



### Sam's warning

Actor and fitness enthusiast Samantha Ruth Prabhu sends a strong message to those who body-shame her

LEISURE | P2



### 60 killed in Gaza

At least 60 people have been killed across Gaza by Israeli strikes, as ceasefire prospects inch closer

INTERNATIONAL | P10



### Nifty shines in H1

The Nifty index has risen 6.8% year-to-date (YTD) as of June 25 -- reflecting steady investor confidence despite global uncertainty

BUSINESS | P11



### Eves relegated

The Indian women's hockey team has been relegated from the FIH Pro League after losing to China 0-3 in its penultimate match

SPORTS | P12

## Chariots reach Gundicha temple

PNN & AGENCIES

**Puri, June 28:** The chariots of sibling deities - Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath - Saturday reached the destination Gundicha Temple, a day after the Rath Yatra began in Puri.

Gundicha Temple is considered the aunt's place of the deities who go there every year after leaving the 12th-century Jagannath temple, situated at a distance of 2.6 km.

They will go back to the main temple after nine days. The return car journey, known as 'Bahuda Yatra', will held this year July 5.

Earlier in the day, amid chanting of 'Jai Jagannath' & 'Hari bol', devotees resumed pulling the three chariots around 10 am, after the Rath Yatra was halted June 27 night.

The chariots were scheduled to reach Gundicha temple by the evening of Friday. But they had to be stopped on Grand Road as Lord Balabhadra's Taladwaja chariot got stuck while negotiating a turn, preventing the other two from advancing.

According to the tradition, 'Taladwaj' rolls first, followed by 'Darpadalan' of Devi Subhadra and 'Nandighosh' of Lord Jagannath.

The chariots with deities inside were kept on the road overnight amid tight security.

Thousands of devotees who spent the night in the holy town, joined in large numbers in chariot pulling amid sounds of gongs and conches.

Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan, Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja, DGP YB Khurania and other senior officials were found pulling Lord Jagannath's 'Nandighosh'.

After the chariots reached their destination, they were parked outside the Gundicha temple.

The deities will be taken inside the temple Sunday in a ceremonial procession.

"We thank all stakeholders including devotees for the conduct of Rath Yatra," Arabinda Padhee, the chief administrator of Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) said.

All arrangements have been made for the security of the chariots and controlling the crowd, said DGP YB Khurania.



MAJESTIC VIEW: The chariots of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra stationed near the Gundicha temple in Puri Saturday

PICTYAGNESWAR MOHANTY

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Fill the form. Start the enrolment process. You'll definitely vote—if not in 2025, then in 2030 for sure

### PM interacts with Shubhanshu Shukla

**New Delhi:** The 'Bharat mata ki jai' slogan reverberated on the International Space Station as Prime Minister Narendra Modi told astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla that his space travel was the first step towards India's Gaganyaan mission. Interacting with Shukla, who is aboard the ISS orbiting the Earth at an altitude of 400 km, Modi said that the Lucknow-born astronaut's historic journey was not just limited to space but would add fresh momentum to the march towards 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India). Shukla said his travel to the space station was not just a personal feat but a collective achievement of the entire nation.

## Row over delay

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, June 28:** A day after Lord Jagannath's chariot failed to reach its destination on time during the Rath Yatra in Puri, political tempers flared Saturday with BJD chief Naveen Patnaik calling the delay a 'terrible mess', prompting the ruling BJP to accuse the Opposition party of engaging in 'vicious politics.'

Patnaik, currently recuperating at a Mumbai hospital after surgery, expressed deep anguish over the disruption.

In a social media post, the former chief minister said, "All we can do is pray. May Mahaprabhu Jagannath forgive all those responsible for the terrible mess that has overshadowed this divine festival this year."

He stopped short of directly blaming the administration but said it was impossible not to voice concern over how events unfolded. "But it's impossible not to voice our deep concern and anguish over how things unfolded during the most sacred event in our state," he said.

"The Nandighosh chariot stood still at the Singhadwar till 7.45pm, only to move a few metres before the day ended. This has left lakhs of devotees disillusioned," Patnaik wrote.

In his post, Patnaik recalled that it is hard to forget that last year Lord Balabhadra's idol slipped during the 'Adapa Bije Pahandi' (procession on way to Shree Gundicha temple), a moment that left countless devotees shaken.

Responding to Patnaik's remarks, state Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan, without naming Patnaik, criticised the BJD for making 'political statements while recovering from jaundice,' implying that they don't understand the will of Lord Jagannath.

"In the past, the BJD government made mistakes and insulted Lord Jagannath. Since 1977, the chariots have always reached the Gundicha Temple on the second day," he claimed.

Harichandan also said this year's Rath Yatra had been 'incident-free' and warned, "Those doing politics over the Lord's festival will face consequences—if not today, then tomorrow."

At a press conference, BJD vice-president Pratap Jena demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Law Minister Harichandan, holding them morally responsible for the delay and crowd mismanagement.

Meanwhile, former OPEC chief Prasad Harichandan ac-

used the BJP of sidelining experienced officials and letting party leaders handle the Rath Yatra arrangements.

He also raised questions about the alleged influence of industrialist Gautam Adani on the scheduling of the chariot pulling.

"There were reports that Adani was to visit Puri and pull the chariot. Did the government postpone the pulling for his visit?" he asked.

The congress leader further cited a remark made by SJTA Chief Administrator Arabinda Padhee, who reportedly said that perhaps 'the Lord chose to stay back as some devotees didn't arrive.'

"Who was that comment directed at? Isn't it a hint toward Adani?" he asked. The Congress also demanded a judicial inquiry into the alleged mismanagement, claiming that over 600 devotees were injured or fell ill due to overcrowding.

BJP spokesperson Anil Biswal rejected the Opposition's claims, calling them baseless and politically motivated. "The Rath Yatra has been conducted transparently and successfully. Congress's allegations about Adani show their weak mentality," he said. Biswal also accused the previous BJD government of failing Lord Jagannath during the Nabakalebar festival in 2015.

## 3 women killed in road mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Pipili, June 28:** A road accident on the Pipili bypass claimed the lives of three young women Saturday.

The deceased were students of Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya and residents of Old Town in Bhubaneswar. The trio was travelling on a scooter to Puri to participate in Rath Yatra when the mishap occurred near the Pipili Tarakaja overbridge.

The victims were identified as Rimjhim Sahoo, 20, daughter of Ramesh Sahoo of Rath Road, Barik Sahi in Old Town, Bhubaneswar; and sisters Elna Dash, 20, and Kajal Dash, 22, both residents of Kendrapara district.

According to Pipili police, the scooter was sideswiped by a motorcycle, causing the riders to fall under the wheels of an Ama bus. All three were killed on the spot.

Locals alleged that reckless driving by the bus driver led to the tragedy, cutting short three innocent lives and leaving their plans to visit the Jagannath temple unfulfilled.

The bus driver fled the scene following the accident. Though



## ACT OF REVENGE: 3 HELD FOR POISONING TIGRESS, FOUR CUBS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chamarajanagar (Karnataka), June 28:** The death of a tigress and her four cubs in this district has turned out to be a case of apparent revenge by a man whose cow was preyed upon by wild animals, Forest authorities said Saturday.

Three people, including the owner of the dead cow sprayed upon with poison and consumed by the wild cats, were arrested Saturday in connection with the incident that happened in the Huguym forest range of Male Mahadeshwara Hills, police said.

The big cats were found dead Thursday, and subsequent investigation revealed they were poisoned. The incident had created a furore in the state.

The breakthrough came after the carcass of a poisoned cow belonging to Maada alias Maaduraju was found.

According to Forest officials, Maaduraju was reportedly enraged after his cow named 'Kenchi' was killed upon by wild animals.

Sprayed poison on the cow's carcass. His friends Konappa and Nagaraju too were allegedly part of the conspiracy.

## Parag Jain new R&AW chief

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 28:** Parag Jain, one of the brains behind the meticulous planning of 'Operation Sindoor', has been appointed as the new Chief of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), according to an official order issued here Saturday.

The two-year tenure of Jain, an IPS officer from the 1989 batch of the Punjab cadre, officially begins July 1. He takes over from Ravi Sinha, who retires June 30.

"The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Shri Parag Jain, IPS to the post of Secretary, Research & Analysis Wing (R&AW) under Cabinet Secretariat for a tenure of two years from the date of assumption of the charge of the post until



further orders, whichever is earlier..." the order read.

The decision to appoint Jain as chief of the external intelligence agency was made by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet earlier this week, officials said. Before this, Jain was the head of the Aviation Research Centre, an organisation that deals with aerial surveillance, SIGINT operations, photo reconnaissance flights (PHOTINT), monitoring of borders and imagery intelligence (IMINT). P8

## Amid furore, Prada credits new design's Indian legacy

REUTERS

**New Delhi/Milan, June 28:** Luxury fashion powerhouse Prada has acknowledged the ancient Indian roots of its new sandal design after the debut of the open-toe footwear sparked a furore among Indian artisans and politicians thousands of miles from the catwalk in Italy.

Images from Prada's fashion show in Milan last weekend showed models wearing leather sandals with a braided design that resembled handmade Kolhapuri slippers with designs dating back to the 12th century.

A wave of criticism in the media and from lawmakers followed over the Italian brand's lack of public acknowledgement of the Indian sandal de-

sign, which is named after a city in the western state of Maharashtra.

Lorenzo Bertelli, son of Prada's owners, responded to the sandal scandal in a letter to a trade group Friday recognising their Indian heritage.

"We acknowledge that the sandals are inspired by traditional Indian handcrafted footwear, with a centuries-old heritage," Bertelli, Prada's head of corporate social responsibility, wrote in the letter to the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce.

The sandals are at an early stage of design and it is not certain they will be commercialised, but Prada is open to



SANDAL SCANDAL

sandal's inspiration from India, adding the company has 'always celebrated craftsmanship, heritage and design traditions'.

Prada products are beyond the reach of most Indians. Its men's leather sandals retail for \$844 and up, while the Kolhapuri slippers, sold in Indian shops and street markets, start at about \$12. India's luxury market is small but growing fast, with rising numbers of rich people buying Louis Vuitton bags, Lamborghini cars, luxury homes and watches.

Conversely, Indian culture and crafts are increasingly finding their way into global brand designs. High-end jeweller Bulgari offers a \$16,000 Mangalsutra necklace inspired by a chain traditionally worn by

married women.

Bertelli's homage to Indian design was sent in a response to a complaint from the head of the trade group that represents 3,000 Kolhapuri sandal artisans, as the online uproar gathered momentum.

Sambhaji Chhatrapati from the Kolhapur Royal family told Reuters by phone he was upset that craftsmen had not been acknowledged for the 'history and heritage of 150 years.'

Kolhapur-based businessman Dileep More, however, said images of the Prada sandal were bringing cheer to some artisans as they show their traditional product going global.

"They are happy that someone is recognising their work," he said.

# leisure

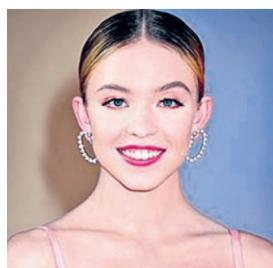


## OLIVIA RODRIGO BRINGS UP SURPRISE GUEST

Hollywood actress-singer Olivia Rodrigo gave a pleasant surprise during her recent gig in London. While her fans were left in awe with her brilliant performance, the Drivers License singer, in a surprising move, welcomed singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran to the stage.

## SYDNEY SWEENEY FEELS GOOD GETTING PUNCHED

American actress Sydney Sweeney said that she felt good getting punched by her co-star in boxer Christy Martin's biopic. Sweeney stars in the movie as Martin, who was one of the most well known female boxers of the 1990s, reports Variety.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Today you might feel homesick if you are out of station. And if you are contacting your family members, Ganesha suggests that you get in touch with your long-neglected friends too. Knowing that you are loved gives a different kind of pleasure.

**TAURUS**  
Your thoughts are not likely to remain focused in your business or profession. Ganesha sees them drifting from such issues and moving towards your home and family members. You will be keenly aware of the fact that you have been neglecting your family interests and affairs on account of your professional involvement.

**GEMINI**  
It is not a good day to invest, or buy things like jewellery, real-estate, shares etc. You will feel a measure of loneliness today. You will probably catch yourself thinking about happenings in the past, which have no bearing upon your present, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
Your intellectual prowess in the office will bring you happy tidings. You may give a new look to work culture in office. Ganesha advises you to think twice before embarking on new deals in the afternoon. Remember it is always good to be cautious in every aspect.

**LEO**  
You will need to pay more attention to your family members. You need to have a larger perspective in all matters. The later half of the day will see you engaged in finding the solutions to some problem or the other. You will also need to give equal importance to all your colleagues.

**VIRGO**  
Today you will feel nostalgic which will make you homesick and you will feel it is better to avoid contemplation. Today you will make earnest attempts to strengthen your relationships. Your energy levels will be very high. Ganesha says it is an optimistic day.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says today is a good day to enhance your joy by arranging a family meeting or gathering. Guests coming home will make you happy with their presence. The presence of your beloved will make your evening a romantic thing. Ganesha says that his blessings will be with you always.

**SCORPIO**  
You are on a mission to solve all the pending problems, by finding their solutions today itself. And very aptly, your optimistic attitude and creative outlook would come to rescue you in difficult moments. At this point of time, even your colleagues and superiors support you, says Ganesha.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Variety is the spice of life, and you seem to be taking this a bit too seriously. Today, your brain data chooses all random things, from health and weight-loss to occult and spirituality. In short, your thoughts go hay-wired, says Ganesha.

**CAPRICORN**  
For you family comes first. Your family members are the pillars of your success, feels Ganesha. You'll kick start the day in high spirit and maintain it through out the day. Somebody may have more money than you have. But, prosperity is also measured in the number of hearts one conquers. And, today, you will be a rich man as you will win many of those, foretells Ganesha.

**AQUARIUS**  
If you are tangled in some legal matters, Ganesha advises you go for an out of court settlement. You are strong, and with patience and perseverance you will sail smoothly through difficult times. People, however, may perceive you as a headstrong or inflexible person.

**PISCES**  
You will look for the company of near and dear ones today. You will not be willing to attend social functions and spend time with colleagues or acquaintances but you will be forced to. As a result you might wander off or keep to your own in the crowd and might lead to people mistaking this as arrogance. Do you best to smile at people, once warmed up it will light up your mood, suggests Ganesha.

## Kriti opens up on rejections

**Mumbai:** Kriti Kharbanda has quietly carved a space for herself in the Indian film industry over the past 16 years, moving seamlessly across languages, genres, and now, digital platforms.

In an interview with a news portal, the actress opened up about the rejections she has faced in her career, recalling a particularly painful experience after the release of *Raaz Reboot*. She had auditioned multiple times, met the director, completed a look test with the lead actor, and even received the signing amount for a major Bollywood project.

However, while attending a family wedding in Delhi, she got a sudden call informing her that the role had gone to another actor who had become available. The reason given was industry relationships playing a role in casting decisions. Though heartbroken at the time, Kriti said she moved on quickly, acknowledging that such setbacks are common in a competitive industry where how you enter doesn't matter—only that you do.

She also emphasized that she has never relied on personal relationships to advance her career. She shared that she prefers to succeed on her own merit and refuses to exploit industry connections or let anyone take her for granted. For her, every opportunity has been earned—not handed to her. AGENCIES



## Sam's note for body-shamers

**Hyderabad:** Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu has been a strong supporter of health and fitness. She often shared about the time she spends at the gym and keeping herself healthy. Now, she recently shared a clip from her workouts and a strong message she has sent to those who body-shame her.

Taking to her Instagram stories, Samantha shared a powerful video of herself nailing a set of front pull-ups. Dressed in a blue athleisure co-ord set, the actress displayed incredible upper body strength and determination. She shared an unapologetic caption she attached to the video. In her words, "Here's the deal. You don't get to call me skinny, sickly or any of that crap unless you can do 3 of these first. If you can't... Then read between the frikkin lines..."

Samantha usually uses her social media to motivate fans and silence critics. Just a few days ago, she shared glimpses from her intense gym session, flaunting her well-built biceps and toned physique in brown-toned gym wear.

Samantha Ruth Prabhu has openly discussed her health struggles with the autoimmune disease myositis, which she was diagnosed with over two years ago. She also took a year off work because of this condition. Myositis leads to inflammation and weakness in the muscles, which has greatly affected her physical strength and daily life. AGENCIES



## Shefali Jariwala dies at 42

The 'Kaanta Laga' girl's last X post was dedicated to her ex-boyfriend, Sidharth Shukla, who tragically passed away under similar circumstances in his 40s. "Thinking of you today mere dost Sidharth Shukla," read the post

**Mumbai:** Shefali Jariwala, widely known for her breakout performance in the iconic 2002 music video *Kaanta Laga*, passed away in Mumbai late Friday night. She was 42.

Jariwala was reportedly rushed to Bellevue Multispecialty Hospital by her husband after she was found unresponsive. Despite all efforts, doctors declared her dead on arrival.

The cause of death has not yet been made public by the family. However, some reports suggest that Jariwala died due to cardiac arrest.

Her body has been sent to Cooper Hospital for post-mortem examination.

Meanwhile, Mumbai Police have launched a Preliminary Investigation and are currently questioning the household cook and domestic help to ascertain the sequence of events leading to her death.

A forensic team was also deployed to Jariwala's residence, where they

conducted an extensive search of the premises. While no official statement has been issued about the cause or nature of her death, the presence of police and forensic officials suggests that the authorities are treating the case as suspicious.

Jariwala also made her mark in television, participating in dance reality shows such as *Boogie Woogie* and *Nach Baliye*, further endearing herself to audiences across India.

She also participated in *Bigg Boss 13* with her friend and ex-boyfriend, Sidharth Shukla, who tragically passed away under similar circumstances in his 40s.

They both dated each other over 15 years ago.

Jariwala's last X post was also dedicated to Shukla, in which she

wrote, "Thinking of you today mere dost Sidharth Shukla." IANS



## Bhumi's UNDP role

**Mumbai:** Bhumi Pednekar, apart from her work in films, continues to support environmental causes. She recently attended an environmental conclave in the city and spoke about her initial response when UNDP reached out to her.

Throwing light on the same, Bhumi shared, "When they came to me, I was extremely thrilled

and very honoured by this opportunity because I always feel to collaborate because when you collaborate, you create more impact. That's what I'm trying to do with my role as an advocate for the UNDP."

