



MRUNAL OPENS UP

Actor Mrunal Thakur believes that having matured conversations about sex and lust is the key to check spread of misinformation

LEISURE P2



FRANCE PROTESTS ESCALATE

Over 600 people were arrested and 200 police officers injured as France struggled to restore order on a third night of unrest

INTERNATIONAL P10



INDIA FACE LEBANON

India to bank on the striking prowess of Sunil Chhetri to tame Lebanon in the SAFF Championship semifinal today

SPORTS P12

SHORT TAKES

Sensex, Nifty scale fresh all-time highs

Mumbai: Equity benchmark indices scaled fresh all-time closing highs Friday, propelled by intense buying in index heavyweights Infosys, HDFC twins, Reliance and TCS amid healthy macroeconomic indicators. BSE Sensex jumped 803.14 points or 1.26% to settle at its lifetime closing high of 64,718.56. The NSE Nifty climbed 216.95 points or 1.14% to end at a record high of 19,189.05. P11

3 killed, 1 injured as car rams into tree

Nabarangpur: At least three persons were killed and a woman sustained serious injuries as the car in which they were travelling crashed against a roadside tree in Nabarangpur district. The incident took place near Basini junction on Umerkote-Jharigaon Road Thursday night when they were returning after attending a wedding in Chhattisgarh's Jagdalpur. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced an ex gratia of ₹3 lakh each for the next of the kin of the deceased.

Centre's ordinance: Delhi govt moves SC

New Delhi: The Delhi government Friday moved the Supreme Court against the Centre's ordinance over control of services in the national capital, officials said. CM Arvind Kejriwal will burn copies of the Centre's ordinance at the party office in central Delhi July 3. P7

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



More than Tamil Nadu, Manipur needs a proactive governor, sir

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	64718.56 ↑ 803.14
NIFTY	19189.05 ↑ 216.95
DOLLAR	82.06 ↓ ₹0.01
EURO	89.56 ↑ ₹0.37
GOLD	₹58,135 ↑ ₹121
SILVER	₹ 68,750 ↑ ₹561

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	36.4°C	36.2°C
TEMP MIN	27.9°C	27.5°C
Humidity	87%	85%
Rainfall	0.1mm	1.4mm
Forecast	Light to moderate rain	



ALL EARS: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi interacts with children as he meets violence affected people at a relief camp in Moirang, Manipur, Friday

PTI PHOTO

ACF DEATH CASE NBW against wife, ex-DFO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, June 30: A local court issued a non-bailable warrant (NBW) against Bidya Bharati Panda, the widow of deceased assistant conservator of forests (ACF), Soumya Ranjan Mohapatra, and prime accused former divisional forest officer (DFO) Sangarm Keshari Behera, Friday.

The court of the sub-divisional judicial magistrate (SDJM) also directed them to deposit in the court, July 7. Earlier, the court had directed Behera and Panda to personally appear in the court, June 27. The DFO sought a stay order in the case through his lawyer as he had approached the High Court. The advocate of the defendant failed to cite any reason for approaching the High Court and sought time in the case. The SDJM rejected the application.

The SDJM court issued the NBW against the accused after they failed to deposit in connection with the case despite repeated reminders.

According to reports, the ACF was found in critical condition with burn injuries at his residence in Paralakhemundi July 12, 2021. Mohapatra succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Cuttack the next day.

Ch'garh at it again

Neighbouring state opens all 64 gates of Kalma barrage leading to rise in Hirakud dam's water level

Chhattisgarh repeatedly opens the gates of Kalma and other barrages during monsoon and restricts water flow of Mahanadi during non-monsoon season

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 30: With the beginning of monsoon rainfall in the upper catchment area of Mahanadi, neighbouring Chhattisgarh opened all 64 gates of Kalma barrage, resulting in a steep rise in the water flow in Hirakud dam.

The Chhattisgarh government repeatedly opens the gates of Kalma and other barrages during monsoon season and restricts water flow of Mahanadi during non-monsoon season as a result of which Odisha faces difficulties throughout the year.

The state faces difficulty in managing the high flood water inflow into the Hirakud dam during rainy days and also water scarcity during the summer season.

Hirakud dam in Sambalpur district registered a significant rise in water level with 1.18 lakh cusecs water entering the Mahanadi. The gates were opened following heavy rainfall (6.06 mm) in the upper catchment of the Mahanadi in the last 24 hours.



The water level of the dam was 603.67 ft against full capacity of 630 ft with inflow of about 80,000 cusec and outflow of 29,772 cusec by 12 noon Friday. The water level in the reservoirs was expected to rise to 605.30 ft by Saturday, said Bhakta Ranjan Mohanty, engineer-in-chief, Water Resources Department.

Last year, more than 12 lakh cusec water entered into Hirakud dam, which was successfully managed, he said.

The water level of Hirakud should remain about 605 ft by July end. Otherwise, it may affect the irrigation process, he said.

Mohanty said the government

has taken precautionary measures to tackle possible flooding in the Mahanadi system. Preparedness meeting was held and weak embankments have been repaired.

If heavy rainfall continues in the upper catchment, Hirakud dam may soon release the first flood water of the year.

Chhattisgarh had earlier opened the gates of Kalma ahead of the Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal's visit. The neighbouring state usually opens and closes the dam doors, as per its whims and requirements, without having proper consultation with Odisha.

Notably, the Odisha government had locked horns with Chhattisgarh in 2016 after water flow in the Mahanadi reduced substantially following construction of dams and barrages by the Chhattisgarh government. The matter is being heard in the Mahanadi Water Dispute Tribunal. Recently, the Tribunal visited both the states. Odisha is expecting at least an interim order from the Tribunal on the case soon.

BALASORE TRIPLE TRAIN CRASH

CRS probe report to be kept under wraps

Railways says this to ensure there is no 'influence or interference' on CBI's ongoing investigation in the case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 30: The Railways will not make public the CRS probe report on the Balasore triple train accident to ensure that there is no 'influence or interference' on the CBI's ongoing investigation in the case, senior officials told PTI Friday.

While there has been no official confirmation, some sources said the Commission of Railway Safety (CRS) informed in its report that the accident occurred due to human error on the part of on-duty officials in the Signalling and Telecom Department as well as the Traffic Department.

The officials failed to follow the standard operating procedure in place for train operations, according to the sources.

"We will not be disclosing anything on the CRS report as another independent CBI inquiry is underway. This is to ensure that this report does not in any way influence or interfere with the other report. We will take cognisance of both the reports and make an overall evaluation of the incident and then take whatever steps necessary," a senior official told PTI.

South Eastern Circle CRS AM Chowdhary, who was investigating the accident, submitted his report to the Railway Board Thursday.

Friday, top board officials refused to comment on the report with many claiming that they have not even read the document. Usually such reports are

52 bodies yet to be identified

Bhubaneswar: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Friday said 29 of the 81 bodies of victims of the June 2 train accident in Balasore, which were kept in AIIMS Bhubaneswar, have been identified and six of them handed over to their families. The process of handing over the bodies has started, BMC mayor Sulochana Das said. "Of the 81 bodies preserved at AIIMS Bhubaneswar, 29 have been identified based on DNA analysis. We have started the process of handing the bodies to their families," Das said. The mayor said authorities of Indian Railways and AIIMS Bhubaneswar decided to go for DNA sampling analysis after there were multiple claimants over one body. Das said the state government has made arrangements to send all the bodies to their native places. "Of the 29 identified bodies, five families have already reached AIIMS Bhubaneswar," she said. It took around 20 days to receive the DNA report from the central laboratory in Delhi, an official said, adding as many as 88 DNA samples were sent for identification of the 81 bodies.

accessible to top officials, mainly to follow through on course corrections recommended by the CRS.

Officials recalled that while the CRS usually files an interim report before the final one within a week of any accident, this time it has submitted one report.

The sources said officials have been directed to plug any leaks on the report.

SOUTH EASTERN RAILWAY GM SHUNTED

New Delhi: The general manager of South Eastern Railway was transferred as general manager to the Rail Wheel Factory in Karnataka's Yelahanka Friday. This is the latest in a series of relocations for senior officials of the zone in which the Balasore triple train accident claimed more than 290 people. Earlier, the Railway Board had transferred five senior zone officials, including the assistant general manager and the divisional railway manager. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, on the recommendation of the Railway Board, appointed Anil Kumar Misra -- an Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers officer -- as the South Eastern Railway general manager, a post held by Archana Joshi.

'320 yrs, 12 prez, 10 emperors, 2 republics, 1 newspaper'

VIENNA'S WIENER ZEITUNG, ONE OF THE WORLD'S OLDEST NEWSPAPERS, ENDS PRINT EDITION AFTER THREE CENTURIES

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Berlin, June 30: One of the world's oldest newspapers, the Vienna-based Wiener Zeitung, ended its daily print run Friday after more than three centuries.

First published under the name Wienerisches Diarium, the paper set out to provide a sober account of the news "without any oratory or poetic gloss" when it was launched August 8, 1703. "320 years, 12 presidents, 10 emperors, 2 republics, 1 newspaper," the print edition's final front

page read. The Wiener Zeitung, which is owned by the Austrian government but editorially independent, suffered a sharp decrease in revenue after a re-

cent law dropped a requirement for companies to pay to publish changes to the commer-

cial registry in the print edition. The newspaper, which is considered a quality publication

forced to cut 63 jobs and reduce its editorial staff by almost two-thirds to 20. It will continue to operate online and plans a monthly print edition.

In its final daily print edition the paper interviewed one of Austria's most famous exports: actor-turned-politician Arnold Schwarzenegger.

It lamented that, unlike Schwarzenegger's famous 'Terminator' character, the newspaper won't be able to make the phrase 'I'll be back' its motto for the future.

Owned by the Austrian government but editorially independent, the newspaper suffered a sharp decrease in revenue after a recent law dropped a requirement for companies to pay to publish changes to the commercial registry in the print edition

with a wide range of articles covering domestic and foreign news, culture and business, was





LORDS OFFERED ADHAR PANA

Puri, June 30: Lord Jagannath and His siblings – Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra – were dedicated 'Adhar Pana', a rich drink for salvation of ghostly bodies, sinned souls and other spirits, on their respective chariots, Friday night. After Mangal Alati, Tadap Lagi, Mailam and Abakash rituals, the sib-

ling deities were dressed and Gopal Bhog was offered. Thereafter Madhyahna Dhupa was offered. At 6:30pm, servitors began preparing Adhar Pana for offering.

In the ritual, nine large open mouth barrel-shaped clay pitchers with one metre height full of holy drinks (consisting cheese, butter, milk, sweet and

many other ingredients) were placed before the three deities on their respective chariots. The pitchers were as high as those touching the lips of the deities. These drinks were provided by many mutts entrusted to them by the then kings. The servitors performed 'Shodasa Upachara' on the three chariots late in the evening. Then the clay

pitchers full with holy drink were smashed on the deck of the chariots spilling the entire drink on the floor.

It is believed that numerous spirits, ghostly bodies and souls trail the deities during the Ratha Jatra keeping a close vigil on this event to get salvation by tasting the holy drink.

AGENCIES

SCB ADDS ANOTHER FEATHER TO ITS CAP

SEVERED HAND OF A YOUTH FROM BALASORE WAS REPLANTED IN A COMPLEX SURGERY AT SCB MEDICAL COLLEGE AND HOSPITAL

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, June 30: Adding another feather to its cap, SCB Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH) has successfully replanted the severed hand of a 23-year-old youth from Balasore in a complex surgery that lasted for six hours, an official said, Friday.

According to sources, Prakash Das of Balasore had his left hand severed in an attack by miscreants around 8pm June 21.

He was initially rushed to Balasore district headquarters hospital (DHH) and later to SCBMCH.

A team of SCB doctors, led by Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery department head Bibhuti Bhusan Nayak, carried out the complex surgery that began around 12am and concluded 6am.

According to Nayak, replantation surgeries are always challenging due to excess blood loss. "We started the surgery within four hours of receiving the youth and his severed hand. The hand was well preserved with polythene and ice package," Nayak said.

"The conventional method of surgery that involves reducing the bone size allows only fingers to function. However, in Prakash's case, we grafted veins from other parts of the body to ensure functioning of fingers



Prakash Das at SCBMCH in Cuttack

A TEAM OF SCB DOCTORS, LED BY PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY DEPARTMENT HEAD BIBHUTI BHUSAN NAYAK, CARRIED OUT THE COMPLEX SURGERY THAT BEGAN AROUND 12AM AND CONCLUDED 6AM

UNLIKE CONVENTIONAL SURGERIES WHEREIN BONE SIZE IS REDUCED, IN PRAKASH'S CASE, VEINS FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE BODY WERE GRAFTED TO ENSURE FUNCTIONING OF FINGERS AND WRIST AS WELL

and wrist as well," Nayak said.

He said SCB has performed eight replant surgeries in the last couple of years. Except for one, seven other surgeries have been successful. Two such surgeries have been performed in the past two months alone.

"The patient is doing well now," the Plastic Surgery head said.

"I was returning home after finishing my tuition when some youths attacked me and chopped my hand. I was immediately rushed to SCB by my family members," said Das, thanking SCB doctors for the fresh lease of life.

RASAGOLA DIBASA

Rasagola has witnessed multiple fights between Odisha and West Bengal for its GI tag which was finally granted to the states distinctly

SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 30: Rasagola, the delicious syrupy sweetmeat, that has captivated the taste buds of countless souls over the generations, has become an integral part of Odia cuisine, rituals

and folklore. And its significance gets multiplied as the delicacy is linked to the rituals of none other than the Lord of universe – Lord Jagannath. The Lord, on his return from Gundicha Temple, offers Rasagola to His consort Goddess Lakshmi, who is miffed for being left behind during the nine-day annual sojourn. The occasion is being observed as 'Rasagola Dibasa' since 2015.

The ritualistic offering of Rasagola is not just about mending the hearts but also a celebration of love and forgiveness, symbolized by the humble delicacy. The day is celebrated across Odisha with much fanfare with preparation and sharing of the sweetmeat.

"Rasagola is known as the king of all sweets for a good reason which Lord Jagannath used to pacify His consort," said Sarojini Mohanty, a resident of Puri. "Our ancient ritu-



als taught us how to deal with our miffed spouses too. Niladri Bijie is the ceremony in which Lord Jagannath along with his siblings enters the Srimandir after returning from Gundicha Temple. Sri Lakshmi, consort of Lord Jagannath, lashes out at Him for being left behind at the Srimandir and not being part of the journey to Gundicha Temple. She stands at the gate of the temple and per-

mits Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Sudarshan to enter the temple while she shuts the temple gate for Lord Jagannath. In order to pacify her, Lord Jagannath offers her Rasagolas at Bijay Dwar and offers His appeal for an entry," Sarojini stated.

