



Taapsee's revelation

Actor Taapsee Pannu, taking part in a talk show, shares the secret behind her entry into Hindi film industry

LEISURE | P2



Nuclear race

World's nine nuclear-armed states continue to modernise their nuclear weapons as the countries deepen their reliance on such deterrence

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Diesel demand dips

India's diesel demand slumps in June as extreme heat conditions curtail travel plans, preliminary data of state-owned firms shows

BUSINESS | P11



Bangladesh win

Bangladesh's dominant bowling performance was on display as they entered the Super Eights of the T20 WC with a 21-run win against Nepal

SPORTS | P12

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NCERT for 'Bharat' & 'India' in books

New Delhi: "Bharat" and "India" will be used interchangeably in NCERT textbooks as is the case in the country's Constitution, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) Director Dinesh Prasad Saklani has said. The comments assume significance in the wake of a high-level panel working on the social science curriculum recommending that "India" should be replaced with "Bharat" in school textbooks for all classes. The NCERT chief said both the words will be used in the school textbooks. P8

IIT Kharagpur 3rd-yr student found dead

Kolkata: The body of an IIT Kharagpur third-year student was found hanging in her hostel Monday, police said. The student has been identified as Devika Pillai, 21, a senior police officer told PTI. "The female student was found hanging from the ceiling of the hostel building. Whether it is a case of suicide or something else is yet to be ascertained. We have started an investigation of the death," the IPS officer said.

5 Maoists killed in J'khand encounter

Chaibasa: At least five Maoists, including two women, were killed in an encounter with security forces near Lipunga, under Gua police station in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district Monday. "Bodies of five Maoists, including two women, have been recovered so far. Additionally, two persons have been apprehended," Jharkhand Police spokesperson and IG (Operations) Amol V Homkar told PTI.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Great, Mr Minister! Now give us some sad expressions for social media reels after train accidents

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	41.0°C	38.6°C
Min Temp	28.9°C	28.0°C
Humidity	78%	79%
Rainfall	0.1mm	Nil
FORECAST		
PARTLY CLOUDY SKY		

NO LESSONS LEARNT

TRAIN TRAGEDY AGAIN

The unabated instances of railway accidents seem to have become a norm of late, with the country waking up to the tragic loss of at least nine lives and injuries to over 40 passengers in a mishap in West Bengal's Darjeeling district, Monday. Though the cause of the accident is still being probed, it nevertheless, came as a crude reminder of last year's horrific triple-train tragedy near Bahanaga station in Balasore district which had left a trail of 296 deaths and injuries to over 1,100. These mishaps have not only posed serious questions over passenger safety in the world's largest railway network, but also reveals how the Ministry's much touted 'Kavach' system has taken a back seat amid the all-out publicity stunts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Jalpaiguri/Kolkata/New Delhi, June 17: At least nine people – seven passengers and two railway staffers – were killed and 40 others injured after a goods train rammied into the stationary Sealdah-bound Kanchanjunga Express in West Bengal's Darjeeling district Monday, a senior railway official said.

Among the deceased were the pilot of the goods train and the guard of the passenger train, he added. Senior West Bengal Police officials, however, put the



casualty count at 15.

The injured passengers were admitted to North Bengal Medical College and Hospital for treatment. The collision occurred near Rangapani station, 30 km from New Jalpaiguri station, causing four rear compartments of Kanchanjunga Express to derail due to the impact by the goods

train's locomotive at 8:55am, the official said. Soon after the accident, Railway Board chairperson Jaya Varma Sinha said the collision took place because the goods train disregarded the signal. The Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS) has started a probe into the cause of the accident.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi

expressed condolences, calling the incident in West Bengal tragic and stating his prayers for the swift recovery of the injured. In a post on X, Modi said the "railway accident in West Bengal is saddening. Condolences to those who lost their loved ones".

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw reached the spot, took

stock of relief operations and announced compensation for the injured and kin of the deceased.

While ₹10 lakh would be given to the next of kin of the deceased, ₹2.5 lakh would be provided to the grievously injured and ₹50,000 to those with minor injuries, Vaishnaw posted on X. He said the CRS has started a

7 deadliest train mishaps in 30 yrs

- 2023: 296 killed and over 1,100 injured in triple-train crash in Balasore
- 2016: At least 150 killed as Indore-Patna Express train derailed near Kanpur
- 2010: 146 lives perished as Jnaneswari Express crashed into a goods train in Bengal
- 2002: At least 120 killed as Kolkata-New Delhi Rajdhani plunged into the swollen Dhabi River
- 1999: At least 285 people died as two trains collided in West Bengal
- 1998: At least 210 people died after Sealdah Express collided with a derailed train in Punjab
- 1995: Over 300 died after Kalindi Exp collided with Purushottam Exp in Ferozabad near Agra

probe into the cause of the accident and added that steps will be taken to prevent a recurrence of the circumstances that led to the accident. Prima facie, it appears that the goods train violated speed restrictions it had to follow given the "defective" automatic signalling system on the section, the Railway Board said. MORE P8

PANNUN MURDER PLOT

Nikhil Gupta pleads not guilty in US court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York/Washington, June 17: Indian national Nikhil Gupta, accused of being involved in a murder-for-hire plot against a Sikh extremist on American soil, Monday pleaded not guilty in the case at a federal court here. Gupta, 52, was extradited to the US from the Czech Republic Friday.

He was arrested in the Czech Republic last year at the request of the US government on charges of being involved in a plot to assassinate Khalistani separatist Gurbatwant Singh Pannun in New York. Pannun holds dual American and Canadian citizenship. Gupta was produced before a federal court in New York Monday, where he pleaded not guilty, according to his attorney, Jeffrey Chabrowe.

The Czech Constitutional Court last month rejected a petition by Gupta against his extradition to the US to face the charges.

US federal prosecutors allege that Gupta had been working according to the directions of an unnamed Indian government official.

India has, however, denied its involvement in such a case and has instituted a high-level investigation into the allegations. "This is a complex matter for both our countries," Gupta's attorney Chabrowe told PTI ahead of his client's arraignment in a federal court here.

"It is extremely important that we refrain from rushing to conclusions so early in the process. Background and details will develop that may cast government allegations into an entirely new light," Chabrowe said.

"We will pursue his defence vigorously and ensure he receives full due process, regardless of outside pressures," he added.

Four killed, 2 hurt in Khariar road mishap

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 17: Four people died while two others sustained grievous injuries in a road accident near Lachhipur village under Khariar police limits in Nuapada district.

The deceased have been identified as Subham Mohauti, Debendra Singh Lal and Rishi Sahu of Khariar town and Devraj Patel of Goimundi village under Khariar police limits.

The locals claimed that Rishi and other victims, after attending the birthday party of the former's elder brother, were going to buy some party items from a nearby shop in Tukula village Sunday night when their Tata Tiago car rammied into a tractor from behind near Lachhipur late Sunday night. The crash was so severe that all four in the car died on the spot while two labourers travelling in the tractor suffered serious injuries.

Police sources asserted that during the initial probe, it came to the fore that the person driving the car was under the influence of alcohol which may be the reason behind the tragic accident.

Collectors to decide school reopening

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 17: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Monday said Collectors would take decisions on reopening of schools after the summer vacation, keeping in view the prevailing weather conditions in their respective districts.

District Collectors would declare holidays or change in class timings in public, private and state-aided schools, depending on the weather conditions in their respective districts, a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said.

The schools were supposed to reopen after summer vacation Tuesday.

While the Collectors of Khurda, Nabarangpur, Puri, Angul, Cuttack, Keonjhar, Balasore and Rayagada have decided to reopen the schools June 18, from 6:30 am to 10:30 am, some districts like Bhadrak, Bargarh and Bolangir have decided to extend the vacation till June 20.



Likewise, Sambalpur district administration has decided to reopen the schools June 21.

In its forecast, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said hot and humid weather conditions would prevail in some districts till June 19, while thunderstorms are also likely. It predicted heavy rainfall at a few places June 20 and 21.

The conditions are favourable for further advancement of southwest monsoon into some more parts of the state during the next four days, the IMD said.

Rahul Gandhi gives up Wayanad for Raebareli

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 17: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will keep the Raebareli Lok Sabha seat in Uttar Pradesh and vacate Wayanad in Kerala from where his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will contest, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge said Monday.

Kharge was speaking to reporters after the Congress' top leadership held discussions on the issue at his residence here. Rahul said it was a difficult decision for him as he has an emotional connection with both Raebareli and Wayanad.

"The last five years as a member of Parliament from Wayanad have been a very fantastic and enjoyable experience. The people of Wayanad gave me support, energy to fight in a very difficult time. I will never forget that...."

"I will continue to visit Wayanad and the promises we made to Wayanad will be fulfilled," he said. Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and party general secretaries KC Venugopal and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra were present. P9

Naveen may be elected Leader of Opposition

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 17: BJD president and former chief minister Naveen Patnaik is likely to become the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in Odisha Assembly as the regional outfit has scheduled its first legislature party meeting Wednesday. This could be Patnaik's first time as LoP in his political career, which began in 1997.

Patnaik served as the CM of Odisha five consecutive times from 2000 until June 2024. If Patnaik takes the role of LoP, the party may elect a deputy leader to handle day-to-day activities in the Assembly, party sources said.

In the 147-member Assembly, BJP has 78 members, followed by BJD 51, Congress 14 and CPI(M) one. Independents bagged three



seats. In the last Assembly, BJD had 113 MLAs.

While Patnaik is expected to be unanimously elected as LoP, one of the senior leaders of the party is likely to be his deputy in the House. Given the saffron surge, many senior leaders lost their seats, but a few managed to retain it.

Senior BJD leaders who won include Prasanna Acharya from the Rairakhol seat, Pramila Mallik from Binjharpur, Ranendra Pratap Swain from Athagarh, Arun Sahu from Nayagarh, and Pratap Keshari Deb from Aul.

China's long history of 'panda diplomacy'

AGENCIES

Melbourne, June 17: During his visit to the Adelaide Zoo Sunday, Chinese Premier Li Qiang announced that two "equally beautiful, lively, cute, and younger" pandas would be given to Australia to replace Wang Wang and Fu Ni, two pandas who will return to China later this year after calling Adelaide home for 15 years. The gifting of pandas to other countries has long been a part of Chinese diplomacy. But what exactly is this unique approach to Chinese soft power? Why does it work? And will it profoundly impact Australia-China relations now?

Panda diplomacy by the People's Republic of China began in 1950s when the newly established communist regime under Chairman Mao Zedong started giving pandas to its socialist al-

lies to strengthen ideological ties and foster diplomatic goodwill.

Ping Ping and Qi Qi, China's first panda "ambassadors", arrived in the Soviet Union in 1957 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution, when the Bolshevik party seized power in Russia.

A pivotal moment then came in 1972. Following US President Richard Nixon's historic visit to Beijing, two pandas, Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing were gifted to the United States. This gesture symbolised a strategic shift in China's foreign policy towards engaging with Western nations and easing Cold War tensions.

Later that year, Japan also received two pandas, Kang Kang and Lan Lan, after normalising diplomatic relations with

China. By 1984, under Deng Xiaoping's leadership, panda diplomacy transitioned from outright gifts to long-term loans, embodying China's market-oriented economic reforms.

The lease model saw pandas being loaned for significant fees, typically between US\$500,000 to US\$1 million per year (A\$755,000-\$1.5 million), with the proceeds

directed towards conservation efforts in China. These agreements also typically trigger joint research projects on panda conservation, fostering scientific collaboration alongside diplomatic relations.

Wang Wang and Fu Ni, the only giant pandas currently in the Southern Hemisphere, came to Australia under such a deal in 2009.

Under current Chinese leader Xi Jinping, panda diplomacy has been regularly used to symbolise China's willingness to strengthen bilateral relations with other nations.

For instance, Malaysia received two pandas in 2014 to mark the 40th anniversary of its diplomatic ties with China.

Likewise, two pandas were sent to Indonesia in 2017 as part of the

60th anniversary of the countries' relations.

The loan of two pandas to Germany in 2017 coincided with Xi's visit to Berlin. He and then-German Chancellor Angela Merkel also attended the official opening ceremony of the Panda Garden at Zoo Berlin.

Even the recent tensions between the US and China haven't derailed panda diplomacy as the US returned three pandas from the Smithsonian Zoo in Washington to China last year. But Xi said two new giant pandas would take their place later this year, calling them "envoys of friendship between the Chinese and American people."

If it's not already obvious, pandas are cute and charismatic. Because of their gentle demeanour, pandas have been seen as symbols of peace and friendship.



leisure



KATIE WORKING ON NEW BBC DOCUMENTARY

Model and actress Katie Price has claimed she's planning to film a new BBC documentary about her son Harvey following two successful films which examined the pair's relationship and Harvey's big move to college.

ANGELINA JOLIE BAGS HER FIRST-EVER TONY AWARD

Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie has earned her first Tony Award, for excellence in Broadway Theatre, all thanks to her youngest daughter Vivienne. After being inspired by her 15-year-old daughter, Jolie produced *The Outsiders: A New Musical* which bagged the honour.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

A new acquaintance will make you feel happy today. You must remember that things don't have to be expressed explicitly; a word or a song from deep within can make a bigger impact. Ganesh says today is the right time to do something which will be more rewarding in the long-term.

TAURUS

This day, your heart is likely to rule your head. You will be driven by your moods, feelings and sentiments. Most of the decisions will be based on your emotions, instead of your reason and experience. Ganesh urges you not to allow your emotionality to enter your professional activities. On no account should you be hasty or impulsive. As far as possible do not allow your feelings to interfere in your plans and decisions.

GEMINI

You will meet someone special who is here to stay for good, predicts Ganesh. Your kind and considerate nature will benefit others. You need to understand that it's okay to spend a little on comforts and entertainment. Be ready for a busy, yet cheerful, day ahead.

CANCER

Sometimes acting a little eccentric and adopting an approach that you will usually not helps you redefine your style, says Ganesh. Go ahead and do that today! Although you will be open to adapt and bring in some revolutionary changes, you will make sure to follow a proper pattern.

LEO

Forget the weather. Today, the only thing shining bright are your chances of spending some quality time with your near and dear ones. Going along these lines, Ganesh wonders how long has it been since you last did the same. So, make the most of this lucky day.

VIRGO

A mixture of the desirable and undesirable is on the cards today. Sentimental people will tend to think of you as a little immature. However, your sense of humour will be as robust as ever and you will never fall short of jokes. Ganesh advises you to pursue spiritually enriching activities in order to properly channelise your abilities.

LIBRA

The whole point of being a Libran is that you always have the tendency to be two separate things put together on a pair of scales that somehow balance. Ganesh feels that today, you'll bring to the scales the stability of being your own master and servant. It's a fine balance to maintain. But only you are capable of doing that, thanks to your extremely high-power status today.

SCORPIO

Your stars indicate splurging of money today. And this time, you do it for your near and dear ones. After all, what is money without friends and family? You may even go out of your way to make them happy by entertaining them with outings and celebrations.

SAGITTARIUS

Staying away from home, for a long business trip may be painful. But, when you strike great deals, it's worth it. Besides good returns from business, Ganesh also has many other surprises in store for you. Be hopeful!

CAPRICORN

You love the people around you unconditionally and such emotions will be more visible now than ever. Today, you will want to keep yourself surrounded with your loved ones, make them happy and have a good time, says Ganesh. Your honesty and sincerity will give depth to your existing relationships.

AQUARIUS

If you're stuck indoors today, make the most of it. There's always carrom, checkers, chess and partying! Shake yourself a bit, and you'll come up with creative ways to spend a leisurely day. You'll find that either way, life is wonderful, says Ganesh.

PISCES

In spite of the hardships that you will encounter on your way, your high spirits, enthusiasm and innate confidence will overcome all obstacles. And no matter how troubled the day starts, it ought to end on a cheerful note, says Ganesh.

Mumbai: Richa Chadha, enjoying the success of her recent series *Heeramandi: The Diamond Harbour*, wrote a heartfelt message as Fukrey celebrates its 11th anniversary. She also mentioned how the film introduced her to her 'future baby-daddy' Ali Fazal.

Richa's emotional note

Taking to Instagram recently, Richa shared a nostalgic video on Instagram from the Fukrey shoot. She wrote a long note about how the film helped her break the stereotype of *Gangs of Wasseypur* and how it led her to meet Ali Fazal. The post read, "Fukrey (2013) is a film that'll always remain close to my (heart) in an absolute sense. Not just because of what it did for me

personally, i.e. put me on the map commercially, broke the stereotype that *Gangs of Wasseypur* had created to some extent, and got me to be with my future baby-daddy, (who would have thought), but also the joy this film brings to all of North India, especially *saddi Dilli!*"

Meanwhile talking about her workfront, Richa Chadha was last seen in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar*. Ali and Richa are all set to welcome their first child next month.



Secret behind Taapsee's Hindi film debut out

Mumbai: Actress Taapsee Pannu, who first appeared in over 10 south movies, has revealed the reason that brought her to Hindi film industry.

Taapsee, who appeared on cricketer Shikhar Dhawan's talk show *Dhawan Karege*, opened up during a candid conversation about looking up to the mesmerising actress Preity, who is also well-acquainted with Shikhar.

The *Mulk* actress shared: "I was first brought into Bollywood because I share a resemblance with Preity Zinta. She has very good energy, and you know it well."

Taapsee continued: "The aura of Preity ma'am is very lively, and she seems very intelligent. I felt like I had to live up to her reputation, as I was brought into the industry because of her name. So, I always put in an effort to be like her."

For the unversed, Shikhar is the captain of the IPL team Punjab Kings, which is owned by Preity.

Dhawan Karege is streaming on JioCinema Premium.

Meanwhile, Taapsee was last seen in the comedy-drama *Dunki* alongside Shah Rukh Khan.

Her upcoming projects include *Woh Ladki Hai Kahaan?*, *Phir Aayi Haseen Dillruba*, and *Khel Khel Mein*.



'Kiara has attitude issue, Janhvi attentive flier'



Mumbai: An air hostess working with IndiGo has described her experience of servicing star Kiara Advani on board a flight.