For the unversed, Bhumi was appointed as UNDP India's first national advocate for the Sustainable Development

Goals. Not only has she brought significant improvements in raising awareness about climate change through the platform, but she has also ensured to fulfill her duty as a responsible citizen. In addition to this, Bhumi has always been vocal about championing environmental sustainability. She started Climate Warrior, an online platform that raises awareness about grave issues like climate change and deforestation.

While Bhumi remains committed to sustainability efforts, she is also gearing up for her upcoming project, *Daldal*. Known for her emotionally driven roles and selective choice of projects, audiences are interested to see what she brings to the screen next. AGENCIES

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

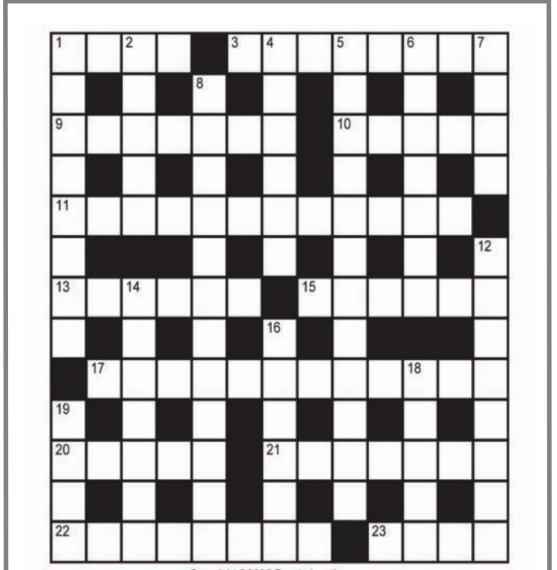


### BREVITY



### FUN POST

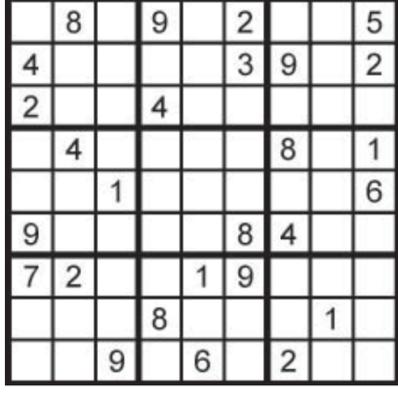
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Airport feature
  - 3 Automobile part (3,5)
  - 9 Anthology
  - 10 Plus
  - 11 You can't fool her (6,6)
  - 13 Refinement
  - 15 Knitted sock
  - 17 Smoke shop items (4,8)
  - 20 Blood carriers
  - 21 Inner circle
  - 22 Begrudged
  - 23 Norse thunder god
  - 6 Demolish
  - 7 After curfew
  - 8 Deterrent example (6,6)
  - 12 Clothing store aisle
  - 14 Medical buildings
  - 16 Platitude
  - 18 Third rock from the sun
  - 19 Profess, as fact
- Down**
- 1 Eventide, usu. in Scotland
  - 2 Dogma
  - 4 Not here
  - 5 Firm bandages for broken bones (7,5)

### 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

**SIT MEET**

Officers heading to the residence of Justice Arijit Pasayat to attend a crucial meeting of the SIT on black money, in Cuttack, Saturday



downtown

**Heavy rain till July 4**



AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, June 28:** A low-pressure area over the north Bay of Bengal and adjoining coastal areas of Bangladesh and West Bengal is likely to trigger heavy to very heavy rainfall, along with thunderstorms and lightning, across several districts of Odisha till July 4, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Saturday.

According to the IMD, an upper air cyclonic circulation persists over southwest Bangladesh and adjoining Gangetic West Bengal, extending up to 7.6 km above mean sea level and tilting southwestwards with height. Under its influence, a

The IMD warned that squally weather with wind speeds of 35-45 kmph, gusting up to 55 kmph, is likely to prevail along and off the Odisha coast between June 28 and July 1

Sea conditions are expected to remain rough to very rough, and fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea during this period

low-pressure area is expected to form over the same region during the next 48 hours.

The system is likely to move slowly in a west-northwestward direction across Gangetic West Bengal, north Odisha, and Jharkhand.

The IMD further warned that squally weather with wind speeds of 35-45 kmph, gusting up to 55 kmph, is like-

ly to prevail along and off the Odisha coast between June 28 and July 1.

Sea conditions are expected to remain rough to very rough, and fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea during this period.

The IMD has forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall at one or two places in the districts of Jajpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Deogarh, Nuapada, Dhenkanal, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Subarnapur, and Jharsuguda, and has issued yellow and orange warnings for several districts.

Additionally, heavy to very heavy rainfall, along with thunderstorms with lightning and gusty surface winds reaching speeds of 30-40 kmph, is very likely to occur at one or two places in Mayurbhanj, Balasore, and Bhadrak districts.

Thunderstorms with lightning and gusty surface winds (30-40 kmph) are also likely at one or two places in Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, and Deogarh, the IMD added.



**ANNUAL DAY:** Young artistes perform during annual day celebration of Raja Dance Studio at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

**'MCL has 35MT coal reserve for smooth power generation'**

PTI & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar/Sambalpur, June 28:** Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) has a reserve of about 35 million tonne (MT) of coal to ensure that there will be no crisis of coal for power generation, MCL CMD Uday A Kaole said Saturday.

Addressing media in Sambalpur, Kaole said MCL will start operation of the Subhadra coal mine - having a reserve of 25MT in Talcher area of Angul district - by the end of financial year 2025-26.

"We are also going to start operation of the Balabhadra coal mine - with a capacity of 10MT - by the end of financial year 2029-30," he said.

At present, MCL, a subsidiary of Coal India Limited (CIL), is operating 18 coal mines in Angul, Sundargarh and Jharsuguda districts, of which three are underground mines and the remaining 15 are open-cast mines.

Among the coal mines, the public sector company has seven operational mines in Angul district which includes Jagannath, Bhubaneswari, Bharatpur, Hingula, Lingaraj, Kaniha and Talcher. Now, MCL is going to start exploration from Subhadra and Balabhadra mines, he said.

To maintain transparency in its mining activities, MCL has installed CCTVs in 98 per cent of its operational areas while the remaining 2 per cent will be done soon, the CMD said, adding, "We are also using artificial intelligence (AI) for real-time tracking of coal transportation vehicles which are GPS enabled."

He further said, "MCL has a reserve of about 35MT of coal to ensure that there will be no crisis of coal for power generation."

The company has produced 225MT of coal during 2024-25 with a growth of 9 per cent compared to its previous financial year. The total coal dispatch was 210MT, which also registered a growth of 6 per cent, he said.

The CMD said, "98 per cent of our total coal production is being done through eco-friendly surface mines, which is highest in the country."

The coal-producing company has targeted to achieve net zero carbon emission by FY29. It has planned to set up several renewable energy projects including solar, wind and pumped storage power plant projects in different parts of the state with an estimated investment of ₹17,900 crore, another official of the company said.

Further, the company has set a target to produce 239MT of coal in FY26, which is expected to reach 300MT by the fiscal 2029-30, he said.

**Odisha BJP to get new prez by July 1**



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 28:** The process for electing new state president and national council members of the BJP is expected to conclude by July 1, Odisha BJP election officer and MP Pratap Sarangi said Saturday.

Bihar MP Sanjay Jaiswal has been appointed as an observer by the central election officer to oversee and manage the or-

ganisational election, he said.

"Odisha BJP needs a leader who can unite and lead the party effectively. Our internal democratic process guarantees the selection of the right candidate. The BJP is the only party where leadership is elected from the grassroots to the national level," Sarangi said.

Party sources said candidates can file nominations from 11am to 2pm June 30 and those will be scrutinised between 2pm and 3pm. The final list will be published by 4pm when the candidates will be allotted election symbols. The voting will be held between 10am and 12pm July 1. The result will be declared by 12.30pm.

The BJP conducts its organisational elections every three years which starts at the local level and culminates with the election of the national president.

**Adanis offer prayers to the Lord**



AGENCIES

**Puri, June 28:** Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani and his family members attended the Rath Yatra here and offered prayers to the sibling deities Saturday.

Accompanied by wife Priti, son Karan and other family members, Adani paid obeisance to Lord Jagannath, Devi Sub-

hadra and Lord Balabhadra by standing in front of their chariots near Gundicha Temple, considered the deities' aunt's house.

Taking to X, Adani said, "I feel blessed to have had the privilege of witnessing the divine Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath. Seeing the Lord Himself among devotees is an experience of the pinnacle

of humility, simplicity, and compassion."

Adani added, "May the grace of Lord Jagannath always remain upon the holy state of Odisha, India, and its people. Jai Jagannath!"

The industrialist was welcomed by the administration and servitors, and was offered 'patta bastra' and flowers.

**CBDT chairman's tenure extended**

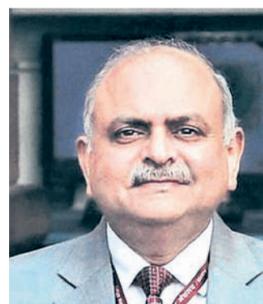
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 28:** The Union government Saturday extended the tenure of CBDT Chairman Ravi Agrawal by one year, till June 2026.

The 1988-batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer was supposed to retire June 30.

He was appointed as the chief of the Central Board of Direct

**The CBDT is headed by a chairman and can have six members who are in the rank of special secretary**



**FOR A CAUSE:** Youth Congress members at Lalbagh police station in Cuttack to demand action against those responsible for the recent wall collapse at Sishu Bhawan in the Millennium City

**DA: AEE under Vig lens**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 28:** Vigilance sleuths Saturday conducted simultaneous raids at seven locations related to Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE) Susil Kumar Panda of Ganjam following allegations of possession of Disproportionate Assets (DA) by him.

Vigilance sources said the raids were carried out by a team, led by six deputy superintendents of police (DSPs), seven inspectors, and other supporting staff, on the strength of search warrants issued by the Special Judge, Vigilance, Berhampur.

The searches were conducted at seven places spread across Ganjam and Puri districts.

During the search operation, the Vigilance team claimed to

have unearthed several assets in the name of Panda and his family members.

The assets include a three-storey building at Ram Hari Nagar in Berhampur, a 2-BHK flat at Mukteswar Apartment in Ankuli area of Berhampur, a 1-BHK flat at Puri; six high-value plots located in Bhubaneswar, Khurda, and Berhampur and ₹2,05,000 in cash. Vigilance sources said that measurement, valuation, and assessment of the buildings, flats, and plots were being carried out.

"Bank accounts, deposits, and other financial investments are under verification. One bank locker at the Central Cooperative Bank in Berhampur, held jointly by Panda and his spouse, is yet to be opened," they said.

**India to host world police & fire games for 1st time**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 28:** For the first time, India will host the prestigious 2029 World Police and Fire Games (WPFG), which Union Home Minister Amit Shah termed as a moment of great pride for every citizen.

Ahmedabad has been selected as the event venue.

The WPFG are organised once every two years since 1985.

The Indian police contingent first participated in these games in Adelaide WPFG in 2007, an official release said, adding that Indian police contingent has won over 1,400 medals in eight editions of the games.

So far, 20 editions of the

games have been held since its inception of which the United States hosted eight times, Canada five times, Europe four times, UK two times and China once.

These games are open to serving and retired personnel from police, fire, emergency, disaster services and first responders, the release said.

The last (20th edition) WPFG were held in Winnipeg, Canada during July 26-August 6, 2023, when 133 of Indian police sports persons won a record 343 medals - 224 gold, 82 silver and 37 bronze.

The Indian contingent for the WPFG is selected on the basis of performance of the players



during the annual All India Police Games held during that year.

The All India Police Sports Control Board, the governing body for organising police sports in the country which has 53 member organisations from

Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), state police forces and other security agencies, conducts 40 annual police games every year.

Gold medal winners in different sports during the All India Police Games that year are

**The last (20th edition) WPFG were held in Winnipeg, Canada during July 26-August 6, 2023, when 133 of Indian police sports persons won a record 343 medals**

shortlisted for the Indian team for the WPFG.

Expressing happiness over India being designated as the host country for the prestigious WPFG, Shah termed it as a moment of great pride for every citizen.

The Union Home minister also said Ahmedabad is being selected as the venue of the event that brings together police, fire, and disaster services to compete in more than 50 sports disciplines is a testament to the city's rising stature as a sporting destination.

"It is a moment of great pride for every citizen as Bharat has been designated as the host country for the prestigious 2029 World Police and Fire Games. Bharat winning the prestigious bid to host the event is a global recognition of our sprawling sports infrastructure built under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi Ji," Shah wrote on X.

# BMC to begin dog census

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

**Bhubaneswar, June 28:** The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) is set to begin a comprehensive census of stray dogs—covering males, females, and puppies—within its jurisdiction to support the ongoing sterilisation drive. The initiative has been welcomed by animal activists in the City.

According to reports, the decision to conduct the dog census was taken during BMC's 32nd General Council Meeting held June 25. Speaking about the initiative, BMC Additional Commissioner Ratnakar Sahoo said, "The blueprint for the dog census is ready and it will likely begin next week. Swachha Sathi members will play a key role in the process. All stray dogs within BMC's jurisdiction will be covered in the census."

Sahoo also explained that the primary objective of the initiative is to support the ongoing sterilisation process. The census will help accurately identify the number of stray dogs at each location. Since



no comprehensive census has been conducted for a long time, this effort will provide authentic data needed for future planning and reporting.

Hailing the initiative, city animal activists have praised the effort and shared their views. Animal activist Prasanna Kumar Das said, "This is a very welcome initiative by the BMC. I have been hearing about the census for a long time, and now that it is set to commence

shortly, it will be very helpful in keeping accurate records of stray dogs. We are thankful to the BMC."

Similarly, Kusal Biswas, chairperson of the Speak for Animals Trust, said, "The census will definitely help provide an accurate report of the dog population in the city. This will also support the sterilisation process and offer clarity for launching awareness campaigns on dog welfare and rabies prevention."

Subrat Prusty, President of the Orissa Kennel Club, welcomed the initiative, saying, "This is definitely a welcome step by the BMC, but its success will depend on how well the move is executed."

He added, "The BMC must ensure that sterilised dogs are kept in the same location after the procedure. While male dogs should be sterilised, greater focus should be given to female dogs as they give birth. We urge the BMC to implement this initiative effectively, and we are ready to support the civic body in every possible way."



**REGALING POSE:** Odissi dancer Srishti Mohapatra performs during Odissi Prativa Utsav 2025, organised by Sanskritiki at Bhanjakala Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

OP PHOTO

# Make Sambalpur a model tree city, urges Pradhan



AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, June 28:** Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Saturday urged people of all ages to plant a tree in their mother's name, with the goal of making Sambalpur a national model for tree plantation.

Addressing the van mahotsav and mass tree plantation drive held under the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0" campaign at Potapali in Sambalpur, Pradhan, who is also the Member of Parliament from Sambalpur, emphasised the need to give the city a new identity grounded in environmental awareness.

"Just as Sambalpur is known for Maa Samaleswari, Nuakhai, Sital Sasthi, and the Mahanadi River, it should now also be celebrated as a city of tree plantation," he said.

The Union Minister joined hands with social organisations, students, volunteers, Matrushakti groups, and citizens

to participate in the plantation drive at Potapali, Burla.

Pradhan highlighted that the Ministry of Education launched the nationwide "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0" campaign on World Environment Day, under the guidance of PM Narendra Modi. The second phase aims to plant 10 crore trees across the country, focusing on environmental protection and raising public awareness about tree plantation.

Aligning with this vision, the Sambalpur district administration and forest department have initiated a local drive to plant one lakh trees between June 5 and August 31, a move Pradhan praised as commendable.

"To transform Sambalpur into a clean, green, and beautiful city, let us turn the slogan 'We Will Plant a Tree for Mother' into a mass movement," he said. "We are committed to planting one lakh trees in the city by the end of August."

# Artist Kesu Das to get Asit Mukherjee honour

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasore, June 28:** Renowned Balasore-based artist Kesu Das has been selected for this year's prestigious Asit Mukherjee Memorial Honour. The award will be presented July 5 during the observance of the death anniversary of celebrated artist Asit Mukherjee, to be held at Sri Ramachandra Bhawan in Cuttack.

The announcement was made by Harekrushna Raut, secretary of the Asit Mukherjee Smruti Sansad.

Asit Mukherjee, a distinguished cover artist and former



chairman of the Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi, was widely respected for his significant contributions to the visual arts. His

seventh annual prayer meeting will be held during the sacred "Bahuda Yatra." Each year, the memorial committee honours an outstanding visual artist from Odisha, recognising excellence and dedication in the field of art.

Kesu Das has been recognised for his tireless efforts in showcasing the folk arts and culture of Balasore on global platforms. He is acclaimed as India's only visual artist to extensively focus on "Jau Kandhei," a traditional lacquer art form native to Balasore. As chief advisor to the NOCI Cul-

tural Academy, Das has made significant contributions across dance, music, painting, and literature, actively working to revive and promote dying, hidden, and neglected art forms.

For over two decades, he has documented and revitalised rare and forgotten cultural treasures—including the endangered blue-blooded horseshoe crab, the ancient Sona-Gangahar-Balang confluence site, Balasore's historic name "Koshamba," intricate traditional Jagannath scroll art, and overlooked art forms like Odia "Jhoti" motifs.

# MAN KILLED BY YOUNGER BROTHER



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Barpali, June 28:** A man was allegedly murdered by his younger brother late Friday night in Mahulpali village under Barpali block in Bargarh district, following a dispute over ancestral land.

The deceased was identified as Bibidh Ganit, 40. According to police, the accused, Chhayakant Ganit, 35, attacked his elder brother with a wooden plank while the latter was sleeping behind the local Radhakrishna temple.

The two brothers had reportedly been embroiled in frequent quarrels over the sale of their inherited property. Another such altercation occurred Friday evening, after which Chhayakant allegedly assaulted Bibidh in a fit of rage, resulting in his death at the spot.

Police have arrested Chhayakant and are interrogating him. The body has been seized and sent to Bargarh Hospital for post-mortem examination.

A scientific team visited the crime scene for forensic analysis. A case of murder has been registered at the local police station.

# Experts term 25% waitlist cap impractical, uneconomical

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 28:** The Railway's decision to limit the passenger waiting list to 25 per cent of the capacity of each class has been flagged by reservation supervisors, ticket booking clerks and some senior commercial officers as uneconomical for the railways and inconvenient for travellers.

