

**Isha's reservation**  
Actor Isha Koppikar addresses the age-gap issue in the Hindi film industry, expressing discomfort working with much older actors  
LEISURE | P2

**Israel pounds Gaza**  
At least 42 people die in Israeli attacks on districts of Gaza City in the north of the Palestinian enclave Saturday  
INTERNATIONAL | P10

**FPIs bullish on India**  
Buoyed by the policy and reform continuity, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) alter their position in equity market following election results  
BUSINESS | P11

**Invincible trio**  
The Indian compound women's archery team continue their imperious form this season, securing a hat-trick of WC gold medals  
SPORTS | P12

## Appointment of corporation heads revoked in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 22:** A day after relieving advisors appointed by the previous BJD government in various departments, the new BJP government in the state Saturday revoked appointment of chairpersons in various government corporations made by the previous dispensation due to 'lack of qualitative progress in the management of these bodies'.  
"Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has revoked the appointments of chairpersons in government corporations made by the previous government over lack of qualitative progress in the management of the said corporations," read a statement released by the Chief Minister's Office. **MORE P3**

## Man kills, buries dad over property; mother missing

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Khaira, June 22:** In a spine-chilling incident, a man allegedly killed and buried his father over property dispute at Garasang village under Simulia police limits and this block in Balasore district.  
The accused was identified as Ramesh Behera, son of the victim Pravakar Behera. On the other hand, the disappearance of Pravakar's wife Champa has made the case more intriguing.  
Pravakar, Champa and Ramesh were living in Garasang village. It was the villagers who smelled something fishy after they found the trio missing since June 17.  
Adding to their suspicion, they noticed a foul smell emanating from a pit near the house Friday and saw dogs digging the ground in the abandoned area.  
The villagers then informed Pravakar's younger daughter Mamata Malik, who filed a complaint at the Simulia police station Friday. When the abandoned pit was dug up Saturday, only Prabhakar's body was found, and there was no trace of Champa.  
Prabhakar's two married daughters, Basanti Jena and Mamata, alleged that their brother always tormented their parents over land disputes and had cut off their access to the house. They expressed firm belief that Ramesh is the murderer and demanded strict action against him. Simulia IIC stated that efforts are on to arrest Ramesh.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



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**WEATHER**

BBSR	CTC
Max Temp 35.0°C	34.0°C
Min Temp 25.4°C	25.0°C
Humidity 77%	83%
Rainfall 8.1mm	Nil
<b>FORECAST</b>	
PARTLY CLOUDY SKY	



**DIVINE BATH:** Lord Jagannath and Lord Balabhadra adorn Hati Besha, while Devi Subhadra in Padma Besha during Debasana Purnima at Srimandir, Puri, Saturday (MORE ON P3) OP PHOTO

# NEET-PG on hold; NTA DG shunted

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 22:** In a significant development, NEET-PG entrance examination, scheduled to be held June 23 got postponed while the Director General of National Testing Agency (NTA) Subodh Singh was shunted out, Saturday.  
The Union Health Ministry said it has decided to put on hold the NEET-PG entrance test, as a 'precautionary measure' in the wake of recent allegations on the integrity of certain competitive examinations.  
Ministry of Health has decided to undertake a thorough assessment of the robustness of processes of the NEET-PG entrance examination, conducted by the NTA for medical students, it said.  
"It has accordingly been decided, as a precautionary measure to postpone the NEET-PG entrance examination, scheduled to be held tomorrow -- 23rd June, 2024," the Ministry said.  
The fresh date of this examination will be notified at the earliest, it said.  
"Ministry of Health sincerely regrets the inconvenience caused to the students," the Ministry added.  
In a related development, NTA

## Panel formed to monitor entrances

**NEW DELHI:** The Ministry of Education has formed a high-level committee of experts led by former ISRO chief K Radhakrishnan to ensure transparent, smooth and fair conduct of examinations through the NTA. The seven-member committee will make recommendations on reforms in the mechanism of the examination process, improvement in data security protocols and the structure and functioning of the NTA, according to a release. The committee will submit its report to the ministry within two months. Central University of Hyderabad Vice-Chancellor Professor BJ Rao and former director of AIIMS-Delhi Randeep Guleria are on the panel. The other members are Ramamurthy K, Professor Emeritus, Department of Civil Engineering, IIT-Madras, Pankaj Bansal, Co-Founder, People Strong and Board Member- Karmayogi Bharat, Professor Aditya Mittal, Dean Student Affairs, IIT Delhi and Govind Jaiswal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education, Government of India.

Director General Subodh Singh was shunted out, amid a massive controversy over alleged irregularities in competitive exams NEET and NET.  
An official said he has been put on 'compulsory wait' in the Department of Personnel and Training till further orders.  
India Trade Promotion Organisation Chairman and Managing Director Pradeep Singh Kharola has been assigned additional charge of the testing agency till appointment of a regular incumbent.  
"NTA DG has been put on compulsory wait in the Department of Personnel and Training. Pradeep Singh Kharola

## 53RD GST COUNCIL MEET

# Bio-authentication among key decisions

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 22:** The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council at its 53rd meeting here Saturday decided to roll out Pan-India biometric authentication to check fake invoicing.  
"There is going to be a rolling out of biometric-based Aadhaar authentication on an all-India basis. This will help us to combat fraudulent input tax credit claims made through fake invoices in the cases," the minister announced at the briefing after the 53rd GST Council meet.  
There were some other important announcements made by the Finance Minister after the GST Council meeting also.  
Sitharaman also announced that the GST Council had recommended extending the time limit for small taxpayers to submit their returns from April 30 to June 30.  
"In order to help small taxpayers, the Council recommended extending the time limit to furnish the detail and the returns in the form GSTR 4 from 30th April, the council has recommended that it be extended to 30th June. This will apply for returns for the Financial Year 2024-25 onwards," the minister added.  
She further announced that the GST Council had recommended waiving interest and penalties for demand notices issued under

## Centre intends to levy GST on petrol, diesel

**New Delhi:** The Finance Minister also talked about the intention of the Central government to bring petrol and diesel under GST, and it is now up to the states to come together and decide on the rate. She said a provision has already been made by former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley by including petrol and diesel into GST law. What is remaining is for the states to come together to discuss and decide on the rate of the levy.  
"The intention of the GST, as was brought in by my predecessor, was to have petrol and diesel in GST. It is up to the states now... to decide on the rate," Sitharaman said. **P11**

Section 73 of the GST Act including cases not involving fraud, suppression or misstatements.  
"Services provided by Indian Railways like platform tickets exempted from GST," the Finance Minister said.  
The Finance Minister further announced that the GST Council recommended monetary limits for filing appeals by the department in various courts. "In order to reduce government litigation, the council has recommended a monetary limit of 20 lakh for GST appellate tribunal, 1 crore for High Court and 2 crore for Supreme Court for filing of appeals by the department," she said.

## CM asks officials to remain prepared for possible floods

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, June 22:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Saturday directed officials to remain prepared to tackle possible floods during the ongoing monsoon season.  
Majhi, while chairing a high-level meeting of the Water Resources Department, asked the officials concerned to open a 24x7 control room and take necessary steps for effective management of floods.  
"The chief minister asked the officials to strengthen river embankments and focus on weak and vulnerable points," Development Commissioner and Additional Chief Secretary of Water Resources Department, Anu Garg, told reporters after the meeting.  
She said that the Chief Minister was apprised of various steps taken by the department regarding possible floods.  
"We informed the Chief Minister that we have already completed mock drills on the opening of gates of different dams. Our engineers and local tehsildars are regularly checking the embankments for detection of any cracks or rat holes so that urgent repair can be taken up," Garg said.

## 2nd AIIMS, Paradip Port expansion in budget wish list



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, June 22:** The new BJP government in state has submitted a memorandum to the Centre seeking expansion of Paradip Port, a second AIIMS at Sambalpur and higher allocation of funds to further accelerate infrastructure development in Odisha, an official release said Saturday.  
The memorandum was submitted by Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo who attended the meeting of Finance Ministers of the states before the Union Budget. The meeting was chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi Saturday.  
The state government memorandum sought higher allocation under the Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment, to further accelerate infrastructure development.  
Apart from the demand for the establishment of a second AIIMS at Sambalpur, the state government also sought expeditious completion of National Highways, specifically the Coastal Highway and Capital Region Ring Road projects, in Odisha.  
The new state government also sought partial support from the Centre for the implementation of the Subhadra Scheme to promote women's welfare. As per the scheme, the state government would pay ₹50,000 to every eligible woman. It also asked for sanction of funds for construction of at least 5 lakh houses for rural and urban areas under PMAY and support of the Central Government for new city development and rapid urbanisation in Odisha.  
While addressing power sector issues through inclusion of Odisha DISCOMs under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme, the state wanted financial support for adoption of new technologies such as green hydrogen, and green energy corridor projects in Odisha. "The FM has assured to look into the demands raised by Odisha," the release issued by the CMO said.

# Escaped pet donkey found 'living best life' with elk

AGENCIES

**New York, June 22:** A pet donkey that escaped his owners five years ago in California has been found 'living his best life' with a herd of wild elk.  
Terrie and Dave Drewry, of Auburn, are convinced the animal, filmed by a hiker earlier in June, is their pet 'Diesel'.  
The couple says they are relieved the animal is safe - and have decided to let him wander free with a new family as a 'wild burro'. Diesel was spooked and took off during a hiking trip with Drewry near Clear Lake, California in 2019.  
Weeks of volunteer searches



proved fruitless, and a trail camera image a few months later was the last time he was seen.  
"We finally kind of gave up," Terrie told BBC's news partner, CBS. "Just no signs of him," she added.  
Then hiker Max Fennell spotted the herd earlier this month, describing the donkey as 'happy and healthy', and posted his film on social media.  
"It was amazing. It was like, oh my gosh. Finally, we saw him. Finally, we know he's good. He's living his best life. He's happy. He's healthy, and it was just a relief," Terrie said.  
The elk herd is a few miles away from where Diesel first

went missing and in an area where there are no wild donkeys.  
"Two completely different creatures, but they learn to get along and be each other's family," Terrie pointed out.  
The Drewrys have adopted new donkeys since Diesel's disappearance and do not plan on trying to capture their missing pet.  
"To catch him would be next to impossible," they said, adding, "He is truly a wild burro now. He's out there doing what he's raised to do."  
She said Diesel is about eight years old and donkeys can live for up to 40 years.

# leisure



## OLIVIA TO RETURN IN THE NIGHT MANAGER SEQUEL

Oscar-winning actress Olivia Colman will be reuniting with British actor Tom Hiddleston for the second season of their critically acclaimed show, *The Night Manager*. Colman will reprise her role as intelligence agent Angela Burr.

## LAWRENCE TO STAR IN HER OWN PRODUCTION

Actress Jennifer Lawrence is set to feature in and produce an upcoming murder mystery. The Oscar-winning actor has partnered with Apple Original Film and A24 for the film, titled *The Wives*, reports *The Hollywood Reporter*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
You will be impulsive today, and this may throw up unexpected results. In a rush of enthusiasm, you may finish pending work and even be left with enough time to plan long-term goals. You may also realise and make amends for your past mistakes, says Ganesh.

**TAURUS**  
You may spend a majority of your time on your health and well-being today. Business lunch may see some pending negotiations reaching a successful outcome. Research work will progress better than expected, says Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
Today, the bond that you share with your friends will get stronger. You are also likely to fall in love. If you are already in a relationship, you will plan to validate your bond either through an engagement or marriage. If you are a student, this is a good phase for you. Along with love, you will also get good grades.

**CANCER**  
There is every possibility that today, you will be probing and prying about your future, predicts Ganesh. A visit to a well-known astrologer cannot be ruled out. Also, you are likely to consult a doctor. It is all due to your bad lifestyle and habits. You had better improve your lifestyle.

**LEO**  
Fortune smiles on but a few, and when it does, it can take you to places you have never even dreamt of. Today is an exceptional day, in the sense that Lady Luck is backing you in all earnestness. So go with the flow and take your chances. You will find, much to your delight, that success is easy to achieve when you are willing to work hard and have luck guiding you.

**VIRGO**  
Reflect on past glories and assemble the machinery for accomplishing more in the future. New relationships will mark the road to progress. You easy-going nature will help you get along famously with people.

**LIBRA**  
Today might be a good day to invest in that body armour you saw on the telly last night. At least find one that will shield you from being at the receiving end of your seniors and the daily grind of life. If you happen to be a job aspirant, be prepared to slog it out for your success. Put off auction bids and sealed tenders for a luckier day.

**SCORPIO**  
House renovation is in the offing. You may furnish it with portraits and artefacts. Today, you may also feel like playing the stock market game and stake your bets, says Ganesh. Have a great time at home by hosting friends over.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Personal grooming will be on your mind today. A small fortune may be spent on enhancing the way you look, especially on a new hair-do. Retail Therapy is on the cards, and you may indulge spending on clothes and jewellery.

**CAPRICORN**  
It's difficult to keep calm and have a control over your temper in times of distress, but today, you will prove all who surrendered to the whims of adversity wrong, foresees Ganesh. You will be unfaltering in dealing with problems, and will overcome them with ease. At home, you will be content and at peace, and this will also reflect in your work, adding to your already high efficiency.

**AQUARIUS**  
The day seems normal as you are unlikely to encounter unpleasant situations, says Ganesh. The high point of the day will be your consummate skill with which you will handle mundane tasks. Ganesh reminds you of the saying, "Success is one percent inspiration and 99% perspiration."

**PISCES**  
Fear is a part and parcel of life, and while it can not be eliminated, it can certainly be tamed, and that is what you will be doing today. All your suppressed audacity will be on full display, says Ganesh.

## Sara redefines sibling goals

**Mumbai:** Actress Sara Ali Khan revealed a more introspective side of their relationship, admitting that she often took on a motherly role towards her younger brother, Ibrahim, whom she now recognises as more mature and sorted than herself.

In an interview, the *Kedarnath* actress acknowledged that her protective and nurturing behaviour towards Ibrahim started from their upbringing with a single mother, actress Amrita Singh. This unique family structure, she explained, sometimes blurred the lines of traditional sibling roles. "I feel like I should apologise to Ibrahim for trying to mother him too much," she admitted, expressing regret for her

overly maternal approach. The actress described Ibrahim as a solid guy who is much more sorted and mature than she is, despite her academic achievements. She praised his grounded nature and admitted that while Ibrahim often sought her advice, she found herself turning to him for guidance even more frequently.

Reflecting on their relationship, the actress noted that Ibrahim had effectively grown up with two mothers due to her overprotectiveness. Despite this, their bond remains strong, characterised by mutual respect and affection.

On the professional front, Sara Ali Khan is gearing up for her next big project, *Metro...In Dino*, directed by Anurag Basu.



**Mumbai:** Actress Patralekhaa, in an exclusive chat with *HTCity Showstoppers*, opened up about her decade-long journey in the film industry.

Reflecting on her early success with *CityLights*, she noted, "The film did really well. It is a beautiful feeling because very rarely does an actor at the beginning of their career get a part like that, a film like that." Despite the acclaim, she admitted it didn't significantly advance her career, attributing this to timing or destiny. However, working with talented individuals helped her grow as an artist during her early formative years. Her path was challenging, re-

calling the lack of structure and agency support early on and often auditioning five times a day. Even now, she continues to rigorously audition, believing in earning every role. "Whatever I was getting offered or whatever I've been part of, 80-90% of the work that I have done, I have gotten only through auditions," she shared.

Discussing her script choices, she emphasised her evolved approach. Initially accepting any role offered, she now prioritises the overall story and the director's vision, considering them crucial to her decisions.

Having completed a decade in the industry, Patralekhaa highlighted the importance of persistence and perseverance, stating, "Keep cool; just put your head down and keep working. There's no other way." She revealed she doesn't set specific goals, instead focusing on an envisioned place in her mind and working towards it.



## Isha weighs in on age-gap in B-town

**Mumbai:** Actress Isha Koppikar was recently seen in the Tamil science-fiction action film *Ayalaan*. She recently addressed the age-gap among actors in the Hindi film industry. Isha, while recalling her experience in the industry, opined, "You do feel uncomfortable when you work with someone 30 or 20 years older than you. I felt uncomfortable when I was working with elderly heroes. You don't get the feeling that you are hugging your partner or lover; you feel like you are hugging your father. I used to feel that. I was new; I thought this was the norm. You are an actor; you focus on your part and forget they are elderly. You wouldn't feel cringe with everyone; some of them had maintained themselves very well and wouldn't look their age, but some obviously had that air and demeanour of a senior, due to their age and experience in the industry."

She further said, "They should understand how they look and accordingly play the part. I hope this changes, because the audience is not foolish. I have seen them in theatres saying, 'Ye kitna buddha lag raha hai, ghar pe baith; apni beti ki umar ki ladki saath romance kar raha hai.' They say this

bluntly, which is the truth. Because of social media, everyone knows this."



## Shriya to serve as jury for IFFLA

**Mumbai:** Actress Shriya Pilgaonkar, who is known for her work in series such as *Mirzapur*, *Guilty Minds*, *Taaza Khabar*, and *The Broken News 2*, shared about joining the jury panel of the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles (IFFLA) for the shorts category at the 2024 edition of the festival.

"I am honoured and thrilled to be invited as a jury member for the short film category at the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles 2024. I look forward to attending the festival in LA and watching these stellar shorts by emerging South Asian filmmakers," she said.

The actress added, "The atmosphere at film festivals is always creatively energising and deeply inspiring. I'm excited to meet and interact with diverse storytellers and performers and to witness the incredible lineup of films at IFFLA."

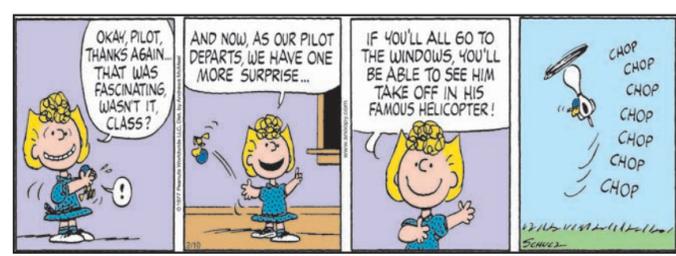
Shriya has also made her mark in international projects, including the British series *Beecham House* and the French film *Unplus One*. The festival will commence June 27 and conclude June 30.

This year, the intriguing submissions in the Shorts Programme include *Hema* featuring Rajshri Deshpande, *Last Days of Summer*, and *Lori*, among others. Additionally, the festival will close with *Maharaja*, starring Vijay Sethupathi and Anurag Kashyap. Guneet Monga and Karan Johar's *Kill*, starring Lakshya, are some of the films from India at IFFLA 2024.