"It is only on Ashadha Shukla Trayodashi day as per Odia almanac that Rasagolas are offered to the deities and a conrtrite Lord Jagannath is finally let inside the Srimandir," she added.

Speaking about the significance of the day, another devotee said, "Rasagola was earlier called 'Khira Mohan' which is this creamish dessert made of cheese (chhena) and sweet syrup. 'Khira Mohan' was invented as an offering to Goddess Lakshmi."

Rasagola has witnessed multiple fights between Odisha and West Bengal for its geographical indication (GI) tag which was finally granted to the states separately. The GI tag underscored the global recognition of Odisha's culinary heritage, amplifying the state's heritage and the sweetmeat's popularity.

HC moved over Ratna Bhandar

Bhubaneswar: BJP leader Samir Mohanty has filed a petition before the Orissa High Court, seeking reopening of Ormandir Ratna Bhandar (treasury) and fresh inventory of ornaments stored there for decades. The former state BJP president said the state government was not taking any step to reopen the Ratna Bhandar despite the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) expressing concern over the dilapidated condition of the treasury. Mohanty sought the HC's intervention in directing the state government to reopen the Ratna Bhandar to carry out necessary repair work and make a fresh inventory of ornaments stored there.

PTI

5th accused held in subsidy fraud case

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 30: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Odisha Police has arrested another fraudster for his involvement in misappropriating subsidies of ₹7.16 crore meant for supply of agricultural equipment to farmers, an official said.

Accused Bidyadhara Behera, proprietor of Kalpana Motors, was arrested from Bhadrak.

During investigation, the EOW found that Varushapriya Agrotech Pvt. Ltd., a Bangalore-based company having its branch office here at Baramunda, was supplying paddy transplanters to farmers across the country and also delivering services and supplies to the Odisha government under various subsidised schemes.

Srinath Rana, prime accused in the case, who was earlier working as regional manager in the company, was authorised to register the sale of machinery in Odisha and facilitate subsidies to beneficiaries/farmers by accessing the Agriculture department website.

During 2017-21, Rana along with Behera and others had fraudulently uploaded the details of more than 556 paddy transplanters and equal number of beneficiaries covering 18 districts of Odisha. The accused did it without the knowledge of the complainant farm. By submitting fake documents, the accused managed to get release of subsidy amount to the tune of about ₹7.16 crore in favour of the beneficiaries.

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CBC1910613/0014/2324

Jaipur-Katikata bridge to be completed by April '24



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 30: The Jaipur-Katikata bridge over Mahanadi under Raghunathpur block of Jagatsinghpur will be completed by April 2024. This was revealed during 5T Secretary VK Pandian's review of various developmental projects in the district.

The 5T Secretary, who was on a two-day visit to Jagatsinghpur, Friday, reviewed the construction work of the bridge and emphasised upon its timely completion.

"The bridge, after completion, will provide a critical connective link to people of the district," said a government official.

As per directions of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Pandian visited the district headquarter hospital (DHH) in

Jagatsinghpur and interacted with the patients there. He reviewed progress made in ongoing construction works under the 'AMA Hospital' initiative and the different indoor and outdoor facilities available at the hospital. The 5T Secretary also reviewed the ongoing construction status of medical college and hospital (MCH) building and directed to complete it by December 2023.

Then, he proceeded to Maa Sarala Temple, Kanakpur, to offer prayer, and there he interacted with the sevayats, priests, and general public while also reviewing the ongoing developmental works under the 'Integrated Development of Maa Sarala Temple.'

Pandian also visited the Gorakhnath Temple, under Raghunathpur block, offered

Pandian visited Bayanagram craft village in Raghunathpur and had a conversation with women weavers. He directed the district administration to prepare a plan for their development with focus on latest technology, designs, and marketing

The 5T Secretary visited the district headquarter hospital in Jagatsinghpur and interacted with the patients there while reviewing progress made in ongoing construction works under the 'AMA Hospital' initiative

prayer and interacted with the sevayats, priests, and local Public for holistic development of the temple and to ensure better facilities for the pilgrims.

He also visited Bayanagram craft village in Raghunathpur and had a conversation with women weavers. He directed the district administration to prepare a plan for development with focus on latest technology, designs, and marketing.

Later, the 5T Secretary then visited Panchasakha Dhyan Pitha, Dhyankud, under Biridi Block, offered prayer to Lord Jagannath and interacted with the priests and the local public about holistic development of the temple.

Listening to the grievances of the public, he assured them timely redressal.



FIELD VISIT: 5T Secretary VK Pandian interacts with students of the Secondary Board High School at Bajrakabati Road in Cuttack, Friday

OP PHOTO

Restore 4L tonne urea quota for state: Swain

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 30: Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain Friday urged the Centre to restore the previous season requirement of 4 lakh metric tonne (MT) urea fertilizer to the state.

Any reduction in supply of urea will hamper the farm output in the state, Swain said. He also requested the Centre to release the required 75,000 MT of

muriate of potash (MOP) as the state is running short of about 39,000 MT of MOP at present.

Attending the meeting chaired by Union Minister of Chemicals & Fertilizers Mansukh Madaviya, Friday, Swain said in Odisha nano urea adoption is yet to take off and the farmers of the state prefer traditional urea. Hence, usage of nano urea should not be imposed upon. This might lead to farmers' unrest, he said. Moreover, unlike many other progressive agricultural states,



fertilizer consumption is relatively low in Odisha. Any attempt to push nano urea might affect the production because of low adaptability. However,

the state is encouraging the farmers to adopt nano urea progressively, Swain added.

Further, Swain said that the ceiling of assistance under PM-PRANAM programme at 50 per cent of the fertilizer subsidy should be relaxed for Odisha as it is having lower rate of fertilizer consumption, coupled with the problems of soil acidity (70% of cultivated area) and soil salination (6% of cultivated area) requiring greater support for soil amelioration.

₹6,194cr SDRF money released to 19 states

Bhubaneswar: Union Home Minister Amit Shah Friday approved the release of Rs 6,194.40-crore State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) money to 19 states. The amount includes Rs 1,209.60 crore Central share of the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) to four states - Chhattisgarh, Meghalaya, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh - for year 2022-23 and Rs 4,984.80 crore to 15 states (Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Tripura) for year 2023-24. The release of funds will help states undertake relief measures during this monsoon season. The Union government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already approved release of Rs 3,649.40 crore as Central share of SDRF to nine states during the year 2023-24.



ASSESSING REALITY: Justice K Chandru (former Madras High Court Judge) speaks at a seminar on 'contemporary situation and our constitution' organised by Jana Chetana Manch at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Friday

OP PHOTO

Woman falls into septic tank, dies

Cuttack: In a freak accident, a resident of Cuttack Jayashree Sahu (60), died Friday after falling into the septic tank of her house in Parashar Sahi of Jobra locality. As per sources, the mishap



occurred as Friday morning Jayashree was collecting flowers in her garden and stepped on the damaged cover of the septic tank. As the damaged cover broke apart under her weight, the woman fell into the tank. Soon after she fell inside, stone chips stocked beside the tank fell into it covering Jayashree, killing her on the spot. On being informed, Fire Services and police personnel reached the spot and rescued the victim, but she had breathed her last by that time. Subsequently, her body was sent to SCB Medical College and Hospital for post-mortem. A pall of gloom descended in the neighbourhood as the news of the accident and the elderly person's death spread through.

Future proofing Odisha's railway infrastructure

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, June 30: Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the Puri-Howrah Vande Bharat Express May 18. The train runs between Puri, the abode of Lord Jagannath, and Howrah, West Bengal's industrial powerhouse.

Puri is a very popular among tourists from West Bengal, as a pilgrimage site and a beach resort. Travel agents believe that the high-speed train will be an instant hit among these travellers. In the same ceremony, PM Modi laid foundation for several other railway projects in the state worth Rs 8,000 crore. The redevelopment of Puri and Cuttack railway stations was one of those projects, which aims to upgrade the Cuttack station into a world-class facility, responding to the growing needs of passengers.

Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced a budget of Rs 303 crore for the project, which is part of larger efforts by the Indian Railways to refurbish railway stations across

the country. Attending the launch event, he highlighted the significant infrastructure development achieved by the Railways in Odisha.

This year alone, Railways has built 450 km of new rail lines. It was a record compared to the mere 50 km annual average during 2009-14. This substantial expansion of rail infrastructure reinforces Odisha's connectivity and overall development. It has also started a 162 crore redevelopment project for Puri station to cater to the growing number of visitors.

The Cuttack station renovation plan includes a weather-resistant shelter which will have the capacity to withstand cyclonic winds and a centralised air-conditioned station building, escalators, and improved amenities. The renovated station will offer facilities such as food plazas, baby feeding rooms, shops, modern retiring rooms, and recreational areas. The redeveloped station will also include dedicated spaces for yoga, meditation, and library facilities.

The station building will be de-



THE PRIME MINISTER LAUNCHED AN INITIATIVE FOR 100 PER CENT ELECTRIFICATION OF THE RAIL NETWORK IN ODISHA. IT WILL BRING DOWN THE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE COSTS, SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCING RELIANCE ON IMPORTED CRUDE OIL

signed as a green structure, in line with environmental considerations, with an efficient energy management system.

"Additionally, the redeveloped Puri station will incorporate several green initiatives, such as the installation of electric car charging points in the parking bay and an effluent treatment plant to minimise environmental impact," informed a Railways official.

The Prime Minister launched an initiative for 100 per cent electrification of the rail network in Odisha. It will bring down the operation and maintenance costs,

significantly reducing reliance on imported crude oil. Earlier in March 2023, Railways announced that it has achieved 100 per cent electrification of the existing 2,822-kilometer route of the broad-gauge network in Odisha. The electrification of the broad-gauge network is likely to reduce travel time by increasing the speed of trains and it is in line with the target of Railways to become a net zero carbon emitter by 2030.

Currently, broad-gauge routes in seven zones, including the Central Railway, North Central Railway, East Coast Railway,

Railways has launched projects worth over ₹8,000 crore in Odisha, which include redevelopment plans for several key railway stations like those in Cuttack and Puri

This year alone, Railways has built 450 km of new rail lines. This substantial expansion of infrastructure reinforces Odisha's connectivity and overall development

North Eastern Railway, South Eastern Railway, Eastern Railway, and West Central Railway, have completed 100 per cent electrification.

Another project the Prime Minister flagged off was the 92.82 km long broad-gauge single electrified railway line section between Budhapankh station in Angul and Baghuapala station near Sukinda in Jajpur district.

The new rail line connects the iron-ore-rich areas of Joda and Barbil to the steel and sponge iron industries in Angul. It also makes for a shorter and congestion-

free alternative route between the coal mining belts of Talcher to the coal-based thermal power plants in Kalinganagar.

The Prime Minister also launched a third line connecting Manoharpur-Rourkela-Jharsuguda-Janga and a new broad-gauge line between Bichhupali and Jhartarbh. These will cater to the increased traffic demands as a result of rapid industrial development in steel, power and mining sectors in Odisha and help ease the pressure on passenger traffic in these regions.

Between them, these projects add up to over Rs 8,200 crore worth of railway investment in the state. The inauguration of these projects marks a significant milestone in the state's infrastructure development.

With improved connectivity, modernised stations, electrification, and expanded rail lines, these initiatives are likely to enhance transportation efficiency, boost economic growth, and elevate the overall travel experience for both residents and tourists in the state.

Monsoon birds arrive at Bhitarkanika

AGENCIES

Kendrapara, June 30: With the onset of monsoon, thousands of residential birds have started arriving at the Bhitarkanika National Park (BNP) for breeding and nesting.

Ranger of Kanika Forest Range Manas Kumar Das said that residential birds of more than six species have already arrived at the Matha-adiha Durgaprasad dia and Laxmiprasad dia herony within the national park.

"The dense mangrove vegetation and the serene pollution-free atmosphere have once again proved as alluring attractions to thousands of residential winged visitors of the National Park," said the official.

Usually, during the monsoon, 11 types of residential birds throng to Bhitarkanika National Park every year for nesting and breeding.

They are Open Bill Stork, Little



Usually, during the monsoon every year, 11 types of residential birds throng to Bhitarkanika National Park for nesting and breeding

Cormorant, Intermediate Egret, Large Egret, Little Egret, Purple Heron, Grey Heron, Night Heron, Darter, White Ibis and Cattle Egret.

Matha-adiha herony, Laxmiprasad dia and Durgaprasad dia have become the favourite nesting and breeding places for these monsoon birds in the last half a decade.

The avian species selectively

use parts of mangroves specific to the national park for constructing nests in the trees of Guan, Sundari, Sinduka, Bani, Jagula, Kerawan and Ouran.

Forest official sources said an estimated 1,16,070 monsoon birds were sighted by the enumerators and 24,464 nests were spotted by forest enumeration teams during last year's monsoon census.

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Rains expose poor quality of development work in Rourkela



had been done wrongly. He pointed out that soil testing was not done in a proper manner before the laying of the blocks. "It takes at least two weeks for the soil to settle down after testing. However, it was not done and the paver blocks were laid in a hurried manner. Also no space has been provided for the rain-water to escape. Hence the paver blocks are collapsing," the retired official explained.

Now the prediction of the technical person has come true. It now seems that ₹2 crore spent on construction of paver blocks have been washed away by rain water.

The opposition parties have been quick to utilise the situation to their advantage. "I have nothing to say, everything is there for all to see. It is a sheer waste of public money. We have been talking about corruption during development work. Now everything has been exposed," pointed out BJP leader Dhiren Senapati.

Several attempts to reach the ADM and CEO, Smart City Project and Commissioner, Rourkela Municipal Corporation Dr Subhankar Mohapatra over phone turned out to be futile.

Recently however, sinking of the paver blocks across a large stretch of area has attracted attention. The paver blocks spanning from Hanuman Vatika Square to Space Square – a distance of approximately four kilometres – have sunk substantially into the ground. At several places, the blocks have even been washed away.

During the World Cup, a retired PWD executive engineer had predicted this development. "With the first rains, one will know the quality of work done. These paver blocks are never going to stay for the way they have been laid," he had stated.

The retired official had pointed out that setting up of the blocks

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, June 30: Faults in many of the development work carried out in this city, before the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup, have been exposed with the arrival of the monsoons. The first rains have laid bare the poor quality of work done.

The opposition parties have been crying themselves hoarse alleging corruption in development work. Now it is there for everyone to see. First, the paver or pavement blocks close to Gate No 2 sank into the ground due to the rains. Then the Major Dhyan Chand statue, a huge attraction and photography point, collapsed.

