



## Kangana's reflection

Actor Kangana Ranaut shares on a podcast that politics is much harder than films

LEISURE | P2



## Record displacement

The UN refugee agency says the number of people forcibly displaced stands at a record 117.3 million by the end of last year

INTERNATIONAL | P10



## Indices' fresh peaks

Sensex and Nifty hit fresh record levels Thursday after lower inflation numbers raise hopes of an interest rate cut by the RBI

BUSINESS | P11



## Arshdeep's new goal

After a great show with the ball against the USA, pacer Arshdeep Singh says he is working on his batting also

SPORTS | P12

## SHORT TAKES

### Srimandir gates reopen

**Bhubaneswar:** All four gates of Srimandir in Puri were reopened for devotees in the presence of CM Mohan Charan Majhi and his Council of Ministers, Thursday morning. The three gates of the 12th shrine, which were closed since Covid-19 pandemic, were reopened after the 'Mangal Alati' rituals. The CM, his two deputies, ministers, several BJP MPs and party leaders visited the temple and offered prayers before Lord Jagannath. **P3**

### 6 dead, 1,500 stranded

**Gangtok:** At least six people were killed and 1,500-odd tourists stranded as massive landslides triggered by incessant rainfall caused devastation in northern Sikkim's Mangan district, officials said Thursday. A newly-constructed Bailey bridge at Sangkalang collapsed snapping the link between Mangan with Dzongu and Chungthang. **P8**

### NBW against Yedi

**Bangalore:** A court here Thursday issued a non-bailable warrant (NBW) against former CM and senior BJP leader BS Yediyurappa in a POCSO case. The Special Investigation Team of the CID had moved the First Fast Track court seeking an arrest warrant against him since he failed to appear for questioning Wednesday. Yediyurappa had sought time to join the probe. **P8**

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL

#### BHUBANESWAR AIRPORT



Tell intelligence to watch them. They're behaving weirdly. Here, opposition shares the stage with the ruling party!

### MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	76810.90	↑ 204.33
NIFTY	23398.90	↑ 75.95
DOLLAR	83.53	↑ ₹0.04
EURO	89.85	↓ ₹0.44
GOLD	₹71,065	↓ ₹905
SILVER	₹87,527	↓ ₹2918

### WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	40.2°C	39.2°C
Min Temp	28.5°C	28.0°C
Humidity	83%	83%
Rainfall	Trace	Nil

### FORECAST

PARTLY CLOUDY SKY



**CELEBRATING WOMANHOOD:** A woman and a child play a swing at Panthaniwas in Bhubaneswar, Thursday, as Odisha gears up to celebrate 'Raja' Friday

# NEET grace marks junked

1,563 CANDIDATES CAN SIT FOR RETEST JUNE 23, CENTRE TELLS SC

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 13:** Budgeting to the nationwide outrage over alleged irregularities in the NEET-UG, 2024, the Centre Thursday told the Supreme Court that it has cancelled the grace marks awarded to 1,563 candidates who took the undergraduate medical entrance test this year. These students will be given an option to either take a retest June 23 or forgo the compensatory marks given for loss of time.

Refusing to stall the counselling for NEET-UG scheduled to begin July 6, the SC made it clear that the admission of successful candidates into medical colleges and other institutions will be subject to the outcome of the petitions which have sought relief like cancellation of the examination held May 5 on grounds of question paper leak and other malpractices. A vacation Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta termed as 'fairly reasonable' the decision to cancel the grace marks awarded to 1,563 candidates on the recommendation of a panel set up to look into the grievances of the petitioners.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) conducts the all India pre-medical entrance test.

At the outset, lawyer Kanu Agarwal, appearing for the Centre and the NTA, said the committee set up to look into the grievances decided June 12 to 'allay the fears of the stu-



dent's'. It was of the view that the grace marks be withdrawn and replaced with an option of retest for these candidates which will be conducted June 23.

He said the panel was of the view that the award of grace marks on grounds of loss of time while taking the test resulted in a 'skewed situation' as it had to be limited only to the questions that remained un-attempted. After examining all aspects, the panel concluded that it would be appropriate to recommend cancellation of scorecards of these beneficiary candidates.

"As per the recommendations, it has been suggested that the scorecards of the affected 1,563 candidates issued June 4, 2024 will stand cancelled and withdrawn. These affected candidates will be informed about their actual scores without compensatory marks. Further, retest will be conducted for the affected candidates," the Bench said.

It added, "The results of the affected candidates who do not

wish to appear for the retest will be declared on their actual marks without compensation obtained by them in the examination held May 5, 2024 and the marks obtained by the candidates who will appear in the retest will be considered and their marks based on the examination held May 5, 2024 will be discarded."

The results of the retest will be declared June 30, the Centre said. The SC issued notices to the Centre and the NTA on three petitions. It said they all will be taken up together July 8 after the summer vacation.

While the Congress reiterated its demand for a SC-monitored probe into the exam 'irregularities' asserting that the anger over the matter will also reverberate inside Parliament, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan rubbished the allegations of paper leak.

Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi said, "We demand a SC-monitored investigation into this entire scandal which has affected around 24 lakh students." "We're waiting for the Parliament session where we'll raise the voice of 24 lakh youth of the country. The anger over the NEET will also reverberate inside Parliament," Gogoi added.

"There is no evidence of paper leak in NEET-UG. The allegations of corruption in NTA are unfounded. It's a very credible body," Pradhan said.

## RANENDRA PRO-TEM SPEAKER

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, June 13:** Eight-time MLA Ranendra Pratap Swain was Thursday appointed as the pro-tem Speaker of Assembly ahead of the regular Speaker election June 20, official sources said.

Swain, a former minister, will be administered oath by Governor Raghuraj Das at Raj Bhawan, Friday. "The newly-elected members of the

Assembly will be administered oath by the pro-tem Speaker for two days - June 18 and 19," the official said, adding that the nominations for the Speaker election will be received at 11am June 19.

Sources said senior BJP leader Surama Padhy is most likely to be the next Speaker of the House.

The BJP formed the government in the state by securing 78 seats in the 147-member Assembly.



## Doval, Mishra reappointed

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 13:** Spymaster Ajit Doval and seasoned bureaucrat PK Mishra were Thursday re-appointed to the post of National Security Adviser (NSA) and Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, respectively, for a fresh five-year term.

With this, Doval has become the first NSA to be appointed to the key post for three consecutive terms.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the two appointments with effect from June 10, 2024, the Personnel Ministry said.

Their appointment will be co-terminus with the term of the PM or until further orders whichever is earlier, it said in identical orders.



Both Doval and Mishra will be assigned the rank of Cabinet minister in the Table of Precedence and terms and conditions of their appointment will be notified separately, it added.

Doval, who belongs to the 1968-batch of Indian Police Service, retired as Intelligence Bureau chief in 2005. He was appointed at the NSA for the first time May 30, 2014, and reappointed for another term May 31, 2019.

Mishra, on the other hand, has held various key positions at the Centre and in the Gujarat government.

He served as Additional Principal Secretary in the PMO in Modi's first term as the PM from 2014 to 2019.

Mishra, a 1972-batch retired Indian Administrative Service officer, was re-appointed to the same post with effect from May 31, 2019, during Modi's second term. He was in September 2019 appointed as the Principal Secretary to the PM. His term was on a co-terminus basis with Modi's tenure.

# Himachal's flip-flop CBI searches 67 places in state

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 13:** Amid on-going water crisis in the national capital, the Himachal Pradesh government Thursday withdrew its earlier statement and told the Supreme Court that it does not have a surplus of 136 cusecs of water to spare.

A vacation bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Prasanna B Varale then asked the Delhi government to submit an application to Upper Yamuna River Board (UYRB) seeking water for the national capital on humanitarian grounds.

The development came while the SC was hearing a plea filed by the Delhi government seeking a direction to Haryana to release the surplus water provided by

Himachal Pradesh to the national capital to mitigate its water crisis. The bench said Yamuna water sharing between states is a complex and sensitive issue and the court does not have the technical expertise to decide on it even on an interim basis.

As the hearing commenced, Delhi government's advocate Abhishek Singhvi said everything possible to augment water availability will be done. He, however, suggested that the court should consider constituting a committee as boards have been reduced to bureaucratic bodies, an apparent swipe at UYRB.

Highlighting the steps taken by the Delhi government to stop water wastage, Singhvi said instructions like ban on car washing have been issued.

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, June 13:** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) launched a state-wide probe into the alleged recruitment fraud in the Odisha Postal Circle - wherein 63 candidates of the Gramin Dak Sevak (GDS) Examination, 2023 submitted forged Class X pass certificates to secure the job - by carrying out simultaneous searches at 67 locations, Thursday.

Over 204 officials, including 122 from the CBI and 82 from other departments, swooped down at various locations in Kalahandi, Nuapada, Rayagada, Nabarangpur, Kandhamal, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Balasore and Bhadrak with an objective of uncovering the interstate or-

### POSTAL JOB FRAUD

ganised gang responsible for providing these fake certificates.

CBI sources said the Department of Posts had invited applications for recruitment of 1,382 GDSS January 27, 2023. The minimum qualification for the post was Class X pass with proficiency in the local language.

"Selection was automated - based on the marks secured in the Class X examination. Selected candidates were informed via SMS and email and asked to report to the verifying authority within 15 days for document verification prior to their appointment," they added.

The verification of certificates by the Odisha Postal Circle

showed that 63 candidates from various postal divisions, including Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Kalahandi and Berhampur, had submitted forged Class X pass certificates for the recruitment.

Soon after, the Department of Posts approached the authorities, and the CBI registered a case in this regard. "These certificates were allegedly issued mostly by the Board of High School and Intermediate Education, Allahabad; West Bengal Board, Kolkata and Jharkhand Academic Council, Ranchi. The complaint suggests alleged involvement of an interstate racket in creating and supplying these forged certificates in collusion with the candidates," a CBI spokesperson said.

# Stolen twice, coveted Titian painting set to go under hammer

AGENCIES

**Rome, June 13:** A highly coveted painting by Renaissance master Titian that was stolen in 1809 then again in 1995 - after which it was discovered in a plastic bag at a London bus stop - will be put up for auction in July, 'The Guardian' reported, Thursday.

The Venetian painter is believed to have created Rest on the Flight into Egypt in 1508 when he around 20. Painted on a 2-ft-wide wooden panel, the piece depicts the Virgin Mary cradling Jesus as an infant with Joseph looking on.

It was first documented in the collection of a Venetian spice merchant in the early 17th century and over the ensuing centuries has been owned by various aristocrats, emperors and archdukes across Europe.

It was bought by the 4th Marquess of Bath at auction from Christie's in 1878, and is now being sold by the same auction house in London July 2 on behalf of the last Marquess. It is expected to fetch between £15m and £25m.

The painting has been stolen twice over its history - first in 1809 from Belvedere Palace in Vienna by Napoleon Bonaparte's



Rest on the Flight into Egypt

PIC: CHRISTIE'S

troops and then in the mid-1990s when it was looted from Longleat House, the seat of the Marquesses of Bath, in Wiltshire, it reported.

An article on the Christie's website said the painting was prized for its vividly coloured scene of familial affection within the natural world, and that, like its subjects, The Rest on the Flight into Egypt, has been on a long and eventful journey - a journey that's far from over. The most colourful part of that journey so far was perhaps when the painting was taken from the first-floor drawing room of the Longleat stately home in 1995. After a seven-year hunt, the paint-

ing, valued at more than £5m at the time, was found in a plastic shopping bag at a bus stop in Richmond by Charles Hill, a former chief of Scotland Yard's art and antiques unit.

Hill, who died in 2021, said he had been led to the spot by a man he described as a cross between Arthur Daley and Lovejoy, the rogue characters of two TV series that ran in the 1980s and 1990s, in return for a £100,000 reward.

Hill was also known for helping to find Edvard Munch's 1893 version of The Scream after it was stolen from the National Museum in Oslo in 1994, it said.

# leisure



## MILEY ON HER LIMITED CIRCLE IN THE INDUSTRY

Singer-songwriter Miley Cyrus revealed she has few friendships with fellow entertainers, stating she doesn't feel part of the entertainment community. However, she has longstanding relationships with certain artists, like Beyoncé, whom she's known for a long time.

## HIDDLESTON GETS RELIEF BIDDING GOODBYE TO 'LOKI'

Actor Tom Hiddleston felt a wash of relief when he said goodbye to 'Loki' after over a decade of playing the character. The actor, who has played the God of Mischief since 2011's *Thor*, confessed to being ready to say goodbye at the end of the second season of his Disney+ TV series *Loki*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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#### ARIES

Today you may think that you have the Midas touch, but Ganesh warns you to keep in mind that everything that glitters may not be gold. You need to give quality time to your family members to keep them happy. You need to give credit where it is due, and maybe buy a gift or two for your kids.

#### TAURUS

If you are a manager or an administrator, Ganesh forecasts an outstanding day for you. Thing will turn out far better than your expectations. Even if you are in some other profession you will stand out at your workplace and be appreciated and admired.

#### GEMINI

You will be in the mood to break free of the rut and routine of daily life today. Trying to keep up with numerous deadlines will keep you tense with worry. You will end up neglecting your familial duties in pursuit of work related activities. You need to find a balance between your responsibilities at work and at home, says Ganesh.

#### CANCER

Ganesh predicts success for your efforts to strengthen your status or prestige through collective activities. Your kind and generous attitude will see you cross a new peak. You will spend resources for an entertainment or recreational pursuit. Get ready for a hectic and fun-filled day, says Ganesh.

#### LEO

You will be in a jovial mood today. You will complete all tasks with energy and enthusiasm. Pending tasks will be completed now, and your routine tasks will be finished in a jiffy. In the morning you will be able to complete all tasks impulsively, but the later half of the day will see you taking a more measured approach, says Ganesh.

#### VIRGO

Ganesh says all signs indicate that today will be a very optimistic and beneficial day. Remember that apocalypse is not going to happen anywhere in the near future. Each new day will bring better new things with it, as per the indications of the planets. Therefore, Ganesh says keep all your hopes alive.

#### LIBRA

Ganesh says that today will be spent in entertaining, throwing parties and in general having a good time. You will be able to plan a trip in the near future with your family members. You may be able to put your money into something that is safe or into a business and will also want to invest a good amount for future needs.

#### SCORPIO

You are likely to be occupied with your health issues in the first half of the day. Your stars indicate some fortunate events during this time. Evening will be spent relaxing at a serene place in pleasant company of your friends or beloved.

#### SAGITTARIUS

Your flexible, down-to-earth and optimistic attitude is likely to pay off well, personally and professionally, feels Ganesh. Celebrations and soiree during the lunch time demand for social exchanges.

#### CAPRICORN

Hard-work never goes unnoticed and so will be yours. Your superiors will appreciate your talents and contribution to the progress of the company, predicts Ganesh. Supportive and cooperative, your colleagues will help you tread the path you have chosen.

#### AQUARIUS

Today, you will receive favourable news from overseas. You will aim for the bull's eye and leave no stone unturned to hit it. You will be competing with yourself and this will certainly enhance your overall performance.

#### PISCES

A mundane day filled with the boring ruts of routine awaits you. You will find yourself struggling to find the motivation to deal with repetitive tasks. Post afternoon should see you in a much more positive frame of mind, and better equipped to deal with the demands of the day.



## Kangana: Showbiz easier than politics

**Mumbai:** Actress Kangana Ranaut, who contested on a BJP ticket and recently won the Lok Sabha elections 2024 from the Mandi constituency, shared in a talk with a podcast that working in films is much easier than that in politics. During the podcast, the *Queen* actress said, "This isn't the first time I've been invited to join politics; I've had several offers before. After my debut in Gangster, I was offered a ticket. My great-grandfather was a three-term MLA, and it's common for successful family members to be approached. Even my father and sister received offers. So, political offers are

no big deal for us." She also added, "I am a person who goes with passion. Even in the film industry, I am an actor, writer, director, and producer. Here in my political career, if I have to engage myself with the people here, I will go ahead with it. There is no compulsion. However, I won't deny that the work in the film industry is comparatively easier than in politics. The latter takes a lot of effort. This is a harsh life, just like doctors, where only troubled people come to see you. When you go to watch a film, you are very relaxed. But politics is not like that."

On the work front, Kangana will be seen next in *Emergency*.

AGENCIES

## Rashmika defends her *Animal* character

**Mumbai:** Actress Rashmika Mandanna often interacts with her fans on social media. She has now reacted to a fan comment based on her character Gitanjali from her last release, *Animal*, in which she played the wife of Ranbir Kapoor's Rannvijay. Even if the fan thought that there is 'nothing scarier' than trusting a man, the actress corrected them in the comments.

On X, a fan posted an edited video from the film *Animal*, where her character is seen suffering after having trusted the man she thought would be loyal to her. The video summarised how Rannvijay had a loyal wife in the form of Geetanjali, yet he fell in love outside marriage and had a relationship with Triptii Dimri's Zoya in the film. When Geetanjali comes to know about this, it causes her a lot of pain. The fan shared this video and wrote, "Remember, nothing is scarier than trusting a man."

This video caught the attention of Rashmika, who replied,

"Correction: trusting a stupid man = scary. There are also a lot of good men out there. Trusting those men = special. (heart reaction emotion)"

On the work front, Rashmika will soon be seen in *Pushpa: The Rule* and also has *The Girlfriend*, *Rainbow*, and *Chaava* in her kitty.

AGENCIES



## Karisma on being away from limelight

**Mumbai:** Actress Karisma Kapoor has always been a fresh breath of air that all cinema lovers adore, and she has been an absolute core of nostalgia in her own right. The actress has been in the industry for over three decades now and has served it like no one else. It was a buzzing discussion when Kapoor took a break from showbiz to focus on her family, and she has opened up about the same now.

Recently, while speaking to a magazine, she admitted disliking the word comeback and said that she chose to stay away from the limelight. She added, "I had young children, and it was important for me as a mother that I didn't want to miss out on those moments. I think that's a choice that each individual needs to make, and that's a choice I made."

She was not into mainstream acting but always remained relevant with her cameo appearances, pregnancy book, radio show,

and a few ads and endorsements along the way. She further shared that she only cherishes and values all of her decisions,

adding, "I don't regret anything. It's important to be a confident human being and make those choices in life."

Kapoor added, "I never thought I'd be able to go to the sets of an OTT show in gruelling circumstances and shoot. I was nervous before I did *Brown*, but I did; mothers can make it happen."

After quiet on-and-off brief appearances, Karisma Kapoor recently made her OTT debut with Homi Adjanian's *Murder Mubarak*.

AGENCIES

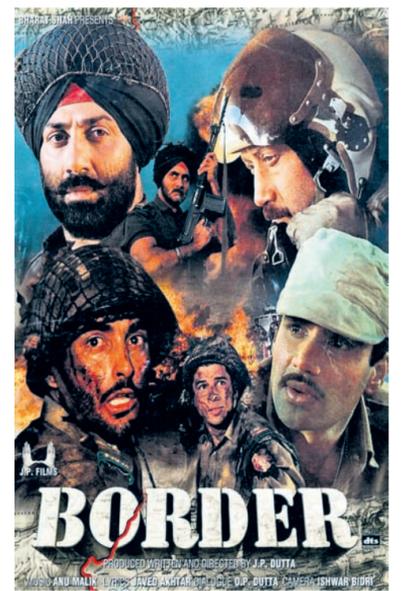
## Border sequel on cards

**New Delhi:** Actor Sunny Deol announced the sequel to *Border* on the 27th release anniversary of the 1997 blockbuster film.

According to the makers, the upcoming movie is India's biggest war film and will be directed by Anurag Singh. Filmmaker JP Dutta, who directed *Border*, will serve as a producer on the sequel alongside his daughter Nidhi Dutta via JP Films. Bhusan Kumar and Krishan Kumar will also produce the new movie under the banner of T-Series.

Deol shared the announcement teaser for *Border 2* on his official X page. "Ek fauji apne 27 saal purane waade ko pura karne, aa raha hai phirse. India's biggest war film, #Border2. Produced by Bhusan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, JP Dutta, and Nidhi Dutta, it will be directed by Anurag Singh #T-Series #JPFilms," the actor wrote.

Released June 13, 1997, *Border* was based on the events of the Battle of Longewala during the 1971 India-Pakistan War. It also starred Suniel Shetty, Jackie Shroff, Akshaye Khanna, Sudesh Berry, and



Puneet Issar, alongside a supporting cast of Kulbhushan Kharbada, Tabu, Raakhee, Pooja Bhatt, and Sharbani Mukherjee.

*Border* also won three National Film Awards: best film on national integration, best lyricist for Akhtar, and best playback singer (male) for Hariharan (*Mere Dushman, Mere Bhai*).

