



## TAAPSEE'S PAIN

Actor Taapsee Pannu thinks that a lot of times her performance is taken for granted by the critics

LEISURE P2



## THOUSANDS FLEE UKRAINE

Tens of thousands flee Ukraine when collapse of a major hydroelectric dam on Dnipro river is blamed on Russian forces

INTERNATIONAL P10



## FACILITIES LAUDED

Indian football team captain says arrangements at Kalinga Stadium are really world class

SPORTS P12

### SHORT TAKES

#### Book PM, Vaishnaw for negligence: Cong

**New Delhi:** Congress Wednesday accused the BJP-led Centre of dereliction of duty of Himalayan proportions in the Balasore train tragedy and said an FIR should be lodged by the CBI against Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for negligence. At a presser here, Congress spokesperson Ajoy Kumar alleged that there was a conspiracy on the part of the Railway minister that caused the death of 288 people and injuries to more than 1,000 in the crash in Balasore, involving three trains. He also accused the minister of doing "theatrics" after the horrific accident. P9

#### Ansari aide shot dead in UP court

**Lucknow:** Gangster-politician Mukhtar Ansari's aide Sanjeev Maheshwari Jeeva was shot dead on the premises of a Lucknow court Wednesday, police said. A policeman and a two-year-old girl were injured in the incident. The alleged assailant, identified as Vijay Yadav, 24, a resident of Jaunpur district, was caught on the spot after the shooting took place right outside a courtroom at around 4 pm, police said. Eyewitnesses said the assailant was dressed as a lawyer and fired around six shots. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed an SIT probe the incident.

#### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Oh, you are a journalist! I thought you are a religious guru. You always have religious debates on TV

#### MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	63142.96 ↑ 350.08
NIFTY	18726.40 ↑ 127.40
DOLLAR	82.54 ↑ ₹0.14
EURO	88.35 ↑ ₹0.11
GOLD	₹59,955 ↓ ₹30
SILVER	₹71,918 ↓ ₹38

#### WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	41.2°C	40.2°C
TEMP MIN	28.6°C	28.4°C
Humidity	77%	75%
Rainfall	6.3	Nil
Forecast	PARTLY CLOUDY	SKY



**NEVER-ENDING SAGA:** Rescue operation in progress at the mishap site near Jajpur-Keonjhar Road railway station where six labourers were killed when the parked wagons of a goods train rolled during the nor'wester, Wednesday

# 'Unlocked' wagons kill 6

THE INCIDENT OCCURRED WHEN THE PARKED WAGONS OF A GOODS TRAIN STARTED MOVING REPORTEDLY UNDER THE IMPACT OF A HAILSTORM

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar/Jajpur, June 7:** Just five days after the horrific triple train tragedy near Bahanaga Bazar station in Balasore district that stunned the entire world, another mishap occurred on tracks near Jajpur-Keonjhar Road railway station claiming the lives of six workers and injuring two others, allegedly due to the 'lapse' by the Railway authorities.

The deceased were identified as Prasant Kumar Jena, 52, of Kenduapada, Goutam Samal, 55, and Manas Samal of Gambhararia village, Susant Jena, 48, of Baliapal village in Bhadrak district, Bhimasen Jena, 40 and Dolagobinda Pradhan, 42, of Oshala village in Jajpur district, said sources.

The injured were identified as Nabaghana Barik and Amar Barik of Bhandaripokhari area in Bhadrak district.

Locals alleged that the mishap occurred due to lack of locking system on the wheels of the stationary railway wagons.

According to officials, reserve rakes containing chips to meet the requirements emerging out of monsoon woes were stationed without engine on the sick line near the station. Contractual labourers engaged by a contractor for railway

Locals alleged that the mishap occurred due to lack of locking system on the wheels of the stationary railway wagons

Expressing deep grief over the unfortunate incident, CM Naveen Patnaik announced ₹5 lakh ex gratia for the next of kin of the deceased

work had taken shelter under the stabled rake (without engine) to shield themselves from the nor'wester. Meanwhile, the rakes started rolling reportedly due to the impact of strong winds during the thunderstorms, said Biswajit Sahu, chief public relations officer (CPRO), East Coast Railway (ECoR).