Ex-Army jawan held for fraud

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, June 30: A dismissed Army jawan has been arrested for allegedly duping three people in Ganjam district on the pretext of providing them with jobs in Defence Services, police said here Friday. The accused has been identified as Santosh Kumar Sethi (33). He was dismissed from service last year for long absence and indiscipline, police informed.

Three cases of cheating were registered against Sethi in January based on the complaints of the duped persons. However, the accused had managed to evade police for a long time, but was finally nabbed Wednesday, SP (Berhampur) Saravana Vivek M.

Police said Sethi had taken ₹50,000 from each of the three persons in January promising them with jobs in the Defence Services. Police have recovered images of online transactions from the complainants and some other persons. They have also seized the motorbike and two mobile phones of the accused, they added.

2 die, 1 injured seriously in Rourkela hit and run



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, June 30: Two persons died and another was seriously injured in a hit and run case involving an unknown vehicle and a bike in Koira area, Thursday. The injured was shifted to a hospital here as his condition deteriorated.

The incident occurred at Koira, 100 kilometres away from here, when the three were returning after witnessing the 'Bahuda Jatra' on a bike. They were allegedly hit by an unknown vehicle and fell down. The intensity of the collision was visible from the mangled bike which was lying at a distance.

The deceased Jagdish Dehuri and Ajit Munda, and the injured Bikram Munda, who has been shifted to Rourkela, belong to Kalamangal village under Malda panchayat of Koira block. Jagdish was riding while the other two were the pillion. Bikram was initially taken to Koira community health centre and later was shifted to Rourkela.

Soon after the accident, irate villagers blocked the road demanding compensation for the trio. The accident occurred around 8.00pm, Wednesday. The blockade was shifted at around 11.00pm after police pacified the agitators.

NHAI plans to build tunnel on NH-53

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, June 30: The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has received ₹37 crore for construction of a tunnel through Laxmi Dugri, a reserve forest in Sambalpur district, an official said Friday. The tunnel will be constructed to check disruption of traffic due to landslides on National Highway (NH) 53 connecting Mumbai and Kolkata.

Project Director, NHAI, Sambalpur, K Nageswar Rao said the geo-technical survey for the construction of the tunnel is underway. Stating that the plan and design will be prepared once the survey is completed, Rao said the tunnel will be constructed on one section of the four-lane highway.

If everything goes according to plan, work will commence by September, Rao said. He added that the primary objective for constructing the tunnel is safety of vehicles travelling on NH-53.

Laxmi Dugri has experienced several landslides, which have impacted traffic movement on NH-53 since September 2007.

Alumni demand varsity tag for Sundargarh Govt College

Former students submit memorandum to Collector for fulfillment of their demand

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, June 30: The demand for unitary university status for the Sundargarh Government College got a new impetus with the joining of hands of a large number of former students.

The Old Students' Association submitted a memorandum Friday to CM Naveen Patnaik on this issue. "The memorandum has all the valid arguments in favour of our demand. We are sure the government will seriously take up our cause," said president of the association, Dr Chirabrata Dutta.

The former students assembled near the main gate of the college and from there they took out a procession till the DRDA Chowk. They reached the Sundargarh Collectorate and expressed their desire to meet District Collector Nikhil Gawali. However, as Gawali was not present



in the office, the former students handed over the memorandum to additional district magistrate Rabinarayana Sahu.

The memorandum states that the college set up in 1958 is one of the oldest in Odisha. It said that the college is an educational destination for the tribal students of Sundargarh and nearby states like Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. Students can join courses in Arts, Science and Commerce streams.

The memorandum also said that students from coastal Odisha come to the college to pursue

higher education in post and undergraduate courses. The college is also the nodal centre for IGNOU courses.

The memorandum pointed out that the college has five hostels, three for boys and two for girls. Currently there are more than 1,000 students availing hostel facilities. It added that the college set up on 154 acres of land has the required infrastructure – modern library and labs and a playground – to get university status.

"We demand and the memorandum also mentions that the Sundargarh Government College should be declared as a 'Tribal University' in the interest of all," said Dutta.

It should be stated that here that a similar demand has been made to grant university status to Government Autonomous College in Rourkela. It also has the requisite infrastructure needed for university status.



Police bust dacoit gang in Kalahandi, 13 held

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhawanipatna June 30: Police arrested Friday 13 members of an inter-district dacoit gang and seized over ₹5 lakh in cash, gold ornaments and other items from their possession, Kalahandi SP Abhilash G informed here. He added that the arrests were made Thursday.

The arrests were made after the miscreants looted a businessman from Saintala in



Bolangir district.

Police did not disclose the identity of the businessman,

but said he was planning to open a jewellery shop here. Members of the dacoit gang approached him to sell gold. When the man agreed, the miscreants fixed up a place for the two parties to meet, the SP informed.

When the businessman arrived at the desolate spot, close to the railway station in this town with the

amount decided on, the miscreants waylaid him and looted ₹13,50,000 from him.

Police launched an investigation after a complaint was lodged and nabbed the dacoits. They recovered ₹5.74 lakh in cash, gold jewellery, 14 mobile phones and various weapons like swords and knives from the miscreants, the SP said. He added that investigations are on to find out about others who are associated with the gang.

Jumbo tramples man to death in Keonjhar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jhumpura, June 30: A man was trampled to death by an elephant at Jamiridih rural forest road under Bamebari section of Champua forest range in Keonjhar district, Thursday evening. The deceased was identified as Pandu Munda, 50, a resident of Jamiridih village under Malda panchayat of Jhumpura block. Locals said that the place where Pandu was attacked by the tusker is frequented by elephants.

The incident occurred when

Pandu was returning home by the forest road after attending to some work. He came face to face with an elephant and tried to flee. However, the elephant managed to catch him with its trunk and then the animal trampled the hapless Pandu to death.

Forest officials and police rushed to the spot after being alerted by the villagers. Champua forest ranger Akshaya Chhatra announced that ₹6 lakh compensation will be given to the deceased's family as per government rules and completion of necessary formalities.

Pardhiapali village's lone guard finally backtracks

SHOT IN THE ARM FOR LOWER SUKTEL PROJECT AS SINGLE FAMILY OPPOSING IT FINALLY RELOCATES

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, June 30: The last family opposing the Lower Suktel project has finally left Pardhiapali village Wednesday, sources informed here Friday. The relocation took place after the first rainwater from the Suktel river entered the Lower Suktel dam.

The family of Gyana Gadatya had been staying at their native place, Pardhiapali village for over four decades. They had been opposing the move to displace them and relocate elsewhere. However, the district administration finally persuaded them to do so as the Pardhiapali village is located at the bottom of the dam. The village will submerge once the dam becomes fully operational, sources said. They added that Gyana after leaving his native village has moved to this town.



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik laid the foundation stone for the Lower Suktel Irrigation Project, November 24, 2001 while Bolangir MLA Narasingha Mishra did the same for the spillway of the project, May 11, 2005.

Initially the project faced severe hindrances from the local

residents of nearby villages including Pardhiapali. Now however, the project is speedily nearing completion due to the efforts of District Collector Chanchal Rana. He has played an influential role in rehabilitation of the displaced people. Many residents of Pardhiapali have now settled

down at the 'Displaced Colony' in this town while others have sought their fortunes in other parts of the state.

Gyana however, was opposing the project since the start and had refused to relocate. He had also refused the compensation amount offered by the Odisha government. However, he finally relented due to the efforts of Rana and Mishra. The two visited the residence of Gyana and persuaded the latter to change his decision.

Gyana's son Pabitra lamented over the relocation. "Leaving one's native village permanently is a pain that cannot be expressed. We are leaving all that we had built up so painstakingly. I hope that the government compensates us in a proper manner," Pabitra said.

Before Gyana, family members of two sisters, Sumitra Sahu

and Subhadra Sahu had left the village. Even though they had relocated earlier, they had not given up the possession of their houses and used to visit Pardhiapali regularly. Now Pardhiapali has a haunted look with not a single resident living there.

This development is certainly a huge success for the district administration. Officials will now use the same method to relocate and rehabilitate people from other villages affected by various projects in the state.

Resident of Pardhiapali had been opposing the project from the start and refusing to relocate. The project got a boost after many people agreed to relocate in 2013. However, the actual rehabilitation started in 2021. Many people relocated to this town and started living in the 'Displaced Colony' built for them.

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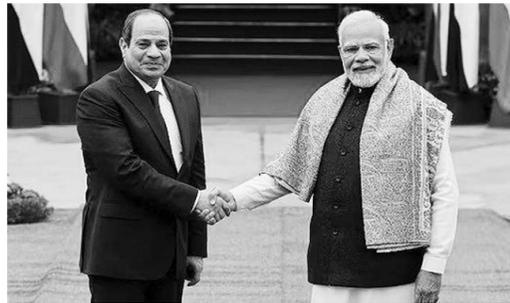
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Sd/- Chief Manager

FOCUS MODI IN EGYPT

A HISTORIC VISIT



The proposed economic free zone for India in the Suez Canal, which lends crucial geo-strategic significance to Egypt, could be an invaluable route for Indian commerce as 12 per cent of global trade passes through this waterway

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-day visit to Egypt was somewhat overshadowed by his 'landmark' official visit to the United States. In fact, his visit to Cairo was no less important, as it paved the way for both India and Egypt to consolidate their footprints in their respective regions of influence. Modi himself tweeted, "My visit to Egypt was a historic one. It will add renewed vigour to India-Egypt relations and benefit the peoples of our nations".

Relations between India and Egypt have been growing since New Delhi invited Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi as the Guest of Honour on the 74th Republic Day, an honour accorded for the first time to an Egyptian Head of State. Historically, India-Egypt relations go back to the late 1950s, as both countries were co-founders, along with Yugoslavia, of the Non-Alignment Movement.

The highlights of Modi's visit to Egypt certainly mark a significant step forward in India-Egypt bilateral relations. This visit consolidates the strategic partnership that evolved during the visit of President El-Sisi last January. This renewed partnership has immense regional and global implications for both countries. It offers Egypt a new option as its voice in regional affairs like Palestine, Ethiopia, and other African countries declines over the years.

As it looks for new partners beyond the continent, India, with its historical ties, promises great potential owing to her growing stature in world politics. In an interview to a leading daily in New Delhi, the Egyptian Ambassador to India called the visits of his President and Indian Prime Minister as 'game changers'.

Indeed, New Delhi could use Egypt as a launching pad, certainly for MENA (Middle East and North Africa). Note that Egypt is the most populous country in MENA. The proposed economic free zone for India in the Suez Canal, which lends crucial geo-strategic significance to Egypt, could be an invaluable route for Indian commerce. Twelve per cent of global trade passes through the Suez Canal.

On the other hand, to capture the significant events of Modi's visit to Cairo, an agreement to elevate bilateralism to a strategic partnership was signed. This will facilitate Egypt's attempt for a self-reliant defence industry as it leans on India's defence capability, offering an alternative to its usual dependence on the West and China/Russia. Egypt's interest in acquiring the Tejas LCA Mk-IA aircraft from India opens space for collaboration in the aviation sector. Over all, with its network of defence alliances with African countries, Cairo could offer a pivotal gateway to India to expand her defence capability and markets.

Both leaders discussed ways and means to deepen the partnership, covering areas in trade, investment, defence, security, renewable energy, culture, and people-to-people ties. In addition to the strategic partnership agreement, three MoUs were signed in the fields of agriculture, archaeology, and antiquities.

The second important highlight is Egypt's highest civilian award, 'the Order of Nile' conferred on Prime Minister Modi. Instituted in 1959, the Order of Nile is awarded to Heads of States, Crown Princes, and Vice Presidents who offer Egypt or humanity invaluable services. Although Prime Minister Modi has received twelve other highest State honours, this one manifests the importance accorded by Egypt to India.

Cairo has also created an India Unit, a group of high-level ministers constituted by El-CC in March to enhance

India-Egypt relations. Modi's first official engagement in Cairo was the meeting with this India Unit. The establishment of a specific India Unit indicates the priority Cairo attaches to India-Egypt ties.

Another highlight is Modi's visit to Heliopolis War Cemetery to pay respects to Indian soldiers who laid down their lives during WW-I. Modi visited the Heliopolis Commonwealth War Cemetery and offered tributes to Indian soldiers who bravely fought and sacrificed their lives in Egypt and Palestine during the First World War. The Heliopolis (Port Tewfik) Memorial commemorates nearly 4,000 Indian soldiers who died in the war.

Modi also visited the 11th century Al-Hakim Mosque in Cairo which has a historic connection with Dawoodi Bohra Muslims, who are a sizeable community in India. Modi met the yoga practitioners, the author Tarek Heggy, and the top businessmen Hassan Allam, CEO of Hassan Allam Holding Company, and visited, escorted by the Egyptian Prime Minister, the pyramid of Giza in outskirts of Cairo. This pyramid was included in the Seven Wonders of the World.

The visit is hailed by both sides as a grand success. There were talks of direct flights between Cairo and New Delhi. With the launch of such direct connection, along with the possibility of having an industrial zone for India in Egypt, among other things, will really solidify the relations and take them to new horizons, said the Egyptian Ambassador to India. We have no room for divergence with such an optimistic and realistic affirmation.

The writer is Secretary General, Assn for Democratic Socialism

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DK Giri

WITH ITS NETWORK OF DEFENCE ALLIANCES WITH AFRICAN COUNTRIES, CAIRO COULD OFFER A PIVOTAL GATEWAY TO INDIA TO EXPAND HER DEFENCE CAPABILITY AND MARKETS

Crisis of Confidence

The recent action by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) against IAS officer Sanjeev Jaiswal, allegedly involved in the COVID jumbo centre scam, has sparked apprehension among many IAS officers in Maharashtra. This apprehension stems from the backdrop of several IAS and IPS officers being incarcerated over the past few years due to their involvement in power struggles. Consequently, senior IAS and IPS officers recently convened a meeting with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Fadnavis to address their concerns.

Among the officers who found themselves embroiled in controversy were IPS officers Rashmi Shukla and Parambir Singh, both under scrutiny in various cases. IAS officer Sushil Khodvekar was arrested in connection with the TET scam after his name emerged, while IPS officer Sourabh Tripathi faced an FIR in an extortion case and a subsequent suspension. These criminal cases reportedly dissuaded other IAS officers from offering support to their accused colleagues.

The worries among IAS and IPS officers escalated further following the ED's questioning of Municipal Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal regarding alleged irregularities in the BMC. Within municipal corporations and other departments, important matters are scrutinized by the Vigilance Department, and the documents are submitted to senior officers. Some IAS officers have snidely commented that perhaps the government needs to appoint ED and CBI officers to review crucial files before signing them! Babus also try hard to avoid pressure exerted by politicians on various issues to escape being subjected to a probe by Central agencies.