## Patralekhaa narrates her showbiz journey

### FUN post

#### PEANUTS



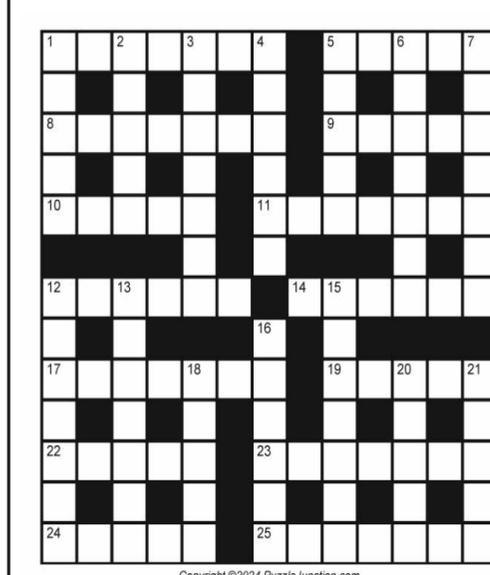
#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### BREVITY



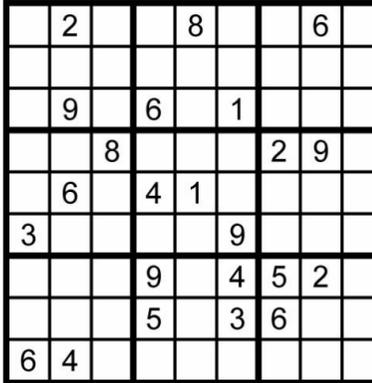
#### CROSSWORD



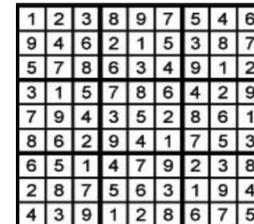
- Across**
- 1 Metalworks
  - 5 Demolish
  - 8 Storehouse of weapons
  - 9 Burnt sienna
  - 10 Clan emblem
  - 11 Taxing
  - 12 Meagre
  - 14 Wicker material
  - 17 Appraise
  - 19 Marriage and others
  - 22 Kind of nerve
  - 23 Sugar pill
  - 24 Marsh plant
  - 25 Preserve
  - Down**
  - 1 Banquet
  - 2 Unexpected sports outcome
  - 3 Forceful
  - 4 Jaundiced
  - 5 Sample
  - 6 Winter wear
  - 7 Go-between
  - 12 Sends for
  - 13 Conformed
  - 15 Forward passes
  - 16 Lures
  - 18 Tio, in Spain
  - 20 Greek letter
  - 21 Pass out

#### 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.

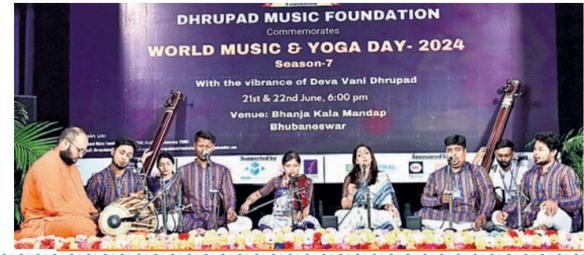


#### SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Artistes perform during the seventh season of World Music & Yoga Day 2024 organised by Dhrupad Music Foundation at Bhanja Kala Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Saturday



# downtown

## LAKHS WITNESS SACRED BATH, HATI BESHA

PNN & AGENCIES

**Puri, June 22:** Braving heavy downpour, lakhs of devotees thronged the Grand Road of the Pilgrim City here to witness the Snana Jatra (bathing ritual) of the Srimandir deities and the Hati Besha (elephant attire) of Lord Jagannath and His elder brother Lord Balabhadra, Saturday.

The royal bathing ceremony is considered a prelude to the world famous Rath Yatra of the sibling deities scheduled for July 7.

As per the schedule, the deities were escorted out of the sanctum sanctorum of the 12th century shrine to the Snana Bedi (bathing altar), situated on a huge raised platform overlooking the Grand Road facing the east, in ceremonial Pahandi procession that began at 5:20am and concluded at 7:45am amidst beats of drums and cymbals and chants of 'Haribol' and 'Jai Jagannath'.

After a complex set of rituals, servitors conducted the bathing ceremony of the deities using 108 pitchers of aromatic and herbal water drawn from the golden well of the temple. The ceremony began at 1:10pm and continued for about an hour. Thereafter, the deities were dressed in new clothes.

Gajapati Dibyasingha Deb performed Chherapahanra and offered arati and his prayers. This ceremony began at 2:35pm and was over by 3:10pm.

It took the servitors around an hour for decorating Lord Jagannath and Lord Balabhadra with Hati Besha and Devi Subhadra with Padma Besha (lotus attire), process for which began at about 3:20pm.

As per the legend, Lord Jagannath had given darshan as Lord Ganesh to Ganapati Bhatt, a staunch devotee of Lord Vinayaka, on the bathing altar in 15th century. Traditionally, Raghav Das and Gopal Das mutts provide the elephant attire for the deities.

While devotees witnessed all rituals, Badadanda Sahan Mela (public darshan) was allowed from 7:30pm till late night.

"Today, instead of regular three bhogs, the deities were offered one single bhog comprising 39 items," said a temple source.



After unmaking the Hati Besha and Padma Besha at 11pm, servitors performed the Bahuda Pahandi and the deities were carried to the Anasara Gruha (asylum for sick).

It is believed that deities catch fever after the bathing ritual and go through medication at the Anasara Gruha for around a fortnight before flaunting their rejuvenated youthhood on the

occasion of Nabajouban Darshan. This year, as per the temple almanac, the Anasara days have been reduced to 13 against the regular of 15. During these days, the

temple Baidya (doctor) would treat them with herbal medicine, while the deities would be served fruit as a diet by the Daita servitors. Public darshan of the deities during these 13 days would be prohibited.

As per legends, Lord Jagannath, during the Anasara period, manifests in Alarnath deb. Devotees rush to Alarnath temple, 23km away from Puri, to have the darshan of the deity.

About 68 platoons of police and other security personnel were deployed for the ritual,

while District Magistrate Siddharth Shankar Swain, Superintendent of Police Pinak Mishra, and SJTA Chief Administrator Vir Vikram Yadav were looking after the festival arrangements.

Devotees had to pass through metal detectors installed at the main gate of the temple, manned by armed police contingents, to enter the shrine and witness the Hati Besha and Padma Besha at the Snana Mandap and exit from the other three gates of the temple.

## Govt revokes appointment of corpn heads

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 22:** A day after relieving advisors appointed by the previous BJD government in various departments, the new BJP government in the state Saturday revoked appointment of chairpersons in various government corporations made by the previous dispensation due to 'lack of qualitative progress in the management of these bodies'.

"Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has revoked the appointments of chairpersons in government corporations made by the previous government over lack of qualitative progress in the management of the said corporations," read a statement released by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO).

Earlier, following the defeat of BJD in the just concluded Assembly polls, chairpersons of various government corporations and boards had put down their papers.

Sangram Keshari Paikaray, chairperson of Odisha Khadi and Village Industries Board, has resigned from his post June 9. Paikaray had been appointed as the chief of Khadi Board by the Naveen Patnaik-led BJD government around two years ago.

Similarly, Chinmoy Kumar Sahoo, chairperson of Odisha Small Industries Corporation (OSIC) Limited, too submitted his resignation following the change in guard in the state.

Sahoo had been appointed as the chief of the OSIC by the BJD government in 2022.

Notably, the BJD failed to win the 2024 Assembly polls in the state. The party managed to secure only 51 Assembly seats out of the total 147.

On Friday BJD, the government led by CM Majhi had relieved advisors appointed by previous government in various department as their presence had 'not brought about any improvement in the government works'.

## Govt buys 71,000 tonne onion for buffer stock

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 22:** The government has bought nearly 71,000 tonnes of onion so far this year for buffer stock, out of the total target of procuring 5 lakh tonnes for price stabilization and it expects retail prices to ease with the progress of monsoon over most parts of the country.

According to data compiled by the Department of Consumer Affairs, the all-India average onion retail prices stood at Rs 38.67 per kg Friday, while the modal price was Rs 40 per kg.

Till June 20, the Centre has procured 70,987 tonnes of onion, as against 74,071 tonnes procured in the same period last year, a sen-

ior official in the department of consumer affairs said.

"The pace of onion procurement for price stabilisation buffer this year is largely comparable with last year, despite about 20 per cent decline in estimated rabi production," the official said, adding that the government is on course to achieve targeted procurement of 5 lakh tonnes for price stabilisation.

The government will exercise the option of holding or releasing onions from the buffer in order to maintain stability in prices of onion, the official said.

The procurement price is a dynamic one, linked to prevailing market prices.



IN FULL SWING: Maharana servitors busy constructing chariots at Rath Yard in Puri, Saturday

OP PHOTO

## Man held for killing friend

DEBADURLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

**Bhubaneswar, June 22:** Tamando police Saturday arrested a 27-year-old man for allegedly hacking his friend to death over some petty issues.

The accused was identified as Ranjan Deep, a history-shelter from Boudh district, who has been booked thrice for some other criminal cases.

IIC of Tamando police station Subrat Kumar Meher said Deep works as a labourer at a construction site near CV Raman College. The deceased, Susanta Satapathy, 40, used to have frequent fights with Deep over some trivial issues but later they manage to resolve the scuffles amicably.

"On the fateful day Saturday, a little past mid-night, both were in an inebriated state when a fight broke out between them. The situation ex-

acerbated when Susanta hurled abuses at Deep and asked him to comfort him by pressing his legs. Feeling humiliated, an infuriated Deep picked an iron rod lying nearby and hit several times on Ranjan's head and other parts of his body. A profusely bleeding Susanta died at the spot. Deep fled the spot to evade police action," he said.

Deep was reportedly under the influence of alcohol.

Later, the cops began an investigation and arrested Ranjan from Gohria Square following a tip-off. Preliminary investigations revealed that Deep has some aggressive behavioural issues which were seen in the past. He had also assaulted his father over a personal issue in the past.

Tamando police have arrested Deep under Sections 239 and 302 of IPC, and produced him before a local court Saturday.

## Manipur deer dies at NZP

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Barang, June 22:** A six-year-old Manipur deer was found dead at Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) here Saturday.

According to sources, as part of a plan to shift the deer to the herbivore safari, the animal was administered tranquiliser by the zoo veterinarians at enclosure no-39 Friday, when it was extremely hot inside the zoo. When the deer lost its sense, wildlife workers took it to the safari. However, the herbivore was found dead in the safari Saturday morning. Reports, meanwhile, said the deer was pregnant.

Sources said the Manipur deer died as it was tranquilised during a hot Friday. With this, the population of Manipur deer has now reduced to 11, comprising seven females and four males.

## Chimps found to 'seek out' plants to heal injuries, infections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 22:** Chimpanzees sought out and ate medicinal plants to treat their injuries, according to a study.

While wild chimpanzees are known to consume a variety of plant matter, researchers said it can be hard to figure out if they intentionally seek out medicinal plants to heal their ailments, or "passively" consume plants that happen to be medicinal.

The study is published in the journal PLoS ONE.

At the Budongo Central Forest Reserve in Uganda, the researchers, including those at the University of Oxford, UK, observed the behaviours and health of 51 wild chimpanzees, belonging to two habituated com-



munities. The researchers observed a male chimpanzee with an injured hand seek out and eat the leaves of a fern, which may have

helped to reduce pain and swelling. They also recorded another chimpanzee with a parasitic infection consuming the bark of a cat-thorn tree (Scutia

myrtina). Researchers during a study conducted at the Budongo Central Forest Reserve in Uganda observed a male chimpanzee with an injured hand seek out and eat the leaves of a fern, which may have helped to reduce pain and swelling. They also recorded another chimpanzee with a parasitic infection consuming the bark of a cat-thorn tree (Scutia myrtina).

The team also tested the plant extracts of tree and herb species in the reserve, which they suspected were being consumed by the chimpanzees to self-medicate, for anti-inflammatory and antibiotic properties.

The species included plants not part of the chimpanzees' normal diet, but being consumed for their healing properties.

The authors found 88 per cent of the plant extracts had anti-

bacterial properties, arresting the growth of bacteria, while 33 per cent of them had anti-inflammatory properties.

Deadwood from a tree in the Dogbane family (Alstonia boonei) showed the strongest antibacterial activity and also had anti-inflammatory properties, suggesting it could be used to treat wounds, they said.

Bark and resin from the East African mahogany tree (Khaya anthotheca) and leaves from a

fern (Christella parasitica) were found to exhibit potent anti-inflammatory effects.

The results suggested that chimpanzees looked for and ate specific plants for their medicinal effects, and the study was one of the first to document evidence of this kind, the authors said.

The medicinal plants growing in Budongo Central Forest Reserve could also be helpful for the development of new drugs to address the challenges of antibiotic-resistant bacteria and chronic inflammatory diseases, the authors said.

The findings demonstrated how watching and learning from our primate cousins may fast-track the discovery of novel medicines, along with emphasising the importance of protecting our forest pharmacies, they said.

# Sishu Bhawan new building inoperative

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, June 22: Expansion of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Post Graduate Institute of Paediatrics (SVPPGIP), also known as Sishu Bhawan, has hit roadblocks as the newly constructed building is yet to be dedicated to the public, thanks to shortage of manpower.

Sources said the construction of the seven-storied building, involving an expenditure of more than ₹127 crore, was completed in 2023 following which the Works department handed over the facility to the hospital authorities. However, it is yet to provide services due to lack of staff, they added.

Keeping in view, the crucial role played by Sishu Bhawan in treatment of children, the previous government had drawn bigger plans for renovation and modification of the facility.

However, the new building remaining inoperative since last one year, despite its completion, has raised several questions over the efficacy of the administration. Orissa POST tried to elicit the response of Sishu Bhawan Superintendent Pardeep Kumar Jena, but to no avail.

According to sources, Sishu Bhawan expansion project started in February 2020 with an expenditure of ₹127.35 crore, aims to have more number of



medical wards, hostels for medical students and other departments.

Currently, two OPDs are functional at the hospital, of which one is dedicated to Surgery department while the other one is a normal OPD. The ground floor of the multi-utility complex is constructed on 3,682-sqft area, which will facilitate 10 new OPDs, along with four super-specialty OPDs. This apart, 47 casualty beds and one minor operation theatre (OT) will be available for the general patients on the ground floor.

The first floor with 3,022-sqft area will have 110 beds. The second floor will have all the important units, constructed in 3,470-sqft area. This will facilitate 30 beds dedicated to high dependency unit (HDU), 15 beds for pediatric intensive care unit (PICU), 40 for neonatal intensive

care unit (NICU), and 11 for kangaroo mother care unit (KMCU). Similarly, six beds have been dedicated to feeding room while 60 beds are reserved for medicine ward.

The fifth and sixth floor of the new building will be used for administrative purpose.

A conference room, seminar hall and training hall will also be situated in the sixth floor. Similarly, the third floor will have 300 beds for the newborn unit, while 92 beds are reserved for restroom for mothers. Likewise, 22 beds will be allocated for KMCU. The fourth floor will have 40 pediatric surgery wards and three OTs.

For the construction of the new hostel, 4,974-sqft of area will be used for 124 rooms, out of which 50 will be for female, as many for male medical students and 24 for married doctors.

## Top Hong Kong honour for Dhanada Mishra

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 22: Dhanada Kanta Mishra has been recently honoured with a coveted spot on the Diversity List 2024, unveiled by the renowned Zubin Foundation of Hong Kong.

The announcement was made during a gala lunch attended by guests including Chief Secretary of Hong Kong SAR Eric Chan, previous Diversity List honorees and prominent personalities from Hong Kong's ethnic minority community and organisations.

Zubin Foundation advocates ethnic minority inclusion, working towards eliminating social disparities and creating equal opportunities through various initiatives.

It brings out the Diversity List as a platform to highlight the crucial role played by ethnic minorities in the vibrant fabric of Hong Kong society.

From an initial pool of 73 preliminary nominations, 21 exceptional nominees were selected for the Diversity List 2024 following a rigorous evaluation process.

Mishra arrived in Hong Kong in 2017 as a visiting research scholar at HKUST and has made significant contributions to the



field of engineering thereafter. He joined the startup RaSpect AI and has played a key role in advancing automated safety inspection of built infrastructure, thereby enabling growth of the startup beyond the shores of Hong Kong.

"Dhanada is a distinguished academic in the field of engineering, whose extensive research experience in emerging building materials has greatly contributed to our understanding of superior infrastructure and sustainability in industrial technology. His expertise holds immense potential to enhance civil engineering in HKSAR," said Theresa Cunanan, member of the Diversity List Committee.

## Application process begins at WSC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 22: In order to give diverse job prospects in country and abroad, one-year advanced training courses in various cutting-edge subjects are being offered at the World Skill Center (WSC) under the aegis of the state government.

The application process for the enrollment in September session of the 2024-25 batch started from June 22. Interested candidates can apply till August 30 for getting admission under 'School of Engineering'.

A special entrance test will be conducted in online mode for the candidates.

Admission in 'Precision Engineering' is also being introduced. Under the new course, modules like engineering drawing and inspection techniques, engineering process (turning), engineering process, 3D CAD/CAM applications, CNC sheet metal fabrication and grinding shall be taught to the students.



Candidates must have completed two years ITI or three years Diploma from any government or private industrial training or polytechnic institute for enrollment.

Interested candidates can apply by registering on WSC website www.worldskillcenter.org. Candidates can also contact 1800 266 6002 for more information about enrollment.

WSC was set up by Odisha Skill Development Authority under the Skill Development and Technical Education Department. The centre is equipped with the necessary infrastructure, ultra-modern laboratories and world-class equipment with courses of international standard.

Hostel, food, uniforms and bus facility for transportation to and from the hostel are provided free of cost at WSC.

The center provides opportunities for students to go abroad and gain unique experience. Under this programme, 40 students from the center are selected and sent to Singapore for a two-week student exchange programme.

## SAMANTA CONFERRED LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD BY ISTE

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 22: KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta was conferred with the Lifetime Achievement Award by Indian Society for Technical Education (ISTE) at its 53rd session which commenced at KIIT Deemed to be University (KIIT-DU) here, Saturday.

The conclave of the country's premier body of technical education is being hosted by Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) and supported by KIIT-DU.

ISTE honorary fellowship was presented to IIT Delhi Director Rangan Banerjee, VTU Regional Director Baswaraj Gadgay, AICTE Advisor Rajendra Baliram Kakde, Bihar State Disaster Management Authority Senior Advisor Anil Kumar and Major General (Retd) Mahesh Kumar Hada.

KIIT-DU VC Saranjit Singh was presented the ISTE National Award for Best Administrator: The ISTE Best Clean and Green Campus Award also went to KIIT-DU.

The ISTE Best Technical University Award was received



by the VC of Vel Tech Rangarajan Sagunthala R&D Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai.

In his acceptance speech, Samanta reminisced about the 24-year relationship between KIIT, KISS and ISTE, and recalled how KIIT and KISS, established in 1997 and granted deemed university status in 2004, had hosted the ISTE convention in 2001 when KIIT was merely four years old.

"When we approached the then-president of ISTE, everybody was surprised. With much reluctance, they gave me the opportunity," Samanta said, highlighting how that convention transformed the nature of ISTE conventions, mark-

ing KIIT and KISS as significant contributors to the technical education landscape.