The ministry, however, has justified the decision, saying less than one-fourth of the total number of waiting passengers get confirmed berths on an average and the 25 per cent cap has been placed in view of that.

"The decision was made after meticulously studying the waiting list confirmation pattern," said Dilip Kumar the Executive

Director of Information and Publicity, Railway Board.

He highlighted that earlier, there was an allegation that the Railways allowed a lot of passengers to book berths in the waiting category which led to crowding in trains. "It was also alleged that the Railways earned money on ticket cancellation."

Refuting the charge, Kumar stressed the Railways was more concerned about passenger comfort than monetary benefits.

The Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS) implemented the 25 per cent cap decision June 16 for trains with reservation facilities. This comes around two months after the ministry, through a circu-



lar, conveyed its decision on the matter to all principal chief commercial managers and the CRIS managing director.

The April 17 circular stated, "The matter has been reviewed and it has been decided that the maximum current waiting list limit will be revised to 25 per cent of the redefined capacity of each class available at originating as well as roadside stations."

It added, "This logic will also be applicable for issuing of

waitlisted tickets from remote locations as well as tickets booked under Tatkal scheme. This waiting list limit shall, however, not be applicable to the tickets issued on concessional fares, warrants etc."

The circular directed CRIS to "make necessary modifications in the software and inform the date of effect to all zonal Railways".

Railway officials said such a cap was in force earlier as well but more and more people were allowed to reserve seats/berths in the waiting category.

According to a 2013 circular, the waiting list cap on AC/EC and 2 AC classes was 30 and 100 respectively. Similarly, the first class, 3AC/Chair Car and sleeper class had 30, 300 and 400 waiting limits, respectively.

# Centre draft rules to ease tree felling

**NEW DELHI:** The Centre has issued model rules for the felling of trees on agricultural land in a bid to promote agroforestry with the aim of doubling farmers' incomes, increasing tree cover outside forests and mitigating climate change. In a letter sent to all state governments June 19, the environment ministry said the objective of "Model Rules for Felling of Trees in Agricultural Lands" is to enhance the ease of doing business in agroforestry and incentivise farmers to integrate trees into their farming systems without facing undue procedural hurdles. The government has been promoting agroforestry to double farmers' income and enhance tree cover outside forests.

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# Social media, food apps transforming food culture

*A new study by IIT Guwahati researchers reveals how digital platforms are reshaping food habits while reinforcing class and social divides in urban India*

The rapid rise of social media platforms and food delivery applications is significantly altering food habits, consumption trends, and cultural practices across urban India, according to an interesting study by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati researchers Saturday.

The study, led by Assistant Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences Rituparna Patgiri, explores how digital technologies are reshaping not just what people eat but how food is experienced,

shared, and valued in the digital age. The findings were recently published in the Sociological Bulletin, a reputed journal from SAGE Publications.

According to the research, digital platforms—such as Zomato, Swiggy, Instagram, and YouTube—are playing a pivotal role in redefining urban food culture. Ordering food online, sharing food pictures, posting reviews, and following food influencers have become common practices, especially among middle-class youth in cities.

"Traditionally, food has been viewed through five key stages—production, distribution, preparation, consumption, and disposal. However, with increasing digitisation, we must now consider a sixth stage: digitalisation," said Dr Patgiri, highlighting how deeply embedded digital experiences have become in culinary practices.

The study points out that food economies are becoming



increasingly platform-driven. Search engines, food delivery services, and social media are now the primary gateways for discovering food content, thereby shaping what people eat, where they eat, and how they judge food experiences.

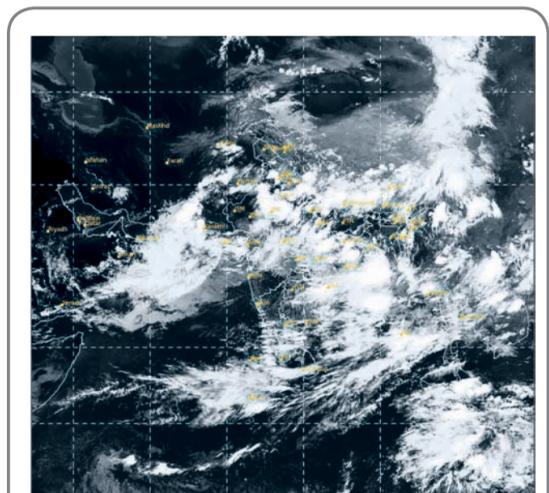
However, the study also raises important concerns. It reveals that digital food culture remains heavily skewed towards urban, upper- and middle-class groups, leaving small-

scale vendors, local producers, and lower socio-economic communities underrepresented and often excluded.

Practices like food blogging and online reviewing are rarely accessible to marginalised communities, leading to a digital divide in the food ecosystem.

The research calls for inclusive digital policies that ensure fair representation of all food stakeholders. It urges the government and policymakers to regulate platform practices, offer digital support to small food entrepreneurs, and use these platforms for promoting public health messages and safeguarding traditional food cultures.

As India's cities continue to embrace digital convenience, the study underscores the need to balance innovation with equity—ensuring that digitalisation of food enhances access and diversity, rather than deepening existing social divides.



| WEATHER  |       |       |   |
|----------|-------|-------|---|
|          | BBSR  | CTC   | FORECAST                                      |
| Max Temp | 28.6° | 28.8° | Generally cloudy sky with possibility of rain |
| Min Temp | 26.4° | 25.0° |   |
| Humidity | 94%   | 97%   |   |
| Rainfall | 0.5mm | Nil   |   |

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# Odisha's show of strength during Rath Yatra in Kotia



PNN & AGENCIES

**Pottangi, June 28:** In a historic show of unity, the Odisha government for the first time showcased its collective strength in the disputed region of Kotia, with the active participation of five Cabinet ministers and leaders across party lines during the Rath Yatra celebrations at Adim Srikhetra.

Amid the rhythmic beats of tribal drums, the echoing sounds of conch shells, and vibrant chants of 'Hari Bol', the sacred Rath Yatra was celebrated with traditional fervour at the Kotia panchayat headquarters, a day after the main Rath Yatra in Puri.

Thousands of devotees, including members of tribal communities from across Koraput and nearby areas, gathered to pull the beautifully decorated wooden chariot of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, and Devi Subhadra — reflecting both spiritual devotion and a strong assertion of territorial identity.

Established 22 years ago with the inspiration of Puri Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb, the Kotia Jagannath Temple has evolved into a powerful symbol

of Odisha's cultural sovereignty in the contested Kotia region.

This year's Rath Yatra was especially significant as, for the first time, five Cabinet ministers and several political leaders from different parties participated and pulled the chariot alongside the villagers.

Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo, Revenue Minister Suresh Pujari, School and Mass Education Minister Nityanand Gond, Mines and Transport Minister Bibhuti Jena, and Fisheries and Animal Husbandry Minister Gokulananda Mallick not only offered prayers but also actively joined the procession. They sang devotional hymns, danced with tribal performers from Malkangiri, and participated in rituals conducted in indigenous languages like Kui and Gadaba.

The presence of Koraput MP Saptagiri Shankar Ulaka (Congress) and other Opposition leaders symbolised rare political unity, reinforcing a clear message: Kotia belongs to Odisha — culturally, spiritually, and constitutionally.

"This is not just a celebration; it's a declaration of be-

longing," said a tribal elder. "Lord Jagannath resides here too. This is our Adim Srikhetra — the original sacred land."

Women in vibrant traditional attire sang folk bhajans, while elderly tribal priests led rituals, emphasising the deep-rooted bond between Lord Jagannath and the forest-dwelling communities who worship Him as Daru Devata (the wooden deity).

On the development front, Revenue Minister Suresh Pujari announced that monthly reviews of all government departments will now be held in Kotia under the chairmanship of District Magistrate V Keerthi Vasana, ensuring faster implementation of welfare schemes.

He also declared plans for a new guest house and infrastructure development, as part of Odisha's long-term strategy for the region.

Senior officials, including the Koraput Collector, district administrators, and security personnel, were present to ensure the smooth conduct of the festival, which has now grown into a celebration of devotion, dignity, and Odisha's enduring presence in the region.

As the chariot rolled down the hilly terrain of Kotia, it carried not just the deities, but a powerful message — of Asmita (identity), Astitva (existence), and Odisha's unwavering connection with Kotia. Eight MLAs and two MPs, including Balabhadra Majhi, Jeypore MLA Taraprasad Bahinipati, Congress Legislature Party Leader Ramchandra Kadam, former MP Jayaram Pangi, and former Koraput Collector Gadadhar Parida, also participated in the festival.



**WATER WOES:** A biker negotiates the waterlogged service road from Mahatab Square to Aradi Square along National Highway 16 in Bhadrak following heavy rainfall in the area, Saturday

OP PHOTO

## Kendrapara: Identification of B'deshi settlers starts

AGENCIES

**Kendrapara, June 28:** The Kendrapara police, with support from the district administration, have begun the identification process of Bangladeshi infiltrators residing in the coastal areas of Mahakalapara and Rajnagar blocks in this district.

As part of the ongoing drive, police have detained around a dozen Bengali-speaking individuals from the Tubi and San areas under the jurisdiction of the Jamboo Marine police station, on sus-

picion of being Bangladeshi nationals. Their documents are currently being verified.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, during his visit to Kendrapara June 9, directed the district administration to take stringent action against illegal Bangladeshi immigrants residing in the area.

Acting on the Chief Minister's instructions, the district administration, in coordination with the police, launched a drive to identify infiltrators. The detained suspects are being housed in a local school, where authorities

are verifying their identity documents.

However, Kendrapara Superintendent of Police Siddharth Kataria and District Collector Smruti Ranjan Pradhan have remained tightlipped on the ongoing operation.

Notably, a similar identification drive was carried out in 2004, during which 1,551 Bangladeshi immigrants were identified in Mahakalapara block, 51 in Rajnagar, and 41 in Pattamundai.

The district administration is expected to inform the

Home department to initiate deportation procedures for those confirmed to be Bangladeshi nationals.

According to official sources, Kendrapara district hosts the highest number of suspected immigrants (1,649), followed by Jagatsinghpur (1,112), Malkangiri (655), Bhadrak (199), Nabarangpur (106), Khurda (17), and Bargarh (2). Despite 1,551 Bangladeshi infiltrators from Kendrapara being served 'quit India' notices January 15, 2005, they have not yet been deported.

### TOKEN OF ENCOURAGEMENT

## Weightlifter receives ₹10K aid from reader

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rayagada, June 28:** Birendra Sabar, a 30-year-old weightlifter from Kadama village in the tribal-dominated Gudari block of Rayagada district, has received financial assistance of Rs 10,000 from a Good Samaritan following publication of a report highlighting his struggles.

Despite winning gold and silver medals at various state-level competitions, Birendra had been unable to pursue his passion due to financial constraints.

His story gained attention after it was featured in leading daily OrissaPOST.

Moved by the report, a reader Shivaji Mohinta expressed his willingness to help via email. Acting swiftly, the OrissaPOST team connected him with Birendra.

Mohinta transferred a token amount of Rs 10,000 to Birendra's account, providing much-needed support to further his training and aspirations in weightlifting. Expressing his gratitude, Birendra thanked Mohinta for the assistance and lauded the editorial team of OrissaPOST, including Editor Tathagata Satpathy and CEO Adyasha Satpathy, for amplifying his voice.

## MINOR KILLED AS DJ VAN OVERTURNS DURING RATH

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dhamnagar, June 28:** A 12-year-old boy was killed Friday night when a DJ vehicle overturned during a Rath Yatra procession in Anaharapur village under Bhagabanpur panchayat of Dhamnagar block in Bhadrak district. The accident reportedly occurred due to a damaged road, sparking outrage in the locality.

The deceased was identified as Soumyaranjan, son of late Kishore Raut. As the chariot moved along a road maintained by the Bhadrak Rural Works department, the poor condition of the road caused the large DJ vehicle, surrounded by a crowd of people, to lose balance and



overturn into a roadside canal. Soumyaranjan was crushed under the overturned vehicle.

Local residents, Dhamnagar police, and the fire services team rushed to rescue the boy and took him to the Dhamnagar hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

## One held for stone pelting on Jan Shatabdi Express

**Bhubaneswar:** The Railway Protection Force (RPF) has arrested an individual in connection with a stone pelting incident on the Howrah-bound 12074 Jan Shatabdi Express. According to East Coast Railway (ECoR) sources, a complaint was received on the night of June 27 by the Divisional Security Control at Khurda Road, reporting that a windowpane in Coach No. D/13 was cracked due to stone pelting between Randia Boudpur and Bhadrak stations. Fortunately, no injuries were reported in the incident. Acting swiftly, the Inspector in-Charge of RPF Bhadrak and his team conducted a trackside search operation in the affected section. One suspect was detained and subsequently arrested in connection with the incident. A case has been registered under relevant sections of the Railway Act. The accused was produced before the SDJM Court, Bhadrak, Saturday for further legal proceedings. The RPF reiterated its commitment to ensuring the safety and security of railway passengers and urged the public to report any suspicious activity through Rail Madad or the Railway Helpline Number 139.

## Jajpur hotels, eateries to reopen from July 1

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur Town, June 28:** All hotels, roadside eateries, soft drink units, and mobile food stalls in Jajpur district will reopen from July 1, as per a directive issued by the District Collector Saturday.

The matter came to the light after the District Collector issued directives in this regard in an official letter (No. 4863, dated June 28, 2025). In the letter, the district administration has allowed these establishments to resume operations from July 1, which were previously shut down due to a diar-

rhoea outbreak in the district. The directive was circulated to all tehsildars, executive officers of municipalities, the health officer of Jajpur Municipality, and all police station heads across the district.

The collector's instructions emphasise strict adherence to hygiene norms. Shop owners are required to maintain cleanliness in their surroundings, ensure proper storage of food, and use safe drinking water.

The decision follows a decline in diarrhoea cases in the region. Earlier, traders and vendors had appealed to the district collector to lift the

## Diarrhoea outbreak in Pattamundai

**Pattamundai:** A diarrhoea outbreak has gripped the Pattamundai area in Kendrapara district with more than 30 persons hospitalised at the Pattamundai Sub-Divisional Hospital in just two days. According to hospital sources, the condition of three patients is critical and they have been referred to the Kendrapara District Headquarters Hospital. While some patients have recovered, many remain under medical supervision. Doctors have yet to determine the exact cause of the infection. Local residents have expressed concern and demanded immediate intervention from the administration and Health department. Public reactions have pointed to deteriorating sanitation and poor waste management across the township. Prominent voices like academic Paramananda Panda and advocate Soumyaranjan Dhal have noted that while the diarrhoea situation in neighbouring Jajpur has shown signs of improvement, the condition in Pattamundai is becoming increasingly severe. According to them, four to five new patients are arriving daily at the local hospital. They fear that unhygienic conditions could further aggravate the outbreak.

closure order. Considering the public demand for food services, the livelihood of mobile vendors, and the current

health situation, the district administration has approved the reopening with safety guidelines in place.

## Urban poor find shelter, dignity under PMAY(U)

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Angul, June 28:** Once confined to fragile thatched huts and leaky asbestos rooftops, thousands of urban poor families across Odisha now live in the safety of concrete homes — thanks to the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the successful implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban).

Launched in 2015, the flagship housing scheme has become a beacon of hope for the underprivileged in urban and semi-urban areas.

Initially focused on rural housing, PMAY was expanded



**Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)**

by the Modi government to include the urban homeless. The 2015 revamp marked a strategic shift towards 'Housing for All', targeting economically weaker sections, particularly slum dwellers and low-income families living in substandard conditions.

Speaking to IANS, Sarita Mishra, a municipal council-

lor, highlighted the scheme's grassroots impact.

"People who once lived under broken asbestos sheets now proudly own solid, secure homes. This is not just a scheme — it's a revolution," she said.

For beneficiaries like Puja Pradhan, the change is deeply personal.

"I never imagined I would

live in a concrete home. Today, I have a roof that doesn't leak when it rains. It's a dream come true," she said.

Another recipient, Sunita Bibi, shared how the scheme transformed her family's life. "My children now sleep safely. Earlier, we used to worry every monsoon. Now, we live with dignity," she said.

According to official data, 1,90,384 houses were sanctioned for the urban poor across all 30 districts of Odisha under PMAY (U). Of these, 1,32,522 houses have been completed. The government provides up to Rs 2 lakh per unit in phased financial as-

sistance. Beyond shelter, the homes come equipped with basic amenities such as sanitation, water supply, and electricity, improving the overall quality of life.

"PMAY is not just a housing scheme; it's a mission to restore dignity and stability to every poor family," said Rudra Narayan Pani, MP from Dhenkanal, crediting Prime Minister Modi's foresight for reshaping India's urban housing landscape.

As the scheme completes a decade, its impact is visible in smiles that speak of security, stability, and empowerment.



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, June 28:** In a milestone for advanced neurosurgical care, the Ispat General Hospital (IGH) of Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has successfully conducted the region's first 360-degree cervical spine surgery.

The rare and complex operation was performed on a 23-year-old youth from Jharkhand, who had sustained a serious spinal injury in a road accident June 11. The patient was brought to IGH in a critical condition and admitted under the non-entitled category. Upon admission, he had no movement in his right leg, was extremely weak, and unable to sit upright. He also reported severe pain in his back and across his body.

Under the leadership of senior consultant and neurosurgeon Dr Manoj Kumar Deo, a comprehensive clinical evaluation revealed a Grade 2 dislocation at the C4-C5 cervical spine level, a life-threatening condition. Without immediate surgical intervention, the patient risked permanent paralysis, respiratory complications, and other long-term disabilities.

After detailed consultations with the patient's mother and

elder brother, the medical team proceeded with the high-risk surgery. Dr Deo, supported by a multidisciplinary team, successfully performed a complex 360-degree spinal stabilisation procedure—both anterior and posterior—over the course of nearly nine hours.

Dr Sanjukta Panigrahi, additional CMO in anaesthesia and ICU, and senior consultant Dr Smita Kujur provided critical anaesthetic support.

Given the patient's financial constraints, essential surgical equipment and life-saving medicines were supplied at subsidised rates through the AMRIT Pharmacy.

The patient has shown remarkable improvement following the surgery. Within a week, mobility returned to his right leg, strength improved across his body, and he was able to sit and stand with support. Doctors have reported a 40 per cent improvement in his overall condition during his stay at the hospital, with recovery continuing at a steady pace.

