



## NEPOTISM DEBATE

Actor Ananya Panday says she can't change the conversation about nepotism but she finds it healthy

LEISURE P2



## WAR ENTERS 100 DAYS

Russia's war on Ukraine completes 100 days Friday, with Moscow's forces now in control of 20% of Ukrainian territory

INTERNATIONAL P10



## ANJUM IMPRESSES

Indian shooter Anjum Moudgil bags a silver in the Women's 50m Rifle 3 Positions at the ISSF World Cup in Baku

SPORTS P12

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### EPF interest rate of 8.1% at 40-year low

NEW DELHI: The government has approved 8.1 per cent rate of interest on employees' provident fund (EPF) deposits for 2021-22 - an over four-decade low - for about five crore subscribers of retirement fund body EPFO. Earlier in March this year, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) had decided to lower the interest on provident fund deposits for 2021-22 to 8.1 per cent from 8.5 per cent provided in 2020-21. According to an EPFO office order issued Friday and reviewed by PTI, the Ministry of Labour and Employment has conveyed approval of the central government to credit 8.1 per cent rate of interest for 2021-22 to each member of the EPF scheme.

#### 'Ensure cleanliness during Rath Yatra'

NEW DELHI: The Centre has asked Odisha to take several steps, including identification of local swachhata brand ambassadors, to ensure high levels of cleanliness during the Rath Yatra. Similar instructions were also given to Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir for Kedarnath and Amarnath Yatras. Union Housing and Urban Affairs Secretary Manoj Joshi has written to Chief Secretaries of these states in this regard and asked them to provide for sufficient numbers of public toilets throughout the approach roads to the shrines. **MORE P3**

#### Minor gangraped by 5 teenagers inside car

HYDERABAD: A minor girl was allegedly gangraped by five teenagers inside a car in Hyderabad's posh Jubilee Hills area last Saturday. The shocking incident came to light Friday. Police have detained two suspects and are questioning them. Class 11 and 12 students belonging to politically influential families are allegedly involved in the incident. Son of a legislator is also believed to be part of the group. However, police said he may not have been involved in the crime as he reportedly got off the car and ran away before the gangrape. **MORE P9**

#### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Sir, please stop saying you were never taught about him. Public knows you've never been to any school!

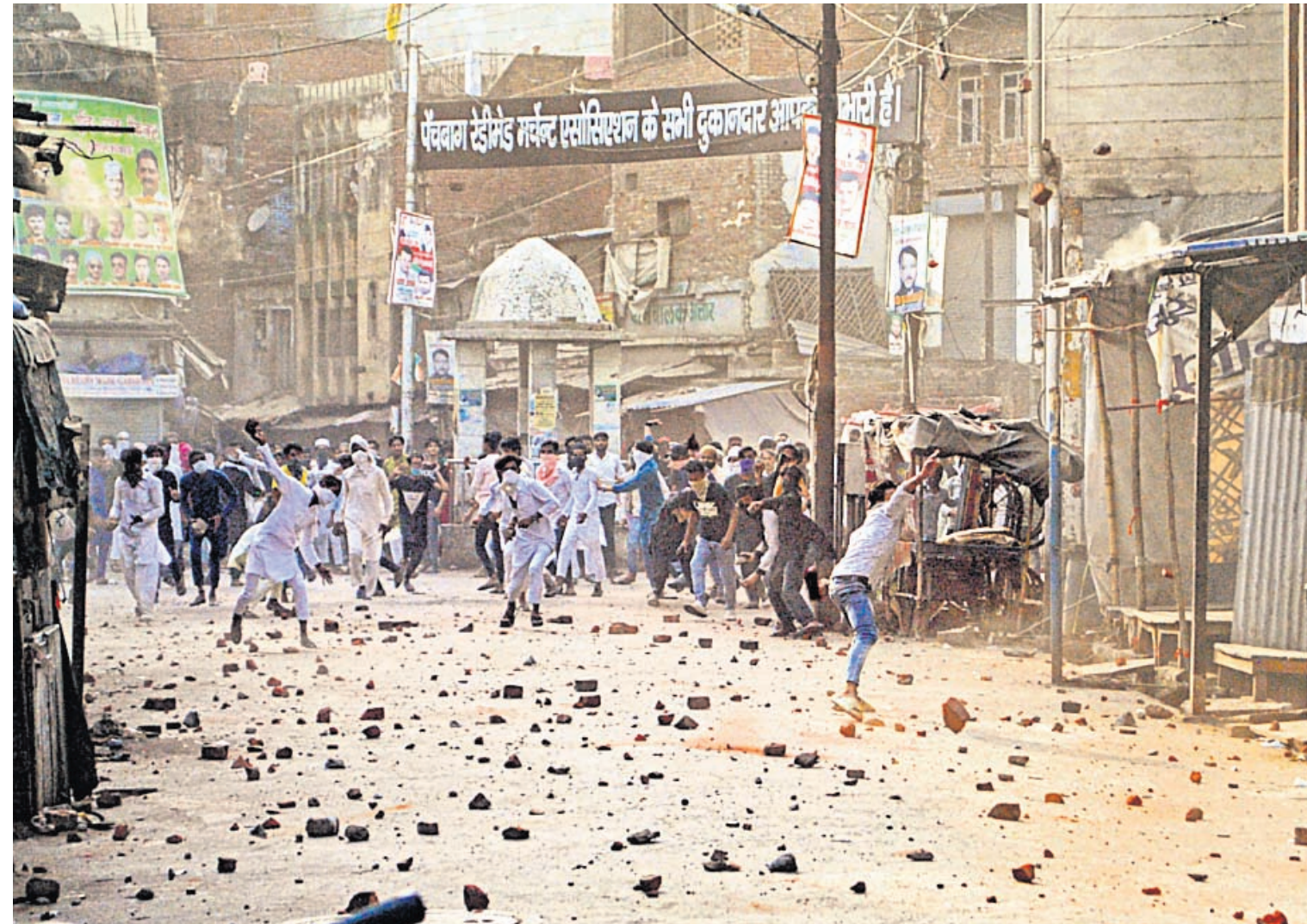
#### MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	55769.23 ↓ 48.88
NIFTY	16584.30 ↓ 43.70
DOLLAR	78.45 ↑ ₹0.01
EURO	83.66 ↑ ₹0.41
GOLD	₹51,213 ↓ ₹56
SILVER	₹62,004 ↓ ₹332

#### WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	36.8°C	37.0°C
TEMP MIN	27.2°C	27.0°C
Humidity	81%	79%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Partly cloudy sky	

## MOB FURY



A mob throws stones during clashes after a Muslim organisation called to shut down shops at the Parade Market, in Kanpur, Friday. The shops were shut down in protest against alleged comments made by BJP leader Nupur Sharma about Prophet Mohammed in a televised debate (Report on Page 7)

The Leaders' Choice

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## State reports 2 swine flu cases

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, June 3:** Odisha reported two cases of swine flu Friday after more than two years, a health department official said. The two - a 38-year-old man and a 28-year-old woman who tested positive for the H1N1 virus are undergoing treatment at a private hospital here, state public health director Niranjan Mishra said.

The two cases were confirmed after their samples tested positive for H1N1 and their condition is stated to be out of danger by the hospital, he told reporters.

Both the patients don't have any travel history and there is no need to worry, Mishra said. "The state usually witnesses two peaks of the swine flu disease - one before the monsoon and another in winter," Mishra said. The official said the government is fully prepared to tackle the situation.

Also known as the swine influenza, the respiratory disease is caused by H1N1 virus. It causes nasal secretions, cough, decreased appetite and restless behaviour. The World Health Organisation had declared swine flu a pandemic from June 2009 to August 2010. However it continues to circulate as a seasonal virus worldwide. The first swine flu case was reported in Odisha in 2009 while 414 positive cases and 54 deaths were reported in 2017. No such cases were reported during the last two years, officials said.

## SC junks PILs against Puri heritage project

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, June 3:** Construction activities carried out by the Odisha government at the famed Shree Jagannath temple in Puri to provide essential amenities like toilets and cloak rooms are necessary in larger public interest, the Supreme Court said Friday while rejecting petitions challenging the work.

A vacation bench of Justices BR Gavai and Hima Kohli dismissed the PILs opposing the construction with costs, and said the state cannot be prevented from making necessary arrangements to provide basic facilities for lakhs of devotees visiting the temple.

The bench also took exception to the filing of frivolous PILs, and said most of such petitions are either publicity interest litigation or personal interest litigation.

"They encroach upon a valuable judicial time which could be otherwise utilised for considering genuine issues. It is high time that such so-called public interest litigations are nipped in the bud so that the developmental activities in the larger public interest are not stalled," the bench said.

### 'FRIVOLOUS PILS'

- The top court imposes ₹1 lakh cost on each petitioner payable to the Odisha government within four weeks
- The state cannot be prevented from making necessary arrangements to provide basic facilities for lakhs of devotees visiting the temple, SC bench rules
- The bench takes exception to the filing of frivolous PILs, and says most of such petitions are either 'publicity interest litigation' or 'personal interest litigation'

The top court said a hue and cry was made that construction carried out is contrary to the inspection report carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). However, the note of the Director General of ASI clears the position.

"In the result, the appeals, having been found to be without any substance, are dismissed with costs, quantified at ₹1 lakh each, payable by the appellants to the respondent No 1 within four weeks from the date of this judgment," the bench said.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by devotees of Lord Jagannath Ardhendu Kumar Das and Sumanta Kumar Ghadei alleging illegal excavation and construction work by the Odisha government at the temple.

## Thumping win for BJD in Brajarajnagar

BJD's Alaka Mohanty gets **93,953** votes; Congress gets **27,831**; BJP slips to third position with **22,630** votes

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 3:** The ruling BJD has once again proved that it doesn't have a strong political opponent in Odisha with its candidate Alaka Mohanty winning the by-election to Brajarajnagar MLA seat with a thumping majority.

Alaka won the seat with a margin of 66,122 votes from her nearest rival from Congress, Kishore Patel. As per Election Commission data, a total of 1,53,398 votes were polled during the by-poll held May 31. This includes 1,53,096 votes through EVM and 302 through postal ballots.

In total, Alaka got 93,953 votes in the by-poll while her rivals in Congress Kishore Patel got 27,831 votes. BJP slipped to third position in the election as its candidate and former MLA from the seat, Radharani Panda got only 22,630 votes in the by-poll.

Alaka got 61.25 per cent of total votes while Congress and BJP got 18.14 per cent and 14.75 per cent of vote share, respectively. Ramesh Kumar Tripathy from CPI got 3105 votes, whereas 1511 voters have selected NOTA (none of the above) option.

Panda, who won the seat in 2014 and secured the seat with 68,153 votes in 2019, lost her deposit in this by-election.



This is the first time since the 2019 Lok Sabha polls that the BJP got the third spot, with the Congress securing the second spot.

The by-poll was necessitated as MLA Kishore Mohanty, the husband of the BJD candidate, died in December last year.

Alaka said she will try for holistic development of the Assembly segment within the short span of time.

Commenting on the result, Congress candidate Patel said he never thought of such a result. He alleged that the ruling party has utilised huge funds and indulged in 'booth rigging' to win the election.

BJP's Panda alleged that the ruling party has used its financial and muscle power and administrative machinery to win the election. She also levelled allegations of EVM tampering by the BJD in the by-poll.

## Deo, Mangaraj, Patra make it to Rajya Sabha

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, June 3:** The ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) won all the three Rajya Sabha seats unopposed Friday.

The three BJD candidates who made it to the Rajya Sabha are Sulata Deo, Manas Ranjan Mangaraj and Sasmit Patra. Patra was re-nominated to the Rajya Sabha.

The three were elected unopposed as neither the Opposition BJP nor the Congress fielded any candidate due to lack of numbers in the Assembly.

The three seats will fall vacant July 1 when the tenure of N Bhaskar Rao, Prasanna Acharya and Sasmit Patra's tenure in the Rajya Sabha ends.



From left: Sulata Deo, Manas Ranjan Mangaraj and Sasmit Patra

While Patra has been elected twice in a row, Deo and Mangaraj are first timers.

They were awarded the certificate of election by the returning officer here on the Assembly premises. They thanked Chief Minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik and said that Odisha's concerns will be rightfully placed in the Parliament.

The election was slated to take place June 10 but as no other candidates filed their nomination, the trio were elected unopposed.

The BJD has 113 MLAs in the 147-member Assembly while the Opposition BJP and Congress have 22 and nine legislators respectively.

Another Rajya Sabha seat in the state has remained vacant after the resignation of Subhas Singh, who has been elected as the Mayor of Cuttack Municipal Corporation.

The by-election to the seat, for which the BJD has fielded tribal leader Niranjan Bishi, will be held June 13 and the counting will be held after the poll, an official said.

## 71% Indians cannot afford healthy diet: Report

A healthy diet is considered unaffordable when its cost exceeds 63 per cent of a person's income, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation

and Down to Earth magazine.

The diseases attributable to dietary risk factors include respiratory ailments, diabetes, cancer, strokes and coronary heart disease, the report 'State of India's Environment 2022: In Figures' said.

The report refers to diets low in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and diets high in processed meat, red meat, and sugary drinks.

"Seventy-one per cent of Indians cannot afford a healthy diet. The global average is 42 per cent," it said citing the Global Nutrition Report, 2021. The diet of an average Indian lacks in fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts and whole grains. The consumption of fish, dairy and red

meat is within target, it said.

In India, adults aged 20 and above have only 35.8g of fruit per day as against the recommended 200g per day and just 168.7g of vegetables per



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progress, diets are not getting healthier. Additionally, they are making increasing demands on the environment, even as unacceptable levels of malnutrition persist in the country," the report said.

"The high human, environmental and economic costs of continuing our current trajectory are so significant that we will pay a far higher price if we fail to act. The global food system falls far short of achieving global goals for both health and the environment," it said.

The report also presents an analysis of food prices. It says that the consumer food price index inflation has seen a 327 per cent increase in the past year.



## KIM KARDASHIAN SNUBBED BY BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Buckingham Palace has rejected reality TV star Kim Kardashian's pleas to attend the Platinum Jubilee official party. The 41-year-old star is currently in London with her boyfriend Pete Davidson and she had hoped to attend the Platinum Party but her hope was dashed by officials at the Palace, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*.

## AMBER CAN'T PAY \$10MN IN DAMAGES TO DEPP

*Aquaman* actress Amber Heard cannot afford to pay \$10 million in damages to Johnny Depp following the jury's ruling in Depp's favour in the defamation trial, her lawyer Elaine Bredehoft told *Today*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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#### ARIES

With your substantial interpersonal abilities, you will accomplish a great deal today, says Ganesh. Your power of expression will impress many people. Financial rewards are on the cards, but be cautious about minor accidents and illnesses.

#### TAURUS

Things will tend to get very difficult and complicated, says Ganesh. Be prepared for setbacks and challenges today. No matter how big the issue, your competence, your resourcefulness will see you through. Try to remain focused and alert. Be cautious and circumspect. Act coolly and sensibly.

#### GEMINI

There is a possibility of conflicts brewing at your home today. The demands made by your family members will increase and you may struggle to cope to meet them. This could make you ill-tempered. You will encounter large expenses in meeting these demands. You need to cut down on your expenses and increase your savings, says Ganesh.

#### CANCER

A wondrous beginning of the day! A unique vibrations in romantic life. Ties with life partner will be cordial. Blissful moments of married life are indicated. Peace and happiness prevail in the family.

#### LEO

A lot of people will sing your praises, however you will not be satisfied with whatever is occurring. The answers to some questions that have been bothering you will remain elusive. You may become emotional owing to feelings of personal loss. You will also be bothered about the near future, says Ganesh.

#### VIRGO

Today finds you ambitious and meticulous. Actions will not speak - they'll roar! Your planning and scruples will set the pace at work. Expect pats on the back from your bosses and a round of cheers from your peers.

#### LIBRA

Ganesh says you shall pay more attention to your family and family issues. You will want to renovate and change the interior of your house or go in for purchasing new gadgets and décor for the home. You will spend time today with your family members. Ganesh says his best wishes are with you always.

#### SCORPIO

It's time to influence people and win their hearts whether it's your crush, love or your boss. You may be eager to express your feelings for them. At work, you are likely to work actively and kick start the projects in the pipeline. Ganesh, advises you to keep your eyes and ears open.

#### SAGITTARIUS

Time to open up that can of confetti at the workplace today. Success never smelled sweeter. But you may bleed on the purchase front, says Ganesh, as in your revelry, you may just unknowingly end up shelling an extra buck or two on ordinary items.

#### CAPRICORN

The hassle and bustle around you will not disturb you today. You've been holding your emotions in your heart and they have started suffocating you. Such an uncomfortable situation may hamper your logical reasoning power and make you feel trapped. But, this too shall pass. You will easily come out of the negative zone and move ahead on the path, foretells Ganesh.

#### AQUARIUS

Flash warning signals to your arch rivals as you will be in a mood to prove you metal and give them a run for their money. Doubts and inhibitions - all will vanish in the air and you will be determined to make your mark, feels Ganesh.

#### PISCES

There is a thick chance that your day will be profitable on the monetary front. Money may pour in from business or even through overseas investments. Your knack for good public relations and networking will work to your benefit and good deals will come from far and unexpected sources as well.

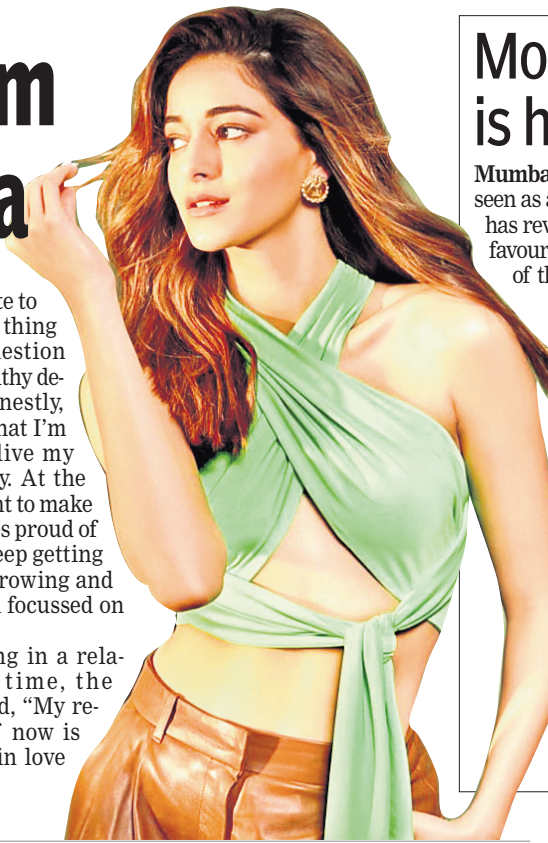
## Debate on nepotism healthy, says Ananya

**Mumbai:** With Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan and Janhvi Kapoor, among others, congratulating debutants Agastya Nanda, Suhana Khan and Khushi Kapoor and the other actors for their first film *The Archies*, talk of nepotism in Hindi film industry has again begun. Ananya Panday, daughter of actor Chunkey Panday, too has faced the question and jibes on the subject early on in her career.

Saying that the conversation of nepotism has been going around for a very long time now, Ananya quipped, "I don't think, anything I can say will change the conversation about this

whole topic or contribute to it in any way. It's a good thing though that people question things and there is a healthy debate around it, but honestly, I'm just very grateful that I'm an actor and I get to live my dream every single day. At the end of the day, I just want to make my fans or my audiences proud of me and I just want to keep getting better. I want to keep growing and improving myself. I am focussed on that."

On rumours of being in a relationship for a long time, the *Gehrayaan* actress said, "My relationship status as of now is that I am completely in love with my work." IANS



## Mouni reveals why Kathakali is her favourite dance form

**Mumbai:** Actress Mouni Roy, who is seen as a judge on *DID L'il Masters*, has revealed why Kathakali is her favourite dance form in an episode of the dance-based reality show. She says Kathakali is a dance form that includes storytelling.