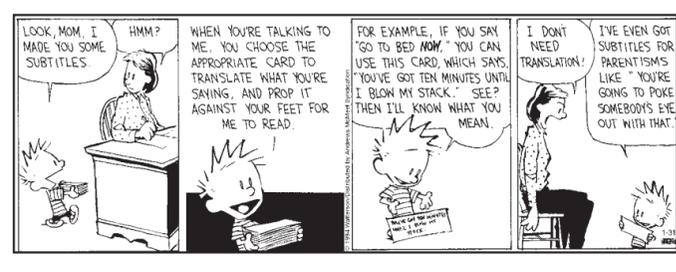
PTI

### FUN post

#### PEANUTS



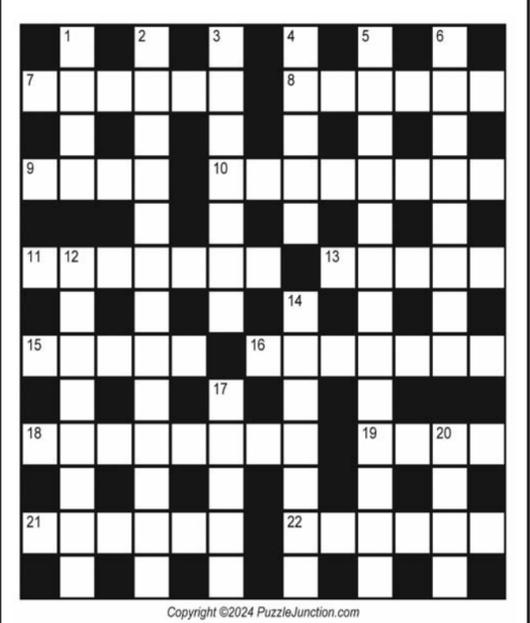
#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### BREVITY



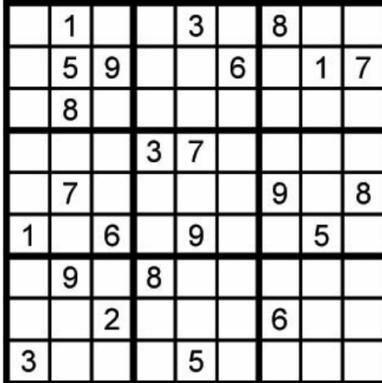
#### CROSSWORD



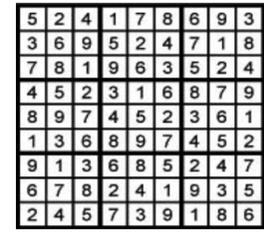
- Across
- 7 Close at hand
  - 8 Optical illusion
  - 9 Alliance
  - 10 Body shop figure
  - 11 Finished
  - 13 Friendship
  - 15 Rime
  - 16 Poisonous salt
  - 18 Brandy cocktails
  - 19 River deposit
  - 21 Off-color
  - 22 Kind of monkey
- Down
- 1 Chime
  - 2 Gold, e.g. (8,5)
  - 3 Muscle or drug interaction
  - 4 Violinmaker Nicolò
  - 5 Head of state (5,8)
  - 6 In a lather
  - 12 Dreadful
  - 14 Blight
  - 17 Bamboo forest denizen
  - 20 Earsplitting

#### SUDOKU

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



#### SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



Noted Odissi exponent Ileana Citaristi lights the ceremonial lamp to inaugurate the Raja Prativa Utsav organised by cultural outfit Nruty Prativa at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

# downtown

## All gates of Srimandir reopened for devotees

A detailed report has been sought to know why the three gates of the temple have not been reopened after the Covid-19 pandemic, said Cabinet minister Suresh Pujari



PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, June 13:** All the four gates of Srimandir in Puri were reopened for devotees in the presence of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and his council of ministers Thursday morning, a day after the first Cabinet meeting of the newly-sworn in BJP government in the state took a decision to this effect.

The three gates of the 12th century shrine, which were closed since Covid-19 pandemic, were reopened after the 'Mangal Alati' ritual of Lord Jagannath.

The Chief Minister, his two deputies, ministers, several BJP MPs and party leaders visited the temple and offered prayers before Lord Jagannath. They also conducted a 'parikrama' around the temple complex.

"After the oath-taking ceremony, the BJP government had Wednesday evening taken its first decision to reopen all four gates of the temple. Today, the gates were reopened at 6:30am after the 'Mangal Alati' ritual," Majhi informed the media in Puri.

The government will closely monitor the situation and take

## Will fulfil poll promises in 5 years, says Majhi

**Bhubaneswar:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Thursday asserted that the promises made by BJP in its election manifesto are 'Modi's guarantees' and would be fulfilled within the next five years.

Majhi made the assertion while visiting the birthplace of Utkalmani Pandit Gopabandhu Das, an icon of the state, in Suando village of Puri district.

Alleging that residents of rural areas were neglected under the previous BJD dispensation, Majhi said his government would solve issues affecting the common people in the villages.

The BJP, in its election manifesto, has promised a minimum support price (MSP) of ₹3,100 per quintal of

paddy, piped water connection to all the households and pucca houses for the poor, among others.

The Chief Minister, accompanied by his deputies KV Singh Deo and Pravati Parida and some other ministers, paid floral tributes at the statue of Utkalmani. They met the villagers and discussed the issues faced by them.

Majhi said his government would bring a 'Samruddha Krushak Niti' within 100 days for the overall development of the farmers.

Earlier in the day, Majhi and his team had visited Puri where all four gates of Srimandir were reopened. They also conducted a 'parikrama' around the temple complex.

necessary steps, if required, to streamline the flow of devotees to the shrine, the CM said.

He said the state government has also decided to constitute ₹500-crore corpus fund for better management, maintenance and development of the temple. The provision will be made in the upcoming state budget, Majhi said.

Cabinet minister Suresh Pujari said a detailed report has been sought to know why the three gates of the temple have not been reopened after the pandemic.

"We had the darshan of Lord

Jagannath and sought his blessings to protect humankind and give us all strength to serve the people of Odisha for the next five years," he said.

Opening all the temple gates was a key promise in the BJP's election manifesto. The previous BJD government had kept three out of four gates shut since the Covid-19 pandemic.

The devotees were allowed to enter through only Singhadwara (Lion Gate), while the gates located at the three other sides of the temple remained closed, causing inconvenience to the devotees.

## CM starts working from guest house

**Bhubaneswar:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has started operating from the State Guest House on a temporary basis from Thursday as the Chief Minister's Office on the third floor of the Lok Seva Bhawan is yet to be readied. Majhi reached the State Guest House after returning from his visit to Puri. He chaired official meetings on the first floor of the building, which has been made to house the CMO for the time being. The CM held discussions with senior officials of Parliamentary Affairs and Housing & Urban Development departments and Secretary of the Assembly. Party sources said the CMO in the Lok Seva Bhawan would be renovated as per the desire of the CM before he starts attending the office on a regular basis. The chamber where former CM Naveen Patnaik used to sit remained closed for four years since Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. Patnaik was operating from Naveen Niwas, sources said.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## Dismay as none from Cuttack gets a berth

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, June 13:** Amid celebrations in several districts which got representation in the newly-formed Cabinet of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi that assumed charge Wednesday, people in Cuttack are feeling left out as the district didn't find a place in the Council of Ministers.

According to reports, there were speculations earlier over one or two MLAs from Cuttack district getting berths in the Majhi Cabinet, but now all hopes have been dashed.

Of the six Assembly seats in the district—Barabati-Cuttack, Choudwar-Cuttack, Cuttack Sadar, Baramba, Banki and Athagarh—, Prakash Chandra Sethi of BJP has emerged victorious by defeating former MLA Chandrasarathi Behera of BJD in Cuttack Sadar. Similarly, safon party candidate from Niali, Chhabi Malik defeated BJD's Pramod Kumar Mallick.

However, neither Sethi nor Malik managed to secure a berth in the newly-formed Cabinet.



Likewise, Sarada Prasad Pradhan and Bijay Kumar Dalabehera, both Independent candidates, won the election from Mahanga and Baramba Assembly seats, respectively, in the district. Though BJP had set its eyes on these candidates before the announcement of results, none of them was considered for ministerial berth.

Though Orissa Post tried to contact Sethi over the issue, he was not available for comments. A cursory glance at Cuttack's representation in the state's council of ministers in the past reveals several inclusions. Eminent personalities like Nandini Satpathy and Biren Mitra had won the Cuttack seat and were sworn in as Chief Ministers. Similarly, former CM Janaki Ballabh Patnaik had contested from Athagarh Assembly seat and won twice. Likewise, Biju Patnaik became the Chief

A cursory glance at Cuttack's representation in the state's council of ministers in the past reveals several inclusions. Eminent personalities like Nandini Satpathy and Biren Mitra had won the Cuttack seat and were sworn in as Chief Ministers

Minister for the first time after winning the Choudwar Assembly seat.

Several MLAs from Cuttack district like Pratap Jena, Debi Prasad Mishra, Ranendra Pratap Swain and Chandrasarathi Behera had got berths in Naveen Patnaik government in the last 24 years.

However, the decision of newly-formed BJP government to ignore Cuttack has come as a disappointment to many.

## 5 HIGHWAYMEN NABBED IN CITY

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

**Bhubaneswar, June 13:** The Commissionerate Police here Thursday arrested five members of a notorious robbers' gang involved in at least two dozens of loot cases under the City limits.

Police said 40 gold chains weighing 400 gram, ₹2 lakh cash, four motorcycles and five mobile phones were seized from the accused. Three members of the gang are still at large, they added.

Police Commissioner Sanjeeb Panda said the accused were identified as Ayaz Mahamad, 20, Debasis Barik, 19, Sibaprasad Barik, 23; residents of Jatni area, Ayusman Tripathy, 27, a native of Rourkela, Rajat Kumar Nanda, a resident of Delang. Primarily, they targeted pedestrians and motorists in the National Highway for snatching, especially gold chains. They were also involved in snatching cases along the highway crossing the City, connecting Angul, Bhadrak and Puri, he added.

Elucidating the modus operandi of the gang, Panda said, "In a bid to give a slip to the cops, the gang members used high-end sports bikes for looting gold chains and valuables from victims. Besides, they used tampered number plates in their motorcycle to hoodwink police. Following the loot, they used to dispose of the stolen gold ornaments with a different goldsmith each time to avoid crackdown."

Furthermore, Panda said the miscreants splurged money on costly items including branded shoes, clothes and bikes, which they earned by selling the booty. The Commissionerate Police have booked the five under relevant sections of IPC and produced them before a local court Thursday.



**CHOCK-A-BLOCK:** Traffic came to a standstill at Rasulgarh Square in Bhubaneswar, Thursday, following a mishap at Palasuni Square. Moreover, absence of traffic police worsened the traffic congestion

## 5 injured in series mishap at Palasuni

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

**Bhubaneswar, June 13:** At least five persons sustained injuries in a series mishap at Palasuni Square here Thursday, when a speeding truck hit as many as three vehicles on Bhubaneswar-Cuttack stretch of National Highway 16.

A senior cop at Mancheswar police station said the driver rammed the speeding truck into a moving car, which had three people onboard. A biker and a scooterist also sustained injuries due to the impact of the collision. On being informed by the locals, the cops rushed to the spot and rescued the victims. The injured victims were soon admitted to Capital Hospital and Hi-Tech Medical College and Hospital, he added.

Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), Traffic, Jayant Dora said the truck was seized



soon after the mishap while the damaged vehicles were removed to facilitate smooth traffic.

Eyewitnesses said the driver might have failed to apply brakes on time which caused the mishap. Adding to this, several others also said he was using mobile phone while driving, which distracted him to keep an eye on the vehicles in front of him.

Irate locals staged a road blockade following the accident, leaving hundreds of vehicles stranded on either side of the National Highway for hours. The cops later placated the locals and restored vehicular movement.

## Diasporas welcome change of guard in Odisha

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, June 13:** Odia diasporas living in countries across the globe have welcomed the new government in the state formed by BJP with Mohan Majhi as the Chief Minister.

Speaking to Orissa POST, Priyadarshini Panigrahi, a scuba diver by profession who lives in Dubai (UAE), said, "It is a mandate for change. People have spoken out. We have a new government now. I am a firm believer of the concept of a welfare state, and also in the saying that 'the government has no business to be in business'."

He said he also wanted the new government to promote healthy investment climate so that private sector could come in droves and provide gainful em-



Priyadarshini Panigrahi



Bhagyashree Singh



Jayanta Rout



Sukant Sahu

ployment to the people.

"I do hope and urge the new government to take advantage of Odisha's rich natural resources and promote value added industries while ensuring balanced regional development," he added.

Bhagyashree Singh, a doctor based out of London, UK said, "As a British Indian and proud NRI Odia, I always love to be linked to my state and my language. I

am born and raised in Bhubaneswar, and hence, that always holds a special corner in my heart."

Singh said since childhood she witnessed Naveen Patnaik as the only Chief Minister of Odisha. "He has a charisma which has impressed the world. However, change is only constant, and I believe Odisha elections has not only proved that Odias are the most responsible

citizens, but also democracy is evidenced at its best in our state."

She said the BJP government has made India touch the sky in the last few years. "We identify ourselves now as citizens of the most advanced country of South East Asia. Therefore I am very positive and hopefully with the new BJP government, and I am sure Odisha, under CM Majhi, will touch new highs," Singh said.

Jayanta Rout, an IT professional settled in Texas, USA said change is always welcome if that has a positive impact. "So, after a long time, the government and chief minister have been changed. We hope we should see some rapid development in infrastructure, more job creation and rural push in the coming days."

The people of Odisha have voted for a change, and this government should work for their

betterment. And, if the government failed to deliver, the same people will go for change after 5 years, he said.

Sukant Sahu member of Odisha Society of UK said, "Odisha needed a change for a long time. Twenty-four years is big time for ruling any state," he said.

He had a word of praise for former chief minister Naveen Patnaik. "He had done a lot of good things, but still many things needed to be done," he said.

"The BJP came to power in the state and I hope their government will fulfill the promises made earlier. I will hope the government make people capable and not cripple them with freebies. Odias must be given more opportunity in business and jobs than non-domiciles," he added.



**IN FULL SWING:** Maharana servitors preparing chariots for upcoming Rath Yatra in Puri, Thursday

OP PHOTO

## Raja Mahotsav inaugurated at Panthanivas

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, June 13:** Raja, an annual festival celebrating womanhood was inaugurated at Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) headquarters in Capital city, Thursday. Promoting authentic Odia delicacies coupled with celebrations during Raja including swings, alata and mehndi for girls and young women, the Raja Mahotsav was inaugurated by Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi and Ekamra MLA Babu Singh.

As part of the three-day festival, special arrangements have been made to ensure sale of Raja delicacies and sweets across all hospitality units of OTDC. Further, traditional swings have been set up and Mehndi artists invited to the Panthanivas to decorate the hands of women



visiting the hospitality facility, free of cost.

To make the celebration grand, three 'Pitha on Wheels' vans have been provided for sale of Raja delicacies and shall be stationed at Master Canteen, KIIT Square and ITER - Khandagiri from 8am to 12noon and 4pm to

7pm. These vans will provide option for take away of Raja Pithas and other delicacies.

The Pitha on Wheels is also stationed at Sambalpur. Raja Pitha counters will be set up at Silvercity Boatclub, Cuttack, ISBT Café and Nimantran Restaurant

As part of the three-day festival, special arrangements have been made to ensure sale of Raja delicacies and sweets across all hospitality units of OTDC

Bhubaneswar for sale to public from June 14 to June 16. The Pitha counter will be operated at Kalinga convention hall of Panthanivas, Bhubaneswar till June 16.

The event had officers from OTDC including director of OTDC Sachin Ramachandra Jadhav, general manager Lalatendu Sahoo and Utkal Paryatan Nigam Employee Association working president Benudhara Patra among others.

## News on Mo Sarkar, 5T fake: I&PR dept

**Bhubaneswar:** The Information and Public Relations (I&PR) department Thursday clarified that news regarding the removal of 5T charter and Mo Sarkar being circulated on a social media account is not correct. A report regarding the removal of 5T charter and Mo Sarkar being circulated on X with the account name "Mohanrajhi\_bjp" is not based upon fact, I&PR department informed. "Mohanrajhi\_bjp" is not the official social media account of Chief Minister Mohan Majhi, the department said. It may be recalled that 5T charter and Mo Sarkar were implemented by the Naveen Patnaik-led government in 2019. The 5T worked on five factors- Teamwork, Technology, Transparency, Transformation and Time limit on which performances of government officials and projects were evaluated. Under the initiative, the government used to receive feedback from the common citizens regarding the kind of response and service they received from government facilities.

## Pradhan assumes charge as MoE



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 13:** Union Minister for Education, Dharmendra Pradhan assumed charge of his office in Shastri Bhawan here, Thursday. On his arrival at the MoE, Pradhan was received by the department of Higher Education secretary K Sanjay Murthy and department of School Education and Literacy secretary Sanjay Kumar.

After assuming charge, Pradhan expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his confidence and trust in him. He also said that he and his team will look forward to the Prime Minister's leadership and guidance in the implementation of NEP 2020, making the learning landscape of the country future-ready, empowering

people and establishing India as a 21st-century knowledge economy.

Pradhan was accompanied by the Ministers of State for the MoE Jayant Chaudhary and Sukanta Majumdar. He congratulated them on their new responsibility and emphasised to translate the Prime Minister's vision into reality and make India a global hub of education, skills, innovation and research.

Pradhan became the Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas in 2014. He was appointed the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel in 2019.

In July 2021, Pradhan became the Minister of Education and Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

## BMC flags off 3 Nidhi Ratha to create dengue awareness

24 DENGUE CASES DETECTED IN CAPITAL CITY TILL NOW

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, June 13:** The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Mayor Sulochana Das flagged off three dengue awareness vehicles named Nidhi Ratha here, Thursday.

BMC commissioner Rajesh Prabhakar Patil, standing committee chairpersons, officials from BMC and Health department were present on the occasion. Nidhi Ratha will be operational in three different zones across the City.

Earlier, an orientation meeting on the dengue control strategy and dengue surveillance was held at BMC office here, Wednesday. Some of the key points of discussion included, house-to-house surveillance and

## TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION IMPACT RANKINGS

# KIIT among top 6 varsities globally

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 13:** KIIT Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar, has been placed among the top six most impactful universities globally and ranked first in India in terms of the Sustainable Development Goal of 'Reduced Inequalities' in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2024.

With an overall score of 79.3 - 83.9, KIIT is ranked in the 201-300 cohort globally in this prestigious ranking published recently.

The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings celebrate universities that excel across multiple United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDGs). This unique ranking exercise evaluates the performance of universities across all 17 SDGs.

KIIT University is ranked 6th in the world in terms of 'Reduced Inequalities' and 1st in India. Additionally, KIIT has secured the 71st position globally in the SDG of 'Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions' and is ranked 1st in India. In terms of the SDG of 'Quality Education', it is ranked 55th in the world and fifth in



The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings celebrate universities that excel across multiple United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDGs). The exercise evaluates the performance of universities across all 17 SDGs

India. KIIT University is also ranked fifth in India in the SDG of 'Partnership for the Goals'.

KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta, lauded the historic achievement and said, "KIIT's position among the world's most impactful universities in the parameters of Quality Education, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, Reduced Inequalities, and Partnership for the Goals, reflects its enormous contribution in the field over the decades."

He congratulated the faculty

fraternity of KIIT-DU, staff members and the students for the unique achievement.

KIIT University, established in Odisha, has spread its influence all over the world in the field of quality education, intellectuals said.

It takes pride as a community-based university, contributing to pressing social issues such as reducing poverty through education, women empowerment, equal opportunity in the work place, rural development, tribal upliftment, art, culture and literature.

## 3 held in Noida with 800kg cannabis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Noida, June 13:** Noida Police Thursday said they have seized 800 kgs of cannabis, valued at approximately ₹4 crore in the black market, and arrested three people transporting it.

Those arrested have been identified as gang leader Sudama Choudhary, Anish and Praveen Paswan, according to police.

The cannabis was concealed in the truck along with 2,000 litres of pesticide which they were bringing from Odisha, they said. "Three accused have been ar-

rested by the CRT and Sector 58 team and about eight quintal of ganja worth ₹4 crore and pesticide worth ₹60 lakh have been recovered from them. A truck and a vehicle have also been recovered from them," DCP (Noida) Vidya Sagar Mishra said.

Additional DCP (Noida) Manish Kumar Mishra said besides the truck, a Maruti Ciaz car has also been impounded.

"This car worked as an escort vehicle for the truck, preceding the truck all through their route to raise alarm about any impending police or security check,"

he told reporters.

