thomas Athol Joyce and Northcote Whitridge Thomas, 1942). Labretifery combines labret with Latin fer-, to carry, bring, or bear, plus the abstract noun suffix "-y".

Lackadaisical

This word is delightfully evocative, bringing to mind some languid person lolling on a couch while all around goes to ruin, so accurately evoking its modern idea of somebody who lacks enthusiasm and determination or is carelessly lazy. It owes its origin, strangely enough, to an old saying of regret or dismay, lack-a-day!, a shortened form of alack-a-day! Alack dates back to medieval times, and probably comes from a dialect word lack that is variously interpreted as failure, fault, reproach, disgrace, or shame. So alack-a-day! originally meant "Shame or reproach to the day!" (that it should have brought this upon me). But over time it became weakened until it became no more than a vapid and vacuous cry when some minor matter went awry. At some point in the eighteenth century, the form lackadaisy appeared, with lackadaisical coming along shortly afterwards for somebody who regularly used the cry. At first it meant that the person was feebly sentimental rather than lazy. The first person recorded as using it was Laurence Sterne, in his *Sentimental Journey of 1768: I took hold of her fingers in one hand, and applied the two forefingers of my other to the artery. – Would to heaven! my dear Eugenius, thou hadst passed by, and beheld me sitting in my black coat, and in my lack-a-day-sical manner, counting the throbs of it, one by one, with as much true devotion as if I had been watching the critical ebb or flow of her fever.* Later it moved towards the idea of somebody who was affectively languishing, and thence to someone merely lazy.

Combating drug menace

Sir, The United Nations observes the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking June 26 to focus on the grave danger posed by drug abuse and illegal drug trafficking especially for the youth. Drug awareness campaign is the pivot around which other subsidiary issues revolve. Socioeconomic status of a society cannot be enhanced by unhealthy and unproductive members, that is why dangers of drug abuse are manifold. Making healthy choices, and valuing oneself, go a long way in keeping mind at bay. Cocaine and heroin sell like 'hot-cakes' in many countries because of their easy access, and slack laws. A strong bond between parents and children can alleviate the latter's tendency to go astray. The same applies to teachers who have to act as instruments of change in moulding students' behaviour.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Deteriorating ties

Sir, Relations between the US and China deteriorated even further when they began hurling accusations at each other. Negotiations between the two nations in Beijing were fruitless, leading to a war of words. Joe Biden, the US President, labelled the Chinese leader Xi Jinping a dictator, which was met with fierce condemnation from Beijing. The two countries didn't see eye-to-eye on several matters, such as Washington's backing for the self-governing island democracy of Taiwan and allegations that Beijing has taken American intellectual property.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Taken for a ride

Sir, It's a crying shame when foreign tourists coming to India post YouTube videos of being overcharged by rickshaws and taxis all over India. Unfortunately we have a rickshaw mafia and taxi mafia operating from both the exits of railway stations and airports making hay when the sun shines. Even a police station in the near proximity could not help out the cause. There is also a beat chowki whose personnel are indifferent observers to these belligerent taxi and rickshaw drivers. Thus, the image of India is tarnished and tourism taken for a ride.

CKS Ramani, CHENNAI

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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2024 LS POLLS

DMK set to be a major driver of Oppn unity

If DMK and its allies, who form the Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA), garner maximum seats in 2024 elections, it will be a major boost for the Opposition at the centre and the ruling front of Tamil Nadu as the front is far ahead of the NDA alliance of AIADMK-BJP in the state

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, June 25: The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), which is aiming to win all 39 Lok Sabha seats in Tamil Nadu and one seat in Pondicherry in 2024, is trying to take up a major role in next years general elections.

Tamil Nadu, the opposition is likely to get a large number of seats from Kerala, where the opposition in all probability will win all the 20 seats. However in Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, the possibility of the opposition winning the maximum number of seats is less.

In the 2019 general elections, BJP could win only four seats in Telangana out of the 17 seats and won 27 in Karnataka while losing the 2023 assembly elections. BJP stands a chance to win at least half of the seats. Situation in Andhra Pradesh is different with the ruling YSR Congress party winning 22 of the 25 seats.

YSR Congress party has also not participated in the opposition unity meet in Patna like the BRS party. Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has a different agenda and has travelled across the country to represent himself as the Prime Ministerial candidate.

Other than Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the opposition may not get maximum seats from South India making Stalin a major player for the opposition unity.

After the arrest of Tamil Nadu Minister Senthil Balaji by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED),



Given the background, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin is expected to play a major role in the 2024 general elections on the merit of the SPA led by DMK

Stalin's father, Late Muthuvel Karunanidhi, had played a pivotal role in forming the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government at the centre in 2004 and the opposition parties are expecting a similar role by MK Stalin in the post-electoral scenario of 2024

Stalin openly said that the DMK cannot be cowed down by using central agencies and that the party was ready for tit-for-tat.

Interestingly, Tamil Nadu police arrested SJ Suryah, BJP state office-bearer on charges of a fake social media post and later an AIADMK district office bearer of Erode district for another social media post.

The BJP State President K Annamalai, an IPS officer turned politician, openly came out against Stalin and the DMK by bringing out DMK files, it was clear that BJP would fight back against DMK.

However, Stalin is only getting

stronger in the state following his win during the 2021 election and bringing in investment and uplifting the social parameters of the state.

After taking over as Chief Minister of the state, Stalin envisaged several social programmes, including Makkale Thedi Maruthum', which is health at the doorstep, Illam Thedi Kalvi' for children to compensate the learning loss due to Covid-19 pandemic, and several other schemes brining Stalin and his DMK in direct contact with the people.

Meanwhile, the AIADMK -- the principal opposition party of Tamil Nadu -- is a divided house. One of its stalwarts and former Chief Minister O Panneerselvam (OPS) was expelled from the party by the incumbent General Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami (EPS).

Pertinently, OPS is from the powerful Thevar community which has considerable sway in South Tamil Nadu and can decide the fate of several seats in the districts like Madurai, Tirunelveli, Kanniyakumari, Theni and others.

Sasikala's nephew and former MLA TT V Dhinakaran who was also expelled from the AIADMK, floated the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) party which has also considerable influence in South Tamil Nadu. Add to this, the alliance between AIADMK and the BJP is rickety with the BJP State President K. Annamalai time and again coming out against the AIADMK.

The AIADMK and BJP even had a public spat with each other showing that all is not well with the AIADMK-BJP alliance in Tamil Nadu. Given the rift, there are less chances of this alliance winning seats in 2024 general elections in Tamil Nadu.

Savarkar controversy starts to heat up

AGENCIES

Lucknow, June 25: The inclusion of a chapter on freedom fighter Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in the list of "great personalities" for UP Board students, has reignited an old controversy. While the Samajwadi Party has demanded that lessons on socialist thinker Dr Ram Manohar Lohia and SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav should also be made a part of the state board curriculum, Congress stated that the move will have a negative impact on the students. BJP defended the decision.

Deputy chief minister Brajesh Pathak said: "Savarkar made important contribution to the country's history but his contributions were deleted by previous governments." Samajwadi Party leader and spokesperson IP Singh said: "I would also say



that Ram Manohar Lohia and Mulayam Singh Yadav, too, should be included in the U.P. Board syllabus."

Samajwadi Party's national secretary Rajendra Chaudhary said: "We do not consider this stance and behaviour of the UP

government proper."

Targeting the government, UP Congress's minority wing chairman Shah Nawaz Alam said: "His inclusion in the UP Board syllabus would cast a negative impact on students."

Former Congress MLC Deepak Singh said that he would write to Governor Anandiben Patel about BJP's attempts to tinker with history. "While the country's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who is widely hailed as the architect of modern India, is missing from the list, Savarkar is there. Though it is the government's prerogative to include whosoever they want to in the course curriculum, we will certainly draw the Governor's attention towards such brazen attempts to tinker with country's history," he said.

Earlier, in January 2021, Deepak Singh had also opposed another decision by the UP gov-

ernment to include Savarkar's portrait in the picture gallery at the state's Legislative Council. Congress MLA Aradhana Misra 'Mona' reacted sharply to the remarks of the state's secondary education minister Gulab Devi who had said that Nehru was not included in the list of great personalities as he had not made "any sacrifice."

"I think from instilling scientific temper, from IITs to IIMS, from space to infrastructure, Nehru's contribution shines through all. So how can anyone deny his contribution? Will you also forget that he was the country's first Prime Minister," she said, adding that the party would strongly oppose such moves.

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati, however, has not commented on the Savarkar issue but has hit out at the Telangana government for "tampering with the Preamble".



Revelers take part in the Chennai Rainbow Pride March in Chennai, Tamil Nadu

PTI PHOTO

TN fails to replace damaged shutters in reservoirs

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, June 25: The Tamil Nadu water resources department that had asked the officials to conduct inspection of shutters in all the 90 reservoirs of the state has failed to replace or repair the shutters citing lack of funds.