This weekend as well, viewers are in for a special treat as famous choreographers - Geeta Kapur and Terrance Lewis will be seen gracing the show alongside the judges of *DID L'il Masters*. During the shoot, it was Geeta's challenge to contestant Aarav to perform to a Kathakali song that won Mouni's heart.

Mouni revealed, "Firstly, I would like to thank Geeta Ma for

giving Aarav this challenge of performing a Kathakali act for all of us. I feel it is very important for us to show the audience our classical dance forms as well. Our culture is very beautiful, and Kathakali is a dance form that includes storytelling and expressing our feelings and emotions through our eyes."

"I feel Aarav did full justice to this dance form today on *DID L'il Masters*. I must add that Kathakali is an art form of the Malayalam-speaking, south-western region of Kerala and it is very close to my heart as a person from Kerala (referring to her husband Suraj Nambiar) is also very close to my heart." IANS



## Hrithik calls ex-wife Sussanne a 'superstar'



**Mumbai:** Actor Hrithik Roshan cheered for his former wife Sussanne Khan for her new venture, on social media.

The *War* actor shared Sussanne's Instagram post where she had announced about her new gig.

She wrote: "Energy never lies. surround yourself with people who have good radiant energy and watch your world light up #AboutLastNight #Chivas18 #sussannekhan #limitededition #thearcoalproject."

Hrithik commented on her post by writing: "Huge congratulations Sussanne this was amazing!"

He then also shared an Instagram story wrote: "So so proud of Sussanne! You are a superstar."

The two chose separate lives in 2014 after being married for 13 years. Hrithik and Sussanne share two children.

On the work front, Hrithik will be seen in Vikram Vedha, the Hindi remake of the Tamil superhit film by the same name. Hrithik will play Vedha in the film, a role enacted by Vijay Sethupathi in the original.

## Shilpa sponsors education of reality show contestant

**Mumbai:** Shilpa Shetty announced she will sponsor the education of 10-year-old *Dance Deewane Juniors* contestant Priyanshi Kanarji.

She says: "Kids are our future, and it is very important to continue their education."

Priyanshi reveals that her father couldn't afford to con-

tinue her studies after going through a financial loss and the added medical expenses of her mother.

"I want to tell all the kids and parents who are watching this show that education is the bedrock of a person's life, and it is very important to stand on your own feet. You have a bright future Priyanshi, and an amazing mentor by your side," Shilpa adds. IANS

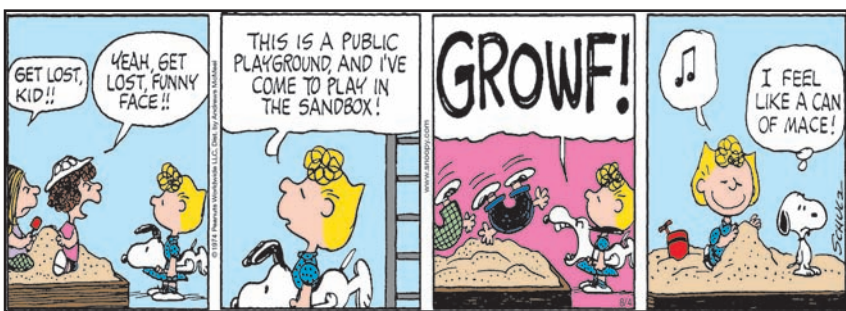


## NATYADHARA CONCLUDES

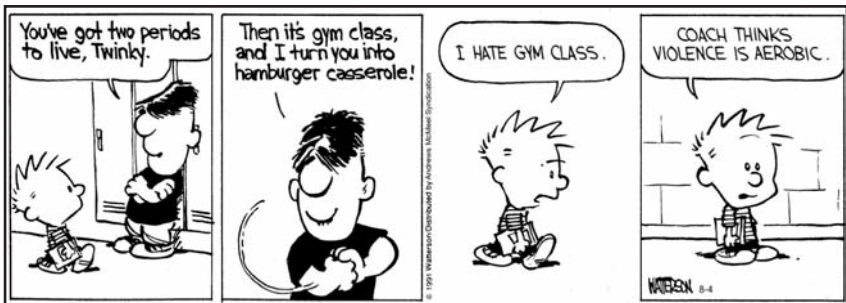


Natraj Sanskrutika Anusthan of Bhadrak presented the Odia play *Ishwar Allah Tere Naam* at Bhanja Kalamandap, Bhubaneswar, Friday, on the third and concluding day of Natyadhara. Written and directed by Dr Sudhanshu Nayak, the play, as the title suggests, told the age-old story of communal harmony in India.

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

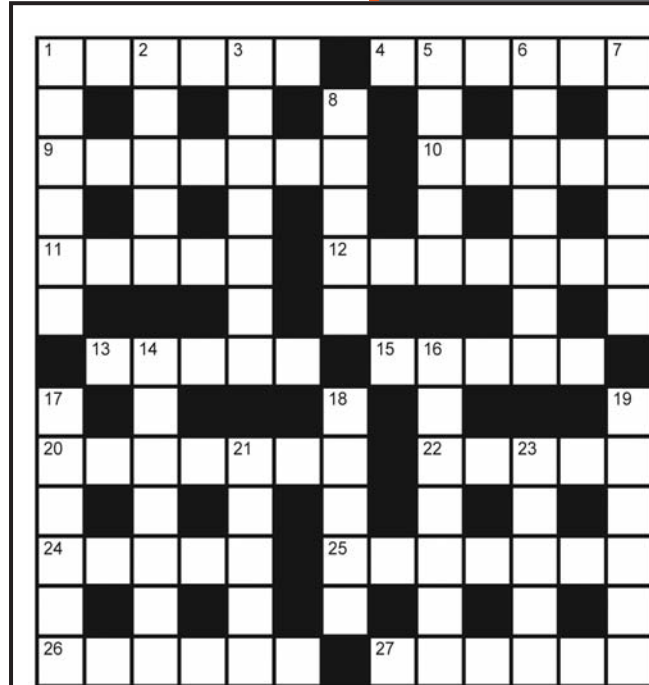


### BREVITY



### FUN post

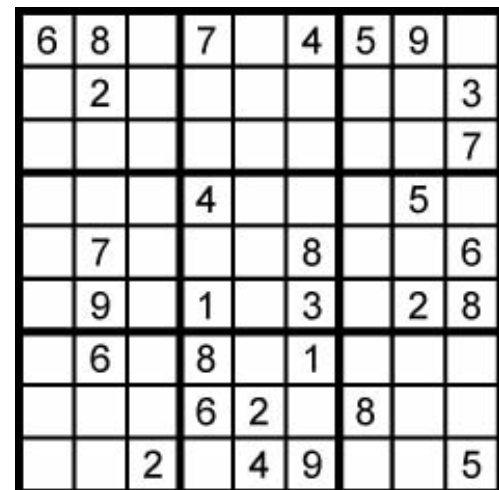
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Brusque in manner
  - 4 Orbit
  - 9 Lessen
  - 10 Like ghost stories
  - 11 Divide
  - 12 Hard work
  - 13 Bead material
  - 15 Lace tip
  - 20 Navigational aid
  - 22 Fatuous
  - 24 Brook
  - 25 Affinity
  - 26 H2O part
  - 27 Deceive
  - Down**
  - 1 Appraise
  - 2 Renegade
  - 3 Gauguin, for one
  - 5 Alpha's opposite
  - 6 Land expanse
  - 7 Tease
  - 8 Cruise ship accommodation
  - 14 State of worry
  - 16 Brief or incomplete view
  - 17 Hitchcock classic
  - 18 Baby bird?
  - 19 Guard
  - 21 It's just over a foot
  - 23 French romance

### 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

#### CROSSWORD



#### SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



**INFRA BOOST**  
Minister Dibya Shankar Mishra Friday inaugurated the new building of Central Range Fire Office in Cuttack

COVID-19 TRACKER			
	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	53,42,99,912	50,52,04,999	63,17,884
India	4,31,68,585	4,26,22,757	5,24,651
Odisha	12,88,473	12,79,227	9,126

## CM: Women play a big role in our transformation story



Women and Child Development Minister Tukuni Sahoo, MP Muzibulla Khan and State Commission for Women chairperson Minati Behera at the National Parliament for Women in Bhubaneswar, Friday

**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Bhubaneswar, June 3:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday said women play a big role in the transformation story of New Odisha-inclusive, aspirational and empowering.

**My government has always held that no household, no society, no state, no country has ever moved forward without empowering its women**  
NAVEEN PATNAIK | CHIEF MINISTER

Addressing a two-day national conference organised by the State Commission for Women (SCW) here, Patnaik said, "My government has always held that no household, no society, no state, no country has ever moved forward without empowering its women."  
At the core of all key initiatives, the state government is making efforts to make girls and women financially independent and empowered in the true sense, he said.  
Highlighting various welfare schemes for women, the Chief Minister said Mission Shakti, a flagship programme, encompasses in its fold 70 lakh women in all habitations across Odisha.  
Mission Shakti symbolises the transformation that is happening

across the state to help women emerge as decision makers and torchbearers of a new inclusive Odisha, he stated.  
"An important issue for us is the representation of women in democratic institutions, starting from the panchayats to the Assemblies and Parliament," he said.  
The Chief Minister pointed out that Odisha has reserved 50 per cent seats for women in panchayats. More than 55 per cent women have been elected to various posts in the recently-concluded local body elections, he said.  
Similarly, 21 out of 30 zilla parishad presidents are women. In a first by any political party,

At the core of all key initiatives, the state government is making efforts to make girls and women financially independent and empowered in the true sense, Patnaik said

Mission Shakti symbolises the transformation that is happening across the state to help women emerge as decision makers and torchbearers of a new inclusive Odisha, he stated

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Biju Janata Dal (BJD) reserved one third seats for women in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Patnaik said.  
The Mamata scheme empowers pregnant women by assuring them financial support at a vulnerable time while Rs 10 lakh coverage is being provided to women under health assurance scheme Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY). The Sudakshya scheme seeks to provide quality technical education to girls, claimed the Chief Minister.  
"Our land rights documents are issued in the name of women. To ensure uninterrupted education we have nearly three lakh girls in our hostels," he added.  
Patnaik thanked the SCW for actively taking up issues involving women and said his government is open to accept any suggestion from the conference to further strengthen the system.



Women participating in the event

OP PHOTOS

### Ponzi scam: ED grills former MLA Tripathy

**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Bhubaneswar, June 3:** Former MLA Pravat Tripathy Friday appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with his alleged complicity in the multi crore chit fund scam by ponzi firm Artha Tatwa Group.  
The former legislator of Banki Assembly constituency reached at the ED office at Nayapalli in the morning. The ED sleuths grilled Tripathy for nine hours to elicit vital details regarding the clandestine financial transactions between him and AT Group director Pradeep Sethy.  
The ED sleuths had earlier grilled Tripathy in August 2017.

## World Skill Centre gets e-Office

**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Bhubaneswar, June 3:** Hemant Sharma, Principal Secretary of Skill Development & Technical Education department, inaugurated the e-Office at the World Skill Centre here, Friday.  
Launching the initiative, Sharma said that in the coming days, e-Office platforms will also be implemented in all government engineering colleges, polytechnics and ITIs in the state under the department. It has been implemented as a pilot project at the World Skills Centre. It will help in students' scholarships and office management, and prevailing transparency in their work, he added.

Talking about the advantages of the e-Office for a Digital World Skill Centre, Executive Director of CMGI Satya Priya Rath said that it is an effective tool to ensure transparency, efficiency, effectiveness and accountability. Rath also said that e-Office is a very convenient system for the employees, which will reduce the workload and ensure efficiency of employees.  
Odisha Skill Development Authority CEO Reghu G said that the implementation of such a system will help the center move towards a paperless system and improve decision making on real-time basis especially when the center is an Asian Development Bank (ADB) project that requires constant in-

teraction with government officers. Kavita Roy Das, State Informatics Officer of National Informatics Centre (NIC), gave a detailed overview of e-Office.  
Roy said the e-Office is a mission mode project under the National E-Governance Plan initiated in 2009. The e-Office is developed by NIC and is being implemented through the Center for Modernizing Government Initiative (CMGI) under the state GA & PG Department.  
World Skill Centre Principal Sangaran Gopal informed that so far, e-Office has been implemented in 149 government offices. It has proved to be very useful to operate office remotely, especially during this pandemic.

## NHRC seeks ATR on Nagada malnutrition

**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Jajpur, June 3:** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Friday sought an action-taken report (ATR) from the district administration regarding the alleged malnutrition among tribal kids in Nagada village of Jajpur district based on a report appeared in **Orissa POST**.  
Acting on a complaint by rights activist Akhand, the NHRC has directed the Jajpur Collector and Magistrate to submit the ATR to the commission within four weeks from the date of the receipt of this letter.  
This newspaper had carried a news report under the header 'Nagada still paints a picture of neglect' May 11, 2022. The report highlighted how the situation in cluster of hilly villages under Sukinda block of this district has not improved and how the lifestyle of Juang tribals has remained unchanged even after so many years



This newspaper had carried a report under the header 'Nagada still paints a picture of neglect' May 11, 2022

of the incident wherein over 20 children died due to malnutrition in 2016 in Nagada.  
The death of the children had then shaken the state government, which had announced a series of welfare programmes to bring in development in Nagada villages. Meanwhile, the hilly villages have been connected with a road but the tribal clusters still lag behind in terms of socio-economic development. The villages are witnessing rise in child marriages and the re-

sultant population growth while malnutrition continues to haunt the primitive tribals of the hilly villages.  
Meanwhile, many short-term plans are being implemented here but the fruits of the developmental initiatives have remained a far cry, thanks to the negligent officials. The long-term plans include construction of an all-weather road, educational institutions, power lines, drinking water and housing facilities.  
Some schemes have been implemented while healthcare services, agricultural schemes and MGNREGS still elude the residents. On the other hand, cases have been filed before the Lokayukta over severe irregularities in drinking water supply and road construction projects.  
Officials have failed to undertake awareness programmes for which 16 minor girls have been married off in the last two months.  
Meanwhile, the state government has implemented food security scheme in Nagada, Ashram school, Anganwadi centre and Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana while supplying free seeds and agricultural equipment to farmers.  
On the other hand, the Juang tribals are still dependent on rice and wild tubers available in the jungles and are not consuming vegetables for which women and children are suffering from malnutrition and stunting.

### SHRINE VISIT



ST Secretary VK Pandian and other senior officials return from Srimandir after paying obeisance to Lord Jagannath in the wake of dismissal of petitions challenging the heritage corridor work in Puri by the Supreme Court, Friday

OP PHOTO

## Ensure cleanliness during Rath Yatra: Centre

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
**New Delhi, June 3:** The Centre has asked Odisha to take several steps, including identification of local swachhata brand ambassadors, to ensure high levels of cleanliness during the coming Rath Yatra.  
It has also asked Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir to maintain the same during Kedarnath Yatra and Amarnath Yatra in the respective states.  
Union Housing and Urban Affairs Secretary Manoj Joshi has written to Chief Secretaries of these states in this regard and asked them to provide for sufficient numbers of public toilets throughout the approach roads to the shrines.  
The move comes after Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his 'Mann Ki Baa' address to the nation May 29, expressed his concerns regarding the heap of filth in Kedarnath.  
According to a statement issued by the ministry Friday, the advisory suggests that plastics and SUPs (single use plastic items) should be stopped at the base-camp level for Kedarnath and Amarnath yatris



FILE PHOTO

at the time of registration itself.  
"All eateries along the approach roads will need to be sensitised about garbage collection, in-situ processing of the food waste through waste to compost/waste to bio-gas units in their premises, usage of biodegradable cutlery and bags," the statement stated.  
In order to prevent indiscriminate littering by visitors, segregated litter bins will have to be placed along the approach roads along with reg-

ular emptying of the same, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) said.  
"Most importantly, the advisory stresses on large scale people participation, whereby all local NGOs/CSOs/voluntary organisations, self-help groups from all villages and towns on the approach roads are to be identified, sensitised and tagged to work in designated area to ensure that cleanliness is maintained at every

All eateries along the approach roads will need to be sensitised about garbage collection  
In order to prevent indiscriminate littering by visitors, segregated litter bins will have to be placed along the approach roads along with regular emptying of the same

step," it stated.  
The ministry said "local swachhata brand ambassadors" should be identified and designated for the 'swachh yatra', and spread the messages of cleanliness to motivate visitors to behave responsibly and help in maintaining cleanliness.  
According to the statement, national teams from MoHUA are being deputed to Odisha, Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir starting this week, to take stock of the preparations underway and also to provide inputs for improving sanitation and garbage management.  
Video-conferencing meetings have been scheduled early next week to discuss with state, city and district officials to discuss the preparedness, it added.

### ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION

## Anubhav pays ₹30K to Varsha

**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Cuttack, June 3:** Acting upon the order of the SDJM court here, actor-turned-politician Anubhav Mohanty Friday deposited Rs 30,000 in the account of her actress wife Varsha Priyadarshini towards house rent expenses for alternative accommodation.  
Hearing a petition filed by Mohanty, the court of the Sub-divisional Judicial Magistrate (SDJM) Thursday asked Varsha to vacate her husband's paternal house in the city here.  
Mohanty had filed the petition

Hearing a petition filed by Mohanty, the SDJM court Thursday asked Varsha to vacate her husband's paternal house in the city here  
The court had directed Mohanty to pay Rs 30,000 to Varsha within the 10th of every month towards house rent expenses

the 10th of every month towards house rent expenses.  
As per the court order, Varsha will vacate her in-laws' house at Nandi Sahi in the Silver City and move to an alternative accommodation after receiving the house rent expenses for two months.  
In his petition, Mohanty had claimed that his parents are suffering from certain health complications and they need to reside in their ancestral house at Nandi Sahi. He had urged the court to direct Varsha to vacate their ancestral house for an alternative accommodation.

### VICTORY CELEBRATION



BJD workers in Bhubaneswar celebrate party's victory in Brajarajnagar bypoll, Friday

OP PHOTO

## BSCL observes World Bicycle Day

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 3:** The Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL), in association with Decathlon, observed World Bicycle Day Friday to encourage fitness and ecological sustainability as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

The rally was flagged off from KIIT square at 6 am. The cyclothon covered a 10-kilometre route from KIIT Square to Ekamra Plaza. Indian Field Hockey player and former member of Rajya Sabha Siddhanta Mahapatra graced the event as the Chief Guest. BSCL's general manager Kamaljit Das joined the event along with Odia film actress Summeera Nagesh, Dancer Rajasmita Kar and other BSCL officials.

"The programme is being organised to reduce the usage of motor cars and create a pollution-free environment as well as to promote physical fitness among citizens. Bicycles have benefited our lives in several ways, from offering an affordable, healthy mode of transportation to assisting us in conserving resources and protecting the environment," said BSCL CEO Sanjay Kumar Singh.

Promoting the need to be physically fit, and to provide ecologically safe and cost-effective form of transportation, the BSCL has taken a few initiatives and implemented a public bicycle sharing project which has garnered positive feedback.

## Orissa HC among 7 to get new judges

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 3:** Eight advocates and four judicial officers were Friday elevated as judges and additional judges of seven high courts (HCs), including that of Orissa, the Law Ministry said.

While two appointments each were made in the HCs of Patna, Rajasthan, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, one appointment each was made in the HCs of Orissa and Jharkhand. Senior advocate Sanjay Kumar Mishra has been appointed as a judge in Orissa HC.

The notifications announcing their appointments were issued by the Department of Justice in the Law Ministry. Some more appointments are expected to be announced in coming days. On Wednesday, eight new HC judges were appointed and six transferred.

Four additional judges of the Kerala High Court were also elevated as judges Wednesday.

Those appointed as judges Wednesday included seven judicial officers from Bihar and an advocate from Jammu and Kashmir.

On May 31, two advocates and as many judicial officers become judges of the HCs of Delhi and Calcutta respectively.

## On-duty cop ran over by speeding truck in Bhadrak

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhadrak, June 3:** In a tragic incident, an on-duty cop was killed after an over-speeding Hyva truck ran over him on National Highway-16 near Nalang Chingudipur area of Bhadrak district early Friday morning.