In a video that has now gone viral on social media, the air hostess claimed that Kiara has an attitude issue and the crew got a 'not-so-pleasant' response from the popular actress.

She shared that when her crew offered Kiara almonds and cashews, the actress asked them to check with her assistant first.

The air hostess clarified that she did not have a direct interaction with Kiara, but it was her crew members who told her about the incident.

The actress apparently asked them to call her assistant, who would give her cashews.

The flight attendant also praised actress Janhvi Kapoor, as she recalled that the actress woke up from her sleep to listen to the emergency exit safety instructions as she was in a slumber at the emergency exit seat.



Tabu reacts to Nag's old pic

Mumbai: Actors Nagarjuna, aka Nag and Tabu were once rumoured to be in a relationship for nearly a decade. Now, Tabu has reacted to a post featuring an old picture of the former.

On Father's Day, Nagarjuna's son, Naga Chaitanya, shared the monochrome photo from his childhood. A young Chaitanya stood behind his father who

held his hand. In the photo, Nagarjuna wore a striped shirt while Chaitanya was seen in a T-shirt. They posed for the photo outdoors. Sharing the picture, Chaitanya captioned it, "The OG (red heart emoji)." Reacting to the post, Tabu and Mona Singh dropped a bunch of red heart emojis.

Tabu and Nagarjuna have always remained tight-lipped about the nature of their relationship. In an interview with a leading newspaper 2017, Nagarjuna had spoken about the relationship he shares with Tabu.

"Yes, Tabu is a fantastic friend of mine. Our friendship goes way back, since I was 21 or 22 and she was just 16 years old. That's like almost half a lifetime... About our friendship, whatever is said is less. I have nothing to hide about her. When you mention her name, my face lights up... (laughs). It is as simple as that. Now, when I say things like that, if you want to read into it, then it's your point of view... To me, she is a beautiful person, and a beautiful friend. She always will be," he had said.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

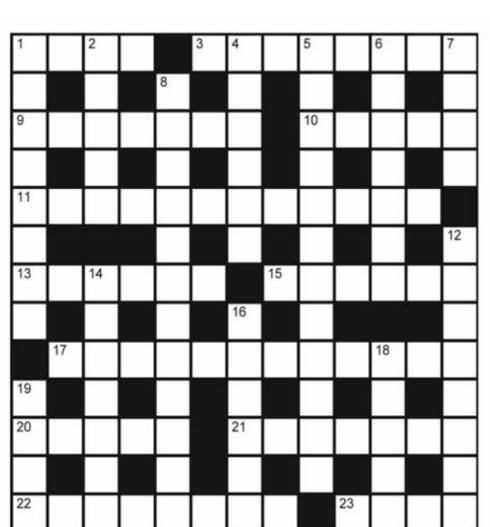


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



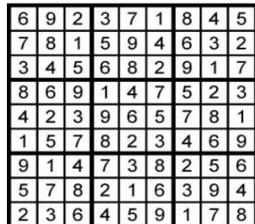
- Across
- 1 Lowly worker
 - 3 Slaughter
 - 9 "Arabian Nights" hero (3,4)
 - 10 Madcap comedy
 - 11 Electrical mishap (5-7)
 - 13 Type of soup
 - 15 Appetiser
 - 17 Chef's tool (7,5)
 - 20 Town follower
 - 21 Haifa native
 - 22 Long underwear
 - 23 Safe, on board
 - 6 Birthplace of Napoleon Bonaparte
 - 7 Promised land
 - 8 Constructed with girders and beams
 - 12 Largest of the Canary Islands
 - 14 Egg-shaped instrument
 - 16 Deep blue
 - 18 Utopian
 - 19 "Shoo!"
- Down
- 1 Last hurrah (4,4)
 - 2 Safari sight
 - 4 Slowly, to a conductor
 - 5 Adept burglars

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

downtown

TRILOCHAN MOHANTY JOINT SECY TO CM

BHUBANESWAR: Senior Odisha Administrative Service (OAS) officer and Keonjhar Sub-Collector Trilochan Mohanty was appointed as Joint Secretary to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Monday. "Sri Trilochan Mohanty, OAS (S), Sub-Collector, Keonjhar, is transferred and posted as Joint Secretary to Chief Minister, Odisha," read a notification issued by the General Administration and Public Grievance department.

MODIJI TO REMOTE CONTROL US: JAGADEV

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 17: Controversial lawmaker Prasanta Kumar Jagadav, who won from the Khurda Assembly constituency in the recently-concluded polls on a BJP ticket, Monday caused an apparent embarrassment to the party's state leadership when he said that affairs in the state will henceforth be 'remote-controlled' by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"You know Modi's style. We may be ministers or MLAs here. But the remote control is in the hands of Modi. The remote control will work from Delhi," said Jagadev, who had switched over to the saffron camp from BJD before the elections.

Speaking to reporters, Jagadev said Odisha is set to become the number one state in the country



The BJP MLA from Khurda says the biggest achievement of the new government so far has been the destruction of "officer raj"

as predicted by Modi. "You have already seen Modi's words coming true," Jagadev said in a reference to the Prime Minister's forecast of imminent victory for the BJP in the Assembly polls. "And, I don't find it an impossibility," he added.

Elaborating, Jagadev said Odisha suffered from the 'tradition' of being a 'rich state with poor people.' "Even Biju Patnaik had reiterated the same thing while demanding fiscal auton-

omy for the state to elevate its standards. Now, the double engine BJP governments (at Centre and state) will facilitate in realising it," he said.

Taking a dig at the previous BJD dispensation, he said the biggest achievement of the new government in the days after it came to power has been the destruction of "officer raj" which created a divide between people and the government by preventing entry of common peo-

ple to even tehsil and block offices, not to mention the Secretariat.

"Now, the doors of the CM's Office has been thrown open, so are the gates of the Jagannath temple. Even a common man can meet the CM with his grievances," he said, adding, "This is the first impression of the government, which will last long, as they say."

He said the response, body language and manners of officials have undergone a drastic change within 24 hours after the government took charge "even before the allocation of departments."

"We are happy for the change. Moreover, it was necessary. This is because the government and administration should work hand in hand without any one-upmanship," he said.

CM directs timely completion of ongoing irrigation projects

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 17: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Monday directed officers of the department to ensure timely completion of the ongoing irrigation projects.

Holding a meeting with the top officers of the department, the chief minister also directed them to manage water efficiently during the delayed monsoon period. He advised the officials to be in a state of preparedness for managing possible flood situation during the ensuing monsoon, the Chief Minister's Office

(CMO) said in a statement.

Highlighting that improvement of the status of the farmers of the state is a top priority of his government, Majhi said that the department has a key role to play in making water available to farmers, it said.

He further exhorted all the officers of the department to work with utmost sincerity, transparency and dedication to ensure greater benefit for farmers.

Development Commissioner Anu Garg, who is also the Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) of the WR department, and many senior officers of the

department were present at the meeting. Meanwhile, the Development Commissioner, along with the senior officers of the Planning and Convergence department, called on the chief minister in the forenoon.

Majhi advised the officials to start the process of consultation with the Finance department and other stakeholders for preparation of a people-centric annual Budget 2024-25 for programme expenditure that reflects the hopes and aspirations of the people.

He also advised the officers to ensure effective and efficient implementation of the schemes of the department and strengthen the planning process at the district level.



GUV, CM EXPRESS GRIEF OVER WB TRAIN MISHAP

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 17: Governor Raghubar Das and Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi expressed grief over the death of nine persons, including seven passengers, in the Kanchanjungha Express train accident in neighbouring West Bengal Monday.

BJD president and ex-chief minister Naveen Patnaik has also expressed grief over the deaths in the train accident.

In a message on X, the Raj Bhavan said, "Governor is saddened to learn about the tragic train accident in West Bengal and conveyed his condolences to the families of the victims. The Governor has also prayed for the speedy recovery of those who have been injured."

Majhi has also expressed deep grief over the loss of lives in the train accident near Jalpaiguri in West Bengal. Terming the inci-

dent as very sad, Majhi expressed his condolences to the family members of the deceased and wished for the speedy recovery of the injured.

Taking to X, Patnaik said, "Deeply saddened to know about the tragic loss of lives after #KanchanjunghaExpress met with an accident in #WestBengal. My thoughts and prayers are with the bereaved families in this hour of grief and pray for the speedy recovery of those who are hospitalised following the #TrainAccident."

At least nine people were killed and 41 injured after a goods train rammed into the stationary Sealdah-bound Kanchanjungha Express in West Bengal's Darjeeling district, according to a senior railway official.

Among the deceased were the pilot of the goods train and the guard of the passenger train, he added.

Senior West Bengal Police officials, however, put the casualty count at 15.

MLAs to take oath today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 17: The newly-elected members of the Odisha legislative assembly will be administered oath by the pro-tem Speaker for two days - Tuesday and Wednesday, official sources said, Monday.

As per norms, the cere-

mony will begin with Chief Minister Mohan Majhi taking oath Tuesday. "The swearing-in ceremony will be held for two days from 10am to 5pm. After the CM, other elected representatives will take oath," they said. Meanwhile, security arrangements have been stepped up in and around the Assembly for the event.

Will take steps to prevent farmer suicides: Singh Deo

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, June 17: Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Varshan Singh Deo Monday asserted that his administration would take steps to prevent farmer suicides in the state.

He made these remarks during his interaction with senior officials of the agriculture and farmers' empowerment department after assuming office.

In a video message, Singh Deo said, "Our focus now is to ensure there are no farmer suicides in the state."

He expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Mohan Majhi for entrusting him with the critical portfolio of agriculture, which affects the majority of the state's population.

Acknowledging the enormity of the responsibility, Singh Deo underscored the department's significant progress, achieving 90 per cent programme expenditure. He pledged to push towards reaching 100 per cent in the near future.

Singh Deo affirmed the BJP government's commitment to fulfilling 100 per cent of its manifesto promises within the next few months.

He cited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's directive to ministers to uphold their commitments regardless of holidays, explaining his decision to assume office even on Eid, a public holiday.

Singh Deo visited Krushi Bhavan to familiarise himself with various sections of the department.

Similarly, the other Deputy Chief Minister, Pravati Parida, also assumed charge of the Mission Shakti department, conducting a thorough review of its schemes and activities. She emphasised strategies to broaden the impact of Mission Shakti, particularly benefiting women.

Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari stressed on zero tolerance towards corruption in his department, pledging stringent action against any official found engaging in corrupt practices.



Government of India

The new government's first task...

Honouring India's farmers



Prime Minister Narendra Modi

to release

17th installment

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18th June, 2024 at 5:00 pm Venue: Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi

Till now, more than **₹ 3.03 lakh crores** have been transferred directly to the bank accounts of more than **11 crore farmers**

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To become a **Krishi Sakhi**, women of Self Help Groups are trained in various aspects of agriculture

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PM-Kisan Helpdesk <https://pmkisan.gov.in/Grievance.aspx>

For more information on this Scheme Scan QR code



Int'l Art of Giving Day celebrated worldwide

Bhubaneswar, June 17: The eleventh edition of the International Art of Giving Day, conceptualised by Achyuta Samanta, was celebrated in 25,000 locations across 200 countries, Monday.

Speaking on this occasion, Samanta said, "It is an altruistic practice filled with selflessness, gratitude, appreciation, kindness, compassion, and humility. A person gains the greatest joy in life through sharing with others. It is based on the philosophy of giving to others in various ways without expecting anything in return."

"I realised that everything I practiced and achieved in my life revolved around the Art of Giving. My life can be summarised in three words-Art of Giving," he added.

KIIT and KISS founder Samanta initiated the movement May 17, 2013 to promote peace, friendship, and happiness, extending a helping hand whenever and wherever needed, establishing friendships, and respecting all the citizens.

Melbourne South Korea Bengaluru Bhubaneswar Cuttack Puri



IN MEMORIAM: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi offer tributes to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Utkal Gourav Madhusudan Das and Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das in Cuttack, Monday



OP PHOTO

NEET-UG ROW

No one will be spared if found guilty: Pradhan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, June 17: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said the government would take strong actions against functionaries of the National Testing Agency (NTA) if they were found to be involved in irregularities in the conduct of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), 2024.

Pradhan made this statement during his visit to Sambalpur in Sunday. He said two types of irregularities in the conduct of NEET have come to the limelight.

As per preliminary information, grace marks have been awarded to some students as they were dissatisfied as they were allotted less time than the prescribed duration, he said.

The government has disapproved the grace marks, and directed re-examination for 1,563 students as per the Supreme Court order, the education minister said.

"Additional wrongdoings have also come to the fore in two locations. I assure both students and parents that the government has taken the issue very seriously. We will take it to a logical end," he said.

If any officials including senior functionaries of NTA are found guilty, they will not be



The NEET-UG examination, which is the gateway for admission to undergraduate-level medical courses in India, was conducted May 5 at 4,750 centres across 571 cities in India

spared and strong action will be taken against them, he said.

The union education minister also advocated for reforms in the NTA.

"A lot of reforms are required

in NTA's functioning though it is an autonomous institution. The government is concerned about this. I want to reassure that no culprit will be spared, strict action will be taken against them," he added.

The NEET-UG examination, which is the gateway for admission to undergraduate-level medical courses in India, was conducted May 5 at 4,750 centres across 571 cities in India. The results were declared June 4.

After the results were declared, parents and teachers began questioning the grace marks awarded to 1,563 students.

'Prepare 100-day worksheet for Mission Shakti'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 17: Prepare a 100-day worksheet to implement key initiatives of the Mission Shakti scheme, deputy CM Pravati Parida instructed officials while holding a review meeting here, Monday.

On this occasion, Parida discussed various schemes and activities with the department officials.

During the meeting, the minister assessed the progress and impact of existing schemes, including financial inclusion, capacity building, and market linkage initiatives.

Parida underscored the crucial role of the programme and ac-



knowledged the progress made in empowering women through different schemes. She also noted the potential of such an initiative in the socio-economic landscape of a developed state.

During the meeting, the minister specifically focused on a 100-day work plan, which is aimed at accelerating the implementation of key initiatives and achieving tangible outcomes within a short span.

Parida also directed the officials to strengthen community participation and involvement in Mission Shakti activities and ensure grassroot-level impact and sustainability, working towards the vision of a 'Vikasat Odisha'.

Commissioner-cum-secretary Shalini Pandit, Odisha Livelihoods Mission (OLM) state mission director cum CEO Vineet Bhardwaj and senior government officials of the department were present during the meeting.

Sports min visits Kalinga Stadium

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 17: "Project mode, not programme mode" were the words of Sports and Youth Services Minister Suryabanshi Suraj while sharing the vision of newly-formed government's in the state during his first visit to Kalinga Stadium here Monday.

Suryabanshi held a review meeting with Sports secretary Vineel Krishna, Higher Education secretary Aravind Agarwal, Hockey Promotion Council chairman Deepankar Mohapatra and other officials.

"The review meeting is about the steps which have been taken in recent days and how many of them are currently effective. There will be a thorough review



in upcoming days," said Suryabanshi.

State's performance at national level competitions is praiseworthy, but now the vision is to be recognised at the international level, he added.

"We will be on project mode, not in programme mode," the minister said, shedding light on the government's approach for sports development in the state.

"We hope that when Odisha completes its centenary, the state will be known as the 'Sports capital of the world,' asserted Suryabanshi.

The minister also reviewed preparations for the upcoming 'World Yoga Day' and the infrastructure developments required in the stadium.

Guv, CM, Patnaik greet people on Eid-ul-Adha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, June 17: Governor Raghubar Das, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and ex-CM Naveen Patnaik Monday greeted people on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha.

"Hon'ble Governor wishes everyone a happy #Eid. May the auspicious occasion of #EidAlAdha spread the spirit of togetherness, harmony, peace and happiness for all. #EidMubarak," the Governor posted on X.

Majhi, in a statement, said, "My greetings to Muslim brothers and sisters on the occasion of auspicious Eid-ul-Adha. I wish happiness and prosperity of all."

Patnaik, in his X post, said, "Warm wishes on the auspicious occasion of #EidAlAdha. May the festival of sacrifice and devotion bring joy, happiness and blessings to everyone. May this occasion guide us in the path of peace, brotherhood and compassion. #EidAlAdhaMubarak."



Optimised diets have low environmental impact limits

Choosing foods that are good for health and the planet as well as accessible and affordable is a complex problem to solve. But luckily, research can help.

The global food system is responsible for about 30 per cent of annual greenhouse gas emissions.

While food production significantly contributes to this environmental footprint, the foods we choose to eat are just as important.

But it's easy to get bamboozled by all the conflicting advice out there about what to eat for nutritional reasons versus what to eat for environmental reasons.

The World Health Organisation and the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation define sustainable healthy diets as "dietary patterns that promote all dimensions of individuals' health and wellbeing, have low environmental pressure and impact, are accessible, affordable, safe and

equitable, and are culturally acceptable".

Researchers at the Riddet Institute in New Zealand have taken a computer-based mathematical modelling approach to the problem instead.

Dietary optimisation modelling seeks to identify the best combination of foods to fulfil diet-related goals, such as meeting nutrient recommendations, while also adhering to certain conditions, such as cost and environmental impact limits.

It also allows researchers to design diets that meet all these conditions with a minimal shift from people's current dietary patterns and cultural preferences.

Dietary optimisation is hardly a new concept. It can be traced back to 1945 when economist George J Stigler tried to eat well while spending the least amount of money doing so.

Fast forward to today, and researchers are putting sustain-



able eating into action.

Imagine a tool that is accessible to everyone and can guide users — from conscientious consumers to policymakers — through the maze of diet advice and environmental worries.

The Sustainable Nutrition Initiative in New Zealand is developing an interactive dietary optimisation tool, called The iOTA Model, which will allow users to explore what it takes for a typical dietary pattern to

be transformed into a nutrient-adequate diet and what the environmental implications of such a diet are.

All with minimal departure from the users' current dietary habits to ensure it will be easy enough for them to adopt the optimised diets without making too many changes to what they are used to eating.