"It is a very unfortunate incident. The workers engaged by the contractor to carry out railway works were taking shelter under the stationed wagons. When the wagons started moving, the workers tried to come out of the tracks and the incident occurred," Sahu said.

Railway officials present at the spot rushed them to hospital. However, six of them had died while the critically injured two workers have been admitted to SCB Medical College and Hospital, he added.

Divisional railway officials led by DRM Khurda Road rushed to the accident spot and started investi-

### TRIPLE TRAIN CRASH

## CBI seizes phones, grills staffers

**Bhubaneswar:** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which is inquiring into the triple train tragedy in Balasore district, has collected evidence from the accident site and Bahanaga Bazar station where the accident took place June 2 evening.

According to sources, the Central agency sleuths visited the accident site and the Bahanaga Bazar Railway station twice Tuesday and spent nearly 45 minutes again Wednesday. They collected vital information and evidence related to the accident, said sources.

The CBI team, along with the forensic and technical team, examined the main line, loop line,

gation, he added.

Expressing deep grief over the unfortunate incident, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced ₹5 lakh ex gratia for the next of kin of deceased.

Jajpur SP Vinit Agarwal, SDPO Sanjay Patnaik, Jajpur Road IIC Upendra Pradhan, tehsildar Ashok Majhi, RPF inspector Praveen Kumar reached the spot and launched an investigation.

accident site, signal room and station master's office.

They have examined all employees and seized mobile phones of some of the Railway employees, who were on duty when the accident took place, the sources said, adding the team is likely to examine the call records, WhatsApp calls, messages and social media accounts of the staffers.

"Both CBI and Railway Safety Commissioner are conducting their investigations separately and the central agency is collecting required evidence," said Aditya Kumar Chaudhary, CPRO, South Eastern Railway.

### Close shave for Rajdhani

A major train accident was averted at Jharkhand's Bokaro after a tractor crashed the railway gate near Bhojudih station when New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express was passing from there, an official said. The incident occurred at Santhaldih railway crossing Tuesday evening and the tractor got stuck between the railway track and the gate.

# Amid dispute, AP gets ₹12,911cr Central aid

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, June 7:** Amidst the pendency of concerns raised in the Supreme Court by Odisha, Telangana and Chhattisgarh with regard to submergence of their territories due to Polavaram irrigation project across Godavari River in Andhra Pradesh, the Union government has approved the proposal for sanctioning ₹12,911.15 crore to AP for the project.

The Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance approved the proposal for releasing ₹12,911.15 crore for Polavaram project. This includes ₹2,000 crore towards the cost of repairing the damage caused to the project due to floods. The Centre, has recently released an amount of 10,460.87 crore towards bridging the revenue deficit gap for 2014-15 financial year.

Significantly, the dispute over Polavaram project has been pending with the apex court for over 15 years. During the last hearing in March, the Union government had requested three months time from the SC to file a status report with respect to the meetings convened by it to resolve the dispute amicably

The Centre had also informed that the meeting of Chief Ministers with the Union Jal Shakti minister is still at consultation stage and sought time of three months to file the status report.

In December 2022, the SC had granted two months time to Union Jal Shakti Ministry to file a status report with respect to the meet-

ings convened by it to resolve the dispute related to Polavaram project among Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Chhattisgarh through talks.

Earlier, the Supreme Court had asked the Centre to play a pioneering role to resolve the dispute and if required then convene a meeting of the CMs.

Subsequently, the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti convened

a meeting of Chief Secretaries of all concerned states and after that a meeting of technical teams was held to resolve technical issues. All the respective states arrived at a consensus with regard to back-water study, the ministry had stated.

Significantly, three suits, each by Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Telangana, have been filed against the project in the SC raising environmental concerns.

### POLAVARAM PROJECT



The dispute over Polavaram project has been pending with the Supreme Court for over 15 years

## Paddy MSP hiked by ₹143

Moong sees 10.4% hike - from ₹7,755 per quintal in the previous crop year to ₹8,558 this year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 7:** The Centre Wednesday hiked the minimum support price (MSP) of paddy by ₹143 to ₹2,183 per quintal for 2023-24 crop year (July-June) in order to encourage farmers to bring more area under the crop and boost their income.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the increase in MSP for all mandated Kharif (summer) crops for 2023-24 crop year.