The deceased has been identified as Sujit Pandab, sub-inspector of Bhadrak police station.

According to police officials, Pandab was on patrolling duty late Thursday night and was treaded over by a truck coming from Andhra Pradesh while he was walking to his patrol vehicle.

A home guard and the driver, who were with Pandab, rushed him to Bhadrak District Headquarters Hospital (DHH). Later, he was referred to SCB Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH) in Cuttack after his condition deteriorated.

While Pandab was en route to Cuttack, his health became critical and he had to be admitted to the nearer Jajpur District Head Quarter Hospital (DHH). However, the doctors there declared him dead upon arrival.

# Puri DM told to seal illegal nursing home

OHRC asks Puri Collector to recover ₹2 lakh from Sibananda Nursing Home owner and pay the same as compensation to a man who lost his baby due to the negligence of the facility in 2017



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 3:** The Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has directed Puri District Collector to seal a nursing home operating sans licence in the Pilgrim City, recover ₹2 lakh from its owner and pay the amount as compensation to a man who lost his baby due to the negligence of the facility in 2017.

The commission's move came while hearing a plea filed by advocate Prasanna Kumar Das, the authorised representative of Abhijit Mohapatra of Kalikadebi Sahi in the Holy City who lost his newborn baby owing to negligence of the nursing home staffers in 2017.

According to the case details, Mohapatra's wife complained of labour pain following which she was rushed to the Puri district headquarters hospital (DHH) October 8, 2017. The doctors at the state-run facility suggested Mohapatra to take her to a hospital with advanced care facilities.

Mohapatra admitted his wife to Sibananda Nursing Home where she delivered a baby. The newborn, however, experienced post natal complications and died within a few hours of the birth.

After examining the documents, including the report of the Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO), the commission held the nursing home responsible for the death of Mohapatra's baby as it failed to arrange a paediatrician to take care of the newborn who died after experiencing post natal complications.

During the probe, the CDMO found that the nursing home was operating without licence when it admitted Mohapatra's wife.

The commission directed Puri Collector to ensure immediate sealing of Sibananda Nursing Home/Hospital at Hospital Square in Salabega Lane of the Pilgrim City after shifting the patients to a better healthcare facility.

It also asked the district administration to recover ₹2 lakh from the nursing home owner— Dr Sagar Ranajin Srichandan—and pay the amount as interim compensation to Mohapatra. The OHRC asked the DM to ensure execution of the order within seven days and file a compliance report in this regard.

## ACCOUNTANTS' MEET



Governor Ganeshi Lal Friday attended the National CA Conference 2022 organised by The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India in Cuttack

# Under Secretary held while taking bribe

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 3:** The vigilance sleuths Friday caught an under secretary working in the state Planning and Convergence Department red handed while accepting bribe of ₹30,000 from a computer shop owner at the former's official residence here.

The accused, Purna Chandra Sahoo, was receiving the bribe amount in lieu of the release of bills issued in the name of shop owner.



The accused had allegedly demanded ₹65,500 including ₹26,500 for the issuance of order for purchase of 55 UPSs.

Sahoo had threatened the computer shop owner to hold an order for the purchase of 55 UPS systems if he did not pay the bribe. Sahoo allegedly demanded ₹65,500 including ₹26,500 for the issue of order

for purchase of 55 UPSs. Finding no other way, the victim later sought the help of the vigilance officials.

Based on the complaint, the anti corruption sleuths set a trap to catch Sahoo red handed. Accordingly,

Sahoo was held while receiving the money from the complainant.

"Simultaneous searches have been launched on residential government quarter of Sahoo at Durgamadhhab Nagar, Ps-Bharatpur, Bhubaneswar; house at native village Kurumabankatara, PS Odagaon, Dist-Nayagarh; and office chamber at Lokaseva Bhawan, Bhubaneswar," informed a Vigilance official. Sahoo will be produced before the court Saturday.

## NO TO TOBACCO



NCC cadets of Stewart School, Bhubaneswar, observed the World Anti Tobacco Day May 31. Inaugurated by Principal RR Senapati, a public awareness rally against drugs was held from the school to Delta Square. Associate NCC officer of the school Diptimayee Khuntia along with 50 cadets participated in the programme

# ORMAS opens outlet at BPIA

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 3:** The handicrafts, food and household items of rural women artisans of Odisha are now available at Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA), Bhubaneswar.

A special stall has been set by ORMAS under the state Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water department at the main entrance to the airport. Department Principal Secretary Ashok Kumar Meena inaugurated the new outlet at the airport Friday.

Ample varieties of handicrafts, handloom, terracotta & processed food items made by Self-Help Groups (SHGs) from different districts of Odisha will be available for sale. In the first phase, products from the Jyoti Paper Mache Producers Group (PG) of Keonjhar will be stocked along with decorative items made of Sabai grass from Mayurbhanj, Tasar items from Jajpur, and handlooms and bamboo items made by the PG members of Angul District will also be available at the outlet. The outlet will run by SHGs from different districts in a phased manner.



The stall can create a unique identity for all of these items of the rural artisans of Odisha both nationally and internationally. As the emphasis is on quality, branding and packaging of the products available for sale at ORMAS outlet, they will be well received by the customers," said

ORMAS CEO Guha Poonam Tapas Kumar

The inaugural function was attended by BPIA Director Prabhat Ranjan Beuria, BPIA Commercial Manager Animesh Raha and ORMAS Joint CEO (Marketing) Sujay Kar along with other officials of BPIA and ORMAS.

# Gandhi interpreted Moghul rule in terms of Swaraj

Hindi article of 1937 attributed to Mahatma Gandhi and claiming slavery in Moghul era is false

SATYA NARAYANA SAHU

An article attributed to Mahatma Gandhi with the headline "Construction of mosque by demolishing temple is a symbol of slavery" is doing rounds on social media. It is claimed that Mahatma Gandhi authored a Hindi article with the aforementioned title and got it published in a monthly Hindi newspaper of Delhi, Seva Samarpan, July 27, 1937. It is further claimed that Gandhi wrote the article in response to one Ram Gopal 'Sharad' and described construction of mosques by some Moghul rulers by destroying temples as continuing signs of slavery and, therefore, suggested both the Hindus and Muslims to come together for amicably settling the issues concerning these disputed structures.

The article got widely circulated, became viral and attained huge traction in the context of highly polarised narratives being spun across the country by recurrently and deliberately provoking the Mandir-Masjid issues.

The 98 volumes of Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (CWMG) containing almost 50,000 pages contain his original writings, speeches and his numerous letters and telegrams. Even many of his articles written in Hindi have been translated to English and incorporated in the Collected Works. Volume 65 of the CWMG containing Gandhi's writings from March 15, 1937 to July 31, 1937 should have contained the aforementioned article published in the Hindi monthly newspaper Seva Samarpan July 27, 1937. A thorough scanning of the pages of the said volume revealed that there is no such article available in any of its pages and even references to demolition of temple and construction of mosque are non-existent. The name Ram Gopal



'Sharad' and the title of the Hindi newspaper Seva Samarpan are nowhere to be found. The fact check of Gandhi's so-called Hindi article prima facie proves that its authenticity is doubtful.

Apart from the facts contradicting the contents of the so-called 1937 Hindi article attributed to Gandhi, the understanding and interpretation of Moghul era by Mahatma Gandhi runs counter to the narrative given in the article that slavery was represented by the mosques

built by demolishing temples. For instance, he never described Moghul rule, spanning a few centuries, as an era of slavery: In his speech delivered in Cuttack March 24, 1921 Gandhi had famously said, "The pre-British period was not a period of slavery: We had some sort of Swaraj under Moghul rule. In Akbar's time the birth of a Pratap was possible, and in Aurangzeb's time a Sivaji could flourish. Has 150 years of British rule produced any Pratap and Sivaji?" Such understanding of Gandhi

of Moghul era in terms of prevalence of some sort of Swaraj negates the weird notion advanced by India's top ruling leaders that there was 'Baraso Sal Ki Gulami' (1200 years of slavery) in India. It is a kind of dog whistle to target Muslims living in India by pointing fingers at the Moghul rule and describing it as a period of slavery.

In 1926, a correspondent wrote to Gandhi, "Witness the site at Kashi (or Benares) where had stood the temple of Vishvanath for long centuries, since even before Lord Buddha's time - but where now stands dominating the 'Holy City' a mosque built out of the ruins of the desecrated old temple by orders of no less a man than the 'Living Saint' (Zinda Pir), the 'Ascetic King' (Sultan Auliya), the 'Puritan Emperor' - Aurangzeb." He then put a sharp question to him and asked, "Do these facts mean nothing to you Mahatmaj?"

In his reply published in Young India November 4, 1926 Gandhi wrote, "These facts do mean a great deal to me. They show undoubtedly man's barbarity. But they chasten me.

They warn me against becoming intolerant. And they make me tolerant even towards the intolerant."

Gandhi's resolve to become tolerant even towards the intolerant and, that too, on being informed about the barbarity associated with the demolition of Kashi temple and construction of a mosque represents the spirit of reconciliation and celebration of higher values rooted in non-violence and respect for faiths of others. With such irrefutable evidence from the writings of Gandhi it is clear that the Hindi article of 1937 ascribed to Gandhi and circulated in social media is false, fabricated and concocted. It constitutes violence to him and his worldview. The best way to counter it is to uphold truth by invoking it from his original writings and putting them in the context so that false narratives in the name of Gandhi are nipped in the bud.

The writer is a former Officer on Special Duty and Press Secretary to the then President of India KR Narayanan.

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SHORT TAKES

**Ganja worth ₹5 crore seized**

**Lamtapat:** Ganja weighing nearly 5 tonne, estimated to be around ₹5 crore, was seized from a salt-laden truck near Tikapat village under Lamtapat police limits in Koraput district late Thursday night. The raid team also nabbed three dealers in this connection. They have been identified as Sudarshan Lendru of Machkund area, and Umesh Babu and Singhpal of Uttar Pradesh. Based on reliable input, a team of Lamtapat police led by Nandapur SDPO intercepted the 14-wheeler vehicle and seized the contraband that was stashed in 223 gunny sacks while it was reportedly being smuggled to Chhattisgarh. On the other hand, two other dealers managed to give the cops a slip. The cops have initiated a manhunt to apprehend the absconding smugglers.

**HM in soup for fake BEd cert**

**Patana:** A headmaster of a high school in Sahrapada area of Keonjhar district has landed in trouble after the district education officer (DEO) filed an FIR against him at Turumunga police station on charges of furnishing a fake BEd certificate during his appointment. The headmaster of Ramchandrapur High School, Sushil Kumar Behera, had earlier been suspended by the director of higher secondary education. DEO Purna Chandra Sethi lodged a complaint against the headmaster seeking legal action. Turumunga IIC Madan Mohan Nayak said a case was registered and an investigation is underway.

**Two MoUs signed**

**Sambalpur:** Two memorandums of understanding (MoUs) were signed between VSSUT, Burla and Tata Power Western Odisha Distribution Ltd (TPWODL) over use of green energy, Thursday. The MoUs were signed at TPWODL corporate office, Burla on research and development in the area of renewable energy and electric vehicle. TPWODL CEO Gajanan Kale and VSSUT Vice-Chancellor Bansidhar Majhi signed the MoUs in presence of senior leadership team of TPWODL and VSSUT. The two will partner in the research and development of customized solution for improvement of agriculture in Odisha.

**Champua villages fret over jumbo menace**

**A WOUNDED TUSKER IS BEING TREATED BY AN OUAAT TEAM IN SAMBALPUR**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Champua/Sambalpur, June 3:** People of several villages under Champua forest range in Keonjhar district have been spending sleepless as around 50 elephants in different herds are causing widespread destructions to farmlands and properties at night.

As per reports, a herd of 20 elephants is holed up in Balibandh section while eight have stay put in Ukhunda section and 21 in Bamebari section. Locals alleged that elephant menace has been a

perennial problem for years, resulting in loss of life and property. Deputy ranger Sanjib Rout said the Forest department has kept a close watch on these elephants. "A 38-member elephant squad, over 20 Gajasathis and six other groups are tracking the animals," he added.

Meanwhile, a report from Sambalpur said, a tusker was found critically wounded in Murgabani forest under Padiabahal range. The animal has multiple wounds. A team of experts from OUAAT, Bhubaneswar, and forest officials started treatment of the animal after tranquilizing it. It is expected that the animal will get well soon. "The elephant has been sick for over a month and might have been wounded in a fight with another, it was said.



**YOGA FOR HEALTH**



Students practised Yoga at a camp on the premises of ST Xavier's School at Jeypore in Koraput, Friday

OP PHOTO

**Row rages over height of Keonjhar chariot**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, June 3:** A huge controversy has erupted over the 72-ft high chariot of Lord Sri Baladev in Keonjhar after a religious outfit of Kendrapara staged a protest in the coastal town Friday alleging violation of age-old tradition of Rath Yatra.

The chariot of Baladev in Keonjhar is regarded as the tallest as per the Guinness Book of World Records.

However, this has not gone down well with Baladev Sena, a religious outfit of Kendrapara. Its activists staged protests Friday in Kendrapara and submitted a memorandum to the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief of Puri, the Shankaracharya, Gajapati Maharaja Dhibyasingha Deb and the district Collector.

Members of this outfit have demanded action against the organisers of the Rath Yatra in Keonjhar for violating age-old tradition.

On the other hand, devotees and servitors of Sri Sri Baladev temple here have reacted to the opposition from the Kendrapara's outfit. Scores of devotees and servitors also staged a sit-in near the chariot here Friday.



They argued that construction of the 72-ft high chariot is an old tradition and this is different from other chariots.

They also lamented that nurturing such intolerance towards religious traditions here is very unfortunate and it hurts the sentiments of lakhs of devotees.

According to Baladev Sena, chariots cannot be constructed as per the whims and fancies of any outfit. This is clear violation of religious traditions, they added.

Besides, servitors of Srimandir in Puri have also opposed the move by Baladev Temple Administration in Keonjhar. It was alleged that a senior

Daitapati of Puri Srimandir has said that Rath Yatra is a religious festival with spiritual significance. The annual festival of Lord Jagannath is beyond any competition. Constructing the tallest chariot to be placed in the Guinness Book of World Records is like committing a sin.

However, the servitors of Keonjhar temple have termed the remarks made by Puri Daitapati and people of Kendrapara as deplorable.

They pointed out that the Nadighosh Rath in Keonjhar has been the tallest chariot since 16th century. There is a lot of difference in temple structures between Puri and Keonjhar.

**M**EMBERS OF 'BALADEV SENA' HAVE DEMANDED ACTION AGAINST THE ORGANISERS OF RATH YATRA IN KEONJHAR FOR VIOLATING AGE-OLD TRADITION

**D**EVOTEES AND SERVITORS OF SRI SRI BALDEV TEMPLE IN KEONJHAR ALSO REACTED TO THE OPPOSITION FROM THE KENDRAPARA OUTFIT

**S**CORES OF DEVOTEES AND SERVITORS STAGED A SIT-IN NEAR THE CHARIOT IN KEONJHAR FRIDAY

**Scam alleged in school renovation**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bahanaga, June 3:** The residents of Kharasahaspur under this block of Balasore district have alleged massive irregularities in renovation of the high school in the village under the ST initiative.

They alleged that ₹45 lakh has been sanctioned for the school transformation programme and the BDO is looking after the development. Ahead of the work, the Collector had in a letter-16204 (December 12, 2021) directed the headmaster of the school to transfer the fund to the bank account of the BDO, it was alleged.

However, with the fund, the school building has been white-washed while old desks and benches have been repaired. There are several holes on the walls of the school building, but they have not been plugged. A meagre amount of the fund has been utilised while a major chunk has been bungled, the villages alleged, adding that many works have been botched up to mint money.

They have raised their doubts over durability of the infrastructural facelift of the high school. However, block development officer Gourang Ghose rubbished the allegations of the locals.

**Creek renovation starts after 20 yrs**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Junagarh, June 3:** Waterlogging issues in several villages under Chingudisara panchayat under Junagarh block of Kalahandi district are going to be resolved as the administration has started the renovation of Sikal Jora (a creek) that had remained clogged for over 20 years.

Reports said farmers could not raise crops in over 400 acres of farmlands in Parigaon, Poragaon, Murlapadar and others during the

last two decades due to waterlogging. As farming is the mainstay of the economy, local farmers had been upset over the issue.

Locals and social activist Himansu Pujari had apprised energy minister Dibyashankar Mishra about the need for renovation of the creek so that it would drain out water from farmlands. The renovation of the nullah has brought a sigh of relief for the local farmers, who have long been demanding its dredging.

**Bangla refugees threat to security in coastal pockets of Kendrapara**

**FRINGE AREAS WITH ILLEGAL SETTLERS COULD BE BREEDING GROUNDS FOR TERRORISM AND ANTI-NATIONAL ACTIVITIES, SAY LOCALS**



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, June 3:** Porous coastal borders and lack of vigil have allegedly been contributing to rising illegal intrusion from Bangladesh into Kendrapara district. Locals alleged that neither the district administration nor the state government has taken a serious note of it.

Reports said 48-km long coastline of the district is still vulnerable to intrusion of Bangladeshi immigrants for lack of vigil.

The threat potential to the coastal parts increased particularly after the 2008 terrorist attack on Mumbai. Soon after the Mumbai terror attack, the Union Home Ministry had issued a directive to the state governments to identify all illegal settlers in coastal pockets and keep strict vigil on the coastlines.

The arrest of suspected terrorist Habibur Rehman, a resident of Tendakuda under Patkura police limits, by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in 2018 has proved the presence

**48-KM LONG COASTLINE OF THE DISTRICT IS VULNERABLE TO INTRUSION OF BANGLADESHI IMMIGRANTS DUE TO LACK OF VIGIL**

**O**VER THE YEARS, THE NUMBER OF BENGALI SPEAKING PEOPLE HAS EXPONENTIALLY INCREASED AND EVEN SURPASSED THE LOCAL POPULATION IN MANY AREAS

of terrorist activities in state.

In 2007, security forces had arrested Mohammed Javed on Indo-Pak borders in Rajasthan. Javed is a resident of Ranapada under Kendrapara Sadar town police station.

In 2010, the Rajasthan police had come to Kendrapara in search of Javed. Earlier, detection of an illegal radio station in Bhitarkanika area had created flutters.

People of various areas alleged that residents of Bangladesh are sneaking into their areas and settling over there, which are going unnoticed by the administration. The district administration had seized VISA and other doc-

uments of Amit Ray, a resident of Bangladesh, in 2018.

However, despite intermittent actions of the district administration, the number of illegal settlers is gradually rising in coastal areas.

Ramesh Chandra Sutar, a local, said the district administration had identified 1,551 Bangladeshi immigrants in the district in 2005.

Despite protests from locals and allegations, these immigrants have not been repatriated till date.

There are three marine police stations in the district. But they are all ill-equipped with staff and infrastructure.

In such situation, it is not possible for the marine police to keep strict vigil along the territorial waters. Over years, number of Bengali speaking people has exponentially increased and even surpassed the local population in many areas, it was alleged.

Bangladeshis are said to be entering the district through sea, Kolkata routes and Malkangiri.

These illegal settlers have been grabbing all kinds of government facilities and even obtaining domicile certificates. Many of them have been shown as landless and provided land under Basundhara Yojana.

Social activist Pratap Kumar Padhu said that it is high time Bangladeshis were identified and repatriated. "It is not impossible for these illegal settlers to run anti-national agenda from this soil," he observed.

Sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) Rajivlochan Panda said, "Marine police stations are undergoing infrastructural overhaul. The staff crunch in police stations will be sorted out soon."

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**Advt. No. 10/2022 DGM-HR (RECTT.)**  
davp 48138/12/0011/2223

**OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT, THQ 160 BATTALION**  
**BORDER SECURITY FORCE, MV-03, MALKANGIRI (ODISHA)**  
**TELEPHONE NO. 06861-230022**

**AUCTION NOTICE**

A public auction of Condemned/Unserviceable stores will be held on **06 June' 2022 at 11.00 hrs** at Rear HQ 160 Bn BSF Khurda (Odisha) and on **08 June' 2022 at 11.00 hrs** at Tac HQ 160 Bn BSF MV-03, Malkangiri (Odisha).

