



## AMUSING EXCHANGES

Actor Samantha holds Karan Johar, on his show Koffee With Karan, responsible for the unhappy marriages in India

LEISURE P2



## ASSAULT CONTINUES

Russia says its forces have taken control of Ukraine's eastern Luhansk region

INTERNATIONAL P10



## HEALTHY LEAD

Mohammed Siraj takes 4 wickets as England are bowled out for 284 giving India a 132-run lead

SPORTS P12

### Newborn 'sold' due to poverty, rescued

**Jajpur:** A newborn girl, who was allegedly sold by her parents due to poverty in Jajpur district, has been rescued, police said. The incident came to the fore after a child development project officer of Dasarathpur block filed a recent police complaint that Suresh Das and his wife sold the infant to a childless couple for ₹7,000, they said. The baby girl was rescued from Champepal village Friday evening and handed over to the child welfare committee, a senior police officer said. No one has been arrested yet, he said. The parents, however, denied selling their daughter. "We are very poor and already have two daughters... So, we decided to give the newborn to one of our relatives," Das claimed.

### Shinde gov't faces trust vote today

**Mumbai:** After winning the maiden major legislature battle - the election of Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Speaker - the Eknath Shinde government supported by the Bharatiya Janata Party is now preparing for the crucial 'vote of confidence' in the House, scheduled here Monday. The Shinde-led government, which was sworn-in June 30 after the collapse of the 31-month-old Maha Vikas Aghadi government, will seek the confidence vote on the second day of the 2-day Special Session of the Assembly convened by Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari. **More P9**

## 4-member CP team probing BJB suicide

Oppn parties warn of raising the issue in Monsoon session of the House

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 3:** The Commissionerate Police has set up a four-member team, headed by one Additional DCP, to investigate the suicide of Plus III student Ruchika Mohanty allegedly due to ragging by seniors in BJB Autonomous College here, Saturday. The team also includes zonal ACP and IIC of Badagada police station.



Protesters during the 'Hul Utsav' in Birbhum district of West Bengal.

The team Sunday visited the Karubaki Hostel in the college and interrogated the superintendent, deputy superintendent, warden and other college staff. The team also recorded the statements of the inmates of the hostel.

"We have been questioning the matron, the assistant matron and the students who were the floor individually. We will interrogate all the 134 students residing in the hostel. The truth behind the suicide has not come out yet. The note recovered from Mohanty indicates towards abetment of suicide and whoever responsible for the abetment will get punishment," said Paresh Rout, ACP Zone IV.

Police are yet to identify the three seniors who allegedly harassed the deceased, forcing her to end her life. Notably, Mohanty did not mention the name of the seniors.

Meanwhile, state Higher Education Minister Rohit Pujari in a tweet expressed condolences over the death of Mohanty and assured that the government will take appropriate steps after the receipt of investigation report from the police. **Contd...P4**

## REMEMBERING REBELLION



Tribal people during the celebrations of 'Hul Utsav' organised in remembrance of the Santhal rebellion, in Birbhum district of West Bengal, Sunday

## Curb media trials: SC judge

Both Justices Pardiwala and Surya Kant were targeted on social media by users after their comments against Nupur Sharma during the hearing of her plea

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 3:** Supreme Court judge Justice JB Pardiwala Sunday called on Parliament to dwell upon introducing appropriate legislative and regulatory provisions to regulate digital and social media as trials by digital media cause undue interference in the process of justice dispensation, as he cited various instances of the media crossing "Laxman Rekha".

Justice Pardiwala, who was part of the Supreme Court bench, which slammed former BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma for igniting the country and damaging the social fabric with her remark on Prophet Muhammad, emphasised on regulating digital and social media in the country to preserve the rule of law.

Media trials are not healthy for rule of law, he said in his address on topic "Vox Populi vs. Rule of Law: Supreme Court of India" in



**In the modern day context, trials by digital media are an undue interference in process of justice dispensation and cross that Lakshman Rekha just a times**

JUSTICE JB PARDIWALA | JUDGE, SUPREME COURT OF INDIA



the 2nd Justice HR Khanna Memorial National Symposium.

"Regulation of digital and social media especially in the context of sensitive trials which are sub-judice, must be dwelt upon by the

Parliament by introducing appropriate legislative and regulatory provisions in this regard," he said.

He said a trial is essentially a process to be carried out by courts, however in the modern-day context,

trials by digital media are an undue interference in the process of justice dispensation - crossing that "Laxman Rekha" many times.

Justice Pardiwala said a section of people, possessing half-truths, scrutinising the judicial process "are a real challenge to dispensation of justice through the rule of law. Social and digital media nowadays primarily resorted to express personalised opinions against judges per se rather than a constructive critical appraisal of their judgments".

He said constitutional courts have graciously accepted informed dissent and cited the personalised agenda-driven attacks on judges. "This is where digital and social media needs to be mandatorily regulated in the country to preserve the rule of law and our Constitution. Attacks on judges for their judgments lead to a dangerous scenario," he said. **Contd...P4**

## LeT terrorist's link with BJP starts political row

AGENCIES

**Jammu, July 3:** A political slugfest erupted between the BJP and the Congress in Jammu and Kashmir after a top Lashker-e-Taiba terrorist, overpowered by locals and handed over to the police, was reported to be an active member of the saffron party who was recently selected as its IT and social media cell in charge of the minority morcha in Jammu province.

As the news about villagers over-powering Talib Hussain Shah and handing him and his associate Faisal Ahmad Dar to the police surfaced, purported pictures of Shah with JK BJP chief Ravinder Raina and his participation in party functions emerged on social media.

The pictures included the one where Raina was presenting him a bouquet and a letter issued by party leader Sheikh Bashir, assigning him the responsibility of new IT and social media incharge of Minority Morcha (Jammu province) May 9.



While Raina dismissed the presence of Shah in his party as a conspiracy hatched by Pakistan to target him and the party headquarters, Pradesh Congress Committee chief spokesperson Ravinder Sharma said the ruling party should answer to the nation the alleged presence of terrorists in their ranks and holding important party positions.

This is the second incident within two days where it has been alleged that terror accused had links with the BJP. The two people arrested in Udaipur were alleged by the Congress to have links with the BJP. **Contd...P4**

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



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WEATHER	
	BHUB CTK
TEMP MAX	34.7°C 30.8°C
TEMP MIN	26.0°C 33.5°C
Humidity	84% 87%
Rainfall	0mm 9.4mm
	Light rain very likely

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### CREW FALL SICK, GO FOR AI HIRING

## Over half IndiGo flights delayed; DGCA to probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 3:** Fifty-five per cent of IndiGo's domestic flights were delayed Saturday as a significant number of cabin crew members took sick leave, with sources in the industry saying they ostensibly went for an Air India recruitment drive.

When asked about this matter, DGCA chief Arun Kumar told PTI Sunday, "We are looking into this."

The phase-2 of Air India's recruitment drive was conducted Saturday and majority of IndiGo's cabin crew members who took sick leave went for it, the sources in the industry added.

IndiGo, India's largest airline, currently operates approximately 1,600 flights --domestic and interna-

tional - daily.

IndiGo did not respond to PTT's request for a statement on the matter.

According to the Ministry of Civil Aviation's website, 45.2 per cent of IndiGo's domestic flights operated on time Saturday.

In comparison, the on-time performances of Air India, SpiceJet, Vistara, Go First and AirAsia India was 77.1 per cent, 80.4 per cent, 86.3 per cent, 88 per cent and 92.3 per cent, respectively, Saturday.

The Tata Group took control of Air India January 27, after successfully winning the bid for the airline October 8 last year.

Air India has started a recruitment drive for fresh cabin crew members as it is planning to buy new planes and improve its services.



**KISS**  
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## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convocation

Date : 4th July 2022 (Monday)

**Convocation Address by**

**His Holiness Gyetrul Jigme Rinpoche**  
Master of Tibetan Buddhism and Spiritual Director of the Ripa International Center

**Conferment of Honoris Causa Degrees on:**

**Dr. Rajiv Kumar**  
Chancellor, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune

**Mr. Pavan Sukhdev**  
UNEP Goodwill Ambassador, Founder and CEO of GIST Advisory Switzerland SA

**Dr. Ricky G. Kej**  
Internationally Renowned Indian Music Composer and 2 Times Grammy Award Winner

**Mr. Erik Solheim**  
President, Green Belt and Road Institute

**Mr. Satya S. Tripathi**  
Chancellor, KISS-DU  
*will preside over the ceremony*

**Venue:** KISS Convention Centre, Campus - 6, Bhubaneswar  
**Watch live on Kalinga TV from 10.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.**

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# leisure



## TARON EGERTON IN TALKS TO PLAY WOLVERINE

Taron Egerton is in talks with Kevin Feige and other Marvel Studio executives about taking on the role of Wolverine, previously brought to screen by Hugh Jackman, reports *Deadline*. Egerton, has previously co-starred with Jackman in 2016's *Eddie the Eagle* and as a member of the *X-Men* in 2017's *Logan*.

## SIGOURNEY WEAVER PLAYS NEW CHARACTER IN AVATAR SEQUEL

After photos of Kate Winslet in the forthcoming *Avatar: The Way of Water* surfaced on the Internet, the first glimpse at Sigourney Weaver in the forthcoming chapter of the sci-fi venture too made their way to the public domain -- and she's portraying an entirely new character, reports *Entertainment Weekly*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
You are likely to give in to the demands of your children today, Ganesh says it is for times like this that you labour so hard. You will finish the tasks that you have been postponing for a long time. It is a good day for people in the medical field and in the public sector.

**TAURUS**  
You may feel frustrated and stranded in family matters today, says Ganesh. Shower your warmth and care to make up for past mistakes. Your spouse will be supportive and lend you a helping hand to regain your mental composure. Reciprocate with intimacy and go with the flow, suggests Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
You will listen to your heart over your head, swept away as you will be in a flood of emotions today. This could mean that you will be unable to distinguish between good and bad. However, looking back upon your day in the evening, you are unlikely to regret any of the decisions you made, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
You will begin the day with a definite plan for a bright future. You will resolutely implement plans that you have made thoughtfully. Such methodical decisions will save you a lot of time in the future. Ganesh says that you will succeed in every endeavour today.

**LEO**  
You may wear the trendiest suit, drive the swankiest car and dine at the costliest restaurant, but if luck is not on your side, you can forget becoming a business tycoon. Fortunately, that is not the case with you today. With a favourable alignment of the cosmos, you are set for a day where your business proposals will be the hardest thing to overlook.

**VIRGO**  
If curiosity killed the cat, it is going to inspire you to go to exotic places and meet new people, says Ganesh. Enriching experiences enter enthusiastically today. But hold on, don't unpack, as you may set off on yet another adventure. Ganesh sees you being crack ductile and malleable.

**LIBRA**  
Lady Luck offers you a mixed bag today, so expect anything and everything. You may also develop a knack for pointing out others' mistakes, while turning a blind eye to your own shortcomings. Ganesh disapproves of this. Look forward to a delightful evening, for, you will have fun in the company of friends.

**SCORPIO**  
Today, you are like a balloon that may burst any time. You may vent out all the sweet and bitter experiences and feel much lighter. Or it may have adverse effects on your health, says Ganesh. You prefer to stay in your cocoon, in the warmth of your near and dear ones.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Providence smiles upon you today, predicts Ganesh. Catching a film with your beloved today is a very good idea. Chances are you may have a nice outing along with your friends or family. In either case, the load in your wallet is likely to lessen, steadily if not dramatically.

**CAPRICORN**  
You firmly believe in the concept of 'health is wealth'. You have maintained a very good health so far and it will not be an issue today, also. Successful completion of current projects seem to be a distant target, however, you will finish them off. Your boss may get upset with you for not completing the work on time.

**AQUARIUS**  
You are disappointed and you seek solace in spirituality. Don't run away from the problems; rather face them with strength and confidence, advises Ganesh, to bring your life back on track. With patience and belief in the Almighty, you will sail through the storm.

**PISCES**  
You will display kindness and generosity today and will do your best to help anyone in need. At work you will receive praise for the efforts that you've put in and your dedication will be validated. Even though you intend to give utmost importance to your family, this intention will trail in the shadow of pending work which will require long hours.

## Samantha 'blames' KJo for unhappy marriages

Hyderabad: The seventh season of the well-known celebrity talk show - *Koffee With Karan* is about to begin. Samantha Ruth Prabhu is seen pulling Karan Johar's leg in the flamboyant trailer, which came out Saturday. She brings up the subject of marriages in his films.

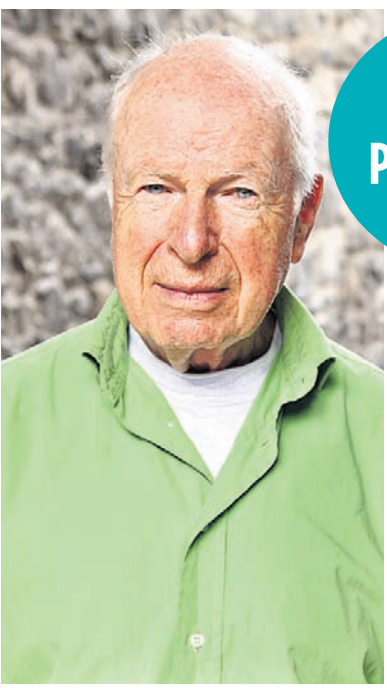
Samantha Ruth Prabhu appeared on Karan's show. She created a name for herself in the first episode of the Hindi webseries *The Family Man 2*. The precise air date of Samantha Ruth Prabhu's episode is still unknown, but it seems like the Majili actress had a few light-hearted moments during her appearance on the show.

As Karan Johar and Samantha appear to be having a good time talking about some recent events, Samantha is heard telling Karan: "You are the reason behind unhappy marriages."

"You have portrayed life as *K3G- Kabhi Kushi Kabhi Gham*, whereas in fact, life is *KGF*," Samantha says. These amusing exchanges between Karan Johar and Samantha have gone viral.

Akshay Kumar, Anil Kapoor, Ranveer Singh, Alia Bhatt,

Varun Dhawan, Janhvi Kapoor, Sara Ali Khan, Vijay Devarakonda, Samantha Ruth Prabhu, Shahid Kapoor, and Kiara Advani are some of the celebrities who will be seen on the celebrity talk show this season. IANS



## Theatre genius Peter Brook dies at 97

The auteur is best known in India for his production of the French play *Le Mahabharata*, which was based on the Sanskrit epic 'Mahabharata'

London: Peter Brook, the British-born director who won Tonys and Emmys, and was conferred the Padma Shri last year, and is best known for his theatre work ranging from Broadway's *Marat/Sade* and *Irma La Douce* to experimental productions such as *The Mahabharata*, has died, reports *Variety*. He was 97.

The auteur is best known in India for his production of the French play *Le*

*Mahabharata* (The Mahabharata), which was based on the Sanskrit epic, by Jean-Claude Carriere. The masterpiece was first staged in 1985 by Brook, who later translated it into English in 1987, in a quarry just outside Avignon in France.

The play was nine hours long in performance (11 with intervals) and it toured the world for four years. For two years the show was performed both in French and in English.

One of Brook's final works, at 92 years old, was *The Prisoner*, which he wrote and staged in Paris as well as at the Edinburgh festival and London's National Theatre. Just this year, he staged and directed *The Tempest Project* with Marie-Helene Estienne, his long-time collaborator; *Variety* reports.

Brook's career spanned eight decades and included opera, plays, musicals, as well as film and TV productions. After decades of bringing an unorthodox approach to traditional works from the likes of Shakespeare and Puccini, he moved to Paris, where he became even more daring and experimental: In one piece, audiences watched a French theatre troupe perform in a language the actors had invented themselves, informs *Variety*.

## Shehnaaz credits herself for 'attracting water'

Mumbai: Actress Shehnaaz Gill seemed to 'attract water', as claimed by her in her latest social media post.

Taking to her Instagram handle, the bubbly Shehnaaz can be seen frolicking in the waters of a beach, having fun all by herself.

"Moon attracts water, but now see... Shehnaaz attracts water!" captioned the TV reality star.

In the short video, Shehnaaz can be seen calling the waves crashing on the shore to 'come', telling the viewers that although the moon attracts the waters onto the shore, more and more waves seemed to be crashing on the beach even during daytime. She then goes on to explain, giving credit

to herself that she is the one attracting the waters.

"I think mei attract kar Rahi hoon pako" said Shehnaaz with a smile, before leaping in joy at her supposed achievement and dipping her feet into the waters of the beach, squealing with excitement.

Shehnaaz was last seen in the Punjabi film, *Honsla Rakh* opposite Diljit Dosanjh. She is reported to make her Hindi film debut very soon. Due to Shehnaaz's close proximity to Actor Salman Khan, fans have been speculating that she will be seen in his next film *Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali*. AGENCIES



## Raveena hits back at trolls

Mumbai: Actress Raveena Tandon recently gave it back to trolls sharing her Mumbai public transport experience during the initial stages of her career. This came after one user on Twitter asked her what she knows about the struggle of the middle class in the city. It all started when Raveena shared her views on Maharashtra deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis' latest decision to shift the Metro 3 car shed back to the Aarey forest in Mumbai. The user tagged Dia Mirza and Raveena Tandon and asked, "Do elite @Deespeak @TandonRaveena know the struggle of middle class Mumbaikars?"

Raveena was quick to respond to the tweet claiming that she was also harassed and pinched, like many women, while using public transport. "Teen years, travelled in locals/buses, got eve teased, pinched, and everything that most women go through, earned my first car in 92. Development is welcome, we have to be responsible, not only a project, but wherever we are cutting through are forests, to safeguard environment/wildlife."

She continued by adding that we all have struggled at some points in our lives, "Everyone's life is not a bed of roses. Everyone has struggled to reach somewhere. I'm sure you have a house/car too. The day heat waves/flooding/natural disasters strike, it'll affect the common man first. Elitists will be the first to run away to their Swiss chalet."