This year's convention, themed 'Viksit Bharat 2047: Alignment with Higher Education Institutions', aims to align higher education with the vision of a developed India by 2047.

Samanta underscored the importance of the National Education Policy (NEP), asserting that its proper implementation would be instrumental in realising the dream of a Viksit Bharat.

ISTE president Pratapsinh Kakasaheb Desai lauded KIIT's phenomenal and miraculous growth, and termed it as a model for other organisations.

## Duo held for assault

DEBADURLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 22: The Lingaraj police arrested a father-son duo on the charges of assaulting a daily-wage labourer near Ananta Basudev Temple here, Saturday.

The accused were identified as Papu Parida, 50 and his son Prapat Parida, 20. They are natives of Nayagarh district. The complainant, Papuna Behera, and the duo work at a construction site in the City, IIC of Lingaraj police station Purnachandra Pradhan said.

According to Pradhan, Papuna attacked the duo, June 19, as Papu and Prapat hurled abuses at him. Following a scuffle, Papuna attacked them with a wooden plank. The locals, however, intervened and pacified them.

On the other hand, the duo was seething with anger against Papuna for assaulting them. While the latter was returning home after work Friday night, the father-son duo attacked him with an iron rod inflicting him severe injury on head. Papuna's arms were also fractured.

The Lingaraj police has booked the duo under Sections 341 and 323 of IPC and produced them before a local court Saturday.

## 'Defer implementation of new criminal laws'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 22: Congress leader Jairam Ramesh Saturday demanded that the enforcement of the three criminal laws, which are to come into force from July 1, be deferred, saying the Bills were 'bulldozed' through Parliament.

In a post on X, Ramesh said the implementation of the Bills be deferred to enable a thorough review and re-examination by a reconstituted Standing Committee on Home Affairs as they were passed at a time when 146 MPs had been suspended.

"December 25 2023," the President of India had given her assent to the Bharatiya

Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023. The three far-reaching Bills had been bulldozed through Parliament without proper debate and discussion, and at a time when 146 MPs had been suspended from the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha," Ramesh said.

"Earlier the Bills had been bulldozed through the Standing Committee on Home Affairs without detailed interactions with stakeholders across the country and completely ignoring the written and very detailed dissent notes of a number of MPs belonging to dif-



ferent political parties, including the Indian National Congress (INC), who were members of the Standing Committee," he said.

Ramesh said the three new laws are to come into effect from July 1, and the Congress is of the firm opinion that the date should be deferred to en-

able a thorough review and re-examination of the laws.

He said the panel should have more extensive and meaningful consultations with various legal experts and organisations "who have serious concerns on the three laws as they stand", after which it should be scrutinised by the 18th Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha as well.

Friday, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanding deferment of the implementation of the three criminal laws, saying they were 'hurriedly passed'. Similar demands have been made by the DMK as well.

## Thin-film solar cells could help satellites withstand cosmic rays

The space environment is harsh and full of extreme radiation. Scientists designing spacecraft and satellites need materials that can withstand these conditions.

In a paper published in January 2024, materials researchers demonstrated that a next-generation semiconductor material called metal-halide perovskite can actually recover and heal itself from radiation damage.

Metal-halide perovskites are a class of materials discovered in 1839 that are found abundantly in Earth's crust. They absorb sunlight and efficiently convert it into electricity, making them a potentially good fit for space-based solar panels that can power satellites or future space habitats. Researchers make perovskites

in the form of inks, and then coat the inks onto glass plates or plastic, creating thin, film like devices that are lightweight and flexible.

Surprisingly, these thin-film solar cells perform as well as conventional silicon solar cells in laboratory demonstrations, even though they are almost 100 times thinner than traditional solar cells. But these films can degrade if they're exposed to moisture or oxygen. Researchers and industry are currently working on addressing the cell's stability concerns for terrestrial deployment.

Researchers developed a radiation experiment to test how the cells hold up in space. They exposed these cells to protons at both low and high energies and found a unique property.

The high-energy protons healed the damage caused by the low-energy protons, allowing the device to recover and continue doing its job. The conventional semiconductors used for space electronics do not show this healing.

Scientists predict that in the next 10 years, satellite launches into near-Earth orbit will increase exponentially, and space agencies such as NASA aim to establish bases on the Moon.

Materials that can tolerate extreme radiation and self-heal would change the game.

Researchers estimate that deploying just a few pounds of perovskite materials into space could generate up to 10,000,000 watts of power. It currently costs about USD 4,000 per kilogram



(USD 1,818 per pound) to launch materials into space, so efficient materials are important.

The findings shed light on a remarkable aspect of perovskites - their tolerance to damage and defects. Perovskite crystals are a type of soft material, which means that their

atoms can move into different states that scientists call vibrational modes.

Atoms in perovskites are normally arranged in a lattice formation. But radiation can knock the atoms out of position, damaging the material.

The findings suggest that soft

materials might be uniquely helpful in extreme environments, including space.

But radiation isn't the only stress that materials have to weather in space. Scientists don't yet know how perovskites will fare when exposed to vacuum conditions and extreme temperature variations, along with radiation, all at once. Temperature could play a role in the healing behaviour but scientists need to conduct more research to determine how.

These results tell us that soft materials could help scientists develop technology that works well in extreme environments. Future research could dive deeper into how the vibrations in these materials relate to any self-healing properties. PPT

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BeMC POLITICS

# BJD tries to keep flock united post poll defeat



margin of 18,000 votes. This has altered the political equation in BeMC. Meanwhile, two years have passed since the civic body election and formation of an elected council of BeMC.

As per Orissa Municipal Corporation Act, the opposition can move no confidence motion against the mayor and the ruling council, two years after the formation of the council.

While the BJP candidate wrested from BJD the MLA seat from Berhampur Assembly constituency, the saffron party has also formed the government in the state.

Apprehending foul play and horse trading, the defeated BJD candidate and party's district president Ramesh Chandra Chyau Patnaik has launched efforts in advance to plug the loopholes and prevent any defection.

During a discussion he informed that the party is keeping a track on the movements of its 36 corporators.

Notably, BJP had launched a tirade against the BJD before and after the civic body elections here. The BJP candidate and their campaigners tried to attract voters during the Assembly election by highlighting corruption and irregularities in the BeMC. BJP had also organised several demonstrations and agitations in front of the BeMC office before the 2024 elections.

Meanwhile, the BJP candidate for Berhampur Lok Sabha segment and the party candidate from Berhampur Assembly constituency have won with good margin of votes. This has concerned the BJD leaders, workers, and the elected party corporators of BeMC.

2 YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE CIVIC BODY ELECTION AND FORMATION OF AN ELECTED COUNCIL OF BeMC

ORISSA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION ACT ALLOWS THE OPPOSITION TO MOVE NO CONFIDENCE MOTION AGAINST THE MAYOR AND THE RULING COUNCIL, 2 YEARS AFTER THE FORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

In the 2022 civic body elections, BJD won in 30 wards out of the total 42 wards of BeMC. While BJD secured victory in seven wards, the Congress won in one ward and Independents in four wards.

Four corporators from BJP and two Independents defected to BJD before the general elections held this year. As a result, the number of BJD corporators rose to 36 in the civic body.

Sources said the BJP candidate for Berhampur Assembly constituency won by defeating his nearest BJD rival by a big

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, June 22:** Apprehending defection and horse trading following the poll debacle, Biju Janata Dal (BJD) is keeping a close watch on its 36 corporators in Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC), sources said Friday.

BJD has gone on the defensive after its drubbing by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the recently concluded Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. The crumbling of the BJD fort in Ganjam district has sparked concern among its leaders who now fear that the ruling BJP might poach its corporators or the latter might defect to the saffron party. Chatters are abuzz over the course of the future politics in Ganjam district.

The debacle of BJD has given rise to new political equations in the southern district. While 36 wards of BeMC are under Berhampur Assembly segment, rest six wards come under Gopalpur Assembly segment.



NOBLE ACT: A man along with his child feeds monkeys near Loisingha railway fatak in Bolangir district.

OP PHOTO

## Driver found dead under truck

**Baliguda:** The driver of a truck was found dead Saturday under the vehicle which was parked at the spot for the last five days at Budhanai under this police limits in Kandhamal district.

The deceased truck driver has been identified as Ranjan Bastia, a resident of Balipatana area in Khurda district. According to reports, the truck (OD-05-Z-0306) which was heading towards Phulbani from Parigarh carrying an HDD machine had developed a technical glitch near Budhanai. The driver had been guarding the truck for last five days which was parked there for repairing. However, locals informed police suspecting something amiss when the driver did not wake up for long Saturday. Police reached the spot, seized the body from under the truck and sent it to Sub Divisional Hospital at Baliguda for post-mortem. The exact reason of the driver's death will be ascertained after getting the post-mortem report, said the police.

## Sonepur wall collapse claims labourer couple

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sonepur, June 22:** In a tragic incident, two labourers including a woman died Saturday afternoon after a wall caved in on them at Vivekananda Nagar in Subarnapur district.

The deceased have been identified as Durlabha Mirdha, 50, and her husband Manu Mirdha, 55, residents of Radhapur village under Subalaya police limits and Badakhmar panchayat.

The mishap occurred while the deceased couple was digging the ground under the wall for construction. The duo was trapped under the wall after it collapsed on them. On being informed, a fire brigade team from Sonepur reached the spot and after rescuing the trapped labourers, rushed them to Subarnapur district head-

quarters hospital (DHH) where the doctors pronounced them dead.

Durlabha's brother Madhu Mirdha who was also engaged in the work lodged a written complaint in this regard at Sonepur police station. Acting on the complaint a case (196/24) under section 304 (A) was registered and a probe launched by SI Debasish Sahu.

"The labourers were engaged in dangerous work. Investigation is on to find out whether they were digging a drain or foundation," said Sonepur PS IIC Lokanath Sahu. The post-mortem of the bodies could not be conducted Saturday. The bodies will be handed over to family members after completion of post-mortem Sunday, said the police.

## Youth found hanging in mysterious condition

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Khallikote, June 22:** Police here recovered the body of a youth who was found hanging inside his room Friday night at Singadapalli village under this police limits in Ganjam district.

The deceased was identified as Deepak Pahan, a resident of Talapada village under this police limits.

According to sources, Khallikote police, upon being informed, reached Singadapalli village and after recovering the hanging body sent it to Khallikote community health centre.

After registering a case, police sent the body to MCG Medical College and Hospital at Berhampur for post-mortem.

A pall of gloom prevailed on the hospital campus after family members of the deceased reached there.

However, it is not yet clear whether this is a case of suicide or murder. Police were investigating the case to find out the exact reason of the death.

## Trouble-torn Balasore limps back to normalcy



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Balasore, June 22:** With a gradual improvement in the situation in Balasore, curfew clamped in the northern Odisha town was further relaxed, a senior official said Saturday.

Curfew has been imposed in Balasore town since Monday night when a group clash took place, leading to injuries to several persons including police officials in stone-pelting.

While curfew has been totally revoked from Industrial police station area, the prohibitory orders have been par-

tially lifted from Sahadevkhunta police station limits from 5am to 9pm and areas falling under Town police station area from 5am to 2pm, Balasore District Collector Ashish Thakare told reporters.

He said mobile internet services shall continue to remain suspended but broadband internet services have been restored from Saturday onwards in view of requirements of health and educational institutions.

Balasore Superintendent of Police Sagarika Nath said that 19 cases have been registered in connection with the group clash and 75 people have been arrested so far.

Mostly youngsters and minors were found to be involved in the incident, she said. The SP appealed to everyone to maintain peace and not spread rumours.

People bought essential commodities during the curfew relaxation period from 5am to 2pm Saturday amid heavy deployment of state police and central armed forces in the town.

## 2 Kumki elephants return to Similipal from Satkosia



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, June 22:** Two Kumki (trained) male elephants -- Mahendra and Rajkumar -- deployed in Satkosia sanctuary under Angul district for the last five years have returned to Kendumundi area of Similipal sanctuary in Mayurbhanj dis-

trict, their home base. The tuskers were carried on two Hyva trucks on NH-49 through Keonjhar district with protection.

Forest officials of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Angul forest divisions along with an elephant expert and veterinary team escorted the elephants to

Kendumundi, sources said.

Forest officials took special measures for their transportation during summer. Besides provision of sufficient food, the animals were bathed through water cannons by the Fire department at different places on their way in Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts.

Divisional Forest Officer, Keonjhar HD Dhanraj said, "The two elephants are 'Kumki' as they have been trained. After spending five years in Satkosia sanctuary under Angul forest division, they have now returned to their home station."

According to sources, the two trained elephants of Similipal sanctuary along with their Mahouts (handlers) had been taken to Satkosia sanctuary around five years back to monitor the Royal Bengal tigress 'Sundari'. The tigress had spread panic in the area, pouncing on livestock and attacking people. After Sundari was shifted, the two kumkis remained there for years.

## CBI arrests two postal officials over bribery

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada/Badasahi, June 22:** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Saturday arrested a postal inspector and overseer of Badasahi subdivision in Mayurbhanj district for receiving bribe from a subordinate officer for increment in his salary.

The accused were identified as Inspector Rubi Das and Overseer Sushant Kumar Das.

According to reports, Rubi and Sushant called MBPA Ajit Kuamr Rout of Deopada Post Office to the Badasahi subdivision office and demanded ₹15,000 bribe for processing his file for salary increment. After Ajit paid the amount, they again called him and demanded ₹50,000 more for file processing. Finally, he agreed to pay ₹40,000.

Later, he lodged a complaint with the CBI following which the central agency formed an eight-member team headed by DSP Ranu Choudhury and caught the officials red-handed while Ajit handed over the amount at Sushant's residence. The CBI team seized the entire bribe money and arrested the duo.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS : TRACTION MOTOR COMPLETE WITH PINION. QUANTITY: 02 NOS.		
SL. NO. 02	TENDER NO.:	81245696
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS : AEROSOL BASED FIRE DETECTION & SUPPRESSION CARTRIDGE. QUANTITY: 1108 SETS.		
SL. NO. 03	TENDER NO.:	81245660
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS : LOW MAINTENANCE SECONDARY CELL 2V/ 200 AH. QUANTITY: 2160 NOS.		
SL. NO. 04	TENDER NO.:	81245659
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS : LOW MAINTENANCE SECONDARY CELL 2V/ 300 AH. QUANTITY: 840 NOS.		
SL. NO. 05	TENDER NO.:	81245689
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS : RELAY PLUG-IN TYPE, STYLE QT2A. QUANTITY: 1590 NOS.		
SL. NO. 06	TENDER NO.:	81245704
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## RGH races to replenish inadequate blood bank

OFFICIALS PLANNING TO ORGANISE DONATION CAMPS WITH THE ONSET OF MONSOONS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, June 22:** Stock of units at the blood bank in Rourkela Government Hospital (RGH) has improved considerably due to various initiatives. It has happened due to the efforts of the hospital authorities and various private organisations. However, even then, doctors are of the opinion that the quantity in hand is not enough.

Presently more than 300 units are in stock with the blood bank. This is because in the past few days authorities of the blood bank and two private organisations have held three donation camps.

Two camps, one at RGH and another at NIT Rourkela, were organised June 14, to commemorate the 'World Blood Donation Day'. It was good that

ODISHA BLOOD CENTRE RGH ROURKELA			
HAPPY NEW YEAR 2024			
BLOOD STOCK POSITION			
OPENING BALANCE 08 AM	DATE 14.06.2024		
A+ve	01	A-ve	NIL
B+ve	02	B-ve	01
O+ve	03	O-ve	0
AB+ve	01	AB-ve	01

the camps were organised, as only a day prior to the two events, only nine units were available at the RGH blood bank. Incidentally, RGH is the nodal centre for blood collection and

distribution to all the hospitals in this town.

Informing about the two camps RGH blood bank officer Dr Prasant Das expressed satisfaction Thursday. However,

even then he stated that more reserves are needed. "We collected 77 units from the two camps. Individual donors are also coming forward to help us. Lions Club and Institute of Chartered Accountants supplied us with 49 units from a donation camp they had organised Wednesday," Das stated. However, he pointed out that the present stock will only last for two days. To tackle this shortage, Das said they are planning to organise a couple more donation camps with the onset of monsoons which will lead to a drop in temperatures.

Das also explained the reasons behind the shortage. "First, the acute heat prevented us from organising blood donation camps as we knew no one would turn up in the searing heat. Also the announcement of the Model Code of Conduct

(MCC) two months before the polls meant that political parties were unable to organise blood donation camps. These two factors led to the shortage," Das pointed out.

"Jivan Bindu", a flagship programme of the erstwhile BJD government was one of the biggest contributors of blood to banks all over the state. With a new government at the helm of affairs a big question mark hangs over its fate. A technician at the blood bank said, "The present government should not abandon 'Jivan Bindu', because it was beneficial for all."

The RGH blood bank collects on average 14,000 units annually, informed Das. "For internal use and supply to other hospitals we need a minimum of 60 units daily. Hence we need to increase our reserves," he added.

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**ELECTRICAL LICENSING BOARD**  
**OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF ELECTRICITY-CUM-PRINCIPAL**  
**CHIEF ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR, ODISHA**  
**3RD FLOOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENT BUILDING, BHUBANESWAR-751001**  
Email-secyelbo@nic.in, Fax/Ph.0674-2394572

No.AA-02  
**NOTICE**  
No.548 Dated 07.06.2024  
ELBO/W.P. Permit (EHT) EXAM / 2023

The result of Workman Permit (EHT) Examination-2023 has been published vide this office Notification No.545 dated 07.06.2024.

All the successful candidates are requested to apply online for obtaining the permit through "eicelectricityodisha.nic.in" / edistrict.odisha.gov.in within six (06) months from publication of result. The application service name "CANDIDATES QUALIFIED IN THE EXAMINATION FOR ISSUANCE OF WORKMAN PERMIT".

During verification of documents, if any discrepancies are detected then the Workman Permit will not be issued to the candidate even if he / she have qualified the examination. In no case the application of the successful candidates for issue of Workman Permit shall be considered after lapse of six (06) months from date of publication of result.

The result is also available in our official website "eicelectricityodisha.nic.in" for information of all concerned.  
Sd./- A.C.E.-cum-Secretary, ELBO  
Bhubaneswar

OIPR-04003/11/0003/2425

He who chooses the infinite has been chosen by the infinite

SRI AUROBINDO



## Media & Democracy

After 2014 India became familiar with the phenomenon of 'Godi Media', a phrase coined by the Magsaysay Award-winning journalist Ravish Kumar. It refers to media in the lap of the prime minister, whose name rhymes with Godi. In his book of a few decades ago, the American scholar Noam Chomsky wrote that media in democratic nations was not really independent and did not do the task of informing the public, particularly about the overreach of the State. Instead it engaged in what he called 'manufacturing consent' in favour of the government and business interests. He said that the mass media are ideological institutions carrying out propaganda, by reliance on market forces, self-censorship, and without overt coercion, through a particular model.