2. For more details please visit in BSF website [www.bsf.nic.in](http://www.bsf.nic.in).

**Sd./- OFFG. COMMANDANT**  
davp 19110/11/0037/2223 **160 BN BORDER SECURITY FORCE**

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**  
**RURAL WORKS DIVISION, JAGATSINGHPUR**

**1st Corrigendum to Tender Call Notice No.03 of 2022-23**

**No.O-399:**As per instruction of Govt. in R.D. Deptt. & EIC, R.W (O), BBSR the tender process is to be flow in e-Estimate system. Due to problem in preparation of e-Estimate in wamis, partial modifications are made in respect of the Tender Online No.03 of 2022-23 is as follows:-

Revised Date & Time of availability of Bid documents in the Portal :	17/06/2022 at 11:00 Hrs
Revised Last date & time for receipt of Bids in the Portal :	29/06/2022 at 17:00 Hrs
Revised Date of Opening of Technical Bid :	30/06/2022 at 11:00 Hrs

All other terms and conditions are remain unchanged.

**Sd./- Executive Engineer**  
Rural Works Division, Jagatsinghpur  
OIPR-25056/11/0007/2223

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**  
**RWS&S DIVISION, KENDRAPARA**

At: Ichhapur, Post: Shree Baladevjee,  
Email: [eerwskendrapara@gmail.com](mailto:eerwskendrapara@gmail.com)

**Identification No.RWS/ 108 /2021-2022**  
**Letter No. 3995 / Dated. 26.05.2022**

**Cancellation Notice**

No.O-398:The tender for execution of 40 LPCD Retrofitting RPWS Scheme to Ramchandrapur under Marshghai Block in Kendrapara District invited online vide this office NIT-108 with letter No. 1750 / Dated. 10.03.2022 and latest corrigendum vide letter No. 3688 /dt. 13.05.2022 has been cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances.

**Sd/- (Er. B.K.Nayak)**  
Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Kendrapara  
OIPR-25004/11/0058/2223



The Divine manifests upon earth whenever and wherever it is possible.

THE MOTHER

## Fall From Grace

There are plenty of babus who have switched to politics and have enjoyed a good run. But not all babus who had a meteoric rise to political stardom can maintain that streak. The case of Janata Dal (U)'s RCP Singh seems to be headed that way. Singh, who is a member of the Union Cabinet, has not been nominated for the Rajya Sabha by party supremo and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, as was widely expected. This puts Singh's future as a minister in doubt.

By the book, a minister has to be either a Member of Parliament or become a member of either House within six months of taking the oath. Failure to do so, as in Singh's case, would mean he will have to resign from the Cabinet.

But not so long ago, Singh was widely known for his close ties with Nitish Kumar. Although belonging to the UP cadre, he became the private secretary to Kumar who was then the Union Railway Minister. This proximity led to him being appointed as principal secretary to the Bihar chief minister. Singh made a swift and seamless transition from babudom to politics and rose to become JD(U) president, and was widely considered by babus and party leaders as Nitish's right-hand man. During this time, he became a two-time Rajya Sabha Member.

Singh's current fall from grace, sources say, can be traced to the Assembly elections of 2020, where the JDU got fewer seats than the BJP, its alliance partner. The denial of nomination to the Rajya Sabha seems to suggest that Singh's run of good fortune may be over. But in politics, nothing is certain, and there may still be a surprise for us all.



BABUDOM BYTES

Dilip Cherian

### FAs may get more clout in ministries

Looking at the future, the Modi sarkar wants to show that it is capable of fresh thinking. The Finance Ministry has reportedly formed an internal working group under the Department of Expenditure Secretary TV Somanathan to work on improving the decades-old role of financial advisors in ministries and departments.

Financial advisors (FAs) are a crucial interface between ministries and the Expenditure Department, and the proposed revamp aims to quicken decision-making while keeping a prudent watch on the purse strings. It may well lead to financial advisers having a larger say in the expenditure roadmap of ministries with possibly more authority to enable better internal governance. Also, since the performance of individual ministers is often evaluated on the outcome of schemes, the financial outlay and the role of financial advisors are sensitive and crucial.

Sources have informed DKB that the revamp is part of the government's Vision 2047, which aims to make India one of the world's top three economies. There's no hint yet on when the working group will present its suggestions, but it is unlikely to have been given a long deadline. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is reportedly keen on seeing some progress as quickly as possible.

### Stern message to babus

The BJP has been first off the mark in the run-up to the Gujarat Assembly elections coming up at the end of the year. The extension of the tenures of Chief Secretary Pankaj Kumar, and Director General of Police Ashish Bhatia, who were to retire last month, is being seen in this context. The state government clearly doesn't want to rock the boat until the conclusion of the polls.

Besides, there is a concerted anti-corruption drive to send a stern message to civil servants and present a clean image of the administration to the public. And the message is being driven by the Modi-led high command in Delhi, no less.

That, babu watchers say, may have led to the CBI raiding 2011-batch IAS officer K Rajesh in connection with alleged financial irregularities related to land scams and arms licenses. There's more. In April, a retired IAS officer SK Langa was booked for allegedly framing incorrect land records when he was posted as Collector in Panchmahal-Godhra in 2017. A month earlier, a 1992-batch IAS officer of the Gujarat cadre was suspended on charges of irregularities which cost the exchequer hundreds of crores.

These developments are a clear and strong warning to IAS, IPS and other officers on what could happen if they stray off the straight path, especially in an election year.

Share a babu experience! Follow [dilipthecherian@twitter.com](https://twitter.com/dilipthecherian). Let's multiply the effect

### WISDOM CORNER

- The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination. **ALBERT EINSTEIN**
- Beauty is truth's smile when she beholds her own face in a perfect mirror. **RABINDRA NATH TAGORE**
- If you judge people, you have no time to love them. **MOTHER TERESA**

### WORDSWORTH

#### Agister

It might sound like one of those ceremonial positions Britain is so fond of but the role of the agister in the New Forest is practical and essential. In medieval times, the New Forest was a royal hunting park. As with the many other royal parks in England, people who didn't have grazing rights on the common land could pasture their animals for a fee. The agister's job was to collect the fees and oversee the pasturing. Agister is from an Anglo-Norman word meaning to pasture livestock on land belonging to somebody else. It's from Old French giste, lodging, which in its modern spelling has become gîte, a French holiday home. It and the noun agistment and verb agist continue in use in related senses to various degrees in Australia, New Zealand and North America. In the New Forest the process is called depasturing, from Latin depascere, to eat down or consume. Today's New Forest agisters work for the verderers, who run the Forest (their name is also from Anglo-Norman French, based on Latin viridis, green). The agisters patrol the forest on horseback to supervise livestock, including the famous ponies, and to deal with emergencies.

#### Yuhangyuan

When China successfully launched its first manned space flight in October 2003, there were some differences of opinion in English-language reports about what to call the pilot, Colonel Yang Liwei. Ever since the start of space travel we've had two words for a space traveller, cosmonaut from the old USSR and the more common US term astronaut. A third began to appear about 1999 in reference to the Chinese space programme: taikonaut, a cross-bred offspring of the Chinese term tai kong, space, with the -naut ending of the other terms (which derives from Greek nautes, a sailor). Taikonaut seems to have been invented by amateur space enthusiasts and taken up by journalists. However, the usual Chinese term is yuhangyuan, which has been used for many years to refer to participants in the American and Russian space programmes. This has been borrowed by English-language newspapers in the last couple of months or so in reports of the Chinese project. It's a transliteration of Chinese words that literally mean "universe travel worker", an individual paid to go into space. Knowing that somehow takes the mystery out of it. Since astronaut is available, why English-language writers are bothering with the Chinese word isn't clear (especially when the China Daily and the South China Morning Post both use astronaut in their English-language reports). Perhaps it's just the restless journalistic quest for novelty. If so, yuhangyuan is likely soon to vanish from English again.

# END OF SOCIAL JUSTICE?

## FOCUS BJP'S POLITICS

The Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party government has completed eight years in power and amidst this the country has seen changes in society and politics. Both sides, Modi supporters and his critics, agree on this, although their interpretations on the end result of these changes are poles apart.

Since coming to power after winning General Elections 2014 with a clear majority, the dispensation has faced allegations of favouring majoritarianism and weakening democracy. These charges have grown after Modi stormed back to power with a stronger mandate in 2019. Supporters of the dispensation, on the other hand, claim the BJP's electoral success since 2014, including the twice saffron victories in Assembly elections in the most politically significant Uttar Pradesh, are a clear indication that caste-oriented politics is no longer applicable to the country. Besides, Kamandal (the temple-oriented politics) has swallowed Mandal (caste-oriented politics), and many others view it as the end of social justice politics. Is it so?

There's no denying that in these past eight years, BJP has strengthened itself and deeply penetrated into rural areas of the Hindi-belt. It has resulted in weakening of caste-based parties, such as Samajwadi Party (SP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Janata Dal-United (JDU), Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) etc have partially or largely lost their core bases to the BJP. These parties attribute their strength to the Mandal politics of the 1990s, pitted against BJP's Kamandal politics. Parties such as the Rashtriya Janata Dal and Samajwadi Party in recent times are trying to look beyond their caste-arithmetic and focussing on economic issues. This is a clear confirmation that they too are accepting that their old caste formula isn't drawing the masses' support.

Just because caste-based par-



Earlier Mandal and Kamandal were poles apart and were two sworn enemies but now under BJP's rule, the party's main agenda is to make Kamandal the best friend forever of Mandal

ties are struggling, it doesn't mean it's an end of social justice politics. The bitter truth is that they have failed to benefit all sections of the society. Even those in the backward classes, who aren't powerful and are divided into small groups didn't get the benefit of social justice politics practised by these parties. Lalu Prasad Yadav's RJD claimed to represent the oppressed, but it represented the Yadavs in Bihar.

The same happened with SP of Mulayam Singh Yadav and later Akhilesh Yadav of Uttar Pradesh. The Dalit-centric BSP under Mayawati came to be actually representing the interests of the Jatav Dalits. Although during elections these parties try to attract other communities, the truth is that the power of these always remains in the hands of those coming from their core community. As a result, the other backward communities wanting a share in power were often left unhappy and angry.

The BJP and its ideological parent Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) understood this and took advantage of the weakness of the Mandal parties. The saffron party guided by the Sangh Parivar started engaging with these left-out backward sections. As a result, today in Uttar Pradesh, the non-Jatav Dalits are identified as vote banks of BJP — not Mayawati's BSP!

Even a section of Jatav Dalits too have moved to the saffron camp in UP. The Dalits are accommodated in power centres both at state and Central level. In addition to this, the various welfare schemes of the Modi government are successful on the ground, and the beneficiaries also include the left-out sections of the society.

Importantly, one crucial aspect that often gets ignored is that the Sangh Parivar itself sees casteism as a barrier against its mission of Hindutva, which seeks to unite all Hindus under one umbrella. So, to assume that under the dominance of BJP, the politics of social justice has been weakening doesn't reflect ground realities. Basically, the politics of social justice has undergone a change in the present era. Now, the baton of the champion of social justice has passed from the earlier caste-based parties to the Hindutva-oriented BJP.

Whether one likes or dislikes the bitter fact is that caste does matter. It is a ground reality. There has been a change. The change is that BJP's style of doing politics of social justice is mixed with the Hindutva agenda. Its agenda is not to discard the Mandal politics but to align it with Kamandal. Earlier Mandal and Kamandal were poles apart and were two sworn enemies but now under BJP's rule, the party's main agenda

is to make Kamandal the best friend forever of Mandal.

Coming to the issue of the rise of majoritarianism under these eight years, what the Left-leaning intellectuals ignore or may be simply not interested to know, is that Hindutva itself has many shades. It isn't a uniform idea. That's also the reason it is not rejecting Mandal politics, but carefully appropriating it only to align with Kamandal.

Interestingly, many of the Right-leaning activists or more properly those associated with Sangh Parivar too ignore the fact that Left itself has many shades, including extreme ones. It has been seen that most of the time these factions of the Left don't get along. Similarly, there are extreme factions along with the moderate ones within the Hindutva movement. These extreme factions try to unnecessarily vitiate the society through their vicious ideas. The extreme factions of the Left too do the same. Basically, both extreme sides complement each other.

Like minorities, majorities are also human beings having their own issues — religious, social or economic. The BJP as a ruling party has the responsibility to understand the concerns of the majority too. They also have their own legitimate concerns. Those worries can't be just brushed aside. It can seriously affect the health of our democracy. Understanding worries of the majority shouldn't be constructed as a stand against minorities and is not healthy to term this as "rise of majoritarianism". Importantly, in this country often the word minority is associated with the minority religious communities forgetting that there are other minorities too, ethnic and linguistic.

It is the responsibility of the saffron party, being the ruling party, and also the Sangh Parivar to keep their extreme factions under check. After all, such factions complemented by the extreme ones of the Left only ferment unrest in the society. The claims of rise of majoritarianism under BJP rule, however, are highly exaggerated. INFA

## SPECTRUM LABOUR REFORM

# Qatar's human rights reversal

It should go without saying that a policy reform should be for the better — or, at least, not for the worse. But recent labor reforms in the Gulf fail to clear even this very low bar. In a region where foreign domestic workers are already highly vulnerable, they are now increasingly being denied basic rights.

Like other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, as well as Jordan and Lebanon, Qatar has in place a kafala system of labour sponsorship, under which a worker's kafeel (sponsor) controls their immigration status, wages, accommodation, and all other contract terms. This system has often been criticized for leaving migrant workers — especially low-income women — highly vulnerable, with condemnation growing after Qatar was awarded the right to host this year's FIFA World Cup tournament.

So, Qatar's pledge in 2017 that it would pursue sweeping labour reforms was welcome news. And many celebrated when, in August 2020, Qatar removed the requirement that workers obtain their kafeel's approval to change employers. Despite concerns that the lack of visibility of some workers, especially domestic workers, would undermine enforcement, many hoped that this augured a broader strengthening of protec-

tions for migrant workers, not only in Qatar, but across the GCC.

Those hopes were dealt a serious blow last July, when Qatar's government extended the probationary period for domestic workers — during which the kafeel can get a full refund from the recruitment agency — from three months to nine. The idea apparently was that the increased risk of financial losses would spur recruitment agencies to expand their monitoring of workers' circumstances. But how could they? The household is considered "sacred," and interference in its affairs is prohibited, so inspections are not allowed. The Ministry of Labour's explanation is that this change promotes stability for employers. In reality, it merely puts domestic workers at increased risk of abuse.

This policy already facilitates exploitation of workers. Even before the probationary period, employers can receive a refund if the worker has a chronic illness, refuses to work, or "absconds." So, sponsors may falsely accuse workers of these "crimes," knowing that workers have little power to contest the charges. The mere threat that a sponsor will level such accusations against a worker can have a powerful coercive effect.

But workers are never more vulnerable than during their proba-

tionary period. For starters, if workers are moved before their probation ends, they cannot access end-of-service benefits. Moreover, far from protecting workers from exploitation, recruitment agencies might punish them for being "returned." The International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) regularly receives complaints about recruitment agencies confiscating mobile phones, providing insufficient food, and withholding salaries until a new employment contract is signed. Agency staff might also harass workers, physically and verbally.

With an extended probationary period leading to larger financial losses, there is good reason to fear an increase in such abuses at the hands of recruitment agencies. This is even more likely, given endemic impunity for such violations. Though the IDWF has filed complaints with the Ministry of Labour, which has, at times, sent inspectors to check conditions at recruitment agencies, violations of workers' rights are usually ignored, and rarely punished.

The flawed reform is merely a symptom of a deeper problem: the exclusion of key stakeholders. Because the new rule technically applies to recruitment agencies, only they were involved in discussions with government offi-

cial. Domestic workers were excluded, even though they are clearly the primary stakeholders, just as they would be in any policy regarding employers' rights or obligations. The fact that the reform does not affect the Domestic Workers Law is irrelevant. Without the active involvement of workers and the organisations committed to protecting them, no positive labour reforms can be achieved.

In the past, Qatar's labour ministry prided itself on its collaborative approach, which included consultations with stakeholders prior to the release of any official decree. This time around, domestic and migrant-worker organisations found out about the change only after it was announced publicly. Moreover, in February 2022, the ministry provided an initial copy of this policy, but to this day, it has not addressed the questions or concerns raised by stakeholders, and a review has yet to take place.

This is no oversight. It amounts to a deliberate effort to obscure the rollback of vulnerable workers' rights. And the World Cup has not even started yet.

Lara Nuwayhid is Middle East and North Africa Regional Coordinator at the International Domestic Workers Federation. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE, 2022.



Lara Nuwayhid

WITHOUT THE ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF WORKERS AND THE ORGANISATIONS COMMITTED TO PROTECTING THEM, NO POSITIVE LABOUR REFORMS CAN BE ACHIEVED

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

### Sedition Law

Sir, The BJP-led Central government has defended in the Supreme Court the highly autocratic penal law on sedition (Section 124A of the IPC) promulgated during the British rule to punish the freedom fighters. During the 75 long years of Independence, despite people's demand, neither the Congress, nor the BJP nor any other ruling dispensation had ever cared to scrap this most atrocious law which confers on the government an absolute and arbitrary power to punish anyone it thinks inimical even up to the extent of life imprisonment. Following continuous abusing of this law by the governments, both Central or at the states, a clutch of petitions challenging the Constitutional validity of the clause was filed in the Supreme Court. When a three-judge bench presided by the CJ of India asked the petitioners and the Centre to file their written arguments on the point, the Centre in its written submission held that instances of abuse of a law can't be a justification for its reconsideration. The government also upheld the validity of the law as "long standing, settled" and having stood the test of time. But then, on a rethinking, the government, in order to preclude eventuality of the law being annulled by the Supreme Court, informed the apex court that it had decided to reconsider and re-examine the law or Section 124A and asked the Court not proceed with the hearing till that time. It is time for the democratic minded right-thinking people including jurists to rise against such a despotic stand of the BJP government and ensure the repeal of the notorious law. **Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR**

### Stop tree felling

Sir, A tree is a living God. It is a benefactor of the mankind. A tree is a symbol of vitality, growth, happiness and fulfillment. A man can't repay the debt of a tree in his entire lifetime. Now, the globe is plagued by global warming and green house gas effect. Atomic winter and smog are the byproducts of industrial pollution. Mankind is at crossroads. The incessant cutting down of trees in the state capital for providing accommodation to Honourable MLAs is pathetic and disheartening. A tree doesn't belong to any party. It can't defend itself. Humidity and sunstroke has afflicted city dwellers for last two decades. At this critical juncture, cutting down of large trees is a disturbing piece of news. Now, modern technology has been developed to supplant an uprooted tree to its original place. For god's sake, please, stop cutting down the trees and provide our Honourable MLAs other better accommodation. It is an appeal. **Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR**

# national

## of the day quote

**Himachal Pradesh farmers, who adopted natural farming, would shortly be sent as 'master trainers' to educate agriculturists in other states**

**People do not feel safe in Punjab as the law-and-order situation is deteriorating there**

**Benefits of the society and system are utmost important to the judiciary. In recent times it has become easy to slander people who are in higher positions. Those who could not achieve their selfish goals through the system are giving misinterpretation to courts' judgements through which the number of people who get sadistic pleasure is also increasing. This is an unfortunate development**

## SHORT TAKES

### Court rejects Karti's bail plea

**New Delhi:** A special CBI court here Friday turned down the anticipatory bail applications of Congress MP Karti Chidambaram, and others in a money laundering case registered by the Enforcement Directorate, linked to an alleged Chinese visa scam. Apart from the Congress leader, the Rouse Avenue Court in Delhi also dismissed the anticipatory bail applications moved by other accused persons in the case including his chartered accountant S Bhaskar Raman and Vikas Makharria, the associate Vice President of thermal power plant Talwandi Sabo Power.