But building trust between the Central agencies and the state bureaucracies may well be a tall order.

Bold assertion or political manoeuvre ?

As previous events have shown, the Bhagwant Mann-led AAP government in Punjab rarely sees eye-to-eye with the Centre on administrative issues. The state government has recently passed a bill for the appointment of the Director General of Police (DGP) in a special session of the state Assembly, which is quite likely to create another contentious issue.

While this bold move raises questions about the balance of power between a state government and the Centre, some observers see it as a political step aimed at challenging the authority of not just the Centre but also the Supreme Court.

The amended Act suggests the formation of a committee chaired by a retired high court judge to finalise a panel of candidates for the DGP position. The state government would then appoint the DGP from this panel, disregarding the Supreme Court's earlier ruling on the matter. Meanwhile, next month, Gaurav Yadav, a 1992-batch IPS officer, will complete one year as officiating DGP of Punjab. By passing the amendment, the Mann government is signalling its willingness to assert its own authority and decision-making power in matters that directly impact the state.

While the Punjab government is within its rights to choose its course of action, it is crucial to ensure that such decisions are made in the best interests of the state and avoid confrontations with the Centre and the higher judiciary. The fallout of the move will be felt across the nation.

Protocol for civil servant awards

Following criticism faced by several officers in different states for receiving awards from dubious organizations, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has made prior approval mandatory for IAS, IPS and IFoS officers before accepting any award from private organizations, and it should not have any monetary component in cash or facilities.

The department has stated that the competent authority may grant approval only in exceptional circumstances to the officers; in such cases, the credentials of the private institutions and organizations should be unimpeachable. Sources have informed DKB that this order only restates existing instructions, which were being blithely ignored by many officers. This decision, observers note, seeks to strike a delicate balance between the need for genuine recognition and the preservation of integrity within the civil service.

Interestingly, earlier this year, the Kerala government issued a similar order directed to all IAS and IPS officers in the state not to accept awards from private organizations or individuals without prior approval. The state Chief Secretary VP Joy had stated that officials would have to apply through the General Administration Department for the sanction, failing which they would face strict action. The order followed complaints from some Kerala Police officials about an IAS officer who received an award for effective management of devotees at a prominent temple in the state.

The present order from the Centre indicates that the issue is faced by several states and that it has decided to enforce a clear line between personal affiliations and official duties. But will babus fall in line?

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

- Growth is painful. Change is painful. But, nothing is as painful as staying stuck where you do not belong. **NR NARAYANA MURTHY**
- I choose a lazy person to do a hard job. Because a lazy person will find an easy way to do it. **BILL GATES**
- It matters not what someone is born, but what they grow to be. **JK ROWLING**

WORDSWORTH

Aunt Sally

The original Aunt Sally was a game, popular in Britain under that name from the middle of the nineteenth century at fairs and racetracks. From the fairground sense the term moved on, as the result of a moderately obvious process of thought, to become our modern figurative expression. The game itself is still played under that name in pubs in some southern counties of England, notably Oxfordshire, where the Oxford & District Aunt Sally Association was founded before World War Two. However, the game today instead uses a stubby white skittle, called a dolly, perhaps as the result of greater racial sensitivity. The aunt part of the name may refer to an old black woman, a term employed both by blacks and whites in the USA from the eighteenth century onwards but also known in London; aunt could also be applied familiarly to any elderly woman. The direct influence, according to J Redding Ware's *Passing English* of the Victorian Era of 1909, may have been an 1820s black-face doll that derived from a low-life character named Black Sal who had been created by Pierce Egan in his series *Life in London* of 1821-28. Ware says that it was probably adopted "owing to the popularity of that work, precisely as in a later generation many of Dickens's characters were associated with trade advertisements. Very significant of Pierce Egan's popularity, which from 1820 to 1840 was as great as that of Dickens, whose fame threw Egan into obscurity."

SPECTRUM POLISH POLLS

Democracy is on the line

Elections are always high-stakes affairs in countries experiencing democratic backsliding. This was true of Turkey's recent presidential election—described as "free but unfair." Likewise, when Poles go to the polls this fall, democracy itself will be on the line.

Since coming to power in 2015, Poland's populist Law and Justice (PiS) party has politicized the judiciary, harassed civil society, and worked tirelessly to drive independent media out of business. It has capitalized on the politics of fear and grievance, pitted urban voters against rural constituencies, and touted a mythologized version of Polish history.

In this sense, the PiS has been following in the footsteps of both Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdo and Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orbán, whose country can no longer even be considered a democracy. The difference is that Poland's de facto leader, Jaroslaw Kaczy ski, has left the presidency to someone else—Andrzej Duda—thereby shielding his influence from vigorous scrutiny. These tactics may well be

working in Poland, just as they have in Turkey and Hungary. During a recent trip to Poland, I was shocked by the sometimes poisonous anti-European tone of public discourse.

Ultimately, only Poland's voters can decide their country's political future. But that is no reason for complacency on the part of the international community. A Polish government that eschews democracy, the rule of law, and European unity would embolden illiberal forces elsewhere, including in the United States.

Another PiS victory might also weaken Poland's position as a bulwark against Russian President Vladimir Putin's imperial designs. Since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year, Poland has provided sanctuary for millions of refugees.

The PiS government deserves the highest praise for its support for Ukraine, but its commitment to this approach may have its limits. In an apparent attempt to secure farmers' votes, it announced in April that it was halting imports of Ukrainian grain, though it must be said that Bulgaria, Hungary,

Romania, and Slovakia also have prohibited grain imports from Ukraine, and all have done so with the EU's blessing.

Fortunately, the US and the EU do have some leverage that they can use to prevent Poland from threatening foundations of the post-Cold War order, including Poland's obvious reliance on NATO for its security, and the EU for financial support. The EU must adopt a constructive yet firm approach to the Polish government, backed by the enforcement of the rule-of-law conditionality that was imposed on diplomatic and financial support for both Poland and Hungary last year.

Democratic and humanist values—the values for which the Ukrainian people are now fighting, at extraordinary cost—are at the heart of the post-Cold War European order. Fortunately, Polish civil society remains robust, with younger generations—people in their twenties and thirties—increasingly leading the fight against PiS's depredations. They are committed to preventing further democratic backsliding and upholding European values, even if Kaczy ski is not. And they de-

serve greater support from their Western allies.

The large Polish diaspora in the US and Western Europe is uniquely positioned to help, along with the broader international community. Brave Polish NGOs—such as Women's Strike—are fighting on the front lines to defend women's rights, under direct threat from PiS. We must amplify their voices, as well as those of Poland's increasingly threatened LGBT+ community.

It is up to today's Poles to take up the mantle of the Gdansk shipyard workers whose strike in 1980 led to the establishment of the anti-authoritarian Solidarity trade union and social movement, which ultimately brought down communist rule in Central Europe in 1989. But Poland's friends also must support those Poles who embody this spirit. Without solidarity, Poland may well lose its democracy.

The writer, the Chair of Action for Democracy Advisory Council, is a journalist, human-rights activist, and author.

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Kati Marton

POLAND'S RULING PARTY HAS CAPITALISED ON THE POLITICS OF FEAR, PITTED URBAN VOTERS AGAINST RURAL CONSTITUENCIES, AND TOUTED A MYTHOLOGIZED VERSION OF POLISH HISTORY

Politics of exclusion

Sir, With roughly 174 million people (14 per cent), Muslims in India form the largest religious minority. Referring to them as 'minority', therefore, is misleading. In fact, they are the third-largest Muslim population anywhere in the world, after Indonesia and Pakistan. Despite this, a growing sense of marginalisation among Muslims across India is hard to deny. And this sense of marginalisation among this minority community has been steadily increasing ever since the rise to prominence of Hindu right-wing ideologies and organisations during the 80s when the Babri Masjid demolition episode was used to sharpen religious divides across the country. Muslims have been equal partners in the building of our composite cultural heritage and have co-existed with the Hindus for aeons. The rules of the electoral polity have made it imperative that no community can survive in politics of exclusion, isolation and sectarianism. Kushwant Singh, the doyen of journalism, once wrote: "Indian freedom is written in Muslim blood, since their participation in the freedom struggle was much more, in proportion to their small percentage of the population."

Suppressing dissent

Sir, The Karnataka High Court Friday dismissed the petition filed by Twitter challenging ten blocking orders issued by the Central government between February 2021 and 2022, directing the social media giant to take down 39 URLs. Twitter contended that the Central government was not empowered to issue general orders calling for the blocking of social media accounts and that the orders must contain reasons that should be communicated to users. A blocking order could only be issued in a situation where the nature of the content was in line with the grounds laid down under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act. Additionally, if reasons were not recorded in such blocking orders, there would be a possibility of reasons being manufactured at a later stage. Centre wants to suppress the dissent against the government which is an undemocratic move. Needless to say, 'Freedom of Speech' is suffering under this government.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Md Tauqueer Alam, BHUBANESWAR

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

Orissa POST
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MODI IN METRO: Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with passengers in Delhi Metro on his way to attend the centenary celebrations of the University of Delhi, in New Delhi, Friday

MORE SHOWERS AHEAD

Rain-related incidents claim 9 in 2 days in Guj

Heavy waterlogging was witnessed in several towns and cities, while roads were closed in rural areas Friday morning due a heavy spell



due to heavy rains during the day, he added.

Ahmedabad, June 30: Heavy rains lashed several parts of Gujarat with some areas receiving more than 200 mm showers in the last 30 hours, while rain-related incidents claimed the lives of nine persons over the past two days in the state, an official said.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast heavy showers for isolated parts of different districts Saturday and light to moderate rain Sunday and Monday, he said.

Normal life was thrown out of gear at several places in Junagadh, Jamnagar, Morbi, Kutch, Surat and Tapi districts

Fifteen talukas received more than 40 mm rainfall between 6 am and 12 pm on Friday, while Jamnagar taluka of Jamnagar district received 177 mm rainfall, which resulted in heavy waterlogging in Jamnagar city in the same period, it stated.

In the forecast issued Friday, the IMD has predicted heavy rains at isolated places in Gandhinagar, Kheda, Ahmedabad, Anand, Vadodara, Bharuch, Surat, Navsari and Valsad districts Saturday and light to moderate rain in different parts of the state on Sunday and Monday.

Nine people have lost their lives in rain-related incidents in the last two days, the SEOC release stated. Four children were killed in Panchmahal district and two in Anand in incidents of wall collapse Thursday, it said. Apart from this, two men drowned in Jamnagar and Arvali districts Thursday, while a woman drowned in flood waters in Lathi taluka of Amreli district Friday, the report said.

Ordinance row: Delhi govt moves SC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 30: Delhi's AAP government has moved the Supreme Court challenging the constitutionality of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023, promulgated May 19, saying it violates the scheme of federal, democratic governance entrenched for the NCTD in Article 239AA and is manifestly arbitrary.



THE CENTRE HAD MAY 19 BROUGHT AN ORDINANCE TO SET UP A PERMANENT AUTHORITY KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL CAPITAL CIVIL SERVICE AUTHORITY

THE DELHI GOVT STRESSED IN ITS PLEA THAT THE ORDINANCE DESTROYS THE SCHEME OF FEDERAL, WESTMINSTER-STYLE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE THAT IS CONSTITUTIONALLY GUARANTEED FOR NCTD IN ARTICLE 239AA

The plea, filed through advocates Shadan Farasat and Hrishika Jain, submitted that ordinance wrests control over civil servants serving in the Government of NCT of Delhi (GNCTD), from the GNCTD to the unelected Lt Governor (LG).

"It does so without seeking to amend the Constitution of India, in particular Article 239AA of the Constitution, from which flows the substantive requirement that power and control in respect of services be vested in the elected government," it said.

The Delhi government stressed that the ordinance destroys the scheme of federal, Westminster-style democratic governance that is constitutionally guaranteed for NCTD in Article 239AA. "The principle of collective responsibility in a democracy - incorporated in Article 239AA(6) - requires that the elected government be vested with control

over officials posted in its domain," it said.

On May 11, a five-judge constitution bench of the Supreme Court ruled that it is ideal to hold that a democratically-elected Delhi government should have control over its officers and the LG is bound by the advice of the elected government in everything other than public order, police, and land.

The top court stressed that if the government is not able to control and hold to account the

Kejriwal to burn ordinance copies

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will burn copies of the Centre's Ordinance at the party office in central Delhi July 3, the AAP said Friday. Addressing a press conference, Aam Aadmi Party chief spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj said copies of the ordinance will be burned across the 70 assembly constituencies of the national capital. On July 3, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, cabinet ministers and all the MLAs will burn copies of the black ordinance at the ITO party office. Then, the copies of the ordinance will be burned July 5 across all 70 parliamentary constituencies. Between July 6 and July 13, the copies of the ordinance will be set on fire at every nook and corner of Delhi.

lance and other incidental matters. However, in case of difference of opinion, the decision of the LG shall be final.

The Delhi government, in its petition, said, "Ordinance is an unconstitutional exercise of executive fiat that i.) violates the scheme of federal, democratic governance entrenched for the NCTD in Article 239AA; ii.) is manifestly arbitrary; legislatively overrules reviews a Constitution Bench judgment of this court dated May 11..... without altering its basis, which was that accountability of civil servants to the elected arm of the government, and the elected government's control over the civil service, is a substantive mandate of the model of governance envisaged by the Constitution, including for the NCT of Delhi under Article 239AA".

The plea contended that Article 239AA of the Constitution is a sui

generis provision in that it constitutionally entrenches for NCTD a Westminster-style democracy, to fulfil the popular, regional, and democratic aspirations of the people of Delhi.

"The Impugned Ordinance directly violates this scheme of federal, democratic governance incorporated in Article 239AA and, specifically, the principle of 'collective responsibility' incorporated in Article 239AA (6), it said.

The Delhi government sought a direction quashing the ordinance and also quashing Section 3A of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991 as introduced by the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance 2023, as unconstitutional.

On May 20, the Centre had also moved the Supreme Court seeking review of May 11 judgment.

PULSES PRICE HIKE

Gujarat grapples with soaring tur dal prices

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ahmedabad, June 30: Gujarat is impacted by the pulses price surge. According to the latest market rates, the average wholesale price of arhar (turred gram) in Gujarat stands at ₹8,335 per quintal (as on Friday). The retail price is even higher, reaching ₹169 per kg.



The tight market conditions, characterised by insufficient supply, have exacerbated the situation. Although the arrival of imported dal is expected in the near future, its impact on the market is predicted to be minimal. As a result, retail prices continue to climb.

Several factors have contributed to the shortage of tur dal in the market. Firstly, farmers are gradually shifting away from pulses cultivation to high-value cash crops, leading to a decrease in production. Additionally, unseasonal rains also affected the crop.