DCP Mishra said gang leader Sudama Choudhary has previously been arrested for similar offences.

"He was released from jail two months ago in connection with a case lodged at Noida's Expressway Police Station," he added.

An FIR has been lodged at the Sector 58 police station against the accused under provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, the police said, adding further legal proceedings are underway.

## Jharkhand man gets new life at SCBMCH

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, June 13:** A five kilograms of tumour tissue was operated and removed from one Asit Lakra from Jharkhand, here at SCB Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH), Thursday.

The five-hour long operation was successfully carried out at the department of Plastic Surgery. Post surgery, Asit is under medical supervision at the hospital and his condition is state to be stable, the authorities informed. "This is one of the most challenging surgeries I have faced in my career. The tumour had affected the chest area, food pipe and had spread across the shoulder," Arun Kumar Choudhury said.

Asit was affected with tumour since last 10 years. He was admitted at Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences in Ranchi and was later referred to SCBMCH. A team of doctors, under the supervision of Choudhury carried out the surgery.

## CLASSIFIED

### SALE

New independent duplex for sale Raghunathpur near Chilika Fresh, Patia Infront of 'Z' one, 5 bed room, Puja room, Servant room, Large Portico, Lift & Lawn facilities. Mob-9861041133.

## AFFIDAVIT

By Affidavit before Executive Magistrate, Khurda on 29.05.2024, I, SK AZARUDDIN, son of SK Samsurddin, declare that both names, SK AZARUDDIN (Aadhaar) and SEKH AZARUDDIN (Passport), refer to the same person for all purpose.

# Hot, cold exposure in early life alters brain's white matter

Children and fetuses exposed to hot and cold environments impact their brain's white matter, responsible for connecting various brain regions and enabling communication, a new research has found.

Researchers said that children are especially vulnerable to extreme environments as their bodies' temperature regulation processes are still immature.

They also found that early exposure could have lasting effects on the microstructure of white matter in the brain.

These findings are published in the journal Nature Climate Change.

"We know that the developing brain of fetuses and children is particularly susceptible to environmental exposures, and there is some preliminary evidence suggesting that exposure to cold and heat may affect mental well-being and cognitive performance in children and adolescents," said lead researcher Mónica Guxens, Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal), Spain, and the study's corresponding author.

However, there is a lack of evidence with regards to how such exposure can bring about structural changes in the brain, Guxens said.



Participants more exposed to cold and heat show differences in a parameter -- the mean diffusivity -- which is related to a lower level of maturation of the white matter

LAURA GRANÉS | RESEARCHER AT BARCELONA INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH (ISGLOBAL), SPAIN

The research team studied the exposure of close to 2,700 preteens to monthly temperatures from birth until they turned eight years old. They used magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) brain scans.

The impacts of the exposure were measured between nine-12 years of age. For this, the researchers assessed the preteens' white matter connectivity by measuring how water flowed and spread in their brains, or

'mean diffusivity'.

In more mature brains, water flows more in one direction than in all directions, showing lower mean diffusivity, the study said.

The team found that exposure to colder-than-usual temperatures during pregnancy and the first year of life, and exposure to hotter-than-usual environments from birth until three years of age were linked with more mean diffusivity at preadolescence, pointing to a slower maturation of their white matter.

"The fibres of the white matter are responsible for connecting the different areas of the brain, enabling communication

between them. As the white matter develops, this communication becomes faster and more efficient," said first author Laura Granés, a researcher at ISGlobal.

"Our study is like a photograph at a particular moment in time and what we see in that image is that participants more exposed to cold and heat show differences in a parameter -- the mean diffusivity -- which is related to a lower level of maturation of the white matter," said Granés.

Previous studies have shown changes in mean diffusivity to be related with poorer cognitive function and mental health problems.

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# Farmers turning away from growing paddy as profit dips

# DMF facility benefits over 1,200 patients, attendants

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, June 13:** Farmers are gradually turning away from growing paddy crop due to declining profit, a report said.

An analysis of the earnings of farmers from the paddy cultivation in last five years reveals that profit from the crop has been quite disappointing. This is despite the fact that the agriculturists have been working hard during summer, rain and winter seasons to raise the crop.

Reports said on an average, farmers earn around ₹607 to ₹728 as profit from a quintal of paddy which is forcing many to turn away from the cultivation. The phenomenon has raised fears of a sharp rise in the prices of food products in coming days.

Observers attributed administrative negligence as the reason behind the declining profit of farmers from paddy cultivation. Some farmers requesting anonymity claimed that if a quintal of paddy was not sold at ₹3,100 per quintal, as per the announcement made by the Union



government, their hopes of getting adequate profit would fade away.

The declining profit from paddy cultivation has frustrated poor and marginal farmers, and led to their migration to other states in search of alternative livelihoods. On the other hand, rapid industrialisation is directly, and indirectly, impacting rural life and agriculture. Climate change is also impacting cultivation as farmers have to battle drought and floods at frequent in-

tervals to save the crop from destruction.

Farmers are also facing losses due to absence of irrigation facilities for cultivation, while irregularities and negligence in paddy procurement have hit them hard.

According to reports available from the state Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment Department, farmers spent ₹1,208 per quintal of paddy cultivation in FY 2019-20, but sold the harvested paddy at ₹1,815 per quintal.

Similarly, farmers spent ₹1,245 per quintal and sold the crop at ₹1,868 in 2020-21 fiscal, while ₹1,293 was spent per quintal and sold at ₹1,940 in 2021-22 FY. Farmers spent ₹1,360 per quintal and sold at ₹2,040 in 2022-23 FY, while they spent ₹1,455 per quintal of paddy and sold it at ₹2,183 per quintal in 2023-24 FY.

The district administration has strictly advised the regulated market committees (RMCs) to ensure that farmers should not face any problems during paddy procurement. Paddy should be procured there at the right time and steps be taken for hassle free payment to the farmers. However, no one ever bothers if the paddy was procured at the right time, number of PACs (primary agriculture cooperative societies) opened, and if farmers were paid properly or not.

The elected political representatives also forget about the farmers. As a result, the problems of the farmers receive little attention, and they continue to be fleeced due to the alleged negligence and bonhomie between

the officials and middlemen. These loopholes frustrate the entire paddy procurement process which starts late every year to help the middlemen, it is alleged. As a result, farmers resort to distress sale and relieve their paddy stocks to middlemen at ₹500 to ₹600 below the per quintal MSP.

Earlier, farmers had to endure a lot of hardship as the paddy procurement process was dependent on millers. Realizing the problem, the state government started procuring paddy through the government or government authorised PACs. However, some unscrupulous officials in cahoots with middlemen started fleecing the farmers like before, it is alleged.

Sources said that the mandis are opened late, or not opened at all. Officials are even allegedly manipulating the registration, and in providing tokens to the farmers for paddy procurement. This has only resulted in losses for the farmers and coming on the way of them becoming self-reliant.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, June 13:** For the past two years, the Patient Facilitation Centre and Attendant Accommodation Centre (PFC-Cum-AAC) has been helping attendants of patients from Sundargarh district referred to the Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) with not just accommodation, but the necessary support services required during prolonged treatment.

The operation of the PFC-Cum-AAC, set up within the Red Cross Building of VIMSAR, has been initiated by District Mineral Foundation, Sundargarh. It is being managed by IMTS, a NGO.

The PFC-Cum-AAC which started its operation in June 2022 out of a rented premise in Majhipalli of Sambalpur, later shifted to the Red Cross Building. The objective of establishment of this centre is to provide support to patients and their attendants during their stay while getting treatment at VIMSAR, Bhubaneswar. This centre not only pro-

vides shelter to the attendants for 10 days upon admission but also provides them food as well as recreation. This facility, in coordination with different medical institutions, takes care of patients' treatment, diagnosis, blood requirement as well as pharmacological. The centre is being managed by a team of 10 professionals - two cooks, two pharmacists, one accountant, two support staff, two security guards and one project co-ordinator.

The 12-bed facility is equipped with a kitchen, toilets and other amenities. Till now more than 1,270 patients and their attendants have taken benefit of this set up, an official said. Rukmini Barik of Rourkela, Jharpali, who came to VIMSAR to attend one of her ailing relatives and availed this facility said, "Earlier, we would stay in hotels by paying anything between ₹300-400 per day. We came across the project coordinator of this centre once who shifted us here," said Rukmini. "The service at the centre was good and it reduced our expenses to a large extent," she added.

## SUSTAINABILITY WEEK

### Plantation drives, awareness campaigns by AM/NS India



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 13:** A series of thematic events across different locations in the state marked the Sustainability Week observance by ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India), a joint venture between ArcelorMittal and Nippon Steel, two of the world's leading steel makers.

The themes included, 'Land Restoration', 'Desertification', and 'Drought Resilience', under the hashtag #GenerationRestoration, a release issued by the steel major stated. At Paradeep, the events aimed to raise mass awareness about environmental protection, specifically the challenges related to land. Various competitions such as debate, quiz, poster making and recording video messages were organised for the employees and their families. On the occasion, Suresha G, Executive Director, Odisha Operations of AM/NS India said, "We all have immense responsibility to protect our environment. We have implemented Natural Gas for Pellet Production in Paradeep which is very environment friendly." He said the company has planted more than 30,000 trees inside the plant premises in the last two years, totalling the greenbelt development from 33 per cent to 42 per cent.

# 6 hurt in group clash; 2 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, June 13:** At least six persons sustained critical injuries after two groups of people clashed over bursting of firecrackers at Dhanurajapur village under Soso police limits in Keonjhar district, Wednesday night. Among those seriously injured are a man and his minor son. Initially both of them were admitted to Agarpada community health centre for treatment.

However, one of them identified as Narayan Samal was shifted to Cuttack after his condition deteriorated. Police have not disclosed the identity of his son as he is a minor.

Police arrested Thursday another father-son duo for their involvement in the attack. They have been identified as Jila Purty and Natabar Purty. Based on a complaint lodged by Sandhyarani Mishra, a case has

been registered and investigation has been initiated" said Bijay Kumar Bihari, Soso police IIC.

The clash occurred at about 8.30pm in Nala Sahi village under Baula police outpost after Mohan Charan Majhi was sworn in as Chief Minister. BJP workers were celebrating by bursting crackers in the village, when Jila and Natabar shot them with arrows.

# MAJOR UPGRADATION CARRIED OUT IN RSP



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, June 13:** Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has successfully executed major critical upgradations in many important units in the first two months of FY 2024-25.

The upgradation of Level-1 automation of Blast Furnace#5 (BF#5) has been executed successfully. The shot crating process in BF#5 was also executed and the furnace was successfully revived and production was normalised within 24 hours.

Modernisation of PLC of Caster-1 of Steel Melting Shop-1 was also successfully completed before schedule. The Caster #3 HMI servers, engineering stations and migration project were successfully completed. The

overhauling of TRTG was taken up for the first time and completed successfully May 23, officials said in a release.

The old and obsolete 1000kw HF Welder in ERWPP has been replaced with the latest state-of-the-art fully indigenous 1000kw HF Welder, which will increase the mill speed up to 18 mpm and provide improved weld quality in ERWPP pipes, officials added.

In a major boost to logistics, RSP has also inducted two rakes of BFN# 22.9 under LSFTO scheme in May, 2024. Out of six rakes, at present three are being used for dispatching steel consignment.

The inauguration of the new outer loop track for Hot Strip Mill-II is another significant infrastructure augmentation that aims to de-bottleneck the finished product dispatch process. The facility can now handle an additional 20 to 22 wagons per day, enhancing the overall dispatch capacity. It also helps in decongesting the yard, making operations smooth and more streamlined, officials pointed out.

# Buzz of expectancy in CM Majhi's native village



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, June 13:** Residents of Raikala village under Jhumpura block of this district are expecting that new Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi will solve all their problems as he is a 'son of the soil'. The village has six hamlets each of which is known as 'Sahi'. However, the 'Sahi' where Majhi once resided has been renamed 'MLA Sahi' after he was elected to the Odisha Legislative Assembly for the first time in 2004.

Raikala wore a deserted look Wednesday with most its residents going to Bhubaneswar to be a part of Majhi's swearing-in ceremony. His family members are yet to return here from Bhubaneswar where they have gone to be a part of the historic occasion.

The house where Majhi resided in the village is locked. Locals informed

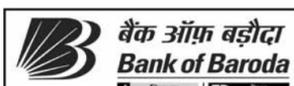
village suffers from acute water crisis. However, with Majhi at the helm of affairs, he is hopeful that these problems will be addressed soon.

Khageswar Mohanta, a resident of Raikala said that track connecting the village to the main road is in urgent need of repair. He said that it was built when Majhi was elected for the first time as an MLA. However, since then it has suffered a lot of wear and tear. Mohanta also said that an overhead water tank was constructed in the village last year. However, it has not yet been connected to the households. Hence people still have to depend on tube wells for drinking water.

Many villagers pointed out that they do not have a proper house to live in. They are hoping that the new CM will look into their problems. Inhabitant Rukmini Mahanta informed that there are no street lights on the village road and hence people have to move in the dark. She added that if solar lights are installed in the village it will be a huge benefit for the residents.

## Youth held for rape

**Jepore:** Personnel from the Jepore Mahila police station arrested Thursday a youth on charges of outraging the modesty of a girl in Koraput district. The accused was identified as Gopal Nayak, 22, a resident of Bedhasahi area in this town. A medical examination was conducted on the accused and the survivor before producing the former in the court, Jepore Mahila police station IIC Anita Kujur said. A case was registered in this connection and further investigations are on, she stated.



**REGIONAL OFFICE: CUTTACK**  
2nd Floor, Chalachitra Bhawan, Buxibazar, Cuttack-753001,  
Tel. - 8093047218, E-mail: legal.cuttack@bankofbaroda.com

## DEMAND NOTICE

(Under Sub Section (2) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI Act 2002)

Demand Notice u/s.13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 is issued by Bank of Baroda as Secured Creditor against the following Borrowers of the Branch.

JAGATSinghpur Branch / Name & Address of Borrower and Guarantors	NPA Date / 13(2) Date / Notice Return Reason	Facility / Limit (₹)	Rate of Interest	Total Dues
<b>Borrowers:</b> 1) M/s. Krishna Medicine, Prop.: Antaryami Patra, 2) Sri Madhabananda Patra / <b>Guarantor:</b> Sri Madhabananda Patra, All are At: Rasalpur, P.O: Ashram Patna, P.S: Jagatsinghpur, Dist.: Jagatsinghpur, PIN - 754104.	22.04.2024 / 08.05.2024 /	1) Cash Credit / ₹16,00,000/- 2) Term Loan / ₹3,15,000/- 3) Term Loan / ₹1,60,000/-	1) 1.85 % above MCLR + SP (floating) 2) 1.85 % above 1 yr. MCLR + SP (floating) 3) 1 yr. MCLR (floating)	₹ 19,44,088.13 as on 22.04.2024 (inclusive of Interest up to 31.01.2024)

**Description of Mortgaged property:** Equitable Mortgage of Land & Building situated at Mouza: Rasalpur, Tahasil: Jagatsinghpur, Dist.: Jagatsinghpur, Khata No.: 1216, Plot No.: 2603/3720, Area: Ac. 0.04 Dec., Status: Stitiban, Kissam: Gharabari, in the name of Sri Madhabananda Patra, S/o: Late Bhajani Patra, Bounded by East: Bholanath Ray, West: Harekrushna Ray & others, North: Lokanath Ray, South: Gouranga Ray & others.

You have committed default in repayment of loan mentioned above with further interest at the agreed rate availed from our Branch as mentioned above. The bank has issued notice under the said Act to you to repay the outstanding amount in the above mentioned table. The Demand Notice sent to you by registered post but it has been returned with the reason mentioned above. Again you have committed default in payment. You are called upon to pay the dues together with interest within 60 days from the date of this notice failing which Bank will be constrained to exercise Right of Enforcement of Security Interest as against the secured asset given in the schedule of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. We hereby give you a notice that in terms of sub-section (13) of section 13 of the said Act, you are barred from transferring the secured asset mentioned above by way of sale, lease or otherwise other than in the ordinary course of business without prior written consent of the Bank. We further invite your attention to sub section (8) of section 13 of the said Act in terms of which you may redeem the secured assets, if the amount of dues together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank is tendered by you, at any time before the date of publication of notice for public auction / inviting quotations / tender / private treaty. Please note that after publication of the notice as above, your right to redeem the secured assets will not be available. This Notice is without prejudice to any other right remedy available to the Bank including initiation of legal action.

**Place: Cuttack, Date: 13.06.2024**

**Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda**

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
Tender No.: 12-KUR-TRD-OT-2024-25  
Name of the Work: ONE MODIFICATION IN CONNECTION WITH PROPOSED RENEWAL OF HBEM SLEEPERS ON BRIDGE NO. 553DN (KATHAJORI BRIDGE) AND 550DN IN BARANG-CUTTACK SECTION AND 539DN (BIRUPA BRIDGE) AND BRIDGE NO. 535A UP AND DN IN KENDRAPARA ROAD-NERGUNDI SECTION.  
Advertised Value: ₹ 32,12,022.40, EMD: ₹ 64,300/-, Period of Completion: 180 days.  
Bidding start date: 14.06.2024, Tender closing date & time: at 1300 hrs. of 28.06.2024.  
Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.  
Complete details & tender documents will be available at website www.treps.gov.in  
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD), PR-203/P/24-25 Khurda Road

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER SAMBALPUR (R&B) DIVISION NO. II, SAMBALPUR**  
E-mail: eesbprnbdivision2@gmail.com, Phone: 0663-2410104  
BID IDENTIFICATION NO. SE/R and B/SP //01 (Online)/2024-25  
**E-Procurement Notice**  
No. 3329 Dated: 13.06.2024  
No. B-21: The Superintending Engineer, Sambalpur (R&B) Division No. II, Sambalpur on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites Percentage Rate bids in Single/Double Cover System in ONLINE MODE.  
1. No. of work : 03 Nos. Building Works  
2. Tender Cost : Rs. 6,000/- & 10,000/-  
3. Class of Contractor : "B", "C" & "D" Class Contractors  
4. Availability of bid document : 18.00 hours of 25.06.2024 to 17.00 hours of 04.07.2024  
5. Date of Opening of Tenders : 11.30 hours on Dt.05.07.2024  
6. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in only. Any Corrigendum/ Addendum/Cancellation of tender will be displayed in the website said only.  
Sd./ Superintending Engineer Sambalpur (R&B) Division No. II  
OIPR-34136/11/0001/2425

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
**WALK-IN-INTERVIEW FOR ENGAGEMENT OF CONTRACTUAL MEDICAL PRACTITIONER (CMP)**  
EMPLOYMENT NOTICE NO. 03/2024-CMP Date: 05.06.2024  
It has been decided to engage 'Contract Medical Practitioners (CMP)' GDMO on full time contract basis in Khurda Road Division, East Coast Railway, from willing, eligible Doctors as per the scheme provided by the Railway Board, from time to time, or till the posts are filled up by regular IRMS (now IRHS) Doctors, whichever is earlier. A Walk-in-Interview will be conducted to adjudge the suitability of the willing doctors, the date/time/venue of which are provided below. The details of the scheme are given below:-  
**TOTAL NUMBER OF VACANCIES: 06 CMPs (GDMO).** Community wise break-up of vacancies are proposed to be filled up as UR-2, OBC-2, EWS-1 and SC-1.  
**VENUE, DATE & TIME OF WALK-IN-INTERVIEW:-**  
VENUE OF "WALK-IN-INTERVIEW" DATE, TIME & REPORTING TIME OF "WALK-IN-INTERVIEW"  
DIVISIONAL RAILWAY HOSPITAL, KHURDA ROAD ON 04.07.2024 (THURSDAY) AT 1100 HRS. REPORTING TIME-1000 HRS.  
For Educational Qualification/Eligibility, Age, Remuneration, Application Format and Other detailed terms & conditions, please visit website www.eastcoastrail.indianrailways.gov.in--About us--Divisions--Khurda Road Division--Recruitment  
PR-203/P/24-25 Divisional Railway Manager (P), Khurda Road

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, P.H. DIVISION, SAMBALPUR**  
Phone No.: (0663) 2412135, Email ID: eophdsbp@gmail.com  
No.C-41  
**NOTICE INVITING TENDERS**  
**NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement**  
Bid Identification No. SEPHSB-02/2024-25 Dt.11.06.2024  
01 Name of the work : 1 No. work  
02 Type of bid : Single Bid System  
03 Estimated cost : Rs.13.64 lakh  
04 Period of completion : 2 (Two) calendar months  
05 Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal : From 11.00 A.M. of dt.20.06.2024 to 5.00 P.M. of 02.07.2024  
06 Last date / time of receipt of bids in the portal : 5.00 P.M. of 02.07.2024  
07 Date & time of opening of technical bids : At 11.30 A.M. of 03.07.2024  
08 Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Sambalpur, Near P.H.D. Field, Ainthapali, Dist.: Sambalpur-768001  
Further details can be seen from the website http://tenders.or.nic.in or www.tendersorissa.gov.in  
Sd./ Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Sambalpur  
OIPR-13026/11/0004/2425