The defining aspects of such a model were the following. Firstly that media was owned by corporate interests; secondly that its revenue model depended on advertising; thirdly that the government made it dependent by giving access only to a select few pliant reporters and anchors and by withholding licenses; fourthly that this compromised and pliant media marginalised dissent and attacked the political Opposition, acting as a government mouthpiece; and fifthly that it created 'boycott' distractions that took attention away from real issues.

As may be noted by alert readers all of these conditions apply to media in India. On some of these, such as licensing and advertising the media is even more dependent than that in the West.

Having said that it is quite revealing to see that the revenues of India's six listed news media companies have not risen in the last decade. The total sales of these companies in 2014 was ₹6325 crore and the total in 2023 was ₹6691 crore. The total profits in 2014 were ₹761 crore and in 2023 they were ₹254 crore.

Adjusted for inflation these six listed companies (which represent some of the nation's largest news channels and newspapers) are half the size they were in 2014.

So the question really is — why is the Godi media acting against its own interest? They have not only made no money or benefited in their business but actually shrunk. There are several reasons that are obvious. Two of them are that the nature of media has changed in the last 20 years. Online advertising has taken a large share and most of this is money that goes to two companies, Google and Facebook. The other reason is that the economy has not been in good shape particularly the part of it related to consumption. Neither of these is disputable. However I felt that to understand what was going on, I spoke to people in the channels. I asked them four questions: What incentives are there for channels to back government and attack the Opposition? To what extent are news channel operations dependent on advertising (and other favours) from government? Do ratings generally indicate audience preference for content that is communally polarising over that which might be conventional news? Do ratings indicate audience preference for journalism that bolsters and justifies the government?

The answers I got were interesting. To the first two questions the replies were that "if there were ways to make money media would find a way to do so with a taller spine" and that "political pressure is not the number 1 cause, it is the broken revenue model." The broken model refers to the shrinking of the media revenues that we have seen. Another reply was that "revenue from government has become dependency to large extent given falling revenues overall" and so one could not antagonise the hand that was feeding one. Another reason was that large parts of media were now owned by magnates like Adani and Ambani for whom the media was a side business and served a larger purpose.

On the second set of questions related to content they said that there was no evidence to suggest that divisive or communal material received more TRP ratings compared to other stories, but material that was polarising did not lead to dip in viewership, meaning that it was acceptable to the audience. Sometimes however, what was in the news at the moment received "pick-up" when it was broadcast as hate speech. For instance when the government associated Muslims with the COVID-19 pandemic, it triggered a slew of coverage that alleged Muslims were deliberately spreading the coronavirus. They also said that the overt majoritarianism under Modi has produced a condition where "existent bigotry is given a platform to be amplified" as many channels now show. Interestingly there was no evidence to show that supporting the government and attacking the Opposition produced higher viewership or was popular, so there was another motive for doing so. This was the feedback that I was given when I asked what people inside why the Godi media was doing what it was doing and I hope it helps readers understand the phenomenon a little more.

Lastly, the election results mean that the Opposition can no longer either be ignored or attacked in the way that it has been. For this reason it will be interesting to see how it behaves from here on and whether there is any change in its behaviour. One hopes that there is because as a journalist one has been witness to what has been undoubtedly the worst and most shameful phase of Indian journalism. It is a phase that we need to put behind us for the betterment of our democracy, our politics and our society.



Aakar Patel

It is quite revealing to see that the revenues of India's six listed news media companies have not risen in the last decade



Brahma Chellaney

**THE DALAI LAMA HAS DECLARED THAT HE MIGHT CHOOSE NOT TO BE REBORN - A DECISION THAT WOULD UNDERMINE THE LEGITIMACY OF ANY CHINESE-ANointed SUCCESSOR**

As the Dalai Lama – the spiritual leader of Tibet – visits the United States to receive medical treatment on his knees, concerns over who will succeed him have become acute. While Tibetans around the world pray that the 88-year-old Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, still has plenty of life ahead of him, China is eagerly awaiting his demise, so that it can install a puppet successor.

Tibetans regard the Dalai Lama as the living incarnation of Buddha. Since 1391, the Dalai Lama has been reincarnated 13 times. When one Dalai Lama dies, the search for the next one begins, with a council of senior disciples taking responsibility for identifying him, based on signs and visions. But in recent years, the Chinese government has insisted that only it has the right to identify the next Dalai Lama.

This would not be the first time China selected a leader of Tibetan Buddhism. In 1995, it anointed its own Panchen Lama, whose spiritual authority is second only to that of the Dalai Lama, after abducting the actual Panchen Lama – a six-year-old boy who had already been confirmed by the Dalai Lama. Almost three decades later, the real Panchen Lama is among the world's longest-serving political prisoners.

China also appointed the Karmapa, Tibetan Buddhism's third most important spiritual leader and the head of the Karma Kagyu sect. But in 1999, its appointee, Gygen Trinley Dorje, fled to India. The ease with which the 14-year-old Karmapa escaped China raised suspicions among Indians about his loyalties. After imposing travel restrictions on him, India decided in 2018 no longer to recognise the China-anointed Karmapa as the legitimate head of his sect. Now, he and his rival Karmapa, Trinley Thaye Dorje, have issued a joint statement pledging to cooperatively resolve the leadership split in the

### FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

# FOIL CHINA'S PLAN



**The US should work with India to devise a multilateral strategy to counter Xi's plan to capture the more than 600-year-old institution of the Dalai Lama. This must include efforts to persuade the Dalai Lama to spell out, once and for all, the rules that must be followed to identify his successor**

Karma Kagyu sect.

But the Dalai Lama is China's "white whale." The incumbent – who was identified as the Dalai Lama in 1937, at age two – has been a thorn in the side of the Communist Party of China (CPC) since China's 1951 annexation of Tibet. With his relentless espousal of non-violence, the Dalai Lama, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, embodies Tibetan resistance to the Chinese occupation. (Had Tibet remained self-governing like Taiwan, it would be the world's tenth-largest country by area.)

In his past incarnations, the Dalai Lama was not only Tibet's spiritual leader, but also its political leader, making him a kind of cross between a pope and a president. But the Dalai Lama ceded his political role in 2011 to a Tibetan government-in-exile, which is democratically elected every five years by Tibetan refugees living in India and elsewhere.

Moreover, the Dalai Lama has declared that he might choose not to be reborn – a decision that would undermine the legitimacy of any Chinese-anointed successor. He knows that, for China, a Dalai Lama devoted to the CPC is much more useful than no Dalai

Lama at all. He also knows that, while he has retained his mental acuity, his body is weakening. In 2016, he underwent radiation therapy for prostate cancer. He says he was "completely cured," but he continues to struggle with his knees. Given his advanced age, more health problems are to be expected.

The Dalai Lama's frailty is one reason why his travel schedule has slowed considerably. But it is not the only one: bowing to Chinese pressure, most countries – including European democracies and Asia's Buddhist states (except Japan) – are unwilling to grant him entry. Fortunately, some countries have retained their backbones. The US is hosting the Dalai Lama for knee treatment, and India has proudly been his home for more than 65 years. India has officially designated the Dalai Lama its "most esteemed and honored guest," while the Tibetan leader describes himself as a "son of India."

In fact, India is home to the vast majority of Tibetan exiles, and has played a central role in helping to preserve the Tibetan culture, including by supporting Tibetan-language schools. By contrast, China has

been working actively to destroy Tibetan culture and identity, especially since Chinese President Xi Jinping has been in charge.

Meanwhile, China's appropriation of Tibetan natural resources has gone into overdrive, with consequences that extend far beyond the Tibetan Plateau. Resource-rich Tibet is a source of fresh water for more than one-fifth of the world's population and a global biodiversity hotspot. The plateau influences Asia's weather and monsoonal patterns, as well as the Northern Hemisphere's "atmospheric general circulation" – the system of winds that helps transport warm air from the equator toward higher latitudes, creating different climate zones.

It is imperative that the US and India work together to foil China's plan to handpick the next Dalai Lama. Already, America's Tibetan Policy and Support Act, which took effect in 2020, says that "the wishes of the 14th Dalai Lama, including any written instructions, should play a determinative role in the selection, education, and veneration of a future 15th Dalai Lama." And it calls for sanctions on Chinese officials who interfere with Tibetan Buddhist succession practices.

But more must be done. For starters, US President Joe Biden should take the opportunity presented by the Dalai Lama's knee treatment to fulfill a 2020 campaign promise to meet with the Dalai Lama. More broadly, the US should work with India to devise a multilateral strategy to counter Xi's plan to capture the more than 600-year-old institution of the Dalai Lama. This must include efforts to persuade the Dalai Lama to spell out, once and for all, the rules that must be followed to identify his successor.

*The writer is Professor Emeritus of Strategic Studies at the New Delhi-based Center for Policy Research and Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin.*

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### SPECTRUM PERSONAL FINANCE

# Why this generation is broke

In an age where curated Instagram feeds and influencer lifestyles dominate our screens, it's no surprise that many young adults today find themselves financially unstable. The allure of conspicuous consumption—acquiring and showcasing expensive items to signal wealth and status—has become a pervasive force, driving many to prioritise the appearance of affluence over genuine financial security. This obsession with looking wealthy, fuelled by societal pressures and the seductive power of social media, is leaving an entire generation broke and struggling to achieve true financial well-being.

The digital and information age has revolutionised how we perceive and display wealth. Platforms like Instagram and other social media bombard us with images of luxury vacations, designer clothes, and extravagant lifestyles. Influencers, often sponsored by high-end brands, present an unattainable standard of living that many young people feel pressured to emulate. The result is a culture where financial success is measured not by savings or investments but by the ability to display expensive possessions.

This relentless pursuit of instant gratification and status symbols is further exacerbated by easy access to credit and buy-now-pay-later schemes. Younger individuals, enticed by the possibility of enjoying luxuries now and worrying about the cost later, often find themselves trapped in a cycle of debt. Statistics reveal alarming trends in spending patterns, with significant portions of income diverting towards maintaining a façade of wealth rather than building a solid financial foundation.

The root of this issue lies not only in societal pressures and economic structures that promote such behaviour but also in the glaring gaps in financial education. Many young adults enter adulthood with little to no understanding of personal finance. The lack of financial literacy leaves them ill-equipped to make sound financial decisions, rendering them vulnerable to the temptations of consumerism. Bridging this educational gap is crucial to fostering a generation capable of achieving genuine financial stability. Economic and social pressures

play a significant role as well. Rising student debt, exorbitant housing costs, and a competitive job market create an environment where young people feel compelled to project success to gain social and professional acceptance. Pursuing status symbols and luxury goods becomes a means of coping with these pressures despite the long-term financial harm it may cause.

The consequences of prioritising appearance over substance are severe. Beyond the immediate financial strain, this lifestyle leads to increased stress and anxiety, as individuals struggle to keep up with an unsustainable standard of living. Stories of financial ruin, where individuals amass crippling debt in their quest to look affluent, are becoming all too common. The mental and emotional toll of living beyond one's means cannot be overstated.

However, there is hope. Individuals can reclaim control over their financial futures by shifting focus from appearance to financial stability. Practical steps such as creating and sticking to a budget, prioritising savings and investments, and seeking financial education can make

a significant difference. Communities and support systems also play a vital role in fostering financial resilience, providing the encouragement and resources needed to break free from the cycle of conspicuous consumption.

Ultimately, redefining what success and wealth mean in modern society is essential. True wealth should be measured by financial security, mental well-being, and the ability to live within one's means rather than by accumulating material possessions. As a society, we must challenge the narratives that glorify superficial displays of affluence and instead promote values that encourage sustainable financial practices.

The road to financial stability may be challenging, but it is not impossible. By addressing the underlying causes of this generation's financial instability and embracing a more mindful approach to money management, we can pave the way for a future where young adults are not just looking wealthy but truly thriving.

*The writer is a Delhi-based independent contributor to print and online publications.*



Sayan Chatterjee

**STORIES OF FINANCIAL RUIN, WHERE INDIVIDUALS AMASS CRIPPLING DEBT IN THEIR QUEST TO LOOK AFFLUENT, ARE BECOMING ALL TOO COMMON**

### WISDOM CORNER

- The wise have always said the same things, and fools, who are the majority have always done just the opposite  
ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER
- When we are no longer able to change a situation - we are challenged to change ourselves  
VIKTOR E. FRANKL
- The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall  
RALPH WALDO EMERSON

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1868:** American inventor Christopher Latham Sholes and two others were granted a patent for a typewriter.
- 1894:** The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is founded. The IOC is responsible for organizing the Olympic Games and similar events. The committee was established at the initiative of French educator, Pierre de Coubertin.
- 1961:** The Antarctic Treaty was enacted, reserving the entire continent for free and nonpolitical scientific investigation.
- 1992:** Yitzhak Rabin's Labor Party wins the election in Israel. Rabin became the country's fifth Prime Minister. For his engagement in a peaceful solution to the Middle East conflict, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1994 (together with Shimon Peres and Yasir Arafat). A year later, Rabin was assassinated by a Jewish extremist.

### Systemic flaws

Sir, This refers to "SC notice on NEET cancellation," Orissa POST, June 21. The controversy surrounding the conduct of the National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) examination by the government-controlled National Testing Agency (NTA) and the cancellation of University Grants Commission's National Eligibility Test have brought into focus grave systemic flaws and threaten to undermine the credibility of our education system. After initially denying any wrongdoing, the government has admitted the lapses brought to light by the aspirants. The government needs to urgently step in to ensure proper functioning of the NTA. It needs to undertake a massive upgrade of the NTA's technological infrastructure and put in place robust security measures to avoid paper leaks. There is also a need for regular stakeholder engagement to identify areas of improvement in order to restore the credibility of the NTA examination system, which affects millions of students. Swift and strict action against those involved in indiscretions and paper leaks should precede the structural upgrade. The Supreme Court has rightly said that even if there is "0.001 per cent negligence" on part of the NTA, it should be thoroughly dealt with.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

### Appalling attitude

Sir, Canada has paid tribute to slain Sikh separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Tension between India and Canada is already running high over the alleged 'involvement of India' in the killing of Nijjar. The Parliament in Canada observed a moment of silence on the first death anniversary of Nijjar. This act of Canada is going to aggravate the relations between both countries. Support to an enemy of another country is a proxy war "waged" against that country. On 23 June, 1985 Air India's Kanishka was bombed. As many as 329 people including 86 children died in the bombing. India has been organising a memorial service on 23 June for victims of the bombing. The memorial service is to subtly remind Ottawa of the danger of yielding space to radicals. Terrorism is a global threat. At a time when there is need for all the countries to come under one umbrella to counter terrorism, the attitude of Canada is appalling.

KV Seetharamaiah, BANGALORE

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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# Chouhan's son says 'entire Delhi bowing down' before his father

Kartikeya Singh made the statement while addressing a public meeting at Bherunda of Budhni Assembly segment of Sehore district



**Bhopal, June 22:** The son of Union Agriculture Minister and former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that after the landslide victory in the Lok Sabha elections, "entire Delhi is bowing down" before his father. Chouhan's son Kartikeya Singh made the statement while addressing a public meeting at Bherunda of Budhni Assembly segment of Sehore district, Friday. The video of the remark is being shared by the leaders of different parties. Chouhan won the recently-held Lok Sabha election from Vidisha seat in the state. State Congress chief Jitu Patwari took a swipe at this statement, saying that it means that Delhi is scared and that there is fear of dissent within the party.

In his address, Singh told the people of Budhni Assembly seat that they have done a wonderful job of sending a message. "I have just returned after staying in Delhi. Earlier too, our leader (Chouhan) was popular as chief minister. But I don't know why it seems that he became more popular when he was not the chief minister," he said. "Now, when our leader has gone after a huge victory, the whole of Delhi also bows down before him today. Entire Delhi also knows him, recognises him, respects him. Not just Delhi, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari if we count the top leaders then our leader Shivraj Singh Chouhan figures in the list," he said.

Kartikeya Singh, an alumnus of University of Pennsylvania of US, also thanked the people of Budhni constituency supporting his father in the elections. "It is said that there is a woman behind every successful man...But I will say that there are people in his area behind the success of a leader along with a woman," he said. Taking a swipe at Kartikeya Singh over his statement, Congress' Patwari said in a post on X, "Shivraj ji's yuvraj (prince) is saying that Delhi is scared. This is 100% true. Because, the country is also watching the scared dictator carefully." "There is fear of the voice of dissent within the party, rebellion of big leaders, coalition management, decreasing support to government and fear of shaking legs of the chair," he stated. After winning the Vidisha Lok Sabha seat by a margin of over 8.20 lakh votes, Shivraj Singh Chouhan was appointed as the agriculture minister in the Narendra Modi 3.0 cabinet. After winning the Lok Sabha election from the Vidisha seat, Chouhan resigned as an MLA from the Budhni Assembly seat.

# Over 3.9L continue to reel under flood



**Guwahati, June 22:** More than 3.90 lakh people continued to reel under floodwater in Assam as the overall situation remained grim, officials said Saturday. Even though there was a marginal improvement in the flood situation with receding rainfall bringing respite in some parts of the state, 19 districts still remained affected, they said. The death toll in this year's flood, landslides and storm has reached 37, while one person is missing, the officials said. Altogether 3,90,491 people remained affected in Kamrup, Tamulpur, Hailakandi, Udalguri, Hojai, Dhubri, Barpeta, Biswanath, Nalbari, Bongaigaon, Baksa, Karimganj, South Salmara, Goalpara, Darrang, Bajali, Nagaon, Cachar and Kamrup Metropolitan districts as Friday evening.

The number of affected people had decreased marginally from 4.09 lakh Thursday, though the number of flood-hit districts remained the same. Karimganj has been the worst-affected district with over 2.40 lakh people hit. Among the major rivers flowing over the danger level were Kopili at Kampur and Dharamtul, Barak at BP Ghat

and Kushiyara in Karimganj, as per reports Friday evening. More than 100 relief camps, sheltering over 15,000 people, have been opened, while another 125 relief distribution centres are also functional. Houses, cattle sheds, roads, bridges, embankments and other infrastructure have been affected or damaged in different districts, the officials added.

## Education dept extends UG admission deadline

**Guwahati:** The Higher Education Department in Assam has extended the date of admissions to undergraduate courses in colleges across the state as the monsoon flood has impacted the whole process, with many students failing to reach the institutions for admission, officials said. According to the latest directive, although the last date for admission as per the first merit list was June 21, however, colleges can admit students till June 23. The release of the second merit list was also postponed to June 24 and 25. The colleges will release the merit lists in two installments and students can take admissions between June 26 to 28. Spot admissions will begin June 29.