Research suggests that optimising diets for nutrition and sustainability must have a coun-

- ◆ Dietary optimisation modelling seeks to identify the best combination of foods to fulfil diet-related goals, such as meeting nutrient recommendations, while also adhering to certain conditions, such as cost and environmental impact limits
- ◆ Research suggests that optimising diets for nutrition and sustainability must have a country-specific focus to account for food availability, consumer habits and the dietary needs specific to different populations

try-specific focus to account for food availability, consumer habits and the dietary needs specific to different populations.

For example, when considering dietary habits in different countries, a one-size-fits-all approach may not always be appropriate: rice might be considered a staple in Nepal but potatoes make up the main en-

ergy source in Mexico.

The nutritional content of foods may also differ from place to place, especially when it comes to the micronutrients, as these are largely impacted by their growing environment.

While this may all seem far too complex, if you're eating healthier and meeting nutritional recommendations, chances are, you are already eating better for the planet as well. For example, reducing consumption of foods high in sugars and low in important nutrients, and replacing them with nutrient-dense whole foods, is better for both your waistline and the planet.

What is consistent across almost all countries is that increasing the contribution of fruits, vegetables and starchy foods to the mix of foods we eat, while decreasing the contribution of sugar and fats, would help reduce diet-related emissions while providing essential energy and nutrients.

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Expansion of Rangeilunda airstrip in limbo

Communal tension prevails in Balasore

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, June 17: The proposed expansion of Rangeilunda airstrip in Gopalpur town of Ganjam district has failed to takeoff due to alleged negligence of the Union government.

The British era airstrip was included under UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik) scheme by the BJP led NDA government at the Centre. However, flights are unlikely to take off and land any time soon on the airstrip as the expansion of the runway is in suspended animation.

The airstrip presently facilitates takeoff and landing of small flights and helicopters only. Meanwhile, the fate of the airstrip has been pushed into uncertainty and nobody knows when the expansion works will be carried out.

A year back, a private firm had launched flight service on a small scale between Bhubaneswar and Rangeilunda. BJD leaders boarded the inaugural flight on the first day of launch of service and thanked the state government after their ar-



riveal in Bhubaneswar. However, the flight service was halted soon due to high price of tickets and lack of footfall of enough fliers.

The district administration started working on the revival of the airstrip and expansion of the runway last year. However, the project was abandoned soon due to unavailability of enough government land. Inflated prices of the private lands made it impossible for further acquisition.

Rangeilunda airstrip, situated on the premises of Berhampur University, falls under Gopalpur Assembly constituency under the Berhampur Lok Sabha seg-

ment. Meanwhile, BJP's Pradip Panigrahy has been elected as Berhampur MP in the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls.

Similarly, BJP's Bibhuti Jena, the new MLA from Gopalpur Assembly constituency, has been appointed as a minister in the first BJP government in the state. As a result, locals have been demanding intervention of the two leaders for revival and expansion of the airstrip.

Sources said Rangeilunda airstrip fulfills all the criteria necessary for expansion as the scenic Gopalpur beach near Berhampur is a major tourist attraction in

south Odisha. It sees footfall of tourists from the state, elsewhere in the country and abroad.

Furthermore, Gopalpur port, Indian Rare Earths Ltd (IREL) under Union Ministry of Atomic Energy, military cantonment at Gopalpur, Berhampur and Khallikote Universities, MKCG Medical College and Hospital and various educational institutes including IISER (Indian Institute of Science Education and Research) are all in proximity to Berhampur and Gopalpur.

Berhampur, the main commercial hub in south Odisha, is visited by a host of traders and business persons. People often travel to Bhubaneswar or Vishakhapatnam from here to catch flights for their destinations due to absence of an airport near Berhampur. As a result, residents have been demanding for expansion and revival of the Rangeilunda airstrip for a long time.

Notably, Vizianagaram MP Ashok Gajapathi Raju of TDP became the civil aviation minister in Modi-led NDA government in

2014. He visited Berhampur to attend a programme on first Modi government's victory celebrations June 14, 2016.

During his visit, many local residents besides BJP leaders and members of various outfits met him and submitted memorandum demanding expansion of the Rangeilunda airstrip. Raju then assured to take steps for expansion of the airstrip. Since then, eight years have passed but the promise made by the former Union minister is yet to be fulfilled.

The Berhampur MP thrice won as MLA of Gopalpur from BJD between 2009 and 2019 and also became a minister in the state government. He however, did not take any step for expansion of the airstrip. Rather he made the expansion of the airstrip an election issue and targeted the state government during his campaigning before the 2024 elections.

Meanwhile, people are waiting to see what steps Panigrahy will be taking for the airstrip as he has been elected as the BJP MP from Berhampur.



PROHIBITORY ORDERS UNDER SECTION 144 OF CrPC IMPOSED

PNN & AGENCIES

Balasore, June 17: Tension prevailed in the communally sensitive area under the Town police station limits of Balasore Monday following a clash between two groups, after a group noticed red fluid in a drain, suspected to be of slaughtering of cows.

Chief Minister Mohan Majhi took a serious view of the situation and directed the Balasore District Collector Ashish Thakare to maintain law and order, peace and harmony in the area.

Odisha is a peaceful state and under no circumstances, peace and law and order would be allowed to be disturbed, the CM said.

Majhi appealed to all concerned to maintain brotherhood and maintain peace in the area.

Protesting the blood of animal sacrifice on the road, a group of people sat on dharna in the Bhujakhia Pir area of the town. The other group allegedly hurled stones at them, following which the clash broke out, police said.

At least two policemen sustained injuries when they were caught in the midst of stone-pelting by the two groups. Several scribes were heckled and asked to delete photos they took on their smartphones. At least 10 bikes and one SUV were vandalised by the mob during the clash.

SP Sagarika Nath rushed to the site with force and held discussions with both the warring groups. Police had to baton

charge the mob to bring the situation under control. Prohibitory orders under Section 144 CrPC were imposed to prevent further deterioration of the law and order situation. The district police also sought further enforcement of force.

According to reports, the incident occurred after a group noticed red fluid flowing in a roadside drain, suspected to be of slaughtering of cows and called the police to enquire if it was cow slaughtering.

At least two policemen sustained injuries when they were caught in the middle of stone-pelting by the two groups

The cops reportedly did not find anything. However, they collected the red colour samples for further investigation.

The cops while enquiring about the issue another group came and protested. Following heated arguments, the number of either side swelled. The mobs took to stone pelting and brick batting.

After the incident flared up, the vehicular traffic on the road which connects Town with Chandipur disrupted. Notably, the road connects the defence establishments including ITR, PXE, Chandipur beach and fishing base at Balramgadi.

The injured persons were admitted to the Balasore district hospital, officials said. At least 150 police personnel have been deployed in the area to prevent any further flare-up. Night patrolling would also be held in some sensitive areas, police said.

30 injured as OSRTC bus suffers brake failure

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, June 17: Over 15 persons were injured, five of them critically, after an OSRTC bus met with an accident here Monday. The critically injured were shifted to Rourkela Government Hospital (RGH) immediately.

The state-run bus was travelling from Sole to Rourkela via Gugundia Monday morning. However, the brake failed to work near Tamda hill range and the driver could not control the vehicle. Finally, he dashed the vehicle against the hill.

Over 40 passengers were travelling in the bus. Apart from other passengers there were a few pregnant ladies along with some ASHA workers, it was learnt. More than 15 passengers were injured. However, the five critically injured were shifted to RGH on priority basis for treatment.

One of the injured was shifted to a private hospital as his condition worsened.

Rourkela MLA Sarada Nayak and Raghunathpalli MLA Durga Tanty immediately reached RGH to take stock of situation there. The injured were stated to be in stable condition.

Man killed, another critically hurt after rickshaw turns turtle

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, June 17: A man was killed and another was seriously injured after a goods carrying auto rickshaw overturned following collision with an unknown vehicle near National Highway-20 near Hundula Village under Sadar police station limits in Keonjhar district.

The identity of the deceased and injured is yet to be ascertained. Reports however, said that the duo from Bihar was doing business by staying in Keonjhar town. Sources said that they went to Rimuli weekly market under Champua police limits carrying clothes and other goods for sale in the locality.



The mishap occurred when they were returning to Keonjhar in an auto-rickshaw at about 5pm when an unknown vehicle collided with their vehicle. As a result, the auto overturned on the road and goods were scattered in all directions after the accident. One of them died on the spot while another person was seriously injured.

Palaspanga police outpost in-charge Manas Ranjan Panda reached the spot, rescued the injured person and admitted him to the district headquarters hospital for treatment while the body was sent for post-mortem. An investigation was launched by police after seizure of the overturned auto-rickshaw.



FESTIVE FERVOUR: Women take part in traditional dance on the concluding day of Raja festival in Dhenkikote panchayat of Keonjhar district, Monday

Two tusker carcasses recovered



POST NEWS NETWORK

Athagarh/Sambalpur, June 17: The carcasses of two tuskers were recovered Monday from a forest in Cuttack district and a village road under Jujumura block in Sambalpur district.

In the first incident, a tusker was found dead under mysterious circumstances at Sorishapal reserve forest in Jenapada forest beat under Athagarh forest division in Cuttack district.

The matter came to the fore after Athagarh divisional forest officer Jagnya Dutta Pati and Forest officials rushed to the spot and seized the carcass after being tipped off about the



animal's death. The carcass was found lying near the Rengali south canal inside the Sorishapal reserve forest.

The Forest officials launched an investigation into death of the pachyderm aged about 5-6 years. While no injury mark was found on the animal's body, absence of any electric connection at the spot also ruled out the possibility of electrocution. Later, a team from the Regional Chief Conservator of Forests (RCCF) in Angul also visited the spot and conducted a probe. Both tusks of the animal were found unharmed and veterinarians collected various samples of the animal and sent it for labora-

tory examination. The dead elephant was buried at the spot after a post-mortem.

When contacted, the DFO said the actual reason behind the death was yet to be ascertained and higher authorities were informed about the development. The post-mortem report will be available to them after a week, he added.

In the second incident, the carcass of a tusker was recovered the Basiapada-Dalkhaipada village road under Jujumura block in Sambalpur district.

It is suspected that the animal aged around 35 might have died due to unknown reasons when it strayed into the village

in search of food. On being informed, Sambalpur DFO Kalunge Gorakh Waman, ACF Mumus Deep, ACF Rajeshwari Tirkey, forester Girish Chandra Dora and other Forest officials rushed to the spot and launched an investigation.

The animal was buried at the spot after veterinarians conducted a post-mortem and a team from Bhubaneswar collected various samples of the dead animal. The actual reason behind its death could be ascertained only after post-mortem report is available, Forest officials said.

Forest officials and residents said that the animal had unleashed terror in the area after getting separated from its herd.

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Forest officials and residents said that the animal had unleashed terror in the area after getting separated from its herd.

Youth kills self over outstanding loan

Khajuripada: A youth committed suicide by consuming poison over burden of outstanding loan at Bangala Sahi under Khajuripada police limits in Kandhamal district, Monday. The deceased was identified as Ajit Naik, a native of the village. Khajuripada police registered a case and sent the body for post-mortem after family members lodged a complaint at the police station, police IIC Chapadhari Pradhan said. Police said Naik had taken loans from three to four self-help groups (SHGs) but was unable to repay the loan in time. This pushed him as well as his family members into severe distress. Frustrated and unable to bear the duress, he decided to commit suicide and end his life by consuming poison.

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NOTICE

Notice to Equity Shareholders of the Company for transfer of shares to the Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF)

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the provisions of IEPF Authority (Accounting, Audit, Transfer and Refund) Amendment Rules, 2017 shares in respect of which dividend entitlements have remained unclaimed or unpaid for seven consecutive years or more are required to be transferred by the Company to the Demat account of the Investor Education & Protection Fund Authority (IEPF). The Company had sent individual notices by registered post to all the concerned shareholders whose shares are liable to be transferred to the IEPF Authority. The relevant details of such shareholders are also available on the Company's website www.imfa.in under the section 'Investor Information/Others'. The concerned shareholders are hereby given an opportunity to claim dividend by sending a letter along with their bank account details so as to reach the Investor Relation Department, IMFA Building, Bomikhal, P.O: Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar-751010 by 30th August, 2024. If no reply is received by the Company with in the stipulated time, the Company shall transfer the shares to the Demat Account of the IEPF Authority.

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 ₹ 62,800/-, Period of Completion: 12 Months.
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Drunk siblings sustain critical burns during scuffle over ₹30

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dharakote, June 17: Two siblings sustained critical burn injuries after the younger brother poured petrol on the elder leading to a fire while they were fighting over a petty matter at a Dalit hamlet in Baradabili village under this police limits in Ganjam district, Sunday night.

The siblings were identified as Tuna Nayak and Uttam Nayak. They were engulfed in flames after coming in contact with a burning chullah during the fight. Family members rescued and admitted them to Dharakote hospital. They were shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur after



their health condition deteriorated.

The incident occurred when the siblings in an inebriated condition fought over payment of ₹30 with each other. Uttam threatened to set his elder brother Tuna ablaze and tried to pour petrol on the latter when he was sitting near the burning chullah. Tuna tried to resist Uttam but the petrol came in contact with fire during the scuffle and the siblings were engulfed in flames.

When contacted, Dharakote police station IIC Shradhanjali Subudhi said that no complaint had been filed yet in the police station.

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APPENDIX - IV (Rule-8(1))
POSSESSION NOTICE
 (for immovable property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Indian Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a Demand Notice calling upon the Borrower/Guarantor to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower/Guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the following Borrower/Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Symbolic Possession** of the property described here-in-below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 & 9 of the said Rules. The Borrower/Guarantor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Indian Bank, Nuapada Branch for an amount mentioned herein below with interest & other expenses thereon.

The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of the section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

NUAPADA BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrower/Guarantor	Amount Payable as on specified date	Date of Demand / Possession Notice	Description of the Immovable Property
Borrower & Mortgagor: Sri Ganesh Sharma, S/o: Sri Mulchand Sharma, At: Bazar Pada, Ward No.: 4, P.O: Khariar Road, Dist.: Nuapada, PIN - 766104	₹20,02,775/- as on 20.02.2024 + interest and cost thereon	21.02.2024 / 11.06.2024	All that piece & parcel of Land & Building recorded in the name of Sri Ganesh Sharma, S/o: Sri Mulchand Sharma, Khata No.: 167/35, Plot No.: 233, Kسام: Gharabari, Area: Ac. 0.047 Dec., at Mouza: Khariar Road Unit No.: 5, P.S.: Jonk, Dist.: Nuapada. Bounded by North: Plot of Sudha Sharma, South: Plot of Nanak Ram, East: Road, West: Plot of Nanda Kishor Soni

Place: Sambalpur
 Date: 17.06.2024

Sd/- Authorised Officer
 Indian Bank

FOCUS POLITICS

WHEN RSS SPEAKS



The ends are there for the RSS to feast on, but what about the means? After all, it is the stated goal of the RSS to build character among its volunteers

— some deliver the results and have the values (he said promote them), others bring neither the results nor the values (sack them), some others have the values but are short on results (give them support), and the last variety, which is the most dangerous for any system — the manager who has no values but delivers the numbers, quarter after quarter. This is the most toxic one, and the suggestion is that this is the one to be sacked first and sacked fast, if the organisation is to survive, let alone thrive. Yet, this can be the most difficult decision to take when the going is good. This framework holds when the end results are valid, legitimate and agreed.

Forget for a moment that the RSS ends in themselves are contested. Yet, these narrow ends have admittedly crossed paths with the RSS' stated means. So within its own universe and for its own structural integrity, the means-ends question is the one the RSS will have to answer. In that light, the words of Mohan Bhagwat signal discomfiture. But his hesitation to name Modi and call him out indicates that the RSS is caught in a trap of its own making. It has benefitted a lot, not to speak of the frills like new and swanky offices, the governmental positions on offer, the respectful receptions across officialdom, the clutch of SPG-like guards that move with Mohan Bhagwat these days — all of it a representation of the RSS tasting glamour and power like never before. You could say that Modi is drunk on power. But the BJP could turn around and say that the RSS drinks today from the same cup!

The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal.

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Jagdish Rattanani

THE SECOND SANSANGHALAK MS GOLWALKAR ONCE POINTED OUT THAT 'EXTRAORDINARINESS' OF THE RSS WORKER WAS PRECISELY IN THE WAY EVERY WORKER SAW HIMSELF AS 'ORDINARY'

A lot has been written about how the speech of the RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat in Nagpur on the 2024 elections points straight to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Without condemning or even naming him, it is argued, Bhagwat has minced no words and left no doubts on his intended target. The RSS chief has noted that an election is not a war; that both sides have a point of view to be heard and that a true sevak is one who serves with maryada, and without ego. He also pointed out that issues in Manipur have been neglected for more than a year now. Who else could all these words of wisdom be directed at! With so much of it widely seen as an anti-Modi statement, the RSS has thought it fit to clarify through unnamed sources that it intended no such dressing down for the man who has now been sworn in as Prime Minister for a third time running.

There are many who will see this as a game of doublespeak by the RSS, which as the ideological parent of the BJP must take responsibility and own up for all the excesses that we have seen during the Modi-era. Modi, after all, is an alum of the RSS school of thought and he is playing the drum as the RSS has taught him to, and the rest is all shadowboxing and temporary shifts of emphasis and control under the RSS umbrella. But there is also the view that there is something more to the RSS statements in recent times, particularly as they come in the wake of the electoral drubbing faced by the BJP, including losing the seat in the very constituency where the partly-built and hastily-inaugurated Ram mandir stands today.

The elections can be the trigger for some genuine rethinking in the RSS, given that the BJP cannot think on its own as it has been reduced to a one-man

operation. This then brings to the fore a tortuous dilemma that the RSS faces today: it has its agenda items fulfilled by the government of Narendra Modi, it can draw power and resources from a government that has been in absolute control for over a decade now, but it appears to detest the cult that Modi has built around himself in the process. Put differently, policies are "good" from the RSS perspective, but the person delivering them is not. The second sarsanghchalak MS Golwalkar once pointed out that "extraordinariness" of the RSS worker was precisely in the way every worker saw himself as "ordinary". Today, the RSS must contend with a Prime Minister who describes himself as God-sent, a non-biological avatar, a pradhan sevak who does not tire speaking of how extraordinary he is.