No.MM-28  
**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**FOREST, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE DEPARTMENT**  
**OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, KHARIAR FOREST DIVISION - 766107**  
Tel/Fax :- 06671-224237, e-mail :- dfo\_khariar@odisha.gov.in  
Bid Identification No. DFO, KHR 01/2024-25 dated. 12.06.2024  
Letter No. 3442 / 1F, Dated, Khariar the 12th June - 2024  
**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
S1. Name of the Work Procurement of Different Planting materials for Planting Season - 2024-25  
https://nuapada.odisha.gov.in  
1 Estimated Cost Depending upon funds availability  
2 Period & time of completion 13 days from the date of issue of orders  
3 Date & time of availability of the bid document in the portal 12.06.2024 to 25.06.2024  
4 Last date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal Up to 5.00 PM of 25.06.2024  
5 Date & Time of bid opening 11.30 hours on Dated. 26.06.2024  
6 Name & Address of the officer inviting Bid Divisional Forest Officer, Khariar Forest Division, Pin - 766107  
Others can see the details from Notice inviting Tenders, available in website - https://nuapada.odisha.gov.in. Corrigendum if any, shall only be published in the above website.  
Sd./ Divisional Forest Officer Khariar Forest Division  
OIPR-08029/11/0002/2425

No.O-26  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RWS&S DIVISION, KENDRAPARA**  
At : Ichhapur, Post : Shree Baladevjee, Email : eerwsskendrapara@gmail.com  
**INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB) [e-Procurement]**  
Bid Identification No. RWS/01/2024-25  
Letter No. 260/Dated. 12.06.2024  
1 The Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Kendrapara on behalf of Governor of Odisha urgently invites lump sum bid in SINGLE cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible Electrical contractors for External electrification works of different Rural Piped Water Supply Schemes in Kendrapara District.  
2 Name of the work : External electrification works for different RWS&S points of PWS Schemes in Kendrapara district.  
3 No. of Work : 08 Nos. (Eight) only  
4 Value of the Work : Rs. 6.82 Lakhs to Rs. 11.42 Lakhs  
5 Concerned tender inviting authority : Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Kendrapara  
6 Cost of Bid documents (Rs.) : Rs. 4000/- and Rs. 6000/- as applicable (Online)  
7 Cost of EMD @1% (Online) : Rs. 6700/- to Rs. 11500/- as applicable  
8 Class of Bidder : "HT" and "LT"  
9 Period of Completion : 30 days  
10 Availability of bid documents in the website : From date. 19.06.2024 at 10.00 A.M. to date. 28.06.2024 till 5.30 P.M.  
11 Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification : Up to 20.06.2024 up to 5.30 P.M.  
12 Date of Opening of Bid : 29.06.2024 at 11.00 A.M  
The bidders have to participate in the tender through ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be had from the website i.e http://tenderodisha.gov.in. Subsequent corrigendum / addendum if required shall only be appeared in the above website.  
Sd./ Executive Engineer RWS&S Division, Kendrapara  
OIPR-25004/11/0001/2425

In sincerity is the certitude of victory. Sincerity! Sincerity! How sweet is the purity of thy presence?

THE MOTHER



## Soft Landing

With global growth stabilising for the first time in three years, inflation reaching a three-year low, and financial conditions brightening, the global economy seems to be on its final approach for a "soft landing." But this positive news cannot obscure the grim reality: more than four years after the COVID-19 pandemic began, the world – especially developing economies – has yet to embark on a promising path toward prosperity.

As a new World Bank Group report shows, the rate at which annual global growth is stabilising – 2.7 per cent, on average, through 2026 – is significantly lower than the 3.1 per cent average in the pre-pandemic decade. That is insufficient to support progress on key development goals. By the end of this year, one in four developing economies will be poorer than it was on the eve of the pandemic. In 2024-25, most of the world's economies are set to grow more slowly than they did in the decade before COVID-19.

With global interest rates expected to average 4 per cent through 2026 – double the level of the previous two decades – this outlook is unlikely to change. Rather than hope for a stroke of luck, governments should be working to advance long-term growth by fostering productivity, entrepreneurship, and innovation, in a setting of closer international cooperation.

This is the model that flourished after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Encouraging the flow of goods, capital, and ideas across borders made possible roughly 25 years of unprecedented global prosperity, during which the gap between per-capita income in the world's poorest and richest countries narrowed significantly. Before the pandemic, an end to extreme poverty appeared to be within reach.

But international cooperation has been fracturing in recent years. Measures designed to restrain cross-border commercial flows are proliferating. With many major economies holding elections this year, uncertainty over trade policy is higher than at any other moment this century. This is all happening amid persistent weakness in investment: in 2013-23, investment growth in developing economies fell to less than half the rate in the 2000s.

This helps to explain why per capita income growth in developing economies is expected to average just 3% through 2026, well below the 3.8% average in the decade before COVID-19. Many developing economies will not make any progress at all in closing the income gap with their developed-economy counterparts in the near term, and that gap will widen for nearly half in the first five years of this decade – the highest share since the 1990s.

But there are also bright spots in the global economy. The United States, in particular, has shown impressive resilience, with growth remaining buoyant even amid the most rapid monetary-policy tightening in four decades. US dynamism is a key reason why the global economy has some upside potential over the next two years.

Among emerging markets, India and Indonesia stand out for their strong performance. Buoyed by vibrant domestic demand, surging investment, and a dynamic services sector, India's economy is projected to grow by 6.7 per cent per fiscal year, on average, through 2026. (South Asia is now the world's fastest-growing region.) For its part, Indonesia is expected to grow by 5.1 per cent, on average, over the next two years, thanks largely to a rising middle class and prudent economic policies.

These economies prove that high growth rates can be sustained, even under difficult conditions. If others want to achieve similar success, and enhance their own long-term growth potential, they must enact policies that strengthen human capital, boost productivity, and encourage more women to enter the labor force. To this end, efficient and well-targeted public investment is critical.

In developing economies, public investment accounts for just a quarter of total investment, on average. Our research shows that scaling it up by just 1 per cent of GDP can increase total GDP by more than 1.5 per cent over the medium term and boost private investment by as much as 2 per cent within roughly five years. The benefits are largest in countries with a track record of efficient public investment and, crucially, sufficient fiscal space to increase spending.

For some countries – especially small developing countries (with populations of less than 1.5 million) – this is a formidable challenge. Home to just 17 million people, small developing countries face climate-related natural disasters at a rate that is eight times higher, on average, than in other developing economies. Making matters worse, two-fifths of these countries are in, or at high risk of, debt distress.

But this does not mean that small-state governments cannot steer their economies onto a more stable, prosperous path. On the contrary, they have considerable room to mobilise more revenues from domestic sources, which offer a more reliable fiscal base than foreign flows. They can also create fiscal frameworks – including rainy-day funds – capable of coping with frequent natural disasters and other shocks, and improve the efficiency of public spending, especially on health, education, and infrastructure. International policy coordination and financial support can complement these efforts.

Policymakers have good reason to celebrate: the world economy has avoided recession, despite the steepest rise in global interest rates since the 1980s. But they must also recognise that, in much of the world, growth remains too slow to support progress on development and poverty reduction. Without stronger international cooperation and policies that advance shared prosperity, the global economy will remain stuck in the slow lane.

Indermit Gill is Chief Economist at the World Bank. M. Ayhan Kose is Director of the Prospects Group at the World Bank. @PROJECTSYNDICATE



Indermit Gill & M. Ayhan Kose

**Buoyed by vibrant domestic demand, surging investment, and a dynamic services sector, India's economy is projected to grow by 6.7 per cent per fiscal year, on average, through 2026**

# RESCIND ONE-CHINA POLICY

FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

Once again China and Pakistan have issued a joint statement on Kashmir. New Delhi has been ignoring such statements with a mild reprimand against third party intervention. But it is time that India made a strong strategic shift vis-à-vis China on the latter's meddling in Kashmir. Pakistan's obsession with Kashmir is understandable and can be dealt with at any point, although this also requires a fresh line of thinking. One of the formidable ways to counter China is to rescind India's support of One-China policy. And to deal with Pakistan, New Delhi should make a serious and persistent claim on PoK in order to complete the unfinished task of United Kashmir's integration into Union of India.



DK Giri

**THE CHINA-PAKISTAN AXIS CAN NO LONGER BE IGNORED OR DOWNPLAYED**

China reiterated that, "Jammu and Kashmir dispute is left over from history and should be properly and peacefully resolved in accordance with the UN Charter, relevant Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements."

The MEA swiftly reacted, "the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh are and always will be integral and inalienable parts of India. No other country has a locus standi to comment on the same." Obviously, those concerned with India's territorial integrity beg the question, can India continue to ignore Chinese reference to Kashmir or take some serious steps to deter China from raising its voice on India's internal issues. As said, India should review its One-China policy. New Delhi's One-China policy refers to recognising People's Republic of China as the only legitimate Govt of China and not recognising Taiwan as an independent state.

It is in order that one recalls the historical context of such a stance taken by India. In 1949, as China got independence, it made a precondition with India for establishing diplomatic relations. And that was accepting the One-China policy. For India, the strategic rationale was that of its commitment to non-alignment and anti-colonialism which



**It is time for New Delhi to exploit the geographic, ethnic and economic fault lines of China – Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang**

implied its opposition to the partition of China.

On reflection, quite a few mistakes have been made by the first Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru; one of them certainly was India's policy towards China – giving away Tibet without any reciprocal commitment from China, offering the Security Council membership to China and being gulled by Chinese overtures, Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai etc. He recognised People's Republic of China cutting off all ties with Taiwan. However, that is history. Instead of brooding over and blaming the past mistakes, it is prudent to correct the fault lines of history.

It is important to remember that while India recognised One-China policy, Beijing has not yet accepted One-India policy. Worse, Beijing has been unduly interfering in Jammu & Kashmir and making obnoxious claims on Arunachal Pradesh as a disputed territory. Also, China has always disregarded sovereignty of India through its position on PoK, J&K, Arunachal Pradesh, issuing of stapled visas and skirmishes on borders of Ladakh and LAC. China's support to Pakistan in military and economic terms and in international forums is aimed at exploiting Pakistan's difference with India and preventing India from becoming a regional power.

Second, Taiwan has emerged as a global economic and technological power doing business

with India. India's stakes in Taiwan are quite high, like jointly making semi-conductors in India and sending a large number of Indians to Taiwan to make up the labour deficit. Recently, both countries signed an agreement on sourcing labour from India to Taiwan.

Third, India and the United States are deepening their relations in multiple sectors. Washington is doing so to counterbalance through India China's growing influence and aggression in the region. India is reciprocating for its own national interests in countering China in partnership with US and its allies. As the US is committed to defending the independence of Taiwan, New Delhi should reconsider its One-China policy. Finally, India should be able to rise as an independent power without being heckled by Beijing.

Arguably, the potential consequences of reviewing India's One-China policy are complex impacting India's foreign and security policy in the region either way. On the one hand, it could lead to increased tension between New Delhi and Beijing to the extent of disturbing the global order. On the other hand, it could lend India leverage and greater bargaining power vis-à-vis China.

The so-called moderates would argue that India and China historically have had strong cultural, economic and strategic ties, so both countries should engage through dialogue and

negotiation. This is part of 'containment' strategy. To put it candidly, the containment policy vis-à-vis China has not worked and may not work in future. Chinese are by nature duplicitous. They will chip away territories while being ready to negotiate. They are infamous for going back on their commitment. Their political system is based on domination and aggression. Therefore, New Delhi needs to embrace the strategy of countering China. It is time for New Delhi to exploit the geographic, ethnic and economic fault lines of China – Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang. Out of all these, Taiwan is an independent entity. There are other territorial disputes China is caught in, South China Sea being one such hotspot.

India's policy towards China witnessed a remarkable shift when BJP under Narendra Modi came to power in 2014 in full majority. Sushma Swaraj, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, at her first meeting with Wang Yi, Chinese Foreign Minister, in June 2014, demanded that China must reciprocate with One-India policy. However, Modi has tried on several occasions to befriend China. That again has not worked.

So, the only option is to counter China. How best to do so could be handled by the sagacious minds in the South Block. The political will has to be sounded out to all concerned. One of the ways is to deepen India's contact with Taiwan. The abovementioned pact on labour supply from India to Taiwan has almost sidelined New Delhi's One-China policy.

On rebuffing Pakistan on Kashmir, New Delhi has to up the ante on PoK. New Delhi should announce to the world its intention about reclaiming PoK. This demand will steal the thunder from Pakistan on Kashmir and deprive them of the sympathy they gain from some Muslim countries. China-Pakistan axis can no longer be ignored or downplayed.

The writer is Secretary General, Association for Democratic Socialism. @NSA

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

## Digital capitalism & its feudal order

Feudalism managed to survive in different stages of its history. As a social, economic, political, and cultural system that emerged in the Middle Ages, it has shown remarkable resilience by adapting and transforming throughout history. In contemporary times, it has reinvented itself in the form of techno-feudalism. This modern iteration is dominated by platform companies that dominate and control various aspects of economic activities of producers, consumers, and distributors. These companies extract rent from producers, consumers, and distributors, influencing the economic activities of individuals, societies, states, and governments. The pervasive reach of these online platforms underscores the enduring nature of feudal structures, albeit in a new, technologically driven context.



Bhabani Shankar Nayak

**LIKE MEDIEVAL FEUDALISM, TECHNOLOGICAL FEUDALISM DOES NOT PRODUCE TANGIBLE GOODS AND SERVICES BUT INSTEAD SURVIVES THROUGH THE ACCUMULATION OF RENT**

Like medieval feudalism, technological feudalism does not produce tangible goods and services but instead survives through the accumulation of rent. While medieval lords extracted agricultural produce and labour from serfs, techno-feudal lords extract

value through data and user engagement on digital platforms. Both systems thrive by leveraging their control over resources and populations to generate wealth, not by producing anything themselves but by appropriating the productivity and creativity abilities of the working masses.

The accumulation of rent has been a central feature of feudalism throughout all stages of its history. This principle, which originally manifested through the collection of agricultural produce and labour from serfs, has evolved over time. In modern iterations, such as techno-feudalism, rent accumulation is evident in the control and monetisation of digital spaces by tech corporations. Whether in medieval manors or contemporary online platforms, the core mechanism remains the same: extracting rent from dependent or subordinate groups to enhance the wealth and power of the feudal ruling and non-ruling entities.

Techno-consumers of social media are akin to free slaves, labouring for the rental profits of social media company owners. Despite the perception of free-

dom and choice, these users are, in reality, contributing to the wealth of the digital platform owners through their engagement and data generation. This dynamic reflects a modern form of exploitation, where the users' activities and personal information are commodified for corporate gain. Techno-feudalism is designed to subjugate working people and manipulate their consciousness to serve the interests of techno-feudal lords, all under the guise of technological progress. This system thrives without fostering genuine technological education, skills, and consciousness among the masses, primarily due to digital divides. The technological barriers are intentionally crafted to create an army of unemployed workforce that remains perpetually available to work for low wages and under unfavourable working conditions imposed by the techno-feudals. This dynamic perpetuates inequality and exploitation, reinforcing the dominance of the tech elites.

The working-class control over technology, the democratisation of digital platforms and technological infrastructure, the

availability and accessibility of technological education and skills for all, and the prioritisation of technology for people rather than profit are some of the immediate alternatives to ensure technological progress that upholds the interests of the masses. Through these concerted efforts, working people can harness technology as a tool for societal advancement and empowerment, ensuring that its benefits are accessible to all members of society, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

By dismantling the barriers erected by rent-seeking behaviours within these systems, working people can pave the way for equitable access to technological advancements. This inclusivity not only democratises innovation but also nurtures a collective awareness of the transformative power of technology, empowering individuals, and communities alike to actively engage with and shape the trajectory of technological progress and future.

The writer teaches at the University of Glasgow, UK. Views are personal.

WISDOM CORNER

- He who has a why to live can bear almost any how. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE
- The truth is, no one of us can be free until everybody is free. MAYA ANGELOU
- The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them. ERNEST HEMINGWAY

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1658: The French and English defeated Spanish forces near Dunkirk (then in the Spanish Netherlands) in the Battle of the Dunes.
- 1800: Napoleon and his troops defeated the Austrians in the Battle of Marengo, securing his military and civilian authority in Paris.

Rewarding loyalty

Sir, Minister of State, Jal Shakti and Railways, V Somanna's loyalty towards the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) high command has paid him rich dividends. In the 2023 Karnataka Assembly elections, the 73-year-old Lingayat leader followed the orders of Union Home Minister Amit Shah to contest in two inimical constituencies, one being the stranglehold of the present Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. Though Somanna lost in both, the top party leadership always nurtured a soft corner towards the man that resulted in a party ticket for him from Tumakuru. Somanna didn't disappoint them this time around; he won by a handsome margin. During the Assembly elections campaign, Amit Shah was openly heard praising Somanna's simplicity and hard work, and promising him to make a minister, and he has kept his word. Low-profile leaders like V Somanna are, therefore, in with a chance to prove themselves at the Centre.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Centre of controversy

Sir, It is unfortunate that the quality of the pitch and the outfield at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York, where some of the matches of the ongoing ICC T20 Cricket World Cup are being played, are reportedly sub-standard and unfit for cricket. Not only matches played there so far were low-scoring, but the playing surface turned out to be borderline dangerous as well. Though India won the match against archrival Pakistan in the titanic clash last Sunday, the game certainly lacked the zest and zeal that a T20 game usually produces. It has been reported that pitches were brought in from Australia and prepared in Florida in haste, before being transported to New York, which meant that the pitch and square got no time to settle in. Pitches in world cricket are increasingly becoming the centre of controversy, and it doesn't bode well for the game.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

## Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

Orissa POST  
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

TERRORISED VALLEY

# DGP blames Pak, locals for unrest

TERRORISTS STRUCK AT FOUR PLACES IN REASI, KATHUA, AND DODA DISTRICTS OVER THE PAST FOUR DAYS, KILLING NINE PEOPLE

# Kuwait blaze leaves 24 families in Kerala bereft



REUTERS

**Thiruvananthapuram, June 13:** From a father-of-two who planned to leave his job to a 29-year-old due to visit his family in August, two dozen Indians from the southern state of Kerala died in a fire that ripped through a labour-housing facility in Kuwait Wednesday, leaving their families bereft.

Nair, told Reuters, adding that the family identified the 61-year-old from a list published by India's embassy. His two roommates also died in the blaze.

Millions of foreign workers make up the majority of the labour force in Kuwait and some of its Gulf neighbours, and often live in overcrowded accommodation.

PALL OF GLOOM

**The Kerala government Thursday said it will provide ₹5 lakh financial assistance to the families of the people from the state and ₹one lakh financial assistance to those injured in the incident**

For decades, a disproportionately large share of Indian workers in the Gulf have been drawn from Kerala, a densely packed state along southern India's Arabian Sea coast.

News of the disaster spread quickly in Kerala. The family of Saju Varghese, 56, found out about the fire from television and social media, and confirmed his death from friends and relatives in Kuwait.

Working in the Gulf nation for the last 21 years, Varghese planned to visit Kerala later this month to arrange his daughter's higher education. "The family is in a state of shock," their neighbour, George Samuel, said.

Another victim, Stephan Abraham Sabu, 29, was an engineer in Kuwait since 2019 and called home almost daily. He had visited his hometown Kottayam "two or three times" since he left, and had booked air tickets to return in August for the housewarming of his family's new home and to help them buy a new car, his friends said.



The starting point is across the border. The clear intent of the adversary is that if they cannot motivate locals for subversive activities to disturb the peaceful atmosphere in Kashmir, send their own people, Pakistanis, after recruiting them there and forcibly pushing them into this side

RR SWAIN | DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE, J&K

**Katra, June 13:** In the wake of four terror attacks in as many days, Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police RR Swain Thursday accused Pakistan of trying to disturb peaceful atmosphere through its mercenaries, and asserted that the Indian forces were determined to give a befitting response to the enemy.

He warned the "enemy agents" that they would repent their decision of supporting terrorism and said "they have stakes including families, land and jobs unlike Pakistani terrorists who have nothing to lose."