Early projections from the Union Agriculture Ministry indicate that tur dal production

is expected to be 9.8 per cent lower than the previous year, with significant damage reported in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana and Madhya Pradesh.

Furthermore, ground reports suggest that tur production in the Saurashtra region is comparatively low, intensifying the price surge within the state's market.

As a result, consumers are grappling with the impact of soaring tur dal prices, adding to their financial burdens.

The Central government's decision to sell pulses from the buffer stock offers a glimmer of hope for the consumers, as it aims to address the pulses price hike issue. However, the market conditions and various external factors continue to pose challenges, necessitating a comprehensive and sustainable approach to stabilise prices and ensure a steady supply of pulses in Gujarat and across the country.

Currently, tur dal is being sold at a steep rate in several states across the country, with consumers shelling out around ₹160 to ₹170 per kg.

Farmer saves cow from becoming lioness' lunch



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Veraval, June 30: A video showing a farmer saving his cow from the clutches of a lioness in Gujarat's Gir Somnath district went viral Friday.

The incident took place near Alidar village in Kodinar taluka, 65 km from here, said BJP leader and Keshod municipality member Vivek Kotadiya who shared the video on Twitter.

The district is home to the Gir wildlife sanctuary which has a sizable population of Asiatic lions.

The video, shot from a car's window, showed a cow trying to escape from the lioness which had gripped her. As the cow dragged the predator across the

road, the lioness tried to bite its neck.

The owner of the cow arrived on the spot at this moment and tried to scare away the wild animal by shouting. With the lioness still refusing to let go of its prey, he picked up a stone and walked towards the two animals. Seeing him coming closer, the lioness released the cow from its clutches and scooted away in the roadside bushes.

Range Forest Officer Ashok Amin said the incident took place on the outskirts of Alidar village Thursday. "Lions have made the area surrounding Alidar their permanent home. Videos showing lions roaming around human settlements surface regularly," he told reporters.

2 sealed bottles of liquor allowed in Delhi Metro

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 30: Two sealed bottles of alcohol per person is permitted to be carried inside Delhi Metro, officials said Friday.

However, drinking of alcohol inside metro premises is still strictly prohibited, they said.

Carrying of alcohol was banned in the Delhi Metro till recent except on the Airport Express Line, the DMRC said in a statement in response to a query from PTI.

However, subsequently, a committee comprising officials from the CISF and DMRC have reviewed the list and as per the revised list, two sealed bottles of alcohol per person is allowed to be carried on the Delhi Metro at par with the provisions on the Airport Express Line, it said.

Metro passengers are requested to maintain proper decorum while travelling, the DMRC said.

In case, any passenger is found behaving in an indecent manner under the influence of alcohol, suitable action will be taken against them under the relevant provisions of law, officials said.

CENTENARY FETE

PM refers to DU's popular food joints

The North and South Campus of Delhi University are known for their hangout spots that are frequented not only by students but also others

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 30: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday referred to DU's popular food joints like 'Patel Chest ki Chai' and Chankyapuri's momos, while emphasising the need to keep some things the way they are.

Addressing students at the Delhi University's centenary celebrations, the PM said the event has brought together all present and past students for them to indulge in evergreen discussions over memories of Kamla Nagar, Hudson Line and Mukherjee Nagar.

Two DU people can spend hours discussing the memories related to Kamla Nagar, Hudson Lane and Mukherjee Nagar and Satya Niketan, said Modi as he praised the university for keeping its value alive for 100 years.

Addressing the valedictory ceremony, he spoke about universities setting a roadmap for



themselves with a focus on innovations. While referring to some popular hangout joints of students, the prime minister said, "Don't change everything completely. Leave some things like they are. The tea and noodles served at Patel Chest in North Campus, Momos of Chanakya in South Campus - you have to ensure that their taste should not change."

Students in the audience cheered and clapped when the PM referred to the food joints.

The North and South Campus of Delhi University are known for their hangout spots that are frequented not only by students but also others.

Prime Minister Modi took a metro ride to reach Delhi University. During his journey, he interacted with students.

During his address, PM Modi made light-hearted statements about college life and the discussions between friends

"The pleasure of coming to the campus is only when you come

with your colleagues. Two friends go on gossiping, will talk about the world, and will not leave anything from Israel to the Moon. Which film did you see... that series is good on OTT... did you see that reel or not... there is a vast sea of talks," he said.

"So, just like you, I have reached here today, chatting with my young friends from Delhi Metro. I came to know some stories in that conversation, and I also got a lot of interesting information," the PM added.



Commuters during Monsoon rainfall in New Delhi



Sadhus wait to get themselves registered for the Amarnath Yatra 2023 at Ram Mandir base camp in Jammu



Demonstrators protest outside of the Supreme Court in Washington after the top court struck down affirmative action in college admissions, saying race cannot be a factor



Riot police officers patrol as smoke billows from burnt vehicles on the third night of protests sparked by the fatal police shooting of a 17-year-old driver in the Paris suburb of Nanterre, France



Supporters of Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh gather to stop him from going to Rajbhawan to resign as Chief Minister, in Imphal. Later, Singh clarified that he will not resign from the post



A security personnel keeps vigil at the Baltal yatri base camp set up for the Amarnath Yatra in Ganderbal district of central Kashmir. The 62-day long Amarnath Yatra will commence July 1, 2023



People at a flooded area after heavy monsoon rains in Junagarh, Gujarat



Muslim worshippers throng the pathway leading to iconic Haji Ali Dargah on the second day of Eid-al-Adha (Bakrid), in Mumbai

national



India's rich education system is the carrier of its prosperity
NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

GOVT: TOMATO PRICES TO SUBSIDE IN 15 DAYS

Tomato prices are expected to cool down in the next 15 days with increase in supplies from producing centres and reach a normal level in a month, Consumer Affairs Secretary Rohit Kumar Singh said, as retail prices of the kitchen staple shot up over Rs 100 per kg in major cities



of the day quote

The reintroduction of strict reporting rules following the SEBI board's 28 June, 2023 meeting represents a public admission of guilt by the regulatory body
JAIRAM RAMESH | CONG GEN SECY

So, they (women) must get their equal rights... They must get justice and they must get dignity... It is not a religious issue... Ambedkar had said that this (UCC) is not religious issue. This is the issue of equal rights
PRAKASH JAVADEKAR | SENIOR BJP LEADER

Congress is the soul of India. Every worker of Congress represents our constitution. We are all ready to face any challenge. Today in AICC office I received feedback from our workers in an open discussion
MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | PRESIDENT, CONGRESS

In talks with Putin, Modi calls for dialogue



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 30: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday reiterated his call for dialogue and diplomacy to find a solution to the Ukraine conflict as he spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin over phone. In their talks, the two leaders reviewed progress in bilateral co-operation and exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest, the prime minister's office (PMO) said, adding that Putin informed Modi about the recent developments in Russia.

While discussing the situation in Ukraine, PM reiterated his call for dialogue and diplomacy, it said. Russia has been engaged in a conflict with Ukraine for over a year, with the western world rallying against Putin over the war.

'BIG FRIEND OF RUSSIA'

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin has called Prime Minister Narendra Modi "a big friend" of Russia and said his 'Make in India' campaign has had a "truly impressive effect" on the country's economy. Putin made these remarks Thursday at a forum in Moscow organised by Russia's Agency for Strategic Initiatives (ASI). "Our friends in India and our big friend, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, launched the 'Make in India' initiative several years ago. It has had a truly impressive effect on the Indian economy. It would do no harm to emulate what is working well, even if it was not us but our friends who created it," the president was quoted as saying by the RT News. Crediting Indian leadership for creating an effective model to develop local manufacturing capabilities and woo foreign investors, Putin emphasised the need to think about "making our products more convenient and functional, with a modern look and properties", the report added. This was one of the major public appearances of President Putin, days after a Russian mercenary group launched a short-lived armed rebellion against him.

Both leaders agreed to remain in touch and continue to make efforts to further strengthen the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between the two countries. The telephonic conversation

between the two leaders took place days before the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit July 4 which they will attend virtually along with Chinese President Xi Jinping and other leaders.

Normal monsoon in 'warmer' July: IMD



AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 30: The monsoon is likely to be normal in July across the country, barring parts of eastern Uttar Pradesh and south Bihar, with above normal temperatures expected throughout the month, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Friday.

Addressing a virtual press conference here, IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said the July rains will help wipe out rainfall deficiencies witnessed in June.

As many as 16 states and union territories received deficient rainfall in June, with Bihar and Kerala reporting large deficits at 69 per cent and 60 per cent below normal respectively.

Large states such as Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana also received less rainfall than what is

normal for June, the first month of the south-west monsoon season.

"The monthly rainfall averaged over the country as a whole during July 2023 is most likely to be normal (94 to 106 per cent of LPA) and most probably within the positive side of the normal," Mohapatra said.

The long period average (LPA) of rainfall over the country during July based on the data of 1971-2020 is about 280.4 mm.

The phenomenon of warming of the equatorial Pacific Ocean, called the El Nino condition, is expected to develop in July. El Nino is known to suppress monsoon rainfall.

Mohapatra said during most of the recent El Nino years, June rainfall has been within the normal range. "In 16 of the 25 years when June rainfall was below normal, July rainfall has been reported normal," he said.

Yogi hands over houses built on land freed from Atiq Ahmad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prayagraj (UP), June 30: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Friday handed over keys of houses built on land freed from the illegal possession of slain gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmad under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) to 76 beneficiaries.

Ahmad along with his brother Ashraf was shot dead at point-blank range by three men posing as journalists during a media interaction in April.

Addressing the event, Adityanath said the previous government stood with the mafia when it came to freeing the land of the poor.

"I will ask all the development authorities to build houses for the poor on the land freed from the mafia so that the poor can get shelter and their faith in the government will increase," he said.

Adityanath said 54 lakh poor people in the state have been allotted houses under PMAY in the past six years and 10 lakh more houses will be allotted soon.

Six years ago, not a single poor person used to get a house under this scheme. The poor did not get houses because the state government at that time did not want to think about them. The central government used to write letters to provide accommodation, but the state government did not want to take the houses, he said.

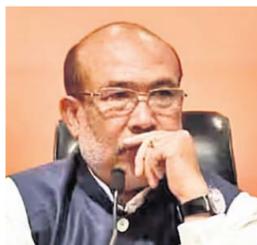
According to a Prayagraj Development Authority (PDA) official, four-storey towers housing 1 BHK flats have been built in the Lukarganj area here.

Each flat costs Rs 6 lakh and the beneficiaries paid Rs 3.5 lakh. The central government paid Rs 1.5 lakh, while the state government paid Rs 1 lakh for every house, the official said.

Each flat has a balcony, electricity, sewerage and parking facility. Adityanath also inaugurated and laid foundation stones of 226 development projects worth Rs 768 crore at the event.

MANIPUR MESS Won't quit, says Biren

As sporadic incidents of violence continued in Manipur, the state government on Friday extended the suspension of internet services for the 12th time till July 5



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Imphal, June 30: Seeking to put all speculations of a leadership change in Manipur at rest, Chief Minister N Biren Singh Friday said that he would not resign at this "crucial juncture".

"At this crucial juncture, I wish to clarify that I will not be resigning from the post of Chief Minister", he tweeted following day-long suspense.

Amidst around two-month long ethnic violence, since Friday morning, there was speculation and media reports that Biren Singh would resign from his post, but late Friday afternoon he was prevented from going to the Raj Bhavan to meet Governor Anusuiya Uikhey.

Biren Singh, accompanied by several ministers and leaders,



came out of his official bungalow at around 2.30 pm but when his cavalcade tried to move towards Raj Bhavan, thousands of people, mostly women, surrounded his car and forced him to return.

Some media even displayed Singh's purported resignation letter addressed to the Governor. Manipur Health and Family Welfare Minister and government spokesman Sapam Ranjan Singh said that the huge crowds prevented the Chief Minister from going to the Raj Bhavan.

"Chief Minister was upset over the incidents that took place during the past few days in Manipur. Now we are discussing the next course of action," he told the media.

Some women holding banners and placards told the media that they would not allow Singh to re-

- Before CM's clarification, thousands of demonstrators blocked the his convoy from proceeding towards Raj Bhavan
- CM N Biren Singh eventually told the women demonstrators that he was not resigning from the chief minister's post

Local media reported that the Chief Minister was supposed to meet the Governor at 10 am, then the meeting was deferred to 1 pm and then to 3 pm.

Raj Bhavan sources refused to say anything about the latest development or confirm about the Chief Minister's meeting with the Governor.

Biren Singh went to Delhi June 25 and met Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who had also visited Manipur for four days (May 29-June 1) and announced a series of measures. The measures include, constitution of a three-member Commission of Inquiry headed by former Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court Ajai Lamba, CBI inquiry in six cases, formation of a Joint Security Command headed by former CRPF DG Kuldip Singh and a relief package for the victims and the affected families.

K'taka HC dismisses Twitter petition

THE HIGH COURT HAS ALSO IMPOSED ₹50 LAKH PENALTY ON THE SOCIAL MEDIA GIANT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, June 30: The High Court of Karnataka Friday dismissed a petition filed by Twitter Inc, challenging several blocking and take-down orders issued by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, saying the company's plea was devoid of merits.

The single-judge bench of Justice Krishna S Dixit which dictated the operative portion of the judgement also imposed a cost of Rs 50 lakh on Twitter and ordered it to be paid to the Karnataka State Legal Services

Authority within 45 days.

Reading the operative portion, the HC said, in the above circumstances this petition being devoid of merits is liable to be dismissed with exemplary costs and accordingly it is. Petitioner is levied with an exemplary cost of Rs 50 lakh payable to the Karnataka State Legal Service Authority, Bengaluru, within 45 days. If delay is brooked, it attracts an additional levy of Rs 5,000 per day.

"I am convinced with contention of the Centre that they have powers to block tweets and block accounts," the judge said



while dismissing Twitter's petition.

The Court said that the judgement framed eight questions and only one of them; the locus standi to file the petition was answered in favour of Twitter

while the rest of the questions have been answered against it. This includes the plea of Twitter to issue guidelines for exercise of Section 69A of the Information Technology Act.

Twitter had challenged ten different 'blocking orders' issued by the Ministry between February 2, 2021 and February 28, 2022. The Government had directed the microblogging site to block 1,474 accounts, 175 tweets, 256 URLs and one hashtag. Twitter had claimed before the court while only challenging the orders pertaining to 39 of these URLs.

UCC SOON IN U'KHAND: CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, June 30: The Uniform Civil Code will soon be implemented in Uttarakhand, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said Friday after a committee of experts set up by the state government announced a draft is ready.