### Flood situation improves in Assam

**Guwahati:** The flood situation in Assam improved Friday with all major rivers of the state flowing below the danger mark even as nearly 70,000 people remain affected by the deluge across five districts and some new areas were inundated due to heavy rain, an official bulletin said. According to a daily report of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), 69,610 people in Cachar, Dima Hasao, Kamrup Metropolitan, Morigaon and Nagaon districts continued to suffer from floodwater.

### RTI activist killed

**Bhopal:** A Right to Information (RTI) activist was shot dead in Madhya Pradesh's Vidisha district Thursday, police said. The incident in Vidisha, around 60 km from Bhopal, created panic among residents in the locality as Ranjeet Soni was shot dead close as he came out of a government office in broad daylight. The local police reached the spot soon after the incident was reported.

### Four arrested

**New Delhi:** The Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO) unit of the Delhi Police's Special Cell has busted a fake helicopter ticket booking module and arrested four persons in this connection, an official said Friday. The accused were identified as Deepak Thakur, a resident of Uttar Pradesh, and Jeki Prasad Kahar, Pappu Singh, and Vikash Kumar Bhagat -- all three residents of West Bengal. Furnishing details, DCP (IFSO) KPS Malhotra said a complaint regarding some unknown persons who cheated the complainant, on the pretext of booking helicopter tickets for visiting Mata Vaishno Devi temple shrine, Jammu.

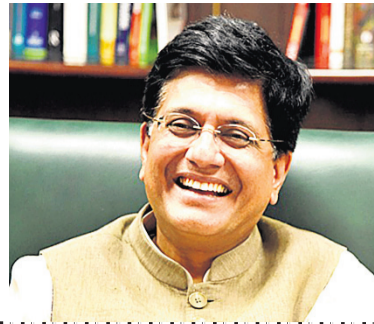


**The Enforcement Directorate notices to Congress president Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in a case shut long ago is an attempt to suppress the voice of opposition leaders**

SACHIN PILOT | FORMER DEPUTY CM OF RAJASTHAN

## CAN'T ADD SERVICE CHARGE: GOYAL

Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal Friday asserted that restaurants cannot add 'service charge' to the food bills, though customers at their discretion can give 'tips' separately



# 18 ARRESTED IN KANPUR VIOLENCE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kanpur (UP), June 3:** Mobs hurled bombs and pelted stones at each other as violence erupted in Kanpur after groups of people tried to force shopkeepers to shut their shutters over an alleged insult to Prophet Mohammed on a television show.

Clashes broke out in Pared, Nai Sadak and Yateemkhana areas of the city after Friday namaz, police said. The two sides hurled bombs and opened fire as members of one of the groups attempted to shut shops over alleged insulting remarks made by BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma during a television debate recently, a senior police official said.

Those who allegedly forced traders to shut shops clashed with police personnel who then used batons to disperse the mob. Meanwhile, 18 people have been arrested in connection with the incident.



Those who allegedly forced shopkeepers to shut shops clashed with police personnel who had to use batons to disperse the mob. The district magistrate said strict instructions have been issued to maintain a close vigil on the situation

"Those involved in the violence are being identified with help of video clips of the incident. Eighteen people have been arrested," said Additional Director General (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar. "The accused and the conspirators will be booked under Gangster Act and their properties will be seized or de-

molished," warned the officer. Kanpur police commissioner Vijay Singh Meena said two people have been injured in the violent episode. Some local leaders, including Maulana Mohammed Ali (MMA) Jauhar Fans Association chief Hayat Zafar Hashmi, had called for closure of shops on Friday

# Covid surge: Centre writes to five states

*In a letter to Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Telangana, Karnataka and Maharashtra, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan highlighted that a few states were reporting a higher contribution to India's caseload, indicating the possibility of a localised spread of the infection*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 3:** In view of a surge in Covid-19 cases over the past week and in the weekly positivity rate, the Centre on Saturday advised five states to maintain a strict watch and take pre-emptive action, if needed, to control any emerging spread of the infection.

In a letter to Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Telangana, Karnataka and Maharashtra, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan highlighted that a few states were reporting a higher contribution to India's caseload, indicating the possibility of a localised spread of the infection. "There is, therefore, a need to follow a risk assessment-based approach on the public health responses without losing the gains made so far in the fight against the pandemic," Bhushan said.

In the letter, he mentioned a sustained and significant decline in the number of COVID-19 cases has been observed in India over the past three months.

However, a slight upsurge in cases is being noticed, with 15,708 new infections being reported in a week ending on May 27, which rose to 21,055 cases in a week ending on June 3.

Also, there is a rise in the weekly positivity from 0.52 per cent in a week ending May 27, 2022 to 0.73 per cent in a week ending June 3. States have been asked to refer to the directions issued in a letter by the min-

istry dated April 8, 2022 for strategic areas of intervention like relaxation in various activities, testing and surveillance, clinical management, vaccination, and community engagement with an increased focus on evidence-based decision making.



They have been advised to continue implementation and monitoring of necessary measures for prompt and effective management of COVID-19 and to ensure compliance with various advisories issued by the ministry.

The five-fold strategy of test-track-treat-vaccination and adherence to Covid-appropriate behaviour should be followed, along with monitoring of clusters of new COVID-19 cases and adequate testing as per guidelines, Bhushan said in the letter.

Focus should also be on monitoring of influenza-like illnesses (ILI) and SARI cases in all health facilities on a regular basis for detecting early warning signals of the spread of infection and genomic sequencing for prescribed samples of international passengers, collection of samples from sentinel sites (identified health facilities), and local clusters of cases.

According to the letter, Tamil Nadu has reported an increase in weekly new cases from 335 in the week ending on May 27 to 659 in the week ending on June 3, accounting for 3.13 per cent of India's new cases in the week ending on June 3.

The state has also seen an increase in positivity in the last week from 0.4 per cent to 0.8 per cent.

# RAHUL GETS SUMMONS FOR JUNE 13

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 3:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued fresh summons to Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, asking him to appear before it on June 13 for questioning in a money laundering case linked to the National Herald newspaper, officials said on Friday.

He was earlier asked by the agency to depose on June 2 but the Lok Sabha member from Wayanad seat in Kerala sought a fresh date as he was out of the country. Officials said Rahul Gandhi, 51, has now been asked to appear on June 13 at the headquarters of the federal agency in central Delhi.

His mother and Congress president Sonia Gandhi, 75, has also been asked to depose before the agency on June 8.

Though she tested positive for COVID-19 on Thursday, the Congress party has said that she was determined to appear before the agency on the scheduled date.

The case pertains to the probe into the alleged financial irregularities in the party-promoted Young Indian that owns the National Herald newspaper. The paper is published by Associated Journals Limited (AJL) and owned by Young Indian Pvt Limited.

Officials said the agency wants to record the statements of Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi under criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The questioning of the senior Congress leaders and the Gandhis is part of the ED's investigation to understand the shareholding pattern, financial transactions and role of the promoters of Young Indian and AJL, officials had said.

The members of the first family of the Congress party, including Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, are among the promoters and shareholders of Young Indian.

# WATER WOES



Residents collect drinking water from a Nagar Nigam tanker owing to water crisis, at Jhalana Doongri slum area in Jaipur

# Sanctuaries must have ESZ of 1 km from boundary: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 3:** The Supreme Court Friday directed that each protected forest such as national parks and wildlife sanctuaries must have an Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) of one kilometre and banned mining activities within such parks across the nation.

Issuing a slew of directions, a bench headed by Justice L Nageswara Rao said "the role of the State cannot be confined to that of a facilitator or generator of economic activities for immediate upliftment of the fortunes of the state."

"The State also has to act as a trustee for the benefit of the general public in relation to the natural resources so that sustainable development can be achieved in the long term. Such role of the State is more relevant today, than, possibly, at any point of time in history with the threat of climate ca-

tastrophe resulting from global warming looming large..." it said.

The bench, also comprising justices B R Gavai and Aniruddha Bose, ordered that no permanent structure will be allowed within such ESZ and said if the local law or other rules provide for an ESZ of more than one kilometre then the earlier provision would continue to apply.

"Each protected forest, that is national park or wildlife sanctuary must have an ESZ of a minimum one kilometre measured from the demarcated boundary of such protected forest in which the activities proscribed and prescribed in the Guidelines of 9th February 2011 shall be strictly adhered to," it said.

Writing a 66-page order for the bench, Justice Bose, however, held that for Jamua Ramgarh wildlife sanctuary of Rajasthan, the ESZ shall be 500 metres so far as subsisting activities are concerned.

# INDIA SLAMS US REPORT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 3:** India Friday rejected its criticism in a US State Department report on religious freedom, saying it is unfortunate that "vote bank politics is being practised in international relations".

External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said the observation on India in the report is based on "motivated inputs and biased views".

The annual report on international religious freedom, released by Secretary of State Antony Blinken, alleged that attacks on members of the minority communities, including killings, assaults, and intimidation, took place in India throughout 2021.

"We have noted the release of the US State Department 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom, and ill-informed comments by senior US officials," Bagchi said.

"It is unfortunate that vote bank



politics is being practised in international relations. We would urge that assessments based on motivated inputs and biased views be avoided," he added.

Bagchi was responding to media queries on the report. "As a naturally pluralistic society, India values religious freedom and human rights. In our discussions with the US, we have regularly highlighted issues of concern there, including racially and ethnically motivated attacks, hate crimes and gun vio-

lence," he said.

The India section of the report mentioned incidents of attacks on the religious minorities. "Attacks on members of religious minority communities, including killings, assaults, and intimidation, occurred throughout the year. These included incidents of cow vigilantism against non-Hindus based on allegations of cow slaughter or trade in beef," said the India section of the report.

# One of the hottest summers led to increased ozone levels

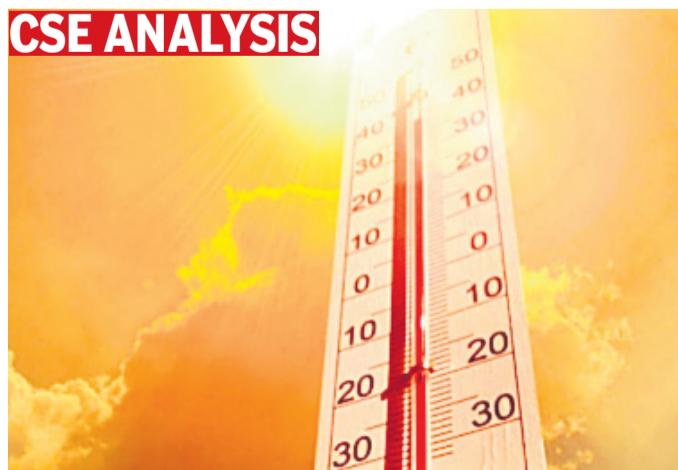
GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD OF GROUND-LEVEL OZONE POLLUTION IN DELHI-NCR DURING MARCH-APRIL WAS HIGHEST IN PAST FOUR YEARS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, June 3:** The summer of 2022 - one of the hottest in history - has witnessed widespread excessive ozone levels, making the air of Delhi-NCR more toxic, while other metros are not far behind, said a latest analysis released by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) Friday.

Among the six big metros, Mumbai is second, followed by Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bengaluru - with the last two having longer durations of exceedance despite lower frequency compared to the other metros, as per the latest air quality analysis by CSE released in the run up to the World Environment Day on June 5.

Geographical spread of ground-level ozone pollution in Delhi-NCR during March-April was highest in



past four years. Ground-level ozone usually exceeds the safety standard on all days of summer in some location in Delhi-NCR every year. "But this year, the spatial spread

which is 33 per cent increase from previous year March and April. During 2020, when lockdowns had reduced the precursor gases needed for formation of ground-level ozone, the number was down to 10 stations daily," the CSE analysis showed. There have been only six days this year so far that have registered no exceedance among any air quality monitoring stations of Delhi-NCR. There were 15 days of no exceedance last year during the same period (Jan-May). Similarly, 2020 and 2019 had 24 days each of no exceedance respectively.

Foggy and cold conditions of January conventionally inhibit formation of ground-level ozone but ozone was found to be exceeding at multiple stations on 28 days this January. "It is up from 11 days and 19 days recorded in January of 2020 and 2021 respec-

tively. Even, the months of monsoon records exceedance in some locations," it said.

After Delhi-NCR that recorded ozone exceedance on almost all days of this summer, Mumbai with 75 days of exceedance was the second most impacted metro. Kolkata-Howrah and Hyderabad registered 43 days of exceedance each. Even though the number of exceedance days in Kolkata-Howrah has been lower than that of Mumbai, its citywide concentration is 30 per cent higher than in Mumbai for this summer season.

The denser network of monitoring stations in Mumbai is able to catch instances of ozone exceedance better. Greater Mumbai has 26 monitoring stations while Greater Kolkata has only 10 stations. "Despite the warning signs, the

problem of the toxic threat of ground-level ozone has not attracted adequate policy or public attention for mitigation and prevention," said Anumita Roychowdhury, Executive Director, research and advocacy, CSE.

To drive home the point about the danger posed by it to human health, the CSE analysis mentioned the 2020 'State of Global Air' report that stated that age-standardised rates of death attributable to ozone is among the highest in India.

The criterion says it may exceed the limits on two per cent of the days in a year, but not on two consecutive days of monitoring. In other words, there should not be more than eight days in a year when the ozone standard is breached, and none of those allowed exceedances can be on two consecutive days.

Cong retains Thrikkakara seat with historic margin

The huge victory, however, turned out to be a real lifeline for the opposition Congress, which desperately needed a poll victory to come out of the rude shock of its massive drubbing in the Assembly polls held last year



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, June 3: A little over a year after it retained power in Kerala with a massive victory, the CPI(M)-led LDF suffered a huge setback in a bypoll held to Thrikkakara Assembly constituency with Congress candidate Uma Thomas Friday winning with a historic margin of 25,016 votes, giving a boost to the morale of the party-led UDF in the southern state.

With the highest ever majority attained in the history of Thrikkakara seat in the fiercely fought electoral battle, Uma, wife of late Congress leader and MLA P T Thomas, became the lone woman legislator of the Congress party in the state Assembly. His untimely demise necessitated the bypoll in the urban constituency. While Uma won a total of 72,770 votes and managed to maintain a steady lead in all the 12 rounds of counting since the beginning, her nearest rival and Left candidate Jo Joseph, a reputed cardiologist, could never come anywhere near her tally and had to be satisfied

announced the results officially. "Unbelievable and unexpected", CPI(M) Ernakulam district secretary C N Mohanan said reacting to the bypoll result. Rejecting the claim that the campaign was led by Chief Minister himself, Mohanan said it was conducted by the district unit of the party and Vijayan joined the campaign considering the request of the district unit of the party. The huge victory, however, turned out to be a real lifeline for the opposition Congress, which desperately needed a poll victory to come out of the rude shock of its massive drubbing in the Assembly polls held last year. State Congress Chief K Sudhakaran even urged Vijayan to quit as Chief Minister, shouldering the responsibility of the party-led front's failure. Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly V D Satheesan said the people of Thrikkakara "plucked the horns of arrogance and haughtiness" of the CPI(M) by providing a historic victory for UDF in the bypoll. Claiming that the verdict was against Chief Minister Vijayan's agenda of implementing the K-Rail project, Satheesan said the UDF would not allow the initiative, which is being done undermining the sentiments of the people. The Congress central leadership also expressed happiness over Uma's victory. Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh termed the victory as a "great tribute" to the life and works of P T Thomas and said the result was a reply to the arrogance of Vijayan.



Congress activists shout slogans during a protest over summoning of party President Sonia Gandhi and leader Rahul Gandhi in connection with an alleged money laundering case by ED, outside governor's residence in Kolkata

Kerala cities to be solid waste-free

All urban local bodies have been requested to take stock of the quantity of waste generated every day in the households, commercial establishments, markets, schools, and offices, said Minister for Local Self-Government M V Govindan



a comprehensive solid waste management project in all the 93 urban local bodies in the state. In the first phase, the project was launched in 87 municipalities and six corporations in the southern state. "All local urban bodies have been requested to conduct data collection and GIS mapping to take stock of the quantity of waste generated every day in the households, commercial establishments, markets, schools, and offices," said Minister for Local Self-Government

MV Govindan. On a pilot basis, this was completed in Thalassery Municipality, he said. The minister also instructed urban local bodies to complete the same in the remaining 92 municipalities within four months. The GIS mapping activity would be coordinated by the state-run Keltron and the data collection would be done by the respective municipalities, he added. The drive would help every local body in creating scientific waste treatment units according to the quantity and nature of the waste generated and also considering the space constraints in each municipality, a statement said here. Land remediation activities also began in the first phase in areas where waste has traditionally been dumped. As many as 34 legacy waste disposal sites have been identified in different districts. As part of the project, more sites will be identified and reclaimed in each municipality in the future. The lands will be reclaimed by segregating the mixed waste heaps that have been accumulated over the years here and treating and disposing of them without any environmental, health, or social issues, the statement further said. There is also a plan to set up a first centralized recycling park in the state through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. It also aims to harness the industrial potential of producing value-added products from solid waste. Non-recyclable waste will be treated scientifically by constructing modern sanitary landfills to ensure their safe disposal.

Online portal for admission to UG courses launched

Kolkata, June 3: The West Bengal government Thursday launched an online portal for streamlining admission to undergraduate courses. Talking to reporters, Education minister Bratya Basu, following a meeting with vice chancellors (VCs) of state universities, said a candidate can now apply for admission based on the marks secured in higher secondary or other plus-two-level board exams. A student can also state his choice of college in the application, and the request will be considered, the minister explained. Asked if the varsities would be conducting online exams this time, given that a section of students had long been agitating for the same, Basu said, "We will leave the decision to the respective institutions. They have autonomy. We will not interfere."

Girls outperform boys as WBBSE declares Class X board results



Students celebrate after WBBSE (West Bengal Board of Secondary Education) class 10th examination results were declared at a school in Kolkata

Pariksha, WBBSE president Kalyanmoy Ganguly said. Kaushiki Sarkar of Adarshabani Academy High School in Malda's Gazole and Rounak Mondal of Ghatil Vidyasagar High School in Paschim Medinipur secured the second spot with 692 marks, he said. Top 104 candidates were in the top 10, he added. "Like previous years, the districts fared better than Kolkata with the highest 97.63 per cent candidates having passed in Purba Medinipur district," Ganguly said.

THE EXAMS WERE HELD FROM MARCH 7 TO MARCH 16 IN OFFLINE MODE. LAST YEAR, THE EXAMS COULD NOT BE HELD DUE TO THE PANDEMIC, AND AN EVALUATION CRITERIA WAS DEVISED BY THE BOARD.

More girls have passed the exams than boys, he said, without sharing the details immediately. The exams were held from March 7 to March 16 in offline mode. Last year, the exams could not be held due to the pandemic, and an evaluation criteria was devised by the board. Next year, Madhyamik Pariksha will be held from February 23 to March 4, Ganguly said. "Congratulations to our successful students and rank-holders of Madhyamik examination! Boys and girls of our districts have shown outstanding performance, while city students too make us proud," Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee tweeted. "Kudos to the guardians, teachers, schools. Results have been announced by the Board quickly, 2023 exam schedules are also declared. Those who have fared below expectations must resolve to fight better in future," she added.

Classroom on wheels



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, June 3: A rundown bus is now a two-level classroom and the decked up facility with amenities like air-conditioning is all set to facilitate learning and recreation for students of the Government Lower Primary School here. The classroom that appears to be a double decker has been built out of one of two decrepit low-floor buses. These two vehicles were among hundreds meant to be scrapped by the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC). The bus that was modelled to provide a new ambience for students to learn was donated to the school located within the campus of the Government Teachers Training Institute (TTI) at Manacaud. The sides of the bus sport a light blue and yellow colour with drawings of birds, trees, animals and books, among others -- a lively attraction for the pre-primary students who would have the opportunity to use this classroom as

schools reopen on Wednesday after a over 2-year-long hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The classroom on wheels has a TV, air-conditioner, chairs with multi-coloured tables, benches, and shelves for books, but the steering wheel and the driver's seat have been retained so that children can play as if they were driving the bus. The upper level is designed for reading and recreation. On May 17, State Transport Minister Antony Raju agreed to provide the two buses to the government school. The Minister, in a lighter vein, said now no one should say they only want low-floor buses, not buildings to hold classes. Later speaking to reporters, Raju had said building a classroom from scratch costs crores of rupees, while converting the bus into a classroom would cost less. For KSRTC, it is a negligible loss. According to a statement from the KSRTC in the Kerala High Court last month, it has around 239 low-floor rear-engine buses lying unused in its depots.