Terrorists struck at four places in Reasi, Kathua, and Doda districts over the past four days, killing nine people, including seven pilgrims returning from Shiv Khouri temple, and a CRPF jawan, and left seven security personnel and several others injured.

Two suspected Pakistani terrorists were killed in an encounter with security forces in Kathua and a large quantity of arms and ammunition were recovered from them.

"The starting point (of terrorism in J&K) is across the border. The clear intent of the adversary is that if they cannot motivate locals for subversive activities to disturb the peaceful atmosphere in Kashmir, send their own people, Pakistanis, after recruiting them there and forcibly pushing them into this side," the DGP told reporters in Reasi district.

The police chief was in Katra, the base camp for the pilgrims visiting the famous Mata Vaishno Devi shrine, and chaired a high-level meeting to review security in the district, where terrorists attacked a bus Sunday evening, killing nine and injuring 41.

The meeting, among others, was attended by Reasi Deputy Commissioner, Vishesh Paul Mahajan, Udhampur-Reasi

Range Deputy Inspector General of Police Rayees Mohammad Bhat, and Reasi Senior Superintendent of Police Mohita Sharma.

"The enemy agents are doing it (helping foreign terrorists) for money and narcotics. They will be identified and dealt with sternly. We want to warn them that while the (foreign) terrorists will get killed... those who are supporting them will repent," the police chief said.

He said the foreign terrorists have nobody to care about, whether they have children or not. "We don't know whom they are sending here after picking them from jails. Those who are supporting them have land, children and jobs here and they will suffer."

Swain said Pakistan seeks to

use the tough terrain of Jammu and Kashmir by sending foreign terrorists into the forests and to disturb the peaceful atmosphere. "This is the truth."

He, however, said the security forces are determined and promise-bound to maintain peace and eradicate terrorism from Jammu and Kashmir.

"What will be our response? We are ready for the small loss because when a war is thrust upon us and terrorists stand before us to kill or get killed, we utilize all our resources and our effort is to give a befitting response. Since they don't have anyone to care about, their power to inflict loss appears more," he said.

He said terrorism spread its tentacles to Jammu region especially Doda and Ramban in

**PM Narendra Modi Thursday directed the officials to deploy a full spectrum of counter-terror capabilities after chairing a review meeting on the security situation in J&K**

## MASSIVE MANHUNT Reasi attack: 50 detained

Fifty people have been detained in connection with the investigation into the recent terror attack on a bus carrying pilgrims in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said Thursday.

To ensure a comprehensive probe, the search operation to track down the terrorists, has been expanded to cover Reasi district's far-flung Arnas and Mahore areas which were terrorist hotbeds between 1995 and 2005.

Confirming the detention of 50 suspects in connection with the attack, a police spokesperson said it followed an intensive investigation.

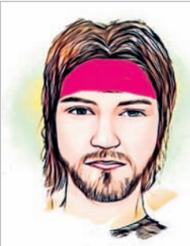
"Significant leads have been uncovered, aiding in the identification and capture of those who may be potentially involved in orchestrating the attack. To ensure a comprehensive probe, search operations have been expanded to cover the far-flung areas of Arnas and Mahore," the spokesperson said.

He said these operations aim to uncover further evidence and apprehend terrorists who may be hiding in these remote regions.

Police have already released a sketch of one of the terrorists and announced a cash reward of ₹20 lakh for information leading to the neutralization of the culprits.

"The law enforcement agencies are committed to bringing the perpetrators to justice and ensuring the safety and security of all residents and visitors in the area," the spokesperson said.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Reasi, Mohita Sharma urged people to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity to the authorities immediately.



Sketch of a terrorist involved in Reasi terror attack on bus released by Jammu & Kashmir police

## Omar accuses admin of harassing locals

National Conference leader Omar Abdullah Thursday hit out at the Jammu and Kashmir administration for allegedly arresting and harassing people in the aftermath of terror attacks in Jammu region, and asserted that the government would need local population on its side if it wanted to end militancy. "If the only tool you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail". This incompetent J&K administration only knows how to arrest, detain & harass people. They repeatedly make the same mistakes & still hope for a different outcome. To end militancy you need the local population on your side, not alienated & angry," Abdullah posted on X. He was commenting on a post by his party National Conference, which claimed that ordinary people were being harassed, detained, and arrested in Chenab valley and Pir Panjal region in the wake of a series of terror attacks over the past few days. "JKNC has always stood for peace and against extremist forces, having lost thousands of its workers to terror and deeply understanding their pain. However, the reports from Chenab and Pir Panjal, where ordinary people are being harassed, detained, and arrested, are profoundly distressing. This must be halted immediately," the party alleged in the post.

1995 but it was completely wiped out by 2005.

"If we are face to face with the same type of challenge, rest assured that we are com-

mitted and promise-bound to give them a befitting response and kill them one by one to maintain a peaceful atmosphere," he said.

## Liquid IEDs: New threat emerging in terrorism theatre of Kashmir

**FORENSIC EXAMINATION INDICATES THAT THE DRONE-DROPPED LIQUID IEDs COULD BE TRINITROTOLUENE (TNT) OR NITROGLYCERINE, GENERALLY USED IN DYNAMITES**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, June 13:** Liquid explosives seem to have made a comeback in Jammu and Kashmir militancy theatre after 17 years as a recent raid by police in the Union territory led to the recovery of such "difficult-to-detect (d2d)" Improvised Explosive Devices, officials said.

The liquid IED was recovered with the assistance of one of the Over Ground Workers (OGW), arrested after a gunfight earlier this month in Pulwama in which one of the oldest surviving Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists Riyaz Dar alias "Sathar" and his associate Rayees Dar were killed.

Riyaz Dar had joined the banned LeT in 2014 and had closely worked with slain Pakistani terrorists Abu Dujana and Abu Ismail. He was involved in many terror-related activities.

While Riyaz, designated as an A++ terrorist, carried a cash reward of above ₹10 lakh, Rayees Dar was categorised as 'A' carrying a cash reward of ₹5 lakh.

Immediately after the gunfight, police cracked down on OGWs working for the Lashkar terrorists and arrested four of them. During interrogation, the officials said, one of the OGWs said the terrorists were given shelter and provided with logistics by Bilal Ahmed Lone, Sajjad Ganie and Shakir Bashir, all residents of Nihama in Pulwama.

The OGW network was unearthed and these three persons

were arrested later. During investigation, the OGWs informed the police that the two Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists had prepared liquid IEDs. Bashir had hid them in the orchards.

Explosive experts from the army decided to destroy the IEDs, weighing around 6 kg and stored in a plastic container, considering them to be dangerous.

This, according to the officials, can be seen as a bigger threat as such explosives can be categorised d2d as they cannot be located with conventional detectors used by Road opening Party (RoP) or by sniffer dogs.

Liquid explosives were used by terror groups in south Kashmir during 2007, but after that, these were not seen during the decade of militancy that hit Jammu



and Kashmir. The officials said there had been intelligence inputs suggesting that Pakistan-based terror groups would now use liquid explosives.

In February 2022, Jammu and Kashmir Police had recovered arms and ammunition from the international border in Jammu which also contained three bottles of a white liquid being air-dropped by drones entering from Pakistan. The liquid explosive material, white in colour, was packed in three one-litre bottles and was part of the consignment dropped by drones, which had taken flight from neighbouring Pakistan, February 24, 2022.

Pakistan's external swooping agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), which has been providing tactical support to banned terror groups like the LeT, Jaish-e-Mohammed and the Hizbul Mujahideen, operating from across the border, has chosen the way of air-dropping weapons with the help of drones.



Fishing boats anchored at the Vizhinjam harbour due to trawling ban in Thiruvananthapuram, Thursday

PTI PHOTO

## Kerala tops India's startup ecosystems

The state's startup ecosystem is valued at \$1.7bn

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Thiruvananthapuram, June 13:** According to a recent study, Kerala created a startup ecosystem valued at \$1.7 billion in 18 months till the end of 2023, which is five times more than the global average during the period.

The Global Startup Ecosystem Report (GSER) 2024 was released at the London Tech Week by the US-based Startup Genome and the Global Entrepreneurship Network. While Kerala tops India's startup ecosystems as per the GSER-2024, the other states to make it to the list are Telangana, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka.

The GSER-2024 powered by the world's most quality-controlled dataset on startup ecosystems.

The report pointed out that while the worldwide average growth was 46 per cent during the period under review, Kerala's startup ecosystem clocked 254 per cent compound annual growth from July 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023, compared to the corre-



**Our mission is to take Kerala's startup growth to the world average in the next five years**

ANOOP AMBIKA | CEO, KERALA STARTUP MISSION

sponding period ending in 2021.

Kerala was also ranked fourth among Asia's startup ecosystems in the 'Affordable Talent' category that measures the ability to hire tech talent, while the state is in the top-30 list when it comes to the 'Performance' of the startup ecosystems.

Startups in Kerala raised \$33.2 million (₹227 crore) in 2023, marking a 15 per cent increase from the previous year. Likewise, software exports reached \$2.3 million in 2022-23, prompting Kerala to aim for a 10 per cent share in the country's IT exports, besides creating five lakh new jobs.

## National anthem made must across J&K schools

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, June 13:** The School Education Department of Jammu and Kashmir has directed all schools in the Union Territory to start the morning assembly with the national anthem.

The Principal Secretary to the Government, School Education Department, through a circular directed all schools to make the morning assembly uniform across the Union Territory.

"Morning assembly should begin with the National Anthem as per standard protocol," the circular, issued Wednesday, read.

The department said the morning assemblies have proved to be an invaluable ritual in instilling a sense of unity and discipline among the students. "They (assemblies) serve as platforms to nurture the values of moral integrity, shared community and mental tranquility. However, it has been observed that such a significant ritual/tradition is not being carried out uniformly across various schools of JK UT," the circular, which suggested 16 steps for the schools to follow.

The department suggested inviting guest speakers, creating awareness about environment, and against the drug menace, as some of the steps for schools to include in the morning assemblies.

**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**  
ROURKELA GOVT. HOSPITAL  
E-Mail: director@rourkela@gmail.com, Phone/Fax: (0661) 2401946  
Tender Ref. No. - NIRMAL/TENDER/RGH/3 & 4 Dt. 24<sup>th</sup> Aug 2024  
**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, ROURKELA GOVT. HOSPITAL**  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**  
No.E-36: Rourkela Govt. Hospital invites Request for Proposal towards "SELECTION OF AGENCY FOR PROVIDING DIFFERENT MANPOWER SERVICES LIKE PATIENT ATTENDANT AND OTHER MANPOWER". The RFP documents will be available from 25<sup>th</sup> August 2024 to 14<sup>th</sup> September 2024 on [www.sundargarh.nic.in](http://www.sundargarh.nic.in). Please refer the RFP documents for further details.  
Sd./- Director  
Rourkela Govt. Hospital  
OIIPR-10158/11/0002/2425

**OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, KUTRA**  
No.1-05  
E-Mail - [ori-kutra@nic.in](mailto:ori-kutra@nic.in)  
**Bid Identification No.- B.D.O. P.S., Kutra - 01/2024-25**  
No :- 1231 P.S Kutra/Dtd :- 12.06.2024  
1. Block Development Officer, Kutra on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid through open bid in Single from eligible contractors for the works as detailed below.  
Nature of Work : "Construction of Model AWCs under Kutra Block  
No. of Works : 11 Nos.  
Tender Cost : As Specified in the bid documents  
Class of Contractor : As specified in the bid documents  
Available of Bid : From dt. 13.06.2024 of 10.00 AM to Dt. 24.06.2024  
document in Website : 24.06.2024  
Last Date of receipt of Tender Paper : Date - 25.06.2024 till 12.00 Noon in working days  
Date of opening of open Bid : Dt. 25.06.2024 at 4.00 PM  
2. The Bidders have to participate in open bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website : [www.sundargarh.nic.in](http://www.sundargarh.nic.in)  
3. Any Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the newspaper and website : <http://www.sundargarh.nic.in>  
Sd./- Block Development Officer  
Kutra  
OIIPR-19126/11/0001/2425

# national

## of the day quote

We want the people of India to live freely, follow any religion, support any party and political ideology of their choice and create a sense of freedom. I have already made up my mind that irrespective of the results in Jorhat, even if it is a victory, there are many people in Assam feel that there is an atmosphere of fear and my job is to make them free from fear

GAURAV GOGOI | CONGRESS LEADER

Mamata Banerjee must find other legitimate means to wipe the taint of #Sandeshkhali instead of using fringe elements to fling muck on me. Such attempts to keep me out of Bengal won't work. I ain't leaving till @BJP4Bengal ensures justice for the women of Sandeshkhali and ousts the TMC from power

AMIT MALVIYA | BJP'S IT CELL CHIEF

Nobody should panic, don't give money. No kidnappings are taking place in Goa. These phone calls come through Virtual Private Network and they call from different countries

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CHIEF MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### LS Speaker's election Jun 26

**New Delhi:** The Lok Sabha will elect its new Speaker June 26 for which notices for motions supporting candidates can be submitted by members by 12 noon a day prior, the Lok Sabha secretariat said Thursday. The 18th Lok Sabha will meet for the first time June 24 and the session will conclude July 3. At any time before 12 noon on the day preceding the date fixed for the election, any member can give notice in writing to the secretary general of a motion supporting another member for the office of the speaker, a Lok Sabha bulletin noted.

### Soldier killed as Army vehicle falls into gorge

**Rajouri/Jammu:** An army personnel was killed and four others sustained injuries when their vehicle skidded off the road and rolled down into a gorge in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir Thursday, officials said. The accident took place near Bhawani village near the Line of Control (LoC) in the Nowshera sector in the evening, they said. Rescuers took the five soldiers travelling in the vehicle to a hospital where one of them was declared brought dead.

### NIA chargesheet against seven

**New Delhi:** The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Thursday filed charge sheet against seven persons for recruiting and radicalising vulnerable youths as "mujahideens" to operate as terrorist sleeper cells, an official statement said. They were part of a bigger conspiracy by proscribed terrorist organisation Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to prepare 50 such sleeper cells in each district of India by 2025, it said.

### Five Tamils dead in Kuwait fire incident

**Chennai:** It is learnt that five Tamils were among the dead in the Kuwait fire incident, Tamil Nadu Minister for Minorities Welfare and Non-Resident Tamils Welfare, Gingee KS Masthan said here Thursday, quoting information shared so far by Tamil associations based abroad.



**Armed forces modernisation and the welfare of the soldiers, both serving and retired, will continue to be our main focus**

RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

## NEW NORM ON MENSTRUAL HYGIENE

Girl students should be allowed to take necessary restroom breaks during board exams for classes 10 and 12 and free sanitary napkins must be made available at all examination centres, the Union Ministry of Education said in an advisory to schools Thursday



# 3 more held in Renukaswamy murder case

AGENCIES

**Bangalore, June 13:** Three people, including the close aide of Kannada star Darshan Thoogudeepa, were arrested in connection with the murder of Renukaswamy even as the police recovered CCTV footage showing the suspected abduction of the victim in a car.

According to police sources, Darshan's aide Nagaraj was looking after all the dealings of the actor.

He was also taking care of Darshan's farmhouse in Mysuru. Nagaraj was on the run ever since the police arrested Darshan, his friend and actress Pavithra Gowda and 11 other henchmen.

Sources did not divulge details about his co-star Pradosh's role in the murder.

Pradosh had appeared in minor roles in some movies in which Darshan was the lead actor. Another henchman identified as Ravi surrendered before the Deputy Superintendent of Police Thursday evening.

He is a resident of Kurubarahatti in the district headquarter town of Chitradurga, and was at large ever since the murder came to light. So far 16 people have been arrested including Darshan and Pavithra. Darshan and his gang were arrested in connection with the murder of Renukaswamy from Chitradurga on June 8 night for allegedly sending lewd messages to Pavithra. The victim's body was then dumped in a stormwater drain at Kamakshipalya police station limits. Police got to know about the murder when a food delivery boy alerted them about dogs eating the body of a man.

Three accused June 9 had approached police and confessed to having murdered Renukaswamy over a financial dispute.

As the investigation progressed, police learnt that the trio was trying to mislead the in-



## BJP SLAMS K'TAKA GOVT

**Karnataka Leader of the Opposition (LoP) R Ashoka** Thursday slammed the state government for handling the murder case involving the Kannada actor Darshan and his associates. "Since there is no law and order in the state, the government is fearful. That is the reason why they have put 'Shamiyanas' in front of the police station. Are we living in Kashmir or is Karnataka a border area? Don't our state police have the capacity to investigate a simple murder case," LoP Ashoka said.

investigation and that Darshan and gang was involved in it.

During inquiry, the police team learnt that Darshan reportedly offered the gang members Rs 30 lakh and agreed to take care of their families till they are out of jail. "Some amount was also transferred, which is the major evidence in this case," a source said.

The team probing the murder case stumbled upon the CCTV footage showing the suspected abduction of the victim by some associates of Darshan in this district headquarters town of Chitradurga. The footage extracted June 8 showed the car zooming past the highway. Police believed that Renukaswamy was inside the car. They suspect that the 34-year-old pharmacy worker, a fan of Darshan, was "lured" by his abductors.

# RAIN WREAKS HAVOC IN SIKKIM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Gangtok, June 13:** At least six people were killed and 1,500-odd tourists stranded as massive landslides triggered by incessant rainfall caused devastation in northern Sikkim's Mangan district, officials said Thursday.

A newly-constructed Bailey bridge at Sangkalang collapsed snapping the link between Mangan with Dzongu and Chungthang. Landslides blocked stretches of roads and several houses were inundated or damaged, while electricity poles were swept away, they said.

Towns such as Dzongu, Chungthang, Lachen, and Lachung in Mangan district known for popular tourist spots like Gurudongmar Lake and Yunthang Valley have now been cut off from the rest of the country. "Three persons each died in Pakshep and Ambhithang villages," Mangan District Magistrate Hem Kumar Chettri said.



A number of houses were damaged in Geythang and Nampathang. A relief camp has been set up at Pakshep for the displaced people, Chettri said.

The district magistrate also held a meeting with other officials to take stock of the situation following the incessant rainfall in and around Mangan District since Wednesday night

and instructed them to carry out rescue and relief works.

Mobile network services were affected in North Sikkim even as a request was made by the district administration to send an SDRF team with ration to Mangan, the officials said. The collapsed Bailey bridge at Sangkalang was constructed after the massive social flood in

the Teesta river in October last year. The authorities have asked the stranded tourists to stay where they are right now till alternative road connectivity could be set up for movement of vehicles, officials said.

The Mangan district administration has started works with several agencies to expeditiously construct a bridge at Phidang to restore connectivity in the region.

Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang, who is in Arunachal Pradesh to attend the swearing-in ceremony of BJP leader Pema Khandu, asked the administration, police and officials of various departments to ensure a swift response to the devastation.

In Namchi district, the surging water in the Teesta river marooned the Melli stadium, officials said.

Nearly 50 people were killed in the flash flood that hit the Himalayan state in October last year.



Women cover their heads for protection from the scorching heat on a hot summer day, at Heritage Street near Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab

## SNIPPETS

### ED registered case against KCR

**Hyderabad:** The newly-elected BJP MP from Medak in Telangana M Raghunandan Rao Thursday claimed that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has registered a case against former Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao. Raghunandan Rao, who was addressing a meeting of party activists, however, did not go into the details of the alleged case against KCR. "ED has registered a case sometime back against former Chief Minister Chandrasekhar Rao ji," he said. Raghunandan Rao, who expressed gratitude to the Medak voters for electing him in the recent Lok Sabha polls, also said he would be accessible to party activists to address their problems.

### Suwendu denied entry to Raj Bhavan

**Kolkata:** The police Thursday prevented BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari from entering Raj Bhavan to meet West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose with alleged victims of post-poll violence Thursday, citing Section 144 of CrPC which is in force outside the Governor House, which prohibits large gatherings. Adhikari, the leader of the opposition in the state assembly, told reporters outside the Raj Bhavan that he would move the Calcutta High Court against the Kolkata Police's "arbitrary" decision to stop him. He was scheduled to meet the Governor along with alleged victims of post-poll violence in the state to demand justice so that they can return home.

### Follow norms for Eid sacrifice: Jamiat to Muslims

**New Delhi:** Prominent Muslim organisation Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind Thursday urged Muslims to strictly follow government guidelines while offering sacrifice on Eid-ul-Azha and not share pictures of slaughtered animals on social media. Eid ul-Azha, also called the festival of sacrifice, will be celebrated Monday. In his message to Muslims on Eid-ul-Azha, Jamiat president Maulana Arshad Madani said there is no substitute for sacrifice in Islam and it is a religious duty which is obligatory on every Muslim for whom it is prescribed.