### PEANUTS



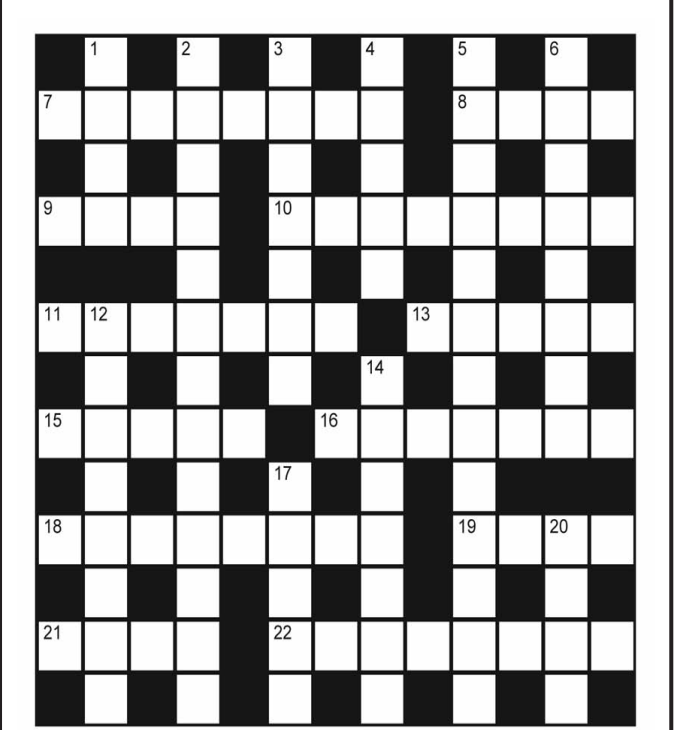
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



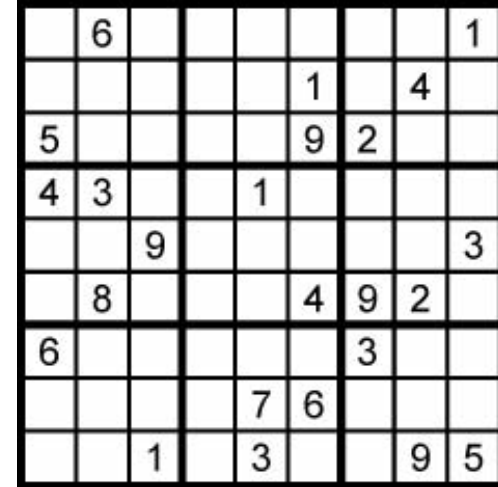
### FUN post CROSSWORD



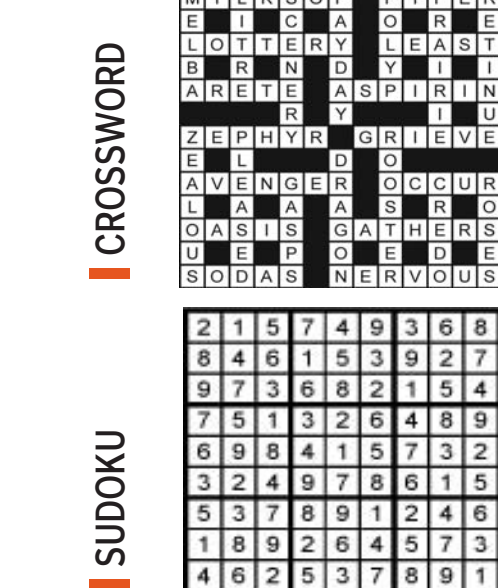
- Across
- 7 At one time in the past
  - 8 Pizzeria fixture
  - 9 Samarang locale
  - 10 Sot's future
  - 11 Roman deity
  - 13 Genius
  - 15 Speeds
  - 16 Fashion plate
  - 18 Carafe
  - 19 Perceive
  - 21 Chicken order
  - 22 Provincial capital of Tuscany
  - 4 Canticles
  - 5 Decorator's choices (6,7)
  - 6 Vitamin bottle ingredient, at times
  - 12 Abstruse
  - 14 Strong alcoholic beverage
  - 17 Sceptre
  - 20 Dentist's tool
- Down
- 1 Forum wear
  - 2 Unethical politician's gambit (5,8)
  - 3 Apple grower's garden

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



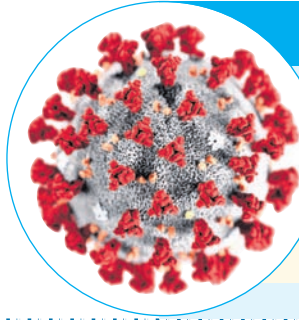
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## ROAD MISHAP

A truck carrying vegetables overturns on NH 16 near Khandagiri Square in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	55,42,58,315	52,89,76,541	63,61,188
India	4,35,02,429	4,28,65,519	5,25,199
Odisha	12,90,538	12,80,049	9,126

# 3L visit Srigundicha temple

**T**HE PRESIDING DEITIES OF SRIMANDIR ARE NOW ON A SOJOURN TO SRIGUNDICHA TEMPLE AS PART OF THEIR ANNUAL RATH YATRA

**T**HE DEITIES WILL RETURN TO THE LIONS' GATE OF SRIMANDIR BY RIDING THEIR RESPECTIVE CHARIOTS ON THE OCCASION OF BAHUDA YATRA JULY 9



2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The presiding deities of Srimandir are usually worshipped at the Adapa Mandap of Srigundicha temple for seven days during the annual Rath Yatra. Thousands of devotees visit the shrine to pay obeisance to the deities and partake Adapa Abadha. However, the devotees could not visit Srigundicha temple during Rath Yatra for the past two years. That is why thousands of devotees are thronging the shrine this year," said an official of Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA).

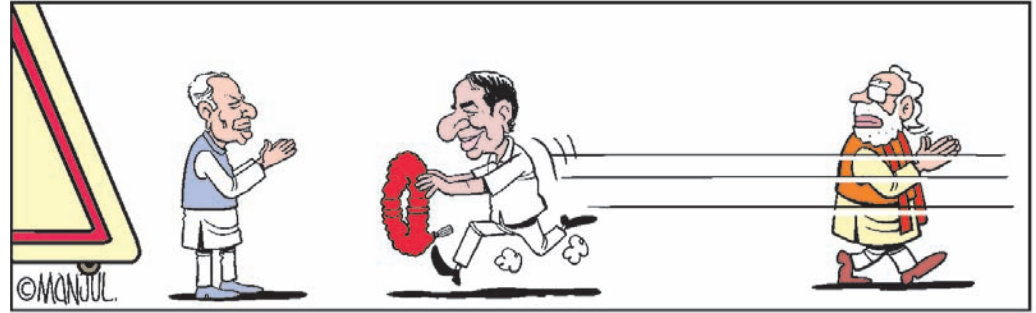
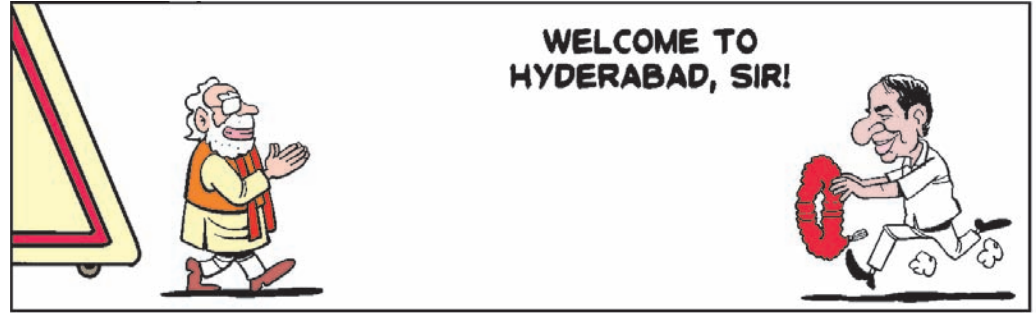
The devotees were allowed to visit the shrine in queues soon after the completion of Adharapochha ritual by the Dattamahapatra servitors. The Puri district administration and the SJTA have made elaborate arrangements for regulating crowd at the shrine.

Sources, meanwhile, claimed that at least 1 lakh devotees partook Adapa Abadha (Mahaprasad) at Srigundicha temple Sunday. Many devotees, however, alleged that the servitors were charging high prices for the temple delicacies.

"The Suar-Mahasuar servitors are charging around Rs 250 for Adapa Abadha. A few years ago, we were getting the same at Rs 100," said Bikram Sahu, a devotee from Bhadrak.

Puri Collector Samarth Verma said the district administration has made all arrangements to ensure smooth darshan for the devotees. "The servitors are trying their best to perform the rituals on time. We have deployed adequate number of police personnel to regulate the crowd," he added.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, July 3:** Around 3 lakh devotees Sunday visited Srigundicha temple here to have a glimpse of Lord Jagannath and his siblings Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra at the Adapa Mandap of the shrine.

The presiding deities of Srimandir are now on a sojourn to Srigundicha temple as part of their annual Rath Yatra. They had reached Saradhahali, an open space near Srigundicha temple, by riding their respective chariots Friday.

The deities were taken to the Adapa Mandap from their chariots through Pahandi procession Saturday.

The deities will return to the Lions' Gate of Srimandir by riding their respective chariots on the occasion of Bahuda Yatra July 9.

After a gap of two years, the annual mega festival is being organised with the participation of devotees. The devotees were barred to participate in the car festival in



(Top) Devotees queuing up to visit Srigundicha temple in Puri, Sunday and a man carries Adapa Abadha for devotees at the shrine

OP PHOTOS

## Jumbos damage houses

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, July 3:** Elephants went on a rampaging spree in several villages of Sambalpur forest range late Saturday night and in the process damaged nine houses in Kumer and Barloi villages.

The locals alleged that the Forest department has failed to curb elephant menace in the area and they have to spend sleepless nights.

They also alleged that the department is yet to pay compensation for the damages done by the wild elephants.

## Joyride turns fatal

POST NEW NETWORK

**Kotpad, July 3:** A 13-year old girl died Saturday night after allegedly suffering from a heatstroke while enjoying an amusement ride at a fair held on the occasion of Rath Yatra here in Koraput district.

The deceased was identified as Alfia, 13, daughter of Md Yakub of Mirgan Sahi locality.

On being informed, family members rushed her to the Kotpad community health centre where doctors pronounced her dead on arrival.

The incident has spread shockwaves in the locality. However, no case has been registered at the police station as family members are yet to lodge a complaint, Kotpad police ASI Sunil Kumar Swain said.

## Brown sugar seized

AGENCIES

**Balasure, July 3:** Three people were arrested with brown sugar in Balasure district, police said Sunday.

Acting on a tip-off, Rajpur village in Jaleswar block was raided and the arrest was made following the seizure of 260 gram of brown sugar, they said.



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

Those arrested were identified as Sk Saffiruddin, Sk Tairuddin and Sayeda Bibi, they added.

A case has been registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

The market value of the drugs is estimated to be around Rs 26 lakh, police said.

## FAIR IN HOLY CITY



People visiting stalls at Pallishree Mela in Puri, Sunday

OP PHOTO

## 'Male infertility rising due to tight clothing, climate'

**T**he infertility and the impaired fecundity have been a concern through ages and are rising for various reasons. The prevalence of infertility in the general population is 15 to 20 per cent, as per the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the male infertility factor contributes around 40 per cent to this rate.

Talking about the rising male infertility, Dr Neeta Singh, Professor, Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, said that Sperm DNA fragmentation is an important factor for this.

"The parenting age has considerably increased compared to last 25-30 years because of late marriage trends. Now, males generally marry after 30-33 years and more or less, there is same pattern for females also. So, with the advancement of the ages, there happens DNA fragmentation in the sperm which is primarily responsible for the male infertility," said Dr Singh.

Among other reasons, the rising temperature is also an important factor for the male infertility,

she said, adding that, "Our clothing patterns have also an impact on the infertility."

"The testes are naturally placed outside the body because it even cannot tolerate the body's normal temperature. But, tight dressing trends and hot geographical location causes severe infertility," said Dr Singh of AIIMS, adding that it also affects the blood circulation of the body.

She continued saying that the tight dressing is for the nations like US where temperature is normally cold, but in Indian context, it may be fatal. The effects of elevated testicular temperature may result in abnormal spermatogenesis and impaired sperm morphology and function, she said, while adding that "our ancestors used to wear loose and airy dresses like 'dhoti' and 'lungi'".

Prolonged heat can create a problem on that part, she said, adding that it is advisable to wash the male part with cold water after several intervals if exposed to high temperature.

She also underlined the late night working culture as prime factor for infertility because it af-



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

fects the secretion of Melatonin hormone that is produced by brain in response to darkness.

"There is a trend of declining sperm count across the globe and accordingly, the WHO has also reduced the acceptable value for normal sperm count. From 45 million sperm count, it has been reduced to 15 million sperm count which is supposed enough for pregnancy," said Delhi-based fertility expert Dr Archana Dhawan Bajaj.

"In the semen analysis, good count was considered above 60 million a decade ago, but in today's environment, we find maximum normal sperm count around 30 to 40 million and it has considerably decreased," she added.

Dr Bajaj said that around 40 per cent of total infertility is caused by male infertility, adding that if sperm count is above 15 million, pregnancy can be achieved.

"The internal rhythm of the

Among other reasons, the rising temperature is also an important factor for the male infertility

Experts are of the opinion that the tight dressing is for the nations like US where temperature is normally cold, but in Indian context, it may be fatal

body has been broken due to work pressure of global lifestyle. People living in India work as per the timing of European countries or other nations which adversely affect the rhythm of the body and results into the performance pressure affecting their sperm quality", added Dr Bajaj.

Meanwhile, India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is currently below the replacement level of fertility of 2.1 children per woman.

The TFR is the average number of children born to a woman in her lifetime.

The below-replacement fertility results eventually in negative population growth and extinction of the population in the long term.

## Delhi govt adds Puri Yatra under its free pilgrimage scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 3:** The Delhi government will be sending elderly pilgrims for Jagannath Puri Yatra in Odisha under its free pilgrimage scheme, officials said Sunday.

The general public was not allowed to take part in the Rath Yatra in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, but the restrictions were later lifted. This year, the yatra kicked off from July 1.

According to government officials, two trains under the 'Mukhyamantri Tirth Yatra Yojna' carrying the elderly pilgrims will leave for the yatra on July 11 and July 28.

Kamal Bansal, chairman of the Delhi government's Tirth Yatra Vikas Samiti, said, "The Jagannath Puri Yatra is very popular. On the instructions of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, free pilgrimage is being provided to senior citizens and now they will get an opportunity to visit the historic yatra. In the month of July, specially two trains will leave for the yatra."

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Barang, July 3:** A banker missing since Friday was found dead in a river in Bidyadharpur area under Choudwar police limits in Cuttack district Sunday, a police official said.

Prasanjeet Mohanty, a resident of Khandagiri area in Bhubaneswar, had been working with a private bank.

Mohanty had left home for some work Friday morning but did not return. Since then he remained incommunicado, said the official quoting the family.

Meanwhile, a few locals of Mundali in Cuttack said they saw a person loitering on the barrage after having parked his motorcycle (OD-06-A-3598) Friday evening. On Saturday morning, though the bike was at the same spot, the biker was nowhere in sight, said the official.

Panic-gripped locals informed the Athagarh police which reached the spot, retrieved the vehicle's details and informed Mohanty's fam-

**PRASANJEET MOHANTY, A RESIDENT OF KHANDAGIRI AREA IN BHUBANESWAR, HAD BEEN WORKING WITH A PRIVATE BANK**

**MOHANTY HAD LEFT HOME FOR SOME WORK FRIDAY MORNING BUT DID NOT RETURN**

ily. Soon, Mohanty's wife reached the spot and confirmed the bike's ownership. Later, she lodged a missing complaint with the Athagarh police.

On Sunday morning, locals of Bidyadharpur in Cuttack spotted a man's body floating in a river and informed the police. Police officials reached the spot and recovered the body, which was later identified and confirmed by Mohanty's wife.

The body has been sent for autopsy. "We are waiting for the post-mortem report to conclude if it is a case of suicide or murder," said the official.

CONTINUED FROM P1

### 'Curb media trials'

Justice Pardiwala said India still can't be classified as a complete and mature democracy, and social and digital media is employed frequently to politicise legal and constitutional issues.

Citing the judgment in Ayodhya title dispute, he pointed out that as the case was nearing the verdict, there were political overtones. "Judges deciding the dispute may get a bit shaken, which is anti-ethical to the rule of law. That is not healthy for the rule of law."

He emphasised that social media is overrun by people possessing half truth and those who don't understand rule of law, evidence, judicial process and its inherent limitations. Citing cases of serious offences, Justice Pardiwala said the immense power of social and digital media is resorted to precipitating a perception of guilt or innocence of the accused even before the trial is over.

### 4-member CP team probing BJP suicide

Taking suo motu cognizance of the incident, chairperson of the State Commission for Women Minati Behera, along with the police team of the commission, visited the hostel Sunday and discussed the matter with the staff.

"We spoke to the principal, the superintendent, the additional superintendent, the warden and other lady staff. I also went to different rooms and talked to the inmates over the issue. Keeping in view the upcoming exams, we have asked the police to complete the investigation at the earliest so that the inmates don't get disturbed unnecessarily. Monday, we will submit a report to the state government about our findings during the visit," Behera told Orissa POST.

Various student unions Sunday hit the streets demanding justice for the victim. Nava Nirman Yuva Chatra Sangathan held a protest along with Mohanty's parents in City demanding stringent action against ragging and the seniors responsible for Mohanty's suicide. The All India Students' Federation (AISF) also held a protest in the city over the incident.

The opposition parties BJP and Congress too warned to raise the issue in the state Assembly in this Monsoon session. BJP Chief Whip in Assembly Mohan Charan Majhi attacked the government over the incident. He said that the state government has failed to check the repeated occurrences of such unfortunate incidents. He also revealed that two similar incidents had occurred in the college in the past. Congress Chief Whip Suresh Routray told media that the party will raise the issue in the Assembly.