This successful surgery reaffirms IGH's commitment to delivering high-quality, advanced medical care to the region, particularly for complex and life-threatening conditions.



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FOCUS DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

# A DEMOCRATIC RECKONING



**Many wealthy countries are sharply reducing their foreign-aid budgets as they ramp up defense spending, which has compounded the challenges developing countries must confront**

migrants attempting to reach wealthier countries is a clear indicator of the deteriorating conditions across much of the developing world. Sadly, many of those fleeing conflict, poverty, and climate disasters are met not with compassion but with indifference or, increasingly, outright hostility. Fueled by the rise of far-right populism, the typical response from developed countries is simply to deport more migrants, with little regard for their fate or the underlying causes of their displacement.

The indifference appears to extend to future generations, as growing apathy (or resignation) regarding climate change threatens the very systems that sustain human life. To help avert disaster, the upcoming FID4 conference aims to rekindle a dormant sense of shared responsibility, which is essential to addressing challenges that no single country can face on its own.

To its credit, the Seville Commitment does not shy away from difficult conversations about the threats facing global democracy. Notably, it calls on institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to reassess

how voting power is allocated among their members – and how to amplify emerging and developing economies' voice in multilateral negotiations. The disparity is striking. At present, the United States holds a 15.8% voting share at the World Bank, while Indonesia – the world's fourth most populous country – has just 1.04%.

The usual justification for this imbalance is that voting power corresponds to financial contributions: the more a country contributes, the more influence it wields. But that logic is akin to arguing that wealthy individuals should have a larger share of the vote in national elections. Such a notion would rightly be seen as a fundamental betrayal of democratic principles.

This is not to suggest that safeguarding global democracy is simple. Even so, the issue deserves much greater international attention, and its presence on the FID4's agenda is a step in the right direction.

Regrettably, the US – the world's most powerful democracy – has withdrawn from this conversation. President Donald Trump's administration has openly criticized the Seville Commitment, claiming

it "failed to align with US priorities" and exiting the process altogether.

In the absence of US leadership, India is well-positioned to assume a more prominent global role. As the world's largest secular democracy and a co-founder of the Non-Aligned Movement, India has decades of experience navigating precarious geopolitical situations. Under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in the 1950s and early 1960s, it often took principled stands, even when they clashed with US interests.

Over the past few years, however, India has aligned itself almost entirely with Trump's foreign-policy agenda. This has eroded its global standing to such an extent that even the Trump administration appears to have begun taking its support for granted.

The FID4 conference presents an opportunity to change course. Its spirit calls to mind the 1955 Bandung Conference in Indonesia, where India played a leading role in bringing together a broad coalition of countries that refused to remain in the shadows of the world's dominant powers.

After years of rising nationalism, geopolitical fragmentation, and retreat from multilateral cooperation, the upcoming FID4 conference could begin healing a fractured world. But that will require revitalising democratic governance, restoring dignity to marginalised communities, and protecting the rights of those who will inherit the planet after we are gone.

*The writer, a former chief economist of the World Bank and chief economic adviser to the Government of India, is Professor of Economics at Cornell University.*

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The cup has to be left clean and empty for the divine liquor to be poured into it.

SRI AUROBINDO

## Genesis of Jana Sangh

W e marked the 50th anniversary of the Emergency a few days ago. Another anniversary, this time the 75th, went relatively unnoticed. This was of the formation of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, and the reasons for its coming into being.

On 5 May 1950, SP Mookerjee announced the agenda of the party being formed which had an eight-point programme. These were: 1) United Bharat; 2) reciprocity instead of appeasement towards Pakistan; 3) an independent foreign policy; 4) rehabilitation of refugees; 5) increased production of goods and decentralisation of industry; 6) development of a single Bharatiya culture; 7) equal rights to all citizens and improvement of the backward classes; 8) readjustment of the boundaries of West Bengal and Bihar.

Other than Mookerjee, who was from the Hindu Mahasabha, the structure of the Jana Sangh came from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, and today the party remains of course a subsidiary of the mothership. Why did the RSS get into politics? The story is interesting. This is how the Jana Sangh's official history, published by the BJP a few years ago, explains it.

An RSS rally in Delhi in December 1947 drew a large crowd and also attracted Hindu princes, businessmen and leaders of other Hindu organisations. This popularity was something that alarmed the Congress, especially Nehru, according to the RSS.

The assassination of Gandhi on 30 January 1948 gave the Congress the opportunity to move. It decided to ban the RSS on 2 February, three days after Gandhi's murder. RSS chief Golwalkar had sensed that the RSS would get into trouble once the details of Gandhi's assassination were out. He acted immediately. On the day of the killing, 30 January 1948, he sent telegrams to RSS branches suspending operations for thirteen days. The same day he also telegraphed Nehru, Patel and Devas Gandhi with a message of condolence: "Shocked at this cruel fatal attack and tragic loss of greatest personality..."

The next day he again wrote to Nehru expressing his shock and referring to Godse as "some thoughtless perverted soul" who had "committed the heinous act of putting a sudden and ghastly end to the life of poojya Mahatmaji by the bullet." He called the killing unpardonable and an act of treason.

That day he wrote also to Patel: "My heart is wrung with extreme agony. It is difficult to find words to condemn the person who committed this crime..." The government notification declaring the RSS unlawful said: "The professed aims and objects of the RSS are to promote the physical, intellectual and moral well-being of the Hindus and also to foster feelings of brotherhood, love and service amongst them... the Government have, however, noticed with regret that in practice members of the RSS have not adhered to their professed ideals. Undesirable and even dangerous activities have been carried on by members of the Sangh (who) have indulged in acts of violence involving arson, robbery, dacoity, and murder and have collected illicit arms and ammunitions. They have been found circulating leaflets exhorting people to resort to terrorist methods to collect firearms... rendering it incumbent on the government to deal with the Sangh in its corporate capacity." Golwalkar was arrested on 3 February along with 20,000 swayamsevak. The RSS says it was shocked that no political party and no political leader spoke up for it or stood in its defence. The ban remained for a little under a year and a half. It was lifted after the RSS was asked to produce a constitution. This was written up and submitted. The ban was lifted on 11 July 1949. Immediately following this, the RSS began debating entering politics in the pages of its house organ, The Organiser. It published articles from RSS workers including KR Malkani who wrote that the Sangh "must take part in politics not only to protect itself" but also "to stop un-Bharatiya and anti-Bharatiya politics" and "to advance the cause of Bharatiyata through state machinery." For these reasons, the Sangh must "continue as an ashram for the national cultural education of the entire citizenry, but it must develop a political wing for the more effective and early achievement of its ideals."

Malkani said the new party "will be revivalist of ancient values as it will be futuristic in its targets" and it would be told "not to depend on foreign values, attitude and manners" and that "the principle of this re-organisation in Hindustan can only be Hindutva." RSS worker from the Arya Samaj Balraj Madhok wrote that the Sangh "must give the lead to the country in regard to the political and economic problems of the country" because this was "vital to the very existence of the Sangh itself."

Mookerjee in his statement to Parliament on 19 April 1950 said that he had "played a very large part in creating public opinion in favour of a Partition of Bengal." As part of this he "gave assurances to the Hindus of East Bengal (later, Bangladesh) stating that if they suffered at the hands of the future Pakistan Government... free India would not remain an idle spectator."

As we read and assess what is going on around us in the India of 2025, it is instructive to do this through the lens of 75 years ago and the events that led to the formation of the BJP as we know it.



Aakar Patel

**OTHER THAN MOOKERJEE, WHO WAS FROM THE HINDU MAHASABHA, THE STRUCTURE OF THE JANA SANGH CAME FROM THE RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH, AND TODAY THE PARTY REMAINS OF COURSE A SUBSIDIARY OF THE MOTHERSHIP**



Kaushik Basu

**THE GROWING NUMBER OF MIGRANTS ATTEMPTING TO REACH WEALTHIER COUNTRIES IS A CLEAR INDICATOR OF THE DETERIORATING CONDITIONS ACROSS MUCH OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD**

The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FID4) from 30 June to 3 July in Seville, Spain, represents a unique opportunity to advance bold progressive policies aimed at combating climate change, reducing poverty and inequality, and reforming the rules of multilateral engagement to strengthen global democracy. United Nations member states have already finalized a landmark document – whose drafting was co-facilitated by a diverse group of countries – Mexico, Nepal, Zambia, and Norway – known as the Seville Commitment (Compromiso de Sevilla), which seeks to unite governments and civil-society organizations around these shared objectives.

Encouragingly, the Seville Commitment highlights the plight of the world's poorest populations, increasingly drowned out by the rising tide of hyper-nationalism in many advanced economies. This is particularly significant, given that developing countries need an estimated \$4 trillion in annual financing to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Many wealthy countries are sharply reducing their foreign-aid budgets as they ramp up defense spending, which has compounded the challenges developing countries must confront. Global military expenditure surged to \$2.7 trillion in 2024, a 9.4% increase from 2023. Even foreign direct investment – which, though not a form of aid, plays a vital role in supporting industrial development and job creation – has declined where it is needed most. Emerging markets and developing economies attracted just \$435 billion in FDI in 2023, the lowest figure since 2005.

The growing number of

SPECTRUM NATIONAL STATISTICS DAY

## Data & the future of sustainable development



Profulla Kumar Swain & Khushi Agrawal

**THE FUTURE DEMANDS NOT JUST OPEN DATA, BUT OPEN MINDS, COMMITTED TO ETHICS, INCLUSION, AND PURPOSE**

On 11 March, 2011, the Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami struck with terrifying force. As towering waves swallowed cities and nuclear reactors faltered, another quieter force surged forward, data. Japan's decades of investment in seismic monitoring, hydrological mapping, and statistical modeling enabled a rapid response that saved thousands of lives. Data didn't stop the disaster. But it ensured the nation didn't collapse under it.

On this National Statistics Day, we pause to honour Prof. Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, the mind who gave India not just a formula but a framework. A pioneer who believed that a country's plans must be rooted not in ideology, but in evidence. Who saw in statistics not an abstraction, but an instrument of nation-building. His legacy is etched not only in the Mahalanobis Distance, but in India's planning history, in institutions like the Indian Statistical Institute, and in the very idea that governance must have an empirical soul. In today's India, that soul must become our compass.

The world has pledged itself to 17 Sustainable Development Goals, ambitious, interconnected, and urgent. Yet, nearly 40% of SDG indicators remain statis-

tically blind in many nations. Progress becomes a mirage when we cannot measure what matters. The World Bank's 2021 Development Report calls it the "data paradox": a world flooded with data but starved of insights that are timely, trusted, and transformative.

But what makes data truly powerful is not quantity, it is quality. It must be granular, inclusive, and real-time. It must be integrated across silos and accessible across sectors. Quality data enables precision in policy, equity in planning, and agility in action. The world is evolving from surveys to sensors, from spreadsheets to satellites. In China, the CASEarth programme uses Big Earth Data to fill statistical voids across hundreds of cities. In Kenya, mobile metadata is mapping poverty where censuses fall short. In India, the Aspirational Districts Programme is showing how real-time data can turn inertia into impact. This is not science fiction, this is the unfolding story of a world learning to see itself clearly.

Yet technology alone does not birth transformation. It is how we govern, protect, and use data that defines its power. Algorithms can replicate bias just as easily as they can reveal truth.

Dashboards can exclude as much as they can empower. The future demands not just open data, but open minds, committed to ethics, inclusion, and purpose.

And here, Odisha offers an instructive tale. A state often tested by nature, cyclones, droughts, and disease, Odisha has quietly been investing in data systems that allow it to act before calamity strikes. It was one of the first to institutionalise early warning systems for cyclones, integrating meteorological data with evacuation protocols. It has used nutrition tracking tools to combat child stunting in remote tribal belts. During the pandemic, it linked health records with mobility data to monitor infections and plan resources. When districts like Ganjam were in the grip of COVID, it wasn't just doctors who saved lives. It was data.

But this is only the beginning. The path to Viksit Odisha 2036 must be paved with intelligent systems that integrate education, health, agriculture, climate resilience, and urban planning into a unified analytical grid. It also means investing in people, not just platforms. Building statistical capacity at the grassroots, nurturing a culture of data use across departments, and empowering citizens to engage with data meaningfully.

As we celebrate Statistics Day, we must remember: data is not the endgame. It is the lens. It is how we see our inequities, and how we correct our course. It is how we convert ambition into accountability. PC Mahalanobis once wrote that "planning without statistics is like building a house without drawing a plan." Today, in a world reeling from pandemics, heating up from climate change, and fractured by inequality, that plan is more essential than ever.

The earthquake in Japan showed us what is possible when data and preparedness converge. Odisha's silent successes remind us that resilience is not a stroke of luck, but a discipline of data. And Mahalanobis' vision urges us to measure wisely, act swiftly, and never mistake noise for knowledge. In the end, sustainable development is not a slogan. It is a system. And that system runs on data that speaks, that listens, that includes. And above all, that delivers.

*Profulla Kumar Swain is Assistant Professor, Department of Statistics, Utkal University. Khushi Agrawal is Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Statistics, Utkal University*

### WISDOM CORNER

**We cannot be more sensitive to pleasure without being more sensitive to pain.** ALAN WATTS

**If you aren't in over your head, how do you know how tall you are?** TS ELIOT

**We choose our joys and sorrows long before we experience them.** KAHILIL GIBRAN

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

**1534:** French mariner Jacques Cartier "discovered" Prince Edward Island off the coast of what is now Canada.

**1613:** During a performance of William Shakespeare's Henry VIII on this day in 1613, the Globe Theatre was destroyed within an hour after its thatch was accidentally set aflame by a cannon marking the king's entrance onstage.

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 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)



### Eliminating high stakes

Sir, The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has announced that it will conduct two exams from the academic year 2026. Students desiring to improve upon their performances can do so in three of the four subjects: science, social sciences, mathematics and languages. The CBSE decision is in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) recommendation that two exams be held to "eliminate high stakes" and unburden the students. While the intention behind the decision cannot be disputed, there is scope for plenty of confusion. There always will be a tendency on the part of the students to take things easy. Additionally, due to its pan-India nature, and diverse subjects, the CBSE allows more than enough gap between two papers. For instance, there was a 10-day gap between language and mathematics in the 2025 exams, and a four-day gap for both science and IT. Furthermore, the students already have the best of five options to augment their percentage marks.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

### Campus horror

Sir, The shocking incident of gangrape of a law college student inside the campus in Kolkata is deeply horrifying and deserves the strongest condemnation. That such a heinous crime took place within an educational institution—meant to shape the defenders of justice—is a tragic reflection of the erosion of safety and morality in our society. This is not just an act of brutal violence against a young woman, but a direct assault on the nation's sense of justice and human dignity. It is imperative that the perpetrators of this despicable act be tried in a fast-track court under the strictest provisions of law and punished without delay. Justice must not only be done but seen to be done—swiftly and without compromise. Additionally, the government must ensure stringent safety protocols in all educational institutions, with functional grievance cells and active surveillance. Campuses must be spaces of learning, not of fear.

Ch Pratap, HYDERABAD

# EC begins spl voter verification drive

# NE not just young, it's younger than rest of country: Sangma

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

## BIHAR ELECTIONS

**New Delhi, June 28:** Ahead of the high-stakes Bihar Assembly elections, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has commenced a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls, aimed at verifying the eligibility of every voter in the state.

The drive, which is already underway, is being conducted in close coordination with political parties and district administrations. Under the SIR, the ECI is reinforcing its booth-level workforce by appointing 20,603 additional Booth Level Officers (BLOs), augmenting the current strength of 77,895 BLOs across the state.

Over 1 lakh volunteers have also been roped in to assist genuine electors, especially senior citizens, the disabled, the sick, the economically disadvantaged, and other vulnerable groups.

All recognised national and state political parties have appointed 1,54,977 Booth Level Agents (BLAs) to aid in the revision process, with the option to appoint more agents as the work progresses. Enumeration Forms (EFs) are being distributed door-to-door and are also available online for Bihar's 7.89 crore registered electors across



243 Assembly constituencies.

Out of these, around 4.96 crore electors, who were registered as of January 1, 2003, need only to verify their details and submit the EF.

District Magistrates and Divisional Commissioners are overseeing the deployment of BLOs, who are now working full-time

on the revision exercise.

Additionally, the ECI is reaching out to voters through SMS campaigns targeting over 5.74 crore registered mobile numbers in Bihar.

The poll panel has reaffirmed that all activities are proceeding according to schedule and reiterated its constitutional com-

## Mockery of democracy, Constitution: Tejaswi

**D**ubbing the Election Commission's (EC) announcement of special intensive revision of the voters list in Bihar as a "mockery of democracy and the Constitution", the leader of the Opposition in the Bihar Assembly Tejaswi Prasad Yadav asked the EC to explain the sudden need for the revision of 8 crore voters in 25 days before the elections. Accompanied by the leaders of the Grand Alliance (GA), Yadav told news persons here Saturday that the decision indicates a conspiracy for scrapping the names of the poor, the oppressed, the deprived, the backward, the extremely backward, the Dalits, the tribals and the minorities from the voter list.

mitment to ensuring that only Indian citizens above the age of 18 and ordinarily residing in a constituency are eligible to vote.

The drive marks one of the most comprehensive voter verification exercises in Bihar, reflecting the ECI's push to ensure a clean and accurate electoral roll through maximum citizen and political participation.

Notably, as Bihar will witness the Assembly elections in

## Manjhi defends move, attacks Opposition

**U**nion Minister and senior NDA leader Jitan Ram Manjhi has strongly defended the voter list revision exercise in Bihar, stating that only those who fear exposure of bogus voters are objecting to the process. Amid the opposition's uproar over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in the state, Manjhi asserted, "We know where bogus voters have been made. Somewhere 25,000, and at other places up to 30,000. When such fake names are removed, only those who are wrong will be afraid." Targeting the leader of the opposition in the Bihar Assembly, Tejashwi Yadav, Union Minister Manjhi mocked the RJD leader's symbolic distribution of pens to students.

the next few months, political parties have upped their ante and have been engaging with the masses on the ground, along with organising rallies followed by the announcement of a few welfare schemes.

Also, opposition parties, including Congress and CPI, are questioning the Voter List Revision and are attacking the poll body, accusing it of acting at the behest of the BJP.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kohima, June 28:** Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma has said that the northeast region has more young population than the rest of the country.

Addressing the 5th Regional Catholic Youth Convention here Friday he said, "The northeast is not just young it is younger than the rest of India."