After the shutter in Parambikulam Dam was washed away during the last monsoon, the state water resources department had asked the officials to conduct a proper inspection in all the reservoirs.

Even after the officials conducted a detailed inspection of the shutters and gave a report, the state water resources department did not take any action. It may be noted that if a shutter is damaged and washed away, then it means that there would be overflow leading to floods and even loss of lives.

Sources said that the department could not take this further due to a lack of funds.

Be careful against loan apps: TN police warns

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, June 25: Tamil Nadu Police are on a crack-down against loan apps with the state Director General of Police, C. Sylendra Kumar calling upon people not to fall prey to the loan apps.

Sources in the police told IANS that most of these apps are of Chinese origin and are taking huge money from the state. Tamil Nadu Police cyber cell have also commenced cracking down on these apps and to get details on how these apps function.

The DGP has also directed

people not to download the loan apps and the police have taken up the matter with Google Play Store. With intensive follow-up, they could pursue Google to remove around 211 loan apps that were fraudulent.

However people are downloading these loan apps from various websites also and the police have called up people not to download any app from websites that were unverified. In many such fraudulent websites, scamsters are using the Display Pictures (dp) of senior officers to impersonate and send mes-

sages to people working in various offices requesting them to click links of small gifts. Police have requested people to verify the phone numbers of the senior officers before clicking on such links. A scam called 'Sextortion' is popular and in this scam the victim receives a video call from an unknown number. Once the person accepts the call the scamster on the other end, mostly women, strips and later the screenshots of this video call is used to blackmail the victims. Police have

THE DECISION WAS TAKEN FOLLOWING SEVERAL COMPLAINTS OF PEOPLE COMMITTING SUICIDE AFTER LOAN APP DEFAULTS AND THE MORPHED PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE DEFAULTERS BEING UPLOADED AND SENT TO THEIR CONTACTS

ACCORDING TO THE POLICE, THE DEPARTMENT IS TAKING UP A CAMPAIGN AGAINST LOAN APPS AND MAKING PEOPLE AWARE AGAINST TAKING EVEN SMALL LOAN AMOUNTS FROM SUCH APPS

cautioned people not to fall prey to calls from such unknown persons or numbers.

Police have informed people to immediately call the police helpline number 1930. This number by the police Cyber Crime Wing Headquarters and police commence freezing of the fraudulent transactions. This measure will help the money to be returned to the victim. According to police, the earlier people report to the helpline, the stronger will be the chances of getting the money back.

KACHORI WALI AMMA

A woman's tale of beating odds with courage

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shahjahanpur (UP), June 25: With steely courage and determination to provide for her family, Anju Verma sets up her humble shop every night to dole out mouth-watering 'kachoris', thus earning the moniker "Kachori wali Amma".

Her husband Vinod Verma, the sole earning member of the family, died of heart attack five years ago, leaving her distraught and with no means to raise her four children. Not one to accept failure, Anju (60) decided to march on and continued with her husband's 'kachori' (snack) business.

At 10 every night, she sets up her shop on the empty platforms in front of closed shops and serves hot 'kachoris' with po-



tato stuffing, soyabean along with garlic sauce -- all for ₹30 per plate.

People queue up, especially during winters and monsoon, to savour the kachoris and also get them packed for home. The elderly woman manages to earn around ₹2,000 every day.

Asked why she chose to set up her outlet at night, Anju, who lives in front of Sunehri Masjid near Kotwali of Shahjahanpur,

says the main reason was the unavailability of a proper shop or the means to rent one.

The woman says she has three daughters and a son. She says she managed to get one of her daughters married with the earnings of her kachori business. Her youngest child is 20-years-old and he is a college student.

Talking about her daily routine, she says, "I close my shop after 3 am and sleep by five in the morning. I get up in the afternoon to buy vegetables, prepare the dough and the filling before opening the shop at 10 in the night."

BJP's district general secretary Anil Gupta, who is also a regular customer of the shop, says whenever he passes by the area, he waits for Amma's Kachori shop to open to relish the kachoris.

Zootorium to come up in Chennai zoo



AGENCIES

Chennai, June 25: The Tamil Nadu government has proposed to establish a Zootorium at the Vandalur Zoo (Arignar Anna Zoological Park) here, as part of measures to strengthen conservation efforts and about ₹4.3 crore has been sanctioned for the project.

A museum and also a theatre will be part of the Zootorium to be established by the

Environment, Climate Change and Forests department, Additional Chief Secretary Supriya Sahu said on Thursday. "The government has issued orders today to set up a zoo museum and a zoo theatre in Vandalur zoo at Chennai at a cost of ₹4.3 crore under the planning commission innovation fund to enable people to understand wildlife conservation in a new light," she said in a tweet.

A 3D/7D theatre will be developed at the old auditorium within the zoo premises and also a zoo museum and an interpretation complex with an interactive display model enabling people to discover, explore and experience wildlife in a new way, will be established, the government order said. The project is expected to be completed in three years' time on an outlay of ₹4.365 crore.

Those jailed during Emergency recall days of 'fear'

A NATIONWIDE CRACKDOWN HAD BEGUN JUNE 26 IN 1975, A DAY AFTER THE EMERGENCY WAS IMPOSED IN THE COUNTRY, WITH SCORES OF OPPOSITION LEADERS AND ACTIVISTS PUT BEHIND BARS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, June 25: It has been nearly 50 years but Lucknow-resident Tej Narayan Gupta vividly remembers the evening a police team knocked on his door and picked him up. "Around 9 pm I had just returned home when a police team raided my house and arrested me," Gupta, who was then an activist and lawyer, said.

A policeman took him on a bicycle to Bazar Khala police station, two km away from his home. He was then taken to

Kaisarbagh police station and finally lodged in the Lucknow district jail along with other arrested persons.

Equating the imposition of the Emergency with dacoity, he said, "Generally, dacoity is carried out around midnight. Similarly, this dacoity of democracy in the country also took place around midnight."

"In jail, we were not sure about the future and whether we will ever walk out of it," Gupta said. Months later the situation

The morning after a crackdown began on opposition leaders and activists with scores of them being jailed across the country



changed and the Emergency was lifted March 21, 1977.

In his 'Mann Ki Baat' radio broadcast June 18, Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the Emergency as a "dark period" in India's history and said those who supported democracy at that time were tortured.

According to the Political

Pension Department of Uttar Pradesh, 4,755 of those arrested during the Emergency in the state are still alive. They are now called "loktautra senani or fighters of democracy". Among them are 83-year-old Ramdeen and 74-year-old Kedar Nath Srivastava. Friday Narayan Dixit, a former speaker of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly,

also recalled his incarceration during the period.

"I was lodged in Unnao jail... The parliamentary elections were announced and we were hopeful that the Congress and Indira Gandhi would be defeated. On the night of counting of votes, I somehow managed to get a radio and was listening to announcement of results.

"Late in the night, the deputy jailor came and said 'agar transistor mila toh danda kardonga' (If a radio is found, you will be beaten with club). At around 4 am, we got the news that Indira Gandhi lost the election from Rae Bareilly. The same deputy jailor came running towards my barrack and said 'badhaai ho, sir' (congratulations). When I asked how your tone changed so soon, he said 'you are forming the government'." Dixit, then a Jana Sangh leader, recalled. The Emergency was imposed on the pretext of internal disturbance though there was no such issue, he said.



Devotees wearing raincoats visit the Kedarnath temple amid rain in Rudraprayag district, Uttarakhand. Heavy monsoon rain lashed various parts of Uttarakhand Sunday amid an 'orange alert' issued by the Met office for several districts



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly during his visit to the Great Pyramid of Giza, Egypt



People take out a silent march in Kochi praying for peace and harmony in Manipur



A family enjoys on a rainy day at Kartavya Path as the southwest monsoon advances over Delhi



Damaged vehicles after they got swept away in floodwater following heavy rainfall in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh



Demonstrators hold signs as they rally during the Women's March in Washington



Goats are lined up at a livestock market for sale ahead of Eid-al-Adha in Kolkata, West Bengal



Singer Shankar Mahadevan receives an honorary doctorate from Birmingham City University in Birmingham, UK

national

of the day quote

In Karnataka elections people believed in their (Congress) guarantee card, they got deceived, as a result of it we (BJP) could not win in over 100 seats. We will protest both inside and outside the Assembly against this government's anti farmer and anti people policies, and its failure in implementing five guarantees within 24 hours, as promised

We live in hope that Manipur which was an example of unity through diversity in India is brought back to the path of normalcy at the earliest

We took some steps towards achieving this goal by announcing free bus travel across Karnataka to women and also depositing ₹2,000 per month into the bank accounts of women who are heads of their families

SHORT TAKES

WB panchayat polls: Guv summons SEC

Kolkata: West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose has summoned State Election Commissioner (SEC) Rajiva Sinha again to Raj Bhavan Sunday afternoon to have updates about the measures taken for ensuring free and fair polls for the forthcoming elections for the three-tier panchayat system in the state. Earlier too the Governor had summoned Sinha on this count. However, at that point of time, Sinha expressed his inability to appear at the Governor's House. Soon after that the Governor refused to accept his joining letter and returned it to the state secretariat. Now it is to be seen whether the state election commission appears or not.