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## BRAINSTORMING SESSION



Dignitaries and guests at a seminar on 'Dr BR Ambedkar's vision and philosophy' to mark the centenary year celebration of Ravenshaw University's East Hostel on the varsity premises in Cuttack, Sunday. While former advisor to Ministry of Culture Prof Kuldeep Chand Agnihotri graced the event as chief speaker, Madhusudan Law University vice chancellor Prof Kamaljeet Singh attended the seminar as distinguished guest. East Hostel Alumni Association vice president Gourishankar Sahoo was the guest of honour and Ravenshaw University director Smrutiprava Das presided over the event. While Subhrajit Swain was the programme convener, East Hostel BMC member Gourab Kumar Mallick was the event coordinator.



## 346 new Cov cases, biggest spike in over 4 months

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 3: Odisha recorded 346 cases Sunday, the highest spike in over four months, pushing the tally to 12,90,538, the state Health department said in a bulletin.

The coastal state's daily test positivity rate (TPR) shot up to 2.68 per cent from 1.7 per cent the previous day, it said. On February 22, the state had logged 428 cases. The coronavirus death toll, however, remained at 9,126 as no new death due to Covid was reported in the state. The state has so far recorded 53 deaths due to comorbidities.



Meanwhile, after Bhubaneswar, the authorities of the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) made wearing of masks mandatory in public places

The fresh infections, detected out of 12,897 samples, comprise 49 children. Khurda, where the state Capital Bhubaneswar is located, reported the highest number of

single-day cases at 189, followed by 51 in Cuttack, the Health department bulletin said. Odisha now has 1,310 active cases, while a total of 12,80,049 peo-

ple have recovered from the disease so far, it added.

Meanwhile, after Bhubaneswar, the authorities of the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) made wearing of masks mandatory in public places, as part of precautionary measures in the fight against the virus.

In its advisory, the CMC urged the residents of the Silver City to wear face masks appropriately while moving out and while in public places. The civic authorities also urged people who are coming to Cuttack from outside to wear masks as a precautionary measure against the

deadly virus.

This apart, the CMC urged residents of the city and outsiders to maintain social distance in public places. Moreover, the civic body advised government and private offices, shopping malls and other business entities to ensure social distancing on their premises.

The CMC advisory also urged people to go for testing if they have symptoms like fever, cold and sneezing. "The pandemic is not over yet. We are urging people not to lower their guard against the deadly virus. Any violation in this regard will invite stern action," said an official of the CMC.

## Varsities caught in Centre-state tussle over appointments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: Universities and their administrations in many parts of the country are caught in the middle of what is essentially a political tussle between the NDA government at the Centre and non-NDA-led state governments.

The appointment of Vice Chancellors in universities has become a major flash point in the confrontation between these state governments and the Centre-deputed governors.

Grievances and allegations such as appointments being held under political influence, biases and disregard for excellence have also caused a stir on certain campuses, turning them into a political battleground.

At the Centre, the President is the honorary head of most in-

stitutions. The President appoints the head of the central institution from the panel suggested by the central ministry. But at the state level, the governor is the chancellor of a state-run university.

In some states, the governor appoints the vice-chancellor or head of the institution directly, while in others they select from the panel suggested by the state government.

Experts from the academic fraternity fear the tussle is going to deepen further due to greater political polarisation that is bound to impact VC appointments and the autonomy of institutions.

"There is an ongoing power tussle between the state governments and the governor. There has been no consultation and no feedback is taken from the state government or before the appointments.



"It (VC appointments) has become political appointments, the

tussle is deepening," said Miranda House professor and former mem-

ber of DU's Academic Council Abha Dev Habib.

"The governors all are BJP people sitting in the states. They are appointing as VCs those close to them," she alleged.

Habib said the appointments should be made respecting the cultural space of a university but it is not being done.

"If the central government will continue to marginalise the states then there will be unrest and this tussle will deepen," she added.

According to a top official at the Centre for Policy Research, similar issues persisted in the past, too, and academic institutions should be free of any political interference.

"The tussle is not new. It has been there during previous regimes too. The need of the hour is to find a third way that

pacifies all stakeholders and improves the academic integrity of India. If we want the academic institutions to be known for academic excellence globally, we need to think beyond CMs and governors as chancellors," said the official.

JNU professor Ayesha Kidwai believes the debate is not about whether the state or the governor should be given control but about the autonomy of universities.

"The actual stakeholders—the academic people associated with the university—should be given the power to make the educational decisions. Across India, the most endangered thing is the autonomy of the universities. I believe there should be academic freedom. The state (government) that has been elected by the people should be the framers of the policies," she said.

### A brief overview of some of the incidents of political tug of war between state governments and governors over academic institutions

**West Bengal, June 2022:** The appointment of a new Vice Chancellor of Rabindra Bharati University led to a confrontation between Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar and the Mamata Banerjee-led TMC government in West Bengal. The two have been at loggerheads over a range of issues since Dhankhar took over as Governor in July 2019. Dhankhar has been trying to establish that as chancellor of state-run universities he has more say in the running of universities than the titular role the state expected him to play. Less than a month after the West Bengal Assembly passed a bill June 13 to replace the governor with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee as chancellor of all 31 state universities, Dhankhar took to Twitter June 30 to say about his decision to appoint one of three names shortlisted by a search committee as the new vice chancellor of state-run Rabindra Bharati University. The issue has once again pitted him against the state government that he nominally leads. Even as Dhankhar maintained he went by the rulebook selecting the first among three names, the Trinamool Congress insisted he acted in a unilateral manner without consulting the chief minister or the education minister before going public, more particularly so since a bill passed by the assembly replacing him as the chancellor with the CM is awaiting his nod. Before this, December 21, 2021, Dhankhar had another run-in with the TMC government when the state government appointed Vice Chancellor of 24 universities without his approval.

**Kerala, December 2021:** Expressing displeasure over political interference in the appointment of Vice Chancellors of the state universities, Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan, who is also the chancellor of universities, had shot off a letter to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan urging him to amend the Acts of the Universities to enable him to assume the position of the chancellor. Vijayan is heading a Left Democratic Front (LDF) government in the southern state. In the strongly worded letter, Khan had said he was ready to sign immediately if the chief minister brings an ordinance to amend the Acts empowering the chief minister to become the chancellor of universities. Reacting to it, the chief minister had said his government has no intention of taking over the position of chancellor of universities in the state and Governor Khan should continue in that post. Clarifying his government's stand in the wake of the governor's claims of political interference in the appointment of Vice Chancellors of the state universities, Vijayan had said neither the present nor the previous LDF administration had tried to illegally interfere in the functioning of the varsities. Later, Khan had said that he never wanted to write the letter in the first place and had to resort to that option as he 'failed' to talk to the chief minister over the phone.

**Maharashtra, 2020:** Maharashtra Higher and Technical Education department had set up a 14-member committee headed by Sukhadeo Thorat to study the Maharashtra Public Universities Act and suggest amendments in the law along with the incorporation of the National Education Policy. One of the suggestions the committee recommended was introducing the post of a Pro-Chancellor in the state universities.

**Rajasthan, February 2022:** The Rajasthan governor's order to halt two management meetings of a university had set off a political controversy, with university officials alleging interference by the Raj Bhawan and the opposition BJP warning against the institute becoming the JNU of Jaipur. The Vice Chancellor of the Haridev Joshi University of Journalism and Mass Communication, Om Thanvi, said Governor Kalraj Mishra's move to halt scheduled meetings of the institute's Board of Management (BoM) and the advisory committee was 'arbitrary'. Others aligned with the Ashok Gehlot-led Congress government echoed his views. BJP leaders, however, had opposed the meetings, alleging that the due procedure was not being followed and anti-national elements were present in the university.

**Odisha, 2020-22:** The BJD government in Odisha allegedly attempted to take power of varsities by passing the Odisha Universities (Amendment) Act, 2020 through which the state government had sought to control appointment to important academic and administrative posts in state universities, including the recruitment of teaching staff. The Act was first challenged in the Orissa High Court, which allowed the state to go ahead with its legislation. However, the UGC and retired JNU professor Ajit Kumar Mohanty moved to the Supreme Court challenging the decision of the high court. A division bench of the apex court in May this year stayed the Act for the next three months after hearing a petition of UGC and Prof Mohanty. The court sought a reply from the Odisha government and set the date for the next hearing on the matter after two months.

**Tamil Nadu, April 2022:** The DMK government, which has crossed swords with state Governor RN Ravi over a number of issues including NEET, had brought an Assembly bill empowering the state government to appoint VCs to the various universities, in an apparent bid to clip the wings of the governor on the matter. Chief Minister MK Stalin then recalled that the Puncchi Commission on Centre-State relations had, while dealing with the subject of VCs' appointment, said there will be a clash of functions and powers if the authority to choose the top academicians rests with the governor. "A government elected by the people being unable to appoint the Vice Chancellor to a university run by it creates a lot of issues in the overall varsity administration. This is against the democratic principles," Stalin said. He further said the Puncchi Commission had recommended against the appointment of VCs by the governor, reasoning that such power would lead to controversies and criticism.

**Chhattisgarh, February 2022:** The Chhattisgarh governor and the Congress government in the state were on a collision course over the appointment of the vice chancellor of the Raipur-based Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya (IGKV). Governor Anusuiya Uikey had questioned if only people from one community should be considered for the post in a state where 32 per cent of the population is tribal, 14 per cent belong to Scheduled Caste communities and there are also people from Other Backward Classes. Hitting back, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel had said the governor "should stop doing politics" on the issue and said the people's demand must be taken into account.

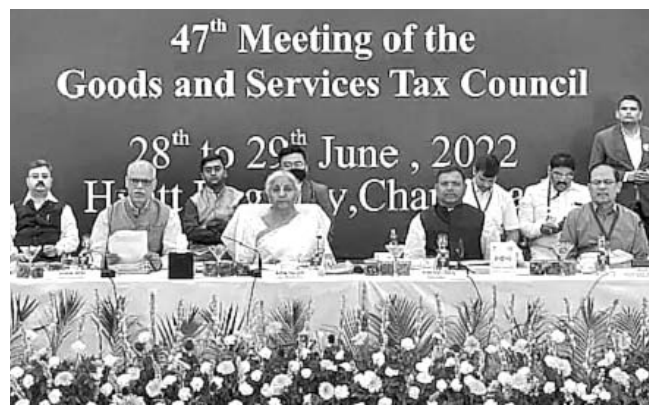
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FOCUS ECONOMY

# THE TAX BURDEN



Higher taxes are known to spurt rising prices, but that is how the GST Council and the Central Board of Direct Taxes decide to raise the rates on many items, a repeat of what was done in January, even as wholesale price index touches 15.88%

Both economics and politics are becoming difficult. If the change of government in Maharashtra is said to be for an ideology, question arises as to why controversial Arrey Colony metro depot and a water project in the state take precedence to get clearance over everything else. Similarly, higher taxes are known to spurt rising prices, but that is how the GST Council and the Central Board of Direct Taxes decide to raise the rates on many items, a repeat of what was done in January, even as wholesale price index touches 15.88%.

It is perhaps difficult to understand how the GST Council can take decisions that have obvious impact on the overall price situation. In January too, the rates on critical textiles, handloom and shoes were raised 5 to 18%. Even a cheque book, normal for a banking transaction, invites tax of 18%. It means each transaction would have huge additional cost. Cumulatively, these would have severe cost increases on all business activities.

Similarly, it is irrational to propose taxes on post office services other than postcards, inland letters, book post and envelopes weighing less than 10 gm. Each such move has a cascading effect on the price situation. The RBI will again resort to repo rate rises by August. The chain is likely to continue as the government and the RBI are apparently not on same page.

It is puzzling to realise why the two projects in Mumbai virtually stacked by the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government for environmental and other concerns become a priority despite a court ruling. Is the present government right or was it the previous government? It seems considerations are more than ideological. This apart, it seems these have been taken up as exerting ego issues. Removing forests have its impact across the country. The recent marooning of large tracts in North-East is ascribed to felling of trees

for various 'developmental' projects. People's representatives need to show more concern on such fragile issues that affect everybody's lives.

Yes, another issue certainly is the bullet train, with a stake of over ₹1.08 lakh crore investments. The Aghadi government had virtually stalled it. Now it may again see an acceleration of land acquisition. The change of government is possibly to restart such projects.

On the tax front, a crucial government decision is to raise the taxes on gold to dampen its high demand. The import duty is raised to 12.5% from 7.5%. There may be marginal fall in imports but historically high duty makes dubious paths of smuggling more remunerative. No amount of policing could stop that as the once zero duty on gold did.

Yet another business aspect is ignored. About half of the gold imports are re-exported as ornaments and other value addition. An expensive domestic gold would hit the international prices causing India to lose a lucrative mar-

ket. India's May trade deficit widened to \$24.29 billion from \$6.53 billion a year ago as gold imports surged to \$6 billion from \$678 million. During May, gold imports surged to 107 tonnes.

The new rates are to impact banking services to milling machinery for cereals and petroleum products. This would impact family budgets as these cover wider ranging goods like LED lamps, ink, knives, blades, power-driven pumps, and dairy machinery (from 12% to 18%); that for milling machinery for cereals (from 5% to 18%); and that for solar water heaters and finished leather from 5% to 12%.

The rate for work-contract services supplied to governments and local authorities is proposed to be increased to 18%. The rationale is difficult to understand, for example why a contractual service or pumping sets used by farmers or milling machinery for cereals should be taxed to make the basic food production expensive. The country, yearning to export wheat and other grains, needs to rethink the benefits and losses of higher

taxes on issues aiding its operations.

The GST Council allows Group of Ministers' (GoM) recommendations on withdrawing exemptions for services such as the transport of passengers in business class from airports in the North-East. Hotel accommodation costing under ₹1,000 per day will be taxed at par with the industry (12%). The government has to realise that the hotel and tourism industry suffered heavily during COVID. Imposition of such taxes hit more the travellers, who have just started moving out. Penalising them with high duties may have deleterious effect.

A cautious but pro-active step is the move to impose cess on export of petrol and diesel by private companies. The ministry says that they were compelled to take such action as crude prices recently spiked and diesel and petrol have shown sharper increase. The refiners export these at globally prevailing prices, which are very high. The private refiners find exports highly remunerative. Certain refiners for the purpose of export keep their pumps in the country dry. To check it, ₹6 on petrol and ₹13 per litre on diesel or ₹2350 per tonne have been imposed with a condition that they would not export more than 50 per cent of the total crude production. For the same reason cess on aviation fuel too has been imposed.

The states should feel happy at the extension of the GST compensation cess for 14% CAGR till March 2026 but they also have to have concern for impact prices.

The RBI's 25th Financial Stability Report sees global outlook uncertain, and the domestic situation though improving, still away from being in ship shape and geopolitical risks warrant careful handling and close monitoring. The political situation and price movements would continue to create shaky conditions. The states are still not satisfied on the financial fall-out for them. A relook at rising rates and burden on the people is a must.



Shivaji Sarkar

## A RELOOK AT RISING RATES AND BURDEN ON THE PEOPLE IS A MUST

# Ragged to Death

The death of a girl student by suicide due to ragging by seniors should not have come as a surprise to anybody familiar with the environment existing in higher educational institutes in the state. It is noteworthy that Orissa stands third at the national level in cases of reported ragging. News reports have quoted other students claiming that ragging is 'rampant' and because no attention is paid to such activities by the administration, senior students are getting emboldened in their acts. Ragging is an ill that has been plaguing educational institutions for a long time. There are numerous cases of ragging that end up in news headlines every year with many resulting in a young life cut short. Most institutions claim that their environment is 'ragging free'. That was the claim by BJB Autonomous College where Ruchika Mohanty, a first year Plus 3 student of History ended her life, blaming three senior girl students for ragging and mental harassment. While no arrests have been made so far, some students have reportedly absconded from the hostel. An internal enquiry by the college authorities is underway along with the police investigation.

Sadly, in most cases of ragging, the college authorities refuse to take responsibility and, in fact, are sometimes seen to be hostile towards the investigation. This itself is the biggest roadblock in the way of tackling this issue which is among the top causes of deaths among young students in hostels. Acceptance of the situation and taking responsibility is the first step towards course correction. Denial only emboldens and protects the culprits and puts the victims in a more vulnerable position. It gives a message to the students that the institution will go out of its way to protect its reputation even if that means shielding the perpetrators at the cost of the victim. This attitude of the management also discourages students undergoing physical or mental harassment to come forward with their complaints before the authorities. They feel their concerns will go unheard and unaddressed while revealing the nature of their complaints to the bullies, making their position even more precarious. This fear psychosis seems to help in encouraging the continuation of the vicious cycle of ragging, throwing up more brutal cases with every passing day.

In cases of death by suicide, parents are also left questioning where they went wrong and how they could have prevented the death of their child. In the case of Ruchika, she had not openly shared her troubles with her family. The family will always be left with the feeling that they could have done more. In some cases, kids do not confide due to fear of retribution by the bullies and in other cases they decide to bear through in order to avoid putting undue stress on their families.

A big obstruction in the way of removing ragging culture from educational institutions is its acceptance as a rite of passage in our society. Students are often told ragging is part of college life, that it makes one tough or is a way of introduction to seniors in the institution. Students start expecting and in fact brace themselves for harassment when they step into institutions of higher education, especially in hostels. This makes them accept their sad fate more easily leading to too many students tolerating abuse for way too long before it's too late for some. For ragging to stop, it needs to be acknowledged and branded as the evil that it is - a justification for bullies to vent their frustration on victims. It must not be brushed aside as a necessary step on the way to education.

In the recent case of Ruchika as well as many other innocent victims, their harassment is seen and accepted by other seniors and batchmates. Bullies are always fewer in number than victims and onlookers. If an atmosphere of trust and assurance is created by the administration of each institution, ragging cases would get reported and action taken on time. Instead of a handful of bullies running around wreaking havoc on the lives of students, they would be named, shamed and cornered. This needs a concerted effort. The government must show sincerity by introducing stricter laws, society must stop accepting ragging as a part of student life and institutions must stop defending the indefensible and protect the majority of students who come to study and create better lives for themselves.