# MP GOVT TO DEVELOP LORD KRISHNA SITES

The chief minister asked the administration to chalk out plans to develop religious places in a bid to encourage religious tourism



The Madhya Pradesh government will identify the places associated with Lord Ram and Lord Krishna in the state and develop them as pilgrimage sites  
MOHAN YADAV | CHIEF MINISTER

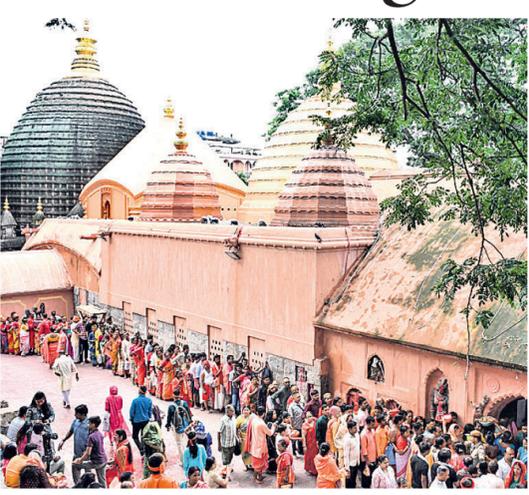
**Bhopal, June 22:** The Madhya Pradesh government will develop the places associated with Lord Ram and Lord Krishna in the state as pilgrimage sites, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has said. "The government has also decided to construct welcome gates dedicated to these deities at the entry points of state capital Bhopal," he said. "CM Yadav issued directives to this effect during a review meeting of the Culture and Tourism Department Friday," an official said. "The Madhya Pradesh government will identify the places associated with Lord Ram and Lord Krishna in the state and develop them as pilgrimage sites," Yadav said. He directed the department to construct welcome gates dedicated to Lord Rama and Lord Krishna at the entry points of Bhopal city and also make plans to set up entry gates dedicated to Raja Bhoj, an 11th century king from the Paramara dynasty, and Vikramaditya, a legendary

king mentioned in Indian literature. "Yadav also gave directions to officials to build entry gates at the state boundaries so that people get to know about the culture and places of religious importance in Madhya Pradesh," the official said. The chief minister asked the administration to chalk out plans to develop religious places in a bid to encourage religious tourism. The department was also told to make an action plan to celebrate Gita Mahotsav on Manas Jayanti in the state to spread Indian culture and philosophy among the common people in the state. "The places associated with Lord Ram and Lord Krishna should be developed with the help of local elected representatives," Yadav said. "The number of tourists in the state has been growing," he said and emphasised the need for branding of the tourist places. Local products and religious tourism should be promoted through various museums, the CM asked the officials.

# Kamakhya temple shut as Ambubachi Mela begins

WORSHIP IS STOPPED AND DOORS ARE CLOSED IN THE TEMPLE FOR FOUR DAYS ANNUALLY, WHEN THE GODDESS IS BELIEVED TO UNDERGO HER MENSTRUAL CYCLE

**Guwahati, June 22:** The annual Ambubachi Mela at Kamakhya temple, atop Nilachal hills in Assam's Guwahati, commenced Saturday with worship stopped for the next four days, coinciding with the ritualistic annual menstrual cycle of the goddess. Lakhs of devotees attend the mela and wait for the resumption of worship and pay obeisance to the goddess. Temple authorities said the doors were closed at 8.43 am with the start of "prabriti" and worship will resume at 9.07 pm June 25 after 'nirvriti'. The temple door will open for darshan after a ritualistic bath and daily puja June 26, they said. Worship is stopped and doors are closed in the temple for four days annually, when the goddess is believed to undergo her menstrual cycle. Devotees from different parts



of the country and abroad converge at the annual mela, which is held in the temple premises during the period. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, in a post on X in Hindi, welcomed the devotees to the mela. "On the occasion of Ambubachi Mela, I welcome the sandhus and devotees," he wrote. Arrangements have been made by the Kamrup Metropolitan district administration and other agencies for the smooth conduct of the Mela, an official statement said. Camping facilities for 5,000 persons have been set up at the

Kamakhya railway station and for 12,000-15,000 people at the main holding area in Pandu port. Provision for VIP passes has been stopped for the time being, while the road leading to the main temple has been closed for all vehicles except emergency and utility vehicles. Strict regulations for food and water distribution to visitors by institutions have been issued, with no arbitrary distribution to be allowed, the statement said. Provisions for toilets, street lights, health camps and barricades on roads at certain locations have been made, it added.

# Vande Metro to run between Indore, Ujjain

KUMBH MELA

**Bhopal, June 22:** Vande Metro trains will run between Indore and Ujjain cities ahead of the Simhastha Kumbh Mela, slated to be held in Ujjain in 2028. A decision about laying the metro track between Indore and Ujjain was taken at a meeting chaired by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav Saturday. Yadav said the state government would initiate important steps considering a new traffic plan for big cities in MP. "The most important decision in this direction is to operate a metro train between Indore and Ujjain, which will also be useful for the convenience of movement of devotees in Simhastha 2028," he said. The report of the feasibility survey related to running the metro trains between these two cities has been received, he said. Yadav also said a Vande Metro service will be launched from Indore airport to Mahakal temple in Ujjain in future, which will be an important gift for the people, tourists, and devotees. In a recent discussion with Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, it has been agreed to



introduce the Vande Metro Circle Train in various cities across Madhya Pradesh, providing a significant boost to urban transportation, Yadav added. "The Vande Metro Circle Train will replace the old Metro system, offering a substantial benefit to the citizens," stated Yadav. In cities experiencing increasing traffic congestion, the Circle Train facility aims to create an integrated plan for Metro train operations. Yadav highlighted his discussions with the Railway Minister, focusing on the operation of Vande Metro trains at speeds surpassing traditional metro trains, the incorporation of state-of-the-art technology, and the potential advantages for industrial areas such as Pithampur and Dewas. Regarding the use of narrow-gauge and other existing railway lines in some cities, Yadav emphasised the need for comprehensive surveys and studies. This will ensure that currently unused rail tracks can be repurposed effectively. The meeting also reviewed the progress of the metro projects in the state. The trial run of the first phase of the Bhopal metro was completed in October last year.

# First-of-its-kind kidney transplant in Northeast

**Guwahati:** The first-ever successful cadaveric kidney transplant in the Northeast has been carried out at a state-run hospital in Guwahati, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma claimed Saturday. He said two kidneys from a brain-dead accident victim were transplanted to two persons recently at Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH), with both the receivers making good recovery. Addressing a press conference, Sarma said, "Kidney transplants have been taking place at the GMCH for the last six years. But it was for the first time that a kidney transplant was successfully carried out from a brain-dead donor, with permission from the family." "Such a procedure was attempted at the GMCH previously as well, but without success," Sarma, who has recently taken over the health portfolio, added. He claimed that the successful procedure at the government-run hospital was the first such cadaveric kidney transplant in the entire northeastern region.

# Grocer's son to represent India at global bartending slugfest

World-travelled bartender presiding over PVR Limited's plush Home lounge and bar in New Delhi, preparing to represent India for the Diageo World Class Global Bartender of the Year faceoff in Shanghai, China, in September

**INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE**  
**New Delhi, June 22:** When Santanu Chanda cleared his B.Com. in Silchar, Assam, his father, who ran a neighbourhood grocery store, said that it was time for him to tie the marital knot with a good-looking Assamese girl. Santanu, though, had other plans. He took a train to Kolkata and from there he set off to Goa for a career of his choice. After working in a shack for some time, he landed a job at the well-known Goan nightclub Titos, where he got paid ₹900 for rinsing glasses and removing beer bottle caps. That was in 2011. Cut to 2023, and you find him, now a world-travelled bartender presiding over PVR Limited's plush Home lounge and bar in

New Delhi, preparing to represent India for the Diageo World Class Global Bartender of the Year faceoff in Shanghai, China, in September. He got his ticket to Shanghai after a two-stage contest - Best of 100 followed by Best of 16 - that engaged the best bartenders from all over the country. Santanu's dream for the competition - he'll know only July 4 about the parameters for this year's slugfest - is to shake up a disco-inspired cocktail to the beat of Parvati Khan's 'Jimmy Jimmy Aaja' from the Mithun Chakraborty-starrer 'Disco Dancer'. Unfazed, Santanu declares with confidence, "I will be this year's winner." It is not an idle boast, but what he calls 'positive manifestation'.



So, how did Santanu move from being rinsing of glasses to a champion bartender? It started in Goa when a bartender friend of his got selected for a cruise liner and landed a ₹80,000 per month job. The friend's lucrative salary package gave Santanu a purpose in life - he had to become a bartender, but he needed a mentor, so he tried to get into the good books of a Ukrainian expat, Artem Klymenko, a champion flair bartender who was a trainer at Titos. Santanu agreed, became

Artem's disciple, attended a three-month course, read up all the books he could lay his hands upon, and six months later, he made his life's first cocktail, a Cosmopolitan. His next break came because of two rising stars of his profession - Pankaj Kamble (who's now no more) and Sachin

Gowda, who ran Pune's Flairology Bar School and Events. They recommended Santanu for a job at the JW Marriott, Pune. When he was at the JW Marriott, Pune, Santanu attended his first World Class, becoming a part of a global community of bartenders created by Diageo to enable them to connect, get acquainted with trends, and pick up new skills. That proved to be his gateway to the famous Buddha Bar in Dubai, where he spent six years and won international competitions - up against French and Italian bartenders. Then the call came from Reynaud Palliere, CEO of PVR's Luxury Collection and Innovations, who head hunted him for Home, which

was then a members-only club at a Delhi mall. Home is no longer a private club. Santanu has helmed its transition to a popular, albeit exclusive, lounge bar with a food menu designed by Japanese Chef Yutaka Saito and MasterChef Australia finalist Sarah Todd. Today, Santanu's father is proud of what his son has been able to achieve by not listening to his advice. The dutiful son, in fact, looks after their financial needs, so his parents are back to doing what they love - they have returned to their paddy fields and his father, who has shut down his grocery store, spends his days fishing when he's not in the fields. Santanu takes immense pride in pointing out that John Walker, the man behind the iconic whisky brand, was a grocer like his father. Well, he may not yet be India's answer to John Walker, but Santanu has up his sleeve a variant of the Johnnie Walker Highball, one of the three cocktails that booked his ticket to Shanghai.

Santanu has helmed its transition to a popular, albeit exclusive, lounge bar with a food menu designed by Japanese Chef Yutaka Saito and MasterChef Australia finalist Sarah Todd

# national

## of the day quote

The way a Dalit prisoner was killed in the jail in Firozabad district of UP. It is very sad. The government should take strict action against the guilty policemen and also provide full help to the victim's family

MAYAWATI | BSP PRESIDENT

So far, 53 individuals have died and a majority of them belonged to the Scheduled Castes. Instead of taking action on this state-sponsored murder, the DMK continues to shield the villains of this ghastly crime

SHEHZAD POONAWALLA | BJP NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON

I have written to the Director General of Police Madhya Pradesh and I am also writing a letter to the Chief Minister of MP, demanding to assign the investigation to a senior officer or constitute a judicial committee to probe into the matter

DIGVIJAYA SINGH | CONGRESS LEADER

## SHORT TAKES

### 20 fall ill after drinking water from school tank

**Latehar (Jharkhand):** At least 20 students fell ill after drinking water from a tank in their school in Jharkhand's Latehar district Saturday, an official said. When they were taken to a local health centre, doctors said the condition of the children was stable. The incident happened at Upgraded Primary School at Duru, around 80 km from the state capital Ranchi. After having their meal, the children went to drink water from the tank in the school. After some time, several students started vomiting and complained of uneasiness, a teacher of the school said. Some students said there was a foul smell in the water.

### CBI searches at 10 places in Rajasthan

**New Delhi:** The CBI Saturday conducted searches at 10 locations in Rajasthan in connection with illegal sand mining in the state, officials said. The agency is understood to have seized more than Rs 20 lakh and a country-made pistol during its searches at different places in Jaipur, Tonk, Jodhpur, Nagaur, Bhilwara, Karoli and Sikar in Rajasthan, they said.

### 2 Indians killed in Nepal road mishap

**Kathmandu:** Two Indians died in a road mishap in southern Nepal, police said here Saturday. Tamanna Seikh, 35, and Irfan Alam, 21, both residents of East Champaran district of Bihar, were killed as the Scorpio jeep in which they were travelling fell down a hilly road in Chandranigahpur section along East West Highway. Four others were injured when the vehicle with Indian number plate met with the accident in Rautahat district of Southern Nepal Friday evening.

### Chaos in school

**Kolkata:** Chaotic scenes were witnessed in a school in West Bengal's Murshidabad district after two Class IX students entered a classroom with a gun and showed it to their classmates. The incident was reported from the Andulberia High School in Rejinagar. The duo reportedly tried to threaten their classmates with the gun. However, after the matter came to the notice of the headmaster and teachers of the school, they promptly snatched the gun away from them. It is learnt that the students were carrying a country-made single-shot gun, which is readily available in the area.



Amid rising unemployment, people are being hit doubly by high inflation. For how long will the public bear the brunt?  
JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS LEADER

## SHOCKING JOB SCAM

In a strange turn of events, a youth in West Bengal found his name in the list of appointed food sub-inspectors in the state Food & Supplies Department without even applying for the job



## NEET-UG EXAM Fresh plea in SC seeks CBI, ED probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 22:** A fresh plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking directions to the CBI and the ED to investigate alleged irregularities in the medical entrance exam NEET-UG held May 5.

The petition, filed by 10 students who had appeared for the exam, has also sought a direction to Bihar Police to expedite the investigation in the case and file a report before the apex court.

"The petitioners are fully aware of the ramifications of the cancellation of the examination but there is absolutely no other alternative."

"The NEET UG Examination of 2024 had many other irregularities, in particular, the gross negligence on the part of the authorities to make the question papers available to the candidates on time. In some places, the wrong set of question papers was distributed and later recalled," the plea said.

The top court had earlier sought responses from the Centre, the National Testing Agency (NTA) and others on a slew of petitions, including those seeking scrapping of the NEET-UG 2024 exam and a court-monitored probe, amid mounting outrage over alleged irregularities in conducting the all-India medical entrance test.

The apex court had also stayed further proceedings on similar

### Bihar Police detain 6

**Deoghar/Patna:** The Bihar Police have detained six people from Jharkhand's Deoghar district in connection with the alleged irregularities in the medical entrance exam NEET, an official said Saturday. They were detained from a house near AIIMS-Deoghar in Devipur police station area Friday night, he said. "The Bihar Police gave us a tip-off. On our identification, they were taken into custody. All the suspects have been taken to Bihar," SDPO (Deoghar Sadar) Ritvik Srivastava told PTI.

pleas pending before different high courts.

The top court, however, had made it clear that it would not stay the counselling process. The examination was held May 5 across 4,750 centres and around 24 lakh candidates appeared. The results were expected to be declared June 14 but were announced June 4, apparently because the evaluation of the answer sheets was completed earlier.

The allegations of irregularities have led to protests in several cities and sparring between rival political parties.

As many as 67 students scored a perfect 720, unprecedented in the NTA's history, with six from a centre in Haryana's Faridabad figuring in the list, raising suspicions about irregularities. It has been alleged that grace marks contributed to 67 students sharing the top rank.



Police personnel deployed after violence broke out following the death of a factory worker after he was allegedly run over by a bus in Gurugram

## ATISHI FACES PROTESTS

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 22:** A group of protesters Saturday raised slogans and waved placards at the venue of Delhi Water Minister Atishi's indefinite hunger strike against the water crisis in the city, with the AAP alleging the BJP caused the disruption.

The BJP hit back terming the hunger strike a political drama and claimed the protesters were civil defence volunteers and bus marshals removed by the AAP government from their jobs.

Atishi, who started the 'Pani Satyagrah' Friday at Bhogal in south Delhi, said some people came to the site of hunger strike to create a ruckus and attack her. "But I want to tell the BJP that I am following the path of 'Satyagrah' taught by Gandhiji. I am not going to be scared by such things. I am not going to stop this hunger strike due to such actions. Till the 28 lakh Delhiites get their rightful share of water,



this hunger strike will continue," she said. The Aam Aadmi Party alleged that on the second day of Atishi's fast, the situation escalated as individuals "sent by the BJP" attempted to disrupt the arrangements and obstruct the peaceful protest.

A Delhi Police officer said 12 people were detained from the hunger strike venue and taken to the Hazrat Nizamuddin police station and later released.

The protesters told the police that they wanted to meet Atishi as they were also holding a 'Satyagrah' at the Raj Ghat for

### Kejriwal shed 8 kg in jail, claims AAP

**New Delhi:** Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who is lodged in Tihar Jail, has lost eight kilograms of weight since his arrest March 21, the AAP said Saturday, while adding that a medical board of the AIIMS has recommended including "paratha and puri" in his diet. The Delhi High Court Friday put an interim stay on the bail granted to Kejriwal by a trial court in a money-laundering case linked to the now-scrapped excise policy of his government. The high court is likely to pronounce its reserved verdict on the trial court's bail granted to Kejriwal next week.

their jobs and salaries from Delhi government, he said.

Taking a dig at Atishi, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said it was a "Kejriwal model" of hunger strike in which a "Satyagrahi" can even go home and eat and drink.



## SNIPPETS

### CNG price in Delhi, adjoining cities hiked by Re 1 per kg

**New Delhi:** CNG price in Delhi and adjoining cities was Saturday hiked by Re 1 per kg following a drop in the supply of subsidised input natural gas. Indraprastha Gas Ltd, the firm that retails CNG automobiles and piped cooking gas to households in Delhi and adjoining cities, announced the hike in rates on its website. In New Delhi, CNG will now cost Rs 75.09 per kg, up from the previous rate of Rs 74.09. In Noida, Greater Noida, and Ghaziabad, the price has increased to Rs 79.70 per kg from Rs 78.70 per kg. There, however, was no change in piped cooking gas prices. IGL did not give reasons for the increase but sources said the hike was warranted because the firm now has to buy more imported gas following a drop in domestic supplies.

### Video shows woman being beaten publicly; seven held

**Dhar (MP):** A video of a woman being beaten in public by some men in the tribal-dominated Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh has surfaced on social media, following which the police have arrested all seven accused, including her brothers-in-law, an official said Saturday. The video shows four men holding a woman and another man hitting her with a wooden stick. Some onlookers are also seen. Police sources said the incident occurred on June 20 after the woman, who is married, allegedly eloped with a man. The opposition Congress slammed the BJP government, saying the incident raises serious questions over the safety of women in Madhya Pradesh.

### OBC activists end fast after meeting govt delegation

**Jalna (Maha):** Activists Laxman Hake and Navnath Waghmare on Saturday ended their hunger strike over the demand that OBC quota should not be diluted after meeting a Maharashtra government delegation. The duo had launched the indefinite fast on June 13 as a counter to Maratha activist Manoj Jarange's demand that Marathas should get reservation in the Other Backward Class (OBC) category. "We are temporarily suspending our protest. If our demands are not met, we will resume it," Hake told reporters at Wadigodri village in Jalna district of central Maharashtra after meeting the delegation. A "white paper" should be issued about objections to the government's draft notification which seeks to give Kunbi certificates to 'sage-soyare' or kin of Marathas who have already established their Kunbi status, he said. Kunbis are an agrarian OBC community.

## Shah to review flood preparedness today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 22:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah will Sunday review preparedness to deal with floods that affect various parts of the country during the monsoon.

Every year, large areas of Bihar, Assam and other eastern states are inundated due to a rise in the water level of various rivers due to monsoon rains.