In a tweet, he said, "As per the promise made to the people of the state, today on June 30, the committee formed to prepare the draft of the Uniform Civil Code has completed its work."

"Soon #UniformCivilCode will be implemented in Devbhoomi Uttarakhand," Dhami said in the tweet in Hindi.

Earlier in the day, Supreme Court Justice (ret'd) Ranjana Prakash Desai, who heads the panel, told a press conference in Delhi that the draft of the proposed UCC for Uttarakhand is ready and would soon be submitted to the state government.

Desai said the panel has drafted the code taking into account all shades of opinion and looking into various statutes and laws, including the statutory framework in select countries.

Chief Minister Dhami at a literary programme here said the draft of the UCC has been prepared after taking into account the opinions of more than 2 lakh people over a period of more than one and a half years.

The draft has been prepared after talking to all organisations, institutions and other stakeholders, he said.

"Efforts have been made to draft a code which treats everyone equally, no matter which religion, caste, community or sect he or she belongs to. We will implement it as soon as we receive the draft," he said.

Warming climate pushing domestic violence in India, Nepal, Pak

A STUDY PREDICTS 21% SURGE IN FAMILY VIOLENCE IN THE REGION BY THE END OF THE 21ST CENTURY, WITH INDIA ESTIMATED TO EXPERIENCE THE HIGHEST INCREASE OF 23.5%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 30: Researchers have linked a 1 degree Celsius rise in the yearly average temperature with a 4.5 per cent increase in intimate partner violence (IPV) in a study of almost 1,95,000 ever-partnered women across three South Asian countries including India.

They have predicted a 21 per cent increase in family violence in the region by the end of the 21st century, with India estimated to experience the highest increase of 23.5 per cent among the three countries, the other two being Nepal and

Pakistan. Ever-partnered women are defined as those who have had sex, been married or been in a romantic relationship.

The study - 'Association of Ambient Temperature With the Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence Among Partnered Women in Low and Middle-Income South Asian Countries' - has been published in medical journal JAMA Psychiatry.

"Given the higher prevalence of IPV in South Asia compared to the global level, and the region's recent history of more frequent and intense heatwaves, we conducted this study to evaluate the



association of ambient temperature with IPV prevalence, including its types - physical, sexual, and emotional - among partnered women," corresponding author of the study Renjie Chen, Fudan University, China told PTI in an email.

The cross-sectional study included ever-partnered women

in the 15-49 age group from India, Nepal and Pakistan and used self-reported data from the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) Programme, collected from October 1, 2010 to April 30, 2018.

Active in more than 90 countries, the DHS programme is responsible for collecting and dis-

seminating accurate, nationally representative data on health and population in low and middle-income countries, routinely conducting surveys at intervals of 3-5 years.

Among the women surveyed, the study found, physical violence to be the most prevalent at 23 per cent, followed by emo-

tional at 12.5 per cent and sexual at 9.5 per cent.

Further, the study projects increases in physical and sexual violence stemming from hotter temperatures to 28.3 per cent and 26.1 per cent, respectively, far greater than the projected rise in emotional violence at 8.9 per cent, by modelling changes in IPV prevalence under various future climate change scenarios through the 2090s.

In the 2090s, India is estimated to experience the highest IPV prevalence increase at 23.5 per cent, followed by 14.8 per cent in Nepal and 5.9 per cent in Pakistan under an unlimited carbon emissions scenario.

Previous studies have shown higher ambient temperature to be linked to multiple forms of manifestations of violence such as intentional homicide, collective violence, and even regional conflicts.

international



We call for a widening of the UN Security Council to give more representation to Asian, African and Latin American. A majority of the world does not want to live according to Western rules
SERGEI LAVROV | FOREIGN MINISTER, RUSSIA

SYRIANS PUSHED TO POVERTY

The UN humanitarian chief has warned that the 12-year conflict in Syria has pushed 90 per cent of its population below the poverty line, and that millions face cuts in food aid next month because of a funding shortfall



of the day quote

The mutiny we saw at the weekend demonstrates that there are cracks and divisions within the Russian system. At the same time, it is important to underline that these are internal Russian matters

JENS STOLTENBERG | CHIEF, NATO

Haitians and our team, they're telling me it's never been worse than it is now — unprecedented hunger and malnutrition, grinding poverty, a crippled economy, resurgence of cholera, and a massive insecurity that creates a deadly downward spiral of violence

CATHERINE RUSSELL | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNICEF

Japan attaches great importance to the efforts of the IAEA, which serves an important role in promoting nuclear nonproliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy

YOSHIMASA HAYASHI | FOREIGN MINISTER, JAPAN

CLIMATE NEARS POINT OF NO RETURN: EXPERTS

In India, one of the most climate vulnerable regions, deaths were reported to have spiked as a result of sustained high temperatures, and extreme heat has been recorded in Spain, Iran and Vietnam, raising fears that deadly summer could become routine

REUTERS

Singapore, June 30: The target of keeping long-term global warming within 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) is moving out of reach, climate experts say, with nations failing to set more ambitious goals despite months of record-breaking heat on land and sea. As envoys gathered in Bonn in early June to prepare for this year's annual climate talks in November, average global surface air temperatures were more than 1.5C above pre-industrial levels for several days, the EU-funded Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said. Though mean temperatures had temporarily breached the 1.5C threshold before, this was the first time they had done so in the northern hemisphere summer that starts on June 1.

Sea temperatures also broke April and May records. "We've run out of time because change takes time," said Sarah Perkins-Kirkpatrick, a climatologist at Australia's University of New South Wales. As climate envoys from the two biggest greenhouse gas emitters prepare to meet next month, temperatures broke June records in the Chinese capital Beijing, and extreme heatwaves have hit the United States. Parts of North America were some 10C above the seasonal average this month, and smoke from forest fires blanketed Canada and the US East Coast in hazardous haze, with carbon emissions estimated at a record 160 million metric tons. Countries agreed in Paris in 2015 to try to keep long-term average temperature rises



within 1.5C, but there is now a 66% likelihood the annual mean will cross the 1.5C threshold for at least one whole year between now and 2027, the World Meteorological Organization predicted in May. **'QUADRUPLE WHAMMY'** High land temperatures have

We are really getting to the moment of truth. I am hoping that the sheer reality will help us change people's moves and change the politics

ANNALISA BRACCO | CLIMATOLOGIST, GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Australia's weather agency warned that Pacific and Indian ocean sea temperatures could be 3C warmer than normal by October. Global warming is the major factor, said Piers Forster, professor of climate physics at the University of Leeds, but El Nino, the decline in Saharan dust blowing over the ocean and the use of low-sulphur shipping fuels were also to blame. Thousands of dead fish have been washing up on Texan

beaches and heat-induced algal blooms have also been blamed for killing sea lions and dolphins in California. Warmer seas could also mean less wind and rain, creating a vicious circle that leads to even more heat, said Annalisa Bracco, a climatologist at the Georgia Institute of Technology. "The ocean is going to have a very slow response as it accumulates (heat) slowly but also keeps it for very long." Climate experts say the extent and frequency of extreme weather is increasing, and this year has also seen punishing droughts across the world, as well as a rare and deadly cyclone in Africa.

WORST NIGHT OF PROTESTS

RIOTS ROCK FRANCE

PROTESTS HAVE CONVULSED FRANCE FOR THE THIRD DAY AFTER POLICE SHOT DEAD A TEENAGER OF NORTH AFRICAN DESCENT AT A TRAFFIC STOP IN A PARIS SUBURB



The priority is to ensure national unity and the way to do it is to restore order
ELISABETH BORNE | PM, FRANCE

REUTERS

Paris, June 30: France's government was set to examine "all options" for restoring order Friday after nationwide unrest escalated overnight into the most destructive rioting since police shot and killed a teenager at a traffic stop. Hundreds of police were injured and hundreds of people arrested, authorities said, as rioters clashed with officers in towns and cities across France, with buildings and vehicles torched and stores looted.

including the working class suburb of Nanterre, where 17-year-old Nahel M. - who was of Algerian and Moroccan descent - was shot dead Tuesday. His death has fuelled long-standing complaints of police violence and systemic racism inside law enforcement agencies from rights groups and within the low-income, racially mixed suburbs around France's major cities.

Overnight videos on social media showed urban landscapes ablaze across the country. A tram was set alight in the eastern city of Lyon and 12 buses gutted in a depot in Aubervilliers, northern Paris. In Nanterre on the city's outskirts, protesters torched cars, barricaded streets and hurled projectiles at police following an earlier peaceful vigil held to pay tribute to the dead boy. In Geneva, the United Nations rights office emphasized the importance of peaceful assembly and urged French authorities to ensure that use of force by police is legal, proportional and non-discriminatory. "This is a moment for the country to seriously address the

deep issues of racism and racial discrimination in law enforcement," spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani said. Some western governments had Thursday warned their citizens in France to exercise caution. Americans "should avoid mass gatherings and areas of significant police activity," the US embassy said in a tweet, while UK authorities urged Britons to monitor the media, avoid protests and check advice when travelling. The unrest has revived memories of three weeks of nationwide riots in 2005 that forced then-president Jacques Chirac to declare a state of emergency. That wave of violence erupted in the Paris suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois following the death of two young men who ended up being electrocuted in a power substation as they hid from police.

600 ARRESTED AND 200 POLICE OFFICERS HURT
PM BORNE SAYS ALL OPTIONS FOR RESTORING ORDER ON TABLE
THIRD NIGHT OF UNREST ROCKS MAJOR FRENCH CITIES

Keep teens at home: Prez urges parents

French President Emmanuel Macron is urging parents to keep teenagers at home to quell rioting spreading across France and says social media are fueling copycat violence. After a second crisis meeting with senior ministers, Macron said Friday that social media are playing a "considerable role" in the spreading unrest triggered by the deadly police shooting of a 17-year-old. He said he wants social media such as Snapchat and TikTok to remove sensitive content and said that violence is being organised online. Of young rioters, he said: "We sometimes have the feeling that some of them are living in the streets the video games that have intoxicated them."

BLOW TO CAMPAIGN

SC rejects Biden's student debt relief

REUTERS

Washington, June 30: The US Supreme Court handed President Joe Biden a painful defeat Friday, blocking his plan to cancel \$430 billion in student loan debt - a move that had been intended to benefit up to 43 million Americans and fulfill a campaign promise.

The justices ruled against Biden in a 6-3 decision favoring six conservative-leaning states that objected to the policy. The court's action dealt blow to the 26 million US borrowers who applied for relief after Biden announced the plan in August 2022 and a political setback for the Democratic president. Conservative Chief Justice John Roberts, joined by the rest of the court's conservative members, wrote the ruling over a dissent from the court's three liberals. "From a few narrowly delineated situations specified by Congress, the secretary has expanded forgiveness to nearly every borrower in the country," Roberts said, referring to the U.S. education secretary.

Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and South Carolina challenged Biden's debt relief, as did two individual borrowers opposed to the plan's eligibility requirements. The court acted on its final day of rulings in its term that began in October. Twenty-six million U.S. borrowers applied for relief between when Biden announced the plan in August 2022 until last November, when lower courts blocked the plan.



Pak clinches crucial \$3bn bailout by IMF

In a major relief to cash-strapped Pakistan, the IMF has agreed to inject \$3 billion into the country's ailing economy after months-long negotiations that pushed it to the brink of default



REUTERS

Lahore, June 30: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reached a staff-level pact with Pakistan on \$3 billion in short-term financial help, the lender said, a decision long awaited by the South Asian nation which is teetering on the brink of default. The deal, subject to approval by the IMF board in July, came hours before the current agreement with the IMF expires later on Friday. Although essentially a bridge loan, it offers much respite to Pakistan, which is battling an acute balance of payments crisis and falling foreign exchange reserves.

up more than 8 cents at just above 70 cents in the dollar, according to Tradeweb data. The gains were most pronounced in shorter-dated bonds, reflecting lingering scepticism over the longer-term fiscal outlook for the country. With sky-high inflation and foreign exchange reserves barely enough to cover one month of controlled imports, analysts say Pakistan's economic crisis could have spiralled into a debt default in the absence of an IMF deal. The \$3 billion funding, spread over nine months, is higher than expected as it looks set to replace the remaining \$2.5 billion from a \$6.5 billion Extended Fund Facility longer-term bailout package agreed in 2019, which expires Friday. The IMF funding will also unlock other bilateral and multilateral external financing and debt rollovers, particularly from friendly countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which have already pledged around \$3 billion. "This will support near-term policy efforts and replenish gross reserves, with the aim of bringing them to more comfortable levels," the IMF said. Pakistan's annual inflation rate hit a fresh record high in May of almost 38 per cent. Deadly clashes between supporters of Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan and police have also rattled financial markets. Pakistan had been barely managing its external liabilities as its foreign reserves hovered around \$4 billion while experts warned of default in coming months. The country's economy has faced several challenges in recent times, including devastating floods last year and commodity price hikes following the war in Ukraine.

The so-called Stand-by Arrangement (SBA) will enable Pakistan to achieve economic stability, and put the country "on the path of sustainable economic growth, God willing," Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said. Pakistan will receive formal documents on the deal later Friday from the IMF, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar told Reuters, which he said he would "sign, seal and return by tonight." He had said Thursday the deal was expected any time soon. Pakistan's sovereign dollar bonds were trading higher after the announcement, with the 2024 issue enjoying the biggest gains,

UK backs permanent seat for India at UNSC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, June 30: The UK government has reiterated its call for reform of the United Nations as one of its top transnational priorities and supported India's bid for permanent membership of the powerful Security Council. India has been at the forefront of the years-long efforts to reform the UN Security Council (UNSC), saying it rightly deserved a place as a permanent member of the United Nations. Currently, the UNSC has five permanent members - China, France, Russia, the UK and the US. Only a permanent member has the power to veto any sub-



stantive resolution. In a speech at a conference at the Chatham House think tank in London Thursday, UK Foreign Secretary James Cleverly called for a reinvigorated multilateral system that is more reflective of the times. He pointed out that the world's economic centre of gravity is shifting away from the Euro-Atlantic and towards the Indo-Pacific but the multilateral institutions are yet to catch up.