From the RSS perspective, that begs the simple question: is this too high a price to pay for getting your things done, or is it not? Is this the golden period of age-old RSS wishes coming true: the temple at Ayodhya, the

writing down of Art. 370 that gave the special status to Jammu & Kashmir, the ban on cow slaughter across most states, the agenda of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the moves towards a Uniform Civil Code, the ban on triple talaq. Or are these the "gifts" of a rotten culture that has been embedded into a party that has given us the corruption seen in the electoral bonds, the capture of institutions, the slide in India's press freedom index, the misuse of investigative agencies to break non-BJP governments and all if it amid a rising wealth and income inequality that promises to become and remain the hot debate of the nation? The ends are there for the RSS to feast on, but what about the means? After all, it is the stated goal of the RSS to build character among its volunteers.

Gandhi told us that the means are as important as the ends. In fact, he was concerned only about means and not the ends. The late management guru Jack Welch drew a two-by-two matrix of managers' achievements (ends) and their values (means)

SPECTRUM CIVILISATION

Who's afraid of colonisation?

A couple of months ago, the Open Society Foundations hosted a roundtable discussion entitled "Who's Afraid (and Should They Be) of Decolonization?" The panel centred on one of the most contested concepts in contemporary political and academic debates: decolonisation. The event did not disappoint. Ultimately, all agreed that the notion of decolonisation remains as relevant and as divisive as ever. But the panel left a bittersweet aftertaste, and a gnawing question: Are we ever going to be able to talk about colonisation again?

Talking about colonisation does not mean that we need to stop talking about decolonisation — or "decoloniality," "decolonialism," and other variants of the term. We must not forget or condone the atrocities committed over centuries of European-led imperialism, because the traumas of slavery, genocide, and torture are still very much alive — both outside Europe and within its borders, parliaments, churches, and classrooms. Decoloniality — the idea that we should confront the legacy of colonialism in our institutions and forms of thinking — remains a powerful and much-needed instrument.

Decolonisation also epitomises the last major paradigm shift in modern social thought, as represented by the works of Frantz Fanon (and Jean-Paul Sartre's late discovery of it), Anibal Quijano, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, and so many others.

Moreover, talking seriously about colonisation may help us counter the most dangerous, and yet most common, use of the concept. Historically, "colonise" has often been a synonym for "civilise," implying that a coloniser is justified in unilaterally imposing norms, standards, and ideas on another people. This narrow definition of colonisation is what propelled all forms of colonialism in the past, when entire cultures, cosmologies, and geographies were essentially dehumanised as a means of subjecting them to exploitation.

Alarmingly, this same dangerous conflation of "colonisation" with "civilisation" is regaining traction, as overconfident autocrats and multi-billionaires continue to redraw — arbitrarily — the frontiers of what they see as the "dehumanised universe." For tech enthusiasts aspiring to humanise other planets, and for despots pursuing wars of aggression and sweeping campaigns of social control, the juxtaposition of "colonisation" with "civilisation" is always convenient.

Although critically important, it may not be enough merely to resist and confront all dehumanising expressions of colonialism. In addition to de-colonising our institutions and ideas, we need to rehumanise the peoples and cultures subject to past and present forms of oppression. In many cases, this may call for expanding, updating, and deepening our shared concept of colonisation.

Thinkers like Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Ailton Krenak, for instance, remind us that the colonisation of the Americas began before the arrival of Christopher Columbus. Moreover, the process continues to this day through the evolving languages and knowledges of indigenous and maroon communities. Colonisation, de Castro and Krenak argue, can be less about controlling and transforming the natural world through artificial means (such as mechanisation, industrialisation, or digitalisation), and more about developing adaptable ontologies: "ways of being" in and with the natural world. From their perspective, colonisation alludes to the essential human tendencies to socialise, to create and share meaning, and to settle.

In a similar vein, anthropologist Anna Tsing suggests that colonisation should be thought of less in terms of domination — of civility over barbarism, of men over nature — and more in terms of discovery and interdependence. A thorough student of the endangered cultures and ecologies of the Indonesian archipelago, the Congo basin, and the Bengal delta, Tsing does not ignore the tragedies of colonial imperialism. Yet she urges us to reflect on colonisation from the standpoint of those who have historically been naturalised, dehumanised, and emptied out of any civilisational significance.

We don't have to stop talking about decolonisation. But we may be running out of time to begin thinking purposefully about colonisation. We must continue to deconstruct and confront the root causes of injustice. But we also need to discover new languages, new shared understandings, and new ways of being. Before it's too late — and the ferocity of self-obsessed despots and magnates is further unleashed — we must adapt to a world where inequality may become irreversible, and where autocracies and democracies may coexist less destructively. In a world so shaken by conflict and displacement, colonisation could offer us new ways of settling.

The writer, a sociologist, is Senior Programme Officer at the Open Society Foundations.

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Be grateful for all ordeals they are the shortest way to the Divine.

THE MOTHER



Doctoring History

Reconstructing history has always been dogged by controversies. It could be because writers of history often tend to care more for the interests of the powers that be than truth and accuracy. As such their work gets coloured by the pride and prejudice of the political and administrative establishment of the day. When it comes to education and teaching, the matter becomes even worse. The educators or rather those in charge of formulating education policies and writing of textbooks bend over backwards to please their political masters. In the process truth is sacrificed at the altar of politics and the minds of students are injected with falsehood or half-truths which are seriously damaging for the future generations.

This is how the latest controversy sparked by the revision of Class XII political science textbook by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) can be explained. The new textbook has deleted and incorporated material facts in such a manner that offer a skewed understanding of contemporary history regarding the Babri Masjid demolition of 1992 and events preceding and following the assault on the structure. A poor attempt has been made to whitewash and distort history. It has removed Babri Masjid's name and has called it a "three-dome structure." This could be labeled a travesty of truth. The intent seems to erase from the budding, impressionistic minds of the country's children the true historical position that existed on this sub continent at that time. The name could be anathema to some folks from the majority community but that should not distort history. The revised textbook has also cut down the Ayodhya section from four to two pages and deleted multiple references of the mosque's demolition.

Some of the significant details of the Ayodhya episode that were deleted include the LK Advani-led BJP's Rath Yatra to mobilise supporters for the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, Kar Sevaks' crucial role in bringing down the Babri Masjid, communal riots in the aftermath of the mosque's demolition, President's rule in BJP-ruled states, and the BJP's "regret over the happenings in Ayodhya."

The development comes in the wake of the BJP's debacle in Ayodhya in particular and UP in general in the just concluded Lok Sabha polls. The BJP has failed to get a simple majority. The ruling party sought to make the consecration of Ram temple a major issue, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi repeatedly raked up Hindoo-Moslem divide. All these backfired and the BJP could not cross the 272 mark, forget the much tomtommed '400 paar.'

The reaction of the NCERT director Dinesh Prasad Saklani to criticism of the new text is indeed laughable. He has said that references to Gujarat riots engineered by Hindoo zealots when Modi was the state's Chief Minister, and Babri masjid demolition were modified in school textbooks because teaching about riots "can create violent and depressed citizens." By deleting them, he contended, the NCERT wants to "create positive citizens." He went to the length of saying that such knowledge needs to be kept beyond the pale of school students and they can learn about it all "when they grow up."

This runs counter to the purpose of teaching history since facts are partially revealed and the learners are imparted distorted knowledge. The whole exercise appears to be geared to projecting the work of one tall BJP leader to the exclusion of other towering leaders of the party and the RSS who gave a boost to the Ram temple movement. This alone explains why the Supreme Court's controversial verdict on settling the temple-mosque dispute has been given prominence and important events preceding it are dropped from the new version.

The internal dissension in the Sangh Parivar has immediately come to the fore with the chief priest of Ram temple Satyendra Das Maharaj expressing his disapproval of the omission. He said the textbook does not mention how the "three-domed structure" was removed on December 6, 1992, but only narrates the issue from November 9, 2019, when the Ayodhya verdict was given. "If they (NCERT) do not mention how on December 22, 1949, Ram Lalla appeared there and His puja started, how can anyone get a minimum understanding of the entire history of the Ayodhya movement?" It is a valid question from the Sangh Parivar's point of view.

The NCERT, it seems, is caught in its own game of placating its political boss rather than remaining faithful to facts and history. It should refrain from politicising education and falsifying history.

WISDOM CORNER

Time and space always change, but there is something which is eternal and changeless. For example, the world and time, past or future, nothing exists for us in sleep. But we exist. Let us try to find out that which is changeless and which always exists.

RAMANA MAHARSHI

To have faith is to trust yourself to the water. When you swim you don't grab hold of the water, because if you do you will sink and drown. Instead you relax, and float.

ALAN WATTS

We will be more successful in all our endeavors if we can let go of the habit of running all the time, and take little pauses to relax and re-center ourselves. And we'll also have a lot more joy in living.

THICH NHAT HANH

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1812: On this day U.S. President James Madison signed a declaration of war against Great Britain, initiating the War of 1812, which arose chiefly from U.S. grievances over oppressive maritime practices during the Napoleonic Wars.

1815: Napoleon suffers a shattering defeat at the Battle of Waterloo. The battle was Napoleon's last. The French Emperor was exiled to Saint Helena where he died six years later. "To meet one's Waterloo" is still a figure of speech today indicating total defeat.

1873: American suffragist Susan B. Anthony was fined after being convicted for voting in the 1872 presidential election, though she refused to pay it; in 2020 President Donald Trump pardoned Anthony, but the move was criticized by those who argued that it validated the trial.

1940: A speech by Charles de Gaulle sparks the French Resistance to German occupation. The Appeal of June 18, transmitted by radio from de Gaulle's exile in the United Kingdom, was pivotal in mobilizing the French after Germany had declared more than half of the country an occupied zone. On August 25, French and Allied troops liberated Paris.

1948: The LP record is introduced. The 33 1/3 rpm microgroove vinyl Long Playing record developed by Columbia Records soon became the music industry's standard medium. It allowed for a total playing time of 20 minutes per side.

1979: The SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) II treaty was signed by U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev.



Frederico Menino

IN ADDITION TO DECOLONISING OUR INSTITUTIONS AND IDEAS, WE NEED TO REHUMANISE THE PEOPLES AND CULTURES SUBJECT TO PAST AND PRESENT FORMS OF OPPRESSION

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Criminal laws

Sir, This refers to the news report "New criminal laws will take effect from July 1" (Orissa POST, June 17). May I be permitted to ask humbly to the Union Minister of State for Law and Justice (Independent Charge) Arjun Ram Meghwal whether before considering the implementation of the three new criminal laws, the public were at all consulted? I am afraid, the government at the Centre did not deem it necessary to get the public involved in the matter for it did not wish to invite further trouble. Will Meghwal let us know whether the suggestions given by the Chief Justice of India and other stakeholders have been duly considered and incorporated in the three criminal laws? Since the old criminal laws have stood the test of time, the people have the right to know whether the persons of legal eminence have approved the new laws in their entirety.

Arun Gupta, KOLKATA

Eurasian geopolitics

Sir, The recent commitment by G7 nations to the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) signifies a major shift in Eurasian geopolitics. This ambitious infrastructure project aims to create a robust network of ports, railways, roads, sea routes, and pipelines, connecting India, the Arabian Peninsula, the Mediterranean region, and Europe. Beyond economic goals, IMEC is poised to act as a counterbalance to China's influential Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Understanding IMEC's potential and its challenges is crucial for assessing its future impact on the region. IMEC's primary goal is to enhance connectivity across Eurasia, which can significantly boost economic growth. By reducing transportation times and costs, IMEC will facilitate increased trade volumes among participating regions. This economic stimulus is expected to foster new partnerships, attract investments, and drive robust economic growth. The creation of a seamless trade network can also help participating countries diversify their trade routes, reducing their dependence on Chinese infrastructure and offering greater leverage in global trade. The strategic timing of IMEC's launch highlights its potential as a counterpoint to China's BRI. The BRI has faced criticism for encouraging debt-trap diplomacy, with some countries becoming heavily indebted to China.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

K'TAKA FUEL PRICE HIKE

BJP stages statewide stir

PETROL PRICES HAVE GONE UP BY ₹3/L AND DIESEL BY ₹3.5/L

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, June 17: The opposition BJP in Karnataka Monday staged a statewide demonstration against the hike in petrol and diesel prices.

The Karnataka government Saturday hiked sales tax on fuel, which will make petrol and diesel costlier.

The government realised that stopping the guarantees would result in public outrage. To continue these guarantees, the government did not have money, so it hiked the petrol and diesel prices

BY VIJAYENDRA | STATE PRESIDENT, BJP



lieu of the additional 5 kg of rice to every member of a BPL household (Anna Bhagya), Rs 3,000 every month for unemployed graduate youth and Rs 1,500 for diploma holders for two

years (YuvaNidhi), and free travel for women in public transport buses (Shakti).

According to officials, the hike was aimed at resource mobilisation.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who is also the finance minister, reviewed the state's revenue generation and fiscal position and took the decision.

The increase in fuel prices comes days after the Lok Sabha poll results, in which NDA got 19 out of 28 seats in Karnataka, with the BJP winning 17 and JD(S) 2. The ruling Congress in the state won nine seats.

'Injustice' to state: CM dares BJP to stage demo against Centre

Hitting out at the BJP over staging state-wide protests against the fuel price hike, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah Monday challenged the party to organise demonstrations against the Centre over "injustice" to the State. The Chief Minister alleged that the State faced injustice by the BJP-led NDA government in its share of central funds and GST devolution and in matters relating to release of funds for State projects and dared the BJP to hold protests over this. Siddaramaiah said the crude oil prices were ruling at \$113 per barrel at some stage during the tenure of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh but presently, it is at \$82.35. In 2015, the crude oil price was \$52 per barrel, which decreased further in the next year, he claimed. "During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's tenure, crude oil prices reduced but petrol prices went up. So, against whom should the BJP leaders' fight be?" Siddaramaiah sought to know. When Manmohan Singh was the Prime Minister, a refill LPG cylinder was costing Rs 410. It went up to over Rs 1,000 during the NDA regime. Even after it was brought down, it is still Rs 805.50, he pointed out. "Who increased the refill gas cylinder from Rs 410 to Rs 805.50 despite reduction in crude oil prices? If they have concern for poor people, let them stage demonstrations against the Centre," Siddaramaiah said. After the Centre introduced GST, the state government "lost the power" to increase taxes except petrol-diesel, liquor, stamp duty and motor taxes, the Chief Minister said. He added the Centre collected the GST, Income Tax, Corporate Tax and Excise Duty whereas the state government can only impose sales tax and fix liquor prices. "Ever since the BJP came to power, Karnataka has suffered a loss of Rs 1.87 lakh crore in the 14th and 15th Finance Commission. Our revenues and the Centre's contribution to the state came down. No BJP MP spoke in the Parliament though they were 25 in number in the previous Lok Sabha," he said. Though the 15th Finance Commission had recommended giving Karnataka Rs 5,495 crore saying that there was decline in state's GST devolution, the Centre did not give it. Yet, the state BJP did not utter a word on it, Siddaramaiah alleged. The Chief Minister said the Centre had announced giving Rs 3,000 crore for the peripheral ring road in Bangalore but it did not give anything. Further, it did not give Rs 3,000 crore for the lake development in Bangalore.



Gujarat govt to restore Jain idols at Pavagadh after stir by community

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Halol (Gujarat), June 17: The Gujarat government Monday instructed authorities in Panchmahal district to reinstall centuries-old Jain idols at their original place near the stairs leading to Kalika Mata temple on Pavagadh hill after community members staged protests over their alleged removal from the site.

While community members alleged these idols of Jain Tirthankars (supreme spiritual teachers) were removed by the temple trust as part of a renovation project, the trust clarified they might have been displaced while removing an old shed on the stairs and maintained it was not done out of any ill will.

These Jain idols were placed on both sides of the steps of an old pathway, which goes to the hill temple, but is not in use at present. On Monday morning, some community members noticed that the idols were removed from the side walls and put together at one place, said Jain leader Dinesh Shah.

On learning about the removal of these six to seven idols, members as well as religious leaders of the Jain community staged protests at Vadodra, Halol and Surat and gave memorandum to district collectors.

Gujarat Minister of State for Home Harsh Sanghavi swung into action and ordered restoration of these idols at their original site after discussing the issue with Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel.

These idols were placed three centuries ago and were being worshipped by people. Permission was never given to any trust or individual to remove these idols. This act has hurt the religious



sentiments of many people. After discussing the issue with the CM, the (Panchmahal) district collector has been asked to reinstall these idols at the same place near the steps, said Sanghavi.

In a memorandum submitted to the Halol police, community leader Kiran Duggad accused the trustees of 'Shree Kalika Mataji Mandir Trust Pavagadh' of removing the idols from both sides of the old stairs.

Duggad, on behalf of the Halol Jain Sangh, demanded immediate restoration of these idols and registration of an FIR against those involved in this act of hurting religious sentiments of Jains.

Vinod Variya, one of the temple trustees, held a meeting with Jain leaders in the presence of district authorities on Monday

afternoon at Halol and announced the idols will be placed at the same place.

"I want to clarify that there was no desecration of any religious structure. As you all know renovation has been going on at Pavagadh to provide better facilities to devotees coming there. This mega renovation is being done by the trust as well as the government," said Variya after the meeting.

"As part of the renovation work, an old shed on the steps was removed as a precautionary measure so that it does not collapse in high-speed winds. It is possible some idols might have been displaced while removing the old shed. But, we have arrived at a solution during the meeting and we have announced to restore those idols at the original place," he told reporters.

RENUKASWAMY MURDER CASE

Celebrities demand justice for family

Top Kannada stars seek police to make investigation transparent



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, June 17: After almost a week, the big stars of Kannada film industry Monday spoke about actor Darshan's alleged involvement in a murder.

The Kannada film fraternity's top stars, actors Upendra and Kiccha Sudeep voiced their opinions on the murder case of Renukaswamy, in which Darshan and his actress friend Pavithra Gowda were arrested June 12.

Both stressed that the victim and his family should get their due justice.