Briefing media, Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal said, "In agriculture, we have been fixing MSP from time to time based on the recommendations of

Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). The increase in MSP of Kharif crops for this year is highest compared to the previous years."

Farmers will benefit from the MSP hike at a time when retail inflation is on a declining trend, he added.

Goyal said the MSP of common grade variety of paddy has been increased by ₹143 to ₹2,183 per quintal for the 2023-24 crop year, from ₹2,040 in the previous year. The support price of 'A' grade variety of paddy has been hiked by ₹143 to ₹2,203 per quintal from ₹2,060, he said.

Highest increase in MSP was in moong by 10.4 per cent at ₹8,558 per quintal for 2023-24 crop year, as against ₹7,755 per quintal in the previous year.

Paddy is the main Kharif crop, the sowing of which normally begins with the onset of southwest monsoon.

# 'Virgin birth' in crocs: Dinosaurs may have had the ability

The latest research is based on the 2018 observation of a lone female American crocodile held in captivity for 16 years which laid a clutch of eggs

AGENCIES

**Virginia (US), June 7:** In January 2018, a female crocodile that has been living alone in a Costa Rican zoo for 16 years laid a clutch of eggs. That was so peculiar. This was the first-ever known case of a crocodile laying eggs without a male mate, a rare reproductive strategy that could be traced back to dinosaurs that has been documented by scientists.

Over the last two decades, zoologists have increasingly documented the very rare vertebrate reproductive strategy of facultative parthenogenesis (FP) in which females lay eggs or give birth to their offspring without mating.

Until now, a wide range of organisms including birds, non-avian reptiles like lizards and snakes as well as some fishes, including sharks, have been shown to reproduce in this strange mode.

However, questions have remained over the occurrence of this reproduction mode outside of these vertebrate lineages - most notably in turtles, crocodiles, alligators and gharials, said researchers, including those from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in the US, as per a report by The Independent.

Looking for such a rare reproductive strategy in crocodilian species has been particularly intriguing to scientists as these organisms lack sex chromosomes and their



sex determination is controlled by the temperature in which eggs develop and hatch.

In the new study, published Wednesday in the Biology Letters journal, researchers have documented the first evidence of FP in the American crocodile, *Crocodylus*

## How a virgin birth happens

As an egg cell matures in mother's body, it divides repeatedly to generate a final product with exactly half the genes needed for an individual. Three smaller cellular sacs containing chromosomes, known as polar bodies, are formed as byproducts. Polar bodies usually wither away. But in vertebrates that can perform parthenogenesis, one polar body sometimes fuses with the egg, creating a cell with the necessary complement of chromosomes to form an individual.

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In the new study, published Wednesday in the Biology Letters journal, researchers have documented the first evidence of FP in the American crocodile, *Crocodylus*

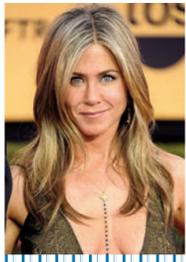
The discovery, according to the researchers, is the "first documentation" of this very rare mode of reproduction in a crocodile species.

While the eggs did not hatch, the discovery has intrigued biologists as it indicates there is a common evolutionary origin of the rare reproductive strategy across reptiles, crocodilians and birds.

The findings further raise the possibility that extinct relatives of crocodilians and birds such as dinosaurs and pterosaurs may have also had this rare reproductive strategy.

"This new evidence offers tantalizing insights into the possible reproductive capabilities of extinct archosaurian relatives of crocodilians and dinosaurs, notably the Pterosauria and Dinosauria," scientists wrote in the study.

# leisure



## 'DON'T WANT TO BE IN A WHEELCHAIR AT 80'

Jennifer Aniston has stopped doing painful workouts and is more mindful of exercises these days so she can remain on her feet forever. "Pushing too much makes the body decline. I don't want to be in a wheelchair if I'm going to be 80 years old," explained the *Friends* star.