In workaholic Japan, agents help people quit

In the country 'job leaving agents' help people escape the awkwardness of quitting which is considered shameful

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tokyo, June 30: In Japan, a nation reputed for loyalty to companies and lifetime employment, people who job-hop are often viewed as quitters. And that's considered shameful. Enter "taishoku daiko," or "job-leaving agents." Dozens of such services have sprung up in the last several years to help people who simply want out. "Imagine a messy divorce," says Yoshihito Hasegawa, who

heads Tokyo-based TRK, whose Guardian service last year advised 13,000 people on how to resign from their jobs with minimal hassles. People often stick with jobs even when they're unhappy, feeling as if they are "kamikaze" sacrificing their lives for the greater good, he said, comparing his clients to pilots sent on suicide missions in the closing days of World War II. "It's the way things are done, the same way younger people are taught to honor older people," he said. "Quitting would be a betrayal." Founded in 2020, Guardian, a taishoku daiko service, has helped various people, mostly in their 20s and 30s, escape less painfully from jobs they want

to quit. That includes people who worked in a Shinto shrine, a dentist's office and law firm to convenience store and restaurant staff. Nearly half of Guardian's clients are women. Some work for a day or two and then discover promises of pay or work hours were false.



Guardian charges 29,800 yen (\$208) for its service, which includes a three-month membership in a union that will represent an employee in what can quickly turn into a delicate and awkward negotiation process in Japan. Generally, Guardian's clients have worked for the small and

medium-sized businesses that employ most Japanese. Sometimes people working for major companies seek help. In many cases, bosses have a huge say over how things are run and sometimes simply refuse to let a worker leave, especially since many places are shorthanded to begin with, given the Japan's chronic labor shortage. Those tackling the quitting battle who were interviewed for this story used terms like "fanatics," "bullies" and "mini-Hitlers" to describe such bosses. Conformist "workaholic" pressures in Japanese culture are painfully heavy. Workers don't want to be seen as troublemakers, are reluctant to question authority and may be afraid to speak up.

business

of the day quote

Tur is giving us trouble. All-India average retail price of tur is up by 25 per cent to ₹128.66 per kg, when compared to last year's level. But it will start cooling down after import begins

ROHIT KUMAR SINGH | SECRETARY, CONSUMER AFFAIRS

With this policy, we aim to create an environment that not only recognises the needs of transgender employees but also champions their well-being and personal growth

PRIYA AGARWAL HEBBAR | NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VEDANTA

Our main conclusion is that by 2030, the amount of money spent on apps is likely to be around \$800 billion. Given that the Indian economy is expected to be around \$6600 billion, the app spending is likely to be around 12 per cent of the GDP

REKHA JAIN | SENIOR VISITING PROFESSOR, ICRIER

SHORT TAKES

Apple breaches \$3trn milestone

California: Apple Inc's market capitalisation Friday breached the \$3 trillion mark for the first time since January last year, as investors bet on the iPhone maker's ability to grow its revenue even as it explores new markets such as virtual reality. Shares of Apple, which is also the world's most valuable-listed company, were up 1.3% at \$191.99 in morning trading. Apple's market value briefly peaked above \$3 trillion in intra-day trading January 3, 2022, before closing the session just below that mark.

HDFC merger today

New Delhi: Housing finance major HDFC will merge with its subsidiary HDFC Bank on Saturday as their respective boards have cleared the proposal Friday. Following the reverse merger, HDFC will cease to exist from July 1 onwards. Termed as the biggest transaction in the history of India Inc, HDFC Bank April 4, 2022, agreed to take over its parent, which is the largest pure-play mortgage lender, in a \$40-billion all-stock deal, creating a financial services titan with a combined asset of over Rs 18 lakh crore. The combined shares of the HDFC twins will have the highest weighting on the indices at close to 14 per cent, much higher than the present index heavyweight Reliance Industries with a 10.4 per cent weightage.

Avg airfares dip

New Delhi: The overall average price of air tickets on various routes, including Delhi-Mumbai, has declined, according to data compiled by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). Among 10 routes, the average airfares on the Delhi-Mumbai route dropped 74 per cent on June 29 compared to June 6, as per the data compiled by the DGCA's Tariff Monitoring Unit. During the same period, the decline was 70 per cent on the Delhi-Pune route, 72 per cent on the Delhi-Ahmedabad route and 36 per cent on the Delhi-Srinagar route.

WB okays \$1.5bn

New Delhi: The World Bank has cleared \$1.5 billion financing to accelerate India's low carbon transition. In a statement issued on Friday, the global lender said the funding will incentivise India's transition towards low-carbon energy by scaling up renewable energy, developing green hydrogen and stimulating climate finance for low-carbon energy investments.



We are seeing a more balanced growth in India and have increased our weekly flights to 56 compared to the pre-pandemic level

SEAN DOYLE | CHIEF, BRITISH AIRWAYS

HDFC'S PAREKH HANGS HIS BOOTS

HDFC Chairman Deepak Parekh Friday announced he would be hanging his boots in conjunction with the merger of HDFC and HDFC Bank after spending 46 years at the Corporation. "It is my time to hang my boots with both anticipation and hope for the future," Parekh said



STOCKS SHINE D-St party continues

FOREIGN FUND INFLOWS AND A FIRM TREND IN THE GLOBAL MARKETS FURTHER BOLSTERED SENTIMENT AND PUSHED INDICES TO FRESH PEAKS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 30: Equity benchmark indices scaled fresh all-time closing highs Friday, propelled by intense buying in index heavyweights Infosys, HDFC twins, Reliance Industries and TCS amid healthy macro-economic indicators.

Rallying for the third straight day, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 803.14 points or 1.26 per cent to settle at its lifetime closing high of 64,718.56. During the day, it zoomed 853.16 points or 1.33 per cent to reach its record intra-day peak of 64,768.58.

The NSE Nifty climbed 216.95 points or 1.14 per cent to end at a record high of 19,189.05. During the day, it rallied 229.6 points or 1.21 per cent to hit its all-time intra-day peak of 19,201.70.

On a weekly basis, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,739.19 points or 2.76 per cent this week, and the Nifty climbed 523.55 points or 2.80 per cent.

"Investors remain positive about the long-term prospects of the domestic market due to healthy macroeconomic indicators while global cues are also improving as concerns over a recession in the US eases. The US economy showed much stronger-than-expected growth in the first quarter than previously thought, according to a big upward revision Thursday from the Commerce Department," said Devarsh Vakil, Deputy Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

Mahindra & Mahindra was the best performer in the Sensex



Sensex jumps 1.26% to settle at lifetime high of 64,718.56

Nifty climbs 1.14% to end at a record high of 19,189.05

Domestic equities continued their northbound journey after a day's break, supported by positive global data, healthy FII buying and strong progress in monsoon

SIDDHARTHA KHEMKA | HEAD (RETAIL RESEARCH), MOTILAL OSWAL FINANCIAL SERVICES

pack, rising over 4 per cent, followed by IndusInd Bank, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, Maruti, Larsen & Toubro, Tech Mahindra, Wipro, Power Grid, HDFC Bank, HDFC, Bajaj Finance and Reliance Industries.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.67 per cent and smallcap index advanced 0.51 per cent.

Among the indices, IT jumped 2.34 per cent, teck rallied 2.13 per cent, auto (1.82 per cent), capital goods (1.73 per cent), industrials (1.31 per cent), financial services (0.94 per cent), consumer discretionary (0.85 per cent) and energy (0.76 per cent).

Commodities emerged as the only laggard.

The rupee closed flat at 82.03 (provisional) against the US dollar in a restricted trade Friday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.61 per cent to \$74.79 a barrel.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) bought equities worth

₹12,350 crore Wednesday, according to exchange data. In Asian markets, Seoul and Shanghai ended in the green, while Tokyo and Hong Kong settled lower. Equity markets in Europe were trading with gains. The US markets ended largely with gains in the overnight trade Thursday.

Mcap of BSE-listed firms at new high

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms touched an all-time high of ₹296.48 lakh crore Friday as the benchmark Sensex hit its new life time peak amid bullish investor sentiments. Thanks to the rally in equities, the market capitalisation (mcap) of BSE-listed companies jumped to ₹2,96,48,153.59 crore. In three days, investors wealth increased by ₹5,80,740.05 crore. On June 21, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms had hit an all-time high of ₹2,94,36,594.50 crore.

Govt raises interest rates on select small saving schemes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 30: The government Friday raised interest rates on select saving schemes by up to 0.3 per cent for the July-September quarter in line with the high-interest rates in the banking system.

The highest increase of 0.3 per cent was for the five-year recurring deposit (RD). During the second quarter of the current fiscal, RD holders would get 6.5 per cent against the existing 6.2 per cent, as per the finance ministry notification.

With the revision, a one-year term deposit with post offices will now earn 0.1 percentage higher point at 6.9 per cent and for the two years tenor - 7 per cent (up from 6.9 per cent).

However, interest rates on term deposits for three years and five years have been retained at 7 per cent and 7.5 per cent.

The interest rates for popular PPF and savings deposits are retained at 7.1 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively.

The interest rate on the National Savings Certificate (NSC) remained unchanged at 7.7 per cent for July 1 to September 30, 2023, period.

The new rate for the girl child savings scheme Sukanya Samridhi too stood at the existing level of 8 per cent.

The interest rate on the senior citizen savings scheme and Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP) is 8.2 per cent and 7.5 per cent, respectively.

Interest rates were increased in the last (January-March) quarter as well as the April-June quarter. Interest rates for small savings schemes are notified on a quarterly basis.

There is no increase in interest rate for Monthly Income Scheme, and this will earn 7.4 per cent for the investors.

The Reserve Bank since May has raised the benchmark lending rate by 2.5 per cent to 6.5 per cent, prompting banks to raise interest rates on deposits as well.

April-May fiscal deficit at 11.8% of annual target

GOVT AIMS TO END THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR WITH A BUDGET DEFICIT OF 5.9%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 30: The central government's fiscal deficit stood at ₹2.1 lakh crore or 11.8 per cent of the full-year budget estimates at May-end 2023, according to official data.

The fiscal deficit was 12.3 per cent of 2022-23 BE a year ago.

Fiscal deficit is the difference between the total expenditure and revenue of the government. It is an indication of the total borrowings that are needed by the government.

In actual terms, the deficit was ₹2,10,287 crore at May-end 2023, as per the data of the Controller General of Accounts (CGA).

In the Union Budget, the government aimed to bring down the fiscal deficit during the current financial year 2023-24 to 5.9 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP).

The deficit was 6.4 per cent of the GDP in 2022-23 against the earlier estimate of 6.71 per cent.

Unveiling the revenue-expenditure data of the Union government for the first two months of 2023-24, CGA said the net tax revenue was ₹2.78 lakh crore or 11.9 per cent of the BE.

Its total expenditure was ₹6.25 lakh crore or 13.9 per cent of the estimates presented in the Union Budget for the current fiscal.

Commenting on the CGA data, Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, Head - Research & Outreach,

ICRA said that while tax revenues reported a contraction of 9.6 per cent, non-tax revenues surged by 173 per cent, boosted by the RBI dividend, amidst a 4.3 per



cent decline in revenue expenditure, and a 56.7 per cent YoY expansion in capex.

While fiscal concerns appear limited and the RBI's monetary policy committee seems unlikely to raise policy rates further in the immediate term, higher state government borrowings in the coming quarter could keep the 10-year G-sec yield in a range of 7.0-7.2 per cent in the remainder of the first half of the fiscal, she added.

The CGA data showed ₹1,18,280 crore has been transferred to states as devolution of share of taxes by the central government up to May 2023.

Of the total expenditure incurred by the central government, ₹4.58 lakh crore was on the revenue account and ₹1.67 lakh crore on the capital account. Out of the total revenue expenditure, ₹1.1 lakh crore was towards interest payments and ₹55,316 crore on major subsidies.

As per the Budget, the fiscal deficit at March-end 2024 is estimated at ₹17.86 lakh crore.

The central government received ₹4.15 lakh crore (15.3 per cent of corresponding BE 2023-24 of total receipts) up to May 2023.

External debt rises to \$624.7bn

The external debt rose by \$5.6 billion from \$619.1 billion at end-March 2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 30: India's external debt rose marginally to \$624.7 billion annually at end-March 2023, although the debt-GDP ratio declined, as per a Reserve Bank data released Friday.

"The external debt to GDP ratio declined to 18.9 per cent at end-March 2023 from 20 per cent at end-March 2022," said the Reserve Bank's data on India's External Debt as at end-March 2023.

Valuation gains due to the appreciation of the US dollar compared to the Indian rupee and

major currencies such as yen, SDR, and euro were placed at \$20.6 billion.

"Excluding the valuation effect, external debt would have increased by \$26.2 billion instead of \$5.6 billion at end-March 2023 over end-March 2022," the central bank added.

RBI also said US dollar-denominated debt remained the largest component of India's external debt, with a share of 54.6 per cent at end-March 2023, followed by debt denominated in the Indian rupee (29.8 per cent), SDR (6.1 per cent), yen (5.7 per cent), and the euro (3.2 per cent).

Loans remained the largest component of external debt, with a share of 32.5 per cent, followed by currency and deposits (22.6 per cent), trade credit and advances (19.9 per cent) and debt securities.

Infra growth slows down to 4.3%

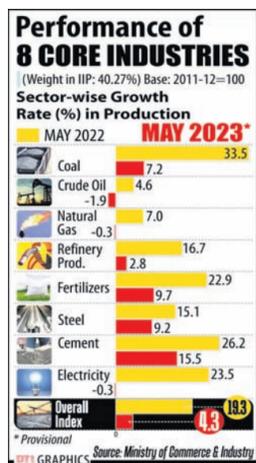
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 30: The growth of eight key infrastructure sectors slowed down to 4.3 per cent in May 2023 due to a decline in the production of crude oil, natural gas and electricity, according to the data released by the government Friday.

The core sector growth was 19.3 per cent in May 2022, while in April 2023, the key infra sectors recorded a growth rate of 4.3 per cent.

During April-May this fiscal, the output growth of these eight sectors slowed down to 4.3 per cent against 14.3 per cent in the year-ago period, the data showed.

Commenting on the numbers, Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, Head - Research & Outreach,



ICRA Ltd, said the growth remained broadly stable in May.

FUNDING WINTER

NO NEW UNICORN IN INDIA IN H1 OF 2023

Several high-flying Indian startups, including Byju's, Swiggy and PharmEasy, have experienced a dramatic downward adjustment in their valuations

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 30: There was no new unicorn in India in the first half of 2023 as startup funding plunged more than 70 per cent in the January-June period from a year ago, signalling that the funding winter is here to stay as several top unicorns continue to face economic downturn.

The first six months witnessed Indian startups raise just \$5.48 billion, from \$19.5 billion they raised during the same period last year, according to data by market intelligence firm Tracxn shared with IANS.

In the first half this year, the startup ecosystem saw 546 deal

rounds, a significant drop from the total number of rounds 1,570 in the same period last year.

If we look at stage-wise, the seed rounds saw \$349 million investments (383 deals), early stage deals saw \$1.36 billion (123) and late stage deal rounds, \$3.77 billion (40 deals).