Startup launches 10-min liquor delivery service in Kolkata

Kolkata, June 3: A Hyderabad-based startup has launched its services in Kolkata of delivering liquor in 10 minutes, the firm said in a statement. Boozy, the flagship brand of Innovent Technologies Private Limited, claimed it is India's first 10-minute liquor delivery platform. Online liquor delivery is already offered by several companies but none have the 10-minute service so far, it said. The service was launched in the eastern metropolis after approval from the West Bengal State Excise Department, the statement said. "Boozy is a delivery aggregator that picks up liquor from the nearest shop, with 10-minute delivery by using innovative AI which predicts consumer behaviour and order patterns," it said. Innovent Technologies said it has created a B2B logistics management platform, which will optimise the delivery costs thereby making Boozy an affordable platform.

WB govt reshuffles top bureaucrats

Kolkata, June 3: Days after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee rebuked Purulia district magistrate Rahul Mazumdar over complaints of brick kiln revenue not reaching the administration, the state government Thursday removed him from the post, and made him the commissioner of the Asansol Municipal Corporation. Mazumdar, known to be in the good books of Banerjee, was also given the additional charge as the CEO of Asansol Durgapur Development Authority. Additional district magistrate of Howrah Rajat Nanda replaced him in Purulia, an order issued by the state government Tuesday



said. The government, in all, effected 24 transfers. Additional chief secretary of fisheries, Atri Bhattacharya, was shifted to the Sundarbans affairs department. Avandira Singh was made the secretary of the fisheries department. The government also transferred Hirdyesh Mohan, secretary, personnel and industrial relations, to the housing department. He replaced Khalil Ahmed.

Tree banking project gained boost during Cov waves

THE VISION BEHIND THE PROJECT IS TO ACHIEVE CARBON NEUTRALITY

AGENCIES

Wayanad, Kerala, June 3: When the pandemic struck, there was a worry in Meenangadi, in Kerala's Wayanad district, that their pioneering "tree banking" initiative would hit a roadblock. On the contrary, the project launched by NGO Thanal and the Meenangadi panchayat in 2016 gathered even more momentum. As a part of its series on 'The Promise of Commons', 101Reporters had earlier reported on how Thanal came up with a model to assess Wayanad's excess 11,412 tonnes of carbon dioxide production. Soon, as an initiative to turn Meenangadi



carbon neutral, the panchayat launched a project on planting trees in the region. In return, farmers would be incentivised for not cutting the trees down. Executive Director of Thanal Jayakumar C told 101Reporters that though there were initial challenges when the lockdown started, local support soon helped put the

project back on track. With schools being shut, children were at home -- this meant there were more volunteers to lend a hand to their vision. Also, with transport having come to a standstill, it became strenuous for the Forest Department to deliver saplings on time, but they soon found a solution -- a record number of saplings were procured through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the country's rural livelihood scheme that provides 100 days of work to rural households. "We saw more progress than we expected, with the local community taking up ownership as well as plantation drives, especially through MGNREGA. We planted around 4 lakh saplings, of which around 2.8 lakh were through efforts under

MGNREGA; local residents planted a lakh of them on their own," said Jayakumar. The vision behind the project is to achieve carbon neutrality. While Thanal had decided to evaluate the emissions in 2020, the deadline was pushed to 2023, with the pandemic slowing down the process. To calculate emissions, Thanal follows the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) model, which means it looks at the cumulative emissions of the panchayat. While the exact figures are not available, travel restrictions significantly lowered emissions in the panchayat in the past two years. While the Meenangadi model may be deemed successful in its attempt to keep a check on the climate crisis, its scalability remains a challenge, especially when we move away from rural communities.



of the day quote

We sent money under various heads. Telangana has always been in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's heart but unfortunately, we did not receive a lot of support from the state

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

People should use face masks, vaccinate themselves and follow discipline if they don't wish to experience COVID-19 restrictions again

UDDHAV THACKERAY | MAHARASHTRA CM

Youths should propagate entrepreneurship and job-oriented schemes of the government at the field level and take advantage of it

JP NADDA | BJP NATIONAL PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Man arrested

Malda (WB): A man was arrested with illegal arms and ammunition in West Bengal's Malda district, police said Friday. The Special Task Force (STF) of West Bengal Police made the arrest on Thursday from Milki area, they said. Three 7 mm pistols, six magazines and 18 rounds of bullets were found with him, they added. An investigation is underway to find from where he procured the arms and ammunition, police said.

Two boys killed

Guna: Two boys were killed and one injured, when a tractor-trolley carrying sand overturned and trapped them in Madhya Pradesh's Guna district Friday, police said. The accident took place between Amrod and Simrod villages in the afternoon, when three children were sitting on the sand-laden tractor-trolley as it overturned and trapped them under it, an official said.

Commando hurt

Bijapur: A commando of the Central Reserve Police Forces (CRPF) was injured when a pressure improvised explosive device (IED) planted by Naxals exploded in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district Friday, police said. The blast occurred around 1 pm in the forest of Budgicheru village under Tarrem police station limits, where a team of the 210th battalion of Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) was out on an anti-Naxal operation, a senior official said.

Suicide attempt

Gondia: A lady police constable allegedly attempted suicide by consuming some disinfectant in Maharashtra's Gondia city, police said Friday. The incident took place in the quarters of the Gondia city police on Thursday, an official said. The lady constable attached to the city police had come to the police station around 10 am and returned to her room in the quarters situated close by, he said.

Girl raped

Hoshiarpur (Punjab): A 13-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her cousin here, police said Friday. The alleged incident took place on the intervening night of May 30 and 31 when her parents had gone to her grandfather's house in Rajasthan, they said. The girl originally hails from Rajasthan and is presently residing here, according to police. While she was sleeping in the courtyard, her cousin called her to the roof of the house. After she went upstairs, he allegedly raped her, police said. A case of rape and under provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act has been registered at the Model Town police station.



It is due to the BJP-led government's mismanagement of the economy that the country is facing a crisis in wheat supply

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

PRIYANKA TESTS COVID POSITIVE

A day after Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi tested Covid-19 positive, her daughter and party General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi also tested positive for the virus infection Friday. Priyanka said that following all the protocols, she has quarantined herself at home



Gang members killed Moosewala: Bishnoi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 3: Gangster Lawrence Bishnoi has told investigators that his gang's members, including Canada-based Goldy Brar, hatched a conspiracy and killed Sidhu Moosewala, officials said Friday.

According to them, Bishnoi, who is in the custody of the Delhi Police's Special Cell, has alleged that Moosewala was involved in the killing of Akali Dal youth leader Vikramjit Singh alias Vicky Middukhera on August 7 last year which led to a "rivalry" between him and the Punjabi singer.

Bishnoi has been very uncooperative and has not yet disclosed the names of his gang members who were the real conspirators being the killing, officials said. The 28-year-old singer-politician was shot dead by some unidentified assailants in Punjab's Mansa district May 29, a day after the Punjab government curtailed his security cover.

The Delhi Police Special Cell, which is probing the matter, got the custody of Bishnoi for three days after arresting him from Tihar in



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann offers his condolences to Balkaur Singh, father of the slain Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala, at Musa village in Mansa district

a case registered under the Arms Act, officials added. "Bishnoi has been very uncooperative so far. But during interrogation, he accepted that he had a rivalry with Moosewala and claimed that his gang members killed the singer.

"He has revealed that Goldy Brar was one of the gang members who conspired and executed the killing of Moosewala but has not yet dis-

closed the names of other associates who were the real conspirators and executioners of the killing," a police official said.

The official said, "Bishnoi has not disclosed the exact motive behind executing the killing and has been uncooperative about revealing other details about the murder." Bishnoi, who is facing nearly 60 cases, was lodged in Central Jail

number eight of Tihar. Gangster Kala Jathedi and his aide Kala Rana, who were in police custody in a different case, were also questioned in connection with the killing of Moosewala.

According to officials, after questioning Bishnoi in Tihar prison, he was produced at the Patiala House court and was remanded in three days of police custody for questioning in connection with the case where three criminals were arrested after a brief encounter with the Special Cell's unit last month.

During interrogation, the arrested criminals had disclosed that the weapons recovered from them were supplied by Bishnoi, a senior police official said. The development came a day after a Delhi court refused to entertain a plea filed by Bishnoi seeking a direction to the jail authorities not to give his custody to Punjab police, which suspects that he had plotted the singer's killing.

Bishnoi has moved the Delhi High Court under the apprehension of a fake encounter by the Punjab Police.

SHAH REVIEWS SECURITY IN J&K



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 3: The security of Kashmiri Pandits living in the Valley was discussed threadbare at a high-level meeting Friday chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who took stock of the prevailing situation in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

The meeting was convened in the wake of eight targeted killings by terror groups especially Lashkare-Taiba in the Kashmir Valley whose victims included non-Muslims, security personnel, an artist and local civilians.

National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval, Army Chief General Manoj Pande, and Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Sinha were among those who attended the meeting. The home minister reviewed the overall security situation in Jammu and Kashmir with special focus on protection of Kashmiri Pandits living in the valley, a ministry official said.

Scores of Kashmiri Pandits, who were employed under a prime minister's package in 2012, have been staging protests threatening mass exodus since the killing of Rahul Bhat, who was shot dead by terrorists on May 12 in the Chadoora area of Budgam district in central Kashmir. Bhat's killing sparked demonstration by around 6,000 em-

ployed at various places who demanded their relocation outside the Valley. The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Friday made it clear the employees would not be moved out of the Valley but transferred to safer locations.

Officials also said the recent escalation in targeted terrorist violence would not lead to any change in plans for holding the annual Amarnath Yatra which is scheduled from June 30-August 11.

Two persons -- a bank employee and a brick kiln labourer -- were killed in Kashmir on Thursday while another labourer was injured in two separate incidents.

The bank manager was the eighth and the labourer was the ninth victims of targeted killings in Kashmir since May 1.

A woman teacher hailing from the Samba district of the Jammu region was shot dead by terrorists at a school in south Kashmir's Kulgam district on Tuesday. On May 18, terrorists had entered a wine shop at Baramulla in North Kashmir and threw a grenade, killing one person from the Jammu region and injuring three others.

Policeman Saifullah Qadri was shot dead outside his residence in Srinagar on May 24 while television artiste Amreen Bhat was gunned down in Budgam two days later.

Gas leak in AP: Over 150 affected

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Visakhapatnam, June 3: Over 150 women, working in an apparel manufacturing unit in the Brandix Special Economic Zone (SEZ), near here, fell sick following a suspected ammonia gas leak from a nearby chemical laboratory on Friday. No casualties were reported.

The gas was suspected to have leaked from Porus Laboratories unit located outside the SEZ at Achyutapuram but its impact was felt in the apparel unit inside the SEZ, where some of the women workers immediately fell unconscious after complaining of eye-sore, nausea and vomiting.

Damaged scrubbers in the unit were said to have resulted in the gas leak, officials said after preliminary investigation. The apparel-manufacturing units in the SEZ were immediately shut down as a precautionary measure and personnel at work in other units were evacuated to safety.

The entire area has been sanitised following the incident. State Industries Minister Gudivada Amarnath said that the affected workers were stable and the situation was now under control.

"Only a few workers fell unconscious while most others suffered irritation in eyes and nausea. They were taken to hospitals in Anakapalli and Visakhapatnam for treatment," Amarnath said. Anakapalli district medical and health officer Hemanth Kumar said many of the workers have recovered after first-aid was administered. "Some of the workers were moved to private hospitals in Anakapalli where we have kept them under observation. There is no danger to anyone," the DMHO said. District Superintendent of Police Gautami Sali said they were investigating into the cause of the incident. "The workers are stable and the situation is under control," she added.

Chidambaram, Misa enter RS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 3: P Chidambaram and Rajeev Shukla of the Congress, BJP's Sumitra Valmiki and Kavita Patidar, former Congress leader Kapil Sibal, RJD's Misa Bharti and Jayant Chaudhary of the RLD were among the 41 winners declared elected unopposed to Rajya Sabha Friday.

All the 11 candidates in Uttar Pradesh, six in Tamil Nadu, five in Bihar, four in Andhra Pradesh, three each in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, two each in Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Telangana and Jharkhand and one candidate in Uttarakhand

Dhami wins Champawat bypoll

Dehradun: Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami Friday won the by-poll to the Champawat assembly seat defeating Congress' Nirmala Gahtori by a record margin of over 55,000 votes to retain his office.

Soon after the results were declared, Dhami thanked the people of the state for his victory, saying it was a triumph of their trust. Bypoll to the Champawat assembly seat was held May 31, with over 64 per cent of the electorate casting their votes.

won without a contest.

Of the 41 winners, 14 are from the BJP, four each from Congress and YSR Congress; three each from DMK and BJD; two each from AAP, RJD, TRS, AIADMK, one each from JMM, JDU, SP and RLD besides Independent Sibal.

Hyderabad gangrape: One arrested

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, June 3: Hyderabad police have arrested one accused and identified four others, including three juveniles, involved in the gangrape of a 17-year-old girl in the city on May 28.

A police officer said on Friday night that one of the juveniles will be apprehended on Saturday while police teams are on the lookout for three others. Deputy Commissioner of Police Joel Davis refused to reveal the identity of the families the three minors belonged to.

"He is the son of a VIP", was all he said when asked if the juvenile and the grandson of home minister Mahmood Ali was involved in the case. The accused committed the sex-



ual assault in a vehicle after promising to drop the girl at her home when she was returning from a party at a pub in the posh Jubilee Hills area. After committing the crime, the accused dropped her near the pub.

Giving a detailed sequence of events, the DCP said the victim's father approached the police on May 31 saying his daughter went to a daytime non-alcoholic party and suspected that molestation might have taken place there. He told the police that the girl was in a state of shock and was not able to speak.

Based on the complaint, the police registered a case under Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Sections 9 and 10 of Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences

(POCSO) Act and took up the investigation.

"As per the standard operating procedure, after counseling the victim the police sent her to Bharosa Centre where lady officials made her comfortable and gave her confidence. It was only the next day that she revealed to the lady officials what happened and gave her statement," the DCP said.

Based on the victim's statement, the police altered the case to Section 376 D of IPC and Sections 5 and 6 of the POCSO Act and since there were bruises on the victim, Section 323 of IPC was also added. On the direction of the City Police Commissioner, various teams were constituted which started collecting details.

Seven from Hyd killed in accident

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, June 3: Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Rao has expressed shock over the ghastly road accident that claimed lives of seven from Hyderabad in Karnataka's Kalaburagi district Friday and announced ex-gratia of Rs 3 lakh each to their families.

A private bus coming to Hyderabad from Goa caught fire after a head-on collision with a DCM van near Kamalapur Friday morning.

According to reports reaching here, the bus fell into a ditch after the collision and caught fire. Twenty people were injured in the accident and they have been admitted to a hospital at Gulbarga.

MAJOR CHALLENGE

HYBRID TERRORISM HITS KASHMIR HARD

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 3: Hybrid terrorism in Kashmir is emerging as a major challenge for the security agencies and the local populace. No one is gaining anything and people of Kashmir can end up as the biggest losers.

The hybrid terrorists are being provided with the small arms like pistols and grenades by their handlers to carryout target killings to create fear psychosis and send a message that terrorism is far from over in Kashmir. Pakistan is avenging its defeat by turning young Kashmiri boys into dreaded terrorists.

The hybrid terrorists in the past three months have killed 16 civilians in targeted attacks. The slain include 10 Kashmiri Muslims and six Hindus.

Besides killing unarmed civilians terrorists have targeted unarmed policemen also. On April 18, 2022, ultras shot dead a Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel and critically injured another outside Kakapora railway station in Pulwama in south Kashmir. The Head Constable Surinder Singh died on the spot while Sub Inspector Devraj succumbed to the injuries a few days later.

On May 7, 2022, a police constable Ghulam Hassan Dar, was fired upon near Aiwa Bridge at Dr Ali Jan Road in Srinagar in the morning.

He succumbed to his injuries at a hospital later in the evening. On May 24, 2022 a policeman, Saifullah Qadri was shot dead and his 9-year-old daughter was injured in a ter-



ror attack that took place in Soura area of Srinagar. The hybrid terrorists are on a killing spree in Kashmir. They

are choosing soft targets to spread terror and fear among the people and the new face of Pakistan sponsored terrorism has shocked

everyone in Kashmir.

No one knows who can be the next target as the hybrid terrorists are highly radicalised and have turned into professional murderers.

The hybrid terrorists after carrying out the attacks return to their normal lives.

They don't have any police record as they are unknown faces. After completing the given assignment they wait for their next task making it difficult for the law enforcing agencies to track them.

They are radicalised to an extent that they carry out a terror strike and then slip back into the routine life.

They are usually used by their handlers after intervals to prevent detection. The hybrid terrorists, who were arrested in the recent past, had no information about the

other groups that are operating in Kashmir. They operate in small groups. One or two of them transport weapons while two or three others carry out the attack.

On May 23, 2022, security forces recovered 15 pistols, 30 pistol magazines, 300 rounds along with one silencer in the Chanapora area of Srinagar from two hybrid terrorists.

The hybrid terrorism is once again pushing Kashmir back into dark days as the security agencies firmly believe that these terrorists cannot operate and survive without the support of locals.

Most of the hybrid terrorists are local youths who have been indoctrinated by their handlers to such an extent that they are killing anyone on the directions of their bosses sitting across the Line of Control (LoC).

# international



Global wellbeing is at risk and it's in large part because we haven't kept our promises on the environment  
ANTONIO GUTERRES | UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

## REPORT REVEALS

A total of 8,11,604 babies were born in Japan in 2021, a record low since 1,899, as the nation's demographic crisis intensifies, the government said in a report Friday. According to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the figure was down 29,231 from a year earlier



## of the day quote

For two years, Sri Lanka kept the exchange rate unchanged, which means they were using their reserves to keep the exchange rate at the desired level. It finally resulted in a large current account deficit and their foreign exchange reserves being depleted

MURTAZA SYED | ACTING GOVERNOR OF THE STATE BANK OF PAKISTAN (SBP)

The situation has reached alarming levels in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger, where people will experience emergency levels of food insecurity during the lean season between June and August

JENS LAERKE | THE UN HUMANITARIAN OFFICE (OCHA) SPOKESPERSON

If the United States acts logically, an agreement in the Vienna talks on the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal will be within reach

HOSSEIN AMIR ABDOLLAHIAN | IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Four killed as train derails

Berlin: A train accident in the Alps in southern Germany Friday left at least four people dead and many more injured, authorities said. Police said the regional train headed for Munich appeared to have derailed shortly after noon in Burgrain — just outside the resort town of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, from where it had set off.

### Massive fire at biz centre

Moscow: A massive fire at a Moscow business centre led to four people, including a top emergency official, getting rushed to a hospital Friday, Russian authorities said. Emergency officials engaged 180 firefighters, dozens of vehicles and three helicopters to combat the fire in the west of Russia's capital.

### Fresh trouble for Imran Khan

Islamabad: Key Pakistan government officials deliberated over going ahead with filing treason charges against PTI Chairman Imran Khan and the chief ministers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan over PTI's May 25 'Azadi March' during a special committee meeting of the cabinet, media reports said.

### 3 killed in shooting outside US church

Washington: Three people, including the gunman, were killed during a shooting incident outside a church in the US state of Iowa, authorities said. The incident took place on Thursday evening in Ames, a city in Story County about 50 km north of state capital Des Moines, reports said.

## WAR COMPLETES 100 DAYS

# Ukrainians withstand as Russia storms eastern city

REUTERS

Sievierodonetsk, Ukraine, June 3: Russian forces advanced deep into the ruined eastern factory city of Sievierodonetsk but Ukrainian troops were still holding out there on Friday as Russia's assault on its neighbour reached its 100th day. Ukraine's defence minister said his troops were already training in Europe to operate new, advanced missile systems pledged this week by the United States and Britain, which Kyiv hopes will help swing the battle in its favour in coming weeks.