## TOM HOLLAND TAKING A YEAR OFF FROM ACTING

*Spider-man* actor Tom Holland is taking a break from acting for a year after working hard as a producer on his latest project. The 27-year-old produced and starred in the psychological thriller *The Crowded Room* but admitted that the project was so intense that he now has to take an extended break.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
You have been too busy with work and social obligations. It is high time you took a break and did something for yourself. Your health may need attention. Ganesha says, everything else should take a backseat if you're stressed out.

**TAURUS**  
You are going to be exceptionally intense in the way you communicate your emotions and feelings. You will, no doubt, succeed in making the impact, the impression you are striving to make, says Ganesha. You will be so involved in this that you are likely to get caught in the mysterious and magical web of relationships.

**GEMINI**  
An occurrence from the past will become a cause of worry for you today. You will also be concerned owing to the deteriorating health of the elders in your family. You will encounter medical expenses. The later half of the day should see your worries abate somewhat, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
Chances are that your inquisitive nature will put in a difficulty. Others will be angry with you for keeping a secret a vital information. Ganesha counsels you to strengthen ties with friends and give up present attitude.

**LEO**  
You will accomplish all your tasks with courage today. As a result of which, the efforts you have made in the last few months will now bear fruit. You need to make a schedule of the tasks you need to tackle today. You need to guard against over-stressing yourself, otherwise your health could suffer, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
Don't procrastinate matters regarding your health, advises Ganesha. Today you are raring to take on some past wounds. However, peace and quietude are the dominant flavours today. Ganesha suggests that you go ahead and enjoy yourself, if only just to recharge your batteries.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says your uniqueness will be the focus of attention and praise today. Your undertaking of various tough tasks and completing them today will showcase your business acumen. You will show your inclination to the finer arts like music and dance. Those of you who may have thoughts about doing varied things maybe able to put those thoughts into actions today.

**SCORPIO**  
Suddenly, you become conscious about your looks today, says Ganesha. How you look, how you dress-up and the way you walk, all becomes a matter of concern for you. All prim and proper, you imagine yourself to be the best. Besides makeover, splurging is another activity that you indulge in.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Your temper is as hot as a fireball today, foresees Ganesha. Not for nothing they say that anger may destroy the world. Don't axe your own feet by your aggressive behaviour. Cool down and think before you act. There are chances that you may experience financial crunch, handle it carefully, advises Ganesha.

**CAPRICORN**  
You have taken your personal relationships for granted but some irregularities in them have caught your attention. Now, you will focus upon them and try to get to the heart of the matter, feels Ganesha. Communication is the key when it comes to solving misunderstandings, and with that you will be able to clear out a number of them.

**AQUARIUS**  
You have done back-breaking work to come this far. Today, you will see your efforts come to fruition. But, you need to be aware about the presence of the green-eyed people around you, especially if you are in some kind of a business, warns Ganesha.

**PISCES**  
Today you will be attracted by the heart and not the mind. This is usual for your star sign. Attempt to understand your emotions today. Ganesha says today you might figure out the way to control both your heart and your mind.

## My work is taken for granted: Taapsee

**Mumbai:** For someone who's managed to impress the audience with good work in the past few years, Taapsee Pannu thinks that a lot of times her performance is taken for granted. The actress feels this, every time she comes across comments like - once again Taapsee has done a good job - after her new film releases.

She elaborates saying, "I am grateful to people who appreciate my work. But when people say things like - once again she did a good job - they really have no idea how much mental stress I go through to be consistent in an industry where things change every few months. The choices of people, the flavour of the season, the kind of films people watch, changes every few months. So, it is very difficult for someone to keep up the level of their performance. It takes a lot of efforts to live up to the expectations and I work hard to live up to those ex-

pectations." She further adds, "Making the first impact when nobody is expecting out of you is easier as compared to when people expect, and you need to continue making that impact." The actress was praised for her work and even won awards back-to-back for her performances in films like *Saad Ki Aankh*, *Thappad* and *Loop Lapeta*.