Flood situation improves in Assam

Guwahati: The flood situation in Assam showed signs of improvement as the number of affected people came down to about 2.70 lakh, an official bulletin said Sunday. No rivers were in spate in the state with the number of affected districts also coming down to 14 in the last 24 hours. Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and assured him of all possible help to deal with the flood situation.

Drugs worth ₹18cr seized

Guwahati: Two persons from Manipur were arrested in Assam Sunday after drugs worth ₹18 crore were seized from their possession in Guwahati and neighbouring Kamrup district, police said. Acting on a tip-off, the Assam Police's Special Task Force personnel along with the Kamrup police chased a vehicle with the two alleged traffickers on board and apprehended them, a senior officer said. STF Deputy Inspector General Partha Sarathi Mahanta said police personnel were deployed after information was received that a Manipur-based group would transport drugs through Assam.

Five killed in road accident

Trichirappalli (TN): At least five people were killed in an accident involving a government bus and a car Sunday in the district, police said. All the victims were reportedly those travelling in the car. The accident happened near Manapparai in the district, police said.



There have been frequent power cuts in Uttar Pradesh. Electricity is not free in Uttar Pradesh. Electricity is quite expensive in UP. So why are there so many power cuts?
ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CM

LUMPY SKIN DISEASE SCARE

Over 100 cows have died in Meghalaya due to the highly infectious lumpy skin disease and over 8,000 animals have been infected by LSD so far, an official said Sunday. A veterinary health department official said over 28,500 cows have been vaccinated till date to contain the disease



MANIPUR CRISIS

12 militants released after mob stops security forces

AGENCIES

Imphal, June 25: Security forces in Manipur's Imphal East district apprehended a dozen of militants of the Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL) outfit Saturday, but had to hand over all of them to local leaders after a mob, led by women, surrounded the forces and prevented them from going ahead, an official said.

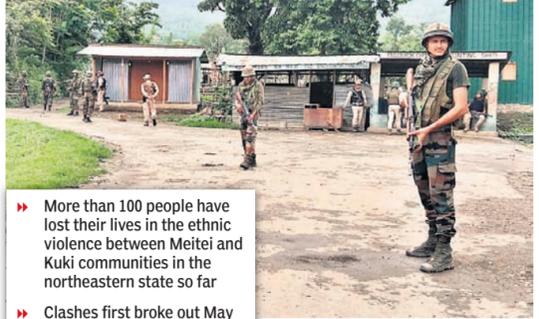
According to a defence spokesman, after Saturday midnight the Army and the Assam Rifles, acting on specific intelligence inputs, launched an operation at Itham village in Imphal East district and the area was cordoned off before the actual search commenced to avoid inconvenience to the locals.

"The operation resulted in the apprehension of 12 KYKL cadres along with arms, ammunition and war-like stores. Self-styled Lt Col Moirangthem Tamba alias Uttam was also among the 12 militants. He was the mastermind of an ambush on the 6th battalion of the DOGRA in 2015," the spokesman said.

A mob of around 1500 people, led by women and local leaders, immediately surrounded the area and prevented the security forces from continuing the operation despite repeated appeals.

The spokesman said that keeping in view the sensitivity of use of kinetic force against large irate mob and envisaged casualties due to such action, the officer on ground made a considerate decision to hand over all 12 KYKL militants to local leaders.

The Army and the Assam



- More than 100 people have lost their lives in the ethnic violence between Meitei and Kuki communities in the northeastern state so far
- Clashes first broke out May 3 after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status
- Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal Valley
- Tribals -- Nagas and Kukis -- constitute another 40 per cent of the population and reside in the hill districts

Rifles troops lifted the cordon and left the area with the re-

covered weapons and ammunition.

Mature decision on part of operational commander displays humane face of the Indian Army, making all efforts to avoid any collateral damage and denies scope of escalating the situation, during the ongoing unrest in Manipur, the spokesman said.

The Indian Army appeals to the people of Manipur to assist the security forces in maintaining law and order to bring peace and stability, a defence statement said.

PM silent, HM ineffective: Jairam Ramesh

New Delhi: Hitting out at the Centre over the situation in violence-hit Manipur, senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh Sunday alleged that while the northeastern state is "burning", Prime Minister Narendra Modi is "silent", Home Minister Amit Shah is "ineffective" and Chief Minister N Biren Singh is "non-functional". Ramesh made the remarks at a national convention on peace in Manipur at the Harkishan Singh Surjeet Bhawan which was addressed by leaders from different political parties. In a tweet later, Ramesh said that he participated in the convention organised by 10 like-minded political parties to share his thoughts on the political, administrative and humanitarian disasters in the state of Manipur.

MQ-9B DRONE PURCHASE FROM US Centre trashes costly deal claims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 25: India is yet to finalise the cost and specific terms of purchase of 31 MQ-9B long endurance drones from the US and it will examine the "best price" offered by the manufacturer to other nations before concluding the procurement, the defence ministry said Sunday while trashing reports in a section of social media on the price as well as the acquisition process.

It said the Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) accorded to the procurement by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) noted the estimated cost of USD 3,072 million (one million=10 lakh) as provided by the US government, adding the price will be negotiated once policy approval from Washington is received.

The DAC headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on June 15 accorded the AoN or initial ap-

proval for acquisition of 31 MQ-9B High Altitude Long Endurance (HALE) drones from the US under the foreign military sale (FMS) route.

The AoN included the number of unmanned aerial vehicles to be procured along with associated equipment. India and the US firmed up the drone deal during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's high-profile visit to Washington.

The defence ministry, in a statement, described the reports in social media on the price and the terms of purchase relating to the drones as "speculative" and said they are being spread with "ulterior motives".

"These are uncalled for, have ulterior motives and aimed at derailing the due acquisition process. The price and other terms and conditions of the purchase are yet to be finalised and subject to negotiations," it said.



FOR A CAUSE: Government employees hold placards during a protest rally against the state government while refusing to join election duty without the deployment of Central Forces ahead of the upcoming Panchayat polls in Kolkata, West Bengal

Modi rising, BJP sliding

PM Modi's individual graph as the most popular leader of the world is rising and leaders across the globe appreciate India's growth story. But those handling BJP's election strategy for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls are a worried lot as BJP has not been winning elections in states; be it Himachal or Karnataka. In 2014, Modi won on anti-corruption plank and in 2019, Balakot air strikes played a decisive role following the Pulwama tragedy killing 40 CRPF jawans. In both these polls, the Opposition was fragmented barring a few states like UP. But 2024 is different. It is almost certain that major players in the Opposition have taken a decision in principle to contest Lok Sabha polls unitedly as far as possible. The Congress collapsed in the 90s with the rise of Mayawati and later Muslims voted for regional parties

not only in states but in Lok Sabha polls as well dumping the Congress. Later, upper castes including Brahmins voted for the BJP. But 2024 seems different as many internal surveys conducted by the BJP showed that the Dalits are looking up to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge as a potential Prime Ministerial candidate.

No cool breeze for Modi Mins

Nearly half a dozen Union Ministers wanted to go abroad by clubbing official engagements with vacation to meet close relatives and friends. Some of the ministers were officially invited to Western Capitals to address seminars and interactions with the Indian diaspora as well by various organisations. They were politely told to stay put in India as they have to be part of month-long celebrations of 9 years of the Modi



government and other important domestic business. No one is sure if a couple of them may have to pay the price as when Cabinet reshuffle takes place. Some of them are upset as they haven't been able to meet their close family members for a long time due to one reason or the other.

RG's Hush Hush White House visit

Did Rahul Gandhi visit White House during his recent trip to the USA? No one is denying or

confirming in the Congress Party as he is traveling in Europe now. Reports emanating from Washington say that a senior Congress leader who doesn't hold a diplomatic passport, met senior officials in the State Department apart from various think tanks, academics & tech experts besides addressing Indian diaspora. This was Rahul Gandhi's first effort to meet people of Indian origin in the USA in a structured manner after 2014. There are reports that he did go to the White House but who he met during this visit is being kept under the wraps.

PM averse to invoke Article 356 in Manipur

Before his departure to the US & Egypt June 20, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is understood to have conveyed to senior leaders in the party and government that ethnic violence must be brought under control at the earliest.