"This makes our youth not only our greatest strength but also our greatest challenge. How we nurture them will determine the destiny of Nagaland, Meghalaya, and the entire northeast," Sangma said.

Emphasising the importance of purpose, goal-setting, and entrepreneurship among youth, he said that "without a goal, you could be working endlessly and achieving nothing."

He said, "Reservation has made our youth complacent. We must compete not because we are guaranteed a seat, but because we can win it on merit."

Calling for a cultural shift, Sangma urged the youth to believe in themselves and embrace entrepreneurship.

"Why do we wait for others to start businesses in our states? Our youth should become the job creators," he said, citing his government's extensive



startup and entrepreneurship initiatives in Meghalaya.

Underscoring the urgency of youth empowerment, Sangma warned that an unchannelled youth population could become a liability rather than an asset. "The same youth who can build our region can also become a destructive force — it all depends on how we guide them," he said.

"Above all, be good human beings. No amount of power or success can replace humility, respect, and fear of the Lord," Sangma said.

The convention is being organised by North Eastern Regional Youth Commission in collaboration with Indian Catholic Youth Movement (ICYM) North East and hosted by Nagaland Catholic Youth Movement.

## BAIRABI-SAIRANG LINE

# Decade-long endeavour to link Mizoram capital to rail network

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 28:** The completion of the 51.38-km Bairabi-Sairang rail line, which is set to connect Mizoram's capital Aizawl to the country's rail network, involved overcoming immense geographical and logistical challenges.

"The line is ready with the approval from the Commissioner of Railway Safety (CSR) and very soon, it will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi," a Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) official said.

Once operational, people can travel to Aizawl via Silchar by train, enjoying the natural beauty, cultural diversity, rolling hills and dense forests of the state, known as the "Land of the Hill People". Officials said the line establishes Mizoram as the fourth northeastern state with its capital city linked to the national railway network.

According to the NFR, the line has 48 tunnels covering 12.853 km, 55 major and 87 minor bridges, five road overbridges and nine road underbridges, with one of the bridges numbered at 196 boasting of a height of 104 metres — 42 metres taller than the Qutub Minar.

"The new line will not only bring benefits to the people of Mizoram through improved



transportation and accessibility, but also enhance regional mobility, along with boosting local tourism," the NFR said.

"The path-breaking operation will also stimulate commercial activities, economic development and strengthen train connectivity across the northeastern states, generating employment opportunities and promoting small-business growth near stations and goods sheds," it added.

Talking about the commencement of the project, a senior official said Modi remotely unveiled the plaque for the new rail line from Bairabi to Sairang at a ceremony held at the Maligaon Railway Stadium November 29, 2014.

He added that the complete rail line was commissioned in four phases — Bairabi-Hortoki (16.72 km) commissioned in

July 2024, Hortoki-Kawnpui (9.71 km) in June 2025, Kawnpui-Mualkhang (12.11 km) in June 2025 and Mualkhang-Sairang (12.84 km) in June 2025.

"The final stretch of the Bairabi-Sairang new line railway project, from Hortoki to Sairang, was thoroughly inspected by the CRS, Northeast Frontier Circle, between June 6 and June 10. This marks a significant milestone as it completes the entire 57.38-km rail line, paving the way for direct rail connectivity to Aizawl for the very first time," another official said.

The CRS authorised the operation of freight and passenger trains on the newly-laid broad gauge line between Bairabi and Hortoki August 22, 2024.

"The revised sanctioned cost of the project is approximately Rs 5,021.45 crore," the official said.

# 'Bihar has highest number of women cops'

Over 21,000 get appointment letters for police jobs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Patna, June 28:** More than 21,000 newly recruited police personnel in Bihar Saturday received their appointment letters at a function here, where Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said that the state now has the "highest number of women in uniform".

The chief minister said no other state has as many women in the police force as Bihar.

"I have asked the DGP to finalise the recruitment of another 55,000 personnel at the earliest. We want to raise the strength of our police force to 2.29 lakh," the CM said.

Altogether 21,391 fresh recruits, including 11,178 women and 10,205 men, were given their letters of appointment at an auditorium here where Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Deputy CM Samrat Choudhary and DGP Vinay Kumar were among those present.

"We came to power in November 2005 and at that time the strength of Bihar Police was just 51,000. Now, the government is committed to increasing the strength of the police force to 2.29 lakh, and our government has substantially increased the strength of women in the force. Now the strength of women in the force is 36,000," the CM said.



Newly recruited constables of Bihar Police take oath during the appointment letters' distribution function, in Patna, Saturday

The state government introduced 35 per cent women reservation in police services in 2013 and later in all government services, he said.

Addressing the gathering, Bihar Deputy CM Samrat Choudhary said, Bihar has the highest number of women in the police force in the country. It is a big achievement.

It's a historic day for Bihar, he said.

"The NDA government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and CM Nitish Kumar is commit-

ted to the welfare of women and their empowerment. Every police station in the state has women officers and all necessary facilities have been provided to them," Choudhary said.

Bihar has become the first state in the country where the strength of women in the police force is 28.5 per cent of the total strength. Today, appointment letters were distributed to 21,391 newly recruited personnel, Bihar DGP Vinay Kumar said.

"The process is already on

to recruit an additional 19,838 personnel in the Bihar Police. Besides, 10,000 more posts are being created in the force to increase its strength. Around 4,360 drivers will also be recruited in Bihar Police in the coming days," the DGP said.

The government is committed to improving the strength of the state police for smooth enforcement of law and order, he said.

"The rule of law prevails in the state, that is the top priority of the government," he added.

# Ronie Chowpoo first Arunachali to command Indian naval warship



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Itanagar, June 28:** Commander Ronie Chowpoo from Arunachal Pradesh's Namsai district has become the first officer from the state to command a frontline Indian naval warship in the Eastern Fleet, an official statement said Saturday.

His appointment marks an important milestone and serves as an inspiration to the youth of Arunachal Pradesh, it said.

Commander Chowpoo, a first-generation Indian Navy

officer, was commissioned into the executive branch of the Navy in 2008. A specialist in communication and electronic warfare, he has served on various frontline warships, including guided missile destroyers and frigates, the statement said.

Over the course of his distinguished career, he has held key operational and staff appointments at Naval headquarters, Fleet headquarters, and other strategic institutions, it added.

An alumnus of Rashtriya Indian Military College (RIMC) Dehradun, and the prestigious National Defence Academy (NDA) Khadakwasla, Commander Chowpoo's professional journey reflects determination and excellence.

His rise from the 'Land of the Rising Sun' to commanding a warship in the Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet, also called the 'Sunrise Fleet', underscores a powerful story of perseverance and commitment, it said.

Heartfelt congratulations have poured in for Commander Chowpoo and his family on this landmark accomplishment.

# 'Efforts underway to form a popular govt in Manipur'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Imphal, June 28:** Former Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh Saturday said efforts are underway for setting up of a popular government in the state which is now under President's rule.

Speaking at the sidelines of a programme at BJP state headquarters, Singh expressed hope that a new government will be formed in Manipur soon.

"We are working to form a government at the earliest. We are a national party. After looking into the ground situation, I have faith that a government will be formed soon. BJP and its allies want a popular government as well. We are working for restoration of popular government," he said.

"We, BJP, haven't criticised anybody. We are concentrating only on the present crisis. We are approaching the Central government and concerned persons to bring an amicable solution and peace in the



state. In the meantime, we are also working to restore a popular government with frequent gatherings of MLAs. Everybody wants restoration of peace. Peace is compulsory. In the last seven or eight months, there have been no reports of fighting between communities," the former CM said.

Singh said the central government is trying to restore peace in the state.

To a media query, Singh said, "I have said earlier that illegal

immigrants and drug cartels have affected the entire North East as well as the whole nation."

Slowly, everyone has come to understand this issue. This change is a positive sign and together we can fight these elements.

Meanwhile, BJP Manipur unit president Adhikarimayum Sharda Devi speaking at a book release function said that now is not the time for elections but to focus on peace initiatives.

She told reporters, "The people want a popular government. BJP is trying to bring a popular government and will work by understanding the desire of the people. Now is not the time to discuss for election but to focus on the process and progress of towards peace initiatives. I want to appeal to them to understand the pulse of the people and work accordingly."

Sharda said, "The question of whether BJP is united or not will be known gradually. There is something called slow and steady wins the race."

# B'desh situation: Tripura CM for increased security

## STATE'S FIRST CYBER PS INAUGURATED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Agartala, June 28:** Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha Saturday exhorted various agencies to enhance security and surveillance in the state, given the current situation in Bangladesh.

"Tripura is surrounded by Bangladesh on three sides. Therefore, strengthening of security is needed," the chief minister said after inaugurating the state's first cyber police station here.

"We all know the present situation in Bangladesh. There is a need to enhance security arrangements. The northeastern state has been made into a corridor for the smuggling of drugs and narcotic items. Infiltration from across the border is also another problem," he said.

There are reports that a section of people go close to the international border (Indian side) and have conversations with people living on the other

side of the international border. The situation may turn ugly once AI-enabled 5G service is available, he said.

Referring to the shift from conventional warfare during 'Operation Sindoor', the chief minister said cannons and the presence of forces were not seen in the conflict (With Pakistan). Modern warfare requires a click, he said.

A mobile phone has become more dangerous than AK-47 rifles. Advanced technology has changed the form of battle, conflict or war, he said.

Terminology cybercrime a kind of shadow warfare, he said the security forces need to fight the criminals digitally to prevent fraudulent activities.

Emphasising awareness among the people about cyber fraud activities, Saha said the security agencies are also required to upgrade their skills to foil fraudulent activities on digital platforms.

The cyber police station is located in Agartala's AD Nagar and it will deal with all cyber-related crimes across the state.



Purulia-Bankura-Howrah MEMU train is being modernised as a passenger and environment-friendly facility. It has been designed to handle over 50,000 passengers daily by 2063, in addition to ensuring time-bound train movement

ASHWINI VAISHNAW | RAILWAY MINISTER

DACHIGAM NATIONAL PARK RANKED AS BEST MANAGED IN COUNTRY

Dachigam National Park in Jammu and Kashmir has secured the highest management effectiveness evaluation (MEE) score in the country in the latest cycle conducted by the Wildlife Institute of India. Dachigam topped the list of 438 national parks and wildlife sanctuaries assessed across the country, scoring a remarkable 92.97 percent, a testimony to the park's outstanding conservation standards, adaptive management, and ecological protection protocols



of the day quote

To become a global innovation leader, India must bring together its higher education institutions, startups, MSMEs, corporate sector, and policy bodies onto a common platform



THAWARCHAND GEHLOT | GOVERNOR, KARNATAKA

The state government is committed to enhancing educational infrastructure



BHAJULAL SHARMA | CHIEF MINISTER, RAJASTHAN

But if any kind of tampering is done with the Indian Constitution, with the objectives of the Indian Constitution, then our party will not sit quiet, our party will definitely come out on the streets to protest against it. Right now we are all keeping a close watch



MAYAWATI | BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY (BSP) CHIEF

LAW STUDENT'S 'GANG RAPE'

BJP's protest rally stopped, party's WB chief detained



The BJP in New Delhi said West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee should apologise and offer to resign over the alleged gang rape of the law college student in Kolkata, claiming that all the accused were linked to the ruling Trinamool Congress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The rally was stopped at Gariahat crossing in south Kolkata, and Majumdar and several other BJP leaders were detained. They were taken to the Kolkata Police headquarters in Lalbazar, the senior officer said.

Following the victim's complaint, the police have arrested prime accused Manojit Mishra, Promit Mukherjee and Zaid Ahmed. The guard of the college was also arrested Saturday morning.

Kolkata, June 28: The police Saturday stopped a BJP rally led by its West Bengal unit chief Sukanta Majumdar and detained him along with several other party leaders when they tried to take out the protest march to a law college in the city, where a student was allegedly gang-raped, a senior officer said.

The rally was not allowed to proceed towards the South Calcutta Law College where the 24-year-old student was allegedly gang raped by her two seniors and an alumnus of the

institution June 25. "The rally was stopped at Gariahat crossing in south Kolkata, and Majumdar and several other BJP leaders were detained. They were taken to the Kolkata Police headquarters in Lalbazar, the senior officer said.

Following the victim's complaint, the police have arrested prime accused Manojit Mishra, Promit Mukherjee and Zaid Ahmed. The guard of the college was also arrested Saturday morning.

The BJP in New Delhi said West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee should apologise and offer to resign over the alleged gang rape of the law college student in Kolkata, claiming that all the accused were linked to the ruling Trinamool Congress.

Majumdar alleged that there is "no security for women and they are not at all safe in Bengal."

"We were here to protest against the rising number of crimes against women. The police did not allow us to hold the rally. The chief minister must take responsibility for the gang rape incident," the union minister said in Kolkata.

He also said, "The CM is not

only the chief minister but also our police minister. Police personnel act like Trinamool Congress workers. They are preventing us from conducting a protest rally. Mamata does not want Sukanta Majumdar to hold any rally here," he said.

The 3-km protest march was planned by the BJP from the Gairahat crossing to the South Calcutta Law College in the Kasba area.

Leader of Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, Suvendhu Adhikari, hit out at the West Bengal government over the incident and questioned the process of appointments of principals in colleges.

"Appointments of principals are done from Kalighat and Camac Street and not by the Education Department. Those who are made the principals are spineless. So this lawlessness is expected," Adhikari alleged here.

He apparently referred to the chief minister as her residence is in the Kalighat area, and also to TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee as his office is in the Camac Street locality.

Meanwhile, BJP president JP Nadda has formed a four-member committee which will visit the state to investigate the matter and submit its findings, the party's national spokesperson Sambit Patra said.

Biplab Kumar Deb and Manan Kumar Mishra, both MPs, and Satyapal Singh and Meenakshi Lekhi, both former parliamentarians, are its members.

Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal also criticised the state government over the alleged gang rape of the law college student, and claimed, "Law and order in Bengal has deteriorated. This has worsened further due to appeasement politics."

TMC slams EC's electoral roll revision

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 28: The Election Commission's special intensive revision of the electoral roll is a "sinister move" to bring the National Register of Citizens (NRC) through the backdoor, Trinamool Congress leader Derek O'Brien claimed Saturday and compared it to 'ancestor passes' in Nazi Germany.

At a press conference here, he said the INDIA bloc parties were united on the issue and would take action soon.

O'Brien also questioned the timing of the move, announced months ahead of Assembly elections in Bihar and set to be carried out in West Bengal before next year's polls. It is the BJP's "desperate attempt" to win in West Bengal, he claimed.

The Trinamool Congress' Rajya Sabha floor leader said, "It



is a sinister move to bring NRC through the backdoor."

"In 1935, under the Nazis (in Germany), you were supposed to be given an ancestor pass... Is this the new version of that Nazi ancestor pass?" he posed.

"Why is this exercise being suddenly done right now? We have evidence as to why it is being done now. It is because the latest internal survey of the BJP for Bengal shows 46-

49 seats for the party in the state's assembly polls (early next year). In their desperation to attempt to change things you do such things," he claimed.

The Election Commission last Monday issued instructions to carry out a Special Intensive Revision in Bihar to weed out ineligible names and ensure all eligible citizens are included in the electoral roll, allowing them to exercise their

franchise in the polls slated later this year.

A similar review of electoral rolls will be done by the end of this year in five states that are going to polls in 2026, which includes West Bengal.

Trinamool's Rajya Sabha MP Sagarika Ghose claimed West Bengal was the "real target" of the exercise. "On June 26, the ECI announced that Special Intensive Revision will be conducted for Bihar Assembly polls, but the real target is Bengal."

Her party colleague and another MP in the Upper House of Parliament, Saket Gokhale, expressed similar views.

"The Modi government is taking away your right to vote and bringing in the NRC using the Election Commission. The purpose of this new exercise is to manipulate Bengal elections for the BJP and then replicate this model all over India," he alleged.

Int'l wildlife trafficking racket busted; 22 baby turtles seized

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 28: An international racket involved in the trafficking of prohibited wildlife species was busted in Delhi's Rohini, with the recovery of 22 live baby turtles and two large coral reef stones, the police said Saturday.

Ajay Kumar (53), a wildlife dealer from Sector 3, Rohini, and Ved Prakash (49), a supplier from Prahlapur, were arrested in connection with the case, registered under the Wild Life Protection Act, 1972 and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1990, the police stated.

"On the intervening night of June 25 and 26, specific information was received regarding the illegal trade of wildlife animals in the area. A case was registered under sections 9, 39, 50, and 51 of the Wild Life Protection Act, and section 11(A) of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act," a senior police officer said.

'Article 370 defied Ambedkar's vision'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nagpur, June 28: Chief Justice of India BR Gavai Saturday said Dr BR Ambedkar envisioned one Constitution for the country to keep it united and never favoured the idea of a separate constitution for a state.

Speaking at the inauguration of the Constitution Preamble Park here, the CJI said the Supreme Court drew inspiration from Dr Ambedkar's vision of a united India under a single constitution while upholding the Centre's decision to abrogate Article 370 that granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

Gavai was part of a five-judge Constitution bench, headed by then Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, that unanimously upheld the Centre's decision to abrogate Article 370, which bestowed special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

"When Article 370 was challenged, it came before us, and when the hearing was underway, I recalled Dr Babasaheb's words that one Constitution is suited for a country... If we want to keep the country united, we need only one Constitution," he said, while addressing the gathering in Marathi.

The Centre decided to strip Jammu and Kashmir of special status and divide it into two Union Territories August 5, 2019.

Gavai said Dr Ambedkar had been criticised, saying the Constitution provides for too much federalism, and in times of war, the country may not remain united.

However, he had responded, saying the Constitution would suit all the challenges and keep the nation united, the CJI said.

"See the situation in the neighbouring countries, be it Pakistan, Bangladesh or Sri Lanka. Whenever our country faces challenges, it has



When Article 370 was challenged, it came before us, and when the hearing was underway, I recalled Dr Babasaheb's words that one Constitution is suited for a country... If we want to keep the country united, we need only one Constitution

BR GAVAI | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

remained united," Gavai said.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said he was happy that CJI Gavai inaugurated the Constitution Preamble Park and unveiled a statue of Dr Ambedkar.

Freedom, equality and brotherhood were Dr Ambedkar's valuable gift to the country in the form of the Constitution, he said.