## When Dia was cheated by her crush in school

**Mumbai:** Actress Dia Mirza made her acting debut with *Rehnaa Hai Tere Dil Mein* and went on to star in films like *Deewaanapan*, *Dum*, *Lage Raho Munna Bhai* and many more.

In 2015, Dia Mirza appeared in an episode of *Doordarshan* when she revealed that she was once fooled by her crush in school. She said, "I had a senior in my senior school who was two years older than me. I had a huge crush on him but neither did I tell him or anyone else. I don't know how he got to know that I liked him. Every day the phone at our house would ring and I used to run to pick it up. He used to call and play I Just Called To Say I Love You." She continued: "I used to get so happy after listening to the song and thought he loved me too. But he never spoke about it in school. We used to look at each other and smile in school until I found out he was doing the same thing to my best friend," Dia added. Asked if it broke her heart? Dia replied, "No. I went straight to the principal's office and both of us complained about him."

## Sara on marrying a cricketer

**Mumbai:** Recently, Sara Ali Khan and Shubman Gill's dating rumours started doing the rounds after they were spotted enjoying a date in the city. Their pictures and videos went viral on the Internet. Despite dating reports, Sara and Shubman chose to remain silent. Recently, during an interview with news portal, Sara was asked if she would be open to following her grandmother Sharmila Tagore's footsteps and marrying a cricketer.

Sara said, "I think that the kind of person that I am, to find somebody it doesn't matter what they do - actor, cricketer, businessman, doctor... Maybe not doctors, they will run away. But you know the truth is that jokes apart, you will need to match me on the mental and intellectual level. And if you can do that, I think it's great, wow but I think that would matter to me much, much more (than the profession)."

When she was asked if she sees herself dating someone from the current Indian team squad, Sara said that she hasn't met the man she plans to be with in her life.



## My well-wishers are my temple: Amitabh

**Mumbai:** Veteran actor Amitabh Bachchan has opened up about why he greets his fans, who come outside his house religiously every Sunday, bare feet.



The *Deewar* actor took to his blog, where he shared a string of pictures of himself greeting his fans outside his home. He also shared pictures of drinking water put outside for his fan due to the summer heat. He wrote: "... I felt they wait for hours in this sweltering heat, so to provide them drinking water with lime to quench their thirst ... 4 containers, 2 on either side of the gate .. over and above the 'matka' that is permanently there during the day and night."



### PEANUTS



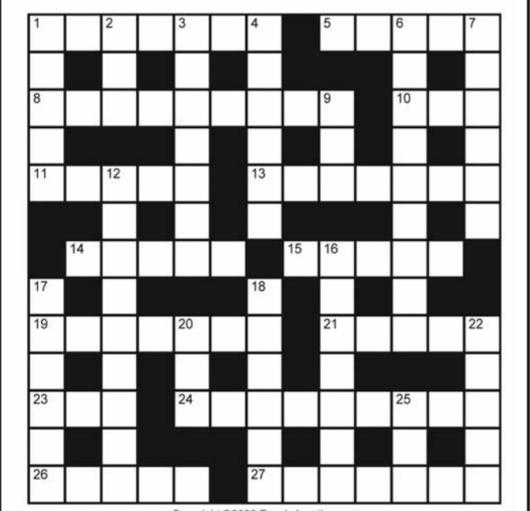
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