"The Home Minister will chair a high-level meeting here Sunday to review overall preparedness for flood management in the country," a home ministry official said.

Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and a few other states also encounter landslides and other rain-related issues during the monsoon.

Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Jammu and Kashmir have also seen floods in recent years.



Currently, Assam is facing floods with around 3.90 lakh people affected in 19 districts, officials said.

The death toll in this year's flood, landslides and storm in the has reached 37, while one person is missing, they said.

Altogether 3,90,491 people remained affected in Kamrup, Tamulpur, Hailakandi, Udalguri, Hojai, Dhubri, Barpeta, Biswanath, Nalbari, Bongaigaon, Baksa, Karimganj, South Salmara, Goalpara, Darrang, Bajali, Nagaon, Cachar and Kamrup Metropolitan districts in Assam as Friday evening.

## Govt to gain emergency control over telecommunications

The Section 20 of the 'Telecommunications Act 2023' stated that the central government of a state government will be able to take control of any telecommunications services or networks in times of emergency after the implementation of the Act

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, June 22:** The Centre Saturday introduced the new Telecommunications Act, 2023 that will usher in the new era of connectivity from June 26, re-

placing century-old colonial laws. The Section 20 of the 'Telecommunications Act 2023' stated that the central government of a state government will be able to take control of any telecommunications services or networks in times of emergency after the implementation of the Act.

On the occurrence of any public emergency, including disaster management, or in the interest of public safety, "the Central Government or a State Government or any officer specially authorised in this behalf by the Central Government or a State Government can take temporary possession of any telecommunication service or telecommunication network from an authorised entity; or provide for appropriate mechanisms to en-

### NEW TELECOM ACT



sure that messages of a user or group of users authorised for response and recovery during a public emergency are routed on priority," according to the Section 20 of the Act.

Any telecom player who wants

to establish or operate telecommunication networks, provide services or possess ratio equipment will have to be authorised by the government.

"The Telecommunications Act, 2023 aims to amend and consol-

idate the law relating to development, expansion and operation of telecommunication services and telecommunication networks; assignment of spectrum and for matters connected therewith," said the Department of Communication (DoT)

The Telecommunications Act, 2023 seeks to repeal existing legislative frameworks like Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and Indian Wireless Telegraph Act, 1933 owing to huge technical advancements in the telecom sector and technologies.

The Act also provides measures for protection of users from unsolicited commercial communication and creates a grievance redressal mechanism.

When it comes to the Right of Way (RoW) framework, public entities shall be obligated to pro-

vide right of way except in special circumstances.

"The fee for right of way would be subject to a ceiling. The Act provides a complete framework for RoW in respect of private property based on mutual agreement. The Act also provides that the RoW to be granted shall be non-discriminatory and as far as practicable on a non-exclusive basis," said the DoT.

It also provides that telecommunication infrastructure shall be distinct from the property it is installed on. This will help reduce the disputes when property is sold or leased.

In line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Gati Shakti' vision, the law provides for the central government to establish common ducts and cable corridors.



"I have directed the Chief Secretary of Assam to immediately constitute an inquiry to investigate the incident thoroughly," the CM added. Local police sources, requesting anonymity, said the two brothers had entered the area around midnight for illegal fishing activity.

They purportedly attempted to flee when forest guards spotted them, leading the latter to fire, which resulted in the death of the duo.

The post-mortem examination of the bodies were conducted at the local hospital and after that, the bodies were handed over to the families Saturday. Rupohihat MLA Nurul Huda, visiting the residence of the deceased, demanded an enquiry and compensation for the victims' families.

"If they had tried to escape, they should have been shot in the leg. The forest department has to answer why they killed these two poor fishermen and pay compensation to the families," the Congress legislator said.

PTI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

### Two killed in firing by forest guard in wildlife sanctuary

**Nagaon, June 22:** Two brothers, who had entered Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary in Assam's Nagaon district illegally, were killed in firing by a forest guard Saturday, police sources said.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, taking note of the incident, has directed the chief secretary to order an enquiry into the matter.

"Last night, individuals from Sutripur village trespassed into Laokhowa-Burachapari Reserve Forest. During an encounter with patrolling forest guards, a guard opened fire in self-defence, resulting in the deaths of Samaruddin (35) and Abdul Jalil (40)," Sarma posted on X.



We will ensure there is no caste tension in the society

EKNATH SHINDE | MAHARASHTRA CM

## SECURITY TIGHTENED

With the Amarnath Yatra set to begin in a week, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Saturday said security arrangements have been tightened and facilities improved for the successful conduct of the pilgrimage



## of the day quote

The need of the hour is that unity, communal brotherhood and peace should be maintained by following the ideals of Bhagat Kabir

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

Coordination between industry and academia is essential for the skill development of students and enhancing manpower

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

Political leaders of Delhi have turned a crisis into an opportunity for blaming the neighbouring states with the sole aim of gaining political mileage

VK SAXENA | DELHI LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

## X POST OF THE DAY

CCTV cameras on more than 50% of Centers for the NEET exam weren't working. At many centres, the officially appointed invigilators didn't go and they sent someone else to take the exam. This is how NTA conducts exams...

@SHAANDELHIT

## SHORT TAKES

### Three drones, pistol, heroin packet seized

Chandigarh: Three drones, a pistol and a packet of heroin have been seized from three places near the India-Pakistan border in Punjab, officials said Saturday. In Tarn Taran district, a China-made drone was seized from a field near Noorwala village along the international border by Border Security Force (BSF) and Punjab Police personnel during a search operation, a spokesperson of the BSF said. In another incident, the BSF carried out a search Saturday in the border area of Ferozepur district after receiving information about a drone.

### Security forces foil infiltration bid

Srinagar: Two militants were believed to be killed as security forces foiled an infiltration bid along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Uri sector of Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district Saturday, officials said. Army personnel noticed suspicious movement along the LoC in the Gohallan area of north Kashmir's Uri sector, the officials said. On being challenged, the militants opened fire, inviting a retaliation by the Army, the officials said. They said there was an exchange of fire for sometime which has now stopped.

### Two fire incidents in Kolkata

Kolkata: Two fire incidents were reported in the city Saturday, police said. There was no report of any person injured in the two fire incidents, they said. The first fire broke out at a building in central Kolkata's Dalhousie area in the early hours of the day while the second one was at a restaurant in the southern part of the city's Jodhpur Park area at around 6.15 PM, an officer of the fire department said. Seven fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the blaze that broke out around 4.30 am at a building behind the Bankshall Court in Garstin Place, he added.

# India, B'desh ink pact to boost ties



A major focus of the talks between the two prime ministers was to explore ways to shore up India-Bangladesh cooperation in digital and energy connectivity even as both sides resolved to work towards peaceful management of borders between the two countries

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 22: India and Bangladesh Saturday firmed up a futuristic vision to shore up cooperation in several new areas and signed 10 agreements to boost ties in several key sectors including in maritime sphere and blue economy.

The pacts were finalised at the wide-ranging talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his visiting Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina.

The documents finalised included a shared vision for India-Bangladesh "digital partnership", one on "green partnership" and another on cooperation in the space sector.

Two other significant pacts firmed up by the two sides were a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on maritime cooperation and blue economy and an agreement to facilitate Railway connectivity.

The other agreements were in the areas of oceanography, health and medicine, disaster management and fisheries.

"Today we have prepared a futuristic vision for cooperation in new areas," Modi said in his statement to the media.

"The youth of both countries will benefit from the consensus reached on cooperation in areas

such as green partnership, digital partnership, blue economy and space," he said.

The Prime Minister also referred to the "futuristic vision" for cooperation in new areas.

"Today we have prepared a futuristic vision for cooperation in new areas. The youth of both countries will benefit from the consensus reached on cooperation in many areas such as green partnership, digital partnership, blue economy and space," he said.

In her remarks, Hasina described India as Bangladesh's major neighbour and a trusted friend.

"India is our major neighbour, trusted friend, and regional partner. Bangladesh greatly values our relations with India, which were born out of the War of Liberation in 1971," she said.

"I recall with gratitude the contribution of the government and the people of India to Bangladesh's independence," she said.

Hasina also paid homage to the "brave fallen heroes of India" who sacrificed their lives in the 1971 war.

"Today, we had very productive meetings where we discussed cooperation in areas of security, trade, connectivity, sharing of water from common rivers, power and energy, and regional and multilateral cooperation," she said.

"We agreed to collaborate with each other for the betterment of our people and countries," she added.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister began her two-day visit to India Friday.

It is the first incoming bilateral state visit by a foreign leader after the formation of the new government in India following the Lok Sabha elections.

In the morning, Hasina visited Raighat and paid rich tributes to Mahatma Gandhi.

## Shah launches special programme to fast-track immigration services

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 22: Union Home Minister Amit Shah Saturday launched a special programme under which the immigration process for pre-verified Indian nationals and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders will be fast-tracked.

The Fast Track Immigration-Trusted Traveller Programme (FTI-TTP) is a "visionary initiative" of the government, thoughtfully designed for Indian nationals and OCI cardholders, Shah said.

The FTI-TTP is similar to the Global Entry Program offered by the United States that allows expedited clearance for pre-approved, low-risk travellers upon arrival at select US airports, officials said.

The Home Minister said the initiative will provide more facilities for the Indian nationals and OCI passengers coming from other countries.



The launch of the programme is one of the key agendas set for "Viksit Bharat by 2047" and reflects the Narendra Modi government's commitment to enhance travel convenience and efficiency for everyone, he added. Shah said the facility will be available free of cost for all passengers.

The FTI-TTP will be launched at 21 major airports in the country.

In the first phase, along with the Delhi airport, it will be launched at seven major airports - Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Kochi and Ahmedabad.

It is designed for faster, smoother and safer immigration clearance for international travellers. The eligible passengers will be allowed to utilise e-gates and bypass regular immigration queues for a seamless journey.

They will need to apply online and submit their biometrics (fingerprint and facial image), along with other required information as specified in the application form. The FTI registration will be valid for a maximum of five years or until the validity of the passport, whichever comes first.



A caravan of camels during World Camel Day celebrations at ICAR-National Research Centre on Camel, in Bikaner, Rajasthan

# Govt, Oppn face-off on Pro-tem Speaker issue

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 22: Ahead of the first session of the 18th Lok Sabha, the NDA government and the INDIA bloc sparred on the issue of Pro-tem Speaker with Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju accusing the Congress of resorting to lies and the Opposition threatening to refuse to join the panel of chairpersons in the House.



President Droupadi Murmu had appointed BJP leader and seven-term member Bhartruhari Mahtab as the Pro-tem Speaker of the Lok Sabha, who is tasked with administering the oath and affirmation to the newly-elected members of the lower house and preside over the election of the Speaker.

The President had also named five senior members - K Suresh (Congress), T R Baalu (DMK), Radha Mohan Singh and Faggan Singh Kulaste (both BJP) and Sudip Bandyopadhyay (TMC) to assist Mahtab in the process that will take place over the first three days of the Lok Sabha Session commencing June 24.

The Congress had alleged that the government has violated procedures and conventions and ignored the right of eight-term member Suresh to the post of the pro-tem Speaker, a claim dismissed as "misleading" by Rijiju.

Opposition sources Saturday said Suresh, Baalu and Bandyopadhyay may not join the panel of chairpersons to assist pro-tem Speaker Mahtab in administering the oath to the newly elected members of the Lok Sabha.

Rijiju had asserted that Mahtab was the senior-most in the House as he was elected for seven uninterrupted terms to the Lok Sabha, while Suresh, though an eight-term member, was not a member in 1998 and 2004.

Suresh had said his claim to the post of pro-tem speaker was overlooked as he belonged to the Dalit community, remarks that were scoffed at by Rijiju.

BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawala said the Congress had deliberately insulted a "tribal" Parliamentary Affairs Minister by lying on the issue of pro-tem speaker.

Rijiju said he may be the first tribal to occupy the post of Parliamentary Affairs Minister but he won't be intimidated by the threats and lies of Congress party.

Earlier, Congress leader K C Venugopal had described the overlooking of Suresh's claim to the Pro-tem Speaker post as an attempt at "destroying parliamentary norms".

# SECTION 144 IMPOSED AFTER CLASH BREAKS OUT IN JODHPUR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jodhpur, June 22: Several people were injured after communal violence erupted in the Soorsagar area here over the construction of an eidgah gate, officials said Saturday.

Police Commissioner Rajendra Singh said 51 people have been arrested so far in connection with the Friday night incident, and prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC have been imposed in areas under six police stations.

Jodhpur West DCP Rajesh Kumar Yadav said the clash began Friday night over the construction of a gate in the rear side of an eidgah near Rajaram Circle in Soorsagar. The tension escalated and some people hurled stones, injuring two police officers, he said.

The residents of the locality opposed the construction of the gate on the backside of the eidgah saying that it would increase the movement of people in that area.

According to police, the construction began Friday evening. The subsequent confrontation turned violent later with stone-pelting, arson and vandalism.

"A shop and a tractor were set on fire while a jeep was vandalised," a senior police officer said. DCP Yadav said the police dispersed people to their homes by using batons and fired 4-5 rounds of tear gas shells.

While charging at the crowd, police had to face a barrage of stones hurled at them, which for a moment blocked their advancement.

A brief peace was also worked out by the police with the help of senior members from both communities but sudden stone-pelting turned the situation tense again. According to police, stones were thrown from houses in the areas including Vyapariyon ka Mohalla, Ambon ka Bagh and Subhash Chowk.

Efforts are on to identify the houses from where stones were hurled at the police when they tried to disperse the mob, they said.

The police commissioner said that the situation is under control and police have been deployed in the entire area. Two FIRs were filed based on complaints from both sides.

"We have imposed CrPC Section 144 and arrested 51 people so far," he said.

## Court remands actor Darshan to judicial custody till July 4

### SNIPPETS

BANGALORE: A court here Saturday remanded Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa to judicial custody in the Renukaswamy murder case till July 4. His four alleged accomplices too were sent to judicial custody. The actor was in the police custody since June 11. The Special Public Prosecutor prayed the court for a direction to lodge the accused persons separately and in different jails across Karnataka, which was opposed by Darshan's lawyers. Darshan and his aides were taken to the central prison at Parappana Agrahara in Bangalore.



## Another bridge collapses in Bihar; none hurt

SIWAN: A small bridge collapsed in Siwan district Saturday in the second incident of its kind in Bihar in less than a week, officials said. The bridge was erected over a canal, connecting the villages of Daraunda and Maharajganj blocks, and it caved in at around 5 am, said District Magistrate Mukul Kumar Gupta. "Nobody was injured in the incident. It was a very old structure and apparently, pillars caved in when water was released through the canal. We are trying to ensure that until it is restored, residents of affected villages face as little inconvenience as possible," the DM told PTI.



## Four dead, 12 injured in factory blaze; owner held

GURUGRAM: The Gurugram police have arrested the owner of GFO Research and Development Pvt Ltd's factory, where a massive fire broke out in the wee hours of Saturday, claiming 4 lives and leaving 12 others injured. According to police, the complainant in the matter claimed that the factory owner had stocked a large number of fireballs and flammable material inside the factory premises and they had requested the accused not to stock such material but the accused paid no heed to their concerns and the incident occurred. The accused has been identified as Sandeep, a resident of Gurugram's Rajender Nagar area.



## WB TRAIN MISHAP

# Railways mulls new procedural initiatives

Sources said a proposal has been mooted for installation of stabilisers-cum-call recorders at all rail-gate cabins for recording the communication between the concerned gate-men, station masters and other officials of the department

AGENCIES

Kolkata, June 22: Following the Kanchanjunga Express-goods train collision which claimed 11 lives, the railways is mulling new initiatives to improve the communication system between different departments as well to avoid certain technical confusion which may lead to the recurrence of such mishaps.

Sources said that a proposal has been mooted for the installation of stabilisers-cum-call

recorders at all rail-gate cabins for recording the communication between the concerned gate-men, station masters and other officials of the department.

They said that the proposal has been mooted by Northeast Frontier Railway. "So in case of not only future mishap but in case of any other glitches, the recorded calls in the system will enable smooth and speedy enquiries in such matters," a railways official said.

He said that the stabilisers-



cum-call recorders were only installed at rail-gate cabins of important junction stations. However, as per the new pro-

posal, a decision has been taken to bring all rail-gate cabins under this system. "The second proposal will be more judicious and cautious issuances of the paper line clear tickets (PLCTs) for trains to pass through a distance where the automatic signalling system is malfunctioning," the official said. As the preliminary step, the Sealdah Division of railways has barred all station masters under the division from issuing PLCTs till further orders. The station masters have

also been cautioned of departmental proceedings in case any of them issues any PLCT without prior order.

PLCT is a paper authorisation issued to a train to ignore red signals within a distance where the automatic signalling system is malfunctioning. However, such PLCT comes with a restriction of the speed limit of 15 kilometres an hour within that distance where the automatic signalling is non-functional.

# international



Having now survived two difficult years, I must acknowledge that this was possible because India gave us a loan of \$3.5 billion. All that will be repaid  
RANIL WICKREMESINGHE | PRESIDENT, SRI LANKA

## SPACE RETURN DELAYED

The American space agency NASA has confirmed that the return of the Indian origin astronaut Sunita Williams from the International Space Station (ISS) has been further delayed and no new date has been set for her 'happy landing'



## of the day quote

Let's be clear: The people of the region and the people of the world cannot afford Lebanon to become another Gaza



ANTONIO GUTERRES | SECRETARY-GENERAL, UN

It was obvious to me that the ever-eastward expansion of NATO and the European Union was giving this man a reason to his Russian people to say, 'They're coming for us again' and to go to war. It's, you know, of course it's his fault — he's used what we've done as an excuse



NIGEL FARAGE | LEADER, REFORM UK

In the face of the Taliban's tightening repression of women and girls, the UN plans to hold a meeting without women's rights on the agenda or Afghan women in the room is shocking



TIRANA HASSAN | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

## SHORT TAKES

### Gunman kills three

**Arkansas:** A shooter opened fire at an Arkansas supermarket Friday, killing three civilians and wounding 11 other people, including two police officers, Arkansas State Police said. The suspect was also wounded in a shootout with police, Arkansas State Police Director Mike Hagar told reporters. The shooting occurred at the Mad Butcher grocery in Fordyce, a town of 3,200 people about 112 km south of Little Rock. The suspect was also shot and taken into custody, Hagar said.

### Heavy rains claim 19

**San Salvador:** The torrential rains hitting El Salvador caused the deaths of another six people Friday when two girls and four adults were killed after being buried in their homes. Wall collapses and landslides on the outskirts of the capital brought a total of 19 dead. The Civil Protection authorities of El Salvador issued a red alert and the country's Congress declared a state of national emergency for 15 days.

## GAZA WAR

# No let up in Israeli attacks

Israel pounds Gaza, killing 42 civilians, as fighting rages

REUTERS

**Cairo, June 22:** At least 42 people were killed in Israeli attacks on districts of Gaza City in the north of the Palestinian enclave Saturday, the director of the Hamas-run government media office said.