Upendra posted on his 'X' account that when a public figure is caught in such a brutal case, all videos, documents and proof should be made public.

Stressing that not only Karnataka but the whole of India is watching, Upendra said he is awaiting impartial decision and justice in the trial of this high-profile case.

"There is some anxiety and suspicion about how the case is being handled among Renukaswamy's family, people, media as well as Darshan fans. Speculations are rife. So, the video footage of the trial and all the details of the witnesses should be shared by the police with the families of the persons concerned. This should, in fact, become a law," he wrote.

According to him, in the past, the police used to write and record

Karnataka Police have arrested all 17 accused in the murder case

trials, now technology has advanced so much that everything can be video recorded and live-streamed, so this kind of legal reform should be prioritised.

"Specially, in case of a case involving a public figure, the police should regularly make public the video footage of the trial of the case and all the de-

tails of the witnesses. The trial of a public figure should be held in public with full transparency. This way, tampering with evidence, interference by influential people and corruption will be exposed," he wrote further on 'X'.

Upendra insisted that this is the only way that Renukaswamy's family, people, media and Darshan fans will have more respect for the police.

Meanwhile, interacting with reporters, Sudeep said that people only know what the media is showing to them as they are not going to the police station to get the information.

He also insisted that Renukaswamy, who died on the streets, deserves justice.

"His wife deserves justice. His unborn child deserves justice. Above all, for everyone to have faith in it, justice should prevail in this case," he said.

Bangaloreans incline towards 'art' after HC limits protests

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, June 17: The use of art in voicing dissent was highlighted by speakers at a panel discussion here in the context of a recent court ruling that limits public protests to a designated space with a park.

Citizens for Sankey organised a panel discussion on 'Art as Activism: Creative Avenues for voicing dissent' in the light of the recent ruling by the Karnataka High Court that limits public protests to a designated space within one park in the city.

Citizens for Sankey is a group consisting of civic activists and residents of Sadashivanagar, Vyalikaval and Malleswaram, formed initially to protest against the Sankey Road flyover project.

"Stifled by protest restrictions, our fight against the Sankey flyover last year forced creative ways of expressing dissent. Despite that, we faced FIRs. A



year on, citizens continue to receive FIRs for exercising their constitutional right to peacefully protest. This is hugely problematic and prevents us citizens from participating in democracy, which is our right," Kimsuka Iyer of Citizens for Sankey said.

The recent court ruling, which states that protests can be held only after getting permission from the police, can also be problematic, claimed advocate Vinay Srinivas, one of the panelists.

"For over two years, police have restricted protests, public

gatherings in any place other than Freedom Park, and have refused permission for processions. This has caused enormous hardship to all those seeking to exercise their constitutional rights and is against the very spirit of plural and diverse Karnataka where all citizens can make their concerns heard and felt," Sreenivasa alleged.

According to him, the Licensing and Regulation of Protests, Demonstrations and Protest Marches (Bangalore City) Order, 2021 designated Freedom Park as the only place for protests in the city.

"This rule has made it incredibly difficult, particularly for marginalised communities. What sense does it make for farmers from Devanahalli to travel to an isolated part of Freedom Park to voice their dissent?" Sreenivasa said.

Artist Shilo Shiv Suleman and poet and activist Mamta Sagar, also part of the panel, discussed the use of art in voicing dissent.

Smritivan in race for UNESCO's Prix Versailles Award

Announced each year at UNESCO since 2015, the Prix Versailles is a series of architectural competitions that shine a light on the finest contemporary projects worldwide

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, June 17: The UNESCO has shortlisted seven most beautiful museums in the world for the prestigious Prix Versailles Award, including the Smritivan Earthquake Memorial Museum of Bhuj.

"A moment of pride for Gujarat and India! The Smritivan Earthquake Memorial Museum in Bhuj has been listed among the 7 most beautiful museums in the world under the prestigious Prix Versailles Award, which is announced annually at UNESCO for architecture and design," Gujarat Chief Minister



Bhupendra Patel recently said on X.

It is a matter of pride for Gujarat that an Indian museum has received global recognition for the first time in this manner for its expression of local culture and nature conservation, he further said in the post.

It was the vision of Gujarat's then chief minister and current Prime Minister Narendra Modi to build a museum in memory of those who fell victim to the dev-

astating earthquake of 2001 as well as a tribute to the resilience of Kutch, Patel said.

On the basis of that, Smritivan was constructed in Bhuj. The design of this museum, built amidst thousands of trees on Bhujia Hill, is remarkable. This museum is a saga of courageously facing challenges and building anew from them. This museum is a tran-

scendental experience of the supreme element, the CM added. In a release, UNESCO's Prix Versailles said, "For the first time in its history, the Prix Versailles, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, is unveiling the World's Most Beautiful Museums List for 2024 -- seven newly opened or re-opened museums that simultaneously serve cre-

ativity, the reflection of local heritage and ecological efficiency, and that leave extraordinary imprints on their environments."

They will all be competing for three 2024 World Titles -- Prix Versailles, Interior and Exterior -- whose laureates will be announced at UNESCO Headquarters by late November, the release added.

Jérôme Gouadain, Secretary General of the Prix Versailles, is delighted that the momentum established by museum build-

ings will now be better recognised, it said.

Museums provide singular settings conducive to intercultural dialogue. Bolstered by technology, they now deliver ever more immersive experiences, participate in the dissemination of knowledge and help form the tastes of their visitors, Gouadain was quoted as saying in the release.

"By creating the World's Most Beautiful Museums List, we also wanted to emphasise the importance of wonder, which elevates the human gaze and allows us to be surprised," Gouadain said.

"Because of what they are, and what they are intended to be, museums fully contribute to the goals of intelligent sustainable development," the secretary general of Prix Versailles added.

Announced each year at UNESCO since 2015, the Prix Versailles is a series of architectural competitions that shine a light on the finest contemporary projects worldwide.

Being a celebrity does not mean we are Gods, don't treat us like that. Don't ask me what steps the film industry should take. Watch the news and draw your own conclusions. And learn what you should not do in your life

KICCHA SUDEEP | KANNADA SUPERSTAR

SMRITIVAN HAS BEEN CONSTRUCTED IN THE MEMORY OF THOSE WHO FELL VICTIM TO THE DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKE OF 2001 IN BHUJ. THE DESIGN OF THIS MUSEUM, BUILT AMIDST THOUSANDS OF TREES ON BHUJIA HILL, IS REMARKABLE

national

of the day quote

Having contested the elections, I can confidently say that these machines have shown inaccurate results. I hope the Election Commission puts out the above data because the public have the right to know

Tripura is cyclone prone. If a cyclone hits, it causes heavy damage to the over-ground electric transmission. To avoid power outages during monsoon season, we will go for underground cable laying in some urban areas

A lot of reforms are required in NTA's functioning though it is an autonomous institution. The government is concerned about this. I want to reassure that no culprit will be spared, strict action will be taken against them.

SHORT TAKES

Cong's Suresh to be temporary speaker

New Delhi: Congress's K Suresh will be named the pro tem speaker when the 18th parliament is convened and will administer the oath of office to MPs till a formal decision on the Speaker's post is taken by the government, sources have said. Mr Suresh, the 68-year-old MP from Kerala's Mavelikara, is the longest-serving member of parliament. He will be administered the oath of office by President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan before parliament is convened June 24. He, in turn, will administer the oath to the Prime Minister's Council of Ministers and other MPs.

Eid prayers barred at historic mosque

Srinagar: Local authorities refused to allow Eid prayers Monday at the historic Jama Masjid in old city for the sixth year in a row. Anjumun Auqaf Jama Masjid said here. "After Fajr prayers today, police personnel closed the gates of Jama Masjid in Srinagar and informed the Auqaf that Eid prayers scheduled for 9:00 AM would not be permitted at the mosque," the management body of 14th century mosque said in a statement. It also claimed that Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, who was scheduled to deliver the Eid sermon, was placed under house arrest. The Eid prayers have been barred at Jama Masjid and Eidgah by the authorities since 2019.

Around 50 tourists rescued from Lachung

Gangtok: Around 50 tourists were rescued from North Sikkim's Lachung Monday and moved to Mangan town, the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) said. The rescue operation, however, had to be halted due to inclement weather, and the remaining tourists would be moved Tuesday, it said. The rescue operation began after the BRO restored connectivity between Chungthang and Mangan via the recently built bridge at Toong over the Teesta river.

Road mishap kills 4

Jaipur: Four people were killed and one injured in a road collision in Udaipur district Monday, police said. A speeding trailer first hit a dumper from behind and then fell in a ditch along the highway, they said.



We are not asking for the part of water for the people of Haryana, we are asking for Delhi's share of water, you do not want to give that too. Secondly, when we complain to the LG (Delhi), instead of resolving the complaints, the LG keeps issuing his political statements

SANJAY SINGH | RAJYA SABHA MP, AAP

CRPF'S HELP FOR KIDS OF SLAIN SOLDIERS

The CRPF is helping the children of its personnel killed in action or decorated with gallantry medals secure seats in technical streams like artificial intelligence, computer science and electronics through special MoUs with prominent institutions. The country's largest paramilitary force has inked such memorandums with 31 universities till now, out of which 22 are located in Tamil Nadu



WB TRAIN ACCIDENT

'Utter mismanagement' of Railways : Cong

At least 9 people were killed and around 40 others injured after a goods train collided with the Sealdah-bound Kanchanjunga Express near Rangapani station in West Bengal Monday



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 17: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and former party chief Rahul Gandhi Monday slammed the Modi government for "utter mismanagement" of the Railway Ministry as they condoled the loss of lives in the West Bengal train accident.

As a responsible Opposition, it is our bounden duty to underline how the Modi Government has systematically converted the Rail Ministry into a platform of 'Camera-driven' self-promotion

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

Government has systematically converted the Rail Ministry into a platform of 'Camera-driven' self-promotion," the Congress chief claimed.

"Extremely distressed by the Kanchanjunga Express train collision accident in Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, where many people have lost their lives and several have been injured," Kharge said. "The scenes of the accident are painful. Our heart goes out to the families of the victims. In this hour of grief, we express our solidarity and condolences to each one of them. We wish a speedy recovery to the injured. Immediate and full compensation must be provided to the victims," he demanded.

Kharge alleged that in the past 10 years, the Modi government has indulged in "utter mismanagement" of the Railway Ministry. "As a responsible Opposition, it is our bounden duty to underline how the Modi

these accidents," he claimed in a post on X in Hindi.

Gandhi said the news of death of several people due to the accident of Kanchanjunga Express in West Bengal is extremely sad. "I express my deepest condolences to all the bereaved families and wish for the speedy recovery of the injured. The government should immediately provide full compensation to all the victims or their families. Congress workers are requested to provide all possible assistance in relief and rescue efforts," he said in his post.

At least 9 people were killed and around 40 others injured after a goods train collided with the Sealdah-bound Kanchanjunga Express near Rangapani station in West Bengal Monday, police said.

'TOTALLY PARENTLESS'

Kolkata: Alleging that the railways have become "totally parentless", West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Monday claimed that it was only keen on increasing fares and not improving passenger amenities.

Banerjee was speaking to the press at the Kolkata airport on the way to Siliguri to take stock of the situation following the train accident near Rangapani in which several people were killed.

"The railways have become totally parentless. Though the ministry is there, the old glory is missing. Only beautification is being done, but they do not care about passenger amenities. They are only keen on hiking fares," she claimed. "You will only see them talk big. They also do not take care of the railway officers, technical, safety, and security personnel. I am with the railway employees and officers," she added.

She criticised the Railway Ministry, alleging that it was not implementing the anti-collision system properly, which could reduce the impact of such accidents.

"The number of train accidents has gone up. Accidents are not in anyone's control, this is a fact. But, the railways is not implementing the anti-collision system properly," she said. "This accident could have been worse. Seventy-eighty people are injured and around 20 are



critical. When one train hits another, then it becomes difficult to estimate how many people are injured," she added.

Banerjee also expressed her "disgust" over not being able to get a flight ticket from Kolkata to Siliguri, stating she wanted to travel much earlier.

"I have been trying for a flight to reach northern Bengal since morning but could not manage one. I did not know about the pathetic condition of flights," she said.

Banerjee said that after reaching Siliguri, she would go to the North Bengal Medical College. "I will not go to the accident spot. I will be going to Coochbehar directly as I have some work there. I will return tomorrow evening," she said.

The accident happened at Rangapani near the New Jalpaiguri station as a goods train rammmed into the Agartala-Sealdah Kanchanjunga Express from the rear.

MAMATA ALLEGES CENTRE KEEN ON ONLY INCREASING FARES

Goods train driver violated speed restriction norms

Prima facie findings into the Kanchanjunga Express accident in West Bengal show that the goods train violated speed restrictions it had to follow given the "defective" automatic signalling system on the section and rammmed into the stationary passenger train while "over-speeding", the Railway Board said Monday. The board said though the driver of the goods train was given authorisation to cross all red signals between RNI and CAT as the automatic signalling system was "defective", the train's speed was above the permissible limit prescribed for this kind of a situation. The goods train driver was "over-speeding" and due to this, it rammmed into the Kanchanjunga Express between RNI and CAT, the board said while responding to reports that the driver, who was killed in the accident, was given a written authority called TA 912 by the station master of Ranipatra authorising him to cross all red signals.

ETHNIC DIVIDE

MHA TO TALK TO MEITEIS, KUKIS IN MANIPUR: SHAH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 17: Union Home Minister Amit Shah Monday said the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) will talk to both Meitei and Kuki communities at the earliest so as to bridge the ethnic divide in Manipur. Reviewing the security situation in Manipur here, Shah directed that strict action must be taken as per law against the perpetrators of violence in the northeastern state. The home minister said the central forces deployment will be increased, if required, and that

they should be deployed strategically to restore peace and tranquillity in the state, according to an official statement. Shah also directed to ensure that no further incident of violence take place in the state which has been witnessing ethnic violence for over a year. The MHA will talk to both the groups, Meiteis and Kukis, so as to bridge the ethnic divide at the earliest, Shah was quoted as saying in the statement. He also instructed the chief secretary of Manipur to ensure proper health and education facilities for the displaced people and their rehabilitation.

'Bharat', 'India' to be used interchangeably in textbooks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 17: "Bharat" and "India" will be used interchangeably in NCERT textbooks as is the case in the country's Constitution, National Council of Educational Research and Training Director Dinesh Prasad Saklani has said.

The comments assume significance in the wake of a high-level panel working on the social science curriculum recommending that "India" should be replaced with "Bharat" in school textbooks for all classes.

In an interaction with PTI editors at the agency's headquarters here, the NCERT chief said both the words will be used in the books and the council has no



aversion to either "Bharat" or "India".

"It is interchangeable....our position is what our Constitution says and we uphold that. We can use Bharat, we can use India, what is the problem? We are not in that debate. Wherever it suits we will use India, wherever it suits we will use Bharat. We have no aversion to either India or Bharat," he said.

"You can see both being used in our textbooks already and that will continue in new textbooks. This is a useless debate," Saklani said.

A high-level committee for social sciences, constituted by the NCERT to revise the school curriculum, had last year recommended that "India" should be replaced with "Bharat" in the textbooks for all classes.

Committee chairperson CI Isaac, who was heading the panel, had said they have suggested replacing the name "India" with "Bharat" in the textbooks, introducing "classical history", instead of "ancient history" in the curriculum, and including the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) in the syllabus for all subjects.

"The committee has unanimously recommended that the name Bharat should be used in the textbooks for students across classes. Bharat is an age-old name. The name Bharat has been used in ancient texts, such as Vishnu Purana, which is 7,000 years old," Isaac had told PTI.

The NCERT had then said that no decision has been taken on panel's recommendations. The name Bharat first appeared officially last year when the government sent out G20 invites in the name of "President of Bharat", instead of "President of India".

Later, the nameplate of Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the summit in New Delhi also read "Bharat", instead of India.

LS Speaker chosen by consensus since Independence

India might witness its first-ever contested election for the Lok Sabha Speaker's post as the Opposition forces a vote. Historically, the Speaker has been chosen through consensus. The Opposition bloc is also pushing for the Deputy Speaker position

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 17: If the Opposition forces an election to the post of Speaker of the Lok Sabha next week, it would be the first such instance in the history of independent India as the presiding officer has always been chosen by a consensus.

Elections to the post of the Speaker of the Central Legislative Assembly, as Parliament was called in the pre-independence days, were held for the first time August 24, 1925, when Swarajist Party nominee Vitthalbhai J Patel won the coveted post against T Rangachariar.

Patel, the first non-official member to be elected as the Speaker, won the maiden election with a narrow margin of two votes. Patel had polled 58 votes against 56 garnered by Rangachariar.

Since Independence, Lok Sabha Speakers have been chosen by consensus, and only MA Ayyangar, GS Dhillon, Balram Jakhar and GMC Balayogi have retained the coveted posts in the subsequent Lok Sabhas.

Jakhar was the Speaker of the seventh and the eighth Lok



Sabhas and holds the distinction of being the only presiding officer to complete two full terms. Balayogi was chosen as the Speaker of the 12th Lok Sabha, which had a tenure of 19 months. He was also chosen as the Speaker of the 13th Lok Sabha

The first session of the 18th Lok Sabha begins June 24

October 22, 1999, till his death in a chopper crash March 3, 2002. Buoyed by its increased strength in the Lok Sabha, the opposition INDIA bloc is now aggressively demanding the post of the Deputy Speaker, which by convention is held by a member of an opposition party.

However, in the last Lok Sabha, the post of Deputy Speaker remained vacant, drawing criticism from the opposition.

"We will force a contest for the post of Lok Sabha Speaker if the government does not agree to have an opposition leader as Deputy Speaker," a senior Congress leader said.

The first session of the 18th Lok Sabha will begin June 24 during which new members of the Lower House will take oath and the Speaker will be elected. As per convention, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will move the motion for election of the Speaker in the Lok Sabha June 26.

Senior Congress leader K Suresh is the seniormost member of the Lok Sabha and is expected to be appointed as Pro-Tem Speaker, before whom the members would take oath.

President Droupadi Murmu will address the joint sitting of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha June 27.