Gadkari said that the Constitution has clearly stated the responsibilities and rights of the four pillars of democracy, i.e. executive, judiciary, legislature and media.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said Gavai was performing his responsibility as the Chief Justice of India ably.

Highlighting the importance of the Constitution, Fadnavis said the government has decided that the Preamble of the Constitution should reach every student to mark the Amrit Mohotsav of the Constitution.

"If we accept the values of the Preamble, 90 per cent of the country's problems will be solved forever," he said.

Spy craft master Parag Jain appointed new RAW chief

The two-year tenure of Jain, an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from the 1989 batch of the Punjab cadre, officially begins July 1

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 29: Parag Jain, one of the brains behind the meticulous planning of 'Operation Sindoore', has been appointed as the new Chief of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), according to an official order issued here Saturday.

The two-year tenure of Jain, an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from the 1989 batch of the Punjab cadre, officially begins July 1. He takes over from Ravi Sinha, who retires

June 30.

"The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Shri Parag Jain, IPS to the post of Secretary, Research & Analysis Wing (R&AW) under Cabinet Secretariat for a tenure of two years from the date of assumption of the charge of the post until further orders, whichever is earlier..." the order read.

The decision to appoint Jain as chief of the external intelligence agency was made by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet earlier this week, officials said.

Before this, Jain was the head of the Aviation Research Centre, an organisation that deals with aerial surveillance, SIGINT operations, photo reconnaissance flights (PHOTINT), monitoring of borders and imagery intelligence



Before this, Jain was the head of the Aviation Research Centre, an organisation that deals with aerial surveillance, SIGINT operations, photo reconnaissance flights (PHOTINT), monitoring of borders and imagery intelligence (IMINT)

Jain is known for his exceptional expertise in integrating both human intelligence (HUMINT) and technical intelligence (TECHINT) and is widely credited as the mastermind behind the planning of 'Operation Sindoore', providing intelligence support that enabled the armed forces to execute precise strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK)

(HUMINT) and technical intelligence (TECHINT) and is widely credited as the mastermind behind the planning of 'Operation

Sindoore', providing intelligence support that enabled the armed forces to execute precise strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

India hit nine terror camps across the border and Line of Control, including the headquarters of banned terror outfits Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba May 7.

The missile strikes were guided by pinpointed intelligence gathered by a team led by Jain, officials said.

With extensive ground experience in Kashmir, Jain is well-positioned to counter Pakistan's ongoing efforts to rebuild terror infrastructure in PoK.

Jain also brings extensive experience in addressing neighbourhood challenges and issues related to Khalistan ter-

ror groups. He played a crucial role in Jammu and Kashmir during the 2019 reorganisation of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Throughout his career, Jain has held several significant positions. He was promoted to the rank of Director General of Police (DGP) in Punjab January 1, 2021, though he was on central deputation at the time.

His career includes significant operational contributions during the height of terrorism in Punjab, where he served as SSP and Deputy Inspector General of Police in various districts.

Jain has also served in Indian Missions in Sri Lanka and Canada. During his tenure in Canada, he monitored Khalistan terror modules operating from the soil of that country.



The first year of the 18th Lok Sabha has marked 104 per cent productivity. The House sitting lasted well past midnight to approve key legislations OM BIRLA | LOK SABHA SPEAKER

LT GEN DS RANA TAKES OVER AS COLONEL OF GARHWAL RIFLES

In a ceremony reflecting the glorious traditions of the Indian Army, Commander-in-Chief of Andaman and Nicobar Command, Lt Gen Dinesh Singh Rana, has taken charge as the 23rd Colonel of the Regiment of Garhwal Rifles. He succeeds Vice Chief of the Army Staff Lt General NS Raja Subramani



of the day quote

The RSS believes in Manusmriti. They have no respect for the Indian Constitution and no faith in democracy

SIDDARAMAIAH | CHIEF MINISTER, KARNATAKA

Preamble sacrosanct; Emergency-era words a 'festering wound': Dhankhar

The Vice-President said that the words 'socialist', 'secular' and 'integrity' were added in 1976, backing the claim made by RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 28: Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar Saturday asserted the preamble of a constitution is "not changeable" but was changed in India during the Emergency which signals a betrayal of the "wisdom" of the framers of the Constitution.

He also said the words inserted in the Preamble in 1976 during the period of Emergency, were a "nasoor" (festering wound) and could cause upheaval.

"It is nothing but belittling the civilisational wealth and knowledge of this country for thousands of years. It is a sacrilege of the spirit of Sanatan," the vice president said at a book launch event here.

Dhankhar described preamble as a "seed" on which a constitution grows. He also underlined that the preamble of no other constitution has undergone change except that of India.

"The Preamble of a constitution is not changeable. But this Preamble was changed by the 42nd Constitution (Amendment) Act of 1976," he said noting that the words "socialist", "secular", and "integrity" were added.

He said it was a travesty of justice that something that cannot be changed was altered "casually, farcically, and with no sense of propriety" and that too during Emergency when several Opposition leaders



No need for socialism in India, secularism not core of our culture: Chouhan

VARANASI: Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan Friday said "there is no need for socialism in India", adding "secularism is not the core of our culture". Chouhan's remarks assume significance as the RSS Thursday called for reviewing the words 'socialist' and 'secular' in the preamble of the Constitution, saying they were included during the Emergency and were never part of the Constitution drafted by BR Ambedkar.

were in jail. "And in the process, if you deeply reflect, we are giving wings to existential challenges. These words have been added as nasoor (festering wound). These words will create up-

heaval," Dhankhar cautioned. "We must reflect," he said, adding that BR Ambedkar did painstaking work on the Constitution and he must have "surely focused on it". His remarks came after the

RSS Thursday called for reviewing the words 'socialist' and 'secular' in the Preamble of the Constitution, saying they were included during the Emergency and were never part of the Constitution drafted by Ambedkar.

The Congress and other Opposition parties have slammed RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale's call for a national debate on whether the terms 'secular' and 'socialist' should remain in the Preamble, terming it "political opportunism" and a "deliberate assault" on the soul of the Constitution.

As Hosabale's strong pitch for a review of the two words inserted in the Preamble of the Constitution during the Emergency days (1975-77) kicked up a political row, an article published in an RSS-linked magazine Organiser said it is not about dismantling the Constitution but about restoring its "original spirit", free from the "distortions" of the Congress' Emergency-era policies.

Union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that "there is no need for socialism in India" and noted that "secularism is not the core of our culture".

Another Union minister Jitendra Singh sought to defend the call by the second senior most functionary of the RSS, saying any right-thinking citizen will endorse it because everybody knows that these words were not part of the original Constitution written by Ambedkar.

India looks bigger from space than it does on map: Shukla



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 28: India looks grand and bigger from space than it does on map, Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla told Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a video conference Saturday.

Shukla shared these details in an 18-minute interaction with Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday from the International Space Station that is orbiting the earth at an altitude of 400 km.

Shubhanshu Shukla said his travel to the ISS was not just a personal feat but a collective achievement of the entire nation.

"When I saw India for the first time from space, it appeared much larger and grander than on the map," Shukla told the Prime Minister.

"You can truly feel the sense of oneness, there are no borders, no lines. It feels as if this entire Earth is our home and we are all its citizens," he said.

Shukla and other astronauts on the International Space Station relished delicacies such as 'gajar ka halwa', 'moong dal

halwa' and 'aam ras' as they began their 14-day stay on the orbital lab.

"Yes, I brought 'gajar ka halwa', 'moong dal ka halwa' and 'aam ras'. I wanted everyone who has joined me from other countries to enjoy the rich Indian cuisine. All of us had it together and everyone liked it," Shukla told the prime minister.

Modi asked Shukla whether he had shared any Indian delicacies with his fellow astronauts.

Shukla reached the International Space Station Thursday along with three other astronauts as part of the commercial Axiom-4 mission for a 14-day stay during which the crew will be part of a series of science experiments.

After reaching the orbital lab Thursday, Shukla and the three astronauts spent the day settling in and setting up their sleeping quarters.

Commander Peggy Whitson is located in the Airlock, Shukla in Dragon, Slawosz "Suave" Uznanski-Wisniewski in Columbus, and Tibor Kapu in the Japanese Experiment Module (JEM).

Super Six is a super flop. Annadata Sukhibhava has turned into sorrow. While there are over 93 lakh farmers in the state, half of them have been cut short under the guise of eligibility criteria

YS SHARMILA | APCC PRESIDENT

In this game, a few BJP leaders benefit while the public is being cheated. This is why (in the Lok Sabha elections) the BJP lost in Ayodhya and narrowly escaped defeat in Prayagraj and Varanasi. Now it is the turn of Mathura and Gorakhpur

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

POST OF THE DAY

Most Indians are unaware that the first thing the Communists (under Mao Tse-tung) did from 1950s was to kill

a large section of land-owning classes throughout the PRC. Rest were re-educated, and society forcibly restructured, & assets redistributed. Class divisions were destroyed. Gender equality was substantially pushed, and primary education made universal. When Deng Xiaoping's market reforms commenced 1979, he started on a different plate altogether. Xi Jinping enforced 'common prosperity' from 2015 onwards. Their game is entirely different, please understand. The simplistic "reservation versus merit" trope is silly and dangerous.

@sandeep\_PT

SHORT TAKES

Himachal flash floods: Death toll climbs to 7

Shimla: The death toll in the flash flood that wreaked havoc in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra and Kullu Wednesday has gone up to seven after the recovery of another body, officials said. The body of a minor girl, identified as Murti Devi, was recovered near the river side in Bakshahal village in Kullu district, they said. Murti, her father and aunt were swept away in flash floods caused by cloudburst at Jeeva Nallah in Sainj area Wednesday. The girl's father and aunt have not been located yet. Three people including Nand Lal, his daughter and sister were washed away in the deluge while trying to take away valuables from their homes at Rehla Bihal in Kullu district Wednesday. With recovery of one more body Saturday, the death toll in flash floods incidents in Himachal Pradesh has gone up to seven.

Vehicles stalled in MP CM's convoy

Bhopal/Ratlam: An FIR was lodged in Ratlam Saturday in connection with the stalling of vehicles in Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav's convoy due to water-mixed fuel, an official said. The move by the state government comes amid oil marketing firm Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited's claim that "unusual heavy rainfall" caused water to enter fuel storage tanks at Shakti Fuel Point in Dosigaon. As per an official release, state Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Minister Govind Singh Rajput, taking cognizance of the incident in Ratlam, directed senior officials to take necessary action by holding a meeting with oil companies.

Not tenable: SC quashes preventive detention of law student under NSA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 28: The Supreme Court has ordered immediate release of a law student in Madhya Pradesh from preventive detention after being booked under the National Security Act (NSA), saying it is "wholly untenable".

A bench of Justices Ujjal Bhuyan and K Vinod Chandran, which found fault with the July 11, 2024 detention order passed by District Magistrate of Betul in Madhya Pradesh said it will be passing a detailed reasoned order in the case.

Petitioner Annu was booked by police following an altercation at a university campus in Betul, allegedly after he clashed with a professor.

An FIR was lodged against him for offences of attempt to murder and other connected offences. While in jail, a detention order under provisions of the NSA was issued against him. This order was later confirmed and extended every three months since then. "After perusal of the first

detention order dated July 11, 2024, we find that the appellant has been taken into preventive detention under Section 3(2) of the National Security Act, 1980. However, we are of the view that the reasons for which he has been taken into preventive detention does not satisfy the requirement of Sub Section(2) of Section 3 of the National Security Act, 1980. Preventive detention of the appellant, therefore, becomes wholly untenable," the Supreme Court bench said in its order passed Friday.

The bench said the preventive detention has also become untenable for other grounds as well, such as representation of the appellant (law student) being decided by the district collector himself, without forwarding it to the state government and also not taken into account the factum of appellant's detention in other criminal cases and as to why he was required to be taken into preventive detention, in spite of being detained in a regular criminal proceeding.



A woman selling inflated toys passes by on a cloudy evening, in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

Unfair trade practices by B'desh forced India to restrict import of jute

THE NEW RESTRICTIONS WILL APPLY TO IMPORTS INTO INDIA OF BANGLADESH'S JUTE AND ALLIED FIBRE PRODUCTS ACROSS ALL LAND AND SEAPORTS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE NHAVA SHEVA SEAPORT IN MAHARASHTRA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 28: India imposed restrictions on the import of jute and allied fibre products from Bangladesh in view of its "unfair trade" practices including circumvention of anti-dumping duty that harmed Indian farmers, people familiar with the matter said Saturday.

The new restrictions will apply to imports into India of Bangladesh's jute and allied fibre products across all land and seaports, with the exception of the Nhava Sheva seaport in Maharashtra.

The punitive measures were announced Friday and they came into effect immediately.

There has been a sharp downturn in India-Bangladesh relations after deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled

Dhaka and took shelter in India in August last year in the face of a massive anti-government protest.

Bangladesh must not be allowed to persist with "unfair trade" practices that harm the livelihood of Indian farmers and mill workers in a sector that forms the economic backbone of rural regions, said an official on condition of anonymity.

The market access extended by India in good faith cannot be undermined to the detriment of India's economic interests, said another official.

India's decision on Bangladesh jute and fibre products came weeks after it put restrictions on ready-made garments and several other consumer goods through land ports.

Under the provisions of SAFTA (South Asian Free



Trade Area), jute from Bangladesh enjoys a duty free access to India.

However, the Indian jute industry has, for long, suffered due to the adverse impact of dumped and subsidised imports of jute products, particularly yarn, fibre and bags' from the

neighbouring country, the people cited above said.

There is credible evidence that Bangladesh jute exports continue to benefit from state subsidies extended by the government of Bangladesh, they said.

In response to these con-

cerns, the Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties (DGAD) conducted detailed investigations and imposed anti-dumping duty (ADD) on jute and goods originating from Bangladesh, the people said.

But, the imposition of ADD has not yielded a substantial reduction in imports, they said.

Apart from various subsidies, common malpractices by Bangladesh exporters include circumvention of anti-dumping duty through technical exemptions, mislabelling, exports through ADD exempted firms and "misdeclaration" to secure higher subsidies, the people said.

The restrictions are aimed to counter unfair trade practices, promote 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliance), and protect rural livelihoods tied to India's domestic jute economy, the

people cited above said.

"To safeguard the interests of the domestic jute industry and to counter the unfair trade practices employed by the Bangladesh exporters acting in collusion with Bangladeshi establishment, it has been decided to restrict Bangladesh imports of jute and jute products to India through only from Nhava Sheva port," said one of the people.

"The imposition is expected to streamline the quality checking, prevent misdeclaration and fraudulent labelling, thereby neutralising the malpractices that have plagued the industry for long," the person said.

"The government is also taking steps to ensure that exporters in Bangladesh do not circumvent the aforesaid restrictions by routing their jute exports through third countries," he added.

# international



No one has wished to pay attention to the Islamic State, as long as it operates against Russia. Explosions in Moscow, and all that. This is still happening today

## DRC-RWANDA PEACE DEAL

The Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda Friday signed a peace deal facilitated by the US to help end the decades-long deadly fighting in eastern Congo while helping the US government and American companies gain access to critical minerals in the region.



### of the day quote

If President Trump is genuine about wanting a deal, he should put aside the disrespectful and unacceptable tone towards Iran's Supreme Leader, Grand Ayatollah Khamenei and stop hurting his millions of heartfelt followers



SEYED ABBAS ARAGHCHI | IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

We've never believed that the United States should be the only option, that the guarantee for a refugee is that they go somewhere to be safe and to be protected from whatever threat they face in their country. It doesn't necessarily have to be the United States



KRISTI NOEM | US HOMELAND SECURITY SECRETARY

People often know they won't get full recognition as refugees, but they set off for Germany because it is known that, even without asylum recognition ... you can have your family follow



ALEXANDER DOBRINDT | GERMAN INTERIOR MINISTER

## Israeli strikes kill 72 in Gaza as ceasefire prospects move closer

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Deir al-Balah, June 28: Israeli strikes killed at least 72 people across Gaza overnight and into Saturday, health workers said, as ceasefire prospects were said to be improving after 21 months of war.

Three children and their parents were killed in an Israeli strike on a tent camp in Muwasi near the southern city of Khan Younis. They were struck while sleeping, relatives said.

"What did these children do to them? What is their fault?" said the children's grandmother, Suad Abu Teima, as others knelt to kiss their bloodied faces and wept. Some placed red flowers into the body bags.

Also among the dead were 12 people near the Palestine Stadium in Gaza City, which was sheltering displaced people, and eight more in apartments, according to staff at Shifa Hospital. More than 20 bodies were taken to Nasser Hospital, according to health officials.

A midday strike killed 11 people on a street in eastern Gaza City, and their bodies were taken to Al-Ahli Hospital. Another strike on a gathering in eastern Gaza City killed eight including five children, the hospital said. A strike on a gathering at the entrance to the Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza killed two, according to Al-Awda Hospital.

US President Donald Trump says there could be a ceasefire agreement within the next week. Taking questions from reporters Friday, he said, "We're working on Gaza and



trying to get it taken care of."

An official with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press that Israeli Minister for Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer will arrive in Washington next week for talks on a Gaza ceasefire, Iran and other subjects. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to the media.

Indirect talks between Israel and Hamas have been on again, off again since Israel broke the latest ceasefire in March, continuing its military campaign in Gaza and furthering the territory's dire humanitarian crisis. Some 50 hostages remain in Gaza, fewer than half believed to still be alive. They were among 251 hostages taken when Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, sparking the war.

"What more is left to do in Gaza that has not already been done? Who else is left to elim-

inate?" Yotam Cohen, brother of hostage Nimrod Cohen, said Saturday evening as weekly rallies by families and supporters resumed following Israel's ceasefire with Iran.

The war has killed over 56,000 Palestinians, according to the Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants. It says more than half of the dead were women and children.

Israel says it only targets militants and blames civilian deaths on Hamas, accusing the militants of hiding among civilians because they operate in populated areas.

There is hope among families of hostages that Trump's involvement in securing the recent ceasefire between Israel and Iran might lead to more pressure for a deal in Gaza.

## Thousands mourn top Iranian military leaders, scientists

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, June 28: Thousands of mourners lined the streets of downtown Tehran Saturday for the funeral of the head of the Revolutionary Guard and other top commanders and nuclear scientists killed during a 12-day war with Israel.

The caskets of Guard's chief Gen. Hossein Salami, the head of the Guard's ballistic missile program, Gen Amir Ali Hajizadeh and others were driven on trucks along the capital's Azadi Street as people in the crowds chanted: "Death to America" and "Death to Israel."