A war that Western countries believe Russia planned to win within hours has ground on for more than three months, with Moscow having been driven back from the capital but launching a huge new assault in the east.

Troops drove at high speed over roads littered with wrecked armoured vehicles. One soldier sat in the back seat, his face streaked with blood from injuries.

At another location in the city, Ukrainian troops, including foreign volunteers, were unloading weapons from a truck.

"We're gonna push the Russians back. It will take a day, a month, or a year it does not fucking matter. We are on the right side of history," said Zurab Kakalidze, a Georgian who described himself as "just a 22-year-old kid."

"So we're gonna make sure all of us: we're gonna get back home with our families. And we're gonna make sure the occupiers don't do the same." The past weeks have seen Russia pour its forces into



- TOO EARLY TO WRITE OFF SIEVIERODONETSK, GOVERNOR SAYS
- "WE'RE GONNA PUSH THE RUSSIANS BACK," FIGHTER SAYS
- RUSSIA WARNS US ON ARMING UKRAINE
- UN AID CHIEF IS IN MOSCOW FOR GRAIN TALKS

the battle for Sievierodonetsk, a small factory city in the east, which Russia must capture to achieve its stated aim of holding all of Luhansk province.

Both sides have been taking punishing losses there in a street-by-street battle that could set the trajectory for a long war of attrition. "I regret to say that the Russian army succeeded in making its way deep into the city... they control most of the city," Ukrainian regional governor Serhiy Gaidai said in televised comments overnight. He said about a fifth of the city was now a contested "grey zone". Ukrainian fighters were holding

out in one area, were still able to clear Russians out of some streets, and had captured six Russian prisoners the previous day.

"So I would tell sceptics not to write off Sievierodonetsk. It's too early to do that. The city is holding on."

Defence Minister Oleskiy Reznikov also said Ukrainian forces had some success in Sievierodonetsk overnight, though he said it was too early to give details. Speaking by video link to a security conference in Bratislava, Reznikov said Ukrainian artillery crews were already training in Europe to operate new HIMARS and MLRS rocket systems pledged earlier this week by the United States and Britain.

Washington had said this week it expected around three weeks of training would be needed before Ukraine can begin using the rockets, which could hit Russian rear supply lines and help negate Russia's artillery fire-power advantage at the front.

## China, Australia's dueling Pacific tours make final stops

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dili (East Timor), June 3: The foreign ministers of Australia and China were both making their final stops Friday on what has become an island-hopping diplomatic duel in the South Pacific.

Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong arrived in Tonga where she met with Prime Minister Hu'akavameiliku and other officials including King Tupou VI. Her visit came just three days after China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi held similar meetings in Tonga.

Wong and the officials talked about climate change and rebuilding efforts after the devastating earthquake and tsunami that hit in January. Also on the agenda was the contentious issue of regional security. "We are not a government or a country that wants to come in and tell you what you should do," Wong said at a news conference in the capital, Nuku'alofa.



She said Australia considered itself part of the Pacific family. "We want regional security to be dealt with, to be the responsibility of the Pacific family," Wong said. "And we will continue to engage with our friends, our partners in the region." Hu'akavameiliku said Tonga was honoured that Wong had decided to visit just two weeks after taking office, following an election in Australia. "This is a clear sign of the Australian government's strong commitment to strengthening our bilateral relations and engagement with our region," the prime minister said.

# Navarro indicted on contempt charges for defying 1/6 panel



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, June 3: Former Trump White House official Peter Navarro was indicted Friday on contempt charges after defying a subpoena from the House panel investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the US Capitol.

Navarro is the second former Trump aide to be charged with contempt of Congress for refusing to cooperate with the January 6, 2021, investigation. Former White House adviser Steve Bannon was indicted in November. The case against him is pending.

Navarro, 72, was charged with one contempt count for failing to appear for a deposition before the House committee.

The second charge is for failing to produce documents the committee requested. Navarro is expected to appear in court in Washington later Friday.

The indictment alleges that Navarro, despite being summoned to appear before the committee for a deposition, refused to do so and instead told the panel that because former President Donald Trump had invoked executive privilege, "my hands are tied." Even after committee staff told him that it

believed there were topics he could discuss without raising any executive privilege concerns, Navarro again refused, directing the committee to negotiate directly with lawyers for Trump, according to the indictment.

The committee went ahead with its scheduled deposition March 2, but Navarro did not attend.

The indictment comes days after Navarro revealed in a court filing that he had been subpoenaed to appear before a grand jury this week as part of the Justice Department's sprawling probe into the deadly insurrection at the US Capitol.

Navarro, who was a trade adviser to Trump, said he was served by the FBI at his Washington, D.C., house last week. The subpoena was the first known instance of prosecutors seeking testimony from someone who worked in the Trump White House as they investigate the worst attack on the Capitol in two centuries.

Navarro made the case in his lawsuit Tuesday that the House select committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack is unlawful and therefore a subpoena issued to him in February is unenforceable under law.

# Nepal exports surplus electricity to India

This is the second year in a row that the Himalayan nation is selling electricity to India through its exchange market

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, June 3: Buoyed by continuous rainfall this year, Nepal is exporting surplus electricity to India through its power exchange market for the second consecutive year; the state-owned power utility body said Friday.

Nepal has started exporting 39 MW of electricity to India from midnight of Thursday due to the continuous rainfall in recent months, state-owned Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) said Thursday.

"We started selling 39 MW of electricity to Indian buyers from midnight of Thursday. The elec-



tricity is generated from Trishuli and Devghat Power Station through Dhalkebar-Mujaffarpur transmission line," NEA Deputy Managing Director Pradeep Thike told PTL. The electricity is being exported to India under the Nepal-India power exchange agreement,

Thike said. The power utility body is also in the process of acquiring permission to sell 144 MW of electricity from the Kaligandaki Hydroproject, by which it would be able to export additional power from Saturday, Thike explained.

On April 6, India allowed the NEA to sell additional 325 MW of electricity generated from four hydel projects—Kali Gandaki (144MW), Middle Marsyangdi (70MW), and Marsyangdi (69MW)—all developed by the NEA, and Likhu 4 Hydropower Project with 52.4MW capacity, developed by the private sector.

NEA had traded 39 MW power generated from the same hy-

dropower projects, 24 MW from Trishuli hydropower and 15 MW from Devghat powerhouse, in the IEX in November.

However, it halted the export of electricity to India due to the shortage of power in the Himalayan nation during the dry season.

With the onset of monsoons, hydropower plants in Nepal have been producing excess electricity from the elevated water levels in the Himalayan rivers.

Last month, it had invited bids from Indian companies to sell its 200MW surplus energy in the upcoming monsoon season under a long-term power purchase agreement.

## Festive atmosphere returns in China

Dragon boat races returned in parts of China Friday for the first time since the outbreak of the pandemic in late 2019

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Guangzhou (China), June 3: Dragon boat races returned in parts of China Friday for the first time since the outbreak of the pandemic in late 2019, as restrictions



are lifted along with a major drop in COVID-19 cases.

The historic Lychee Bay scenic area in the southern Chinese manufacturing hub of Guangzhou staged races and other scaled-back celebrations to mark the holiday that commemorates the death more

than 2,200 years ago of revered poet and government minister Qu Yuan. Restrictions on the length of events and the size of crowds remained in place but did little to dampen the mood. Along with dragon boat races, which feature teams of up to a dozen or more paddlers, the holiday is marked by community gatherings and the enthusiastic consumption of steamed rice dumplings cooked with meat, peanuts and other ingredients and wrapped in green leaves bound with string.

## Myanmar junta to carry out first judicial executions

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Yangon, Myanmar, June 3: Myanmar's junta will execute a former member of Aung San Suu Kyi's party and a prominent democracy activist, both of whom were convicted of terrorism, in the country's first judicial executions since 1990, a spokesman told AFP Friday.

Four people, including former MP Phyo Zeya Thaw and democracy activist Ko Jimmy, "who were sentenced to death will be hanged according to prison procedures", Zaw Min Tun told AFP.

The junta has sentenced dozens of anti-coup activists to death as part of its crackdown on dissent after seizing power last year, but Myanmar has not carried out an execution for decades.

Phyo Zeya Thaw, a member of Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy who was arrested in November, was sentenced to death in January for offences under anti-terrorism laws.

Prominent democracy activist Kyaw Min Yu — better known as "Jimmy" — received the same sentence from the military tribunal. "They continued the legal process of appealing and sending a request letter for the amendment of the sentence," said junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun.

# Indian-origin teen Harini Logan wins Spelling Bee 2022

The Indian American correctly spelled 22 words in the 90-second spell-off, beating Vikram Raju, another Indian origin student, who studies in Class 7 in Denver

AGENCIES

New York, June 3: Harini Logan, a 14-year-old Indian-American eighth-grader from Texas, barely took a breath as she correctly spelled 22 words during a marathon, first-of-its-kind 90-second spell-off to win the 2022 Scripps National Spelling Bee, beating Vikram Raju in the prestigious contest where children of Indian origin have ruled the roost.

Logan, who took home the USD 50,000 cash prize and Scripps Cup trophy on top of awards from Merriam-Webster and Encyclopedia Britannica, was declared cham-

pion on Thursday night after she was reinstated by the judges in the final round.

She spelled 22 out of 26 words correctly while Raju, a 12-year-old boy from Denver, got 15 out of 19 words right during the first-of-its-kind spell-off, a format that tested the contestants on how many words they could correctly spell within 90 seconds.

The final two competitors had trouble deciphering their words between rounds 13 and 18. At that point, judges opted to institute the first spell-off, 90 seconds to spell as many words as possible correctly.

"By correctly spelling 22 words in the Spell-off, the 2022 Scripps National Spelling Bee Champion is Speller231 Harini Logan!" Scripps National Spelling Bee said in a tweet.

"Our 2022 Scripps National Spelling Bee Champion Speller231 Harini Logan draws inspiration from VP @KamalaHarris. After tonight, Harini is inspiring a new generation of spellers everywhere. She says it takes a village to build up a speller. Hers is happy tonight," it said.

Vihaan Sibal, a 13-year-old from Texas, finished third while Saharsh



Vuppala, a 13-year-old eighth-grader from Washington, was fourth. Harini, one of the best-known

spellers entering the competition and a crowd favourite, nearly did not advance past the word mean-

## of the day quote

IPOs have somehow been taken as a surrogate for the next round of financing. I think that's not a good thing, because an IPO comes with tremendous responsibility

We want them (small retailers) to get an opportunity to use technology (ONDC) to serve our consumers, we want them to get an equal opportunity to enjoy the fruits of the digital world, we want their data to be protected

**PIYUSH GOVIL** | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

To celebrate 15 glorious years in India, we have announced a segment first warranty coverage for five years with unlimited mileage for our customers this year, starting June 1, 2022

**BALBIR SINGH DHILLON** | HEAD, AUDI INDIA

## SHORT TAKES

### Xiaomi names Tse as India biz head

**Bangalore:** The Indian unit of Chinese smartphone maker Xiaomi Corp said Friday it has appointed founding member Alvin Tse as its general manager, a change of guard as the company faces government scrutiny over its business practices. Tse, a British national who was also the former general manager of Xiaomi Indonesia, has helped the company expand into many global markets, Xiaomi India said in a tweet. The organisational rejig will also have Anuj Sharma rejoin the company as the chief marketing officer.

### Aether shares rise 21% in debut trade

**New Delhi:** Shares of speciality chemicals company Aether Industries on Friday surged 21 per cent against its issue price of ₹642. The stock made its debut at ₹706.15, registering a jump of 9.99 per cent from the issue price on BSE. It rallied 20.98 per cent to settle at its upper circuit limit of ₹776.75. On NSE, it was listed at ₹704, a premium of 9.65 per cent. The stock jumped 20.62 per cent to end at ₹774.40. The company's market valuation stood at ₹9,669.19 crore on BSE.

### Omega Seiki plans to lease 5,000 EVs

**Mumbai:** EV maker Omega Seiki Mobility has formed a strategic partnership with Grip Invest for lease financing to retail investors, in a bid to cater to the growing demand of electric vehicles in the last-mile delivery segment. Under the collaboration, Grip Invest, which is a digital platform for facilitating new-age investments, will finance 1,000 Raga+ Rapid e-three-wheelers of the company, with plans to expand to a minimum of 5,000 EVs by the end of the next year, Omega Seiki said.

### Essar Power sells transmission line

**New Delhi:** Essar Power Ltd Friday said it has agreed to sell one of its two electricity transmission lines to Adani Transmission Ltd for ₹1,913 crore. The sale is a part of deleveraging strategy following which Essar has repaid over ₹1.8 lakh crore to banks and financial institutions in the last three years - the largest debt repayment in the history. In a statement, Essar Power said it "has entered into a definitive agreement with Adani Transmission Ltd to sell one of its two transmission lines for ₹1,913 crore."



**We believe that CBDCs could actually be able to kill whatever little case that could be for private cryptocurrencies**

**T RABI SANKAR** | DEPUTY GOVERNOR, RESERVE BANK

## FIRST CRYPTO RUPEE INDEX CRE8 OUT

Cryptocurrency investing application provider CoinSwitch has unveiled Crypto Rupee Index CRE8, to measure the performance of the Indian Rupee-based crypto market, the company said Friday. The Crypto Rupee Index tracks the performance of crypto assets that represent over 85 per cent of the total market capitalisation of cryptocurrencies traded in Rupee



# Ambani pips Adani as Asia's richest man again

Elon Musk is the richest man worldwide with a net worth of \$227 billion. He is followed by Jeff Bezos (\$149bn), LVMH's Bernard Arnault (\$138bn), Bill Gates (\$124bn), Warren Buffett (\$114bn), Larry Page (\$106bn), Sergey Brin (\$102bn), Mukesh Ambani (\$99.7bn), Gautam Adani (\$98.7bn) and Steve Ballmer (\$96.8bn)

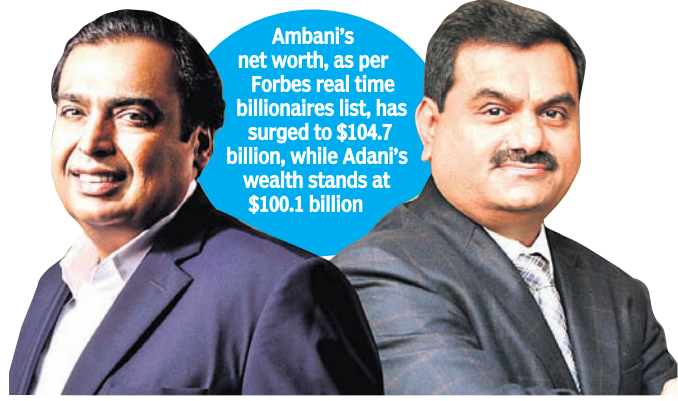
## AGENCIES

**New Delhi, May 3:** Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) chairman Mukesh Ambani has surpassed Gautam Adani, chairman of the Adani Group, and regained his spot as Asia and India's richest man owing to a surge in the stock prices of RIL. The 65-year-old is now the eighth-richest person worldwide, the Bloomberg's Billionaires Index said, while Adani is just behind him, at the ninth spot. As of June 3, Reliance chairman's net worth was \$99.7 billion, while the wealth of Adani Group's founder stood at \$98.7 billion, according to the Bloomberg's

Billionaires Index. In the last 24 hours, the Bloomberg's Billionaires Index, which tracks each billionaire's net worth, said that Ambani

saw an increase in his wealth of \$3.59 billion. Adani added \$2.96 billion to his net worth. Shares were trading 3 per cent

higher at ₹2,816.35 on the BSE in Friday's trade, having rallied 7 per cent in the past two trading days amid heavy volumes. The company has seen addition of ₹1.25 trillion in its total market capitalisation of ₹19.05 trillion during this period. The surge in Ambani's wealth comes on the back RIL in March quarter reporting a 22.5 per cent rise in net profit at ₹16,203 crore, driven by high oil refining margins, telecom and digital services growth and surge in retail business. Ambani's net worth, as per Forbes real time billionaires list, has surged to \$104.7 billion, while Adani's wealth stands at \$100.1 billion.



Ambani's net worth, as per Forbes real time billionaires list, has surged to \$104.7 billion, while Adani's wealth stands at \$100.1 billion

## INPUT INFLATION AT PEAK

# Services growth at 11-year high in May

The upturn was supported by a substantial pick-up in new business growth as demand continued to recover following the reopening of the economy after Covid-19 lockdowns

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 3:** India's services sector activities improved further and expanded at strongest rate in over 11 years in May, supported by a substantial pick-up in new business growth, even as input cost inflation climbed to a record high, a monthly survey said Friday. The seasonally adjusted S&P Global India Services PMI Business Activity Index jumped to 58.9 in May, up from 57.9 in April, amid better underlying demand and strong inflows of new work.

For the tenth straight month, the services sector witnessed an expansion in output. In Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes contraction. "The reopening of the Indian economy continued to help lift growth in the service sector. Business activity rose at the quickest pace in over 11 years in May, supported by the fastest upturn in new orders since July 2011," said Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at S&P Global



The S&P Global India PMI rose to 58.9 in May from 57.9 in April. Consumer services was the best-performing area of the service economy. For the tenth straight month, the services sector witnessed an expansion in output

## Market Intelligence.

On the prices front, the rate of inflation climbed to the highest in 16-and-a-half years of data collection. One-fifth of panellists signalled increases, citing greater food, fuel, labour, material, retail and transportation costs.

"Elevated price pressures continued to restrict business optimism. Despite picking up from April, the overall level of sentiment among service providers was historically subdued," Lima said.

Despite remaining optimistic towards the 12-month outlook for business activity, firms remained concerned that inflationary pressures would dampen

## the economic recovery.

On the jobs front, service providers refrained from taking on additional workers in May. "In fact, there was a renewed but only marginal decline in employment," the survey said.

Meanwhile, the S&P Global India Composite PMI Output Index - which measures combined services and manufacturing output - rose from 57.6 in April to 58.3 in May, pointing to the fastest rate of expansion since last November.

Amid a stronger upturn in input prices in the service economy, aggregate cost burdens rose at the fastest rate since March 2011, the survey said.

## High in pesticides, many nations return Indian tea



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, June 3:** Both international and domestic buyers have rejected a series of tea consignments due to the presence of pesticides and chemicals beyond permissible limits, Indian Tea Exporters Association (ITEA) chairman Anshuman Kanoria said Friday. All teas sold in the country must conform to the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) norms. However, most of the buyers are purchasing tea that have unusually high chemical content, Kanoria told PTI.

In 2021, India exported 195.90 million kg tea worth ₹5,246.89 crore. The major buyers were Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) nations and Iran. The board is aiming to achieve 300 million kg tea this year.

Kanoria said that many countries are following strict entry regulations for tea. Most of the countries follow variations of the EU standards, which are more stringent than the FSSAI rules.

Filling up the vacuum created by crisis-hit Sri Lanka in the global market, Tea Board is eyeing to ramp up exports. However, the rejection of consignments is causing a decline in outward shipments

"Instead of complying with the law, many are urging the government to make the FSSAI norms more liberal," he said, adding that this would send a wrong signal as the beverage is considered to be a health drink.

A senior official of Tea Board told PTI that complaints have been received from tea packers and exporters on the issue.

"It is reiterated that producers should strictly abide by the extant FSSAI norms. The issue of modification of the norms has been raised by the producers' organisations with FSSAI. It is obvious that exports should adhere to the existing norms of the importing countries," he said.

## Twitter says waiting period for Musk's deal is over

REUTERS

**San Francisco, June 3:** Twitter Inc said Friday that the US antitrust waiting period for Elon Musk's \$44 billion acquisition of the social media giant had expired, indicating it had dodged a lengthy review of the proposed deal.

With the expiration, completion of the deal is now subject to remaining customary closing conditions, including approval by Twitter stockholders and any other regulatory approvals, Twitter said.

Under antitrust law, deals are reported to the US government for review by either the Justice Department or the Federal Trade Commission.