Sources in the Modi dispensation say that during the past nine years, the PM had never imposed President's rule in any state. It is reminded that there was extreme pressure to dismiss the Mamata Banerjee government in the wake of massive violence in West Bengal. It was stated that in Manipur, President's rule was imposed 10 times between 1967-2002 by various governments at the Centre. However, his government would help the state to restore normalcy as the President's rule is no solution. The President's rule was invoked in a couple of states under Modi as the ruling Congress MLAs quit or withdrew support by the alliance partners. Arunachal Pradesh, Pondicherry, Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir faced this situation. Even Delhi witnessed a brief stint of President's rule as Arvind Kejriwal himself quit in 2014 and no other party was in a position to form the government.

Monsoon covers Delhi, Mumbai together for first time in 62 years



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Mumbai, June 25: The monsoon Sunday covered both Delhi and Mumbai together for the first time since June 21, 1961, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

While it hit the national capital two days before schedule, its entry into the financial capital is two weeks late, the Met office said. "It is the first time since June 21, 1961, that the monsoon arrived in Delhi and Mumbai at the same time," said DS Pai, a senior scientist at the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The Safdarjung Observatory, Delhi's primary weather station, logged 48.3 mm rainfall in the 24 hours ending at 8.30 am Sunday. The Dhansa weather station logged around 80 mm, Jafarpur and Lodi Road around 60 mm each, Ayanagar and Mungeshpur around 50 mm each and SPS Mayur Vihar 40 mm, according to the IMD.

The Met office termed the monsoon activity over Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi as 'vigorous'. According to the IMD,

monsoon activity is considered 'vigorous' if the recorded rainfall is more than four times the normal or it is fairly widespread or widespread.

In Mumbai, the Colaba Observatory, representative of the island city, recorded 86 mm rainfall in the 24-hour period ending at 8.30 am on Sunday while the Santacruz weather station, representative of the suburbs, registered 176.1 mm in the same period, according to the IMD.

The northern limit of monsoon has now passed through Veraval, Baroda, Udaipur, Narnaul, Ambala and Katra. Conditions are favourable for further advance of the monsoon into some more parts of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab and the remaining parts of Jammu and Kashmir during the next two days, the IMD said in a noon update.

Normally, the monsoon reaches Kerala by June 1, Mumbai by June 11, and the national capital by June 27. The trajectory that the monsoon followed this year is unusual.

5 medical students held for growing cannabis

AGENCIES

Shivamogga, June 25: Five medical students have been arrested here on the charges of cultivating and peddling 'ganja' in two separate cases, police said Sunday.

Among the arrested, three were involved in cultivation of cannabis at a rented house, they said. Two people from Vijayapura, and Ballari were arrested Friday and 466 gm of ganja and a few other banned items worth ₹20,000 was seized from them. The police action came following a tip-off that the accused, who lived in a rented house at Hale Gurupura here, were selling ganja among the locals.

In another incident, police Saturday picked up three people during a raid in a rented house in Shivaganga Layout here.

international

of the day quote

There of course remains a vital role for the federal government in protecting unborn life. We will defeat the radical Democrat policy of extreme late term abortion



DONALD TRUMP | FORMER PRESIDENT, US

The IC (intelligence community) will be super-focused on the (Russian) nuclear stockpile



MARC POLYMEROPOULOS | FORMER SENIOR OFFICER, CIA

I think this (Narendra Modi's) visit will go down in history as the turning of a page and the starting of a bold new chapter in America and India relations. It's the culmination of years and even decades of work



ERIC GARCETTI | US AMBASSADOR TO INDIA

SHORT TAKES

Israel reboots its judicial campaign

Jerusalem: Israeli lawmakers Sunday began debating a bill that would limit the Supreme Court's powers, rebooting a fiercely opposed judicial overhaul instigated by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's religious-nationalist coalition. Anti-government demonstrations had prompted Netanyahu to suspend his judicial drive in March to allow compromise talks with opposition parties. He declared those talks fruitless last week and ordered some of the legislation to be revived. The proposed changes, which included curbs on the court's ability to rule against the government, had sparked frequent street protests before the March suspension and Saturday night anti-overhaul activists blocked a major Tel Aviv highway.

Nawaz acquitted in 37-yr-old case

Lahore: A Pakistani accountability court has acquitted former prime minister Nawaz Sharif in a 37-year-old case alleging that he transferred a "precious state land" here in the capital of Punjab province to one of the country's leading media barons as a "bribe". Saturday's ruling came days after the federal government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the younger brother of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif, made crucial amendments to laws to lift the life-long ban on politicians. The 73-year-old three-time former prime minister's acquittal may allow him to contest and lead PML-N in the next general election scheduled later this year.

Roller coaster mishap in Sweden

Stockholm: One person was killed and several injured in a roller coaster accident at the Grona Lund amusement park in the Swedish capital Sunday, the TT news agency reported, citing a park spokesperson. Public broadcaster SVT, citing eyewitnesses, said the park's Jetline roller coaster had partly derailed during a ride. Ambulances, fire trucks and a helicopter were seen arriving at the park, and police said they were investigating.

Airstrike kills 9

Jisr Al-Shughur: An airstrike early Sunday over a busy vegetable market in northwestern Syria killed at least nine people, activists and first responders said. Opposition-held northwestern Syria's civil defense organisation known as the White Helmets said over 30 people were wounded, and expected the death toll to rise.

CRACKS IN UNITY RUSSIAN MERCENARIES RETREAT

THE GREATEST CHALLENGE TO RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN IN HIS MORE THAN TWO DECADES IN POWER FIZZLED OUT QUICK BUT EXPOSED VULNERABILITIES AMONG RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT FORCES

REUTERS

Voronezh, June 25: Heavily armed Russian mercenaries pulled out of the southern Russian city of Rostov overnight after halting their advance on Moscow under a deal that defused an unprecedented challenge to the authority of President Vladimir Putin. Under the deal, mediated by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, fighters of the Wagner group would return to base in return for guarantees for their safety and their leader, Yevgeny Prigozhin, would move to Belarus.



Prigozhin, a former Putin ally, whose forces fought the bloodiest battles of the 16-month war in Ukraine, said his decision to advance on Moscow was intended to remove corrupt and incompetent Russian commanders he blames for botching the war

analysts, said it had shattered the "myth" of Russian unity. Under the deal brokered late Saturday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said a criminal case opened against Prigozhin for armed mutiny would be dropped. Prigozhin would move to Belarus, and Wagner fighters who rallied to his cause would face no action, in recognition of their previous service to Russia.

However, the aborted mutiny raises big questions about Putin's grip on a country

- PRIGOZHIN SAYS HIS MEN WILL RETURN TO BASE
- KREMLIN SAYS MERCENARY LEADER WILL MOVE TO BELARUS
- WAGNER FIGHTERS LEAVE ROSTOV, REGIONAL GOVERNOR SAYS
- BELARUS SAYS BROKERED DEAL IN RETURN FOR REBELS' SAFETY

he has ruled with an iron hand for more than two decades. Italy's foreign minister, echoing other

analysts, said it had shattered the "myth" of Russian unity. Under the deal brokered late Saturday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said a criminal case opened against Prigozhin for armed mutiny would be dropped. Prigozhin would move to Belarus, and Wagner fighters who rallied to his cause would face no action, in recognition of their previous service to Russia.

Peskov said Lukashenko had offered to mediate, with Putin's approval, because he had known Prigozhin personally for around 20 years. Putin has not made public comments since the deal was

The myth of the unity of Putin's Russia is over. This internal escalation divides the Russian military deployment. It's the inevitable outcome when you support and finance a legion of mercenaries. One thing is certain: the Russian front is weaker than yesterday. I hope that peace will now be closer. We wait to see Russia's next moves in Ukraine

ANTONIO TAJANI | FOREIGN MINISTER, ITALY

struck to de-escalate the crisis. State television released excerpts Sunday of an interview in which Putin said he was giving top priority to the conflict in Ukraine and was in constant

BELARUS AWKWARD LANDING PLACE FOR MERCENARY BOSS

Russian mercenary boss Yevgeny Prigozhin was notorious for unbridled and profane challenges to authority even before the attempted rebellion that he mounted Saturday. The reported agreement for him to go into exile in Belarus would place him in a country where such behavior is even less acceptable than in his homeland. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko reportedly negotiated the deal. But Prigozhin's maverick ways are at odds with Lukashenko's harsh repression of dissent and independent media. In power since 1994, the leader often called "Europe's last dictator" launched a brutal crackdown on 2020 protests against his rule; hundreds were sentenced to lengthy prison terms, including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ales Bialiatski.

contact with the defence ministry. However the interview appeared to have been recorded before the mutiny and he made no reference to Saturday's events.

Moscow had told residents to stay indoors and deployed soldiers in preparation for the arrival of the mercenaries, who appeared to meet little pushback from the regular armed forces.

The capital was calm Sunday, following the deal to de-escalate, with little evidence of increased security in the streets. Monday has been declared a non-working day to allow time for things to settle.