One Israeli strike on houses in Al-Shati, one of the Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee camps, killed 24 people, Ismail Al-Thawabta told Reuters. Another 18 Palestinians were killed in a strike on houses in the Al-Tuffah neighborhood.

The Israeli military released a brief statement saying: "A short while ago, IDF fighter jets struck two Hamas military infrastructure sites in the area of Gaza City." It said more details would be released soon.

Hamas did not comment on the statement the attacks targeted the civilian population and vowed in a statement "the occupation and its Nazi leaders will pay the price for their violations against our people."

Footage obtained by Reuters showed dozens of Palestinians rushing out to search for victims amid the destroyed houses. The footage showed wrecked homes, blasted walls, and debris and dust filling the street in Shati refugee camp.

Residents said Israeli tanks deepened their incursion into western and northern Rafah areas in recent days. Israeli forces bombed several areas from air and the ground, forcing



More than eight months into the war, Israel's advance is now focused on the two last areas its forces had yet to seize: Rafah on Gaza's southern edge and the area surrounding Deir al-Balah in the centre

October 7, killing around 1,200 people and seizing more than 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies.

The offensive has left Gaza in ruins, killed more than 37,400 people, of whom 101 were killed in the past 24 hours, according to Palestinian health authorities, and left nearly the

entire population homeless and destitute.

On Friday, the Gaza health ministry said at least 25 Palestinians were killed in Mawasi in western Rafah and 50 wounded. Palestinians said a tank shell hit a tent housing displaced families.

Palestinian and UN figures show that fewer than 1,00,000 people may have remained in the far western side of the city, which had been sheltering more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million people before the Israeli assault began in early May.

The United Nations said Friday it is Israel's responsibility - as the occupying power in the Gaza Strip - to restore public order and safety in the Palestinian territory so humanitarian aid can be delivered, amid warnings of imminent famine.

## 42K ISRAELI WOMEN APPLY FOR GUN PERMIT

With many Israelis gripped by a sense of insecurity following Hamas's unprecedented October 7 attack, the number of women applying for gun permits has soared, while feminist groups have criticised the rush to arms. According to security ministry data, there have been 42,000 applications by women for gun permits since the attack, with 18,000 approved, more than tripling the number of pre-war licenses held by women. The surge has been enabled by the loosening of gun laws under Israel's right-wing government and its far-right security minister Itamar Ben Gvir. More than 15,000 women civilians now own a firearm in Israel and the occupied West Bank, with 10,000 enrolled in mandatory training, according to the ministry. "I would have never thought of buying a weapon or getting a permit, but since October 7, things changed a little bit," political science professor Limor Gonen told AFP during a weapons handling class at a shooting range in the West Bank settlement of Ariel. "We were all targeted (on October 7) and I don't want to be taken by surprise, so I'm trying to defend myself," Gonen said after the class, an obligatory step for acquiring a permit.

## BALTIMORE CRASH

### 8 crew members leave for India

**Washington:** Eight Indian crew members of the cargo ship 'Dali' that crashed into a famed Baltimore bridge in March left for India Friday after nearly three months on the mammoth vessel. According to Baltimore Maritime Exchange, four of the 21 crew members are still on board the 984-foot cargo ship MV Dali, which is tentatively scheduled to leave Friday evening. The rest of the crew has been moved to a service apartment in Baltimore and will remain there pending an investigation. The departure of eight Indian crew members including a cook, a fitter and seaman follows a deal approved by the judge. The rest 13 would remain in the US, mainly because of the pending investigations.



A supermoon sets behind rock formation known as the fairy chimneys at the Phrygian valley in western Turkey

## Iranians split on Prez vote as hardships mount

**IRANIANS HEAD TO THE POLLS JUNE 28 TO CHOOSE FROM SIX CANDIDATES -- FIVE CONSERVATIVES AND A RELATIVE REFORMIST -- TO SUCCEED EBRAHIM RAISI, WHO DIED IN A HELICOPTER CRASH LAST MONTH**

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



**Tehran, June 22:** With just a week remaining before a presidential election, Iranians are divided over whether voting will address pressing economic issues and mandatory hijab laws. Iranians head to the polls June 28 to choose from six candidates -- five conservatives and a relative reformist -- to succeed Ebrahim Raisi, who died in a helicopter crash last month.

The candidates have held two debates, each pledging to tackle the financial challenges impacting the country's 85 million people. **'NO DIFFERENCE'**

Others, like 57-year-old baker Taghi Dodangeh, remain hopeful. "Change is certain," he said, viewing voting as a religious duty and national obligation.

But Jowzi, a 61-year-old housewife, expressed doubts, especially about the candidate line-up. "There's hardly any differences between the six," she said. "One cannot say any of them belongs to a different group."

Iran's Guardian Council approved six candidates after disqualifying most moderates and reformists. Leading contenders include conservative parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, ultraconservative former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili and the sole reformist candidate, Masoud Pezeshkian.

**The economic situation is deteriorating daily, and I don't foresee any improvements. Regardless of who wins, our lives won't change**

FARIBA | ONLINE STORE OWNER

Keshvar, a 53-year-old mother, intends to vote for the candidate with the most robust economic plan. "Young people are grappling with economic hardships," she said. "Raisi made efforts, but on the ground, things didn't change much for the general public, and they were unhappy."

In the 2021 election that brought Raisi to power, many voters stayed away, resulting in a participation rate just under 49 percent -- the lowest since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. **'ACT HUMANELY'**

This election comes at a tur-

**The election comes as Iran grapples with economic pressures, international sanctions and enforcement of the compulsory headscarves for women**

bulent time, with the Gaza war raging between Iran's adversary Israel and Tehran-backed Palestinian militant group Hamas, along with ongoing diplomatic tensions over Iran's nuclear programme.

Compulsory hijab laws remain contentious, particularly since mass protests triggered by the 2022 death in custody of Mahsa Amini.

Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian Kurd, was detained for an alleged breach of Iran's dress code for women, who are required to cover their heads and necks and wear modest clothing in public.

Despite increased enforcement, many women, especially in Tehran, defy the dress code. Fariba expressed concern that after the election, "things would go back to where they were," and young women won't be able to remove their headscarves.

Jowzi, an undecided voter who wears a veil, regards it as a "personal" choice and opposes state interference. "It makes no difference who becomes president," she said. "What's important is what they actually do. It's not important to me whether or not they have a turban. They need to act humanely."

## Hindujas 'appalled' by Swiss court's jail order, file appeal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, June 22:** Britain's wealthiest family, the Hinduja's, have said they were "appalled" by a Swiss court's ruling of jail terms for some members and have filed an appeal in a higher court challenging the verdict finding them guilty of exploiting vulnerable domestic workers from India at their villa in Geneva.

In a statement issued on behalf of the family on Friday, lawyers from Switzerland stressed their clients -- Prakash and Kamal Hinduja, both in their 70s and their son Ajay and his wife Namrata -- had been acquitted of all human trafficking charges.

They also dismissed media reports that any members of the family faced detention after court reports from Geneva said the four were sentenced to between four and four-and-a-half years in prison.

"Our clients have been acquitted of all human trafficking charges. We are appalled and disappointed by the rest of the decision made in this court of first instance, and we have, of course, filed an appeal to the higher court, thereby making this part of the judgement not effective," reads the statement signed by lawyers Yael Hayat and Robert Assael and Roman Jordan.

"Under Swiss law, the presumption of innocence is paramount till a final judgement by the highest adjudicating authority is enforced. Contrary to some media reports, there is no effective detention for any mem-

## NAVIGATING DARKNESS

# Ukraine struggling with new wave of blackouts



## RUSSIA LAUNCHES A NEW BARRAGE OF MISSILES ON UKRAINIAN ENERGY FACILITIES, LEAVING 2 DEAD IN KHARKIV

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Kyiv, June 22:** At least two people were killed in Ukraine's second city, Kharkiv, in Russian shelling Saturday afternoon, local officials said.

The shelling hit an area of "dense residential development", according to city mayor Ihor Terekhov. He said that 18 people were wounded, along with the two dead reported by regional Governor Oleh Syniehubov.

Russia launched a new barrage of missiles and drones in an overnight attack on Ukraine, officials in Kyiv said Saturday, damaging energy facilities in the southeast and west and injuring at least two workers.

Ukraine is struggling with a new wave of rolling blackouts after relentless Russian attacks on energy infrastructure that started three months ago took out half the country's power generation capacity. In its eighth major attack on energy facilities overnight, Russia fired 16 missiles and 13 Shahed drones, the Ukrainian air force said.

Ukraine's air defences intercepted 12 of the 16 missiles and all 13 drones launched by Russia, the air force said.

State-owned power grid operator Ukrenergo said the strikes damaged equipment at facilities in southeastern Zaporizhzhia and the western Lviv region.

Two energy workers were injured in Zaporizhzhia when a fire broke out at an energy facility, according to regional Governor Ivan Fedorov.

With no major changes reported along the 1,000-kilometer front line, where a recent push by the Kremlin's forces in eastern and northeastern Ukraine has made only incremental gains, both sides have taken aim at infrastructure targets, seeking to curb each other's ability to fight in a war that is

## In its eighth major attack on energy facilities, Russia fired 16 missiles and 13 Shahed drones

now in its third year.

Moscow's overnight attack on Zaporizhzhia and Lviv follows Ukrainian military strikes on three oil refineries in southern Russia overnight into Friday.

Air defences destroyed five drones over the Sea of Azov and the country's western Bryansk and Smolensk regions, the Russian Ministry of Defense said. A man was killed in shelling of Russia's Belgorod region, which borders Ukraine, according to regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov.

The governor of eastern Ukraine's partly occupied Donetsk region said Saturday that Russian attacks had killed five people and wounded seven the previous day.

In the Russia-controlled part of the region, Moscow-installed Governor Denis Pushilin said three people were killed and four were injured in shelling by Ukrainian forces Saturday morning.

## Kanishka bombing probe remains 'active, ongoing': Canada cops

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



bers of the family," they said.

The lawyers also pointed out that "it should also be recalled that the plaintiffs in this case had withdrawn their respective complaints after declaring to the court that they had never intended to be involved in such proceedings".

"The family has full faith in the judicial process and remains confident that the truth will prevail," they conclude.

The statement followed a hearing in the Swiss city of Geneva after prosecutors opened the case for alleged illegal activity, including exploitation, human trafficking and violation of Switzerland's labour laws.

The family members were accused of seizing the workers' passports, barring them from leaving the villa and forcing them to work very long hours for a pittance in Switzerland, among other things.

During the trial, prosecutors alleged the family spent more on their dog than on their servants.

The family's legal team had countered the allegations and told the court the staff were treated respectfully and provided with accommodation.

**Ottawa, June 22:** Investigations into the bombing of the Air India Flight 182 remain "active and ongoing", the Canadian police have said, terming it the "longest" and one of the "most complex domestic terrorism" probe, ahead of the deadly bombing's 39th-anniversary memorial.

The Montreal-New Delhi Air India 'Kanishka' Flight 182 exploded 45 minutes before it was to have landed at London's Heathrow Airport on June 23, 1985, killing all 329 people on board, most of them Canadians of Indian descent. The bombing was blamed on Sikh militants in retaliation to 'Operation Blue Star' to flush out militants from the Golden Temple in 1984.

In a statement Friday, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Assistant Commissioner David Teboul called the bombing the "greatest terror-related loss of life involving and affecting Canadians" in the country's history as he offered "deepest sympathies, understanding and support to the families of the victims".

"The Air India investigation is the longest and certainly one of the most complex domestic terrorism investigations that the RCMP has undertaken in our history," Teboul said. "Our investigative efforts remain active and ongoing," he said.

Asserting that the impacts of the bombing "have not diminished with time" he said that the trauma it caused has impacted generations.

## of the day quote

India is well poised to leapfrog into the future and become one of the world's leading economies. Armed with technological prowess, innovative acumen, increasing affluence and growth-centric policies, the country is often referred to as the new land of opportunities

NITIN PARANJPE | HUL CHAIRMAN

Fresh products have a good demand (in the US and other overseas markets)... We would be soon expanding with other products like dahi, lassi buttermilk, cream and paneer

JAYEN MEHTA | MD, GCMMLF

It is anticipated that India, now the fastest growing economy in the world, will achieve upwards of 7 per cent real GDP growth in FY2024, and various forecasts expect this buoyancy to continue in FY2025

NIRAJ BAJAJ | BAJAJ AUTO CHAIRMAN

## SHORT TAKES

### GRSE gets order from German firm

**Kolkata:** Defence PSU Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd Saturday signed an agreement with a Germany-based shipping company for the construction and delivery of four multi-purpose cargo vessels, an official said. The contract is worth approximately USD 54 million and the order is to be executed in 33 months, GRSE informed the National Stock Exchange and BSE. GRSE signed the agreement with shipping company Carsten Rehder Schiffsmakler und Reederei GmbH and Co. KG, Germany, for the construction and delivery of four multi-purpose vessels with an option of building another four ships in near future, the GRSE official said in a statement. The vessels will be 120 metres long and 17 metres wide and can carry 7,500 metric tonnes of cargo each, the GRSE official said.

### Ireda raises ₹1,500cr via bonds

**New Delhi:** State-owned Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (Ireda) Friday said it has raised ₹1,500 crore through a bond issue, which was oversubscribed by 2.65 times. The bond issuance, which consisted of a base issue of ₹500 crore and a green shoe option of ₹1,000 crore, received an overwhelming response from investors, and oversubscribed 2.65 times, a company statement said. According to the statement, Ireda successfully raised ₹1,500 crore Friday through the issuance of bonds. Funds have been raised at an annual interest rate of 7.44 per cent for a tenure of 10 years and 2 months.

### Prestige Estates to raise up to ₹5k-cr

**New Delhi:** Realty firm Prestige Estates Projects Ltd plans to raise up to ₹5,000 crore by selling equity shares to institutional investors and also monetise its hotel business through issuance of shares of its arm Prestige Hospitality Ventures. Prestige Estates is one of the leading real estate developers in the country. It is into development of housing, office, shopping malls, warehousing and hospitality projects. The company has a significant presence in South India and has entered into Mumbai and Delhi-NCR property market. According to a regulatory filing on Friday, the company's board approved "raising of funds by way of issuance of equity shares or other eligible securities for an aggregate amount not exceeding ₹5,000 crore by way of QIP or other permissible mode."



I want to reassure the assessee that our intent is to make GST assessee's life easier, we are working towards less and less compliance

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

# GST on fuel: FM puts ball in states' court

INCLUDING OIL PRODUCTS UNDER GST WILL NOT JUST HELP COMPANIES SET OFF TAX THAT THEY PAID ON INPUT BUT WILL ALSO BRING ABOUT UNIFORMITY IN TAXATION ON FUELS IN THE COUNTRY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 22:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Saturday said the intention of the central government has always been to bring petrol and diesel under GST, and it is now up to the states to come together and decide on the rate.

She said a provision has already been made by former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley by including petrol and diesel into GST law. What is remaining is for the states to come together to discuss and decide on the rate of the levy.

"The intention of the GST, as



was brought in by former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, was to have petrol and diesel in GST. It is up to the states now... to decide on the rate. The intent of my predecessor was very clear, we want petrol and diesel to come into GST," Sitharaman said.

When GST was introduced July 1, 2017, amalgamating over a dozen central and state levies, five commodities -- crude oil, natural gas, petrol, diesel, and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) -- were included in GST law but it was decided that it would be taxed under GST at a later date.

This meant that the central government continued to levy excise duty on them, while state governments charged VAT. These

taxes, with excise duty, in particular, have been raised periodically.

Sitharaman said the intent of the central government when GST was implemented was that eventually sometime (later) petrol and diesel can be brought into GST.

"Provision has already been made that it can be brought into GST. One and only decision which is expected is for the states to agree and come to the GST Council and then decide what rate they will agree on. Once the states agree in the council, they will have to decide what will be the rate of taxation. Once that decision is taken it will be put in the Act," Sitharaman told reporters after the 53rd GST Council meeting.

## Bidders for strategic mineral blocks to be named Monday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 22:** The government Monday will declare the names of the bidders who have won the blocks in the first round of critical and strategic mineral blocks auction.

The preferred bidders will be declared during the launch of the fourth round of auction of critical and strategic mineral blocks.

"During the event, preferred bidders of the first tranche launched on November 29, 2023 will be declared," the mines ministry said in a statement.

Union Minister of Coal and Mines G Kishan Reddy and Minister of State for Coal and Mines Satish Chandra Dubey will launch the fourth round of auction of critical and strategic mineral blocks here.

So far, the Centre has launched three tranches of auction of 38 critical and strategic mineral blocks located across 14 States and Union Territories. The government had earlier cancelled the auction for 13 of the 20 blocks put on sale in the first tranche of critical minerals as the response was lukewarm. Of the 20 blocks put on offer, 56 physical bids and 56 online bids were received for 18 blocks. Of the 11 cancelled blocks, seven mines have been notified for auction under the third round. The second round of auction of six blocks was completed as per schedule.

## FPIs bullish on India, pump ₹23,786 crore since June 10



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, June 22:** Buoyed by the policy and reform continuity, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have altered their position in the equity market following the election results, injecting ₹23,786 crore since June 10, industry analysts said Saturday.

There are three primary reasons for this positive inflow. "First, the continuity of the government assures ongoing reforms. Second, the Chinese economy is decelerating, as evidenced by a 12 per cent decline in copper prices over the past month," said Sunil Damania, Chief Investment Officer, MojoPMS.

Third, certain block deals in the market have been eagerly taken up by FPIs.

"However, these FPI inflows are concentrated in a select few stocks rather than being widespread across the market or sec-

tors," Damania said.

Till June, FPIs sold equity for ₹11,193 crore.

According to market experts, it is interesting to note that this net sell figure is composed of selling through the exchanges for ₹45,794 crore and buying through the "primary market and others" for ₹34,600 crore.

FPIs are selling where valuations are high and buying where valuations are reasonable.

Analysts believe that FPI inflows will remain constrained due to the high valuations currently commanded by the Indian equity market.

Meanwhile, the Indian market initially continued its upward trend as concerns over election outcomes eased and global sentiment improved.

With a coalition government in place, there is optimism that the upcoming budget will strike a balance between growth initiatives and populist measures, they noted.

## Not all happy at Reliance with Aramco board call

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 22:** Reliance Industries' shareholders have approved the reappointment of Saudi Aramco Chairman Yasir Othman H Al-Rumayyan as an independent director on the company's board for five years but over 16 per cent voted against the proposal.

In a stock exchange filing, Reliance said its shareholders through a postal ballot approved reappointment of Al Rumayyan as well as appointment of Haigreve Khaitan as independent directors on the board. They also approved reappointment of long-time company executive PMS Prasad as a director for another 5 years. The resolution for reappointment of Al Rumayyan was carried with 83.97 per cent voting in favour of the resolution.