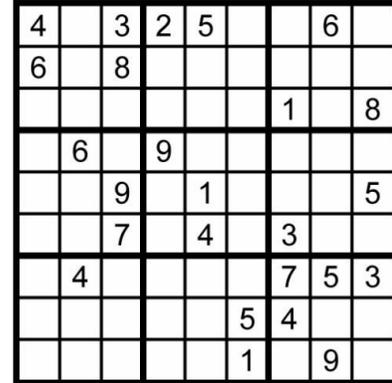
### FUN post CROSSWORD



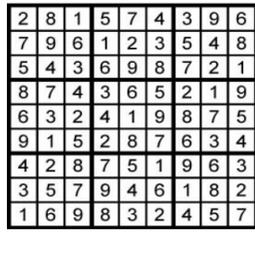
- Across**
- 1 Part of a place setting
  - 5 Epsom follower
  - 8 Not quite a lie (4-5)
  - 10 Devoured
  - 11 Side dish in Delhi
  - 13 Pickle type
  - 14 Philander
  - 15 Earth colour
  - 19 Ringtailed animal
  - 21 Surfing need
  - 23 Spider's trap
  - 24 Savage
  - 26 Manicurist's board
  - 27 Astringent drug
  - 6 Irresolute (4-5)
  - 7 Reddish brown
  - 9 Garden tool
  - 12 Hot-tempered
  - 16 Imitation
  - 17 Window-shop
  - 18 Captures
  - 20 Amiss
  - 22 Melody
  - 25 Feedbag morsel
- Down**
- 1 Theatre employee
  - 2 Moray
  - 3 Leave on a cruise (3,4)
  - 4 Chesterfield

### 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

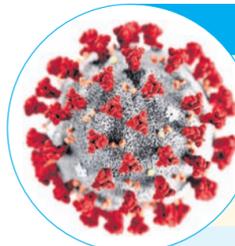
# downtown

## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	689,960,939	662,410,092	6,888,041
India	4,49,92,094	4,44,57,379	5,31,884
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

### CAR FEST PREP

A coordination meeting between police and servitors for smooth Rath Yatra was held at Puri SP office, Wednesday



## ₹423.87cr for 37 ULBs under Mukta



**Bhubaneswar, June 7:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday sanctioned Rs 423.87 crore for 37 urban local bodies (ULBs) covering 10 districts under the state's Mukhya Mantri Karma Tatpara Abhiyan (Mukta) scheme for 2023-24.

The ULBs of the remaining 20 districts will be covered in the next two phases, it was learnt.

Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Jajpur, Jagatsinghpur, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Khurda, Puri

THE URBAN LOCAL BODIES OF THE REMAINING 20 DISTRICTS WILL BE COVERED IN THE NEXT TWO PHASES

ALL THESE PROJECTS WILL BE EXECUTED DIRECTLY BY MISSION SHAKTI GROUPS AS THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES

regarding development of their localities under the Mukta scheme.

The basket of projects approved under Mukta are climate resilient work, which include creation of civic amenities like mini parks, open air gyms, child play stations, playgrounds, walking tracks, vending zones, and other public utility works like development of open space and water bodies, construction of multi-purpose community centres, wall painting, city beautification and other labour-oriented works, an official said.

"All these 37 ULBs have developed ward-wise feasible annual action plans under Mukta through a participatory process involving local citizens and key stakeholders. All these projects are demand driven, technically feasible and environmentally sustainable," the official added.

The action plans have been screened before approval. All these projects will be executed directly by Mission Shakti groups as the implementing agencies, the official said.

The CM had launched Mukta April 18, 2020 across 115 ULBs with an aim to create rapid, immediate and mass employment opportunities for the urban poor.



AT LORD'S SERVICE: Chariot construction in full swing in Puri, Wednesday



PHOTOS: YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

### TRIPLE CRASH AFTERMATH

## TV interview helps Nepali couple reunite with son

**Cuttack, June 7:** A live television interview of a Nepali couple aired from one hospital helped it find out its minor son who was injured in the June 2 Balasore train accident and under treatment in another hospital.

The 15-year-old boy, Ramananda Paswan, who was recuperating in the ICU of a hospital here, saw his parents on a news channel on a television set which was in the room and alerted the authorities.

The hospital then facilitated the reunion of the boy, who was trav-

elling in the ill-fated Coromandel Express, with his parents who came from Nepal in search of him after knowing about the accident that claimed 288 lives, an official said.

"I am happy to find my son. He was travelling with three of our relatives. All of them were killed in the accident. He, however, miraculously escaped with injuries," said the boy's father Hari Paswan.

After coming to Bhubaneswar, Hari and his wife were visiting one hospital after another in search of their son.

While in AIIMS-Bhubaneswar, they came across a journalist of a local TV news channel who re-

ported their ordeal.

Ramananda saw the report on the television in his room and identified his parents. He informed the hospital authorities about it.

"The hospital called up the TV channel's office, got the videos

and got it checked again with Ramananda to confirm about his parents. Following this, the hospital authorities were successful in connecting Ramananda with his parents," SCB Medical College Emergency Officer BN Moharana told PTI.