"I enjoy what is happening in Russia. The inevitable conflict between Prigozhin and Putin was expected," she said. "I don't know what may come out of it. But I wish for them to shoot each other and die."

In Kkarkiv, Ukraine's second city subjected to frequent shelling since the invasion, residents said the confrontation was a consequence of volatile politics and the protracted conflict.

"They started the war and now they are getting it back. The harder you compress a spring, the harder it comes back," they said. "The situation was compressed to such an extent in Russia that it became hopeless. I consider what happened a natural event. It will influence the war but I think it will not be over in a day. We will have to endure a bit."

'Chinese threat in SCS surging'

Taiwanese Foreign Minister also cited China's growing military activities in the Indian Ocean Region including its attempt to control key ports in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Djibouti and hoped that New Delhi is paying "close attention" to it

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Taipei, June 25: The Chinese threat in the South China Sea is increasing significantly as a large number of armed maritime militias are operating in the region at China's behest besides its deployment of an array of warships and other military assets, Taiwanese Foreign Minister Jaushieh Joseph Wu has said, calling for united efforts by all stakeholders to deal with the challenge.



India is also facing a threat in its northern borders with China. It is not only the military threat coming from the North; but it is also the Indian Ocean that India might face some challenge

JAUSHIEH JOSEPH WU | FOREIGN MINISTER, TAIWAN

In an interaction with an international media group, the Taiwanese foreign minister said the countries having stakes in the South China Sea must join hands in combating the challenge emanating from China's rising military muscle-flexing in the region and that Taiwan is ready to share its experience in dealing with the Chinese threat.

There have been growing global concerns over China's sweeping claims of sovereignty over all of the South China Sea, a huge source of hydrocarbons. Several countries in the region including Vietnam, the Philippines and Brunei, have counterclaims.

The Taiwanese foreign minister said time has come for democratic countries to join hands to face the common challenges from China including through sharing of resources with each other. "China is trying to secure ports along the Indian Ocean -- in Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

and all the way to Djibouti. The lessons that we learnt from port Hambantota in Sri Lanka are significant to us," he said.

China considers Taiwan as part of its territory. The self-governed democratic island has positioned itself as a democratic power that is ready to contribute its part in the world's fight against China's expansionism.

China's ruling Communist Party says Taiwan is a province of the country and has repeatedly warned that the island must unite with China, by force if necessary. Beijing has threatened to attack if Taiwan declares formal independence or delays talks on unification.

Wu said China was responsible for the crisis in Sri Lanka as well as that Beijing does not care

about the financial situations in these nations. It is repeating the same model in Myanmar and some other countries.

"We should pay close attention to these developments. This is also something I am sure the Indian government is paying very close attention to and in that regard, I would like to say that the federal democracies facing common challenges from the PRC (People's Republic of China), need to work with each other," he said.

The Taiwanese foreign minister said the growing Chinese military activities in the South China Sea should be a matter of concern to all countries in the region.

"If you look at China's naval activities in the South China Sea, it is something for all of us to feel worried about. From the data that I can see, from the briefings that I received, I can say that there are more than a dozen Chinese military vessels that are patrolling the South China Sea region. And it is not only the military vessels. China also has a large number of maritime militia with fishing boats. There are hundreds of them and they listen to orders of the PLA (People's Liberation Army)," he said.

He said there is a possibility of Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia facing the same problem and that "this requires all of us to find ways to deal with the challenges posed by the Chinese in the maritime domain."



Protesters and environmental activists with a banner reading "STOP THE POLLUTION" take part in a protest 'People vs Polluters' led by Greenpeace Netherlands against Tata Steel, in Ijmuiden, Netherlands

Modi, El-Sisi raise ties to 'Strategic Partnership'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cairo, June 25: India and Egypt Sunday elevated their relationship to a 'Strategic Partnership' as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi held wide-ranging talks with a particular focus on enhancing political and security cooperation.



Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said four MoUs and agreements were signed, including the "most important and landmark" one on the "Strategic Partnership" between India and Egypt.

Modi, who is visiting Egypt at the invitation of President Sisi, held one-on-one conversation with El-Sisi during which they also took stock of what is happening on important issues of the region and the world.

Addressing a media briefing on the visit by Modi, the first bilateral visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Egypt in 26 years,

"The two leaders had a private one-on-one conversation during which, following up on the India visit of President Sisi earlier this year, the two leaders discussed a whole range of bilateral cooperation and also took stock of what is happening on im-

Pakistan accuses Indian forces of killing 2 civilians

REUTERS

Islamabad, June 25: Pakistan's army claimed Saturday that two civilians were killed by Indian forces in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, the first such conflict since a ceasefire in 2021 between the two nuclear-armed South Asian neighbours.



A group of shepherds in Sattwal sector at the Line of Control (LoC), the de facto border between the two countries, were hit, the army said in a statement, warning it reserves a right to strike back.

"The Indian Army, in a display of its usual inhumane approach towards innocent Kashmiris, opened indiscriminate fire onto a group of shepherds in Sattwal Sector," the statement said.

The Indian army did not respond to a request for comment.

In 2021, the two sides agreed in a rare joint statement to a ceasefire along the disputed border in the scenic valley. Both India and Pakistan lay claim over the disputed territory, but each control half of it. The two countries have fought three wars, two over Kashmir, since their independence from British rule in 1947.

Make porn boring: Platform urges govts amid crackdown

The issue has risen the political agenda since many governments promised to make protecting children from porn a priority

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Paris, June 25: Governments should stop cracking down on porn websites and instead take pride in sexual expression and help to make porn normal and "boring", the new owner of Pornhub told AFP.

Canadian private equity firm Ethical Capital Partners bought Pornhub's parent MindGeek three months ago, bringing under its control a stable of other sites

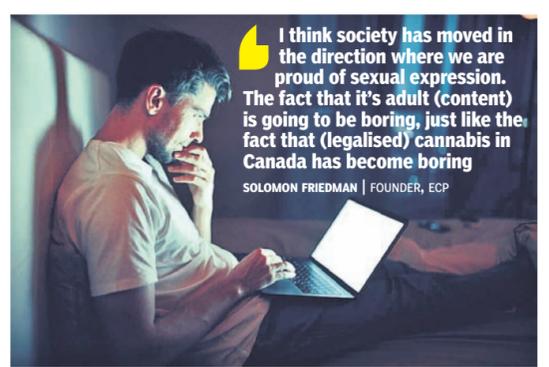
including YouPorn. The acquisition has also brought a sea of legal troubles.

Its websites were pulled from the US state of Utah in May after they were ordered to verify the ages of users.

In France, website owners and regulators have been locked in talks for months on how to make a 2020 age verification law work in practice. Two of MindGeek's sites have not put in place any age verification and face a court ruling July 7 that could ban them.

"We do not want any underage users on our websites whatsoever," said ECP founder Solomon Friedman in an interview with AFP.

But he pushed back on the idea that the onus should fall



on the websites, instead calling for the operating systems to find a solution. "We are strongly in support of

I think society has moved in the direction where we are proud of sexual expression. The fact that it's adult (content) is going to be boring, just like the fact that (legalised) cannabis in Canada has become boring

SOLOMON FRIEDMAN | FOUNDER, ECP

age verification solutions that do two things: protect children effectively and do not expose personal data," he said.

"The only solution that accomplishes both of these goals is device or browser-based verification," he said, adding that it would be "a very simple step for Google and Apple".

HEAVY PRESSURE MindGeek got into hot water in 2020 when the New York Times published allegations that its sites were hosting material depicting rapes and sex involving minors.

The article sparked heavy pressure from regulators in several countries and Visa and MasterCard stopped processing payments.

The owners spent two years trying to sell the firm, which is largely based in Canada but has a complex corporate structure spanning many of the globe's

tax havens, with its official headquarters in Luxembourg.

The new owners -- who include two lawyers, an ex-police officer and an Italian investor who made his fortune in the legal sale of cannabis -- are keen to distance themselves from the New York Times allegations.

Friedman said the company had completely changed in the past few years.

He boasted that eight million pieces of content had been taken down in 2021 -- a claim AFP cannot verify.

In addition, uploaders had to provide identification, all content was scanned by algorithms to filter out copyright-protected material, and it is then viewed by company staff before it hits the web.

of the day quote

In a year's time or 18 months' time, along with ONDC and my b2b logistics business, we do see ourselves entering into 10 to 15 new cities

DALVIR SURJ | CO-FOUNDER, DUNZO

Still 18 to 20 per cent of our total car sales will come from used cars. So last year, if we did 16,000-odd cars, I will say 3,000 plus cars were used cars, about 20 per cent. Similar ratios will continue, I would say at 20-odd per cent

SANTOSH IYER | MD & CEO, MERCEDES-BENZ

While the amendment and the Sebi circular aim to benefit the investors, some aspects lack clarity, such as benefits to schemes that have already exceeded their tenure, and consequences where the AIF manager fails to achieve the minimum bid of 25 per cent of the unliquidated assets

PUNIT SHAH | PARTNER, DHRUVA ADVISORS

SHORT TAKES

India to resolve sugar dispute

New Delhi: India is in negotiations with Brazil to resolve a sugar dispute at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the commerce ministry is coordinating with concerned departments for the same, government sources said. India is also following a similar process for other complainants of the sugar dispute at the Geneva-based WTO, they said. In 2019, Brazil, Australia and Guatemala dragged India into the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism alleging that New Delhi's sugar subsidies to farmers are inconsistent with global trade rules. Brazil is the largest producer and exporter of sugar in the world. India is the world's second-largest sugar producer after Brazil.