Last month Tesla Inc Chief Executive Musk said the Twitter deal was "temporarily on hold", while he sought more information about the proportion of fake accounts on the platform. Musk has secured equity and debt funding for the deal. Meanwhile in an email to executives, Musk said he has a "super bad feeling" about the economy and wants to cut about 10% of jobs at the electric carmaker. The message came two days after the world's richest man told employees to return to the workplace or leave the company.

## Forex reserves at \$601.36bn in May

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, June 3:** The country's foreign exchange reserves increased by \$3.854 billion to \$601.363 billion in the week ended May 27, RBI data said. In the previous week, the reserves rose by \$4.230 billion to \$597.509 billion.

During the reporting week, the rise in forex reserves was due to an increase in the Foreign Currency Assets (FCA) and the gold reserves, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Friday.

FCA increased by \$3.61 billion to \$536.988 billion in the week ended May 27. Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves increased by \$94 million to \$40.917 billion.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) rose by \$132 million to \$18.438 billion. The country's reserve position with the IMF also increased by \$18 million to \$5.019 billion in the reporting week.

## Central Bank holds 'Business Development Meet'

**Bhubaneswar:** Central Bank of India, Sambalpur Region Friday organised a 'Business Development Meet' at Hotel Harjit Residency on the visit of Mukul N Dandige, General Manager & Chief Finance Officer, Central Office, Mumbai and Suresh Kumar Jha, Regional Head, Sambalpur Region. In the meeting, prominent personalities from rice industries of Sambalpur district were present. The Central Bank of India described various products which are beneficial to the rice mill owners and are available at a very competitive rate to these industries. All rice mill owners and other customers who are present in the meeting appreciated the initiative taken by the bank. BK Swain, Chief Manager and Sradhakar Naik, Chief Manager were also present in the meeting.



# India cyber rules irk tech companies

REUTERS

**New Delhi, June 3:** Indian cybersecurity rules due to come into force later this month will create an "environment of fear rather than trust", a body representing top tech companies has warned the government, calling for a one-year delay before the rules take effect.

The Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), which represents firms including Facebook, Google and Reliance, wrote this week to India's IT ministry criticising a directive on cy-



bersecurity set out in April.

Among other changes the directive from the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) requires tech firms to report data breaches

IAMAI says penalties for violation creates 'environment of fear'. Govt says norms needed in the context of rising cyber incidents

within six hours of noticing such incidents and to maintain IT and communications logs for six months.

In the letter, IAMAI proposed to extend the six-hour window, noting the global standard for reporting cyber-security incidents is generally 72 hours. CERT, which comes under the IT ministry, has also asked

cloud service providers such as Amazon and virtual private network (VPN) companies to retain names of their customers and IP addresses for at least five years, even after they stop using the company's services.

Thursday, VPN service provider ExpressVPN removed its servers from India, saying it "refuses to participate in the Indian government's attempts to limit internet freedom".

IAMAI's letter follows one from 11 significant tech-aligned industry associations earlier this week, which said the new requirements made it difficult to do business in India.

# Central banks threatened as focus on digital money intensifies

The Fed is debating whether to develop a digital currency, as are most central banks around the world. The point of tension may seem far off since the market value of cryptocurrencies and stablecoins remains a small slice of the financial system, but payments processors, such as PayPal and Apple Pay, are growing fast

REUTERS

**New York, June 3:** Digital money, a curiosity just a few years ago, is emerging as an intense concern among central banks with the potential to erode the power of mon-

etary policy, and even in the best of worlds likely to make control of interest rates more difficult, according to new Federal Reserve and other research.

A New York Fed symposium this week laid out the puzzle central bankers face in dealing with emerging digital technologies that range from new ways to process payments to new asset categories like cryptocurrencies and stablecoins.

There are benefits seen in the underlying technology including better transaction speed, lower cost, and easier accessibility to banking services, and even with recent crashes and volatility it is assumed it will keep advancing. Ignore it, in other words, and systems developed by upstart private companies could capture larger shares of finance and make "central bank cash" less relevant - diminishing central bank control over interest rates.

Create a substitute in the form of a central bank digital currency, and new instabilities could emerge - in-



What if the central bank no longer has money that is relevant either at the retail or the wholesale levels? In that case the central bank could start losing traction. In some countries it is becoming a problem today. China, increasingly India or Sweden - the use of central bank money in retail payments has plunged to basically nothing as private payments providers have stepped in

ESWAR PRASAD | CORNELL UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR AND AUTHOR OF 'THE FUTURE OF MONEY'

cluding the potential for a digital dollar or euro to replace conventional bank deposits and compete with money market funds and other key financial instruments. In a crisis,

the process could mimic a bank run, leave the system starved for liquidity, and force the Fed, for example, to either ramp up lending to commercial banks or beef up its own holdings of

Treasury bonds and similar securities to keep the system stable.

Banks losing deposits would have to compete for fresh ones and "depending on the intensity...the general level of short-term interest rates...could rise" as a result, concluded a Fed paper this week outlining possible outcomes should the US central bank adopt a digital currency at the retail level, open to households. "A retail CBDC could magnify financial sector stress, forcing the Federal Reserve to provide more liquidity to banks through existing tools. The Federal Reserve's longer-term footprint in certain asset markets, such as in US Treasuries, could become more pronounced."

## STAKES ARE HIGH

The implications of central bank digital currencies for monetary policy is just one part of a broader look by institutions like the Fed at how emerging technologies will change the financial system. As those technologies have become

more prominent, the implications for financial stability and the risks posed to individual investors have become a higher priority for research and regulation.

In a published presentation to the New York Fed conference, Andrew Hauser, executive director for markets at the Bank of England, said that "while the technology for any future CBDC may be new...the use of the central bank balance sheet to provide state-backed transactional money...is one of the oldest functions of central banks."

"The innovation occurring in money and payments has the potential to alter the existing...monetary system upon which current monetary policy implementation frameworks are designed," said Lorie Logan, executive vice president of the New York Fed and recently named to head the Dallas Fed. "How things evolve from here is uncertain, and the impact of these innovations could be revolutionary, or more evolutionary."

# PORTUGAL DRAW AT SPAIN



**SAVING THE DAY:** An unmarked Ricardo Horta strikes past a fully-stretched Spanish goalie Unai Simon to find the equaliser for Portugal, Thursday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Barcelona, June 3:** Focused on keeping Cristiano Ronaldo in check, Spain left another Portugal substitute completely unmarked to spoil the start of its bid to reach consecutive Nations League finals.

Ricardo Horta scored his first goal for his nation to help Portugal earn a 1-1 draw at Spain Thursday. Horta was making just his second appearance for Portugal — nearly eight years after his international debut back in 2014.

The Braga winger came on for the final minutes to join Ronaldo, who had also been on the bench and only played the final half hour in Sevilla.

Spain's defenders never let international soccer's all-time top scorer become a threat, but they completely ignored Horta when he

made his run into the heart of the box in the 82nd minute. João Cancelo found him all alone to fire in his cross. That canceled out Alvaro Morata's 25th-minute opener for Spain, which lost last year's final to France.

Teenager Gavi started for Spain in his hometown and helped set up the opening goal after the 17-year-old Barcelona midfielder stole a pass by Cancelo to start a counter-attack. Gavi raced forward and slid a perfectly weighted pass forward for Pablo Sarabia, who squared the ball for the unmarked Morata to score.

Spain's Carlos Soler had a chance to shoot from the top of the area four minutes later but hit it straight at goalkeeper Diogo Costa.

Rafael Leão almost leveled for Portugal in the 59th but goalkeeper Unai Simón got a foot on his shot

to push it wide. Simón, however, could do little to keep out Horta's strike.

In the same group in League A, the Czech Republic beat Switzerland 2-1 at home. Jan Kutcha put the Czechs ahead in the 11th after Switzerland failed to clear a long throw-in and Kutcha only had to tap in.

Noah Okafor pulled Switzerland back just before halftime with a powerful shot off the underside of the crossbar, but an own goal by Djibril Sow handed the Czechs the win.

The four group winners in League A will qualify for the Final Four in June next year. The group winners in the lower leagues will gain promotion.

Poland beat Wales 2-1 Wednesday in the inaugural match of this third edition of the UEFA Nations League,

which several teams will use as preparation for the World Cup in November.

## LEAGUE B

Erling Haaland helped Norway get off to a good start in League B. The striker, who is set to join Manchester City, scored in the 26th from a pass by Marcus Pedersen to down the Serbs in Belgrade.

Sweden also won 2-0 at Slovenia in the same group. In a different group in League B, Shon Weissman's 84th-minute goal earned Israel a 2-2 draw at home against Iceland.

## LOWER LEAGUES

Greece got a first-half goal from Tasos Bakasetas to win 1-0 at Northern Ireland in Group 2 of League C. Georgia routed Gibraltar 4-0 while Bulgaria was held 1-1 at home by North Macedonia in Group 4 of League C. Estonia beat San Marino 2-0 in League D.

# Chhetri drops hints of retirement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, June 3:** Talismanic striker Sunil Chhetri Friday dropped yet another hint that his retirement is not far away, saying a FIFA ban on India in the aftermath of Supreme Court's ruling to oust Praful Patel as AIFF president would be catastrophic as he is playing his "last games".

The 37-year-old Chhetri's retirement has been a matter of speculation for some time now and he has said on many occasions that his illustrious career will come to an end soon.

"No matter what is happening on that front, I hope it is under control and the country does not get a ban," the iconic India captain said during a media interaction ahead of the Asian Cup qualifiers final round beginning here June 8.

"Because, that will be catastrophic, not just for the whole country but for me, because I'm 37. I'm playing my last games. You never know when there's a last game for you.

"So yes... I was scared when the headlines came, it affects you. But with my limited knowledge, when you go into it, you understand that it is not that dangerous and things will subside," he added.

Patel was thrown out of office by the Supreme Court in a May 18 ruling as he has exceeded his tenure as All India Football Federation President. His third term in office was to end in December 2020 but he clung on to a SC case, which remained pending since 2017, to extend his executive committee's term while refusing to hold elections till the issue of a new constitution was settled by the top court.

There were fears in some quarters that the SC ruling could lead to FIFA imposing a ban on India and stripping the country off the host-



ing rights of Under-17 Women's World Cup in October. A joint team from FIFA and AFC is slated to visit India to "understand the current situation".

Chhetri made his international comeback after more than six months of injury lay-off during India's 0-2 defeat against Jordan in Doha May 29, their last preparatory outing ahead of the Asian Cup Qualifiers.

Every time he takes the pitch, there's speculation about his retirement and the Indian captain happily responds with a smile that "I don't know yet".

"Same question was asked before the last Asia Cup (2019) that 'what next' and I said the same thing. Five years have passed. It's the same now. I was 32 then, now I'm 37-38. I don't know, maybe.

"Right now, I'm enjoying it. I enjoy sprinting with Udanta (Singh), enjoying headers with (Sandesh) Jhingana, and scoring against Gurpreet. The day I don't (enjoy), I'll be done, I can't give you a number when.

"It's not easy to get up at 6 o'clock everyday or do a 30-minute yoga session before everyone wakes up. It's a very, very strict life that I live. It's not easy to do it for 21 years."

Whether the Asia Cup will be held in 2023 or 2024 is not yet clear after China pulled out of hosting it next year, citing spike in COVID-19 cases, something that may further complicate matters for Chhetri.

"I want to qualify. If I'm not there, my country will be there. If we don't qualify, then no matter who, none of us will be there. We want to be there."

Clubbed with lower-ranked opponents in Hong Kong (147), Afghanistan (150) and Cambodia (171), world number 106 India are favourites to make the cut from group D.

# Anjum settles for silver at ISSF WC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 3:** Experienced Indian shooter Anjum Moudgil clinched a silver in the Women's 50m Rifle 3 Positions as India moved up to third spot in the medal tally at the ISSF World Cup in Baku, Azerbaijan, Friday.

Anjum went down 12-16 in the gold medal match to Denmark's Rikke Maeng Ibsen. Anjum, also a World Championship silver medallist, had Thursday qualified for the top-eight ranking round with a score of 587 out of 600, which gave her a fourth place in a field of 60 shooters.

Friday, she finished second to Ibsen in stage two with a 406.5 to the Norwegian's 411.4. She then put up a strong challenge in the final but could not put it across the Dane. It is Anjum's second individual World Cup silver in the event.

The Men's 3P trio of Swapnil, Deepak Kumar and Goldie Gurjar also won a silver in the team competition. The trio came through

two rounds of qualifying to make it to the gold medal match which they lost 7-17 to Croatia. Ukraine picked up the bronze.

Swapnil Kusale had also finished second in the corresponding Men's 50m Rifle 3 Positions Thursday. Indian now have one gold and three silver medals in the tournament and stand in third place behind Korea and Serbia.

There was heartbreak for the other two Indian women in the fray as Ayushi Podder finished 16th with a score of 585, just one point away from the final top-eight mark and Ashi Chouksey ended 20th with a score of 584.

The women's 3P team comprising Anjum and Ayushi won their first qualifying round with an aggregate of 1316 to make it to stage two. However, they could not get into the reckoning for a medal, finishing sixth in the ranking round with a score of 867, falling short of the medal rounds by a point. India fielded a 12-member Rifle squad in the Baku World Cup.



# Nadal back in Roland Garros summit clash

**36-YEAR-OLD SPANIARD BECOMES 2ND OLDEST MEN'S EVENT FINALIST IN FRENCH OPEN HISTORY**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Paris, June 3:** Rafael Nadal has become the second-oldest men's finalist in French Open history after his semifinal opponent, Alexander Zverev, stopped playing Friday because of an injured right leg. Now Nadal will try to become the oldest champion at a tournament he's already won a record 13 times.

Playing on his 36th birthday at an event he first won at 19, Nadal emerged to claim a tight-as-can-be, draining first set that lasted one and half hours by a 7-6(10-8) score. The second set also was headed to a tiebreaker after another one and half hours when Zverev tumbled behind the baseline while chasing a ball to his right. Zverev's black outfit was covered

in rust-colored clay, as were his legs and arms, and he immediately grabbed his right ankle, screaming in pain. A trainer came out to attend to him, and Nadal walked around the net to check on Zverev, too.

Zverev then was taken off the court in a wheelchair. Several minutes later, he came back out using crutches and said he needed to retire from the match. He shook the chair umpire's hand and then hugged Nadal.

Nadal has been dealing with chronic pain in his left foot and was coming off a pair of victories that each lasted more than 4 hours — including against defending champion Novak Djokovic Tuesday — but showed no signs of age, injury or fatigue against the 25-year-old Zverev.

The match was played indoors at Court Philippe Chatrier, with the retractable roof installed in 2020 shut because of afternoon showers.

In addition to bidding for a 14th trophy from the French Open, Nadal can claim his 22nd Grand Slam title to add to the men's record he already holds after his triumph at the Australian Open in January. Djokovic and Roger Federer are tied at 20.

There's also this on the line for Nadal in Sunday's final against No.8 Casper Ruud of Norway or No.20 Marin Cilic of Croatia: It would be the first time the Spaniard ever has won the first two legs of the calendar-year Grand Slam. Cilic won the 2014 US Open; Ruud has never been to a major final.

# Anand remains on top after third straight win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Stavanger (Norway), June 3:** Indian legend Viswanathan Anand continued his winning run in the Classical section of the Norway Chess tournament here as he defeated China's Wang Hao in the third round to remain on top of the standings.

The 52-year-old Anand won the Armageddon (sudden death game) early Friday after the regular classical match was drawn after 39 moves.

The Armageddon saw the former world champion pip Hao in 44 moves to take his points tally to 7.5. He is followed by American Wesley So, who is on 6 points, and World No.1 Magnus Carlsen (5.5).

This is the Indian ace's third straight win in the Classical section after having beaten Frenchman Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and Veselin Topalov (Bulgaria) in the first two rounds.

Carlsen bounced back to win against Teimour Radjabov after having lost in the second round to

So via the Armageddon.

In the other matches of the day, Vachier-Lagrave defeated Norwegian Aryan Tari and Anish Giri shared points with So, drawing the classical and Armageddon games while Shakhriyar Mamedyarov topped Topalov in the sudden death.

In the ongoing Norway Chess tournament, the players take part in an Armageddon (sudden death) in case of a draw in the classical game. American star So had won the Blitz event which preceded the Classical section.

In Pune, GMs Arjun Kalyan and Deep Sengupta won in the fifth round to join Georgian GM Luka Paichadze at the top with 4.5 points in the Maharashtra International Open GM chess tournament.

While Paichadze, who had an all-win record after four rounds, was held by Indian GM M R Lalith Babu, Kalyan and Sengupta registered wins over Aditya S Samant and Anup Deshmukh respectively to take their tally to 4.5 points and share the lead.



# Star shuttlers set to launch GPBL SAKSHI ENDS INTERNATIONAL GOLD DROUGHT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, June 3:** A plethora of Indian badminton stars including PV Sindhu, Kidambi Srikanth, Sai Praneeeth, Jwala Gutta, Ashwini Ponappa and Chirag Shetty will take part in the launch of the Grand Prix Badminton League (GPBL), Karnataka's own version of Premier Badminton League, here Saturday.

The mega event has the blessings of the Karnataka Badminton Association, a statement said Friday. The league will see eight teams battle for supremacy and it is sched-

uled to be played from July 1 to 10.

The eight teams are - Bengaluru Lions, Mangalore Sharks, Mandya Bulls, Mysore Panthers, Malnad Falcons, Bandipur Tuskers, KGF Wolves and Kodagu Tigers - with each team comprising 10 players including a minimum of five Karnataka players, two foreign players and three female shuttlers.

The tournament boasts of a prize money of Rs 60 lakh with the winners pocketing Rs 24 lakh while the runner-up team will be richer by Rs 12 lakh. The team jerseys and the trophy will also be unveiled during the launch. As

many as 400 players have signed up for the league while the auction is slated for next week, it was stated.

Meanwhile, the Karnataka Badminton Association will be felicitating Sindhu, Srikanth, Sen and coach U Vimal Kumar here Saturday. On the occasion, the association will confer its honorary life membership on them, it said.

In another good news, young Indian shuttlers will have an opportunity to earn ranking points and experience with the country hosting two BWF international challenge badminton tournaments in Nagpur and Raipur in September.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Almaty, June 3:** Sakshi Malik's struggles were nowhere to be seen as a fearless and aggressive Rio Olympics bronze medallist grabbed her first international gold medal in almost five years at the UWW Ranking Series event here Friday. India's Mansi and Divya Kakran too earned top of the podium finishes. But the day belonged to Sakshi, who has been struggling till the recent CWG trials.

She was consistently losing to young Sonam Malik in the 62kg category and even missed qualifi-

cation for the Tokyo Games but looked completely transformed Friday as she fought her bouts with tremendous confidence.

She began with a win by technical superiority against Kazakhstan's Irina Kuznetsova and followed that up with another big 9-3 win over Uzbekistan's Rushana Abdirasulova.

As Mongolia's Tserenchim Sukhee forfeited her semifinal, Sakshi entered the final, where she pinned Kuznetsova while leading 7-4, beating the home wrestler for a second time in the day.

Sakshi stood out with her dou-

ble leg attacks and agility, hardly giving breathing pace to her opponents. Even when her rival won a challenge to take 5-3 lead, Sakshi was not perturbed and won in an emphatic fashion.

The last time she won a gold was in 2017 Commonwealth Championship even as she won two bronze medals at the Asian Championships in 2020 and 2022.

Also winning the gold was Mansi (57kg), who won her final bout 3-0 against Kazakhsthan's Emma Tissina, who hardly made a move. Mansi got push out points as mostly the two wrestlers were involved in

standing wrestling.

Divya won two of her bouts by 'fall' - against Mongolia's Delgermaa Enkhsaikhan and Kazakhstan's Albina Kaïrgeldinova - but lost the final bout 10-14 to Mongolia's Bolortungalag Zorigt in the four-wrestler 68kg category.

Zorigt also finished with two wins and a defeat (against Delgermaa) but since Divya had more convincing results, she was declared winner.

India now have won four medals with Greco Roman wrestler Neeraj winning a bronze in 63kg category Thursday.