Salami and Hajizadeh were both killed on the first day of the war, June 13, as Israel launched a war it said meant to destroy Iran's nuclear program, specifically targeting military commanders, scientists and nuclear facilities.

There was no immediate sign of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in the state broadcast of the funeral. Khamenei, who has not made a public appearance since before the outbreak of the war, has in past funerals held prayers for fallen commanders over their caskets before the open ceremonies, later aired on state television.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was on hand, and state television reported that Gen Esmail Qaani, who heads the foreign wing of the Revolutionary Guard, the Quds Force, and Gen. Ali Shamkhani were also among the mourners.

Shamkhani, an adviser to



Khamenei who was wounded in the first round of Israel's attack and hospitalized, was shown in a civilian suit leaning on a cane in an image distributed on state television's Telegram channel.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard was created after its 1979 Islamic Revolution. Since it was established, it has evolved from a paramilitary, domestic security force to a transnational force that has come to the aid of Tehran's allies in the Middle East, from Syria and Lebanon to Iraq. It operates in parallel to the country's existing armed forces and controls Iran's arsenal of ballistic missiles, which it has used to attack Israel twice during the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

Over 12 days before a ceasefire was declared Tuesday, Israel claimed it killed around 30 Iranian commanders and 11 nuclear scientists, while hitting eight nuclear-related facilities and more than 720 military infrastructure sites. More than 1,000 people were killed, including at least 417 civilians, according to the Washington-based Human Rights Activists group.

## BUDAPEST PRIDE DRAWS THOUSANDS DESPITE GOVT BAN

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Budapest, June 28: Around 100,000 people defied a government ban and police orders Saturday to march in what organisers called the largest LGBTQ+ Pride event in Hungary's history in an open rebuke of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's government.

Marchers gambled with potential police intervention and heavy fines to participate in the 30th annual Budapest Pride, which was outlawed by a law passed in March by Orbán's right-wing populist governing party.

The march began at Budapest City hall and wound through the city centre before crossing the capital's Erzsébet Bridge over the Danube River. Police diverted the crowd from its planned route to keep it separated from a small group of far-right counterprotesters, while members of Hungary's LGBTQ+ community and large numbers of supporters danced to music and waved rainbow and anti-government flags.

The massive size of the march, which the government for months had insisted would no longer be permitted in Hungary, was seen as a major blow to Orbán's prestige, as the European Union's longest-serving leader's popularity slumps in the polls where a new opposition force has taken the lead.

Some participants said that the march wasn't only about defending the fundamental rights of sexual minorities, but also addressed what they see as an accelerating crackdown on democratic processes under Orbán's rule.

### SHORT TAKES

#### 13 killed in Pak suicide attack

Peshawar: At least 13 security personnel were killed and 24 others injured in a suicide attack Saturday in Pakistan's northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, security sources said. A suicide bomber rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into a Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle belonging to the Bomb Disposal Unit early this morning in the Mir Ali area of North Waziristan, the sources added. Among the 24 injured are 14 civilians, including women and children, with several said to be in critical condition. A curfew was imposed in the area at the time of the incident due to ongoing military movement, sources said. Security agencies launched a rescue operation following the explosion. The militant group Usud al-Harb, a sub-faction of the Hafiz Gul Bahadur group, has claimed responsibility for the attack, they added.

#### Rains claim 34 lives in Pakistan

Lahore/Peshawar: At least 34 persons, including 16 children, died and 46 injured in separate rain-related incidents over the last three days as heavy rains of pre-monsoon showers lashed across many regions of Pakistan, officials said Saturday. At least 19 people were killed and six others injured over the last 48 hours in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province while 15 persons, including children, were killed and 40 injured in the last three days in Punjab province. According to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) in Peshawar, six men, five women, and eight children were killed across Swat, Abbottabad, Charsadda, Malakand, Shangla, Lower Dir, and Torghar districts in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Among these, Swat, the worst-hit district, saw 13 deaths and six injuries.

#### Colombia landslide death toll rises to 22

Bogota: The number of people killed in a landslide this week in northwest Colombia has risen to 22, with eight still missing, according to authorities. Crews Saturday were still looking for victims in Medellín, Colombia's second-largest city, and the nearby city of Bello. The landslide occurred early Tuesday following heavy rains.

## France to ban smoking in parks, beaches, near schools



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, June 28: France has struggled to kick its smoking habit. A new public health decree published Saturday aims to change that.

In the coming days, smoking will be banned in all French parks and sports venues, at beaches and bus stops, in a perimeter around all schools, and anywhere children could gather in public.

In a country where smoking has for generations been glamorised in cinema and intertwined with the national image, government crackdowns on tobacco use have met resistance.

"In France, we still have this mindset of saying, this is a law that restricts freedom," Philippe Bergerot, president of the French League Against Cancer, told

the Associated Press.

The ban aims "to promote what we call denormalisation. In people's minds, smoking is normal," he said. "We aren't banning smoking; we are banning smoking in certain places where it could potentially affect people's health and ... young people."

It's been illegal to smoke in restaurants, bars and public buildings since a series of bans in 2007 and 2008. Ever-higher taxes mean a pack now costs upwards of 12 euros (\$14).

Yet more than 30% of French adults still smoke cigarettes, most of them daily, one of the higher rates in Europe and globally. The Health Ministry is particularly concerned that tobacco remains popular among young people, citing public health statistics showing that 15% of 17-year-olds smoke. Black market cigarette trading is common.

More than 200 people in France die each day of tobacco-related illness, Health Minister Catherine Vautrin said in a statement Saturday. That adds up to some 75,000 deaths per year.

## Sudanese people eat weeds, plants to survive as war rages

War spiked market prices, limited aid delivery, and shrunk agricultural lands in a country that was once a breadbasket of the world

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cairo, June 28: With Sudan in the grips of war and millions struggling to find enough to eat, many are turning to weeds and wild plants to quiet their pangs of hunger. They boil the plants in water with salt because, simply, there is nothing else.

Grateful for the lifeline it offered, a 60-year-old retired school teacher penned a love poem about a plant called Khadija Koro. It was "a balm for us

that spread through the spaces of fear," he wrote, and kept him and many others from starving.

A.H, who spoke on the condition his full name not be used, because he feared retribution from the warring parties for speaking to the press, is one of 24.6 million people in Sudan facing acute food insecurity — nearly half the population, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. Aid workers say the war spiked market prices, limited aid delivery, and shrunk agricultural lands in a country that was once a breadbasket of the world.

Sudan plunged into war in April 2023 when simmering tensions between the Sudanese army and its rival paramilitary the Rapid Support Forces escalated to fighting in the capital Khartoum and spread across the country, killing over 20,000 people, displacing nearly 13



million people, and pushing many to the brink of famine in what aid workers deemed the world's largest hunger crisis.

Food insecurity is especially bad in areas in the Kordofan region, the Nuba Mountains, and Darfur, where El Fasher and Zamzam camp are inaccessible to the Norwegian Refugee Council, said Mathilde Vu, an aid worker with the group

based in Port Sudan. Some people survive on just one meal a day, which is mainly millet porridge. In North Darfur, some people even sucked on coal to ease their hunger. On Friday, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called the Sudanese military leader Gen Abdel-Fattah Burhan and asked him for a week-long ceasefire in El Fasher to allow aid delivery. Burhan

agreed to that request, according to an army statement, but it's unknown whether the RSF would agree to that truce.

A.H. said aid distribution often provided slight relief. His wife in children live in Obeid and also struggle to secure enough food due to high prices in the market. His poem continued: "You were a world that sends love into the barren time. You were a woman woven from threads of the sun. You were the sandalwood and the jasmine and a revelation of green, glowing and longing."

Sudanese agricultural minister Abu Bakr al-Bashari told Al-Hadath news channel in April that there are no indicators of famine in the country, but there is shortage of food supplies in areas controlled by the paramilitary forces, known as RSF.

However, Leni Kinzli, World Food Programme Sudan

spokesperson, said 17 areas in Gezeira, most of the Darfur region, and Khartoum, including Jebel Aulia are at risk of famine. Each month, over 4 million people receive assistance from the group, including 1.7 million in areas facing famine or at risk, Kinzli said.

The state is suffering from two conflicts: one between the Rapid Support Forces and the army, and another with the People's Liberation Movement-North, who are fighting against the army and have ties with the RSF, making it nearly impossible to access food, clean water, or medicine.

Hassan, another South Kordofan resident in Kadugli said that the state has turned into a "large prison for innocent citizens" due to the lack of food, water, shelter, income, and primary health services caused by the RSF siege.



Protesters gather at Victory Monument demanding Thailand's Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra resign in Bangkok, Saturday

AP PHOTO



## OVER 10L MSEs JOIN GeM

More than 10 lakh micro and small enterprises (MSEs) have joined the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal and total transaction value on GeM has reached around ₹5.40 lakh crore in FY2024-25, Ajit B Chavan, Additional CEO, GeM said Saturday. Addressing at a PHDCCI event on the occasion of the 'World MSME Day,' he shared about the transparency of the GeM portal and opportunity it offers to the MSMEs for supplying goods to various departments

### of the day quote

**Banks need to ensure that there is no mis-selling of insurance to customer and premium are affordable so as to help increase market penetration for such products**

**M NAGARAJU** | FINANCIAL SERVICES SECRETARY

**There is an urgent need for developing robust DPI in the power sector to manage the country's rising demand, ensure grid stability, and empower consumers. What Aadhaar did for identity and UPI achieved for digital payments, the India Energy Stack will accomplish for the power sector**

**MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR** | POWER MINISTER

**The operating margin of integrated millers is likely to improve only marginally by 40-60 bps to 9-9.5 per cent despite a 15 per cent jump in sugar output. That said, stand-alone millers, lacking distillery or co-generation power sales, may continue facing margin pressure**

**ANU SETHI** | SENIOR DIRECTOR, CRISIL RATINGS

### SHORT TAKES

#### B'desh pays \$384mn to Adani to clear dues

**New Delhi:** Bangladesh paid \$384 million to Adani Power in June, significantly reducing its outstanding dues under a power supply agreement with the Indian firm, according to sources. In June (till June 27), Bangladesh has paid \$384 million of the committed \$437 million to be paid during the month, two sources aware of the matter said. This would clear Bangladesh's "admitted" claims till March 31. With this, Adani's "claimed" dues, while still substantial, will come down to around \$500 million (assuming Bangladesh meets its month-end commitment), they said.

#### Big corporate deal

**New Delhi:** Sajjan Jindal-led JSW Paints' ₹12,915-crore deal to acquire Dutch paint maker Akzo Nobel's India unit is among the biggest transactions in the country so far this year. JSW Paints Friday announced that it will buy a 74.76 per cent stake in Dulux paint-maker Akzo Nobel India for ₹8,986 crore, followed by an open offer to buy another 25 per cent from open market for up to ₹3,929.06 crore, totalling tad over ₹12,915 crore. It is slightly behind Japan's Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp's acquisition of a 20 per cent stake in Yes Bank for ₹13,483 crore announced last month.

# Tesla Model Y drives itself from factory to buyer

*The fully autonomous delivery closely follows Tesla's limited rollout of its robotaxi service this week*

AGENCIES

**Washington, June 28:** Tesla has successfully completed its first autonomous car delivery, a major milestone in the company's journey toward self-driving technology.

The vehicle, a Model Y, drove itself from Tesla's Texas factory to a customer's home without any human intervention.

In a post on X, Musk revealed, "Across town, no human in the car, no remote control," highlighting the significance of this development in Tesla's autonomous ambitions. Though no images or videos were initially shared, Musk indicated that footage of the trip would be released soon.

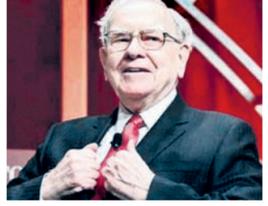
#### Buffett donates record \$6bn Berkshire shares

REUTERS

**Washington, June 28:** Warren Buffett donated Friday another \$6 billion of Berkshire Hathaway stock to the Gates Foundation and four family charities, his biggest annual donation since he began giving away his fortune nearly two decades ago.

The donation of about 12.36 million Berkshire Class B shares boosted Buffett's overall giving to the charities to well over \$60 billion.

He donated 9.43 million shares to the Gates Foundation; 943,384 shares to the Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation;



and 660,366 shares to each of three charities led respectively by his children Howard, Susie, and Peter; the Howard G Buffett Foundation, Sherwood Foundation and NoVo Foundation.

Warren Buffett still owns 13.8% of Berkshire's stock, based on reported shares outstanding.

His \$152 billion net worth prior to Friday's donations made him the world's fifth-richest person.

Buffett would rank sixth after the donations, which surpassed the \$5.3 billion he donated last June. He donated another \$1.14 billion to the family charities last November.

In a statement, Buffett maintained he does not intend to sell any Berkshire shares.

Now 94, Buffett began giving away his fortune in 2006. He changed his will last year, designating 99.5% of his remaining fortune after his death to a charitable trust overseen by his children.

The \$1.05 trillion conglomerate owns close to 200 businesses including Geico car insurance and the BNSF railroad, and dozens of stocks including Apple and American Express.



lighting the significance of this development in Tesla's autonomous ambitions. Though no images or videos were initially shared, Musk indicated that footage of the trip would be released soon.

The hands-free journey, according to Musk, involved highway driving and occurred with no one inside the vehicle — neither passengers nor remote operators were involved.

The autonomous delivery took a total of 30 minutes, during which the car reached

a top speed of 116km per hour.

**Milestone follows limited robotaxi launch**

The achievement comes just days after the firm launched a limited pilot of its robotaxi service in Austin, Texas. A small fleet of around 10-20 vehicles is currently operating within a geofenced area, providing rides to select users at a flat fee of \$4.20 each ride.

The billionaire entrepreneur has repeatedly stated his vision of a future dominated by robotaxis and humanoid robots like Optimus, as Tesla seeks to reduce dependence on traditional car sales. The company is betting heavily on software and automation to drive future revenue, as per reports.

# Nifty zooms 6.8% in H1

**EVEN AS THE GLOBAL LANDSCAPE BECOMES MORE FRAGMENTED AND VOLATILE, INDIA'S ECONOMY AND MARKETS HAVE SHOWN STRONG RESILIENCE**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, June 28:** The Nifty index has risen 6.8 per cent year-to-date (YTD) as of June 25 — reflecting steady investor confidence despite global uncertainty, according to the 'NSE Market Pulse' report.

In May alone, the index gained 1.7 per cent, followed by a 2 per cent rise in June.

This performance is notable given the backdrop of rising global trade tensions, geopolitical conflicts, and increasing protectionism that have unsettled markets around the world.

Supported by falling inflation, robust forex reserves, and timely policy measures, the Indian market continues to maintain a sense of stability that stands out globally, the report said.

In the first half of 2025, world economies have grappled with tariff hikes, broken supply chains, and ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East.

These challenges have pushed up production costs and inflation concerns. The



IMF has warned that the global trade disruptions could be more damaging than the Covid-19 pandemic.

Amid this, the RBI acted quickly by cutting the repo rate by 50 basis points to 5.5 per cent, taking advantage of a sharp drop in inflation, which was just 2.8 per cent in May.

A timely monsoon has further boosted rural sentiment and early Kharif sowing, the report added.

India's macroeconomic indicators present a mixed picture. While industrial output and credit growth have slowed, strong domestic demand — evident in non-oil, non-gold imports — continues to support the economy.

On the corporate front, earnings for the fourth quarter of FY25 showed mild improvement.

While revenue growth stayed in single digits, profit margins improved, especially for large-cap firms, due to lower input

### OPTIMISTIC MARKET

In May alone, the index gained 1.7%, followed by a 2% rise in June

Capital markets remained active, with nine IPOs raising over ₹5,600cr in May

SIP inflows hit new high of ₹26,688cr, showing rising trust among retail investors

costs and better efficiency.

However, despite beating earnings expectations, analysts have trimmed FY25 and FY26 forecasts, indicating caution over global volatility's potential impact on Indian exports and overall business performance.

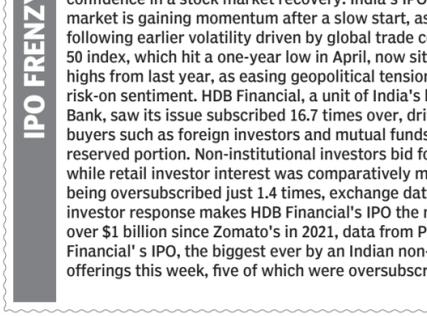
India's capital markets remained active, with nine IPOs raising over ₹5,600 crore in May, as per the report.

Investor registrations bounced back, with Gujarat becoming the third state to cross one crore investor accounts.

SIP inflows hit a new high of ₹26,688 crore, showing rising trust among retail investors.

#### HDB Financial most subscribed IPO over \$1 billion since 2021

**MUMBAI:** HDB Financial Services' \$1.5 billion IPO drew bids worth \$19 billion by Friday's close as institutional buyers rushed for India's largest offering so far this year, signaling investor confidence in a stock market recovery. India's IPO market is gaining momentum after a slow start, as the stock market stabilizes following earlier volatility driven by global trade concerns. The blue-chip Nifty 50 index, which hit a one-year low in April, now sits just 2.4% below record highs from last year, as easing geopolitical tensions and trade fears spurred risk-on sentiment. HDB Financial, a unit of India's biggest private lender HDFC Bank, saw its issue subscribed 16.7 times over, driven by qualified institutional buyers such as foreign investors and mutual funds who bid for 55 times their reserved portion. Non-institutional investors bid for 10 times their portion, while retail investor interest was comparatively muted, with their shares being oversubscribed just 1.4 times, exchange data showed. The strong investor response makes HDB Financial's IPO the most subscribed offering over \$1 billion since Zomato's in 2021, data from Prime Database showed. HDB Financial's IPO, the biggest ever by an Indian non-bank lender, was one of six offerings this week, five of which were oversubscribed in a range of 2-86 times.



#### Meesho gets shareholders' nod to raise ₹4,250 crore

**NEW DELHI:** SoftBank-backed Meesho has received shareholders' approval to raise up to ₹4,250 crore through an initial public offering, according to the company's regulatory filing. The resolution for IPO was passed in the Extraordinary General Meeting June 25, the filing by the e-commerce company said. According to the filing dated June 27, the shareholders approved raising up to ₹4,250 crore through issuance of fresh equities. The development comes after Meesho completed its domicile shift to India from the US.