The INDIA bloc won 233 seats in the Lok Sabha elections, while the BJP-led NDA won 293 seats to retain power for the third consecutive term. The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) with 16 seats and Janata Dal (U) with 12 seats are the biggest allies of the BJP which bagged 240 seats.

The opposition bloc is also egging on BJP ally TDP to insist on the post of the Lok Sabha Speaker, cautioning the regional party that it may face gradual disintegration due to BJP's machinations.

The JD(U) has declared support for a BJP candidate as the Lok Sabha Speaker, while the TDP is understood to have favoured a consensus candidate for the coveted post.

national



This is a warning to everyone. So, we have to continue the fight against the Sangh Parivar and their efforts to communalise textbooks and all other systems of the government

MB RAJESH | CPI(M) LEADER, KERALA

AI APP CRACKS UPSC PRELIMS

An Artificial Intelligence based app, PadhAI, scored over 170 marks out of 200 in the UPSC preliminary exams 2024 solving the entire paper within seven minutes and qualifying above the general score which usually remains under 100. The score places PadhAI's score in the top 10 nationally, if not rank 1, an official release said



of the day quote

Our victory was snatched away by misusing the official machinery. If the elections were held in a free and fair manner, then the BJP would have won only 40 seats and not 240

When the government is the same and its system is also the same, then all these scams may again become a means of earning money for the government-protected 'examination mafia'

The government has given 10 per cent quota to Marathas and now Jarange is seeking Kumbi certificates under the 'sage soyare' (notification) which is not acceptable to us

POST OF THE DAY

The Union government's proposed ₹72,000-crore 'Mega Infra Project' in Great Nicobar Island is a grave threat to Great Nicobar Island's tribal communities and natural ecosystem. The project, initiated in March 2021 at the instance of the NITI Aayog, shows numerous red flags. The Congress demands an immediate suspension of all clearances and conduct of a thorough impartial review of the proposed project, including by the parliamentary committees concerned. This area is about 15 per cent of the island's land mass and constitutes one of the country's largest forest diversions in a nationally and globally unique rainforest ecosystem

SHORT TAKES

NEET row: AAP to protest against govt

New Delhi: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will protest against the Centre at the Jantar Mantar here Tuesday over alleged irregularities in the NEET exam, party Rajya Sabha MP Sandeep Pathak said Monday. Pathak said the AAP will protest against the Central government across the country June 19. "Many irregularities have come to light in the NEET exam. The country will not tolerate such scams of the Modi government on the hard work and dreams of lakhs of children. Aam Aadmi Party will organize protests all over the country against this scam. Tomorrow on June 18 at 10 am, all the respected MPs, MLAs and councillors of the Aam Aadmi Party will protest against the government at Jantar Mantar. On June 19, the Aam Aadmi Party will protest against the Modi government in all states across the country. Jai Hind!" Pathak said in a post on X in Hindi.

Yediyurappa grilled

Bangalore: The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) questioned former Chief Minister and BJP stalwart BS Yediyurappa for three hours Monday in connection with a POCSO case registered against him. Yediyurappa appeared before a team of CID, which had summoned him for an inquiry in connection with the case. "He was questioned for three hours," a CID officer said. The Karnataka High Court Friday restrained the CID from arresting the veteran BJP leader in connection with the March 14 case.

Monsoon rains a fifth below normal so far

REUTERS

Mumbai, June 17: India's monsoon has delivered a fifth less rain than normal so far this season, the weather department said Monday, in a worrying sign for the vital agricultural sector. Summer rains, critical to economic growth in Asia's third-largest economy, usually begin in the south around June 1 before spreading nationwide by July 8, allowing farmers to plant crops such as rice, cotton, soybeans, and sugarcane. India has received 20% less rainfall than normal since June 1, according to data compiled by the state-run India Meteorological Department (IMD), with almost all regions except for a few southern states seeing shortfalls and some north-



western states experiencing heat waves. The rain shortfall in soybean, cotton, sugarcane, and pulse-growing central India has risen to 29%, while the paddy-growing southern region received 17% more rainfall than normal due to the early onset of the monsoon, according to the data. The northeast has received 20% less rainfall than normal so far, and the northwest some 68% less. The lifeblood of the nearly \$3.5-trillion economy, the monsoon brings nearly 70% of the rain India needs to water farms and refill reservoirs and aquifers. In the absence of irrigation, nearly half the farmland in the world's second-biggest producer of rice, wheat and sugar depends on the annual rains that usually run until September. "The monsoon's progress is stalled. It has weakened. But when it revives and becomes active, it can erase the rain deficit in a short burst," an IMD official told Reuters. The official sought anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to the media. Heat wave conditions are likely to prevail in northern states for a few more days, but temperatures could start coming down from the weekend, the official added. The maximum temperature in India's northern states is ranging between 42 and 47.6 degrees Celsius (107.6 to 117.7 degrees Fahrenheit), about 4-9 C above normal, the IMD data showed.

EVM row gathers steam

Ensure complete transparency of EVMs or abolish them, says Rahul Gandhi to EC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 17: Raising questions on the reliability of EVMs, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Monday asked the Election Commission to ensure complete transparency of the machines and processes or abolish them. The demand came a day after the Congress leader had alleged that the electronic voting machine is a "black box" and nobody is allowed to scrutinise them while further alleging that serious concerns are being raised about transparency in our electoral process.

"When democratic institutions are captured, the only safeguard lies in electoral processes that are transparent to the public," Gandhi said in a post on X. "EVM is currently a black box. EC must either ensure complete transparency of the machines and processes or abolish them," the former Congress president also said. A fresh political slugfest has erupted over EVM tampering claims with Gandhi and other opposition leaders citing a media report that alleged that a relative of the Shiv Sena candidate in Mumbai North West Lok Sabha constituency was found using a mobile phone "connected" to an electronic voting machine during the counting of votes June 4.

However, Vandana Suryavanshi, the returning officer of the constituency, dismissed the report in 'Mid-Day' newspaper as "false news" and said a defamation notice has been issued to the publication. She asserted the EVM is a stand-alone system, not programmable and has no wireless communication capabilities. The BJP hit out at the opposition leaders over the issue and demanded that the Election Commission should prosecute all those who "amplified the lie" by sharing the



A fresh political slugfest has erupted over EVM tampering claims that a relative of Shiv Sena's candidate Ravindra Waikar, who won the polls from Mumbai's North-West seat by 48 votes, had a phone that unlocks an EVM

AAP joins chorus

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Monday joined the political slugfest over the electronic voting machines (EVMs), saying the Supreme Court and the Election Commission need to take a drastic decision on the issue. AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said that his party has been raising the incidents of irregularities related to the EVMs for long but were mocked by the BJP. Singh alleged that there were 80 Lok Sabha seats won by the BJP in the recent polls and claimed "if proper counting of votes on these seats happened, the current BJP government will collapse". These 80 seats are in Maharashtra, UP, Bihar and other states, he said. Citing the controversy related to EVM in North West Mumbai Lok Sabha seat, Singh said, "The Supreme Court and the Election Commission should now take a strict decision over the EVM issue." Senior AAP leader and Delhi Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj in a post on X claimed that the EVMs can be tampered even if they are not connected to any network. Bharadwaj in 2017 in a special session of the Delhi Assembly gave a live demonstration using a dummy EVM claiming the machines can be hacked.

news report. Questioning the reliability of EVMs, Gandhi and others had on

Sunday also quoted a post by Elon Musk, chairman of social media platform X and CEO of Tesla, in which he talked about eliminating EVMs and claimed the risk of hacking was "too high". "We should eliminate electronic voting machines. The risk of being hacked by humans or AI, while small, is still too high," Musk said while responding to a post by US politician Robert F Kennedy Jr alleging Puerto Rico's primary elections experienced "hundreds of voting irregularities related to electronic voting machines".

Congress' ally and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav also questioned the credibility of EVMs and demanded that all future elections should be conducted through ballot papers. "EVMs in India are a 'black box' and nobody is allowed to scrutinise them. Serious concerns are being raised about transparency in our electoral process. Democracy ends up becoming a sham and prone to fraud when institutions lack accountability," Gandhi said in a post on X.

Blade-like object found in AI food; airline apologises

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 17: An Air India passenger has claimed that a blade-like metal piece was found in his food on a Bangalore-San Francisco flight last week after which Tata Group-owned airline launched an investigation. Confirming the presence of a "foreign object" in the food, Air India Monday "deeply apologised" for the incident, saying that it came from the vegetable processing machine used at the facilities of its catering partner TajSATS.

The passenger, in a post on X, claimed that he got a feel of the blade-like object only after chewing the grub for a few seconds but luckily no harm was done. "Air India food can cut like a knife. Hiding in its roasted sweet potato and fig chaat was a metal piece that looked like a blade. I got a feel of it only after chewing the grub for a few seconds. Thankfully, no harm was done," the passenger, Mathures Paul, who is a journalist by profession, said.

Cong chooses Wayanad for Priyanka's poll debut

With the Congress putting up a surprisingly good show in the Lok Sabha polls, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has cemented her position as her party's talisman



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 17: Since her entry in active politics in 2019, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was projected as a possible challenger to Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Varanasi and also as a successor to Congress veteran Sonia Gandhi in the family pocket borough of Rae Bareilly parliamentary seat. However, Congress has decided to field her from Wayanad, the parliamentary seat that her elder brother Rahul won for two consecutive terms.

Rahul won comfortably for the first time from Wayanad in 2019 when he had to bite the dust in the family stronghold of Amethi. In the just concluded Lok Sabha elections, Rahul again contested from Wayanad but moved from Amethi to Rae Bareilly. Having won both the seats, Rahul has decided to vacate Wayanad and retain Rae Bareilly. The 52-year-old Priyanka, whose name did the rounds as the Congress candidate for Amethi, Rae Bareilly as well as Varanasi parliamentary seats, will finally make her debut in electoral politics from the safe environs of Wayanad in Kerala, a state that Congress has almost swept in 2019 as well as 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

"I'm not nervous at all... I am very happy to be able to represent Wayanad. All I'll say is that I won't let them feel his (Rahul's) absence... I have a good relation with Rae Bareilly as I have worked there for 20 years and that relation will never break

with Rae Bareilly as I have worked there for 20 years and that relation will never break," Priyanka said after her candidature was announced Monday.

Priyanka is married to businessman Robert Vadra, who had repeatedly expressed his interest in contesting from Amethi in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections. The seat was eventually given to family loyalist Kishori Lal Sharma, who defeated BJP leader Smriti Irani.

If Priyanka wins the Lok Sabha by-polls, it would be for the first time that three members of the Gandhi family will be in Parliament. Her mother Sonia Gandhi is a Rajya Sabha member from Rajasthan.

Political commentator and former Congress leader Sanjay Jha hailed Priyanka Gandhi as an "outstanding campaigner". "Her sharp and prompt rebuttals to Mr Modi's jibes have worked wonders during the campaign. Her presence has been talismanic," he said.

The INDIA bloc won 233 seats out of 543 in the Lok Sabha elections with Congress emerging as its largest constituent with 99 seats. The election campaign saw a spirited fight back by the Congress with Priyanka playing a pivotal role in countering constant barbs from Modi and other BJP leaders.



Children celebrate the 'Eid al-Adha' celebrations at Jama Masjid in New Delhi, Monday

Snow persistence in Hindu Kush Himalaya hits record low

SNOWMELT ACCOUNTS FOR AROUND 23% OF THE TOTAL WATER FLOW OF 12 MAJOR RIVER BASINS ORIGINATING IN HKH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 17: The Hindu Kush Himalaya is experiencing significantly lower snow persistence this year, raising serious concern over water security for downstream communities, according to a new report. Leading experts from the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), a Nepal-based intergovernmental organisation, have urged water management officials to initiate drought management strategies and preemptive emergency water supply measures.

The Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region heavily depends on the cryosphere - frozen water on the Earth's surface, including snow, permafrost, and ice from glaciers, lakes and rivers. This frozen water is a critical source of freshwater for around 240 million (24 crore) people living

in the HKH region and has far-reaching benefits for around 1.65 billion (165 crore) people downstream. Snowmelt accounts for around 23 per cent of the total water flow of 12 major river basins originating in the HKH. However, its contribution varies from river to river, representing 74 per cent of the Amu Darya's flow, 77 per cent of the Helmand's flow, and 40 per cent of the Indus' flow.

Monitoring shows snow levels are almost a fifth below normal across the region this year, with the most dramatic declines in the west, where its contribution to water supply is the highest. The Helmand river basin shows the most significant drop in snow persistence at 31.8 per cent below normal. Its previous lowest level was in 2018, with a 42 per cent reduction. The Indus basin has fallen to 23.3 per cent below normal, the lowest level in 22 years. The pre-



Snow persistence dropped 17% below normal in the Ganga basin and 14.6% below normal in the Brahmaputra basin

vious lowest year for this basin was 2018, with a 9.4 per cent shortfall. The Mekong basin had the smallest variation from normal, with snow persistence around 1 per cent below normal.

"We have seen a pattern of decreasing amounts and persistence of snow across the Hindu Kush Himalaya, with 13 of the past 22 years registering lower-than-normal seasonal snow persistence," said ICIMOD cryosphere specialist Sher Muhammad, who is also author of the report. Miriam Jackson, ICIMOD's senior cryosphere specialist, said agencies must take proactive steps to address possible drought situations, especially in early summer. "Plans must be updated to accommodate water stress, and communities need to be notified of the risks."

This is a wake-up call for researchers, policymakers and downstream communities. Lower snow accumulation and fluctuating snow levels pose a serious increased risk of water shortages, particularly this year

SHER MUHAMMAD | ICIMOD CRYOSPHERE SPECIALIST

"Beyond that, it's clear that governments and people in this region need urgent support to adapt to changes in snow patterns that carbon emissions have already locked in. G20 countries need to cut emissions faster than ever before to prevent even more changes that could prove disastrous to major population centres and industries reliant on snowmelt in the mountains," she said.

The experts said promoting rainwater harvesting and establishing local water committees may help mitigate the immediate impacts of below-normal snowfall on the water supply in the HKH region.

However, to ensure long-term resilience to climate change, countries sharing trans-boundary rivers must collaborate to update their water management laws. Such actions are crucial to addressing water shortages in south Asia, which relies on snowmelt, they said.

international

of the day quote

If we talk about the results of this meeting (Ukraine peace summit), then they come down to zero. Many countries understood the lack of perspective of any serious discussion without the presence of our country

DMITRY PESKOV | KREMLIN SPOKESMAN

We (Australia-China) had a candid exchange of views on some differences and disagreements and agreed to properly manage them in a manner befitting our comprehensive strategic partnership

LI QIANG | CHINESE PREMIER

We have never sought war. We are very clear that our entire strategy is defensive operations

WELLINGTON KOO | DEFENCE MINISTER, TAIWAN

SHORT TAKES

Putin to visit NK

Seoul: North Korean state media says Russian President Vladimir Putin will arrive in the country Tuesday for a two-day visit. Putin is expected to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un for talks focused on expanding military cooperation as they deepen their alignment in the face of separate, intensifying confrontations with Washington. It will be Putin's first visit to North Korea in 24 years. The visit comes amid growing international concerns about arms arrangement in which Pyongyang provides Moscow with badly needed munitions to fuel Putin's war in Ukraine in exchange for economic assistance and technology transfers that would enhance the threat posed by Kim's nuclear weapons and missile program.

Ten migrants die in Mediterranean

Rome: Ten migrants died in the Mediterranean after their boat was flooded with water, but 51 other people aboard the vessel were rescued, a German charity said Monday. RESQSHIP, which operates a migrant rescue ship called Nadir, said on social media platform X it had found the 61 people on board a flooded wooden boat, with the 10 dead trapped in its lower deck. The charity said two of those who survived were unconscious and receiving medical attention, adding that they critically needed emergency evacuation.

SK, China to begin diplomatic talks

Seoul: South Korea and China will hold their first round of diplomatic and security dialogue on Tuesday, Seoul's foreign ministry said on Monday, in line with an agreement the two nations made last month. During the meeting, "the two countries plan to exchange views on issues of mutual interest including bilateral relations, Korean peninsula issues, and regional and international situations," the ministry said.

Two-day joint exercise in SCS

Manila: The United States, Canada, Japan, and the Philippines conducted a two-day joint maritime exercise in Manila's exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea, the US Pacific Fleet said on its website Monday. The maritime cooperative activity was aimed at "upholding freedom of navigation and overflight, reaffirming the four nations' commitment to bolstering regional security and stability," the US Pacific Fleet said.



NATO's aim is, of course, a world without nuclear weapons, but as long as nuclear weapons exist, we will remain a nuclear alliance, because a world where Russia, China and North Korea have nuclear weapons, and we do not, is a more dangerous world

JENS STOLTENBERG | SECRETARY-GENERAL OF NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

CAMPAGNING KICKS OFF

Campaigning kicked off for France's snap parliamentary election which opinion polls suggest the far-right National Rally will win, with President Emmanuel Macron's centrist alliance coming third, behind a leftwing ticket



N-arms taking over

NUCLEAR-ARMED NATIONS ARE DEEPENING THEIR RELIANCE ON THEIR NUCLEAR WEAPONS, WATCHDOG FINDS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Copenhagen, June 17: The world's nine nuclear-armed states continue to modernise their nuclear weapons as the countries deepened their reliance on such deterrence in 2023, a Swedish think tank said Monday. "We have not seen nuclear weapons playing such a prominent role in international relations since the Cold War," said Wilfred Wan, director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's weapons of mass destruction programme. Earlier this month, Russia and its ally Belarus launched a second stage of drills intended to train their troops in tactical nuclear weapons, part of the Kremlin's efforts to discourage the West from ramping up support for Ukraine.

In a separate report, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, ICAN, said the nine nuclear-armed states spent a combined total of \$91.4 billion on their arsenals in 2023, equivalent to \$2,898 per second. The Geneva-based coalition of disarmament activists won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017. The group said that figures



show a \$10.7 billion increase in global spending on nuclear weapons in 2023 compared to 2022, with the United States accounting for 80 per cent of that increase. The US share of total spending, \$51.5 billion, is more than all the other nuclear-armed countries put together.