## POCSO: Non-bailable arrest warrant against Yediyurappa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, June 13:** A court here Thursday issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against former Chief Minister and senior BJP leader BS Yediyurappa in a POCSO case. The Special Investigation Team of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) had moved the First Fast Track court seeking an arrest warrant against him since he failed to appear for questioning Wednesday.

The BJP veteran, who is also a member of the party's parliamentary board, is presently in Delhi, and he is likely to join the probe after he returns, sources close to him have said. According to police, Yediyurappa has been booked under the POCSO Act

and Section 354 A (Sexual harassment) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) based on a complaint by the mother of a 17-year-old girl who alleged that he molested her daughter during a meeting February two this year, at his residence in Dollars Colony here.

The victim's brother had filed a petition in the court earlier this week alleging that though the case was registered March 14, no progress has been made in the investigation.

The petitioner prayed that Yediyurappa should be arrested and interrogated. After the Sadashivanagar police registered the case in March, the Karnataka Director General of Police Alok Mohan had issued an order transferring it to the CID for further investigation.

## MARATHA QUOTA

### Jarange suspends indefinite fast

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, June 13:** Activist Manoj Jarange Thursday suspended his indefinite fast over the Maratha quota six days after launching it and set a deadline of one month before the Maharashtra government to accept the community's demands.



He made the announcement after Maharashtra minister and member of Maratha quota sub-committee Shambhuraj Desai, Shiv Sena MP Sandipan Bhumre met him at his native Antarwali Sarati village in Jalna district and discussed the issue.

State health minister Tanaji Sawant and Ambadas Danve, leader of the Opposition in the legislative council, also met Jarange at Antarwali Sarati earlier. Addressing people at the protest site, Jarange said, "We are giving a month's time to the government to fulfil the demands of the Maratha community. But we will also go ahead with our preparations for the upcoming assembly elections. If the government doesn't provide reservation to us, we will go and take it."

"If the demands are not fulfilled in a month, neither the Opposition members nor those in the government should come to us. We will defeat the candidates (in the state Assembly elections) by declaring their names," he said.

## WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY

# Health Ministry to help citizens know blood group

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 13:** The Union health ministry has suggested making a facility for blood group testing June 14, the World Blood Donor Day, available at all primary and community health centres, district hospitals and other blood banks to help citizens know their blood group.

In a letter to all central government ministries, states and Union Territories (UTs), central government hospitals and medical colleges (both government and private), Union Health Secretary Apurva Chandra has stressed on promoting registration of blood donors and creating awareness about blood donation.

"This day (World Blood Donor Day) serves as a reminder of the critical need for regular non-remunerated voluntary



This day (World Blood Donor Day) serves as a reminder of the critical need for regular non-remunerated voluntary blood donations and aims to raise awareness about the life-saving impact of these donations

APURVA CHANDRA  
UNION HEALTH SECRETARY

blood donations and aims to raise awareness about the life-saving impact of these donations," Chandra said.

he suggested an action plan of activities to be organised at all central government ministries, hospitals, institutions and government and private medical colleges.

"The event will aim to maximise the registration of willing blood donors along with op-

timal blood collection," he said.

The Union health secretary urged them to spread awareness among rural masses by organising activities of felicitation of blood donors and pledge-taking ceremonies at the gram panchayat level. The pledge will be administered by the respective sarpanch.

Similar activities will be organised at the block and district level. The office of the district collector or district magistrate will be involved in supervising the entire activity in the concerned district, Chandra said.

A pledge in English or Hindi or regional language for blood donation will be administered through both physical events at the levels and digital platforms, Chandra said. The letter contained a template of the pledge in English and Hindi,

which he said will be translated into regional languages for wider dissemination.

"To promote registration of blood donors and create awareness, a facility for blood group testing may be made available 14th June, 2024 at all PHCs/CHCs/Sub-district and District Hospitals and other blood banks as per feasibility. This will help the common citizens to know their blood group, which will be useful in emergencies for blood donation," the letter stated.

The aim is also to showcase the achievements and challenges of the national blood programmes and to share best practices and lessons learned and highlight the continuous need for regular, unpaid blood donation to achieve universal access to safe blood transfusion.

# national



**We are monitoring the political activities and whenever there is an opportunity for an alternative government, the current government, the dictatorial government, will be removed**  
SANJAY SINGH | AAM AADMI PARTY LEADER

## APEX COURT STAYS RELEASE OF MOVIE 'HAMARE BAARAH'

The Supreme Court Thursday stayed the June 14 release of Annu Kapoor's movie "Hamare Baarah" after taking note of allegations that the film is derogatory to the Islamic faith and married Muslim women



### of the day quote

The central and state governments are providing financial support to the farmers through various welfare schemes and policy decisions  
BHAIJANLAL SHARMA | RAJASTHAN CM

Madhya Pradesh, which is smaller in area than Rajasthan, has 55 districts. A small state like Chhattisgarh has 33 districts  
ASHOK GEHLOT | FORMER RAJASTHAN CM

The BJP government should answer that when the police has its own recruitment board, then why is the government running away from direct permanent appointment?  
AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY (SP) PRESIDENT

## X POST OF THE DAY

The Union Government's attempt to wriggle out of the recent #NEET Scam by agreeing to cancellation of grace marks is another admission of their own ineptitude. It should not be allowed to divert the attention away from the core problems of irregularities and unprofessional conduct of exams, after taking away the right of States. While condemning their incompetence as well as apathy towards the agony of lakhs of students, we reiterate that the only solution for this issue is to restore the role of state governments in deciding the method of selection for MBBS courses.  
@mkstalin

### SHORT TAKES

#### Sikkim CM's wife quits as MLA

**Gangtok:** Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang's wife Krishna Kumari Rai Thursday quit as an MLA, a day after taking oath. She had won from the Namchi-Singithang seat in the recently concluded assembly polls, defeating Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) candidate Bimal Rai. Speaker M N Sherpa has accepted Sikkim Krantikari Morcha leader Krishna Kumari Rai's resignation.

#### Ajit Pawar's wife enters RS poll fray

**Mumbai:** Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar's wife Sunetra Thursday filed nomination papers as the NCP candidate for the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections, days after she lost the Lok Sabha polls from Baramati. Incidentally, barring leaders from the NCP, no politician from the Ajit Pawar-led party's allies in the ruling Mahayuti -- the BJP and the Shiv Sena -- was present when Sunetra Pawar filed her nomination at the Vidhan Bhavan in south Mumbai.

#### WBI samples found negative for bird flu

**Kolkata:** None of the samples of poultry birds from different parts of West Bengal tested positive for bird flu, a senior official said Thursday, maintaining that there was no need to panic. The state government was not considering any restriction on the consumption of poultry items as of now, Health Secretary N S Nigam said. "The situation in West Bengal is normal and there is nothing to worry. We have carried out an active influenza surveillance. Not a single person was found affected with the virus," Nigam told reporters.

# India slams China, Pak for mentioning J&K in joint statement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 13:** India Thursday categorically rejected "unwarranted" references to Jammu and Kashmir in a latest joint statement by China and Pakistan and asserted that the Union territory and Ladakh have been, are and will always remain its integral parts. India also criticised mentioning of projects under the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in the joint statement and said New Delhi rejects any moves to reinforce or legitimise Islamabad's illegal occupation of territories. The

The joint statement was issued in Beijing June 7 following talks between Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese Premier Li Qiang

CPEC passes through Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir. "We have noted unwarranted references to the Union territory of Jammu & Kashmir in the joint statement between China and Pakistan of June 7. We categorically reject such references," External Affairs



Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. "Our position on the issue is consistent and well known to the concerned parties. The Union Territory of Jammu and

Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh have been, are and will always remain integral and inalienable parts of India," he said. Jaiswal was responding to a media query

on the joint statement. "No other country has the locus standi to comment on the same," he said. The China-Pakistan joint statement said the Pakistani side briefed the Chinese side on the latest developments in Jammu and Kashmir. It said the Chinese side reiterated that the "Jammu and Kashmir dispute is left over from history, and should be properly and peacefully resolved in accordance with the UN Charter, relevant UN Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements". The MEA spokesperson also took

strong note of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that featured in the joint statement. "The same joint statement also mentions activities and projects under the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), some of which are in India's sovereign territory under forcible and illegal occupation by Pakistan," he said. "We resolutely oppose and reject any moves by other countries to reinforce or legitimise Pakistan's illegal occupation of these territories, impinging on India's sovereignty and territorial integrity," he said.

# What NEET-UG controversy is all about

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 13:** Medical entrance exam NEET-UG with over 24 lakh candidates appearing for it has become a centre of controversy over allegations of several irregularities and has triggered protests across the country and a political slugfest. Here is an explainer on what has happened so far:

**1. ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES**  
There have been allegations of inflation of marks in NEET-UG which has led to a record 67 candidates sharing top rank with perfect score. Last year, two students shared the top rank. Students have been alleging the marks have been randomly reduced or increased for several candidates, affecting their ranks. The grace marks awarded to over 1,500 students to compensate for loss of time for delay in exams at six centres is also under scanner.

There have been allegations of paper leak too. The Economic Offences Unit of Bihar Police had last month said that its investigation has revealed that the question papers and answers for NEET-UG were provided to approximately 35 aspirants before the May 5 exam. Thirteen individuals have been arrested so far in connection with the case.

**2. WHY WERE STUDENTS AWARDED GRACE MARKS?**  
Students from at least six centres in Meghalaya, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Surat and Chandigarh had complained about the loss of time during the exams. At these locations, the students did not get the full 3 hours and 20 minutes to write the exam due to administrative reasons, such as the distribu-



tion of the wrong question paper, torn OMR sheets, or delay in the distribution of OMR sheets. A committee formed by NTA investigated the matter and chose to use the formula devised and adopted by the apex court in a 2018 judgement, to address the loss of time faced by candidates. The loss of time was ascertained and such candidates were compensated with grace marks.

**3. NTA'S STAND ON ALLEGATIONS**  
The National Testing Agency (NTA) has maintained that the sanctity of the exam has not been compromised. It has attributed the rise in the number of top scorers to increase in the competitiveness of the exam and increase in performance standards.

According to officials, grace marks have been awarded to 1,563 candidates to compensate for the loss of time in line with the Supreme Court approved formula. Out of the 67 candidates who got 720 out of

720 marks, 44 are on account of the revision in one Answer Key of Physics, and six are on account of compensatory marks for loss of time.

This adjustment aimed to address inconsistencies in NCERT textbooks, ensuring candidates were not disadvantaged by factual discrepancies. Sixty-three cases of students using unfair means were reported in NEET-UG out of whom 23 have been debarred for varying periods.

**4. EDUCATION MINISTRY'S STAND**  
The Ministry has set up a four-member expert panel headed by former UPSC chairman to review the grace marks awarded to students. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has denied the allegations saying there is no evidence of paper leak and claims of corruption in NTA are unfounded.

**5. POLITICAL SLUGFEST**  
The Congress has been demanding a Supreme Court-monitored probe into the NEET

Exam, asserting the anger in the country over the matter will "reverberate inside Parliament as well."

Shiv Sena leader Priyanka Chaturvedi slammed the Education Minister for defending NTA, claiming that the Bihar Police investigation has found a paper leak.

The Maharashtra government has sought immediate cancellation of the exam, alleging that its results have caused injustice to the students from the state. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin said the trends from the latest NEET results have once again vindicated the DMK on its stand opposing the exam and reiterated that the entrance test goes against social justice and federalism.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and TMC have also demanded a Supreme Court-monitored SIT probe.

**6. SUPREME COURT'S STAND**  
The apex court has noted that the sanctity of NEET-UG, 2024 was affected and has refused to stay the counselling process for admissions. The NTA expert panel has told the court that the decision to give grace marks to 1,563 NEET-UG candidates for admission to MBBS, BDS and others courses had been cancelled and they would be given an option to take a retest June 23.

If the candidates do not wish to take up the retest then their earlier marks, minus the grace marks, will be given for the purposes of the results, it said. The results of the retest will be declared June 30 and the counselling for admission in the MBBS, BDS, and other courses will start July 6.

# Congress slams Centre over NEET exam issue

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 13:** The Congress Thursday again demanded a Supreme Court-monitored probe into the NEET exam issue, and asserted that the anger in the country over the matter will "reverberate inside Parliament as well".

The Opposition party also sought the removal of the National Testing Agency (NTA) Director General and claimed that the BJP government's attitude towards the on-going demand for an inquiry into the NEET examination is "irresponsible and insensitive". "Grace Marks

was not the only problem in NEET exam. There has been rigging, papers have been leaked, corruption has taken place. The future of 24 lakh students appearing in the NEET examination is at stake due to the actions of the Modi government," the Congress president said.

A nexus of exam centre and coaching centre has been formed, where the game of "pay money, get paper" is being played, he alleged.

"The Modi government cannot escape its responsibility by placing the responsibility of its actions on the shoulders of NTA. There should be a CBI investigation into the entire NEET scam. If the Modi government is not ready for a CBI inquiry then

the Congress party demands a fair inquiry under the supervision of the Supreme Court," Kharge said in a post.

After investigation, the culprits should be given the harshest punishment and lakhs of students should be given compensation to save their year from being wasted, he said.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh also hit out at the government, saying the "one-third padhan mantri's" government has tried to wriggle its way out of the simmering NEET controversy and scam.

"It has assured the Supreme Court that grace marks given to 1563 students will be cancelled. But why were the grace marks given in the first

place? The primary reason appears to be one physics question in the paper which gave four options. According to the new NCERT Class 12 text book, one of the four was right. But on the basis of an older textbook, another option could also be considered right," he said.

The students who ticked the latter, in addition to students who lost time due to delays in paper distribution, etc were given grace marks, Ramesh said.

"It is a pathetic state of affairs, reflecting on both the National Testing Agency and the NCERT," he said. Ramesh posed questions to Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Health Minister J P Nadda.

**Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said that in the last 10 years, the Modi government has ruined the future of crores of youth through paper leaks and rigging**

# Human finger in ice-cream

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, June 13:** A day after a human finger was allegedly detected in one of its Yummo brand ice-cream cones delivered to a customer, Walko Food Co Ltd. said Thursday that it has stopped outsourcing its manufacturing to a third-party and is withdrawing stocks of the ice-cream from all stores.

In a guarded statement, a company spokesperson said, "We are taking this incident very seriously. We have stopped manufacturing (the ice-cream) at this third-party facility. We have isolated the said product at the facility, our warehouses and

are in the process of doing the same at the market level."

The company admitted to the customer complaint on Wednesday -- raised by one Dr. Brendan Serrao of Malad west -- that a "foreign object was found in one of our products ordered via a delivery partner." The spokesperson said that product quality and safety were its top priority and they were addressing the situation even as an official police

complaint was lodged by the customer, Dr Serrao. "We are a law-abiding company and shall fully co-operate and support the authorities to investigate the matter thoroughly," said the spokesperson.



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu being greeted by supporters while on his way to take charge at the Secretariat in Amravati

# 6 dead in blast at explosives factory

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Nagpur, June 13:** Six workers including five women were killed and three injured in a blast at an explosives manufacturing factory near Nagpur city Thursday afternoon, police said.

The incident took place around 1 pm at Chamundi Explosive Pvt Ltd at Dhamna village under Hingna police station limits, around 25 km from here.

A total of nine injured persons were brought to two private hospitals in the city said Nagpur police commissioner Ravindra Singhal.

Of them, five women and a man died during treatment, he told mediapersons.

Most of the victims were working in the factory's packaging unit when the explosion took place, another police official said.

Further probe was on, he added. Union minister and Nagpur MP Nitin Gadkari took to X to express condolences for the deceased.

The BJP leader also appealed local party workers to cancel a program organised here in the evening to welcome him to the city after he again took oath as Union road transport minister following the Lok Sabha elections, his office said in a statement.

NCP (SP) MLA from Katol and former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh visited the blast site. The factory is located in the Katol assembly constituency.

# Record student visas to Indians last year: US Embassy

The US Mission in India Thursday held its eighth annual Student Visa Day countrywide with consular officers from New Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Mumbai interviewing Indian student visa applicants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 13:** After issuing a record 1,40,000 student visas last year, the US consular team in India is all geared up to meet the expected rise in number of applications from Indian students in 2024, with a senior official at the embassy here saying that the projected total number this year will be "similar or in

excess" in comparison to last year.

At the US Embassy in Delhi, a long queue of students was seen since morning. American universities attract a large number of Indian students, and last year, the US consular team in India issued over 1,40,000 student visas -- higher than for any other country setting a record for the third year in a row.



Syed Mujtaba Andrabi, acting Consul General at US Embassy in New Delhi, in an interaction with PTI at the embassy, said, "by the end of the day, we should have interviewed approximately 4,000 students."

"(Student visas) is one of our top priorities. Academic exchange between the two countries

is one of the top priorities of this administration, and our Mission here.

Last year, we issued a record number of student visas, numbering 1,40,000, which has been a record... And, we will continue to focus on this area, as we go forward during this year," Andrabi told PTI.

Asked about the extent of the expected rise in student visas in 2024, he said, "It will be similar or in excess" to last year. America gives "high priority" to student visas because it knows people-to-people ties "last a lifetime," US envoy Eric Garcetti

had told PTI in an interview here late April. The US Embassy in statement said the number of Indians who choose to study in the US has increased significantly in the past three years.

In 2023, the US Mission to India issued "more student visas than in 2018, 2019, and 2020 combined."

This "unprecedented growth" reflects the ongoing commitment by the US government to prioritise students and to facilitate their travel, even as the Mission met a 400 per cent rise in demand for all other visas between 2021 and 2023, it said.

# international



**The constitutional bill regarding New Caledonia... I have decided to suspend. We cannot leave ambiguity during this period. It must be suspended to give full strength to dialogue on the ground and the return to order**  
EMMANUEL MACRON | PRESIDENT, FRANCE

## SA MAY GET NEW PREZ

South African lawmakers are expected to elect the country's President Friday after being sworn in at the first sitting of Parliament



## of the day quote

I think the truth is that anytime two countries (India-China) can find a degree of the common space to reduce tensions, I think we have to support that. I think we wish the Indians well in deliberations

KURT CAMPBELL | US DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE

It (China) is our neighbour, it is a friendly country with which we are developing bilateral relations. We will continue to do so in an upward direction

DMITRY PESKOV | KREMLIN SPOKESMAN, RUSSIA

Modern air defence systems are capable of providing maximum protection of people, our cities, and our positions. And we need as many of them as possible

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

## Record 117mn forced to leave homes in 2023

UNHCR estimates that forced displacement has continued to increase in the first four months of 2024, and that the number of those displaced is likely to have exceeded 120 million by the end of April

REUTERS

Geneva, June 13: The United Nations refugee agency Thursday said the number of people forcibly displaced stood at a record 117.3 million as of the end of last year, warning that this figure could rise further without major global political changes. "These are refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people, people being forced

Conflict remains a very, very deep driver of displacement

FILIPPO GRANDI | THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES



away by conflict, by persecution, by different and increasingly complex forms of violence," said Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). "Conflict remains a very, very deep driver of displacement."

In its report on global trends in forced displacement, UNHCR said that there had been a yearly increase in the number of people



forcibly displaced over the last 12 years.

"Unless there is a shift in international geopolitics, unfortunately, I actually see that figure continuing to go up," Grandi said, referring to the risk of new conflicts.

The conflicts that have driven displacement include the war in Sudan, which Grandi described as "one of the most catastrophic ones" despite gar-

nering less attention than other crises. More than 9 million people have been internally displaced and another 2 million have fled to neighbouring countries including Chad, Egypt and South Sudan, Grandi said.

"People are arriving in the hundreds every day," he said, referring to the influx of people seeking safety in Chad.

In Gaza, Israel's bombardment and ground campaign have caused around 1.7 million people, nearly 80% of the Palestinian enclave's population, to become internally displaced, many of them multiple times.

Grandi warned that the possible crossings of Gazans into Egypt from the southern border town of Rafah to escape Israel's military offensive would be catastrophic.

## Houthi rebel launch boat-borne bomb attack in Red Sea

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, June 13: Yemen's Houthi rebels launched a boat-borne bomb attack against a commercial ship in the Red Sea Wednesday, authorities said, the latest escalation despite a US-led campaign trying to protect the vital waterway.

The use of a boat loaded with explosives raised the spectre of 2000's USS Cole attack, a suicide assault by al-Qaida on the warship when it was at port in Aden, killing 17 on board.

Yemen's military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree claimed responsibility for the attack, identifying the vessel targeted as the Liberian-flagged, Greek-owned bulk carrier Tutor. He described the attack as using a "drone boat," as well as drones and ballistic missiles.