## BIZ BUZZ

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar:** Kalyan Kumar, Executive Director (ED) of Punjab National Bank visited Bhubaneswar Zone June 21. A customer meet was organised where Kumar addressed the customers and assured the Bank's best services along with Digital Product Offerings. Then he reviewed the senior bank officers under Bhubaneswar Zone. Kumar emphasised on best customer services. Punjab National Bank's Bhubaneswar Zonal Manager Rajesh Kumar, Deputy Zonal Manager Kshetrabasi Mishra and other senior officers were present in the meeting.

## BoM pays ₹857cr dividend to govt

**Bhubaneswar:** State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) Friday presented ₹857 crore dividend cheque to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The cheque was handed over by BoM managing director Nidhu Saxena and executive director Asheesh Pandey in the presence of Financial Services Secretary Vivek Joshi. The bank declared a dividend of ₹1.40 per equity share (14 per cent) for FY24, BoM said in a statement. The Government of India holds an 86.46 per cent stake in the Pune-based bank. This dividend payment reflects the bank's impressive financial performance during the fiscal year, it said. The bank's net profit increased by 55.84 per cent to ₹4,055 crore in FY24, compared to ₹2,602 crore in the previous fiscal year. The bank has recorded a 15.94 per cent improvement in total business and a 15.66 rise in deposit mobilisation for the 2023-24. BoM has consistently shown resilience and adaptability to changing market dynamics, enabling it to remain at the forefront in terms of service delivery and customer satisfaction, it added.



## Rural FMCG sales growth to outstrip urban markets: Report

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, June 22:** Rural India has bounced back as a buyer of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) such as soaps and soft drinks and sales of these goods are expected to expand at a faster pace than urban areas in the second quarter of 2024, according to a report by consulting firm Kantar.

The report states that the rural market is a 'bright star', recording a 'resurgence' in 2024 and is expected to further consolidate its position in the April-June quarter of the year. This



growth in the rural areas has been fuelled by region-centric measures announced by the government in the interim budget

earlier this year, which provided stability.

Populist measures expected by some states which are going to

face elections this year are also expected to drive up rural demand, the report added.

"The start to 2024 from a rural perspective has been brilliant, with rural growth overtaking urban's; and the rural worm is looking upward," according to the Kantar FMCG Pulse report for Q2.

The report also states that the urban market did not record growth for three straight quarters, and is contending with a huge Q2 2023 base.

The falling Urban curve coupled with a strong base is likely to constrict the numbers for the next quarters, the report states.

# India's deep tech promise stunted by funding gap

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 22:** India saw a significant surge in deep tech startups in 2023 with 480 new ventures emerging, making it the third largest pool globally, a report said.

However, the report by technology industry body Nasscom and global consulting firm Zinnov highlighted the worrying trend of a funding winter, posing a major challenge for these startups.

'India's DeepTech Dawn: Forging Ahead' report also said funding for scaling, talent attraction and retention, and global expansion are the top 3 challenges faced by startups in deep tech innovation.

"India currently has 3600+ deep tech startups, out of which

480 were established in 2023 itself, nearly 2X more than the number of deep tech startups established in 2022," the report said.

But India's deep tech promise is stunted by a funding gap.

"Compared to startups across some other leading deep tech ecosystems, Indian deep tech startups receive a fraction of the median investment at every stage. This lack of funding restricts the ability of some promising deep tech startups to scale, thus hindering India's ability to compete in the global deep tech race," it said.

Indian deep tech startups raised about USD 10 billion in the last 5 years.

Total USD 850 million was raised in 2023 itself - this is a 77 per cent decline over USD 3.7



billion raised in 2022. The number of deals, meanwhile, declined by 25 per cent in 2023 over 2022, it said.

"India needs a multi-pronged approach: increased funding at early-stage, supportive market

ecosystem for scale-ups, and robust initiatives to aid commercialisation."

Artificial Intelligence (AI) emerged as a founder's favourite, with 74 per cent of deep tech startups established in 2023

driven by AI. AI was also an investor favourite, with 86 per cent of the startups who raised funding in 2023 having an AI focus.

AI takes the center stage in patent filings with 41 per cent of all patent filings in deep tech, followed, with a large gap, by IoT and Neurotech, the report said.

According to venture capital firms, long gestation periods are the biggest challenge facing them while investing in deep tech.

"Co-investment programmes and government-backed instruments are necessary initiatives to be taken by the government to make the landscape more favourable to invest in," the report said.

The number of investors participating in funding rounds for India's deep tech startups dropped

by over 60 per cent in 2023 compared to 2022. The absence of many large global investors, who had previously driven funding, also contributed significantly to this decline.

"Median ticket size across seed-stage and late-stage reached their 4-year low and 5-year low respectively. Although early-stage median ticket size reached a 5-year high, it was not enough to offset the overall decline in funding. The absence of mega deals in 2023 as compared to 9 mega deals in 2022, underscores a declining investor emphasis on large-ticket investments," the report noted.

Investors preferred investing in seed-stage deep tech startups with low ticket sizes and relatively lower risk, further declining the funding volume.

# India outclass B'desh

Hardik, Kuldeep sparkle as Men in Blue beat Bangladesh by 50 runs, move closer to semis



Hardik Pandya plays a shot during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup cricket match between India and Bangladesh at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in North Sound, Antigua and Barbuda, Saturday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**North Sound (Antigua), June 22:** Hardik Pandya produced an all-round show while Kuldeep Yadav foxed Bangladesh batters with his guile as India all but assured themselves of a semi-finals berth through a dominant 50-run victory in their second Super 8 game of the T20 World Cup here Saturday.

Star batter Virat Kohli (37 off 28) found much-needed rhythm before Shivam Dube (34 off 24) and Hardik (50 not out off 27) pushed India to 196 for five, the highest total at this venue so far.

Bangladesh could never really challenge India in the steep run-chase and ended up with 146/8 in 20 overs, their second straight loss in the Super 8s.

Kuldeep (3/19), who got his opportunity in the Caribbean

**India will meet their match in Australia, the two unbeaten teams so far, in their final Super 8 fixture Monday**

leg of the competition, made the Bangladesh batters look clueless with the effective use of go-gly and stock ball.

Bumrah (2/13 in four) produced a frugal effort as usual.

Bangladesh skipper Najmul Shanto (40 off 32) played some attacking shots including two sixes over fine leg off Hardik but did not get support from others as the batters led the team down once again. After Litton Das (13 off 10) crisply pulled Hardik for a six over deep mid-wicket, the all-rounder had him caught at deep square leg the very next ball.

It was a premeditated walk across the stumps from Litton that led to his dismissal.

Kuldeep then got into the act and it did not take him long to make an impact.

He got rid of opener Tanzid Hasan (29) with a wrong one that the batter failed to pick, trapping him in front of the stumps.

Bangladesh's stand out batter so far, Towhid Hridoy, went for a sweep against Kuldeep but missed it completely to be adjudged leg before.

After being 76 for three in the 12th over, Bangladesh could only delay the inevitable.

Earlier, struggling for runs since his selection in the India squad, Dube once again was slow off the blocks before smoking three sixes to make an impact towards the end of the innings.

Hardik provided the final flourish to take the team close to 200. The all-rounder completed his 50 off the final ball of the innings.

Skipper Rohit Sharma (23 off 11) was happy to lose the toss at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium and alongside Kohli (37 off 28), was able to play his shots from the get go unlike the earlier games.

Bangladesh started with spinners from both ends, an interesting move against the two right-handers.

After three fours and a six, Rohit made room to deposit Shakib Al Hasan over extra cover but ended up mistiming it to be caught.

Kohli too meant business with the pick of his shots being the 94m six off Mustafizur Rahman to the cow corner region.

He then welcomed leggie Rishad Hossain with a straight six before getting foxed by a slow off-cutter from pacer Tanzim Hasan.

Two balls later, the pacer got a delivery to jump off the length, kissing Suyakumar Yadav's gloves for a double strike in the over, leaving India at 83 for three in 10 overs.

Rishabh Pant (36 off 24) then brought the momentum back in India's favour by collecting two fours and a six over deep mid-wicket off Mustafizur who had a rare off day.

In the next over, Pant took the attack to Rishad before falling to the reverse sweep for the second consecutive innings. Dube and Hardik then shared a 53-run stand to take the innings forward.

Hardik ended up with four boundaries and three sixes while Dube targeted the deep mid-wicket boundary against the spinners with success, besides hitting Tanzim down the ground for a maximum.

# Hat-trick of gold medals at Archery World Cup



**THE FORMIDABLE TRIO OF JYOTHI SUREKHA VENNAM, ADITI SWAMI, AND PARNEET KAUR EMERGED VICTORIOUS AGAINST SIXTH-RANKED ESTONIA IN A TIGHTLY CONTESTED FINAL**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Antalya (Turkey), June 22:** The Indian compound women's archery team of Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Aditi Swami and Parneet Kaur continued their imperious form this season, securing a hat-trick of World Cup gold medals with a win over Estonia, even as Priyansh settled for a silver here Saturday.

Priyansh narrowly lost the men's final to world number one Mike Schloesser.

Entering the final as the top-seeded team, the women's trio displayed their prowess by defeating Estonia's Lisell Jaatma, Meeri-Marita Paas, and Maris Tetsmann 232-229 in a one-sided final of the stage 3 event.

The women's compound team has been invincible this season, winning all three World Cup stages.

They previously secured gold at stage 1 in Shanghai and stage 2 in Yecheon in April and May respectively, making them unbeaten champions in the 2024 World Cup series.

Later in the day, rising compound archer Priyansh failed to defeat Dutch heavyweight Schloesser for a second time this season and settled for a runner-up finish.

Priyansh, who showed flawless shooting to enter the final, dropped a point in the opening set and could not overcome the deficit as Schloesser shot a series of 10s to clinch the match 149-148.

It was in the final set that the Dutch archer dropped a point

as Priyansh needed a perfect 30 score to clinch the gold, but the Indian missed one point to finish second best.

In the semifinal, the 21-year-old landed all his 15 arrows in the perfect-10 ring to knock out World No 2 Mathias Fullerton by one point, thus also exacting his defeat of the last World Cup.

At the stage 2 World Cup in Yecheon last month, the Danish archer had eliminated Priyansh in the pre-quarters in a tight shoot-off finish.

For Priyansh, this was his second World Cup silver. At the season-opening World Cup in Shanghai in April this year, Priyansh had lost to World No. 8 Nico Wiener of Austria 147-150 in the final.

India will be aiming for three medals in the recurve finals Sunday. Ankita Bhakat and Dhiraj Bommadevara are in the hunt for two medals, having advanced to their respective individual semifinals.

The mixed team of Dhiraj and Bhajan will take on their Mexico rivals in the bronze playoff.

## SHORT TAKES

### Sreeja, Sutirtha, Ayhika script history

**Lagos:** The No 1 ranked women's national player Sreeja Akula continued her dominant run in the WTT Contender Lagos as she beat young national compatriot Yashaswini Ghorpade 3-0 in the quarterfinals of the tournament.

Alongside Sreeja, Sutirtha Mukherjee caused a huge upset as she beat defending Champion and world ranking number 8 Shin Yubin 3-2 to reach the semifinals.

Sutirtha, who is world-ranked 125, showed tremendous character to win the final two games with a score of 11-9 & 11-6 to complete the comeback. Sreeja Akula and Sutirtha Mukherjee will be facing each other in the semifinals of the tournament.

Irrespective of who progresses to the final, history will be made as it will be the first time that an Indian Singles player will play in the summit clash of a WTT Contender Event. Alongside Sreeja and Sutirtha, Ayhika Mukherjee also booked her place in the semifinals of the tournament with a 3-0 victory over Egypt's Farida Badawy to become the third Indian in the semifinals in what was a great day for the Indian contingent.

### Rutuja, Fangran win ITF W35 in Tauste

**New Delhi:** Indian tennis star Rutuja Bhosale, in partnership with China's Fangran Tian, won the doubles competition in the International Tennis Federation (ITF) Women's 35,000 (ITF W35) tournament in Tauste in Spain Saturday. The formidable duo secured the title with a straight sets triumph over the third-seeded pair, Alana Parnaby of Australia and Victoria Rodriguez of Mexico, with a final score of 6-2, 6-4. From the very first serve, they exerted their dominance, quickly taking control of the match and never allowing their opponents a chance to recover.

### Aditi Ashok makes cut at Women's PGA golf

**Sammamish (Seattle):** Aditi Ashok managed to squeeze inside the cut line despite three bogeys in the second round of the KPMG Women's PGA Championship here. The Indian, who is playing a record 30th Major in women's golf, had five bogeys and no birdies in her round of 77 as she totalled 5-over 149 after a first round of even par 72 at Sahalee Country Club.

## Selangor Masters: Gangjee comes out victorious

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Selangor (Malaysia), June 22:** Rahil Gangjee won the PKNS Selangor Masters despite six bogeys in his 3-over 73 on the final day as he prevailed over Deyen Lawson (69) by one shot, here Saturday.

The 45-year-old veteran, who had started the day with a five shot lead, finished at 8-under for the wire-to-wire win as Lawson was 7-under.

Gangjee's five-shot lead going into the final round disappeared within a matter of holes as he was unable to find the form that he seemed to have had since round one.

With three bogeys in his first nine, and another to match on hole 10, he soon found himself neck and neck with Thailand's Runchanapong Youprayong.

It was Gangjee's second win on the ADT after his 2018 success at Louis Philippe Cup in India. He has two Asian Tour wins - first in 2004 in Volkswagen Masters in Beijing and then 14 years later in Panasonic Open in Japan. In 2011 and 2012 he played on the Nationwide Tour in the US and also played between 2020 and 2022 in Japan.

Local rising star Marcus Lim and Australia's Deyen Lawson



were breathing down his neck and just one shot behind in the \$175,000 Asian Development Tour event.

Gangjee was able to birdie the par-three hole 12 and then the Par-5 13th as he stayed ahead. Another birdie came on the 16th.

By the time he reached the 17th tee, Runchanapong had dropped away with a double bogey on 16th and only Lawson was left, two shots behind.

Those two shots vanished as Gangjee bogeyed 17th and 18th. Lawson's birdie on 17 meant the pair were heading down the final fairway with just one shot between them.

## EURO 2024 Mbappé sits out stalemate between France, Netherlands

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Leipzig (Germany), June 22:** Kylian Mbappé was left out of France's starting lineup for its 0-0 draw with the Netherlands at the European Championship Friday. He was an unused substitute.

Mbappé hadn't been certain to play after breaking his nose Monday in the opening 1-0 win over Austria.

Mbappé trained wearing a face mask Thursday and coach Didier Deschamps sounded optimistic that his star forward would be able to play. But Deschamps decided it was not worth the risk to play him against the physical Dutch defenders.

Mbappé appeared relaxed when he got off the team bus upon arrival at the stadium. He wore sunglasses but no bandage on his nose as he had when he resumed light training Wednesday.

He emerged before Friday's game wearing a plain black face mask for the team's warmup, and sat on a football initially while the rest of his teammates stretched out. He was coaxed off the ball by a coach, then spent some time adjusting the



**“With each day he's getting better and if it had been a decisive game this evening, I would have thought twice about him playing or not. We are getting to a point that is better for him. After what happened, I thought the wiser decision was to keep him on the bench”**

DIDIER DESCHAMPS | MANAGER, FRANCE

mask and tapping it, as if to test its suitability, before he joined the substitutes in kicking a ball around.

UEFA equipment regulations prevented Mbappé from wearing the same red, white and blue mask he wore to training Thursday. "Medical equipment worn on the field of play must be a single color and free of team and manufacturer identification," the rules say.

As well as featuring the French flag, Mbappé's personalized

mask the day before had his initials, the French Football Federation rooster, and his No 10 flanked by two stars.

France and the Netherlands both have four points in Group D. Austria has three after defeating Poland 3-1 in their second group game earlier Friday.

Poland has no points after two games and can no longer progress, even if it beats France in its final game because of its head-to-head record against Austria.

## Nagal confirms Paris Olympics qualification

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, June 22:** Indian tennis star Sumit Nagal Saturday confirmed that he has officially qualified for the men's singles event of the upcoming Paris Olympics.

The Paris Games will be his second stint in the Olympics, having also qualified for the 2020 Tokyo Games, where he made it to the second round.

"Extremely glad to share that I have officially qualified for the 2024 Paris Olympics. This is a monumental moment for me as the Olympics holds a special place in my heart!" Nagal posted on X. "One of my career highlights so far was participating in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Ever since then, Paris has been a big goal for me. Can't wait to put my best foot forward."

The All India Tennis Association (AITA) had said that Nagal as per ITF was alternate till June 10, when the rankings were considered for qualification.

Rohan Bopanna and N Sriram Balaji will compete in the men's doubles event at Paris Games. Bopanna, being a top-10 player, had the choice to pick his partner. AITA approved his choice and paired him with Balaji.

## Historic change as athletics shifted to 1st week of 2028 LA Olympics

*World Athletics is confident that this schedule adjustment, which sees swimming events move to the second week, will unlock unparalleled opportunities for athletics in pre-Games promotion and Games-time viewership*

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lausanne, June 22:** World Athletics and the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games Organising Committee (LA28) announced a historic shift in the competition schedule.

In an unprecedented move, athletics will now take place during the first week of the

Olympic Games at the iconic LA Memorial Coliseum, which will make history as the first stadium to host events at three Olympic Games.

This change, aimed at optimising the venue master plan, promises to elevate the Olympic experience for athletes and viewers alike, as the world's greatest track and field athletes give the Games their most electrifying start in history.

"We are excited to support this visionary timetable change for LA28," said Sebastian Coe, President of World Athletics. "This change underscores our commitment to innovation in athletics and elevating the global profile of our athletes."

World Athletics and LA28 are confident that this schedule adjustment, which sees swimming events move to the second week, will unlock unparalleled oppor-



tunities for athletics in pre-Games promotion and Games-time viewership. The first-week scheduling positions athletics at the forefront of the Games, ensuring a strong start and sustained excitement throughout the event.

The historic marathon events will remain over the last weekend, with medals presented during the closing ceremony - a tradition that befits an event that

**“By prioritising athletics in the first week, the Games will witness the most thrilling of starts, captivating audiences worldwide and setting the stage for an unforgettable Olympic journey for global audiences”**

SEBASTIAN COE | PRESIDENT, WORLD ATHLETICS

has been part of the programme since the first modern Olympic Games in 1896.

The swap allows athletics, for the first time in memory, to benefit from the high level of interest and excitement provided by the opening ceremony. And not just any opening ceremony, but one crafted in the storytelling and creative capital of the world in

Los Angeles.

"Over the past months, LA28 has worked closely with World Athletics, World Aquatics, the IOC, and OBS to assess the opportunities around this competition schedule swap," said Janet Evans, Chief Athlete Officer of LA28.

"We believe the positive effects of this change will extend beyond the two sports involved, strengthening the LA28 Games as a whole and ultimately benefiting all sports in the LA28 sport programme."

The Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games will be held from 14-30 July 2028, featuring over 10,000 athletes from more than 200 nations competing in 35 sports currently in the LA28 sport programme. This marks the third time Los Angeles will host the Olympics, following the 1932 and 1984 Games.