## WISDOM CORNER

Courage isn't having the strength to go on - it is going on when you don't have strength. **NAPOLEON**

Anyone can give up; it is the easiest thing in the world to do. But to hold it together when everyone would expect you to fall apart, now that is true strength. **CHRIS BRADFORD**

Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is more important than fear. **FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT**

## WORDSWORTH

### Triskaidekaphobia

Strictly, triskaidekaphobia refers only to fear of the number 13. Many people regard 13 as a marker of bad luck, an ancient superstition that some writers credit to the Last Supper, after which Jesus was betrayed by one of the 13 present (some hosts will still take great care not to seat 13 around a table); others put the idea much further back, into Hindu mythology. The term is often extended to mean fear of the inauspicious date Friday 13th, a double dose of uncluckiness, as in some cultures Fridays have also been regarded as a day of bad luck because Christ was crucified on that day. It was once thought so especially by mariners, for whom it was long considered unlucky to set sail on a Friday. Some wag invented friggatriskaidekaphobia specifically for fear of Friday 13th, where the first element derives from the name of the ancient Scandinavian goddess Frigga, after whom Friday is named. The year 2009 was a bad one for friggatriskaidekaphobics, since it was one of the comparatively rare ones in which that date turns up three times. Every year has at least one Friday 13th, but in each of the 28-year cycles of our calendar there are four years that have three of them; the years 2012 and 2015 will also have three such Fridays. The origins of triskaidekaphobia are all Greek, from tris, three, kai, and, deka, ten (so making thirteen), plus phobia, fear or flight.

### Trivial

The word trivium in classical Latin was made up of tri, meaning three, plus via, a road or way, so it literally did mean a place where three roads met. But a frequent sense was of a crossroads, as you suggest would be more appropriate. The word later took on a figurative sense of the street corner, a place where the common people met and passed the time of day. Something trivial, the adjective from trivium, was commonplace, ordinary or everyday. However, the first sense of trivial in English, in the fifteenth century, referred to a quite different matter. In the educational system of medieval times, learning was organised in seven aspects, the liberal arts, where liberal meant study suitable for a free man, a gentleman, a person not tied to a trade. It was divided into two groups. The first part - you might call it Liberal Arts 101 - was called the trivium. This comprised grammar, logic and rhetoric; a more advanced set, the quadrivium, consisted of the mathematical sciences - arithmetic, geometry and astronomy - together with music. The Latin names for these two divisions of learning likewise came from via, and you might translate them as the threefold way and the fourfold way. Trivial was the adjective applied to the trivium. Because the quadrivium was thought to be more difficult to learn than the trivium and dealt with matters that were less commonly met with in daily life, the subjects of the trivium came to be thought of as ordinary or of lesser status. Our modern sense of the word was first used by Shakespeare, in Henry VI, more than a century after it had begun to be applied to the trivium. Those with a knowledge of Latin - that was everybody involved in education at the time, of course - also knew what Romans of the classical period meant by trivials. That must have powerfully influenced the development of the modern sense of trivial but doesn't seem to have been its foundation.

## SPECTRUM CURRENCY

# The rupee apocalypse

On 29th of June, the rupee breached the 79-mark vis-à-vis the US dollar. On the 13th day of the same month, the rupee had crossed the 78-mark. This is the first time that the rupee has depreciated to such levels. The rupee is expected to further go down owing to the US Federal Reserve's imminent rate hike. A lot of other global currencies might undergo a similar precarious fate.

India's export data reflects a purple picture. Exports on a YOY (Year on Year) basis were up by 15.5% in May. Hence we can expect a robust year in terms of exports. India has overcome the COVID impediments and has emerged as a perfect substitute to China as an epicenter of export hubs. The major contributors to the high export revenue are oil and petroleum products. Since the oil price has been on the higher side, the exporters have had a field day.

Oil is a double-edged sword. India imports 80% of its oil requirements. Inflated oil prices were also responsible for higher import bills. The trade deficit widened to 23.3 billion USD. This trend is likely to continue.

External dependence on oil has been our Achilles' heel. Our global

reserves have remained vulnerable due to this. The global oil price levels are higher by 55% this year. The various sanctions, logistical constraints, the Russia-Ukraine war, etc. have contributed to such a scenario. Cheaper oil from Russia faces logistical as well as insurance burdens. It negates the entire profit.

In the month of May, coal imports spiked by 167% due to power shortage. There is a severe demand-supply mismatch when it comes to coal. There has been ever growing demand for coal while the domestic supply of coal has been poor.

Coming to the capital market, the imminent rate hike in the US has led to 'sell off' by the FIIs (Foreign Institutional Investors). In an environment of uncertainty and market volatility, the FIIs withdraw their investments from emerging economies and park them in safe havens, which in this case is the US. The US rate hike implies higher risk free return for institutional investors. Hence although the US equity market is on a downside, the demand for US dollar is rising exponentially.

It will be interesting to see the stage at which the RBI will inter-

vene to arrest the rupee downside. It is usual practice for RBI to sell dollars in the open market to contain the currency volatility. India has enough foreign reserves to tackle the prevailing situation. During the closing hours of trade on 29 June, the RBI sold off almost 700 million USD to arrest the downside of the currency value. But this is a stop-gap arrangement. The burgeoning oil prices, the impending US-China trade war, the lengthening of global uncertainty, are factors that the RBI has to ponder before taking any call.

A weakening rupee will have its political ramifications. The value of a sovereign currency is a reflection of its economic virility. The strength of a currency is a matter of national dignity. But this depreciation of currencies is ubiquitous in the prevailing scenario. Markets and exchange rates are supposed to be competitive and driven by the forces of supply and demand.

It is important to interpret the situation from a relative perspective rather than from an absolute perspective. The currencies of all major emerging economies have all depreciated with respect to the USD. Among them, the INR stands

its ground among its peers.

If the rupee is allowed to depreciate further, it will hurt the importers. It will also hurt students who are planning to travel abroad (especially the US) for higher education. This is definitely a global crisis and not India specific. This would inadvertently have a negative impact on inflation. India needs to be cautious not to be in an Argentine kind of situation.

India's inflation rate is pretty high and with the high oil prices, the current account deficit is surely going to go up. But, the inflation rate in the US is more than 8% and the inflation rate in certain parts of Europe is close to 10%. Hence our situation is not that bad. In fact, the Q1 numbers have been pretty robust in terms of GST collections, core sector growth, forward earning projections.

India is optimistic of its manufacturing incentives since the time it is actively participating in the global supply chain cycle. As we embark on an era of low trade business, it is imperative for the central banks across the globe to take the right call at the most opportune time.

The writer is an investment banker.



Sourajeet Pradhani

## IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE THE STAGE AT WHICH THE RBI WILL INTERVENE TO ARREST THE RUPEE DOWNSLIDE

# 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**  
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## Tiny tots & their school bags

Sir, A delegation of Odisha Parents Federation (OPF) met Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Mayor Sulochana Das and urged her to implement the school bag weight limits in Bhubaneswar and ensure availability of books list as per the NCERT syllabus. Most of the private schools in the state are not implementing the guidelines in reducing the weight of school bags. In some cases, the weight of the bag exceeds the prescribed limit. Due to the heavy weight of the school bags, most children complain of pain in the back which poses serious health hazards. The ministry therefore issued strict notification in this regard as per the order of Madras High Court in 2018. As per the guidelines given by NCERT, homework shall not be assigned to the students of class I and II, schools should not prescribe any other subjects except language and mathematics for class I and II and languages, EVS and mathematics for class III to V students. Students should not be asked to bring additional books; extra materials and the weight of the school bag should not exceed the prescribed limit. There are a few schools in the states without Certificate of Recognition and No Objection Certificate. This has also left parents worried as the state government has clearly clarified that schools lacking CoR and NOC can't send their students for admissions to JNV and OAVS under the economically weaker sections quota. Strict actions should be taken against the schools for playing with the future of students.

Hitesh Kumar Parida, PANIKOILLI

## Replacing plastic

Sir, India being the third-largest producer of plastic waste in the world and using approximately 14 million tonnes of plastic annually, the Centre's decision to ban single-use plastics beginning July 1 is a significant one. Plastic trash has grown to be a significant source of pollution. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) claims that plastic is bad for the environment since it is not biodegradable and takes a long time to break down. Due to its difficulty in recycling, single-use plastic has spread across the environment, disrupted the human food chain, and put human health in danger. Single-use plastics not only contribute to waste but also to the proliferation of microplastics, which are hard to collect and can disrupt ecosystems and food chains. There is an urgent need to boost the production of biodegradable products that are sustainable like jute, paper, and cotton as a substitute for plastics.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

# national

## of the day quote

I head the Maharashtra State Wrestling Association, but I was never informed or intimidated by the national body that it would dissolve the association. Now, I am concerned about the future of some wrestlers who are receiving financial assistance from the association for their training and treatment

SHARAD PAWAR | NCP CHIEF

Gujarat has seen huge progress in the railway sector ever since Narendra Modi became prime minister, with the Central government spending Rs 3,960 crore annually on works in the state between 2014 and 2022

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

All states should enact a Uniform Civil Code like Uttarakhand is going to

PUSHKAR SINGH DHAMI | UTTARAKHAND CM

## SHORT TAKES

### 1 dead, 17 injured

**Chennai:** An IT professional Muthumari, 29, was killed and 17 others of a private company were seriously injured when a tourist van carrying them to Masinagudi in Nilgiris fell off Kalthatti Ghat Road Sunday morning. The tourists were on a holiday to the hill station. Two persons working with the resort, W. Vinod Kumar, 25, from Chennai and G. Joseph, 26, from Coimbatore were arrested for misguiding the van driver.

### Man killed

**New Delhi:** A homeless man, sleeping on a pavement in the national capital, was crushed under the wheels of a car, an official said Sunday. The accused driver, identified as Ashok, 31, has been arrested. Deputy Commissioner of Police Sameer Sharma said a PCR call was received in Mangolpuri police station regarding a fatal accident near Ramlila Ground after which the police reached the spot where a large number of people were already gathered. "It was found that one unknown person had been hit by an unknown vehicle and his head was crushed due to that accident. He was lying on the ground in a pool of blood," the DCP said.

### Policemen attacked

**Modasa (Gujarat):** A group of 45 armed men chased and attacked a police party, escorting a couple, in north Gujarat, leaving two police personnel injured, and a police vehicle damaged, police said on Sunday. Three persons were arrested in this connection on Saturday night. Police head constable, Jayesh Jayantibhai in his complaint with the Shamlaji police station said: "Under Modasa Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate's order, the police team was escorting Bhupendrabhai Tarar, Muniben Khant, Shaluben Tarar and Bhupendrabhai's advocate Shailendra Rathod in a police vehicle from Modasa to Sunokh village."

### Three arrested

**Lucknow:** The Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force (STF) has arrested three persons for fleecing several people by impersonating as owners of car agencies. The three are facing over 30 cases of fraud in Ghaziabad and Bareilly, besides cities in Chhattisgarh and Himachal Pradesh. The STF spokesman said that the arrested persons include Vijay Kumar Prajapati, Amiruddin a.k.a Amir of Delhi and Pradeep Sharma of Ghaziabad. The STF has recovered a car, five mobile phones, three Aadhaar cards, three SIM cards and other documents.



I request the people of Madhya Pradesh to vote for our candidates in the civic elections. Give us one opportunity. If we don't work, kick us out. You have seen the Congress and BJP and their games so far. They don't work. They indulge in setting to rule for five years alternatively

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CM

# Don't mock parties that are on terminal decline: PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hyderabad, July 3:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday asked BJP members to learn from mistakes of the parties which ruled India for long but are now in "terminal decline", as he emphasised on qualities such as restraint, balanced outlook and coordination among them.

In his speech at the final session of the BJP national executive, Modi called upon party workers to strive to make India "shreshtha" (great) and asserted that its goal should be "triptikaran" (fulfilment) from "tushtikaran" (appeasement), something it has accused opposition parties of. "This will lead to 'sabka vikas' (development of all). No one should be left behind," he said.

He called for taking out "Sneh Yatra" which, BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad said in a press conference, will be aimed at boosting affection and coordination in society by reaching out to different sections of people. Modi called for "P2 to G2" (Pro-people to good governance) in the party's political and governance model.

Taking aim at the opposition, Modi said the country was fed up with dynastic politics and dynastic parties and added that it would be difficult for them to survive long. Emphasising on the need for party workers to stay connected to people, he said they should not make fun of or jeer at the parties which are in terminal decline and instead learn from their mistakes.

Recalling that he had noted in a 2016 party meet about BJP workers having qualities of "Sevabhaav, Santulan, Sanyam, Samnway, Sakaratmak, Sadbhavana and



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with BJP leaders during the second day of the BJP's National Executive meeting in Hyderabad

TAKING AIM AT THE OPPOSITION, MODI SAID THE COUNTRY WAS FED UP WITH DYNASTIC POLITICS AND DYNASTIC PARTIES AND ADDED THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO SURVIVE LONG

MODI CALLED FOR "P2 TO G2" (PRO-PEOPLE TO GOOD GOVERNANCE) IN THE PARTY'S POLITICAL AND GOVERNANCE MODEL

Referring to Hyderabad as Bhagyanagar, a name with roots in the city's Hindu cultural heritage, Modi said Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel laid the foundation of "Ek Bharat" (United India) by integrating the region into the Union and it is the BJP's historical obligation to build "Shreshtha Bharat".

Everything that is good in the country belongs to every Indian, he said, asserting that the BJP believes in this philosophy and that is why it celebrates leaders like Patel, who was a Congress stalwart, and paid tributes to every prime minister through a museum dedicated to all previous PMs. The prime minister also hit back at opposition parties for questioning the BJP's democratic credentials and asked what is the status of democracy within their organisations.

Modi asserted that his government has worked for everyone and noted that nearly 200 crore Covid vaccines doses were given to people for free across the country. India's exports have surged and the country has received record FDI, he said.

Samvad (Service, balance, restraint, coordination, positivity, empathy and dialogue), Modi reiterated this message to BJP members in the Sunday address.

The two-day executive meeting saw the party taking stock of its organisational activities and lauding the Modi government over its economic policies and overall governance. Issues such as the killing of a tailor in Udaipur by Islamic fanatics and the Nupur Sharma row were not discussed in the meeting, though the obituary reference did mention tailor Kanhaiya Lal, party leaders said.

## Mumbai ex-top cop summoned by ED

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 3:** In a latest development in connection with National Stock Exchange's (NSE) co-location scam, the Enforcement Directorate has summoned 1986 batch IPS officer and former Mumbai Police Commissioner Sanjay Pandey to join the probe.

Pandey has been asked to get his statement recorded before the ED at its Delhi based Headquarters. Pandey is close to former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. ED's case is on the basis of the CBI's case.

In April, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had filed its first charge sheet in the matter against Chitra Ramkrishna the ex-CEO of NSE and Anand Subramanian, the ex-Group Operating Officer of the NSE.

Subramanian was arrested by the CBI February 24 while Ramkrishna was placed under arrest March 6. The federal probe agency is probing the matter since May 2018 but they haven't found any concrete evidence to identify mysterious Himalaya Yogi with whom the classified information was shared by Ramkrishna. Recently, the SEBI imposed a fine of Rs 3 crore on her, following the market regulator finding that she allegedly shared vital inputs about the NSE with the yogi.

## NATURE'S FURY



Locals near a banyan tree after it was uprooted and fell on the road following strong winds and rain in Bhopal

# Death count in Manipur landslide rises to 42

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati/Imphal, July 3:** The death toll in the landslide at a railway construction site in Manipur's Noney district rose to 42 Sunday evening as eight more bodies were found from under the debris, officials said.

Twenty people are still missing with heavy rains and fresh landslides impeding the search operations since Saturday, he said.

Bodies of 42 people have been found so far from under the debris at Tupul yard railway construction camp. Among them are 27 Territorial Army personnel and 15 civilians, including railway employees, construction workers and villagers, a defence spokesperson in Guwahati said.

The Territorial Army is deployed in the area to provide security for the railway construction work. "Relentless effort to find the re-



maining three missing Territorial Army personnel, and 17 civilians will continue," he said.

# Bitter divisions in Cong pushing Raj towards distress

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jaipur, July 3:** That the Rajasthan Congress is divided into two camps is an open secret now, however, the worrying fact is that the split is affecting governance too.

The state is in a mess. It tops the corruption charts, it again tops the crime list against women and also the unemployment index. At present, the state government is trying to save face after the horrific murder of a tailor in Udaipur in broad daylight in a busy market.

With questions being asked about the state machinery, intelligence failure and police negligence, the state government has had to transfer 32 IPS officers overnight. Questions are being raised about intelligence

failure as it was clueless about the incident. Even at a time when the video of the threat being given to the tailor was posted on social media, no action was taken.

Also, the police did not act when the tailor Kanhaiya Lal lodged a complaint alleging that he was receiving threats. Bharatiya Janata Party state president Satish Poonia said that the state intelligence agencies remain busy snooping on ruling party MLAs and hence have no time to look into other issues.

The comment came in the wake of an intelligence team 'looking after' the Congress MLAs camping in a five star hotel during the Rajya Sabha polls. The team was deputed to ensure that none of the MLAs gets poached by the oppo-



sition. Also, during the Congress rebellion the SOG had filed a case against the Pilot camp which was later taken back.

The matter again showed the state government in a poor light. This was not the first time when Congress MLAs were seen doubt-

ing their own colleagues. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot accused his former deputy CM Sachin Pilot of being hand in glove with Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in planning the rebellion in 2020 for toppling the state government. State minister

Shantilal Dhariwal supported Gehlot's statement doubting their own MLA and former deputy CM. Further, senior MLA Rajendra Singh Bidhuri accused the state government of inefficiency after he received a death threat. Bidhuri, MLA from Begun in Chittorgarh, said, "A person from Kota makes constant threats against me on social media. I had complained about this three months ago, but neither has the government done anything nor the police of Chittorgarh. When an MLA is not safe then how will the people of Rajasthan be safe," he added. With such statements, there seems no let up in attacks from the Congress's own MLAs. The Congress government re-

cently drew flak from its MLA Bharat Singh from Sangod Assembly seat in Kota district who wrote a letter to Gehlot expressing unhappiness with his own government for withdrawing a case filed against 4 BJP MLAs in protest against Agnipath.