The US military separately destroyed three anti-ship cruise missile launchers in Houthi-held Yemen, as well as one rebel drone over the Red Sea. The Houthis launched two anti-ship ballistic missiles over the Red Sea, but they caused no damage, Central Command said.

Houthis say the attacks are aimed at stopping the war and supporting the Palestinians, though the attacks often target vessels that have nothing to do with the conflict.

The Houthis have launched more than 50 attacks on shipping, killed three sailors, seized one vessel and sunk another since November, according to the US Maritime Administration. A US-led airstrike campaign has targeted the Houthis since January, with a series of strikes May 30 killing at least 16 people and wounding 42 others, the rebels say.

## ATTACK ON RUSSIAN ASSETS

US, EUROPE AGREE TO LOCK UP RUSSIAN ASSETS UNTIL IT PAYS FOR UKRAINE WAR, CLEARING WAY FOR \$50 BILLION LOAN

### G7 SUMMIT

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Borgo Egnazia, June 13: The United States and European countries have agreed to lock up sanctioned Russian assets until Moscow pays reparations for its invasion of Ukraine, a senior US official said Thursday.

The move clears the way for leaders to announce a \$50 billion loan package for Kyiv at the Group of Seven summit, where President Joe Biden is set to sign a security agreement with Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The highly anticipated agreement will leverage interest and income from the more than \$260 billion in frozen Russian assets, largely held in Europe, to secure a \$50 billion loan from the US and additional loans from other partners.

The first disbursements will be made this year, but it will take time for Ukraine to use all the money, the official said. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to preview the agreement, which will be included in



the G7 leaders' communique Friday.

The leaders' statement will also leave the door open to confiscating the Russian assets entirely, for which the allies have yet to secure the political will, largely citing legal and financial stability concerns.

Biden will meet Thursday with Zelenskyy to discuss a bilateral security agreement between the US and Ukraine, as the international group of wealthy democracies has been looking for new ways to bolster Ukraine's defences against Russia.

It comes several months after the White House broke through a logjam in Congress that stalled

approval of some \$60 billion in US aid for Ukraine. The delay gave Russia time to make up ground on the battlefield.

Scores of countries and organisations are set to meet over the weekend in Switzerland to discuss peace for Ukraine. Biden is not scheduled to attend the summit, a decision that has disappointed Zelenskyy.

Vice President Kamala Harris will represent the US instead. Zelenskyy recently said the summit needs Biden's participation because other leaders value the US viewpoint. He said Biden's absence "will be only an applause to Putin, a personal

applaud to Putin".

## Hezbollah attacks military sites in Israel with rockets, drones

REUTERS

Beirut, June 13: Hezbollah said it had launched rockets and weaponised drones at nine Israeli military sites in a coordinated attack Thursday, ramping up hostilities on Lebanon's southern border for the second consecutive day.

The attacks were carried out in retaliation for an Israeli strike Tuesday that killed a senior Hezbollah field commander. A security source told Lebanon it was the largest attack waged by Hezbollah since October, when the group started exchanging fire with Israel in parallel with the Gaza war. Hezbollah said in a statement



it had fired volleys of Katyusha and Falaq rockets at six Israeli military locations. Its Al-Manar television reported more than 100 rockets fired at once.

Hezbollah's statement said it had also launched attack drones at the headquarters of Israel's northern command, an intelligence headquarters and a military barracks.

## FIRE TRAGEDY

## Kuwait identifies bodies of 45 Indians, 3 Filipinos

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, June 13: Kuwaiti authorities have identified the bodies of 45 Indians and three Filipino nationals killed in the tragic fire incident in a building housing foreign workers in the Gulf Kingdom, a top official said Thursday.

At least 49 foreign workers were killed and 50 others injured in the fire Wednesday at the seven-storey building where 196 migrant workers were staying in the southern city of Mangaf.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf Al-Sabah, serving as the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, and Minister of Defence, said that authorities have identified 48 bodies, among which 45 are of Indians and three are of Filipino nationality, English language daily Arab Times reported.

The efforts are still underway to determine the identity of one remaining body, said the first deputy Prime Minister.

Kuwaiti authorities are conducting DNA tests on the bodies of those killed in the devastating fire incident in southern Kuwait's Mangaf area and an Indian Air Force aircraft is on standby to bring back the mortal remains of Indians killed in the incident, officials said in New Delhi Thursday.

Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh, who reached Kuwait to oversee assistance to Indians injured in the fire and to ensure early repatriation of mortal remains of those killed, met Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya who assured full support and vowed to promptly investigate the tragedy.

Singh also met some of the Indians injured in the massive fire and assured them all support from the Indian government.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf Al-Sabah is heading an overall inspection campaign on illegal properties in many areas in Kuwait Thursday.

The Interior Ministry, Kuwait Municipality, Kuwait Fire Force, Ministry of Electricity and Water



and Public Authority for Manpower took part in the campaign.

The minister has warned that any building violation would be addressed without prior warning as of Thursday.

"As of Thursday, the Municipality and its teams will respond to all violations at all apartment buildings without prior warning," the minister told reporters while inspecting the fire site. The owner of the affected building will be kept in custody until investigations into the causes of the fire are over, the minister added.

Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber al-Sabah has issued directives for the distribution of financial assistance to the families of the deceased. Additionally, he has ordered the preparation of aircraft to repatriate the bodies of deceased Indians back to their homeland, it said.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's public prosecutor has launched an investigation into the incident. The probe aims to uncover the circumstances behind the incident and what might have triggered the deadly fire, the public prosecutor said on X.

## SHORT TAKES

### EU fines Hungary

Brussels: The European Court of Justice ordered Hungary Thursday to pay a fine of 200 million euros and a further 1 million euros per day of delay for failing to comply with the bloc's asylum rules. The court had ruled in December 2020 that Hungary had failed to abide by the bloc's policies for granting international protection and returning illegal migrants. "In its judgment, the Court holds that Hungary has not taken the measures necessary to comply with the 2020 judgment," it said in a statement. "That failure, which consists in deliberately avoiding the application of a common EU policy as a whole, constitutes an unprecedented and extremely serious infringement of EU law."

### Fistfight in Parl

Rome: Tensions in Italy's lower house erupted into a fistfight, sending an opposition lawmaker to hospital, over a controversial government proposal that opponents say will further impoverish the poor south. Calderoli, a firebrand lawmaker from the Lega party with northern roots, drafted the contested expansion of regional autonomy that would mostly benefit regions like Lega strongholds of Veneto and Lombardy. Italian media reported that Donno was taken to the hospital for evaluation after being hit in the head and the chest.

### Lanka gets \$336mn

Colombo: The IMF has disbursed the third tranche of \$336 million from its \$2.9 billion bailout package to Sri Lanka, even as it cautioned that the economy of the cash-strapped nation remains vulnerable and the path to debt sustainability is "knife-edged". The third tranche under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) arrangement was released during an executive board meeting of the International Monetary Fund held Wednesday, the Washington-based lender said in a statement. Two tranches of \$330 million each were released in March and December 2023.

### Less defence money

Islamabad: Pakistan's budgetary allocation of Rs 2,122 billion for defence for 2024-25 constitutes just 1.7 per cent of the cash-strapped but nuclear-armed nation's GDP, which is the same as the previous year, despite the higher than the Rs 1,804 billion set aside during the outgoing fiscal 2023-24, according to documents.

## SNIPPETS

### Anti-terrorism court judge accuses ISI of harassment

Lahore: An anti-terrorism court judge, hearing the cases related to attacks on military installations in May last year by workers of jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan's party, has accused Pakistan's powerful intelligence agency ISI of harassing him and his family members to get desired verdicts. Anti-Terrorism Court Judge (Sargodha) Muhammad Abbas has written a letter to Lahore High Court Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan informing him how spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) officials harassed him and his family members. In March, six judges of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) reached out to the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) informing alleged intrusion of intelligence operatives in judicial matters.

### Chinese degrees: Indian Embassy publishes FAQ

Beijing: The Indian embassy in Beijing has published a comprehensive FAQ on its website for a large number of Indians studying in China to inform them of the procedures relating to attestation of their documents and degrees obtained from Chinese colleges. The FAQ dealing with a host of questions about necessary documentation of their degrees obtained from the Chinese colleges was released Wednesday as a large number of Indian students from the 2016, 2017, and 2018 batches are set to return to India in June and July after completing their studies. The FAQ was issued by the embassy after it held its first interactive session last month with the Indian students who suffered the most during the three-year COVID-19 period following China's visa bans prolonging their academic periods for several years.

# EU's new AI rules ignite battle over data transparency

ONE OF THE MORE CONTENTIOUS SECTIONS OF THE ACT STATES THAT ORGANISATIONS DEPLOYING GENERAL-PURPOSE AI MODELS, SUCH AS CHATGPT, WILL HAVE TO PROVIDE 'DETAILED SUMMARIES' OF THE CONTENT USED TO TRAIN THEM

REUTERS

London, June 13: A new set of laws governing the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the European Union will force companies to be more transparent about the data used to train their systems, prying open one of the industry's most closely guarded secrets.

In the 18 months since Microsoft-backed OpenAI unveiled ChatGPT to the public, there has been a surge of public engagement and investment in generative AI, a set of applications that can be used to rapidly produce text, images, and audio content.

But as the industry booms, questions have been raised over how AI companies obtain the data used to train their models,

and whether feeding them best-selling books and Hollywood movies without their creators' permission amounts to a breach of copyright.

The EU's recently-passed AI Act is being rolled out in phases over the next two years, giving regulators time to implement the new laws while businesses grapple with a new set of obligations. But how exactly some of these rules will work in practice is still unknown.

One of the more contentious sections of the Act states that organisations deploying general-purpose AI models, such as ChatGPT, will have to provide "detailed summaries" of the content used to train them. The newly established AI Office said it plans to release a template for organizations to



follow in early 2025, following a consultation with stakeholders.

While the details have yet to be hammered out, AI companies are highly resistant to revealing what their models have been trained on, describing the information as a trade secret that would give competitors an unfair advantage were it made public.

It would be a dream come true to see my competitors' datasets, and likewise for them to see ours. It's like cooking. There's a secret part of the recipe that the best chefs wouldn't share, the 'je ne sais quoi' that makes it different

MATTHIEU RIOUF | CEO, PHOTOROOM

### SHARING TRADE SECRETS

Over the past year, a number of prominent tech companies, including Google, OpenAI, and Stability AI have faced lawsuits from creators claiming their content was improperly used to train their models.

While US President Joe Biden has passed a number of executive orders focused on the security risks of AI, questions over

copyright have not been fully tested. Calls for tech companies to pay rights holders for data have received bipartisan support in Congress.

Amid growing scrutiny, tech companies have signed a flurry of content-licensing deals with media outlets and websites. Among others, OpenAI signed deals with the Financial Times and The Atlantic, while Google struck deals with NewsCorp social media site Reddit.

Despite such moves, OpenAI drew criticism in March when CTO Mira Murati declined to answer a question from the Wall Street Journal on whether YouTube videos had been used to train its video-generating tool Sora, which the company said would breach its terms and conditions.

Last month, OpenAI faced further backlash for featuring an AI-generated voice described as "eerily similar" to her own by actress Scarlett Johansson in a public demonstration of the newest version of ChatGPT.

Senior lawmakers across the continent remain divided. Dragos Tudorache, one of the lawmakers who oversaw the drafting of the AI Act in the European parliament, said that AI companies should be compelled to make their datasets public.

"They have to be detailed enough for Scarlett Johansson, Beyonce, or for whomever to know if their work, their songs, their voice, their art, or their science were used in training the algorithm," he said.

# business

## of the day quote

India's middle class is expected to grow from about 30 per cent of the population to 50 per cent by the end of this decade. That is about an additional 300 million people who will be entering the middle class

**N CHANDRASEKARAN** | CHAIRMAN, TATA CONSUMER PRODUCTS

There is a growing demand for credit from the corporate sector and loans worth ₹5 lakh crore are in the pipeline

**DINESH KUMAR KHARA** | CHAIRMAN, SBI

We are hopeful that the new leadership will build on the work done so far and make the industry's wish list to accord 'infrastructure status' and extending of 'industry' benefits to hotels a reality

**KB KACHRU** | PRESIDENT, HAI

## SHORT TAKES

### In a first, India sends pineapples to UAE

**New Delhi:** India has exported the first consignment of 8.7 tonne of high-quality pineapples to UAE with a view to promote the country's fruit shipments, the commerce ministry said Thursday. The MD2 variety pineapple, also known as Golden Ripe or Super Sweet, is renowned for its exceptional sweetness and quality. It is produced in the Sindhudurg district of the Konkan region in Maharashtra. The consignments were facilitated by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. "This marks a pivotal moment in India's agricultural export history, showcasing our ability to produce and supply premium quality pineapples to global markets," it said.

### Ample wheat stock

**New Delhi:** India has sufficient wheat stocks to meet domestic requirements and undertake market interventions, if required, to keep prices stable, the government said Thursday, adding that it has no plans to alter the import duty on the grain for now. The Department of Food and Public Distribution under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, is closely monitoring the market price of wheat, it said in a statement. "Suitable interventions, as warranted, shall be undertaken to ensure that there is no hoarding by unscrupulous elements and the price remains stable," the statement said.



As India embarks on a clean energy journey with the Modi 3.0 government, our white paper aims to suggest the immediate steps required to achieve the green energy transition vision

**RAHUL WALAWALKAR** | PRESIDENT, IESA AND CUSTOMIZED ENERGY SOLUTIONS

### FIRST-EVER 5-STAR RATED EVs

Tata Motors' Punch.ev and Nexon.ev have become the first recipients of the five-star Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (Bharat-NCAP) rating in the electric vehicles (EV) category. Road Transport and Highways minister Nitin Gadkari in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, said: "Congratulations to @tataev @TataMotors for achieving a 5-star Bharat NCAP rating for the Punch.ev and Nexon.ev, thus becoming the first-ever 5-star rated EVs in the Indian automotive market"



## INFLATION COOLS OFF

# D-St scales fresh peaks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, June 13:** Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty hit their fresh record levels Thursday after lower inflation numbers raised hopes of an interest rate cut by the RBI.

Besides, heavy buying in capital goods, consumer durable and industrial stocks also helped the indices, traders said.

Retail inflation continued its downward slide to reach a one-year low of 4.75 per cent in May due to a marginal decline of prices in the food basket and remained within the Reserve Bank's comfort zone of below 6 per cent, according to government data released Wednesday.

Rising for the second day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 538.89 points or 0.70 to hit its lifetime peak of 77,145.46. It ended at a fresh record high at 76,810.90, up 204.33 points or 0.27 per cent.

A total of 2,345 stocks advanced, 1,539 declined, and 100 remained unchanged on the BSE. The NSE Nifty rallied 75.95 points or 0.33 per cent to settle at a new closing high of 23,398.90. During the day, it climbed 158.1 points or 0.67 per cent to its record peak of 23,481.05.

"The domestic equity bench-



mark traded with a modest gain, with domestic CPI data indicating that inflation is on a slow track of decline. A similar trend is reported in the US CPI, which brought down the market expectation from 2 rate cuts in 2024 to 1, which is having a mixed effect on the global markets. In the domestic broader market, the realty and consumer durable sectors took the lead owing to government initiatives to revive the affordable housing segment," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Among the 30 Sensex companies, Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan, Larsen & Toubro, IndusInd Bank, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Wipro, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj Finance and Nestle were the biggest gainers.

On the other hand, Hindustan Unilever, Power Grid, Axis Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank and ITC were among the laggards.

There is good news on the inflation front, both in the US and in India. The takeaway from the inflation numbers is that the disinflation process is well on track. From the market perspective, this is positive news, particularly for banking stocks

**VK VIJAYAKUMAR** | CHIEF INVESTMENT STRATEGIST, GEOJIT FINANCIAL SERVICES

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.89 per cent, and midcap index rallied 0.79 per cent. Among the indices, realty jumped 2.15 per cent, capital goods (2.05 per cent), industrials (1.67 per cent), IT (1.08 per cent) and consumer discretionary (0.88 per cent).

In contrast, telecommunication, bankex and metal were the laggards. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.71 per cent to \$82.01 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹426.63 crore Wednesday, according to exchange data.

The BSE benchmark climbed 149.98 points or 0.20 per cent to settle at 76,606.57 Wednesday. The Nifty ended at 23,322.95, up 58.10 points or 0.25 per cent.

### Mcap of BSE-listed firms at record high

The combined market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms hit a fresh record of ₹431.67 lakh crore Thursday when the benchmark Sensex also reached its new lifetime high level. Tracking the rally in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies jumped to an all-time high of ₹431.67,541.81 crore (\$5.17 trillion). In two days, investors' wealth has risen by ₹4.72 lakh crore.

## Canara Bank holds 'Corporate Meet'



**Bhubaneswar:** Canara Bank organised "Corporate Meet" at The Crown Hotel, Nayapalli June 13 under the guidance and leadership of Jagdish Chander, General Manager and Circle Head of Canara Bank, Circle Office, Bhubaneswar. More than 70 existing and prospective corporate/MSME customers participated in the programme. The meet started with lighting lamps & floral tributes to A Subbarao Pai, Founder of Canara Bank. Further, all the customers were welcomed by P Thakur Naik, DGM, CO Bhubaneswar. On this occasion a presentation on "Forex for you" was done by Hari Shankar Singh, Global Trade processing Centre (Manipal), presentation on "API Banking" by Balasubramanian P, AGM, CO Bhubaneswar, talk on "major sector relevant for Odisha Economy" by Priti Agrawal, Senior Director, CARE Rating Agency, "Wealth & Legacy Planning" by Vikash Kumar Gupta, Vice President, Canara HSBC Life Insurance and presentation on "Canara Payroll Package" by Suman Jha, Senior Manager (Marketing). The corporate/MSME customers appreciated the presentations as they found it informative and beneficial. The meet was concluded with vote of thanks by Netra Mohan Patra, DGM, CO Bhubaneswar.

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## India to remain fastest growing Asia-Pacific economy: Moody's

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 13:** Moody's Ratings Thursday said India will remain the Asia-Pacific region's fastest-growing economy in 2024, sustaining last year's domestically driven momentum.

In a report titled Credit Conditions - Asia-Pacific H2 2024 Credit Outlook, Moody's Ratings said Indonesia, the Philippines and India led the way in terms of growth in first half of 2024 and should continue to outperform pre-Covid growth numbers on the back of rising exports, local demand and government spending on infrastructure.

"India will remain the region's fastest-growing economy, sustaining last year's domestically driven momentum. We anticipate policy continuity after the general election, and a continued focus on infrastructure development and encouragement of private sector investment," it said.

Moody's said stronger portfolio inflows are likely in India and ASEAN economies, because of robust corporate credit metrics and appealing valuations.

Last month, the rating agency projected India to grow 6.8 per cent in the current year, followed by 6.5 per cent in 2025, on the back of strong, economic expansion along with post-election policy continuity.

India's real GDP grew 7.7 per cent in 2023, up from 6.5 per cent in 2022, driven by robust capital spending by the government and strong manufacturing activity.



## RISING DEMAND

# May palm oil imports jump 74%

Global edible oil prices surged last month due to supply disruptions in major exporters like Argentina, Brazil, Russia, and Ukraine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 13:** India's palm oil imports surged 74 per cent to 7,63,300 tonne in May this year from 4,39,173 tonne in the year-ago period, as the world's largest vegetable oil buyer stocked up the commodity to meet rising domestic demand, industry body Solvent Extractors Association (SEA) said Thursday.

The total vegetable oil imports rose to 15.30 lakh tonne in May this year from 10.58 lakh tonne in May 2023, it added. Palm oil constitutes a major



Crude palm oil (CPO) imports rose to 5,32,555 tonne in May this year from 3,48,118 tonne in the year-ago period, while RBD Palmolein imports surged to

## OUTSTANDING DEBT

# Nokia, Ericsson picks ₹2,458cr-stake in VIL

VIL is all set to participate in the industry growth with right investments to expand its 4G coverage and offer 5G experience to its customers while remaining focused on its execution capabilities. As VIL embarks on its growth journey, support from key stakeholders is critical and the agreement with Nokia and Ericsson reaffirms these vendors as long-term partners of the company, and sets the stage for the next phase of our growth

**AKSHAYA MOONDR** | CEO, VIL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 13:** Debt-ridden telecom operator Vodafone Idea will allocate shares worth ₹2,458 crore to vendors Nokia India and Ericsson India to clear their partial dues, a regulatory filing said Thursday.

The board of Vodafone Idea Ltd (VIL) has cleared allotment of shares on preferential basis at about 35 per cent higher price compared to the follow-on offer price of the company, and comes with a lock-in of 6 months.