"There has been a notable upward trend in the amount of money devoted to developing these most inhumane and destructive of weapons over the past five years," said Alicia Sanders-Zakre, Policy and Research Coordinator with ICAN. The next biggest spender was China at \$11.8 billion, she said, with Russia spending the third largest amount at \$8.3 billion. "All this money is not improving global security, in fact it's

threatening people wherever they live," Sanders-Zakre said.

SIPRI estimated that some 2,100 of the deployed warheads were kept in a state of high operational alert on ballistic missiles, and nearly all belong to Russia or the USA. However, it said that China is also believed to have some warheads on high operational alert for the first time.

"Regrettably we continue to see year-on-year increases in the number of operational nuclear warheads," said Dan Smith, SIPRI's director. He added that the trend will likely accelerate in the coming years "and is extremely concerning". Russia and the United States have together almost 90 per cent of all nuclear weapons, SIPRI

China, Philippine ships collide in SCS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, June 17: The China-Philippines confrontation to assert their claims in the disputed South China Sea took a violent turn Monday as their naval ships collided in the first such incident after Beijing issued new rules to act against foreign vessels and detain foreigners "suspected of violating" regulations in the Chinese waters.

China claims most of the South China Sea (SCS), which is hotly disputed by the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei and Taiwan. A Philippines ship and a Chinese vessel collided after the former "illegally entered" the waters near the Second Thomas Shoal and "dangerously approached" the Chinese ship, China Coast Guard (CCG) said. China alleges that the Philippines deliberately ran a naval ship aground in 1999 at the Second Thomas Shoal, which it calls Ren'ai Jiao, and converted the damaged ship into a permanent installation manned by naval personnel.

According to the CCG, the Chinese vessel collided with the Philippines ship Monday morning in a bid to prevent it from delivering construction materials. The CCG statement said its vessel has taken regulatory measures to respond to an illegal intrusion by a Philippine vessel into waters near Ren'ai Jiao Monday morning. A Philippine supply vessel, in disregard of repeated stern



The development comes as Beijing begins to enforce new law to act against foreign vessels

warnings from the Chinese side, deliberately and dangerously approached Chinese vessels navigating normally in adjacent waters of Ren'ai Jiao, it said.

This violated the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea. The act led to a slight collision, for which the responsibility lies entirely with the Philippine side, the statement added. However, the statement did not mention any damage or injuries on either side. This is the first collision of ships after Beijing promulgated a new law Saturday, authorising its coast guard to seize foreign ships that illegally enter China's territorial waters and to detain foreign crews for up to 60 days.

ISRAEL PM DISBANDS INNER WAR CABINET

REUTERS

Jerusalem, June 17: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has dissolved the six-member war cabinet, an Israeli official said Monday, in a widely expected move that came after the departure from government of the centrist former general Benny Gantz.

Netanyahu is now expected to hold consultations about the Gaza war with a small group of ministers, including Defence Minister Yoav Gallant and Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer who had been in the war cabinet.

The Prime Minister had faced demands from the nationalist-re-

ligious partners in his coalition, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, to be included in the war cabinet, a move which would have intensified strains with international partners including the United States.

The forum was formed after Gantz joined Netanyahu in a national unity government at the start of the war in October and also included Gantz's partner Gadi Eisenkot and Aryeh Deri, head of the religious party Shas, as observers.

Gantz and Eisenkot both left the government last week, over what they said was Netanyahu's failure to form a strategy for the Gaza war.



China opens tit-for-tat anti-dumping probe into EU pork

REUTERS

Following the European Commission's June 12 announcement that it would impose anti-subsidy duties of up to 38.1% on imported Chinese cars from July, global food companies have been on high alert for retaliatory tariffs from China



Beijing, June 17: China has opened an anti-dumping investigation into imported pork and its by-products from the European Union, a step that appears mainly aimed at Spain, the Netherlands and Denmark, in response to curbs on its electric vehicle exports. The investigation announced by China's commerce ministry Monday will focus on pork intended for human consumption, such as fresh, cold and frozen whole cuts, as well as pig intestines, bladders and stomachs. The probe will begin June 17. It was prompted by a com-

plaint submitted by the China Animal Husbandry Association June 6 on behalf of the domestic pork industry, the ministry said.

Following the European Commission's June 12 announcement that it would impose anti-subsidy duties of up to 38.1% on imported Chinese cars from July, global food companies have been on high alert for retaliatory tariffs from China. Spain is the top supplier of pork to China and its pork producers group Interpork said they would fully cooperate with the

investigation by Chinese authorities.

"The EU and China have plenty of time to reach agreements," Interpork said in a statement.

European pork producers should be able to keep exporting to China tariff-free while the investigation is underway, pending a decision and a tariff announcement by the Chinese side.

China's commerce ministry said that the investigation should be completed by June 17, 2025, but could be extended by another six months if required.

World losing track on sustainable development goals: UN

THE REPORT IDENTIFIED THE TACKLING OF HUNGER, THE CREATION OF SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND THE PROTECTION OF BIODIVERSITY ON LAND AND WATER AS PARTICULAR AREAS OF WEAKNESS

REUTERS

Singapore, June 17: The world is way off track on most of the sustainable development targets agreed in 2015, such as tackling poverty and hunger, says a United Nations report which cites funding shortfalls, geopolitical tensions and the covid-19 pandemic. The UN's annual Sustainable Development Report ranks the performance of its 193 member states in implementing 17 wide-ranging "sustainable development goals" (SDGs), which also

include improving access to education and health care, providing clean energy and protecting biodiversity.

It found that none of the 17 goals were on course to be met by 2030, with most targets showing "limited or a reversal of progress". It urged countries to address chronic funding shortfalls and also revamp the UN system itself.

"What this report is showing is that even before the pandemic hit, progress was already too slow," said Guillaume Lafortune,



Vice President at the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and lead author of the report.

"Once the pandemic hit, and other crises, including military conflicts, then it is a story of stagnation." The report identified the tackling of hunger, the cre-

ation of sustainable cities and the protection of biodiversity on land and water as particular areas of weakness. Political goals like press freedom have also seen a "reversal of progress".

It said Finland, Sweden and Denmark ranked at the top of the list of countries, and China

has also made faster than average progress, but the world's poorest countries have fallen further behind.

Lafortune said developing countries needed more access to international finance, adding that institutions like credit rating agencies should be encouraged to take a country's long-term environmental and economic wellbeing into consideration, rather than just its short-term liquidity.

The report also assessed countries on their willingness to cooperate globally through UN institutions. The United States was ranked in last place.

"A large majority of countries are supportive of collaborating but there are a number of great powers that do not play by the rules of the game," said Lafortune.



Pak vows clampdown on 'anti-state' social media campaigns

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, June 17: Urging jailed former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's party to quit its anti-state activities and propaganda, the government has warned that it would clamp down on those involved in running anti-state smear campaigns on social media in a bid to damage the country's ties with friendly nations.

Addressing a press conference Sunday, legal affairs spokesperson Aqeel Malik said there was no precedent to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) enmity as it was perpetrating anti-Pakistan legislation in foreign countries, the Geo News reported.

"Pakistan is an independent country and does not take dictation from any nation. We want friendly relations with all nations. However, a concentrated smear campaign against Pakistan in foreign countries that started after the 2022 vote of no confidence which mounted the anti-Pakistan propaganda," he said.

Malik alleged that PTI has hired lobbyists and PR firms to promote anti-Pakistan campaigns abroad and warned that the government would clamp down on those involved in running anti-state campaigns on social media in a bid to damage Pakistan's ties with friendly countries.

The spokesperson urged PTI to quit its anti-state activities and propaganda and hold dialogue with the government on political issues to mull over solutions instead of damaging the nation's interest at global forums, the report said.

Malik claimed, "All anti-Pakistan legislation is done on the behest of PTI and overseas Pakistani diaspora who have strong affiliation with this party are being misused for this clandestine motive of PTI".

of the day quote

We always give importance to deposits. That is the reason why we increased the interest rate for the short-term deposits recently because we felt that there's room for improvement...we should improve our deposit growth rate to some extent during this year. And our effort would be that we should at least grow around 12-13 per cent this year

DINESH KUMAR KHARA | SBI CHAIRMAN

Digital gold has zero cash payments, digital KYC and is ideal for small ticket purchases of gold. It benefits from current market trends at multiple levels as is evident from the scale and growth of our business

GAURAV MATHUR | SAFEGOLD FOUNDER AND CEO

We closed FY24 with our highest ever annual sales driven by successful launches throughout the year

AMIT SINHA, MD & CEO | MAHINDRA LIFESPACE DEVELOPERS

SHORT TAKES

Electric version of Creta by Q4 FY25

New Delhi: Hyundai Motor India Ltd plans to launch four electric vehicle models in future, including Creta EV, in the last quarter of the current fiscal, according to the company's preliminary IPO papers filed with Sebi. The company is looking to maximise the price competitiveness of its electric vehicle (EV) models and intends to focus on securing local production capabilities for key parts, such as cells, battery packs, power electronics, and drivetrain and building a localised EV supply chain. In the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP), Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMITL) said it seeks to calibrate its EV strategy and plan EV timelines in line with market demands in India by launching the appropriate EV models within each price segment.

Anti-dumping relief for HFCL

New Delhi: HFCL Monday said it is the only Indian optical fiber cable manufacturer to have been exempted from anti-dumping duties by the European Commission. Highlighting a decision by the European Commission June 14, 2024, HFCL said "in the said decision, it was determined that HFCL is the only Indian company not engaged in dumping of OFC in European markets, whereas provisional Anti-dumping duty has been determined on all other Indian Optical Fiber Cable Manufacturers in the statement issued by European Commission." A complaint was lodged October 3, 2023 by Europacable on behalf of the European industry of optical fiber cables, alleging imports of optical fiber cable, originating from India, were being dumped and were causing injury to European industry.

Skye Air secures \$4 mn funding

New Delhi: Skye Air, a drone logistics solution provider, Monday said it has secured USD 4 million (about ₹34 crore) funding, which will be used to expand the company's operations across Gurugram and other cities for healthcare, and quick-commerce deliveries. The Series A funding was achieved with backing from Mount Judi Ventures, Chiratae Ventures, Venture Catalyst, Windrose Capital, and Tremis Capital. Faad Capital, Misfits Capital, Hyderabad Angels, Soonicorn Ventures and other existing investors, family offices and angels also participated in the funding round.



India has enormous potential for onshore wind, offshore wind and as a global supply chain hub

BEN BACKWELL | CEO OF GWEC

PRE-BUDGET TALKS

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will hold consultations with apex industry chambers, farmers' associations and state finance ministers in the run-up to the full budget for 2024-25 that is expected to be presented in late July. While the meeting with India Inc. is expected to be held Thursday, the consultations with farmers' associations and economists are likely to take place Friday.



Extreme heat melts diesel demand

DIESEL IS INDIA'S MOST CONSUMED FUEL, ACCOUNTING FOR ALMOST 40 PER CENT OF ALL PETROLEUM PRODUCT CONSUMPTION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 17: India's diesel demand slumped in June as extreme heat conditions in parts of the country curtailed travel, preliminary data of state-owned firms showed Monday.

Fuel sales, which traditionally surge during elections, have defied the trend this year, falling month after month.

And the decline has now extended even after the end of the general elections.

Petrol sales of three state-owned firms, which control 90 per cent of the fuel market, at 1.42 million tonnes in the first half of June was almost the same as 1.41 million tonnes of fuel consumed in the same period last year. Month-on-month consumption dropped 4.6 per cent.

Diesel sales dropped 3.9 per cent to 3.95 million tonnes during June 1 to 15 when compared with the year-ago period. The demand for the nation's most consumed fuel



had fallen 2.3 per cent in April and 2.7 per cent in March. In May it fell 1.1 per cent.

Besides electioneering, the summer harvest season as well as the scorching summer that increases the demand for air conditioning in cars, should have led to a rise in fuel consumption. However, this year has defied the trend.

Petrol and diesel prices were reduced by ₹2 per litre in mid-March, ending a nearly two-year-long hiatus in rate revision, which should have also propelled sales.

Month-on-month petrol sales fell 3.6 per cent compared to 1.47 million tonnes of consumption during May 1-15. Diesel demand was flat month-on-month against 3.54 million tonnes in the first

half of May.

Diesel is India's most consumed fuel, accounting for almost 40 per cent of all petroleum product consumption. The transport sector accounts for 70 per cent of all diesel sales in the country. It is also the predominant fuel used in agriculture sectors, including in harvesters and tractors.

Consumption of petrol during June 1-15 was 4.6 per cent lower than in the first fortnight of June 2022, and 28.1 per cent more than in the Covid-marred same period of 2020.

Diesel demand slumped 10.5 per cent over June 1-15, 2022, and 14 per cent higher compared to June 1-15, 2020.

Jet fuel (ATF) sales rose 2.3 per cent year-on-year to 331,000

tonnes during June 1-15, 2024. But, this was 4.5 per cent lower month-on-month when compared to 346,500 tonnes in May 1-15, the data showed.

Like petrol and diesel, ATF demand, too, is now firmly above pre-Covid levels.

ATF consumption was 10.1 per cent more than during June 1-15, 2022, and 6.1 per cent more than in June 1-15, 2020, as per the data.

Cooking gas LPG sales were up 0.1 per cent year-on-year to 1.24 million tonnes in June 1-15, 2024. LPG consumption dropped 0.9 per cent as compared to June 1-15, 2022 and was 32 per cent more than June 1-15, 2020.

Month-on-month, LPG demand fell 5.2 per cent against 1.3 million tonnes consumed.

Indian Inc braces for revenue uncertainties in Q1, says Icra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 17: Corporates are bracing for revenue uncertainties in the April-June period due to a slowdown in government spending and the onset of the annual monsoon season, domestic rating agency Icra said Monday.

The sequential revenue growth will taper in the first quarter of the fiscal, the agency said in a note, adding that there was a 6.5 per cent growth in revenues in the March quarter compared to the preceding December quarter.

"While signs of a revival in rural demand have emerged, headwinds, such as a slowdown in the Government of India's (GoI) spending during the Parliamentary elections and onset of the monsoon period, are likely to weigh on growth in H1FY25," the agency said.

"India Inc braces for revenue uncertainties in Q1FY25," it added. Its co-group head for corporate ratings Kinjal Shah said the sequential revenue growth will slow down because of a relatively high base amid a perceived temporary pause in the infrastructural activities for a major part of the quarter due to

the general elections and the dependency on rural demand on the monsoon.

Shah added that the concerns around the ongoing geopolitical tensions may adversely impact demand sentiments, especially for export-oriented sectors.

The rating agency, however, said that the steady raw material costs will help ensure that the operating profit margin (OPM) will remain steady in the range of 15-18 per cent, and credit metrics will also be largely stable.

The agency said its analysis of 558 listed companies' performance in the March quarter indicates an improvement in the profit margins by 0.92 per cent compared to the year-ago period at 17.2 per cent.

The improvement in profit margins was mainly aided by the softening in commodity prices and benefits of operating leverage, it said, adding that the margins remained flat on a sequential basis.

The interest coverage ratio of Icra's sample set companies, adjusted for sectors with relatively low debt levels like IT, FMCG and pharma, improved marginally in the March quarter, according to the agency.

FDI, R&D key to achieve \$5bn defence export: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 17: Factors like streamlining foreign direct investment (FDI) as well as augmenting Research & Development (R&D) and manufacturing capabilities can help the country realise its USD 5 billion defence export target by 2024-25, says a study.

Nexgen Exhibitions, organisers of International Police Expo, one of Asia's premier homeland security and defence expos, have released the findings of a comprehensive survey aimed at streamlining Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and bolstering Defence Research & Development (R&D) and manufacturing capabilities, as per a statement.

According to the statement, this initiative aims to propel India towards its ambitious USD 5 billion defence exports target by 2024-25.

The survey, conducted across 15 cities in India, saw participation from over 130 national and international arms, ammunition, and security equipment manufacturers, exporters, and startups.

The key highlights of the survey, underscored the need for streamlined FDI inflows,



elevated technology integration with AI and other futuristic technologies, and a robust skill development ecosystem to create a large pool of industry-ready professionals.

By enhancing R&D and manufacturing capabilities, India's homeland security and defence sector is poised to emerge as a global manufacturing hub, it stated.

Additionally, it stated that increasing procurement categories is a significant step towards boosting domestic defence manufacturing. Currently, India exports defence equipment to over 75 countries, demonstrating its growing foot-

Govt moots personal tax rate cuts to boost consumption

While the Indian economy grew at a world-beating 8.2% in 2023-24, consumption has grown at half that pace

REUTERS

New Delhi, June 17: The government is considering lowering personal tax rates for certain categories of individuals, which could help boost consumption in the Asia's third-largest economy, two government sources told Reuters.

The plan could be announced in July, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government presents the first federal budget after his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) failed to win a majority on its own.

A post-poll survey showed that voters were worried about inflation, unemployment and decreasing incomes.

While the Indian economy grew at a world-beating 8.2% in 2023-24, consumption has grown at half that pace.

Prime Minister Modi, while staking a claim to form the National Democratic Alliance ruled government, had said his administration would focus on raising middle-class savings and improving the quality of their lives.

A cut in personal tax could boost consumption in the economy and increase savings for

the middle class, the sources said, declining to be identified as budget discussions are confidential.

India's finance ministry did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment. The category of individuals that may see some tax relief are those earning over 1.5 million rupees (\$17,960.42) annually, up to a certain amount which is yet to be determined, the first source said.

The changes could be made to a tax scheme introduced in 2020, where annual income up to 1.5 million rupees is taxed at 5%-20% while earnings over 1.5 million rupees is taxed at 30%.

The personal tax rate jumps six-fold when an individual's income increases by five times from 300,000 to 1.5 million rupees, "which is quite steep," the second source said.

The government may also explore lowering personal tax rates for annual incomes of 1 million rupees, said the first source, adding that a new threshold was being discussed for income taxed at the highest rate of 30% under the old tax system.

Any loss of tax income to the government through tax cuts could be partially offset by increased consumption from this category of income earners, the second source said.