The former minister in the letter said that if such cases are to be withdrawn and relief has to be provided to the MLAs, then all the cases registered against the public in the state should also be withdrawn.

Exposing the rifts further, state minister Dhariwal recently raised questions about the party, asking why education minister BD Kalla was fielded by the Congress when he had lost two elections earlier.

## HOLY JOURNEY

A total of 40,233 yatris had darshan at the holy cave shrine in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district, in the first four days of the Amarnath Yatra 2022, officials said Sunday



## AMRAVATI CHEMIST MURDER CASE

# 'Mastermind' in custody till July 7



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Amravati, July 3:** A court here Sunday remanded Irfan Khan, the alleged mastermind of Amravati-based chemist Umesh Kolhe's murder, in police custody till July 7, even as the police are now conducting an investigation into the bank accounts of an NGO, of which the accused is a director, a senior official said Sunday.

Sheikh Irfan Shaikh Rahim alias Irfan Khan (35), a resident of Amravati city in eastern Maharashtra, was arrested from Nagpur Saturday in connection with the killing of Kolhe, who ran a veterinary medical shop here. He is the seventh accused to be arrested in the case. "Khan is the director of a voluntary organisation - 'Rahbar' and police have started investigating its bank accounts now," the official said.

There were similarities between the murders of Kolhe and of tailor Kanhaiya Lal in Rajasthan's Udaipur city as both the victims had posted messages on social media supporting Nupur Sharma, who has been suspended by the BJP for making controversial comments about Prophet Mohammad, he said.

Earlier, the Union Home Ministry spokesperson had tweeted that the probe into the Amravati case has been handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA). However, Amravati police commissioner Dr Arti Singh Sunday said the central agency is yet to formally take over the probe as the police department has so far not received orders about the transfer of the investigation into the case.

The NIA is also probing the killing of tailor Kanhaiya Lal. Police had earlier said that on the face of it, the killing of Kolhe was linked to certain posts that he had shared in WhatsApp groups supporting Nupur Sharma.

An NIA team interrogated Khan on Sunday morning at the city Kotwali police station, before he was

**Sheikh Irfan Shaikh Rahim alias Irfan Khan (35), a resident of Amravati city in eastern Maharashtra, was arrested from Nagpur Saturday**

taken to the Amravati district and sessions court amid tight security. The local court remanded Khan in police custody till July 7, the police official said.

Earlier, police had arrested six other people - Mudassar Ahmed alias Sonu Raza Sheikh Ibrahim (22), Shahrukh Pathan alias Badshaha Hidayat Khan (25), Abdul Taufiq alias Nanu Sheikh Taslim (24), Shobh Khan alias Bhurya Sabir Khan (22), Atib Rashid Aadil Rashid (22) and Dr Yusuf Khan Bahadur Khan (44) - in connection with Kolhe's killing.

"Four of these accused were Irfan Khan's friends and had worked for his NGO," an official city Kotwali police station here said. Irfan Khan is accused of plotting Kolhe's murder, allotting special tasks to the other accused and supplying vehicles and money to them. Yusuf Khan is a veterinary doctor and Kolhe owned a veterinary medical shop. The two had business relations, the official said.

Kolhe had formed a group of veterinary doctors on a social media platform, of which Yusuf Khan was also a member. His post supporting Nupur Sharma on the social media group is believed to have fanned anger, following which Yusuf Khan allegedly instigated others for the crime, the official said.

"Kolhe posted messages on a social media group, of which Yusuf Khan was also a member. He instigated the others," the official said. Yusuf Khan had friendly relations with Kolhe and even attended his funeral, the police investigation has revealed.



# Decoding Assam's mounting flood ferocity

The unprecedented destruction witnessed in the recent years can be primarily attributed to faulty flood control measures, population pressure, shrinkage of water-bodies, unregulated construction and skewed development strategies



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, July 3:** Every year, around this time, life comes to a complete standstill in Assam, pounded by relentless rain and subsequent landslides and floods, the intensity of which has only been on the rise, leading to increased loss of lives and property. Experts have pointed out that floods in the two river basins of Brahmaputra and Barak have occurred since yore but the unprecedented destruction witnessed in the recent years can be primarily attributed to faulty flood control measures, population pressure, shrinkage of water-bodies, unregulated construction and

skewed development strategies. Environmental scientist Dr Partha Jyoti Das told PTI that the devastating floods in May and June have taken larger swathes under its grip this time, when compared to the last few years, and the toll registered in the early-monsoon deluge has not been this high in the recent memory. "Growing population and construction in flood-prone areas are some of the reasons behind the burgeoning damage in the state. In several places, breach of embankments has caused widespread destruction. Add to that, frequent flash floods leave people with little

time to protect life and property," he explained. Flood predictions and early warnings do not reach the vulnerable population on occasions, thus giving them no scope for preparations, the environmentalist said. "Drainage congestion in low-lying areas, which is a result of rapidly changing land use practices, fast pace of urbanisation and expansion of human habitat all around, at the cost of natural waterways, have also intensified the flood situation," Das insisted. The current wave of floods, which the northeastern state is still reeling under, has claimed 174

lives, besides damaging crops across 2,35,845.74 hectares and leaving 90 lakh people in the lurch, according to a spokesperson of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA). An official of the Water Resources Department noted that the Brahmaputra basin is among the most flood-prone areas in the world, followed closely by the Barak, and with nearly 100 tributaries and sub-tributaries feeding them, the two rivers make 40 per cent of Assam vulnerable to deluge. A series of factors, both natural and anthropogenic, add to the woes, he said. "Highly potent monsoons, seismic activities leading to a change in the course of the river and rise in the river bed, and the unique geo-environmental setting of the rivers, particularly the Brahmaputra basin in the Eastern Himalayas, are some of the reasons why the flood situation keeps deteriorating in Assam," the official added. Urban flooding in places such as Silchar, Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Barpeta, Nalbari and Tinsukia have also laid bare the faults in the drainage system of the state. Drainage congestion and choking of local water bodies, which had earlier served as an outlet for flood waters, are largely responsible for

urban flooding, river specialist Pradip Pujari told PTI. Echoing him, Assam University's former professor of environmental science Dr Abhik Gupta said hill cutting and deforestation, along with climate change, compound flood problems. Das said a combination of strategies is being discussed by authorities to find a permanent solution. Water Resources engineers have always advocated the construction of large storage reservoirs but this is fraught with risk, considering the geo-ecological fragility of the region, he maintained. "Non-structural measures like issuance of flood warnings can play an important role in reducing damages. Use of geo-synthetics for fortifying embankments is also being considered as an option," he said. Das, however, asserted that people might still have to put up with floods, at least to a certain extent, despite the adoption of all possible measures to minimise the scourge, as "technological fixes have certain limitations against natural processes". "Reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience while taking into account the impact of climate change should be at the core of flood management along with the exploration for a feasible technological solution," he added.

# Days after bypoll jolt, SP dissolves all party posts

This is seen as an attempt to revamp the organisation after the drubbing on Rampur and Azamgarh seats

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, July 3:** Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav Sunday dissolved the party's all national, state and district executive bodies including the youth and the women's wing, days after the SP lost two Lok Sabha seats considered its bastions to the BJP in bypolls. Though the party has not given any reason for the decision, which comes into effect immediately it is seen as an attempt to revamp the organisation after the drubbing on Rampur and Azamgarh seats. The SP's Uttar Pradesh president Naresh Uttam will, however, continue to remain in his position, the party said. In a tweet, the SP said Yadav has dissolved the national, state and districts units of all party cells including the youth and women wings. "He has also dissolved the national, state and district executives." A senior SP leader said, "The party is gearing up for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and the focus is to strengthen the organisation to take on the BJP with full force." The BJP on the other hand said it was the SP's internal matter, but



asked why Yadav did not take the responsibility himself. "The party should tell people why it lost elections under Akhilesh Yadav. Why Yadav himself did not take responsibility for the defeats," BJP spokesman Rakesh Tripathi said. "The SP lost Lok Sabha polls in 2014 and 2019 and assembly elections in 2017 and 2022 under Akhilesh Yadav. He should also take the responsibility," Tripathi said. Azamgarh and Rampur, Lok Sabha seats considered the SP's pocket boroughs owing to their caste and religious compositions, went to bypolls recently after they were vacated by Yadav and senior leader Azam Khan. The BJP came out as victorious. Analysts put it down to the failure of the SP's time-tested MY (Muslim-Yadav) against the BJP's MY (Modi-Yogi) phenomenon.

# Kanpur admin seals food outlets of violence accused



**VIOLENCE BROKE OUT IN KANPUR JUNE 3 OVER SUSPENDED BJP SPOKESPERSON NUPUR SHARMA'S PROPHET REMARKS**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kanpur, July 3:** The district administration here Sunday sealed two more eateries owned by June 3 Kanpur violence accused Mukhtar after samples collected from these places were found to be unfit for human consumption, officials said. Mukhtar alias Baba Biryani runs a chain of restaurants. The administration had sealed three outlets of his food chain late last month after samples collected from the eateries failed the quality test. Vijay Pratap Singh, assistant commissioner, Food Safety and Drug Administration (FSDA) said an eatery at Defence Colony in Jajmau and one in a Kidwai Nagar mall, both owned by Mukhtar, have been sealed after the food samples collected from them were found to be unsafe in laboratory tests. June 27, the FSDA had raided Mukhtar's five food outlets in Jajmau, Yashoda Nagar, Beckonganj and a mall in Kidwai Nagar and collected 18 samples that were sent to a laboratory in Agra for examination, he added.

# 2 killed in police firing while trying to escape custody: Cop

At least 54 people have been killed and 139 injured in police action since the BJP government, led by CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, assumed office in May 2021

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Silchar, July 3:** Two persons, accused of various crimes, were killed in police firing while allegedly trying to escape custody in Assam's Cachar district, a senior officer said Sunday. One of the two, Kamrul Islam, featured in the list of 'most-wanted persons' in the district for his purported involvement in several extortion, kidnapping, dacoity and vehicle-lifting cases, Cachar Superintendent of Police Ramandeep Kaur said. The other, Amrul Hussain, was also wanted in dacoity cases, she stated. At least 54 people have been killed and 139 injured in police action while allegedly trying to flee custody or for attacking police personnel since the BJP government, led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, assumed office in May 2021. According to the SP, the two, after being shot, were initially taken to Kalain primary health centre, and administered first aid.

They were later shifted to Silchar Medical College and Hospital, where doctors declared them "brought dead", she said. Police sources said that the condition of Kamrul Islam and Hussain had deteriorated on way to the Silchar hospital. Explaining the sequence of events, Kaur said that a team from Silchar sadar police station had been on the hunt for a person wanted in a land dispute case. "The team managed to nab the accused from a vehicle in Jorabat area. Two others, including a criminal wanted in multiple cases, were also apprehended from the same vehicle," she said. All three of them were being brought to Silchar in two vehicles by the police team Saturday night, when Islam and Hussain tried to flee custody, taking advantage of darkness, Kaur explained. The Silchar police station officer in-charge, who was accompanying the duo, and the other policemen chased them down, and had to resort to firing to stop them, the SP stated.



# On-again, off-again alliances cast shadow on Oppn poll pact

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Guwahati, July 3:** The non-BJP Opposition parties in Assam forged an abortive alliance in last year's March-April state Assembly polls and again in the by-elections in October. But they are yet to make up their mind about another possible alliance before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. The Congress-led 'Mahajot', a grand alliance of 10 parties, miserably failed in the 2021 elections against the BJP-led three party alliance, which includes the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL). Following the defeat in the Assembly elections, the Badruddin Ajmal-led All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) and Hagrama Mohilary-led Bodoland People's Front (BPF) walked out from 'Mahajot' and fielded separate candidates for the October 30, 2021, bypolls to five seats dividing the non-BJP votes. According to political pundits, any kind of an occasional alliance among the parties does not make up any productive chemistry in the mindsets of the voters. "If the electoral alliance between like-minded parties forms much before an election, then the common workers of the parties in particular and the people in general understand the efficacy of the poll deal," political analyst Bijan Baruah told IANS. "A genuine alliance of different parties can take forward the local, state level and national issues to the people. But if it forms just before the elections then the outcome of the coalition in most occasions does not yield expected results." According to the analyst, the Congress has several internal problems, including an indifferent attitude and mindset towards the state organisations'



**The Congress has several internal problems, including an indifferent attitude and mindset towards the state organisations' pro-active works to beat the BJP or rival parties, according to an analyst**

pro-active works to beat the BJP or rival parties. "These predicaments caused the party to lose in one election after the other, as well as alienation from the common people," Baruah observed. Since last year's assembly polls, the main Opposition Congress in Assam is yet to get the solid support from the Lurinjyoti Gogoi-led Asom Jatiya Parishad (AJP) and the Rajiwar Dal headed by Akhil Gogoi. The AJP, Rajiwar Dal and AIUDF

have reasonable support bases in different parts of Assam, especially among the indigenous people, tea tribes and Muslims, who play vital roles in the state's electoral politics. Speaking to IANS, political commentator and writer Sushanta Talukdar said: "Both the BJP and Congress have high stakes in Assam's politics. But it is too early before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls about the permutation and combination of the fast changing electoral politics. "The Congress might be trying to consolidate its position in the northeast on its own but reality shows that it has to take the support of the other non-BJP parties, specially the local ones." Talukdar, also the editor of multilingual online portal 'Nezine', said that the non-BJP parties' joint programmes and agitations from now onwards can get them a dividend in the 2024 polls but such serious efforts not yet visible now. Assam has more than 10 lakh

tea garden workers in the organised sector working in 850 tea estates. They play a crucial role both in the politics and in the electoral battle. According to the 2011 Census, Muslims account for 34.22 per cent of the state's population, while Hindus and other religions make up for the rest of the 3.12 crore people in Assam. Of the 126 Assembly seats, religious minorities decide the electoral fate of 23, mostly in western and southern Assam and also play a crucial role in about seven more. Of Assam's 34 districts, 12 per cent or more Muslims reside in 19. Muslims are a majority in the districts of Dhubri (79.67), Barpeta (70.74 per cent), Darrang (64.34 per cent), Hailakandi (60.31 per cent), Goalpara (57.52 per cent) and Bongaigaon (50.22 per cent). Over four million population, mostly Bengali speaking, reside in the Barak Valley's Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi districts.

# 2 years on, Bikru lives with dark memories of massacre

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bikru, July 3:** Exactly two years ago on this day, Bikru was sleeping peacefully when gunshots rent the air. People woke up with a start to a series of screams and cries in the darkness. Twenty minutes later, there was silence and then headlights went on in the darkness. Life has not been the same ever since for the village and its people. The massacre of eight policemen in the Bikru village, allegedly by gangster Vikas Dubey and his men July 3, 2020, has changed the lives of people in this village. "Almost every house in this village has at least one person who is either in jail or was brutally thrashed by the police after the massacre. They have suffered fractures and many of them have even lost their jobs. Some are unable to work now. The incident has taken a toll on every life," says Ram Chandar (name changed), a local resident who also suffered a frac-

ture in hip bone. A few families have left Bikru after the incident. "We were being regularly harassed by the police just because our house is located near Vikas Dubey's house. The police presumed that we were a part of his gang and every day someone from the family would be picked up for questioning," said Vivek Kumar, who has left Bikru along with his brother, uncle and their families and migrated to another district. Nearly 54 persons were arrested, most of them from the village, after the July 3 massacre, and all of them are in jail. They have been denied bail and trial is yet to begin. A total of 80 cases have been registered by the police in the case. Arms licenses of 30 accused have been cancelled. The administration has seized assets worth about Rs 70 crore of other gang members, including Vikas Dubey, the main kingpin of the Bikru incident who was killed in a police encounter.



Four women, who are prima facie not guilty in the Bikru massacre case but are paying a price for the Dubey connection, are also in jail since the past two years. They include Khushi Dubey, a minor who was married for three days when her husband Amar Dubey was shot dead by the po-

lice, Kshama Dubey (mother of Amar Dubey), Shanti Dubey (mother of another accused, Hiru Dubey) and Rekha Agnihotri, who worked as a cook in the house of Vikas Dubey. Rekha's seven-year-old daughter and two-and-a-half-year-old son are also in jail with her.

**I have never defended Vikas for what he did, but his family is not criminal. The government should have killed us in an encounter too, if they felt we did not have the right to live**

RICHA DUBEY | WIFE OF VIKAS DUBEY

Much hue and cry was raised by the opposition parties during the Assembly elections for the release of these women but the issue dissolved as soon as the polls were over. The village still has a strong police presence and the local people do not even venture near the partially demolished residence of Vikas Dubey. Two days ago, the police recovered Vikas Dubey's Scorpio car from the Syahpur village and the owner of the plot from where the car has been recovered is being questioned. Richa Dubey, the wife of Vikas

Dubey, has her own heart-wrenching story to tell. "We are alive but we are actually dead. My father-in-law and mother-in-law do not have a place to live. Everything that we had, has been confiscated. It has been two years but our bank accounts have been seized and we are finding it impossible to make ends meet." Richa said that she has been selling her jewellery to pay the school fees of her sons. "My elder son has done three years of medicine but I cannot afford to continue paying his fees. If I get the death certificate, at least I can get some money from my husband's insurance policies for my children's education," she said. Richa said that she had been calling up all top officials, but no one has responded. "I have never defended Vikas for what he did, but his family is not criminal. The government should have killed us in an encounter too, if they felt we did not have the right to live," she said.