Adani eyes ₹90K-cr EBITDA in 2-3 yrs

New Delhi: Embattled Adani group is eyeing a 20 per cent year-on-year growth in pre-tax profits to reach ₹90,000 crore EBITDA in 2-3 years on the back of robust growth in businesses ranging from airports to energy, according to a company note. Earlier this month, the group repaid loans aggregating \$2.65 billion to complete a prepayment programme to cut overall leverage in an attempt to win back investor trust post a damning report of a US short seller. The ports-to-energy conglomerate is now looking at robust growth in sectors such as airports, cement, renewables, solar panels, transportation and logistics, and power and transmission, it said adding several of Adani's new infrastructure investments will also begin to fructify and generate cash in the coming years.

BUBBLE BURST

The edtech decacorn, valued at about \$22 billion early last year, has laid off thousands of employees since October to cut costs, after seeing demand for online tutoring drop following the end of the Covid-19 pandemic

REUTERS

Bangalore, June 25: Fresh troubles at Indian edtech startup Byju's this week have escalated concerns among employees who were already uncertain about their future after several rounds of job-cuts, more than a dozen current and former staff told Reuters.

Auditor Deloitte and three prominent board members severed ties with the Bangalore-headquartered firm Thursday, raising further questions about

INFLATION FIGHT

World economy at critical juncture: BIS

Despite the relentless rise in rates over the last 18 months, inflation in many top economies remains stubbornly high, while the jump in borrowing costs triggered the most serious banking collapses since the financial crisis 15 years ago

AGENCIES

London, June 25: The world's central bank umbrella body, the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), called Sunday for more interest rate hikes, warning the world economy was now at a crucial point as countries struggle to rein in inflation.

"The global economy is at a critical juncture. Stern challenges must be addressed," Agustín Carstens, BIS general manager, said in the organisation's annual report published Sunday. "The time to obsessively pursue short term growth is past. Monetary policy must now restore price stability. Fiscal policy must consolidate."

Claudio Borio, the head of BIS's monetary and economics unit, added there was a risk an "inflationary psychology" was now setting in, although the bigger-than-expected rate hikes in Britain and Norway last week showed central banks were pushing "to get the job done" in terms of tackling the problem.

Their challenges are unique by post-World War Two standards though. It is the first time that, across much of the world, a surge in inflation has co-existed with widespread financial vulnerabilities.

The longer inflation remains



I think central banks will get inflation under control. That is their job - to restore price stability. The question is what will the cost be

CLAUDIO BORIO | HEAD (MONETARY AND ECONOMICS), BIS

elevated, the stronger and prolonged the required policy tightening, the BIS report said, warning that the possibility of further problems in the banking sector was now "material".

If interest rates get to mid-1990s levels the overall debt service burden for top economies would, all else being equal, be the highest in history, Borio said.

BANKING CRISES

The Swiss-based BIS held its annual meeting in recent days, where top central bankers discussed the turbulent last few months.

March and April saw a failure of a number of US regional banks including Silicon Valley Bank and then the emergency rescue of Credit Suisse in the BIS's own backyard.

Historically, about 15% of rate hike cycles trigger severe stress in the banking system, the BIS report showed, although the frequency rises considerably if interest rates are going up, inflation is surging or house prices have been rising sharply.

It can even be as high as 40% if the private debt-to-GDP ratio

The prime minister's visit is significant as Egypt is the gateway to Africa and Europe. A cementing of economic relations and possibly a feasibility study for FTA can be undertaken as Egypt has such FTAs with countries in West Asia and Africa

AJAY SAHAI | DIRECTOR GENERAL, FIEO

IPO MARKET BUZZING

Even though the first half of the year has been on and off for primary markets, the IPO Street is buzzing as we enter the second half. As many as seven public issues will hit the markets this week, with 3 being the mainstream ones and four in the SME space, according to reports



GO FIRST CRISIS

Creditors greenlight ₹425cr revival plan

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 25: Creditors of cash-strapped airlines Go First have approved interim finance of ₹425 crore aimed at reviving the airline. While an in-principle approval for the interim finance has been granted, the plan is subject to the boards of the respective banks approving the same.

Central Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, and IDBI Bank are the consortium lenders to the airline. They will seek board approvals to sanction the interim finance. Post which DGCA approvals will be sought to start the airline's operations.

The low-cost carrier's resolution professional Shailendra Ajmera had sought ₹425 crore in interim finance from the airlines financiers to get a revival plan going that could help restart operations, multiple reports said Sunday.

The requirement for financing could expand based on certain contingencies such as the availability of working engines for the aircraft and ticket cancellations, the reports said.



Go First reportedly plans to resume operations in July and operate 78 daily flights with 22 aircraft. Aircraft of the cash-strapped carrier have been grounded since May 3.

The Go First bankruptcy filing lists Central Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, IDBI Bank and Deutsche Bank among its creditors, which are owed ₹6,521 crore in total.

Early this May, Go First filed for bankruptcy at the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and suspended its flight operations due to rising losses, primarily due to delays in the delivery of Pratt and Whitney's engines leading to the grounding of a portion of its fleet.

EL NINO A CHALLENGE

Will strive to get CPI down to 4%, says Das

RBI chief exuded confidence that the economy will grow at 6.5% in FY24

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



The central bank's rate hikes by a cumulative 2.50 per cent since May last year, coupled with supply-side measures from the government, have helped get the inflation down to 4.25 per cent in May from a peak of 7.8 per cent in April last year

SHAKTIKANTA DAS | GOVERNOR, RBI

Mumbai, June 25: Governor Shaktikanta Das has said the Reserve Bank will strive to get headline inflation to its 4 per cent target but flagged El Nino as a challenge to its efforts.

In an exclusive interview with PTI Bhasha at his office here, Das exuded confidence that the economy will grow at 6.5 per cent in FY24, as estimated by the RBI earlier.

"We continue to be watchful on the inflation front. We expect inflation to be at 5.1 per cent in FY24, and we will continue to strive and get it down to 4 per cent," he added.

On the high borrowing costs, Das said interest rates on loans may have a direct relation with inflation, and if inflation cools down on a durable basis, people can expect lower interest rates on loans.

The governor explained that the Russia-Ukraine war, which led to a shoot-up in the commodity prices, led to a surge in inflation, but added that crude prices are not a concern from an inflation perspective now as they've come down to \$76-76 a barrel.

Food inflation has also come down, Das said, adding that measures like the Food Corporation of India releasing wheat and rice stocks have also helped. Targeted cuts in duties on certain products have also helped, he added.

When asked about the challenges on the inflation front, Das pointed to 2-3 factors like the volatile international situation due to geopolitics and the monsoon situation domestically.

"Although there is an expectation of a normal monsoon,

there are concerns around El Nino. We will have to see how serious it is. Other challenges are primarily weather-related events, which can have an impact on food inflation," Das said, adding that we will have to grapple with these uncertainties.

Growth front

Meanwhile, on the growth front, Das said the RBI has taken all the factors into consideration while arriving at its estimate of a 6.5 per cent expansion in real GDP and is confident of the economy attaining the same even though other watchers like IMF estimate it to be much lower.

He said the bank credit growth of around 16 per cent is sustainable, and the RBI is watchful of the developments on this front.

The rupee has been less volatile in the calendar year 2023, and the domestic currency has strengthened against the dollar, Das said, reiterating that the RBI will continue with its efforts to reduce volatility.

The governor said the current account deficit (CAD) will be "eminently manageable" in FY24, as there are positives like higher services exports and lower crude prices working in our favour.

BIGGEST TAX EVASION EVER

Shree Cements accused of ₹23K-cr fraud

The company siphoned off ₹1200-1400 crore every year in tax evasion and the centre and the state governments have suffered a huge loss of revenue due to fake agreements

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, June 25: Income Tax officials have conducted searches at premises of Shree Cement Group in various places across Rajasthan and have seized documents indicating tax fraud to the tune of at least ₹23,000 crore, sources said Sunday, claiming it is one of the biggest tax evasion to date.

Income Tax Department officials said that a scrutiny of the documents found in the raid has revealed that almost ₹1,200 to 1,400 crore tax evasion was reportedly done every year.