#### Juniper Green to raise ₹3K-cr

**NEW DELHI:** Renewable power producer Juniper Green Energy has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to mobilise ₹3,000 crore through an initial public offering (IPO). The IPO is entirely a fresh issuance of equity shares worth up to ₹3,000 crore with no offer-for-sale component, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) filed Friday. Also, the company is looking to raise about ₹600 crore in a pre-IPO round. If the pre-IPO round takes place, the size of the fresh issue will be reduced accordingly. Proceeds from the fresh issue to the extent of ₹1,157.7 crore will be used to invest in its material subsidiaries — Juniper Green Gamma One, Juniper Green Three, Juniper Green Field, and Juniper Green Beam — as well as other subsidiaries Juniper Green Kite and Juniper Green Ray Two, for repayment of debt.



# Jio, Airtel dominate fresh subscribers' base

**OVER 99% NEW SUBSCRIBERS JOIN RELIANCE JIO, AIRTEL NETWORK IN MAY: TRAI DATA**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 28:** The total number of telecom subscribers in India grew marginally to 120.7 crore in May with Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel adding over 99 per cent new customers during the month, according to data published by sector regulator Trai Friday.

The total net subscriber addition by telecom service providers was 43,58,231 while Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel jointly added 43,51,294, thereby accounting for 99.84 of the total net subscriber addition in May.

The overall growth in subscriber base was mitigated by loss of subscribers by debt-ridden Vodafone Idea (Vi) and public sector firms BSNL and MTNL.

The total telecom subscriber base in the country grew to 120.7 crore with landline connection growing by 3.34 per cent to 3.86 crore and mobile connections rising to 116.84 crore in May. The total subscriber base in April was 120.3 crore.

Reliance Jio dominated the mobile subscriber base, having 40.92 per cent share with net addition of 27 lakh customers, taking its total wireless base to 47.51 crore.

Bharti Airtel held 33.61 per cent share with net addition of 2.75 lakh taking its total subscriber base to 39 crore in May.

Vi lost 2.74 lakh, BSNL 1.35 lakh, MTNL 4.7 lakh and Reliance Communications lost 30 mobile subscribers in May.

In the wireline segment, Reliance Jio led the chart with net new subscriber addition at 12.76 lakh. It was followed by Bharti Airtel which added around 99,000 new subscribers. Tata Teleservices added 4,890 new subscribers, Vi 1,795 and STPL 252.

State-run MTNL was the biggest loser of fixed line customers in May. It lost 66,834 fixed line subscribers and BSNL lost over 46,000 customers.



May. Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel submitted internet subscription data in required format to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India after a gap of five months.

Reliance Jio led the broadband segment with 49.44 crore subscribers comprising customers in both mobile and wireless segments. It was followed by Bharti Airtel with 30.2 crore broadband subscribers, Vi 12.66 crore, BSNL 3.43 crore and Atria Convergence 23.2 lakh customers.

**RELIANCE JIO DOMINATED THE MOBILE SUBSCRIBER BASE, HAVING 40.92% SHARE WITH NET ADDITION OF 27L CUSTOMERS, TAKING ITS TOTAL WIRELESS BASE TO 47.51CR**

**BHARTI AIRTEL HELD 33.61% SHARE WITH NET ADDITION OF 2.75L TAKING ITS TOTAL SUBSCRIBER BASE TO 39CR**

**VI LOST 2.74L, BSNL 1.35L, MTNL 4.7L AND RELIANCE COMMUNICATIONS LOST 30 MOBILE SUBSCRIBERS**

# PSBs' biz surges to ₹251L-cr in '24-25

**NPAs have declined from 1.24% to 0.52% from FY2022-23 to FY2024-25**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, June 27:** The total business of public sector banks has surged from ₹203 lakh crore in FY 2022-23 to ₹251 lakh crore in FY 2024-25 while the net non-performing assets (NPAs) have declined from 1.24 per cent to 0.52 per cent during this period, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was informed at the annual review meeting with bank chiefs here Friday.

The net profit of public sector banks has also risen from ₹1.04 lakh crore to ₹1.78 lakh crore, and dividend payouts grew from ₹20,964 crore to ₹34,990 crore during this period.

The Finance Minister was also apprised that the public sector banks are adequately capitalised, with their capital adequacy ratio standing at 16.15 per cent as of March 2025.

She reviewed the performance of public sector banks



across key areas with a focus on financial strength, inclusive lending, cybersecurity, and customer-centric innovation.

Sitharaman emphasised the need for sustained efforts to improve deposit mobilisation to support ongoing credit growth. PSBs were advised to undertake special drives, make effective use of their branch networks, and deepen outreach in semi-urban and rural areas.

It was also noted during the meeting that under the Stand Up India scheme, 2.28 lakh loans have been sanctioned worth ₹51,192 crore.

# EVES' WOEFUL RUN



## Indian women's hockey team relegated from FIH Pro League after defeat against China

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Berlin, June 28:** The Indian women's hockey team was Saturday relegated from the FIH Pro League after losing to China 0-3 in its penultimate match, a result which placed it at the bottom of the points table.

India's seventh consecutive defeat in their disastrous European leg of the FIH Pro League meant that they will finish at the lowest rung of the standings

even though one match is left to be played Sunday.

India are now at the bottom of the nine-team standings with 10 points from 15 games and will play again against China Sunday in their last match of the 2024-25 FIH Pro League.

With 0-1 loss to England in the other match of the day, Germany are one rung above India with 13 points. Even if India beat China, they are certain to finish at the bottom as they can only reach up to 12 points.

Hence, India will be relegated from the FIH Pro League to the second tier FIH Nations Cup in the 2025-26 season.

England are placed at seventh with 14 points from 15 games. In their penultimate match, China scored through

### DISASTROUS EUROPEAN LEG

**W**omen's hockey team relegated to the second tier FIH Nations Cup in 2025-26 season

**I**ndia see seventh consecutive defeat in their disastrous European leg of FIH Pro League

**E**ves are now at the bottom of the nine-team standings with 10 points from 15 games

Chen Yang (21st minute), Zhang Ying (26th) and Anhui Yu (45th) against India.

India made a bright start and made some good circle penetrations in the first quarter.

Baljeet Kaur had the first real chance of the match but her shot from the top of the circle

in the third minute went wide. A minute later, India secured two-back-to-back first penalty corners but Deepika failed on both the occasions.

China got their act together soon and earned their first penalty corner a minute later but India defended well.

Veteran India goalkeeper Savita made some fine saves to deny the Chinese, including one in the 13th minute to keep out Guoting Hao's reverse hit.

Seconds from the first quarter, China secured their second penalty corner but failed to stop the push. A minute into the second quarter, China earned two consecutive penalty corners but failed to make use of the chances.

China came out all guns blazing in the second quarter and dominated the proceedings through penalty corners, and in the 21st minute, Chen Yang scored from a set piece.

China continued to put pressure on the Indian defence and got their fifth penalty corner in the 26th minute and Zhang Ying made no mistake as they took a 2-0 lead at half-time.

The Indians created a few chances but, as has been the case so far, they lacked the finishing touch.

They dominated the third quarter with persistent attacks but failed to break the resolute Chinese defence.

China took advantage of India's lacklustre attitude in the backline, tripling their lead in the 45th minute through a field goal by Anhui Yu against the run of play.

The Indians continued to apply pressure on the Chinese defence and secured a penalty stroke in the 55th minute but Deepika missed the golden chance.

The missed penalty stroke summed up India's day as China came out winners.

## DOMINATING DISPLAY

# Asian Snooker: India regain team gold



## For India, who last won the gold two years ago in Iran, this achievement was their fifth gold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Colombo, June 28:** Multiple-time world champion Pankaj Advani and Brijesh Damani dug deep as India scored a fine 3-1 win over formidable Malaysia to regain the team gold in the ACBS Asian Snooker Championship here Saturday.

For India, who last won the gold two years ago in Iran, this was their fifth gold.

Having been put through the wringer in the semifinals earlier in the morning by Hong Kong-1 (3-2), the Indians sans

Aditya Mehta, who suffered a neck niggle, for both the matches, came back recharged for the final.

Damani, who made a sizzling 33 clearance that took proportions of an 80-break in the decider against Hon Man Chau in the semis, seemed to carry that momentum into the title clash.

Playing the first singles, he made a gritty 52 before an unlucky red in-off ended the break abruptly against Thor Chuan Leong.

Given a lifeline, Thor Chuan, winner of the Asian 6-red title three days ago, fought back in fine style, prevailing 68-58 with a run of 39, to put Malaysia ahead.

Advani, who lost a rare frame in the semis against Kwok Wai Fung, brushed aside Lim Kok Leong to make it one-frame apiece.

In the doubles, after letting Malaysia take an early 33-1 lead, Damani punished Thor Chuan's error with a brilliant frame-clinching break of 60 to put India just a win away from the title.

Advani then kept the dangerous Thor Chuan on a tight leash with his stunning safety play en route to a decisive victory.

### Results:

**Final:** India beat Malaysia: 3-1 (Brijesh Damani lost to Thor Chuan Leong 58 (52) -68; Pankaj Advani beat Lim Kok Leong 66 (51) -25; Advani/Damani beat Tir Chuan/ Lim Kok 76 (60) -33; 58-1).

**Semis:** India beat Hong Kong (1): 3-2 (Pankaj Advani beat Hon Man Chau 88-39; Brijesh Damani lost to Kwok Wai Fung 51-81; Advani/ Damani beat Wai Fung/ Man Chau 60-47; Advani lost to Wai Fung 0-61; Damani beat Man Chau 59-57).

## SHORT TAKES

### Pegula beats Swiatek to win Bad Homburg title

**Bad Homburg:** Top-seeded Jessica Pegula beat five-time major champion Iga Swiatek 6-4, 7-5 Saturday to win the grass-court Bad Homburg Open, extending Swiatek's year-long title drought. Pegula clinched her third title of 2025 — with the others in Austin, Texas, and Charleston, South Carolina — and it was the ninth title of the 31-year-old American's career. Swiatek was seeded fourth at the WTA 500 tournament in Germany, where the 24-year-old Pole sought her first trophy since the 2024 French Open and a 23rd overall. In their 11th career meeting, but first on grass, Pegula won for the fifth time overall. Pegula beat Swiatek in the quarterfinals at last year's US Open, where she finished the runner-up.

### Tanvi, Ayush progress to semis of US Open

**Iowa:** Promising Indian shuttlers Tanvi Sharma and Ayush Shetty marched into the semifinals of the US Open badminton tournament with convincing wins to continue their impressive run in the Super 300 Tournament here. The 16-year-old Tanvi wrapped up her match in 33 minutes with a fine 21-13, 21-16 victory over her higher-ranked Malaysian opponent Karupathevan Letshanaa. Ayush also dished out an excellent performance as he got the better of junior world champion Chinese Taipei's Kuo Kuan Lin 22-20, 21-9 in straight games. However, the men's doubles pair of Hariharan Amsakarunan and Ruban Kumar Rethinasabapathi lost their quarterfinal match 9-21, 19-21 to Chiang Chien and Wei Wu Hsuan-yi of Chinese Taipei at Mid-America Centre.

### India clubbed alongside Pak in Jr Hockey WC

**Lausanne:** Hosts India were clubbed alongside arch-rivals Pakistan, Chile and Switzerland in Pool B of the expanded FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup to be co-hosted by Chennai and Madurai from November 28 till December 10 this year. The draw ceremony for the tournament was held at the FIH headquarters here, and this edition will feature 24 teams for the very first time. Pool A consists of Germany, South Africa, Canada and Ireland while Pool C will feature Argentina, New Zealand, Japan and China. Spain, Belgium, Egypt and Namibia are in Pool D, while Netherlands, Malaysia, England and Austria are in Pool E. Pool F will feature France, Australia, Korea and Bangladesh.

# Chennai Bulls to take on Delhi Redz in final

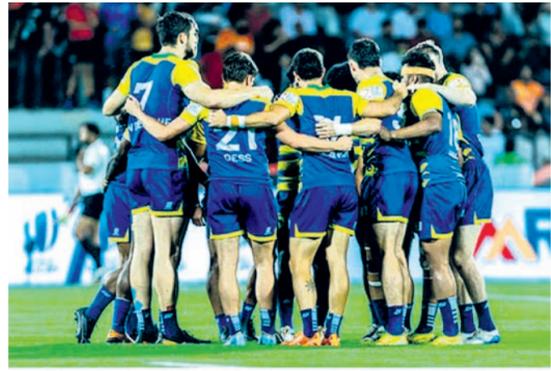
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, June 28:** The Delhi Redz will take on the Chennai Bulls in the first-ever final of Season 1 of the Rugby Premier League (RPL) as they reached the summit clash with contrasting wins at the Shahaji Raje Bhosale Sports Complex here Saturday.

In the semifinals, the Chennai Bulls stormed past the Bengaluru Bravehearts, after which the Delhi Redz raised the bar and thwarted the challenge of the Hyderabad Heroes, who had finished as the table toppers in the league stage.

In the first semifinal, the Bulls defeated the Bravehearts 31-12. The Chennai Bulls were out of the blocks at a good clip, with Vaafauese Maliko and Alexander Davis getting in their tries through speedy attacks. And Gaurav Kumar was able to convert one of the kicks after that. The Bulls were well and truly dominant on the evening, as Terry Kennedy added another try before half-time.

The Bengaluru Bravehearts were caught off guard and were doing their best to find a way back into the game. However,



the Bulls kept them at bay and went into the half-time break with the score at 17-0.

In the second semifinal, the Delhi Redz produced one of their best performances of the season, as they dug deep in an absolutely thrilling contest against the Hyderabad Heroes, and walked away with a crucial 14-7 win.

The Delhi Redz and the Hyderabad Heroes were both going for the kill from the get-go in their semifinal, which resulted in the contest becoming a fiery one. And while both teams attacked with all their might,

neither could get on the score-sheet in the first quarter.

In the final quarter, the Delhi Redz first absorbed the pressure from the Heroes, and then Patrick Okongo put their foot on the pedal and ran through the defence to register a game-changing try. Deepak Punia then added two more points to confirm their spot in the final.

The Hyderabad Heroes and the Bengaluru Bravehearts will now square off for third place on Sunday, while the Chennai Bulls and the Delhi Redz have their eyes on the coveted title.

# Past meets present at Club World Cup

## Messi's PSG reunion, Real Madrid vs Juventus headline Round of 16

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, June 28:** The revamped FIFA Club World Cup is all set to enter its knockout phase June 28 as the Round of 16 will kick off with Brazilian teams Palmeiras and Botafogo taking the field at the Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia.

Lionel Messi's first meeting with Paris Saint-Germain since leaving in 2023 is arguably the headline of the last 16. The Inter Miami CF marvel shook planet football when he departed Barcelona in 2021 for the Parisian giants, where he went on to play 75 matches. Messi could meet old foe Real Madrid for the 48th time in the semifinal if the Los Blancos manage to emerge victorious against Italian giants Juventus.

Asian giants Al Hilal will be testing their mettle against defending champions Manchester City, and it promises to be an



other tough test for the Saudi Pro League side. Former English champions Chelsea will face two-time European Cup winners Benfica, setting up another reunion for Enzo Fernandes, who joined the Blues for a whopping transfer fee reported to be just above 100

million Pounds. German giants FC Bayern Munich, who fell to second spot in Group C with a defeat against Benfica, will take on Brazilian side Flamengo in a pre-quarterfinal clash. Italian club Inter Milan will meet another Brazilian club, Flu-

## Round of 16 fixture list (All times are in IST)

- June 28** - Palmeiras vs Botafogo - 9:30 PM
- June 29** - Benfica vs Chelsea - 1:30 AM
- June 29** - Paris Saint-Germain vs Inter Miami - 9:30 PM
- June 30** - Flamengo vs Bayern Munich - 1:30 AM
- July 1** - Inter Milan vs Fluminense - 12:30 AM
- July 1** - Manchester City vs Al Hilal - 6:30 AM
- July 2** - Real Madrid vs Juventus - 12:30 AM
- July 2** - Dortmund vs Monterrey - 6:30 AM

minense, while German side Borussia Dortmund may have an easy time against Mexican club Monterrey.

# Mandhana's maiden ton propels India to triumph

Women in Blue now lead five-match T20I series 1-0 against Eng



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Nottingham, June 28:** Stand-in skipper Smriti Mandhana's graceful maiden T20 International hundred adorned India's smooth 97-run win over England in the opening match here Saturday.

The visitors now lead the five-match T20I series 1-0.

Mandhana (112, 62 balls) and Harleen Deol (43, 23 balls) added 94 runs for the second wicket as India posted a commanding 210 for five after being invited to bat.

Skipper Nat Sciver Brunt (66, 42 balls) waged a lone battle for England, who were limited to 113 all out in 14.5 overs by the on-song Indian bowlers.

For India, debutante left-arm spinner Shree Charani (4/12) was the most successful bowler, as there was nothing much left in England's innings after they lost half of the line-up inside the first 10 overs for a sub-100 score.

Mandhana, who led the team in the absence of injured regular captain Harmanpreet Kaur, stole the day with an innings that was a full-fledged display of her style, aggression and ability to play shots around the field.

She gave the Indian innings some early impetus, making 77 runs with a struggling Shafali Varma (20, 22 balls), whose return to top-flight cricket after a gap of eight months was less than satisfactory.

Mandhana was the dominant

figure in that alliance off just 8.3 overs.

Shafali's dismissal did not deter Mandhana as the left-hander raised a further 94 runs for the second wicket with an equally aggressive Harleen, who was dropped on 26 by Danny Wyatt-Hodge off off-spinner Alice Caspey near mid-wicket.

Mandhana did not give any such chances to England, and she started off with three boundaries off left-arm spinner Linsey Smith in the fourth over, and hardly took her foot off the accelerator.

Later, she also punished another left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone for two sixes in the seventh over as the Indian innings chugged along.

Mandhana brought up her fifty in 27 balls, and the next 50 came off just 24 balls.

Mandhana soon went past 87, her previous best in T20Is, and touched the three-figure mark for the first time in her career that has 30 fifties.

She reached the coveted milestone in style too, hammering pacer Lauren Bell for two consecutive boundaries.

Her knock is the highest for India in T20Is, surpassing Harmanpreet's 103.

England tried to stage a late comeback as Bell removed Richa Ghosh (12) and Jemimah Rodrigues (0) in the 18th over but by then India were already closing in on the 200-run mark.