## of the day quote

It is of grave impropriety that the ruling party TMC spokesperson has made totally wrong statement as regards Governor/Chancellor making appointment of Vice-Chancellor of Rabindra Bharati University

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | WEST BENGAL GOVERNOR

Nitish Kumar is NDA and NDA is Nitish Kumar in Bihar. He has been leading the coalition since it came into being in the state. He will continue to do so as long as the NDA exists here

UPENDRA KUSHWAHA | JD(U) PARLIAMENTARY BOARD CHIEF

BJP leaders in Bihar have taken 'Y' category security because they do not trust their own double engine government in the state, the home department here and the police. Are these shameless and corrupt people in power just to loot the people?

TEJASHWI YADAV | RID LEADER

### SHORT TAKES

#### Minor killed in J&K

Srinagar: A 6-year old girl was killed and her father and grandfather injured when a wall collapsed in J&K's Shopian district Sunday, police said. The brick wall collapse occurred in the Imam Sahib area of Shopian. Sources said both the injured have been shifted to hospital for treatment.

#### Teacher suspended

Raichur: In a shocking incident, a teacher forced the mother of his student for physical relation and circulated video of the act in Raichur district of Karnataka. The accused is identified as Mohammad Azaruddin, a teacher of Singapura Government School. The accused teacher is also accused of misbehaving with school children, police said Sunday. Following a complaint against him, the Deputy Director of the Department of Public Instruction, Raichur district issued a suspension order against the accused teacher.

#### Man found dead

Ayodhya (UP): A man has been arrested for killing his cousin in the premises of a temple in UP's Ayodhya, police said Sunday. The body of Pankaj Shukla, 35, was found inside the premises of a temple under Kumarganj police circle. Shukla, a resident of Amethi, was on a visit to his maternal house in Bhuapur village in Ayodhya. Police officials said on Sunday that Shukla's cousin Golu Mishra has been arrested in connection with the murder. A sharp-edged weapon used in the murder has also been recovered from his possession.

#### Fire breaks out

Patna: Hundreds of passengers had a narrow escape on Sunday morning after a fire broke out in a running train near the Bhehlai railway station on the Raxaul-Narkatiaganj section in North Bihar. The mishap occurred at 5.10 a.m. in the engine of a Raxaul-Narkatiaganj passenger train number 05541 at bridge number 39 near Bhehlai station. The fire was first spotted by the guard of the train who immediately informed the drivers. At that time, the passenger train was near the Bhehlai railway station. The drivers of the train applied brakes to stop the train. The passengers immediately jumped out from the train. There was complete chaos and the passengers were very agitated.

# Team Shinde wins Speaker election

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, July 3: After winning the maiden major legislature battle - the election of Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Speaker - the Eknath Shinde government supported by the Bharatiya Janata Party is now preparing for the crucial 'vote of confidence' in the House, scheduled here on Monday. The Shinde-led government, which was sworn-in June 30 after the collapse of the 31-month-old Maha Vikas Aghadi government, will seek the confidence vote on the second day of the 2-day Special Session of the Assembly convened by Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari.

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said the ruling alliance will easily win the house trust as it has 166 MLAs on its side, comprising the BJP, the Shiv Sena's rebel group which broke away on June 20, besides independents and smaller parties' legislators - sufficient to clear the midway mark of 145 (in the 288-member Lower House).

The government passed its first litmus test Sunday afternoon when BJP's Advocate leader Rahul Narwekar - a first-time legislator - was elected as the youngest-ever Speaker of the House and also the youngest to hold the august office in the country.

While Narwekar bagged 164 votes, the MVA candidate Rajan Salvi secured only 107 votes of the 271 votes polled in the 288-member house. Of the rest 17, one



Newly-elected Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar being presented a bouquet by Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis after the special session of Maharashtra Assembly, at Vidhan Bhavan in Mumbai

Speaker of the House and also the youngest to hold the august office in the country.

While Narwekar bagged 164 votes, the MVA candidate Rajan Salvi secured only 107 votes of the 271 votes polled in the 288-member house. Of the rest 17, one

has passed away, 2 are in custody, 3 abstained, and the remaining others were absent for various reasons, including ill-health.

Congress leader Nana Patole was the last Speaker, who was elected late in 2019 after the Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-

The Delhi government is aiming to plant 35 lakh saplings in the national capital in 2022 to fight pollution more effectively

GOPAL RAI | DELHI ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

### CABINET EXPANSION LIKELY TODAY

Less than four months after the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) sweeping victory in the Punjab Assembly elections, the Bhagwant Mann government will have its first cabinet expansion Monday evening with five new ministers, including second-time legislator Aman Arora, likely to be inducted



# Trespasser enters Mamata's residence

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, July 3: A trespasser, reportedly entered the residence of West Bengal Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee in South Kolkata after climbing up the boundary walls on late Saturday and was hiding inside the house for the whole night. He was nabbed by the security personnel Sunday morning.

He was handed over to the local Kalighat Police Station. The police are interrogating him to know with what intention he dared to enter that high-security zone and that too after climbing up the walls. Facing interrogation, he confessed that he climbed up the boundary wall and entered the Chief Minister's residence at around 1 a.m. and was hiding there for the whole night. Now the questions are being raised on how the person could climb up the wall and enter the chief minister's residence, hoodwinking the security personnel present there and also avoiding the CCTV cameras installed there.

Recently, an aged couple was murdered in the same locality, which raised questions about the



Facing interrogation, he confessed that he climbed up the boundary wall and entered the Chief Minister's residence at around 1 a.m. and was hiding there for the whole night

It is learnt that all officers and personnel in charge of the security arrangements at the Chief Minister's residence will be questioned and the negligence part will also be probed

security arrangements there. Then it was learnt that a number of CCTV cameras installed there were non-functional.

A senior official of the city police said that the questions of negligence of the police personnel posted there cannot be ruled out. It is learnt that all officers and personnel in charge of the security arrangements at the chief minister's residence will be questioned.

# Tejas aircraft emerges as Malaysia's top choice

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: India's Tejas light combat aircraft has emerged as the top choice for Malaysia as the Southeast Asian nation looks at replacing its ageing fleet of fighter jets and the two sides are holding negotiations to firm up the procurement.

Malaysia has narrowed down on the Indian aircraft notwithstanding the stiff competition from China's JF-17 jet, South Korea's FA-50 and Russia's Mig-35 as well as Yak-130, Chairman and Managing Director of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, R Madhavan, said in an interview.

As part of the package, India has offered to set up an MRO (Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul) facility in Malaysia for its Russian-origin Su-30 fighter fleet as it is facing difficulties in procuring spares for the aircraft from Russia in view of western sanctions against Moscow. "I am very confident about it unless some political shift takes place," Madhavan said when asked whether the deal would be closed soon.

The top executive of the state-run aerospace behemoth said if the deal is sealed, it will give a "very good signal" to other prospective buyers of the aircraft and boost its overall export potential.

"(The negotiation) is almost in the final stages. We are the only country which is offering them the support for their Su-30 aircraft as other than Russia, we are the only one who can support them to the extent that they require for the Sukhoi fleet," Madhavan said.

It is learnt that the Chinese JF-17 was cheaper but could not match

Tejas is a much superior aircraft compared to JF-17 and FA-50 and that the selection of the Indian aircraft would provide Malaysia with the option to go in for future upgrades of the fleet

R MADHAVAN | CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING DIRECTOR OF HINDUSTAN AERONAUTICS LIMITED

the technical parameters of the Tejas Mk-IA variant and the offer of maintenance of the Su-30 fleet as proposed by India.

A team of high-ranking officials and experts is expected to visit India soon to take forward the procurement process. Malaysia is procuring the aircraft to replace its ageing fleet of Russian MIG-29 fighter planes. The number of aircraft that Malaysia is looking at procuring is not immediately clear.

Madhavan said Tejas is a much superior aircraft compared to JF-17 and FA-50 and that the selection of the Indian aircraft would provide Malaysia with the option to go in for future upgrades of the fleet. Tejas, manufactured by HAL, is a single-engine and highly agile multi-role supersonic fighter aircraft capable of operating in high-threat air environments.

In February last year, the defence ministry sealed a Rs 48,000 crore deal with HAL for the procurement of 83 Tejas fighter aircraft for the Indian Air Force (IAF). India has started work on the MK 2 version of the Tejas as well as on an ambitious USD 5 billion project to develop a fifth-generation Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA).



## Kuru Kolumn

### PM's Murmu card pays rich dividends

Prime Minister Modi's masterstroke of fielding Droupadi Murmu as NDA's

presidential candidate is turning out to be a huge setback for the joint Opposition candidate Yashwant Sinha. There is a massive groundswell of support for Murmu among the 37-odd parties in the Parliament. Though NDA has only 16 parties on its side in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha out of these 37 parties, the number is growing. If the Biju Janata Dal, a non-NDA party, was the first to come to support Murmu, YSR-Congress having a large chunk of votes announced its support too. Then came the big announcement by Bahujan Samaj Party to support Murmu. There is a possibility that Shiromani Akali Dal, TDP, RLP and many undecided parties may also vote for Murmu. As if this is not enough, three Independents each in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha may also support

# Sukesh secretly sending letters

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 3: Jailed conman Sukesh Chandrashekar was caught secretly sending a letter to someone from the high-security Tihar Jail in the national capital, officials said on Sunday.

"A few days back it was noticed in CCTV recording that a Nursing Orderly (contractual staff) was seen taking some paper from Sukesh Chandrashekar," Director General (Prisons) Sandeep Goyal said.

The top prison official further said that on inquiry it was revealed that it was a letter to be given to someone.

Sukesh Chandrashekar, presently lodged in Jail no 3 of the Tihar Jail, was arrested last year for allegedly cheating and extort-



ing money from some high-profile people, which includes former Fortis Healthcare promoter Shivinder Mohan Singh's wife Aditi Singh. Many women Bollywood actors and models have been questioned by the Enforcement Directorate for their alleged links to Chandrashekar. In April 2021, he was arrested in

another money laundering case linked to the 2017 Election Commission bribery case, which allegedly involved a former AIADMK leader and others.

Notably, the Enforcement Directorate, recently in an application in the Supreme Court, had mentioned that accused Sukesh has repeatedly committed offences, including that of money laundering during his incarceration in jail by subverting the legal system and prison rules with the help of his knowledge of technology and his "ability to con people".

Earlier also in February, the alleged conman had once again tried to bribe the staff of Tihar Jail No 4 and was subsequently, as a precautionary measure, shifted to another jail.

# SFI disbands Wayanad district committee

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, July 3: The Student Federation of India (SFI), the student body of the CPI(M) has disbanded its Wayanad district committee following criticism over the attack on the office of Congress leader and Member of Parliament from Wayanad constituency Rahul Gandhi.

SFI in a statement on Sunday said that a seven-member ad-hoc committee will look into the affairs of the Wayanad district committee till a new elected committee is put in place. A group of around 100 SFI activists led by its Wayanad district secretary Jishnu Sasi had on June 24 ransacked the office of Rahul Gandhi and even smashed the photograph of Mahatma Gandhi.

# Murmu. There are many who believe that if this kind of support continues for Murmu, she may gain more than 66.36% votes secured by Ram Nath Kovind in 2017.

# Sena's 19 Lok Sabha MPs are equally split

The 19-member Shiv Sena Parliamentary Party in Lok Sabha is headed for a vertical split after the majority of its MLAs walked out to support rebel leader Eknath Shinde. Efforts are on to woo the majority of 19 Lok Sabha MPs by the rebel faction aided and supported by the BJP's Devendra Fadnis. The first test of these MPs will be when the Presidential election takes place

# where it will be seen who votes for whom on July 19. It is learnt that more than a dozen Sena's Lok Sabha MPs are reportedly supporting rebel Eknath Shinde.

# The RCP Singh riddle

All eyes are now set on the fate of Union Steel Minister RCP Singh. Once a blue-eyed boy of Nitish Kumar, his rise has been rather meteoric. He was PS to Nitish Kumar in the Railway Ministry in 2003 and was given a Rajya Sabha seat later. Nitish even elevated him as Janata Dal(U)'s national president. As if this was not enough, Nitish Kumar nominated him under the JD(U) quota to be the party's lone representative in the Union Cabinet under Modi. But equally tumultuous is his

# fall from grace. No one has a clue as to what happened between the two leading to Singh's fall from grace. Nitish was so angry with him that he denied him a Rajya Sabha ticket forcing PM Modi's hands to drop him. Technically, Singh can continue until July 7 when he retires from the Rajya Sabha. But politically, Nitish Kumar has reasons to be upset and Singh should have resigned from the Union Cabinet after he was denied the RS ticket. Whether Modi sacks RCP Singh or allows him to retain his ministerial position even if he is not an MP could be anybody's guess. There are already reports that a Cabinet reshuffle may take place anytime as Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi's term is also ending early next month.

# international

## of the day quote

We must work together to address different challenges, including defending the Palestinian cause and rights of Palestinian people, putting an end to wars in our countries, and not sparing efforts to fight against terrorism in addition to dealing with the biggest waves of displacement in modern history

ABDALLAH BOU HABIB | LEBANON FOREIGN MINISTER

In the coming months our goal, of this whole table, is to run the government as if there is no election campaign. The citizens of Israel deserve a functioning government at any given moment

YAIR LAPID | ISRAEL'S CARETAKER PM

## SHORT TAKES

### 40 al-Shabab ultras killed

**Mogadishu:** Somali National Army (SNA) said Sunday its elite forces Danab killed at least 40 al-Shabab militants during security operations carried out in the Middle Shabelle region, the central part of the country, Saturday. "During the operation, about 40 militants, including leaders, were killed and several vehicles were set on fire," Xinhua news agency reported.

### Drought conditions persist in California

**Fernley:** The latest data released by the US Drought Monitor (USDM) showed that California remained mired in extreme drought conditions when the most populous state in the US entered its tenth month of the 2022 water year. In total, 97.5 per cent of the state's land area is in at least "severe" drought status, 59.8 per cent in at least "extreme" drought and the driest 11.6 per cent in "exceptional" drought, reports said.

### Shooter kills 2, takes own life

**Haltom City (Texas):** A gunman killed two people and wounded four others, including three police officers, before taking his own life Saturday evening in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, police said. Haltom City Police Det. Matt Spillane said early Sunday that all of those wounded in the shooting in a residential neighbourhood had non-life threatening injuries and were expected to recover.

### HK Palace Museum open to public

**Hong Kong:** China's famed Palace Museum opened a branch in Hong Kong Sunday amid a drive to build loyalty to Beijing in the former British colony that reverted to Chinese rule 25 years ago. Works of calligraphy and paintings on silk dating back more than 1,000 years featured heavily in the exhibition, housed in a seven-story building in a newly developed harbourside arts district.

### Beijing, Shanghai resume flights

**Beijing:** Shanghai and Beijing, China's top two cities which went through stringent Covid lockdowns in the last two months due to the spread of the Omicron variant, has accelerated the resumption of rail and air services, gearing up for the summer travel peak as the number of cases came down drastically.



A parliamentary committee has authorised the military leadership of Pakistan to hold peace talks with the outlawed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

RANA SANAUULLAH | PAKISTAN INTERIOR MINISTER

## WORST SITUATION

With no fuel for transportation, Sri Lanka Sunday declared a week-long holiday for schools from Monday. The Education Ministry decided that all government and government-approved private schools would be given holidays from July 4 to 8



## Many injured in Copenhagen mall shooting

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Copenhagen, July 3:** Several people were injured in firing at a shopping centre in the Danish capital Sunday, but the number of casualties was not clear so far, reports said.

Additional armed police personnel were sent to the Field's mall in south Copenhagen, while all roads and the metro line towards it have been closed, the BBC reported. "We're on the scene, shots were fired and several people have been hit," Copenhagen city police said in a tweet. Ambulance and fire crews were also at the scene at the mall, which lies between the city centre and the airport.

Images on local media published images showing heavily armed police officers at the mall, as well as people running out of the shopping centre. Copenhagen Mayor Sophie H. Andersen tweeted: "Terrible reports of shooting in Fields. We do not yet know for sure how many were injured or dead, but it is very serious." Police said one suspect had been arrested, but gave no further details.

## Pak: 19 killed, 12 hurt as bus falls into ditch

AGENCIES

**Islamabad, July 3:** At least 19 people were killed and 12 others injured when a speeding passenger bus veered off a mountain road in heavy rain and fell into a ravine in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province Sunday.

The bus carrying more than 30 people was heading to Quetta from Islamabad when it plunged into the ravine in Zhob.

Television footage showed rescue workers assisting bloodied passengers. "As the bus neared Quetta, the driver lost control at a sharp bend and the bus plunged into a ravine. We have recovered 19 bodies so far while 11 injured have been admitted to hospital," Assistant Commissioner Syed Mehtab Shah said. "Rainfall and speeding led to the incident," The Express Tribune newspaper quoted Shah as saying. Rescue teams rushed to the scene soon after receiving information, Shah said, adding that the bodies had been taken to the hospital where the process to identify them was underway.

## Nepal: India gifts 75 ambulances, 17 school buses

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kathmandu, July 3:** India Sunday gifted 75 ambulances and 17 school buses to various governmental and non-governmental, not-for-profit organisations working in the fields of health and education, spread across various districts of Nepal.

The keys were handed over by Ambassador Naveen Srivastava in the presence of Devendra Paudel, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, who also graced the event. Gifting of 75 ambulances also coincides with the India@75 celebrations being marked this year to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence, the Indian Embassy said.

In his remarks during the event, Ambassador Srivastava said that this has been one of the long-standing traditions of the Government of India under the Nepal-India Development Partnership Programme to bolster the efforts of Government of Nepal to strengthen its infrastructure in health and education.

He also highlighted that this is part of the very robust and strong development partnership between India and Nepal, which has a long history and legacy, and has geographical spread throughout Nepal, touching people's lives and bringing out a tangible progress in the development journey of Nepal.



## Chinese farmers pay for homes with watermelons

ACCEPTING CROPS AT INFLATED PRICES HAS ALLOWED DEVELOPERS TO OFFER STEEPER DISCOUNTS ON HOMES THAN PERMITTED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WHILE TAPPING INTO AN UNDERSERVED MARKET

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Beijing, July 3:** Struggling developers in China have started taking payment for homes in watermelons, peaches and other agricultural produce, state media reported Sunday, as they attempt to lure buyers deterred by a property market slump.