The raids came after IT Department officials doubted the tax deduction claims of the



group, they added.

On the other hand, it was also reported that the Centre and the state governments incurred losses via fake agreements made by the sarpanch, gram panchayat and the local bodies concerned and the Income Tax Department officials have also seized the agreements related to the forgery.

According to the information from the Income Tax Department, when the members of the group were questioned in this matter, they denied having any infor-

mation in this regard.

Shree Group's Chairman HN Bangur and Vice Chairman Prashant Bangur have moved out after the raids. Group's Joint President Arvind Khicha was reportedly called for questioning several times during the raids but he too did not appear before the Income Tax officials. Officials are also unable to contact senior officials of the firm.

A team from the Income Tax Department's Jaipur office had raided more than 24 locations of Shree Cement in Jaipur, Beawar, Udaipur, Ajmer, and Chittorgarh. More than 200 Income Tax officers and policemen were involved in this raid.

According to IT officials, there were huge irregularities in the accounts of coal purchased for cement production and the payment made for this and the department detected this fraud with the help of new technology and software.

Mcap of 6 of top-10 most valued firms erodes by ₹1L-cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 25: Six of the top-10 most valued domestic firms suffered a combined erosion of ₹1,02,280.51 crore in market valuation last week, amid a weak trend in equities, with Reliance Industries taking the biggest hit.

Last week, the BSE benchmark fell 405.21 points or 0.63 per cent amid a bearish trend in global equities and concerns over rate hikes by central banks of various countries.

From the top-10 pack, Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, Infosys and State Bank of India faced erosion from their market capitalisation (mcap). However, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, HDFC and Bharti Airtel emerged as the gainers.

The market valuation of Reliance Industries tumbled ₹40,695.15 crore to ₹17,01,720.32 crore.

Hindustan Unilever's mcap diminished by ₹17,222.5 crore to ₹6,20,797.26 crore.

State Bank's valuation fell by ₹14,814.86 crore to ₹4,95,048.22 crore and that of Infosys declined by ₹11,204.66 crore to ₹5,25,228.89 crore.

The mcap of ITC went lower by ₹10,625.95 crore to ₹5,52,611.81 crore and that of ICICI Bank dipped ₹7,717.39 crore to ₹6,46,262.77 crore.

However, HDFC Bank added ₹23,525.6 crore taking its market valuation to ₹9,18,984.17 crore. The mcap of TCS jumped ₹15,441.19 crore to ₹11,77,281.48 crore.

In the ranking of top-10 most valued firms, Reliance Industries continued to rule the chart, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, Infosys, HDFC, State Bank of India and Bharti Airtel.

Morale waning amid turmoil, says Byju's staffers

Right now the situation is so dismal, subordinates are sitting with their managers and job hunting

SENIOR MANAGER | BYJU'S



are asked to pack up overnight," said a senior manager at Byju's, requesting anonymity.

Several employees, all of whom requested anonymity, said they had received no memos about the exits of auditor Deloitte and the board members.

"Morale is at an all-time low. Literally every person has a job portal open on their laptop at all times. Everyone wants to leave desperately before they

board seats.

"It's all been eerily quiet so far," said the manager, adding that the lack of communication from the company's leadership was heightening employee concerns.

Two of the employees that spoke to Reuters said performance incentives, bonuses and appraisals had stalled amid the turmoil. "The general sentiment is that the company is strugg-

ling," said one analyst at the company. "Almost 90% of us, myself included, are waiting for a performance appraisal which hasn't happened."

A former employee, citing conversations with managers who are still at Byju's, said many "are insecure about their future, because top leaders have not been in regular touch with them for about four- to six-weeks."

Another source, who left Byju's last month, said: "People count each day anticipating layoffs, today I may be safe, tomorrow I may not. No one is working there out of choice anymore, but due to financial commitments, or because they haven't yet found another job."

2022 earnings by Sept

Byju's, which lost its auditor

after delaying financial statements, has told investors it will file 2022 audited earnings by September and 2023 results by December, a person with direct knowledge of the matter said.

Byju's leadership, including founder Byju Raveendran and Chief Financial Officer Ajay Goel, briefed about 75 shareholders Saturday to address their concerns about the company's financial affairs, said the source, who attended the meeting.

Goel told the investors Byju's will submit 2021-22 audited results to Indian regulators by September and 2022-23 earnings by year's end, the source said.

The company told investors it was focussing on appointing new independent directors to the board, said the source.

Mud-slinging continues among wrestlers

London Olympics bronze medallist Yogeshwar Dutt slams Bajrang Punia over match conceding comments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 25: Bajrang Punia's claim that 'I asked him to concede wrestling bouts on purpose' is nothing but a 'blatant lie', London Olympics bronze medallist Yogeshwar Dutt said Sunday as the mud-slinging match between the top wrestlers of the country continued.

Bajrang, in a live social media address, had claimed Saturday that the London Olympics bronze medallist several times asked him to lose matches on purpose in the past. "I never told him to lose any match. It's a blatant lie," Yogeshwar said when asked about Bajrang's claim.

"During the (2016) Olympic qualification, he (Bajrang) was part of the 65kg trials but we were not pitted against each other. Amit Dhankar had defeated him. In the final bout, I fought against Amit. In the Pro Wrestling League, we fought against each other. There I won 3-0. If I wanted, I could have scored more and everybody knows that it was a show fight," added the Olympic medallist.

Dutt, who is now a BJP leader, said he always took Bajrang on foreign training trips as his sparring partner. "Before 2016 Olympics whenever I went abroad I took Bajrang along with me. Despite all this, he has betrayed me. I don't know why is he accusing me and tarnishing



In our religion 'gau mata' (mother cow) is considered holy and I can swear on gau mata that I never asked Bajrang to concede a match
YOGESHWAR DUTT

my image," Yogeshwar said.

Yogeshwar feels that Bajrang is just trying to settle scores against him by levelling such false allegations after they decided to split in 2018. "In 2018 Bajrang told me 'let me go to Commonwealth Games and you go to Asian Games' but I told him I will go through the trials. After that he got angry with me and we stopped talking to each other," Yogeshwar claimed.

"After 2016 Rio Olympics, I never participated in any tournament, I never attended any camp. In camps there are many wrestlers in one weight cate-

Gauhati HC stays WFI elections

Guwahati: The Gauhati High Court stayed Sunday the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) elections, scheduled for July 11, on a petition filed by the Assam Wrestling Association. The Assam association, in its petition filed against the WFI, IOA ad-hoc body and the Sports Ministry, said that though it was entitled to be an affiliated member of the WFI, it was not granted one 'despite recommendation made by the then WFI executive committee at WFI's general council in Gonda, November 15, 2014'. The petitioner contended that unless their body is affiliated to the WFI, they cannot nominate their representative to the WFI polls, and so the election process should be stalled.

gory. Anybody can beat anyone. As I had left wrestling, I was never in the reckoning. In fact I left competitive wrestling in 2018, I am now a former wrestler," Yogeshwar stated.

3 from Odisha in HI core group

Indian team to play in Spain and the Asian Champions Trophy ahead of Asian Games

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 25: Hockey India (HI) named Sunday a 39-member senior men's core group for the national camp to be held June 26 to July 19 at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) Centre in Bangalore. There are three Odia players in the core group and they are Dipsan Tirkey, Amit Rohidas and Nilam Sanjeev Xess. Rohidas has also captained the men's team in the past.

After the camp, the team will travel to Terrassa, Spain, where they will compete against England, the Netherlands and the home side in the 100th Anniversary Spanish Hockey Federation international tournament which will be held July 25 to 30.

The four-nation tournament will be followed by the Asian Champions Trophy in Chennai starting August 3. India will face Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Japan and China for the title.

"We performed well in the FIH Men's Hockey Pro League 2022/2023 matches in Belgium and the Netherlands. Now we hope to maintain the same consistency, especially with important tournaments set to take place later this year," India's chief coach Craig Fulton said in a release.

"The camp will be an opportunity for us to improve ourselves in certain areas and to



work together as a unit once again. With the Asian Champions Trophy Chennai 2023 set to take place in August, followed by the Asian Games 2023 in Hangzhou, it is an important camp for us to begin our preparations for the upcoming months and to display the kind of hockey we wish to play," Fulton added.

The core probables: (Goalkeepers): Krishan Bahadur Pathak, PR Sreejesh, Suraj Karkera, Pawan Malik, Prashant Kumar Chauhan; (Defenders): Jarmanpreet Singh, Surender Kumar, Harmanpreet Singh, Varun

Kumar, Amit Rohidas, Gurinder Singh, Jugraj Singh, Mandeep Mor, Nilam Sanjeev Xess, Sanjay, Yashdeep Siwach, Dipsan Tirkey, Manjeet; (Midfielders): Manpreet Singh, Hardik Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Rabichandra Singh, Shamsher Singh, Nilakanta Sharma, Rajkumar Pal, Sumit, Akashdeep Singh, Gurjant Singh, Mohd Raheel Mousen, Maninder Singh; (Forwards): S Karthi, Mandeep Singh, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, Abhishek, Dilpreet Singh, Sukhjeet Singh, Simranjeet Singh, Shilana and Lakra and Pawan Rajbhar.