In comparison, the first half of 2022, which witnessed 19 unicorns, had logged seed-round investments at \$1.08 billion, early-stage rounds at \$5.08 billion and late-stage funding at \$13.1 billion in total.

In H1 2023, the leading investors were IPV and Y

Combinator and the largest funding round (in April) was reported by edtech unicorn Byju's at \$700 million.

Leading sectors were consumer (\$1.81 billion), fintech (\$1.41 billion) while Bengaluru topped the city chart with \$2.87 billion investments in startups, according to the data.

In the first quarter of this year, Indian startups raised a total of \$2.8 billion, a massive 75 per cent lower compared to the same period in the previous year (\$11.9 billion), as rising inflation and interest rates continue to impact investments significantly.

The funding volumes con-



tracted due to the reduction in late-stage funding, which declined by 79 per cent in the first quarter (\$1.8 billion) com-

pared to Q1 2022.

The slowdown comes as many late-stage investors, previously prolific backers of Indian startups, have taken a step back. Tiger Global has done just one deal in India this year, according to Tracxn and Crunchbase, whereas SoftBank (which deployed over \$3 billion in India in 2021) and Insight Partners (which backed several late-stage startups last year and in 2021) wrote virtually no checks.

Instead, SoftBank has been bulking up liquidity. For the last several weeks, SoftBank has been selling a portion of its Paytm stake each day, according to a market source familiar with the matter.



For the week ended June 23, the foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by \$2.212 billion to \$525.44 billion, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by the RBI Friday.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves dropped \$745 million to \$44.304 billion, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up by \$85 million to \$18.334 billion, the apex bank said.

The country's reserve position with the IMF was down by \$29 million to \$5.12 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.

India aim for final berth

BLUE TIGERS BANK ON CHHETRI MAGIC TO OVERCOME LEBANON IN SAFF CHAMPIONSHIP SEMIFINAL



MATCH SCHEDULE

Kuwait vs Bangladesh 3.30 pm
India vs Lebanon 7.30 pm

Telecast: DD Bharati

worry. They are entering the semis with an all-win record in the group stage, having warded off Bhutan, Maldives and Bangladesh. On the other hand, India were stretched by Nepal and Kuwait after a relatively easy outing against Pakistan.

India will miss the presence of their head coach Igor Stimac on the touchline after the Croatian was Friday handed a two-match ban for his red-card offence after he argued with the match officials during the home side's 1-1 draw against Kuwait. He was also fined USD 500 as the SAFF Disciplinary Committee deemed it a fit case for suspending him for more than one match.

petitive world of football and India will have to be at their absolute best to beat their West Asian rivals, whose quick counter-attacks can be a thing of

CHHETRI UNSURE OF HIS FAREWELL MATCH

Bangalore: India skipper and mercurial striker Sunil Chhetri Friday played down the talks about his retirement saying he has not put any timeline for himself to bid adieu to the game.

Chhetri is 38 but still continues to be the spearhead of Indian attack, evidenced by the five goals he netted in the on-going SAFF Championship from three matches.

"I don't know when my last game for the country is going to be. It derives from the fact that I have never had long-term targets, I think about next match, next 10 days. It (retirement) may come at a day when probably I don't want to, as there are a lot of things, and I will be done. Till that time, I never think about it," Chhetri said on the eve of India's semifinal against Lebanon.

Chhetri, the second highest goal-scorer from Asia with 91

goals, said he has set some parameters for himself to determine about hanging his boots.

"Generally, there are some parameters that I think about... Whether I am contributing to the team or not, whether I am able to score goal or not, training as hard as I want or not. These are some of the markers that will tell me whether I am good for this team or not. The day I see that it is not there, I am done, I am gone because there is not any other motivation for me to play," said Chhetri.

"But sadly, I can't tell whether it (retirement) is in one year or six months. Fortunately or unfortunately my family is also guessing this, and whenever they mention this, jokingly, I tell my stats to them. The day I am finished with my petrol or diesel or electric or whatever I am done," he added.

TROPHY TOUR FLAGGED OFF

Foreign teams back after 27 years for Durand Cup football



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 30: Foreign teams will be back for the domestic season-opener Durand Cup, Asia's oldest football tournament, after a gap of 27 years, the organisers said Friday.

The tournament, the third oldest in the world, will witness participation of 24 teams including sides from Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh.

The trophy tour for the 132nd edition of Durand Cup, beginning in Kolkata August 3, was flagged off by the tournament organisers here Friday.

General Manoj Pande, the chief of the Army staff, along with Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari, and Kalyan Chaubey, president, All India Football Federation flagged off the trophy tour.

Besides Kolkata, which will also host the summit clash September 3, matches will be held in Guwahati, Kokrajhar and Shillong.

Indian talisman Sunil Chhetri won the coveted Durand Cup for the very first time in his glittering career, after his side Bengaluru FC defeated Mumbai

City FC 2-1 at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata last year.

Organised by the Indian Armed Forces, the Durand Cup has been the breeding ground for the country's best footballing talent over the years.

The inaugural edition took place in Shimla in 1888, when it started off as an Army Cup, open only to the British Indian Army troops in India.

The tournament is unique wherein the winning team walks away with three trophies - the Durand Cup (a rolling trophy and the original prize), the Shimla Trophy (also a rolling trophy and first given by the residents of Shimla in 1904) and the President's Cup (first presented by Dr Rajendra Prasad, India's first President, in 1956).

Over the next one month, the three trophies as part of a "Trophy Tour" will traverse the length and breadth of the country with appearance at some major cities like Shimla, Udhampur, Jaipur, Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, Bhubaneswar, Kokrajhar, Guwahati and Shillong before reaching Kolkata for the mega event.

Odisha FC name Floyd Pinto as assistant coach

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, June 30: Odisha FC have appointed Floyd Pinto as the assistant coach of the senior men's team on a two-year deal with an option to extend the contract by one year, the Indian Super League (ISL) franchise said Friday.

Pinto's coaching journey began with Kenkre FC after which he was appointed as the India U-19 head coach, where he led the squad to victory in the SAFF U-19 Championship.

This early success showcased his ability to nurture young talent and create a winning environment. His work with the youth setup demonstrated his commitment to developing players and providing them with the necessary skills to excel at the professional level.

Having gained recognition for his achievements with the national team, Pinto continued his coaching career with various clubs. He had stints at Roundglass Punjab FC, Northeast United FC, and Indian Arrows, where he left a lasting impact on the players he worked with.

Most recently, Pinto's tenure with Northeast United FC saw the team achieve a significant milestone by qualifying for the Super Cup semi-finals. His strategic approach and ability to bring out the best in his players played a crucial role in the team's success.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, June 30: India will bank on the striking prowess of their talismanic captain Sunil Chhetri to tame a formidable Lebanon in the SAFF Championship semifinal here Saturday.

India, the defending champions, entered the semis as the second-placed team behind Kuwait from Group A while Lebanon topped Group B in their march to the last-four stage.

Chhetri has been India's primary weapon in this tournament, as he has so far netted five goals from three matches to sit on top of the goal-scorers' list. The count of goals includes a hat-trick against Pakistan.

The sensational tumbling volley against Kuwait during India's last league match underlined his still burning desire to lead the team's charge. Chhetri will have to be on top of his game for India to hurdle over the Lebanon challenge, and this is not to say that others will have a lesser role.

The likes of Sahal Abdul Samad, Mahesh Singh and Udanta Singh will have to up the ante to support their skipper. All of them have had their moments in the tournament but

apart from Chhetri only Udanta and Mahesh have been able to find the target.

India will be served well if they also can chip in with goals as relying on one player, even if he is as great as Chhetri, against an organised side like Lebanon could prove costly.

The home side will also hope that their defence will continue to work like a well-oiled machine as they have conceded only one goal in the last nine matches.

All these factors might not have lost on the Indians as Lebanon are a rather familiar opponent. The first meeting between these two sides took place in 1977 and since then they have engaged with each other seven more times.

Overall, Lebanon hold a 3-2 edge over India with three matches ending in draws. However, India can take solace from the fact that their two recent outings against Lebanon fetched positive results. India held Lebanon to a goalless draw in the league match of the Intercontinental Cup earlier this month in Bhubaneswar, and beat them 2-0 in the title clash.

But, then, past records have little meaning in the ultra-com-

NOZ inch closer to victory with splendid show

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, June 30: North Zone (NOZ) hurtled ruthlessly towards a crushing win over North East Zone (NEZ) while rattling up 259/6 in their second innings, pathway to their giant 665-run lead on the third day of the Duleep Trophy quarterfinal here Friday.

Once that strong foundation was set, the North bowlers made optimum use of it to reduce North East to 58/3 at close. NEZ trail by 607 runs. But before their batsmen came into the party for the second time in the match, North bowlers led by Siddarth Kaul bundled out NEZ for 134 to gift them a lead of 406 runs.



Despite that massive first innings lead, North opted against enforcing follow-on. Ankit Kalsi and Prabhsimran Singh joined hands for a fine 83-run stand for the third wicket in a little over 15 overs. Just when they looked set for a bigger haul, Kalsi was ousted for 49 and later Prabhsimran too fell for 59.

Then NOZ captain Jayant Yadav (55 n o) and Ankit Kumar (70) further punished their rivals with a 113-run alliance for the sixth wicket.

SAURABH SHINES
Central Zone's Saurabh Kumar bagged four wickets to reduce East Zone to 69/6 and placed his side on the doorstep of a victory on the third day of their quarterfinal. Chasing an improbable 300 to win, East now need 231 runs more with four wickets remaining.

Along with Saurabh, the East Zone should be thankful to their batters too for this position of strength. In the second innings, they made 239 all out to construct an overall lead of 299 runs.



ASIAN CROWN RETAINED

The Indian men's kabaddi team pose with the Tricolour following their triumph at Asian Championships in Busan, South Korea, Friday. The Pawan Sehrawat-led side defeated Iran 42-32 in a high-voltage final to successfully defend their continental title. It was India's eighth title in the continental championships. Iran started aggressively, but the Indians were up to their tasks. India kept building pressure on the Iranians and produced another All-Out. India were leading 23-11 at halftime. Iran tried to make a comeback but they ended up conceding another all-out to trail 14-33. India maintained their stranglehold and sealed the issue. "With the score of 42-32 in the final match against Iran, Team India retains the Asian Kabaddi Championship Title! Kudos to the entire team. Well played boys," the Sports Authority of India (SAI) tweeted. India had beaten arch-rivals Pakistan in the final in the last edition held in Iran in 2017.

Dipika-Harinder clinches Asian mixed doubles title

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Huangzhou (China), June 30: The Indian duo of Dipika Pallikal Karthik and Harinderpal Singh Sandhu won the gold medal at the Asian Squash Mixed Doubles Championships here Friday.

Overall, India ended their campaign with two medals as the duo of Anahat Singh and Abhay Singh secured a bronze after losing a close semifinal battle to Ivan Yuen and Rachel Arnold of Malaysia.

Ivan and Rachel, however, were handed a defeat by the ex-

perienced Indian duo of Dipika and Sandhu who won a hard-fought contest 11-10, 11-8 to clinch the title.

It was not an easy road to the final for the Indian duo who overcame the top-seeded Malaysian pair of Aira Azman and Shafiq Kamal in the quarters, while in the semifinal they ousted Pakistan's Taryab Aslam and Faiza Zafar.

Iran, Hong Kong and hosts China participated in the six-nation tournament which was held for the first time here to promote the sport in the region.



Watchful Australia in cruise control in second Ashes Test

REUTERS

London, June 30: Australia took their time building on their first-innings lead on the third afternoon of the second Ashes Test on a grey Friday at Lord's, adding 130/2 by the time rain forced the umpires call off the play for the day, giving them a handsome lead of 221 with eight wickets left.

In contrast to England's swash-buckling approach with the bat, Australian openers Usman Khawaja (58 batting, 123b, 10x4) and David Warner (25, 76b, 2x4) put on 63 runs at a snail's pace before Warner was trapped lbw by a ball nipping in from Josh Tongue (1/21) in the 25th over.

While it is only the first time since 1971 that two sides' opening partnerships have scored more than 50 runs in the first three innings of a test match, these two teams' approaches to



USMAN KHAWAJA

the job could hardly be different. After Warner's departure, Marnus Labuschagne (30, 51b, 5x4) joined Khawaja at the middle for another 60 runs before

James Anderson (1/41) broke the stand getting rid of the No.3 batter in the 41st over. The Aussies were 130/2 in 45.4 overs when rain stopped play for the

day. At stumps, Steve Smith (6 batting) was giving Khawaja company at the middle.

Warner's 25 came off 76 balls, a glacial pace compared with England's Zak Crawley and Ben Duckett in the first innings. At the other end for Australia, Khawaja has now faced more balls in the first two Tests of an Ashes series in England than any batter since his compatriot Bill Brown all the way back in 1938. Australia will be looking to set England as big a target as they can, bidding for a 2-0 lead in the series.

Earlier in the day, England's last six wickets tumbled for just 47 runs in a helter-skelter hour and a half of play, taking the home side to 325 in reply to Australia's first innings score of 416.

The Australians picked up where they left off Thursday, bowling short and hostile to defensive fields. But in friendlier overcast and cool conditions

Blow for Aussies as injured Lyon ruled out

LONDON: Australia spinner Nathan Lyon will miss the rest of the second Ashes Test against England at Lord's after straining his right calf. Lyon was hurt while running to the ball after tea Thursday. He took England's first wicket. Cricket Australia called the strain "significant" in a statement on Friday during play on the third day. The statement didn't say how long he will be out for. "He will require a period of rehabilitation after this match is concluded," it said. "A decision regarding his availability for the remainder of the series will be made at the conclusion of the game." Lyon arrived at Lord's on crutches Friday, and on the field he received a consoling pat from England captain Ben Stokes after the Australia team huddle before play began. Lyon's injury leaves Australia down to three specialist bowlers, all quicks, plus allrounder Cameron Green. The spin options are specialist batters Travis Head, Steve Smith and Marnus Labuschagne. They have a combined 39 wickets compared to Lyon's 496. Australia has a ready-made spin backup in the squad in 22-year-old Todd Murphy, who made his debut on the tour of India in February and played all four Tests. Murphy looks set to make his Ashes debut in the third Test at Headingley starting next Thursday. Nevertheless, if Lyon's absence extends to the series, it will be a blow to Australia's hopes of winning the Ashes in England for the first time since 2001.

Friday, they dismissed England, who had resumed the day's play from 278/4, before the new ball became available.

BRIEF SCORES: Australia

416 & 130/2 (Usman Khawaja 58 batting, Marnus Labuschagne 30; Josh Tongue 1/21); England 325 (Mitchell Starc 3/88, Travis Head 2/17). Match to continue.