China's housing market has been

hit by a slowing economy and debt crisis precipitated by a government ban on builders taking deposits before construction begins on a project.

One developer in the eastern city of Nanjing said it would accept truckloads of watermelons worth up to 100,000 yuan as down payment from local farmers, state-run China News Weekly reported.



In the nearby small town of Wuxi, another developer was taking peaches as payment, the magazine said. Homebuyers in Qi county, a major garlic-producing region in central China's Henan

province, can exchange their produce at three times the market price to settle part of their down payment.

Accepting crops at inflated prices has allowed developers to offer

steeper discounts on homes than permitted by local governments while tapping into an underserved market. "On the occasion of the new garlic season, the company has made a resolute decision to benefit garlic farmers in Qi county," homebuilder Central China Management said on social media in late May. "We are helping farmers with love, and making it easier for them to buy homes."

About 30 properties had been sold since the garlic campaign was launched, it added. Home sales in China measured by floor area have slid for 11 consecutive months and were down 31.5 percent in May compared to the same month last year, official data shows.

## Russia claims capture of pivotal Ukraine city



REUTERS

Russia announced encirclement, then capture of Lysychansk

City was last Ukrainian stronghold in Luhansk region

Ukraine staged fierce resistance in weeks of fighting

Blasts hit Russia's Belgorod, southern Ukraine base - officials

**Kyiv/Kostyantynivka, Ukraine, July 3:** Russia said Sunday its forces had taken control of Ukraine's eastern Luhansk region after capturing the final Ukrainian holdout of Lysychansk in heavy fighting, though Ukraine did not confirm the claim.

Control of Luhansk, a key war aim for Russia, would come after weeks slow advances, hand Moscow a limited political win and shift the battlefield focus to neighbouring Donetsk region, where Ukraine still controls substantial territory.

Driven back from the Ukrainian capital Kyiv following its Feb. 24 invasion, Russia has concentrated its military campaign on the Donbas, which includes Luhansk and Donetsk. Moscow-backed separatist proxies have been fighting there since Russia's first military intervention in Ukraine in 2014.

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu informed President Vladimir Putin that Luhansk had been "liberated", the defence ministry said, after Russia earlier said its forces had captured villages around Lysychansk and encircled the city. The minister said Russian forces and their allies in the area had "gained full control over the city of Lysychansk".

Yuriy Sak, an advisor to Ukraine's defence minister, told Reuters over the phone that he "cannot confirm that Lysychansk is under full Russian control". Ukraine's defence ministry press service did

not reply to a request for comment. Ukrainian officials, who say references to "liberating" Ukrainian territory are Russian war propaganda, had reported intense artillery barrages on residential areas. "Ukrainian forces likely conducted a deliberate withdrawal from Lysychansk, resulting in the Russian seizure of the city July 2," analysts at the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, wrote in a briefing note.

**COSTLY CAMPAIGN**  
Thousands of civilians have been killed and cities levelled since Russia invaded, with Kyiv accusing Moscow of deliberately targeting civilians. Moscow denies this.

Russia says what it calls a "special military operation" in Ukraine aims to protect Russian speakers from nationalists. Ukraine and its Western allies say this is a baseless pretext for its flagrant aggression that aims to seize territory.

While Russia would try to frame its advance in Luhansk as a significant moment in the war, it came four months into the war and at a high cost to Russia's military, said Neil Melvin of the London-based think tank RUSI.

## 'Sri Lanka struggling to pay for fuel shipments'

The country of 22 million people is unable to pay for essential import of food items, fertiliser, medicines and fuel due to a severe dollar crunch

REUTERS

**Colombo, July 3:** Sri Lanka is struggling to raise \$587 million to pay for about half a dozen fuel shipments, a top minister said Sunday as the cash-strapped country tries to cope with its worst financial crisis in decades.

Power and Energy Minister Kanachana Wijesekera said new fuel shipments were being lined up but the country is struggling to raise enough funds to pay as the central bank can supply only about \$125



Vitol by Thursday.

Faced with severely limited diesel and petrol stocks Sri Lanka last week closed schools, asked public employees to work from home and restricted government fuel supplies to essential services.

The minister said the country will have to attempt to raise funds from the open market and seek more flexible payment options from suppliers. Plans to settle the \$800 million owed to seven suppliers for purchases made this year were being discussed, he said.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) officials will continue to hold talks with Sri Lanka for a possible \$3 billion bailout package, the global lender said last week after wrapping up a 10-day visit to Colombo.

However, immediate release of funds from the IMF is unlikely because the country has first to get its debt on to a sustainable path.

## ORANGE STORM



A man navigates his wheelchair on a street during a sandstorm in Baghdad, Iraq, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

## Fossil discovery solves mystery of how pandas became vegetarian

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Beijing, July 03:** The discovery of panda fossils in China has helped researchers solve the mystery of how the giant species developed a "false thumb" and became the only dedicated vegetarian in the bear family.

Fossils dating back about six million years found in southwest China's Yunnan province included a greatly enlarged wrist bone called a radial sesamoid.

It is the oldest known evidence of the modern giant panda's false thumb that allows it to grip and break heavy bamboo stems, scientists wrote on a research paper published in the latest edition of the Scientific Reports.

The fossils belong to the now-extinct ancient relative of the panda called an Ailurarcto that lived in China six to eight million years ago.

"The giant panda is... a rare case of a large carnivore with a short, carnivorous digestive tract... that has become a dedicated herbivore," Wang Xiaomeng, curator of vertebrate palaeontology at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, said.

"The false thumb in Ailurarctos



WHILE THEIR DIET IS MOSTLY VEGETARIAN, WILD PANDA ARE KNOWN TO OCCASIONALLY HUNT SMALL ANIMALS

shows... for the first time, the likely timing and steps in the evolution of bamboo feeding in pandas."

Researchers had known about the panda's false thumb, which works similar to a human thumb, for about a century. But the lack of fossil evidence had left unanswered questions about how and when the extra digit - not seen in any other bear - evolved.

"While the giant panda's false thumb is not the most elegant or dexterous... even a small, protruding lump at the wrist can be a modest help in preventing bamboo from slipping off bent fingers," Wang wrote.

The fossils found near Zhaozong city in the north of Yunnan in-

cluded a false thumb that was longer than that found in modern pandas, but without an inward hook on the end.

The hook and a fleshy pad around the base of the thumb evolved over time since it had to "bear the burden of considerable body weight", the paper said.

Pandas traded the high-protein, omnivorous diet of their ancestors for bamboo, that is low in nutrients available year-round in South China millions of years ago.

They eat for up to 15 hours a day and an adult panda can consume 45kg of bamboo a day.

They eat for up to 15 hours a day and an adult panda can consume 45kg of bamboo a day. While their diet is mostly vegetarian, wild panda are known to occasionally hunt small animals.

## 27 missing after floating crane sinks in S. China

38 rescue vessels have been despatched and rescue aircraft made 14 trips to search for the missing people, covering an area of 700 square nautical miles where waves were three to four metres high

AGENCIES

**Beijing, July 3:** As many as 27 people were reported missing after a floating crane sank off the coast of south China's Guangdong Province which was hit by typhoon Chaba, the provincial maritime search and rescue centre said Sunday.

So far, 38 rescue vessels have been dispatched and rescue aircraft made 14 trips to search for the missing people, covering an area of 700 square nautical miles where waves were three to four metres high.

The floating crane of an offshore wind farm project was found via a monitoring system to be in danger after its mooring chain broke while it was taking shelter from typhoon

Chaba in waters near the city of Yangjiang.

The floating crane sank later Saturday. Three people were rescued and 27 others fell into the water and were missing, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported, citing the centre.

Chaba, the third typhoon of the year, made landfall in the coastal area of Maoming City in Guangdong Saturday.

Search and rescue efforts are still underway.

On Saturday, China's State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters upgraded its emergency response for flood and typhoon control to Level III, in light of possible floods triggered by the third and fourth typhoons of the year.

Typhoon Aere, the fourth typhoon of the year, is forecast to approach the East China Sea on the weekend. China has a four-tier flood-control emergency response system, with level I being the most severe.

Guangdong had ordered 53,728 fishing boats to return to the local ports for shelter, the province closed 82 seaside scenic spots and beaches and evacuated 77,900 people to safe areas, local media reported.

# business



**We expect our turnover to be in the range of \$3-3.5 billion in the first phase which is by 2026-27. This will be from both display and semiconductor combined. At that time we expect \$1 billion to come from exports**

AKARSH HEBBAR | GLOBAL MD (DISPLAY AND SEMICONDUCTOR BUSINESS), VEDANTA GROUP

## TESLA'S DELIVERIES HIT BY CHINA LOCKDOWN

Tesla Inc delivered 17.9% fewer electric vehicles in the second quarter from the previous quarter, as China's Covid 19-related shutdown disrupted its production and supply chain. The world's biggest electric car maker said that it delivered 254,695 vehicles in the April to June period, compared with 310,048 vehicles in the preceding quarter, ending a nearly two-year-long run of record quarterly deliveries



### of the day quote

We have earmarked ₹10,000 crore for investments to reduce our carbon emissions through various initiatives, such as increasing the use of renewable energy to replace thermal power, reduce our fuel rate

SAJJAN JINDAL | CHAIRMAN, JSW STEEL

Corrections are now happening in the start-up funding ecosystem, with a higher degree of accountability to show the route to profit, which is a good step for the industry

HARSH MARIWALA | CHAIRMAN, MARICO

In the next five to seven years, every model will have some element (of green technology) or the other. There will be no pure petrol powertrain across the range

CV RAMAN | CHIEF TECHNICAL OFFICER, MSI

## ALL-TIME HIGH Pak's trade deficit touches \$48.66bn

**PAKISTAN IS FACING GROWING ECONOMIC CHALLENGES, WITH HIGH INFLATION, SLIDING FOREX RESERVES, A WIDENING CURRENT ACCOUNT DEFICIT AND A FALLING CURRENCY**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, July 3: Cash-strapped Pakistan's trade deficit has surged to an all-time high of \$48.66 billion in the outgoing fiscal year, up from \$30.96 billion a year ago, a significant 57 per cent jump on the back of higher-than-expected imports, a media report said Sunday. The trade deficit reached an

alarming level despite a ban on more than 800 non-essential luxury items in May by the Shehbaz Sharif government, the Dawn newspaper reported, quoting the provisional official data.

Pakistan's trade gap widened by more than 32 per cent to touch \$4.84 billion in June, from \$3.66 billion a year ago, driven largely by almost double the increase



in imports compared to exports, the paper said.

The outgoing fiscal year's trade deficit has crossed the \$37 billion figure in 2017-18, which was largely led by imports related to the China-

Pakistan Economic Corridor.

In the subsequent years, the trade gap dropped to \$31.8 billion in 2018-19 and then to \$23.2 billion in 2019-20, before bouncing back to \$30.8 billion in 2020-21 and finally to a whopping \$48.64 billion in the 2021-22 fiscal, according to official data.

The outgoing year's trade deficit is propelled by the highest-ever increase in oil prices and commodities in the international market due to the supply chain disruptions brought about due to the ongoing war in Ukraine.

The trade deficit has been on the rise owing to an unprecedented increase in imports due to a rise

in global commodity prices, while exports have stagnated to around \$2.5 billion to \$2.8 billion a month, mostly those of semi-finished products and raw materials, the paper added.

Pakistan's import bill increased 43.45 per cent to \$80.51 billion during 2021-22, up from \$56.12 billion, just a year ago.

Last week, the Pakistan government steeply hiked petroleum prices to implement the tough preconditions set by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to revive the stalled \$6 billion bailout package for the cash-strapped country.

## 3 of top 10 firms lose ₹73,630cr in m-cap; Reliance biggest drag



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: The combined market valuation of three of the 10 most valued domestic firms eroded by ₹73,630.56 crore last week, with Reliance Industries Limited taking the biggest hit.

While HUL and ICICI Bank were the other laggards from the top-10 pack, TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, LIC, SBI, HDFC and Bharti Airtel were the gainers.

However, the combined gain of the seven firms at ₹49,441.05 crore was less than the total loss suffered by the three companies.

Last week, the Sensex climbed 179.95 points or 0.34 per cent, while the Nifty gained 52.80 points or 0.33 per cent.

The market valuation of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) declined by ₹62,100.95 crore to reach ₹16,29,684.50 crore.

ICICI Bank's valuation fell by ₹6,654.2 crore to ₹4,89,700.16 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) dipped ₹4,875.41 crore to ₹5,36,364.69 crore.

Among the gainers, the market capitalisation of Infosys Limited jumped ₹15,172.88 crore to ₹6,21,907.38 crore.

The market capitalisation (m-cap) of State Bank of India (SBI) climbed ₹11,200.38 crore to ₹4,16,690.11 crore.

The valuation of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) went up by ₹9,519.12 crore to ₹4,28,044.22 crore and that of TCS advanced ₹8,489 crore to stand at ₹12,13,396.32 crore.

HDFC added ₹3,924.46 crore to its market valuation to reach ₹4,01,114.96 crore.

The m-cap of Bharti Airtel gained ₹1,043.49 crore to ₹3,69,833.12 crore and that of HDFC Bank went up by ₹91.72 crore to ₹7,51,892.03 crore.

In the ranking of top-10 firms, Reliance Industries retained its top slot, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, HUL, ICICI Bank, LIC, SBI, HDFC and Bharti Airtel.

## FPI exodus continues for 9th month in a row

FPIs have now pulled out around ₹2.2 lakh crore from domestic equities in the first six months of 2022 -- the highest-ever net withdrawal by them

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: Continuing their massive selling spree for the ninth consecutive month, foreign investors dumped Indian shares worth ₹50,203 crore in June -- the highest net outflow in over two years -- amid aggressive rate hike by the US Federal Reserve, elevated inflation and relatively higher valuation of domestic equities.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have now pulled out around ₹2.2 lakh crore from domestic equities in the first six months of 2022 -- the highest-ever net withdrawal by them. Before that, FPIs withdrew ₹52,987 crore in the entire 2008, data with depositories showed.

The massive capital outflow has also contributed to the depreciation in the rupee, which breached the 79-mark against the US dollar for the first time last week. Analysts warn that FPI flows are likely to remain volatile in the near term.

"Going ahead, we believe inflation would be the key driver to monitor to decide the trend, coupled with narrowing yield gap between bond and equities," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head - Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities.

"Aggressive rate hike by US Fed, high inflation as well as relatively higher valuation of Indian stocks

**The relentless FPI selling has to be seen in the context of steadily rising dollar and bond yields in US. FPIs are selling more in countries with rising CAD like India because the currencies of such countries are vulnerable to further depreciation**

VK VIJAYAKUMAR | CHIEF INVESTMENT STRATEGIST, GEOJIT FINANCIAL SERVICES

₹50,203cr withdrawn from equity market in June

This was the highest net outflow since March 2020, when they had pulled out ₹61,973cr

FPIs have been deserting Indian equities since October 2021

continued to keep foreign investors at bay through the month of June," said Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar India.

According to him, the broader sentiment remained negative towards India, which prompted foreign investors to carry forward their cautious stance on domestic equities. Compared to other emerging markets, India is among the worst hit with respect to net outflows.

Towards the end of June, FPI



Massive outflow pushed rupee to breach 79-mark for the first time against dollar

FPI flows in June were negative in other emerging markets like Indonesia, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand

selling witnessed a declining trend. If the market rises in July, anticipating or responding to good first quarterly results, FPIs may sell again. This trend will be halted only when the dollar stabilises and US bond yields decline, he added.

Apart from equities, FPIs were net sellers in the Indian debt market too last month. They were net sellers to the tune of ₹1,414 crore in June, which, however, was significantly lower than May's figure of ₹5,505 crore.

### SHORT TAKES

#### Discoms dues to gencos rise 4%

New Delhi: Total outstanding dues owed by electricity distribution companies (discoms) to power producers rose by 4 per cent year-on-year to ₹1,32,432 crore in June 2022. Discoms owed a total of ₹1,27,306 crore to power generation firms in June 2021, according to portal PRAAPTI. On a sequential basis, total dues in June increased from ₹1,30,139 crore in May 2022.

#### Ola EV's charging network head quits

New Delhi: There is no stopping resignations at Ola Electric and now, Yashwant Kumar, who is Senior Director and Business Head for Charging Networks at the company, has decided to move on. A B.Tech from the Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay, Kumar joined Ola Electric in March last year. He is among several senior employees who have made a beeline to leave Bhavish Aggarwal-run electric two-wheeler company in the recent months, sources told IANS Sunday, amid global meltdown, supply chain issues and several EV fire episodes that have shaken the trust of EV buyers in the country.

#### Crypto co Voyager suspends all ops

San Francisco: Cryptocurrency broker Voyager Digital (VYGFV) has suspended all trading, deposits withdrawals and loyalty rewards, as top crypto hedge fund Three Arrows Capital (3AC) filed for bankruptcy in the US, in which Voyager has made significant investments. Voyager disclosed in a statement that it had significant investments in 3AC, and the Singapore-based hedge fund failed to make payments on its loan of 15,250 BTC (\$294 million) and \$350 million USDC.

#### HM plans electric 2-Ws by next year

Kolkata: Hindustan Motors (HM), the erstwhile maker of the iconic 'Ambassador' cars, expects to set up a new joint venture with a European partner to manufacture electric two-wheelers (2-Ws) by next year, a senior official said. It might look at making electric four-wheelers at a later date, he said. Financial due diligence of both the companies will start in July, which will take two months, after which the technical aspects of the joint venture will be looked into and this will take another month, Director of Hindustan Motors, Uttam Bose, told PTI.

### BIZ BUZZ

#### Vedanta celebrates Van Mahotsav Week' 22

Jharsuguda: Vedanta Limited, Jharsuguda kickstarted the Van Mahotsav Week' 22 celebrations with a painting competition for kids on the theme 'Conservation of our forests' organised at Vedanta Meadows township. Ashish Shukla, recipient of Biju Patnaik Wildlife Award by government of Odisha graced the occasion along with Ashwin Chand Head PR & Communications - Vedanta Jharsuguda. The environmentalists elucidated about the importance of trees in our lives and the need to nurture a green ecosystem. Winners of the painting competition were felicitated and saplings were handed over to the participants. The weeklong celebrations will also include plantation drives in the community, plant premises and awareness sessions for employees, kids, family members and business partners.