The federal government is targeting a fiscal deficit of 5.1% of GDP in the financial year ending March 2025.

lic safety and national resilience.

"Increase in procurement categories and emphasis on quality and innovation have positioned India as a reliable defence equipment supplier on the global stage. The government's supportive policies, coupled with strategic partnerships and collaborations, are driving the growth of India's defence exports, bringing the country closer to its USD 5 billion target by 2024-25," Aadhar Bansal, Director, Nexgen Exhibitions said in the statement.

The International Police Expo facilitates connections between global and domestic manufacturers, suppliers, and innovators, fostering discussions on the key priorities shaping the future of policing and homeland security.

Scheduled for July 4-5, 2024 in New Delhi, the International Police Expo will see participation from over 25 countries, including the UK, USA, Israel, Poland, Croatia, UAE, Germany, Canada, Singapore, Brazil, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

These countries will showcase their latest innovations and technologies, providing a platform for international collaboration and exchange of best practices.

Gold, silver imports surge 210% in FY24 from UAE: GTRI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 17: India's gold and silver imports from its free trade agreement (FTA) partner UAE have skyrocketed 210 per cent to \$10.7 billion in 2023-24 and there is a need to potentially revise the concessional customs duty rates under the pact to mitigate the arbitrage driving this surge, a report said Monday.

Economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said this sharp rise in gold and silver imports is primarily driven by import duty concessions granted by India to the UAE under the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

India allows 7 per cent tariffs or customs duty concessions on import of unlimited quantities of silver and a 1 per cent concession on 160 metric tonnes of gold. CEPA was signed in February 2022 and implemented in May 2022.

Additionally, India facilitates gold and silver imports by allowing private firms to import from the UAE through the India International Bullion Exchange (IIBX) in Gift City. Previously,

only authorised agencies could handle such imports, the report said.

"While India's total imports from the UAE fell 9.8 per cent from USD 53.2 billion in FY23 to USD 48 billion in FY24, imports of gold and silver skyrocketed 210 per cent, from USD 3.5 billion to USD 10.7 billion," it said.

"Import of all remaining products fell 25 per cent, from USD 49.7 billion in FY23 to USD 37.3 billion in FY24," it said.

GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said the current import of gold and silver from the UAE is unsustainable as the UAE does not mine gold or silver or add sufficient value to imports.

"High import duties in India on gold, silver, and jewellery at 15 per cent are at the root of the problem. Consider lowering tariffs to 5 per cent. This will cut large-scale smuggling and other misuse," Srivastava said. Trade in gold, silver, and diamonds has been prone to misuse due to their low volume but high value and high import duties in India.

Low tariff imports of gold, silver only benefit few importers who keep all profits



arising through tariff arbitrage and never pass it to consumers, he said.

Srivastava suggested the government implement certain measures to help India balance its trade policies, protect domestic revenue, and ensure fair competition in the import of precious metals and jewellery.

It suggested reassessing and potentially revising the concessional duty rates under CEPA to mitigate the arbitrage driving the surge in imports of gold and silver.

"At least, implement yearly import quotas (tariff rate quotas) for silver, similar to those for gold, to control the volume of imports and prevent revenue loss," it said, adding that India should rigorously verify the claimed value addition by Dubai-based refiners in gold and silver imports to ensure compliance with CEPA rules of origin.

It also asked to tighten regulations around the India International Bullion Exchange (IIBX) at Gift City to control the volume and nature of precious metal imports and the exchange

should not allow country-based exemptions.

As increased imports contribute to a higher current account deficit and since gold and silver act more like financial instruments than regular trade items, India should avoid including them in any FTA.

India has granted tariff concessions for these items in many FTAs and under the DFTF (duty-free tariff preference) scheme, so a comprehensive review is needed. India announced the scheme for LDCs (least developed countries) in 2008. Under this, India provides duty free/preferential market access on about 98.2 per cent of India's tariff lines (or product categories).

Further, the report stated that silver imports from the UAE increased multifold to USD 1.74 billion in 2023-24 from a meagre USD 29.2 million in 2022-23 due to India charging an 8 per cent duty under the CEPA versus a 15 per cent duty from other countries.

"The large 7 per cent tariff arbitrage resulted in a loss of revenue for India of ₹1,010 crore in FY24. Revenue loss will in-

crease as India has committed to make tariffs zero on unlimited quantities of silver from the UAE within next 8 years," it added.

It said this trade is unusual because the UAE just imports large silver and gold bars, melt and convert these into silver grains and unwrought gold for exports.

"A check with global refiners will show that value addition in such process is much less than 1 per cent as opposed to 3 per cent required under the FTA," it said.

On gold bars, the report said India agreed to import 200 metric tons of gold annually from the UAE with a 1 per cent tariff concession and due to this gold imports rose 147.6 per cent from USD 3 billion in FY23 to USD 7.6 billion in FY24, causing India to lose ₹635 crore in revenue in FY24.

Similarly, India's jewellery imports have increased 187.6 per cent from USD 1.1 billion in FY23 to USD 3.3 billion in FY24, whereas these imports from the UAE have increased 290 per cent from USD 347 million in FY23 to USD 1.35 billion in the last fiscal.

SHANTO'S MEN DOMINANT BOWLING PERFORMANCE DECIMATES NEPAL

T20 World Cup Bangladesh enter Super Eight



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kingstown (Saint Vincent), June 17: Pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib's career-best figures of 4 for 7 with an astounding 21 dot balls headlined Bangladesh's dominant bowling performance as they entered the Super Eights of the T20 World Cup with a comfortable 21-run win against Nepal in their final group league game.

Having nearly shocked South Africa in their previous game, Nepal bowlers were again on target, bowling out Bangladesh for 106 but Tanzim along with seasoned Shakib al Hasan (2/9) and Mustafizur Rahman (3/7) bowled out Nepal for 85 in 19.2 overs.

Nepal were on course at 78 for 5 at one stage before losing their last five wickets for seven runs as a determined Bangladesh team used all its

SL save their best for last

Sri Lanka finally found their mojo as they clinically disposed of the Netherlands by a whopping 83 runs in an inconsequential final group D league game of the T20 World Cup here. With Bangladesh beating Nepal by 21 runs in the other group league game, the faint outside chance that the Netherlands had despite a way inferior net run-rate was up in smoke as they were bowled out for 118 in pursuit of an improbable target of 202 set by Wanindu Hasaranga's men. The Sri Lankans left it too late while bringing their A game to the fore as all three units fired in unison but the horse has already bolted as they were out of reckoning for the Super Eights. The Sri Lankan middle order were brilliant with veteran Angelo Mathews (30 off 15 balls) and skipper Hasaranga (20 off 10 balls) shored up the scoring rate but it was left-hander Charith Asalanka's 21-ball-46 that was the real difference in their innings. Asalanka smashed five sixes as Sri Lanka crossed the 200-run mark.



reservoir of experience after a disappointing batting show.

Bangladesh should have won the match when Nepal were re-

duced to 26 for 5 after seven overs courtesy the right arm outswing specialist Tanzim and Kushal Malla (27) and world record holder Dipendra Singh Airee (25) added 52 runs to raise visions of a first big win for the country against a major Test playing nation.

But as it happens with ICC's Associate Member nations, the batters with little exposure of facing quality bowling didn't know what to do with an experienced player like Mustafizur. Needing 22 off 12 balls, 'The Fizz' was an artist at work as he bowled his customary slow off-cutters, which would pitch on middle stump and cut across the right hander.

Airee, who holds the world record of fastest T20I fifty off 9 balls and only third cricketer after Yuvraj Singh and Kieron Pollard to hit six sixes in an over, understood the difference of fac-

ing a world class operator to plundering runs against Mongolia and Qatar.

Mustafizur didn't even let Airee lay bat on ball during the five deliveries that also had a slow bouncer. He got Airee off the last delivery.

In fact, four among the last five Nepalese batters failed to open their accounts with the fifth remaining not out without troubling the scorers.

"Very happy the way we played this round. I hope we can continue with our bowling performance and hope that our batting performance will be fine in the next round," Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto said at post-match presentation ceremony.

The skipper wasn't happy that none of the Bangladeshi batters could even cross 20 but has confidence that his bowling unit can defend any totals.

"We have everything. All the fast bowlers have worked really hard in the last two or three years. In this format, the bowling unit is very important and I hope they continue their form. We have to plan for the next round and execute our plans," he said.

As far as Nepal skipper Rohit Paudel is concerned, he conceded that inexperience became their undoing.

"As a batting unit, we could have done better, especially the top order batters. We could have batted tighter. Bangladesh bowled really well with the new ball and we were under pressure after that. They were asking us challenging questions," a dejected Paudel said at post-match presentation ceremony.

"Top order batters could have done better and taken more responsibility. We need to step up, need to know where to score runs and how to assess conditions," the skipper said as he promised the ardent fans of a better show in the coming tournaments.

Neeraj to resume Olympic build-up

The Indian won a silver medal in 2022 with a throw of 89.30m, which was a personal best at that time. Chopra improved that mark to 89.94m at the Stockholm leg of the Diamond League in the same year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Turku (Finland), June 17: Forced into a short break to mend a niggle, Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra will return to competitive action at the Paavo Nurmi Games here Tuesday against a stellar field, hoping to continue his build-up to Paris Games with renewed vigour.

The 26-year-old superstar, the lone Indian in the field here, will be up against German teenaged sensation Max Dehnning, who is the youngest member of the coveted 90m club, which Chopra is aspiring to enter. The 19-year-old is being seen as a major competition for Chopra when he defends his Tokyo Games gold medal in Paris.

Local favourite Oliver Helander, who had beaten the Indian in the 2022 edition of the one-day competition, will also



SHORT TAKES

Sumit Nagal attains career-high ranking

New Delhi: India's Sumit Nagal continued his ascent in the ATP singles chart, climbing to a career-high ranking of 71 Monday. His previous best was 77 last week. The Olympic-bound Nagal jumped six places following his runner-up finish at the Perugia ATP Challenger tournament Sunday. The 26-year-old, who will be the sole Indian in the men's singles event at the Paris Olympics, has so far logged 777 ATP points. A string of impressive results in recent times has not only helped



Nagal improve his ranking but also make the cut for singles event at the Paris Games. The year began with a historic second round outing at the Australian Open. While he bowed out of the French Open in the first round, Nagal is set to compete at in the main draw of Wimbledon followed by the Paris Olympics at Roland Garros. He had won the men's singles crown at the Heilbronn Neckarcup 2024 Challenger event in Germany earlier this month and the Chennai Open in February. Nagal, who is currently the best-ranked Indian singles player, has won four ATP Challenger titles since 2023 and Heilbronn was his fourth title on clay.

Diksha finishes T-6

Rome: Indian golfer Diksha Dagar carded an underwhelming 71 in the final round to sign off from the Ladies Italian Open at tied-6th place, her third Top-10 finish of the season. Diksha, who had one birdie and one bogey in the second round, managed just two birdies and one bogey in the third for a total of 6-under 210. It was her third Top-10 of the season but the first since late April in Johannesburg, where she was third. Since then she has had four other Top-25 finishes. Her teammate Pranavi Urs, who is playing her first full season after emerging as the winner of the Order of Merit in Hero Women's Pro Tour in India in 2022, finished T-19 with a final day's card of 72 and Tvesa Malik, slowly making a comeback, was T-41 with a final round of 73.

No unity: Gary slams Pak team

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 17: In a scathing criticism of the beleaguered Pakistan cricket team, head coach Gary Kirsten has said that there is "no unity" in the side and he has "never seen such a situation" in his long coaching career. Kirsten's criticism follows the Pakistan's team's group stage exit from the ongoing T20 World Cup in the USA and West Indies.

Entering the tournament as runners-up from the previous edition, the Pakistan team produced one of its worst performances in recent years and ended the event with a consolation win over Ireland, having suffered a shock loss to newcomers USA before biting the dust against traditional rivals India.

According to media reports in Pakistan, Kirsten, who guided India to ODI World Cup triumph in 2011, pulled no punches in his assessment of the team after being eliminated from the ongoing T20 showpiece.

"There's no unity in Pakistan's team. They call it a team, but it isn't a team. They aren't supporting each other; everyone is separated, left and right. I've



GARY KIRSTEN | COACH, PAKISTAN

worked with many teams, but I've never seen such a situation," Kirsten said as per reports quoting a senior scribe.

Geosuper.tv 4 quoted sources as saying that Kirsten had expressed his displeasure over the fitness level of the players. The former South Africa opener also said the team is far behind in terms of skill level as compared to the rest of the world.

After Pakistan's defeat to India, Kirsten put the team's loss down to poor decision-making. "Disappointing loss, that's for sure," Kirsten had said.

On Sunday, Pakistan beat Ireland by three wickets in their last match of the T20 World Cup, which was held at the Central Broward Regional Park Stadium in Lauderdale, Florida.

Pakistan's defeat to the USA and loss to India meant they were eliminated from the event before the conclusion of the group stage matches.

Eng defeat Serbia in Euro '24 opener



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gelsenkirchen (Germany), June 17: Jude Bellingham scored to give England a winning start at the European Championship by beating Serbia 1-0.

The Real Madrid star put Gareth Southgate's team in front with a stooping header in the 13th minute at the Veltins Arena from Bukayo Saka's cross.

The buildup to the game had been overshadowed by concerns about violence between rival supporters. And some of those fears were realized when police

rushed to separate brawling fans in Gelsenkirchen earlier in the day. England fans were soon celebrating once the game got underway after Bellingham's early goal.

"It's a great start for me personally to get my confidence up and to help the lads get the win is the most important thing," Bellingham said.

Harry Kane so nearly extended the lead in the second half when Serbia goalkeeper Predrag Rajkovic pushed his far post header onto the underside of the bar.

Kane set a record for his coun-

try by making his 23rd appearance at a major tournament. Victory sent England to the top of Group C after Denmark drew 1-1 with Slovenia in an earlier game, with Christian Eriksen scoring three years after suffering a cardiac arrest on the field at the last Euros. England plays Denmark in Frankfurt Thursday.

England was a beaten finalist at the last Euros, losing on penalties to Italy in the final three years ago. It is one of the favorites this time around.

Meanwhile eight people were temporarily detained following the brawl between Serbia and England fans in Gelsenkirchen ahead of the two countries' opening European Championship match, police said Monday.

Romania beat Ukraine 3-0

Romania recorded only its second ever victory at the European Championship – and its first in 24 years – with a 3-0 win over Ukraine Monday to give coach Edward Iordanescu a late birthday present. Nicolae Stanciu put Romania ahead with a long-range strike in the first half before two quickfire goals from Razvan Marin and Denis Mihai Dragus early in the second half. It was Romania's first win at a major tournament since a surprise 3-2 triumph over England 24 years ago. Iordanescu, who was the first coach to lead a Romania team at a European Championship since his father Anghel in 2016, turned 46 years old Sunday. Stanciu also hit the bar as Romania thoroughly beat Ukraine, which is playing at Euro 2024 amid the backdrop of war at home and hoping to give its citizens some joy even as Russian missiles keep raining down on the country. The Ukrainian soccer federation unveiled an installation in Munich of a stadium stand destroyed by Russian troops in May 2022 to highlight the ongoing conflict ahead of the match. It was Romania's first appearance in a major tournament for eight years and several of the players were in tears as the national anthem rang out.

EURO 2024 Ronaldo on verge of European Championship record

PORTUGAL STAR ALREADY HAS THE RECORDS FOR THE MOST GOALS (14) AND APPEARANCES (25) AT THE TOURNAMENT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Leipzig (Germany), June 17: Cristiano Ronaldo can become the first player to feature at six European Championships when Portugal opens its Euro 2024 campaign against the Czech Republic. But Ronaldo is not the only danger for the Czechs, who are making their eight successive appearance.

This will be the fourth meeting between the countries at the tournament. The Czechs won the first 1-0 in 1996, and Portugal won in 2008 and 2012. Portugal has won the last four meetings between the teams, without conceding in the last three.

Both teams reached the knockout stage of Euro 2020, with defending champion Portugal losing to Belgium in the round of 16 while the Czechs lost in the

quarterfinals to Denmark.

While Portugal won Euro 2016, the Czechs need to go back to 1976 for their triumph when the country was still part of Czechoslovakia. Antonin Panenka scored the winning penalty in the shootout against West Germany by softly dinking the ball through the middle while the goalkeeper dived to the side. Other players like Spain's Sergio Ramos have since tried their luck scoring "Panenka" penalties.

Spanish coach Roberto Martinez was in charge of the Belgium team that knocked Portugal out of the last edition. He's now the Portugal coach, and his team eased through qualifying for Euro 2024 as the only team to win every game. Martinez' side scored 36 goals and conceded only two as it qual-



ified with three matches to spare. Even without Ronaldo, Portugal boasts a formidable attacking lineup with Barcelona's Joao Felix, Paris

Saint-Germain's Goncalo Ramos and Milan's Rafael Leao all providing options for Bruno Fernandes in midfield. But it's clear Ronaldo is still

the main attraction for fans. Police had to intervene to remove some enamored supporters from Portugal's open training session in Gutersloh Saturday when they ran onto the field to take selfies with the Portugal star. Some 8,000 fans attended the training session.

Turkey and Georgia are the other teams in Group F. They meet earlier Tuesday in Dortmund. Neither team had any major injury worries before Monday's final news conferences.

By the numbers, Ronaldo, who made his tournament debut at Euro 2004 when Portugal reached the final, already has the records for the most goals (14) and appearances (25) at the tournament. The 39-year-old forward

showed he's not finished yet by scoring two goals as Portugal warmed up with a 3-0 win over Ireland.

Ronaldo bagged five goals at Euro 2020, the same as Czech striker Patrik Schick to share the top-scorer award. Schick is again the main target for the Czech team and arrives at the tournament full of confidence after helping Bayer Leverkusen win the Bundesliga.

What they're saying "Ronaldo always thinks in big proportions, and we want to support him because he is our captain. He's the one who has won the most among us," says Portugal central defender Diogo Dalot. "I believe we all have the highest ambitions and that's clear to see. We could be knocked out in the group stage, or we could win it."