"The Board of Directors of Vodafone Idea Limited today approved preferential allotment of about 166 crore equity shares of face value of ₹10 each, at an issue price of ₹14.80 per share, for an aggregate consideration of up to ₹2,458 crore, to two of its key vendors, Nokia Solutions and Networks India Private Limited and Ericsson India Private Limited," the filing said.

Nokia and Ericsson will participate for up to ₹1,520 crore and ₹938 crore respectively, subject to approval by VIL shareholders at the EGM to be held July 10, 2024, the telco said. "Nokia and Ericsson both have a long-term partnership with VIL, as key suppliers of network equipment, and this preferential allotment will enable VIL

to clear part of their outstanding dues," the filing said.

Post this preferential issuance, the shareholding of Nokia and Ericsson in the company will be 1.5 per cent and 0.9 per cent, respectively.

The shareholding of VIL promoters - Aditya Birla Group and Vodafone - will stand at 37.3 per cent while government's shareholding will come down to 23.2 per cent and the balance 37.1 per cent will be public shareholding.

Earlier, VIL has issued ₹1,600 crore worth optionally convertible debentures (OCDs) to mobile tower vendor ATC, out of which the tower vendor has picked stake worth ₹1,440 crore in the debt-ridden telecom operator.

With this equity issuance, VIL has raised around ₹24,000 crore of equity comprising OCDs issued to ATC India, ₹18,000 crore FPO issue in April and preferential issue to promoters in May.

"Additionally, in line with its stated fund-raising roadmap, the company is in active discussions with its lenders to raise debt funding to the tune of ₹25,000 crore. This comprehensive fundraise (equity and debt) will empower the company to work towards executing its well-defined strategy including expansion of its 4G coverage and launch of 5G services," the filing said.

## ENTRY INTO LANKA MKT Ambuja Cements to buy Penna Cement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 13:** Billionaire Gautam Adani-led Adani Group Thursday said it will acquire Hyderabad-based Penna Cement at an enterprise value of ₹10,422 crore, which will add 14 million tonne of annual capacity to the country's second largest cement manufacturer.

The deal will increase Adani's market share in cement in southern India and give an entry into Sri Lanka, where Penna Cement Industries Ltd (PCIL) operates a unit through a local subsidiary.

Besides, this deal will also provide sufficient limestone reserves to the growth-hungry Adani group firm, which is aspiring to achieve a 140 MTPA (million tonne per annum) capacity by FY28.

A binding agreement for the acquisition has been signed and Ambuja Cements, an Adani group firm, will acquire 100 per cent shares of PCIL from its existing promoter group P Pratap Reddy and family, said a statement. After the acquisition, the total production capacity of Adani Cement would climb up to 89 MTPA, it added.

"This acquisition will be fully funded through internal accruals," said Ambuja Cements.

Ambuja Cements CEO & Whole Time Director Ajay Kapur said it is a "significant step" forward in the company's accelerating growth journey.

"By acquiring PCIL, Ambuja is poised to expand its market presence in south India and reinforce its position as a pan-India leader in the cement industry," he said.

PCIL has 14 MTPA cement capacity in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Rajasthan, of which 10 MTPA is operational, and the remaining is under-construction at Krishnapatnam (2 MTPA) and Jodhpur (2 MTPA) and will be completed within 6 to 12 months, it added.

The deal "strengthens Adani Cement's sea transportation logistics with five bulk cement terminals at Kolkata, Gopalpur, Karaikal, Kochi and Colombo to serve peninsular India."

# Reliance clears hurdle in bid to launch satellite internet

GLOBALLY, THE RACE TO CONNECT RURAL AREAS OF THE WORLD VIA SPACE-BASED INTERNET IS ACCELERATING

REUTERS

**Bangalore, June 13:** A joint venture between Reliance Industries' Jio Platforms and Luxembourg-based SES to provide gigabit fibre internet has won approval from the Indian space regulator to operate satellites there, a government executive said.

The three approvals issued to Orbit Connect India, opens new tab - which aims to provide satellite-based high-speed internet access - come as companies from Amazon.com to Elon Musk's Starlink have been vying for the go-ahead to launch satellite communication services in the world's most populous nation.

The authorisations have not been previously reported. They were granted in April and June from the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation

Centre, known as IN-SPACE. These allow Orbit Connect to operate satellites above India, but further approvals are needed by the country's department of telecoms to begin operations.

Inmarsat, another company hoping to provide high-speed satellite-based internet, has also gotten approval to operate satellites over India, IN-SPACE chairman Pawan Goenka told Reuters. Two other companies, Elon Musk's Starlink and Amazon.com's Kuiper have applied.

Eutelsat's Bharti Enterprises-backed OneWeb was given all of its approvals late last year.

Amazon plans to invest \$10 billion in Kuiper, which was announced in 2019, the year SpaceX began deploying its first operational Starlink satellites.

Last week, Sri Lanka gave Starlink preliminary approval to



provide internet services there. Goenka said the more companies were involved in the sec-

tor in India, the better off consumers would be. "Comparatively low pricing

India's satellite broadband service market is expected to grow 36% per year over the next five years and reach \$1.9 billion by 2030

of communication services in India will compel global players to drive innovation to reduce their pricing," said Goenka, the former managing director of automaker Mahindra & Mahindra.

"This is already being done in many industries like automotive, where multinational OEMs had to innovate to meet the expectations of Indian consumers of high performance and low cost." IN-SPACE will also soon au-

thorise private companies to operate ground stations, he said, which would enable satellite operators to download data as they pass over India.

Prime Minister Modi's government, which just won a rare third term, has been pushing the development of India's space industry.

This year, it opened the gates for foreign direct investment in the sector, saying outside companies could invest in the manufacture of components and systems or sub-systems for satellites up to 100% without approval.

As a result, investors' interest has "significantly increased", Goenka said.

"Last year investments into private companies were \$2 million-\$7 million. This year they are talking \$20 million-\$30 million," he said. "The proof of concept has happened."

# Arshdeep keen to bat also

PACER SAYS HE IS PUTTING IN HARD YARDS AT THE NETS WITH COACH VIKRAM RATHOUR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, June 13: He is wreaking havoc with the ball these days but India pacer Arshdeep Singh is still not quite satisfied. He wants to become a reliable lower-order batter as well, for which he is putting in the hard yards with batting coach Vikram Rathour.

Arshdeep was lethal in India's seven-wicket win over the plucky USA team as he snared four wickets for a mere nine runs in the T20 World Cup group stage match Wednesday. It was India's third successive victory which guided the side into the Super Eight stage.

"We are always learning, always trying to get better at all the skills, be it bowling, batting or fielding, because you never know when the team need those runs," Arshdeep, who was adjudged Player of the Match, said in the post-game media interaction.

"It can be two runs, four runs, anything. So, you just have to give your best. And I am trying to work as hard as possible with Vikram bhai regarding my batting as well," Arshdeep added.

Arshdeep came in at No.9 in the high-voltage game against Pakistan here June 9. He scored nine off 13 deliveries before being run out. The left-arm pacer said he insisted on going ahead of Jasprit Bumrah in that match.

"...Jassi Bhai (Bumrah) was supposed to go before me, but I just went in after asking Rohit (Sharma). They were surprised

with it, but I told them I will go up regardless of whatever you say," he revealed.

"I will go at No. 9 because I faced the quickest bowlers in the last game. So yeah, that's the plan now. I am very confident about my batting. And be it fielding or bowling, you just try to keep getting better," the Punjab pacer asserted.

Arshdeep said adapting to conditions across varied venues will be crucial to success as the tournament goes on.

"The main thing is how we adapt to the conditions and to the situations. If there is help in the wicket, we try to get early wickets and restrict the opposition to a low total and if we are batting first, we try to make as many as possible and give the bowlers good enough chance to restrict the opposi-

tion," he said.

India played their first three games here and will now travel to Lauderdale, Florida for their final Group A match Saturday against Canada following which the tournament will shift to the Caribbean.

Arshdeep knows that the T20 format can be very cruel indeed. More often than not, it is the batters who dominate the scene. Hence Arshdeep keeps his emotions in check in all situations. "There will be some good days and some equally bad ones. Neither do I feel overjoyed due to success, nor do I feel very bad on an off day," Arshdeep pointed out.

The left-arm pacer provides much-needed variety to the Indian bowling attack and bowls at the start as well as in the death. "Before every game, I have plan 'A', 'B', 'C'. I study the opposition carefully and chalk out my strategy accordingly. And then it comes to execution in a proper manner on the field," Arshdeep stated.



**I try to remain stable whether we win or lose, try and keep my emotions in check because there will be some bad days also**  
ARSHDEEP SINGH

# It wasn't easy: Rohit



Indian players Virat Kohli and Hardik Pandya congratulate Suryakumar Yadav and Shivam Dube after their match-winning partnership against the USA, Wednesday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, June 12: India skipper Rohit Sharma admitted Wednesday it wasn't easy playing on a two-paced newly-laid drop-in pitch at Nassau County ground here. He said the team had to stick through till the end to notch up wins in each of their three matches in the ongoing T20 World Cup.

India recorded the highest successful chase at this venue when they scored 111/3 in reply to USA's 110/8 after Arshdeep Singh (4/9), Suryakumar Yadav (50 n o) and Shivam Dube (31 n o) played key roles.

"We knew it would be tough. Credit to us for the way we held our nerves and got that partnership. Credit to Surya and Dube for showing the maturity and taking us through," Rohit said after the match.

"Being in the Super Eight is a big relief - playing cricket here wasn't easy (as) it could have been anyone's game. We had to fight hard all through till the end in all three games. We will take a lot of confidence from these wins," added Rohit.

The Indian captain had praise for each of the three key performers while applauding Suryakumar for changing his aggressive approach to anchor the chase.

"He (Suryakumar) showed he has a different game to him, that's what you expect from experienced players. Credit to the way he stuck through today to take the game deep and win it for us," he said.

"We knew bowlers had to take the lead (as) run scoring was difficult. All the bowlers did the job, particularly Arshdeep," Rohit pointed out.

Rohit said since seamers were expected to dominate, the team decided to give Dube a chance to roll over his arm too. "You want options and we should be able to use them as and when we can. Today, the pitch favoured the seamers so wanted to use him," he said.

Rohit had words of encouragement for the USA team. "(A) lot of these guys have played cricket together with us. We are very happy to see their progress. Saw them last year in MLC as well, they are all hard-working guys," Rohit said.

USA's stand-in skipper Aaron Jones, meanwhile, felt his side were competitive but fell a few runs short. "(We were) 10-15 runs short. If we got 130 then it would have been a tough total, but that's how it goes sometimes," Jones said.

## SHORT TAKES

### Bopanna, Balaji to double up for Paris

New Delhi: The All India Tennis Association (AITA) confirmed Thursday that Rohan Bopanna will pair with N Sriram Balaji in the men's doubles event at the Paris Olympics. It should be stated here that the 44-year-old Bopanna wanted Balaji as his partner as the veteran Indian aims to take his final shot at an Olympic medal. "The All India Tennis Association (AITA) is thrilled to announce that Rohan Bopanna and N Sriram Balaji have qualified for the Paris Olympics 2024 in the tennis doubles event. Their journey to the Olympics marks a significant milestone for Indian tennis," AITA said in a press release.

### USA hold Brazil

Orlando (USA): Four days after one of their worst matches, Christian Pulisic and the US soccer team stopped an 11-game losing streak to Brazil with a spirited 1-1 draw here Wednesday that left them with a positive mindset heading into the Copa America. Pulisic scored in 26th minute to offset Rodrigo's 17th-minute goal and US goalkeeper Matt Turner made 11 saves, to keep the Brazilian's at bay. Overall the US took 24 shots at the opposition goal. "It's obviously a huge bounce back performance for us," Turner said.

### Dismantling starts

New York: Dismantling of the makeshift Nassau County cricket stadium, which was built specifically for the T20 World Cup has started, officials said here Thursday. The New York leg of the event came to an end with India's seven-wicket victory over co-hosts USA here Wednesday. Built in just over 100 days, the stadium became notorious for its challenging drop-in pitches, which were sourced from Adelaide. The massive structure sat on the edge of the 930-acre Eisenhower Park in Long Island here. The stadium which 'almost popped up overnight' will be dismantled over six weeks, informed officials.

### Rafa skips SW19

London: Rafael Nadal is going to skip Wimbledon, as expected, and instead prepare for the Paris Olympics by entering a clay court tournament in Bastad, Sweden. The 22-time Grand Slam champion said Thursday he wants to just remain on clay, rather than switching over to grass for the All England Club and then needing to go back to clay. "We believe that the best for my body is not to change surface now," Nadal said in a statement. The Summer Games will hold the tennis competition at Roland Garros starting July 27. It is the site of the French Open, where Nadal has won a record 14 titles.

# Kiwis grounded by Windies

CO-HOSTS SEAL SUPER EIGHT BERTH, NEW ZEALAND ALL BUT ELIMINATED



FLYING HIGH: Sherfane Rutherford acknowledges the applause after reaching his half century Wednesday

AGENCIES

Tarouba (Trinidad), June 13: Sherfane Rutherford (39b, 2x4, 6x6) smashed a career-best unbeaten half century before pacer Alzarri Joseph (4/19) and left-arm spinner Gudakesh Motie (3/25) ripped through the New Zealand line-up to steer West Indies into the T20 World Cup's Super Eight stage with a 13-run win here.

Rutherford came up with the innings of his life to lift West Indies to 149 for nine from 76 for seven in 12.3 overs after New Zealand opted to bowl in a virtual knock-out Group C fixture. In reply, West Indies restricted the Kiwis to 136 for nine.

With three wins in a row, the tournament co-hosts qualified

for the Super Eight stage, while New Zealand's hopes are all but over following back-to-back losses. They had earlier lost to Afghanistan by 84 runs after being shot out for 75. The 2021 runners-up, among the most consistent sides in World Cups, have been found wanting this time.

They made the semifinals in the 2015, 2019 and 2023 editions of the ODI World Cup, and in 2016, 2021 and 2022, the Black Caps ensured a last-four appearance in the T20 World Cups.

"It was fantastic. I was sitting there with Nicholas (Pooran) and it was such a beautiful night for someone to stand up and be counted," skipper Rovman Powell said. "That (Rutherford) innings gave us confidence and belief. It

is only the start of something big to come. Hopefully we can continue the momentum," added Rutherford on making the Super Eight.

Kiwi skipper Kane Williamson rung in three changes to the line-up beaten convincingly by Afghanistan and the intent was clear when Trent Boult (3/16) dismissed Johnson Charles (0) in the first over.

Wickets continued to fall at regular intervals and soon the West Indies were 23/4 at the end of the power play.

But Rutherford had other ideas and played one of the best innings of his career. The 25-year-old Guyanese all-rounder hung around before turning up the heat in the final five overs, blasting five sixes and two fours.

In reply, New Zealand got off to a poor start and lost both their openers - Devon Conway (5) and Finn Allen (26) - in the power play.

Thereafter left-arm spinner Motie foxed the Kiwi batters before Joseph turned on the heat with his four-wicket haul. Motie dismissed both Rachin Ravindra (10) and Williamson (1).

Glenn Phillips kept the Kiwi hopes alive with his 33-ball 40 before being dismissed by Joseph. **Brief scores:** West Indies 149 for 9 (Sherfane Rutherford 68 n o, Trent Boult 3/16) beat New Zealand 136 for 9 (Glenn Phillips 40, Alzarri Joseph 4/19, Gudakesh Motie 3/25) by 13 runs.

# Yashita wins chess title



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 13: Yashita Rout emerged as the title winner in the Odisha State Women's Chess Championships which ended Thursday. Yashita finished with a total of six points, the same as Smaraki Mohanty, another participant in the tournament. However, Yashita was adjudged the winner on tie-breaker rule.

The tournament was played over six rounds. At the completion of the fifth round, Pratyasha Jena was leading the competition. However, in the last round, she lost to Yashita, paving the way for the latter to emerge champion.

The top four players in the event, Yashita, Smaraki, Pratyasha and Jayalakshmi Sahoo will represent Odisha in the national

championships, officials said.

The tournament was organised by the All Odisha Chess Association (AOCA) in association with 'Prochessta'. Incidentally both Yashita and Pratyasha are students of 'Prochessta'. A total of 90 players took part in the championships. Some intense matches were witnessed during the two-day competition with players trying to outwit one-another by mind games.

The prize distribution ceremony was attended by director 'Prochessta' and Additional Secretary to the Government of Odisha Shubransu Mishra. He was present as the chief guest while Olympian and former India hockey player Lazarus Barla was present as the guest of honour.

# 3 Indian shuttlers enter quarterfinals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, June 13: Indian shuttlers HS Prannoy and Sameer Verma progressed to the men's singles quarterfinals of the Australian Open with contrasting victories over their respective opponents here Thursday.

Fifth seed Prannoy, a former World No.1, took just 46 minutes to get the better of Misha Zilberman of Israel 21-17, 21-15 in the round of 16 match. However, Verma had to toil hard for 62 minutes to upset eighth seed Loh Kean Yew of Singapore 21-14, 14-21, 21-19.

Prannoy will be up against second seed Kodai Naroaka of Japan in the next round, while Verma will take on Chinese Taipei's Chun-Yi Lin. Both the matches will be played Friday.

However, it was curtains for Kiran George in men's singles as he lost 20-22, 6-21 against seventh seed Kenta Nishimoto of Japan.

Among the women shuttlers, eighth seed Aakarshi Kashyap beat Australia's Kai Qi Bernice 21-16, 21-13 to progress to the quarterfinals, where she will be playing third seed Yu Po Pai of Chinese Taipei.

But the tournament ended for Anupama Upadhyaya and Malvika Bansod in the women's singles second round. While Anupama lost 11-21, 18-21 against



HS Prannoy

RESULTS	
HS Prannoy bt Misha Zilberman	21-17, 21-15
Sameer Verma bt Loh Kean	21-14, 14-21, 21-19
Aakarshi Kashyap bt Kai Qi Bernice	21-16, 21-13

sixth seed Putri Kusuma Wardani of Indonesia, Malvika was shown the door by another Indonesian, eighth seed Ester Nurumi Tri Wardoyo 17-21, 21-23.

It was also the end of the road for Panda sisters, Rutaparna and Swetaparna, in women's doubles. The seventh-seeded India pair were shocked 5-21, 9-21 by Malaysian combination of Pei Jing Lai and Chiew Sien Lim.

# EUROPE BRACES FOR SOCCER FEST

HOSTS GERMANY FACE SCOTTISH CHALLENGE ON OPENING DAY IN MUNICH

AGENCIES

Munich, June 13: Euro 2024 football tournament kicks off Friday in Germany as the continent's footballing heavyweights prepare to fight it out over the next month with the aim of taking the crown away from reigning champions Italy. Germany play Scotland in the opening game here Friday and the host nation are hoping their journey will continue all the way to the final July 14 in Berlin.

Euro 2020 was delayed by a year because of the pandemic, finally taking place in 2021 in front of limited crowds. Hence the tournament lost much of its charm. This time all supporters will descend on Germany, where matches will be played in 10 stadiums, from Hamburg in the north to this city in the south.

Philipp Lahm, the captain of Germany's 2014 World Cup-win-



German football team trains in Munich ahead of their game against Scotland

ning team and now Euro 2024 tournament director, hopes the competition will bring people together at a time of division and disunity across the continent.

"I hope at the very least the Euro will lead to a more united Germany again," said Lahm.

A good performance by Germany on the field would help, and the outlook is more positive for Julian Nagelsmann's team now than a few months ago.

The group also has Hungary

and Switzerland. However, it should be easy for the hosts to top the group and qualify given the quality in Germany's ranks, from veteran playmaker Toni Kroos to younger stars Florian Wirtz and Jamal Musiala.

"We have gone through difficult phases as a national team, but something big can happen here," Musiala, of Bayern Munich, was quoted saying Thursday by Sportbild.

However, there are good reasons

why France and England are so strongly fancied to raise aloft the Henri Delaunay trophy July 14.

France are Europe's top-ranked nation and have been in the last two World Cup finals. Fresh from sealing his move to Real Madrid, Kylian Mbappe is eager to make up for a disappointing showing at the last Euros.

"Kylian is our captain and a great leader. We will need him to be at his best," admitted France coach Didier Deschamps when the team arrived here Tuesday.

England have never been European champions, although they came mightily close in 2021 when they lost the final on penalties to Italy. Optimism about their prospects this time is fueled by the fact that star players Harry Kane, of Bayern, and Jude Bellingham, formerly of Borussia Dortmund, should feel so at home on German soil. "We want to make history," said England midfielder Declan Rice this week.