## 'Windfall tax to recoup lost revenue'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: The windfall tax on oil produced within India and fuel exported overseas will make up for more than three-fourths of the revenue that the government lost when it cut excise duty on petrol and diesel to cool soaring inflation, industry sources said.

The government slapped a ₹6 per litre tax on the export of petrol and jet fuel (ATF) and ₹13 a litre on the export of diesel effective July 1. Additionally, a ₹23,250 per tonne tax was levied on crude oil produced domestically.

The tax on crude oil producers like Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), Oil India Ltd and Vedanta Ltd alone will fetch the



government ₹69,000 crore annually considering 29.7 million tonne of oil production in 2021-22 fiscal (April 2021 to March 2022), two sources with knowledge of the calculations said.

For the remaining nine months of the current fiscal, the levy would get the government almost ₹52,000 crore if the tax remains in place till March 31, 2023. On top of this, the

new tax brought in on the export of petrol, diesel and ATF would bring in additional revenue.

"India exported 2.5 million tonne of petrol, 5.7 million tonne of diesel and 797,000 tonne of ATF during April and May. Even if these volumes fall to a third due to the new levy and other restrictions imposed, the government would still be richer by at least ₹20,000 crore if the tax

continues till March 2023," one of the sources said. The two taxes together will accrue as much as ₹72,000 crore or over 85 per cent of the revenue that the government lost from cutting excise duty on petrol and diesel, they said.

The government had May 23 cut excise duty on petrol by ₹8 per litre and diesel by ₹6 a litre to cool record inflation. These excise cuts, according to a statement by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at that time, would dent the exchequer by ₹1 lakh crore annually.

For the remaining 10 months of the current fiscal, the revenue foregone was about ₹84,000 crore. And the windfall tax will help bridge 85 per cent of this deficit, sources said.

## Over 22K techies lose jobs in US; 12K in Indian startups

**WHILE JUSTIFYING THEIR ACTION, STARTUP FIRMS SAY IT IS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO RAISE NEW FUNDING IN THIS GLOOMY ENVIRONMENT**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 3: As the tech and startup sector gets hammered by economic meltdown, more than 22,000 workers in the sector have lost jobs in 2022, along with more

than 12,000 in the Indian startup ecosystem.

Startups, especially the ones who benefited from a pandemic boom, are feeling the pressure as valuations, particularly at the late stage, have started to dip, according to Crunchbase. Globally, companies like Netflix, financial services company Robinhood and several crypto platforms have tripped their workforce.

In the world of crypto that has been battered by the economic headwinds, crypto exchanges and firms including Coinbase, Gemini, crypto.com, Vauld, Bybit, Bitpanda and others announced to downsize their workforce.

Pokemon GO game developer Niantic has asked eight per cent



of its workforce to leave the company, which is said to be around

85-90 people. Elon Musk-run Tesla has cut 10

Industry experts say that at least 50,000 more startup employees are likely to be thrown out this year alone in the name of "restructuring and cost management" while certain startups keep receiving millions in fundings

per cent of its salaried workforce. As startups in India keep firing their staff to navigate through the 'funding winter', the country may see more than 60,000 job losses in

2022 alone, led by edtech and e-commerce platforms.

Nearly 12,000 startup employees have been shown the door to date, let by companies like Ola, Blinkit, BYJU's (White Hat Jr), Toppr, Unacademy, Vedantu, Cars24, Mobile Premier League (MPL), Lido Learning, Mfine, Trell, farEye, Furlanco and more.

Industry experts say that at least 50,000 more startup employees are likely to be thrown out this year alone in the name of "restructuring and cost management" while certain startups keep receiving millions in fundings.

Even several unicorns have also laid off employees like Ola, Unacademy, Vedantu, Cars24 and Mobile Premier League (MPL).

# Siraj, Pujara prop India

DESPITE BAIRSTOW'S FIGHTING CENTURY, MEN IN BLUE TAKE COMMAND OF 5TH TEST

**Birmingham, July 3:** Mohammed Siraj (4/66) bowled a hostile spell in the post-lunch session to neutralise a fine century by Jonny Bairstow (106, 140b, 14x4, 2x6) as India bowled out England for 284 to take a sizeable 132-run first innings lead on the third day of the rescheduled fifth Test here Sunday. At stumps Sunday India were 125 for the loss of three wickets with Cheteshwar Pujara (50 batting, 139b, 5x4) and Rishabh Pant (30 batting, 45b, 5x4). India are currently ahead by 257 runs with two full days play remaining.

The three Indian wickets to fall were those of Shubman Gill (4), Hanuma Vihari (11) and Virat Kohli (20). However, both Pujara and Pant batted with a lot of common sense to keep India in a position of command.

Earlier the morning session belonged to Bairstow, who smashed

the Indian attack after being extensively sledged by Virat Kohli. Kohli had something to say to Bairstow about his 'play and miss' game and the England batter wasn't someone to take the stuff lying down. Post that altercation, Bairstow started chancing his arms and played a lot of lofted shots over mid-off and clipped a few towards the mid-wicket boundary.

However, Siraj came back strongly in the second session to mop up the tail after Mohammed Shami (2/78) finally had some luck going his way by dismissing Bairstow.

Once Bairstow smashed Shardul Thakur (1/48) through cover point to complete his 11th Test century off 119 balls and third in as many games, he suddenly went into a shell. In the next 20 balls, Bairstow managed only six runs after his mayhem

that saw him get 14 boundaries and two sixes.

Skipper Jasprit Bumrah (3/68) bowled a probing spell, beating the bat time and again. Bottled up by Bumrah, the England batter had no option but to try an expansive drive when a fuller delivery was pitched on the fourth stump line. The resultant thick edge was smartly taken by a leaping Kohli, who made amends for his needless engagement with the batter.

Once the Bairstow-Sam Billings (36, 114b, 4x4) stand of 92 runs ended, Siraj bowled fast and quick to get the remaining three wickets for addition of another 43 runs.

In the morning session, Thakur more than made up for

**Brief scores**  
India 416 and 125 for 3 (Cheteshwar Pujara 50 batting, Rishabh Pant 30 batting); England 284 (Jonny Bairstow 106, Mohammed Siraj 4/66, Mohammed Shami 2/78). Match to continue.

dropping a regulation skier by dismissing Ben Stokes (25), but the in-form Bairstow's brutal yet swift counter-attack did create some worries for the Indian team.

Stokes and England's 'man of the moment' Bairstow added 66 for the sixth wicket before Bumrah produced a moment of inspiration on the field, taking a diving screamer off Thakur's bowling to dismiss his opposite number.

The dismissal couldn't have come at a more opportune time for India after an attacking field proved to be counter-productive as seven boundaries came between overs 33 and 36.

In fact, in a spell of 10 minutes, Stokes was dropped twice, first by Shardul, who couldn't latch on to a skier when the English skipper had shimmied down the track only to mistime it. The second chance was off the delivery before the dismissal when he flat-batted Shardul straight to Bumrah at mid-off but, to everyone's horror, he missed a regulation catch. But instead of being discreet, Stokes did a repeat act, only to find the Indian skipper holding on to a much tougher chance.

# Britain's Norrie in quarters



**HAPPY ENDING:** Germany's Tatjana Maria celebrates after defeating Latvia's Jelena Ostapenko at Wimbledon, Sunday

**Wimbledon, July 3:** Cam Norrie became the first British man in five years to reach the Wimbledon quarterfinals, beating Tommy Paul in straight sets on No. 1 Court here Sunday. The ninth-seeded Norrie was only broken once as he won 6-4, 7-5, 6-4. He is the first British male quarterfinalist since Andy Murray in 2017 and will face David Goffin of Belgium.

Goffin reached his second Wimbledon quarterfinal after outlasting Francis Tiafoe in five sets. The Belgian won 7-6 (7-3), 5-7, 5-7, 6-4, 7-5 on No. 2 Court in a tight contest that lasted four hours, 36 minutes. Goffin also reached the quarters in his last Wimbledon appearance in 2019, but missed last year's tournament with an injury.

Jule Niemeier is into the quarterfinals in her first Wimbledon appearance after denying British veteran Heather Watson a spot in the last eight. The 22-year-old

Niemeier, who is playing just her second Grand Slam tournament after losing in the first round of the French Open in May, beat Watson 6-2, 6-4 on Centre Court. The German converted her third match point when Watson netted a backhand.

Niemeier will next face countrywoman Tatjana Maria, who reached her first Grand Slam quarterfinal at the age of 34. Maria saved two match points in the second set before beating 2017 French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko. The 103rd-ranked Maria won 5-7, 7-5, 7-5.

Maria saved two match points at 5-4 in the second set, then had a chance to serve out the match at the same score in the third but was broken. But she broke Ostapenko again and then converted her second match point when the Latvian sent a service return wide.

Marie Bouzkova of the Czech Republic beat Caroline Garcia of France 7-5, 6-2 in a fourth-round

**Sania advances**  
**Wimbledon:** The Indo-Croatian pair of Sania Mirza and Mate Pavic advanced to the quarterfinals of the mixed doubles event Sunday at the Wimbledon. The sixth-seeded pair of Mirza and Pavic got a walkover after their second round opponents Ivan Dodig and Latisha Chan did not take court. Mirza and Pavic had beaten Spain's David Vega Hernandez and Georgia's Natela Dzalamidze 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (7-3) in the first round.

match on No. 2 Court to reach her first Grand Slam quarterfinal.

Earlier in a late afternoon match played Saturday Frenchwoman Alize Cornet ended the 37-match winning streak of top seeded Iga Swiatek. Cornet defeated the Polish player 6-4, 6-2. Swiatek had remained unbeaten since February and had won six titles on the trot including the French Open before she went into this match.



**USEFUL SPELL:** Teammates congratulate bowler Mohammed Siraj after the dismissal of an England batter Sunday

## SHORT TAKES

### Coach sacked

**New Delhi:** Indian women U-17 team assistant coach Alex Ambrose has been sacked for alleged sexual misconduct, SY Quraishi, a member of the Supreme Court-appointed Committee of Administrators (CoA) overseeing the All India Football Federation (AIFF) said Sunday. Earlier Ambrose was suspended and called back from Norway for the 'misconduct' with a player during a training and exposure tour of Europe. "Alex Ambrose, assistant head coach of under-17 Women's team has been sacked for sexual misconduct. Further action under process," Quraishi tweeted. The team are touring Europe as part of preparations for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup which India is hosting from October 11-30.

### Impressive feat

**New Delhi:** Indian runner Parul Chaudhary smashed the national record at the 'Sound Running' meet in Los Angeles as she became the first athlete from India to clock a sub-nine minute time in the women's 3000m event. The 27-year-old Chaudhary covered the distance in 8:57.19s to finish third Saturday night. With her latest effort, Chaudhary, who specialises in steeplechase, broke Suriya Loganathan's record of 9:04.5s, set six years ago. Chaudhary was trailing at fifth spot in the race, but the Indian gained momentum to claim a podium finish.

### Goalkeeper dead

**New Delhi:** Former India football international EN Sudhir, who played as a goalkeeper for India in the 1970s, died Sunday in Mapusa, Goa. He was in his early 70s. Sudhir is survived by a son and daughter. "Mr Sudhir will always remain alive in his achievements. He has been an inspiration. My condolences to his family. May his soul rest in peace," Sunando Dhar, Acting General Secretary of the AIFF, said in his message. Sudhir, who made his international debut against Indonesia in Rangoon (currently Yangon) in the Olympic qualifiers in 1972, represented India in nine matches and was a part of the Indian squad for the 1974 Asian Games.

# Women pugilists ensure 4 medals

**MEN BOXERS LOSE THEIR BOUTS IN SEMIFINALS**

**New Delhi, July 3:** World Championships bronze medalist Jamuna Boro got the better of Kazakhstan's Anel Sakysh to enter the final Sunday of the Elorda Cup boxing tournament in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan. Jamuna, who hails from Assam, produced a clinical performance against the home boxer to emerge victorious by unanimous margin in the 54kg semifinal.

Apart from Jamuna, three other Indian boxers, Kalaivani Srinivasan (48kg), Gitika (48kg) and Alfiya (81+kg) will play the final Monday. Jamuna's speed and footwork were spot on as she managed to evade her opponent's punches several times before freeing herself up to land a few of her own towards the end of the opening round. While the Indian dominated the proceedings in the second round, Jamuna's determination and composure under pressure gifted her a win in a highly competitive final round.

Among other Indians, two women boxers - Sakshi (54kg) and Sonia (57kg) ended their campaign with 0-5 and 2-3 defeats against Uzbekistan's Nigina Uktamova and



Jamuna Boro displayed impressive form

Sitora Turdibekova respectively. The challenge in the men's section also ended in the semifinals as all the four pugilists lost unanimously. While Kuldeep (48kg) and Jugnoo (92kg) lost to Kazakh boxers Asilbek Jalilov and Aibek Oralbay respectively, Anant went down fighting against China's Pang Bo. Sachin (57kg) showed great courage against 2021 World Championships silver medalist Serik Temirzhanov of Kazakhstan but lost the bout eventually.

Late Saturday night, World Youth Champions Gitika (48kg) and Alfiya (81+kg) stormed into the final and ensured at least silver medals for themselves.

# India begin WC campaign with hard-fought stalemate

**AMSTELVEEN (the Netherlands), July 3:** The Indian women's hockey team began their FIH World Cup campaign with a hard-fought 1-1 draw against England here Sunday. England took the lead through Isabella Petter in the ninth minute before Vandana Katarriya equalised for India in the 28th minute.

There was hardly anything to differentiate between the two sides in the first two quarters as they matched each other stick for stick. The Indians had the first shy at the goal as early as in the first minute in the form of a penalty corner, but they wasted the opportunity. Minutes later, skipper Savita made a fine save in front of the goal to deny the English women.

After a neck and neck fight it was England who took the lead through Petter who neatly deflecting in a ball from within the 'D'. India responded brilliantly and secured back-to-back penalty corners seconds later, but Gurjit Kaur was first denied by the post and then by English goalkeeper Hinch.

The Indian eyes kept up their tempo and continued to press hard on the English defence and secured their third penalty corner in the 17th minute, but once again Gurjit faltered. Three minutes later, Savita once again came to India's rescue to keep her side in the match.

Then after India had got their fourth penalty corner, they managed to restore parity as Vandana sounded the board from a rebound.

India secured another penalty corner just at the stroke of half time, but once again, England goalkeeper Hinch made a brilliant save.

England started brightly after the change of ends but it was India who managed a shot at the goal, only to see Neha Goyal's shot being saved by Hinch. Thereafter, England dominated the rest of the third quarter but failed to translate their efforts into goals.

The neck-and-neck fight between the two teams continued in the fourth and final quarter but yielded no result. In the 56th minute, India had a great chance to surge ahead but Sharmila Devi failed to connect from close range as the ball hit her foot. Two minutes later, India secured another penalty corner but once again wasted the opportunity to share points.



**WOMEN POWER:** Vandana Katarriya (centre) got the only goal for India

## SUPERSTAR REPORTEDLY UNHAPPY DUE TO LACK OF EFFORTS BY MANAGEMENT TO BUILD A PROPER SQUAD

# FRUSTRATED RONALDO MAY LEAVE MAN U

**London, July 3:** Cristiano Ronaldo wants to leave Manchester United this summer if the Premier League club receive an appropriate offer, according to multiple reports that appeared in the media Sunday. The 37-year-old Portugal forward returned to Old Trafford from Juventus last summer but despite being United's top scorer last season, and third in the Premier League, the campaign was overall disappointing.

Manchester United however, are adamant that Ronaldo, who scored 24 goals in all competitions, is not for sale, the reports also said.

Ronaldo won three Premier League titles and the Champions League during six trophy-laden years with United before leaving for



Real Madrid in 2009 and Juventus in 2018, collecting more trophies at both clubs.

The report added that Ronaldo believes that he can play at the elite level for another 'three or four

### Liverpool recruit Fulham's Carvalho

**London:** Liverpool have announced the signing of Fabio Carvalho from Fulham, the club confirmed in a statement Sunday. The Portugal's U-21 international joins the Reds following a breakthrough 2021-22 campaign during which he was a key figure in Fulham's promotion back to the top flight. Carvalho contributed 10 goals and eight assists as the Cottagers won the Championship title last term, earning the exciting forward a place in the division's 'PFA Team of the Year'.

have Ronaldo on their roster, the reports said.

The reports also said that the star footballer wants to win more titles now that 'he is in the twilight

of his career, but has realised that it may not happen with Manchester United who have shown no inclination to build a team'.

According to a 'skysports.com' report, Ronaldo is also understood to be concerned that United are yet to make any improvements to the squad in the current transfer window. Thirteen players have left the club this summer but none have yet arrived.

Ronaldo respects United a lot - especially the fans - and is said to be 'in love' with the club, but this coming season will be the first in his career in which he will not play Champions League football if he stays at Old Trafford. The Portugal international has never played in the Europa League - which Man United will be in next season.

as he will need some recovery time and training ahead of first T20I," a senior BCCI official said Sunday.

As per medical protocol, any player, who is out of quarantine, needs to undergo mandatory cardiovascular tests to check the lung capacity and how it is functioning post Covid-19.

The Indian team were desperate to play Rohit but he tested positive thrice before the game day and hence India had a new captain in Jasprit Bumrah. While Rohit will play from the first game of the white ball series, the likes of Virat Kohli, Bumrah, Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja will be available from the second game onwards.

It should also be stated here that head coach Rahul Dravid had expressed displeasure before the 'rescheduled' fifth Test began at the way a national selector had 'handled' the Rohit issue. Dravid had said that the announcement of Rohit's unavailability could have come just before the Test began to keep the opposition guessing till the very last moment.