Cuttack emerge champs in state athletics meet



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 25: The 69th Odisha State (Senior & Junior) Athletics Meet 2023 concluded Sunday at the KIIT University premises. The meet was organised by the Odisha Athletics Association and KIIT-KISS. The event which began June 22 saw record 1,700-plus athletes taking part in the meet.

Cuttack district was declared the team champions with 602 points while Sundargarh (407 points) were runners-up. A total of 41 new state-level records

were set during the tournament. Among the highlights was the feat of Ashok Dandasena of Odisha Police. He created a new state record clocking 31:24.6 seconds in the 10,000 metres run. In the process Dandasena, broke the existing record of 31:36.00 seconds set by TK Tirkey of Cuttack way back in 1980.

Among the women, Anshika Routray and Mari Mukta Soreng stood out with their performances. Anshika won the girls' under-18 shot put title while Mari took the honours in women's triple jump.

'Disappointing not to win Champions League with PSG'

LIONEL MESSI, WHO HAS SIGNED UP FOR THE MLS, RECALLS HIS TENURE WITH PSG

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Buenos Aires, June 25: Lionel Messi has called his start at former club Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) 'very tough and disappointing'. He has also dubbed two successive failed Champions League bids a 'massive disappointment'.

"I came to Paris because I liked the club, because I had friends in the dressing room... it seemed easier for me to adapt rather than another destination I could have gone to," Messi told 'beIN Sports' in an interview which was aired Sunday.

"In reality, it was a very tough adaptation, much harder than I expected... with a new game plan, new teammates, a new city. I arrived late, I didn't have a pre-season. The start was difficult for me, my family," added the Argentine legend.

Messi, 36, signed for PSG in the summer of 2021 after 17 seasons at Barcelona, but will now head to Inter Miami in the MLS after quitting the French capital.

Messi's first season, during which he scored 11 goals in 34 games for PSG, was made harder after he contracted Covid during the winter break back in



Argentina, meaning he was sidelined for a month.

"It took me time to get back my original and physical form," Messi admitted. He added that the 2022 World Cup in Qatar - which Messi won with Argentina - also took its toll on his body.

"It's not an excuse but the World Cup played a big role in my form and the team. Some came back later than others, some were injured, like Neymar. I think, generally, the level of Ligue 1 and the Champions League was affected by the World Cup," added Messi.

Messi confessed that Champions League losses to Real Madrid in 2022 and Bayern Munich this season were a 'massive disappointment'. There were even sections of PSG fans who turned on Messi whistling at him from the stands.

Neymar fined again

Rio de Janeiro: Environmental authorities in Brazil have fined Neymar a second time Saturday after their orders to halt an unlicensed construction project at his mansion just outside this city were ignored, officials said. The Brazil and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) star was already facing a fine of at least five million reais (USD 1 million) after authorities said they had found 'various environmental infractions' Thursday at his luxury property in the resort town of Mangaratiba, where workers were building an artificial lake and beach. The environmental authorities however, did not disclose the amount of fine Neymar would have to pay while the footballer's manager said it was an 'unspecified amount'.

Shooters Sekhon, Darsha make cut for Asian Games

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 25: Ganemat Sekhon, the 22-year-old shotgun exponent to win India's first skeet medal at a World Cup, and Darsha Rathore have been included in the proposed list of shooters for the ISSF World Championships in Azerbaijan and the Asian Games scheduled in Hangzhou, China from September 23. The third skeet shooter in the women's category for both the major events is Parinaaz Dhalwal.

Ganemat, the first Indian woman skeet shooter to win a medal in the junior World Championships and the first to bag a World Cup bronze, had last month added a World Cup silver in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Darsha has made the outing even more memorable, clinching bronze in Almaty, which meant that India had two senior individual medals in women's skeet at the World Cup for the first time.

The men's skeet team for the Asian Games and World Championships comprises 2014 Asian Championships silver medallist in junior category Anantjeet Singh Naruka, Angad Vir Singh Bajwa and Gurjoat Singh Khangura. However, veteran skeet shooter Mairaj Ahmed Khan has not made the cut for the two competitions.

Diksha 2nd Indian to win title in LET event

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Czechia (Czech Republic), June 25: Talented golfer Diksha Dagar finally cruised to her second Ladies European Tour (LET) title, as she grabbed a commanding four-shot victory at the Tipsport Czech Ladies Open here Sunday. The 22-year-old southpaw Diksha won her first LET title back in 2019 in her rookie year and in 2021 she was part of the winning team at the Aramco Team Series in London.

This was Diksha's 79th start on the LET and she now has two individual wins and nine top 10 finishes, four of which have come this season.

Starting the day with a five-shot lead, Diksha, who hails from Jhajjar in Haryana, duly delivered the win with no hiccups. Diksha's final round 69 included four birdies and just one bogey. She dropped shots only once each on first and last days with a bogey-free 65 in between on the second day. She compiled rounds of 69-65-69 with 13 birdies, an eagle and just two bogeys in 54 holes over three rounds.

Diksha is the second Indian to win on the LET Tour after Aditi Ashok, who won the Hero Women's Indian Open in 2016 to become the first Indian to triumph on the Tour.

"I'm feeling confident. My



main focus is to play good golf and at the moment I'm enjoying it," Diksha said after her title win.

This season Diksha was tied sixth in Belgian Ladies event, tied eighth at Helsingborg Ladies Open and tied third at Amundi German Masters last week.

Thailand's Trichat Cheenglab made a valiant charge on the final day with a 64, but her first two rounds of 73-70 meant she started the final day nine shots behind Diksha and that was too much overcome for the Thai player.

Diksha, who was born with a hearing impairment and has been wearing hearing aids since the age of six, has overcome the hurdles amazingly well with the support from her family. Her father Col Narinder Dagar is also her mentor, coach and caddie.

Sahal, Mahesh making a mark

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, June 25: Amid the loud cheers that have often been reserved for talismanic Sunil Chhetri, two young footballers are quietly making their mark in India's SAFF Championship campaign so far.

It's not that Sahal Abdul Samad and Mahesh Singh are unfamiliar names to Indian football aficionados, but they have validated their potential to carry forward a rich legacy in Indian football. The duo was particularly impressive against a gritty Nepal whom India beat 2-0 Saturday night at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium here to book a semi-final berth.

Nepal had erected a defensive hurdle in front of India for a good one hour and the home side needed a moment of inspiration from Mahesh to break free. He and Sahal combined brilliantly to set the ball rolling for Chhetri who did not make any mistake from close.

India's assistant coach Mahesh Gawli has been effusive in his praise for the 24-year-old Mahesh. "I think Mahesh is an excellent talent and a future star for India. He is a quality player and very passionate about his



Mahesh Singh has been grabbing eyeballs with his attacking brand of football. (Inset): Sahal Abdul Samad

game. I think he'll become a very good player in the future," Gawli said Sunday.

Before showing more purpose and precision in the second half, Sahal was banking on his dribbling skills to tear through Nepal defence without much avail. Gawli said that during half time, he had a chat with Sahal asking him to play 'purposeful football' for the side.

"Sahal was instructed to release the ball sooner and not give it away so cheaply by dribbling excessively. He did exactly that in the second half," said

Gawli. He teed up Mahesh to score the second goal, after Chhetri had missed from close.

However, Sahal might rue the fact that he could have been on the scoresheet in the first half itself. It was also the first time the Mahesh-Sahal combination looked threatening in the tournament.

Sahal is aware that he should be able to get onto the scorer's list more often. "We need to start scoring goals not just with one player. I think every aspect has room for improvement, and mainly, I think I have to start contributing goals," Sahal said.

1st triumph for Alcaraz on grass

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, June 25: Carlos Alcaraz won the Queen's Club Championships final Sunday for his first ATP title on grass and reclaimed the No.1 ranking. The victory ensured he will enter Wimbledon next month as the top seed. Despite struggling at times in the first set, Alcaraz beat Alex De Minaur 6-4, 6-4 for his fifth title of the year and 11th overall.

The win saw the 20-year-old Spaniard move above Novak Djokovic in the rankings and confirmed the US Open champion as a serious challenger to the Serbian's crown at Wimbledon. Alcaraz lost in the fourth round to Jannik Sinner last year.

Sunday's final was Alcaraz's first on grass, in only the third tournament of his young career on the surface. He had to save two breakpoints in the eighth game of the first set, broke in the next game and then served out for the set.

Alcaraz won the only breakpoint of the second set, when De Minaur double faulted, and sealed the title on his first match-point when the Australian sent a return long.