The Coromandel Express crashed into a stationary goods train, derailling most of its coaches at 7 pm June 2. A few of those toppled over the last few coaches of the Bengaluru-Howrah Express which was passing by at the same time.

In all, 288 people died in the accident and more than 1,200 were injured.

## Rlys using AI, SIM card info to identify unclaimed bodies

**New Delhi, June 7:** Railways is using an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered website and SIM card triangulation to identify the unclaimed bodies from the triple train crash.

Of the 288 people killed in the accident June 2, as many as 83 bodies remained unclaimed as of Wednesday, officials said.

The Railways initially called a team from the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to the site to take thumbprints of the dead to ascertain their identity.

"That did not work out since in most cases the skin of the thumbs were damaged and prints were difficult to take. Then we thought of identifying the bodies using Sanchar Saathi which is an AI-based portal," an official said.

The recently launched Sanchar Saathi web portal was put to use to identify 64 bodies and it was successful in 45 cases, officials said.

Sanchar Saathi allows customers to know the mobile connections issued in their name and also track and block their lost smartphones. This artificial intelligence-based portal was recently launched by Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw who also holds the information and technology portfolio.

To identify the bodies of the train accident victims, the portal traced the victims' phone numbers and Aadhaar details using their family members were contacted, officials said.

However, it was an uphill task as many of these bodies were beyond recognition.

"Some have no identifiable fea-



tures left. It is difficult to identify them even from their clothes since they are caked with blood," an officer said.

Railway officials are also hoping to identify some bodies by using cell-phone impressions around the accident sites. By tracing calls made through nearby towers just before the accident and linking them to those which shut down immediately at the time of the crash, the Railways is trying to figure out if they belonged to the unidentified victims.

"We are trying to trace phones which were active just before the accident and shut down as soon as it happened.

"So far, out of the 45 unclaimed bodies we are trying to trace through this method, we found 15 phones which were switched off but those were of survivors. We are still trying to trace the other 30," an official said.

The Railways made mammoth efforts to complete its rescue and restoration work in 51 hours. The

ministry deployed eight teams, each comprising 70 personnel and headed by an officer for the operation. DRMs and GMs supervised four teams each.

Five cameras transmitted live to Rail Bhawan where it was monitored from the war room. The teams and officers did eight-hour shifts and took adequate breaks, officials said.

The ministry claimed that the 51 hours taken to restore the affected section was less than the time taken in Greece where officials took five weeks to restore the tracks following a collision between a passenger train and a freight train on February 28 this year.

It took 24 days for officials in Germany's Hannover to complete the restoration work following a collision between two goods trains in 2022. Taiwanese officials took 17 days to complete restoration work following a train derailment in the Qingshui Tunnel of Hualien County, the railway ministry said.

## Engineer held for amassing 333% DA

**Bhubaneswar, June 7:** Vigilance sleuths Wednesday arrested an assistant engineer at the superintending engineer's office in Sundargarh's Rural Works Division for amassing assets to the tune of 333 per cent of his known sources of income.

According to Vigilance sources, Sanjay Kumar Behera was arrested for possessing disproportionate assets (DA) to the tune of 333 per cent.

A case has been registered against Behera and his spouse under provisions of the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018, they said.

During house searches, movable and immovable assets worth crores of rupees were unearthed in the name of Behera and his family members Tuesday.



EXPO IN CITY: Visitors to the 'New Rajasthan Cottonfab-2023' browse through sarees, at Idco Exhibition Ground in Unit-III area of Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

## S&ME dept inks pacts for aspirational curriculum New York overtakes Delhi in air pollution

**Bhubaneswar, June 7:** In a bid to introduce aspirational curriculum in all transformed high schools, the School and Mass Education (S&ME) department inked pacts with Magicbus India Foundation and Khan Academy here, Wednesday.

Official sources said the Mo School-Magicbus India Foundation pact aims at supporting the introduction of the aspirational curriculum in all transformed high schools of the state by implementing sports-integrated and activity-based life skills education programmes.

The practical and immersive educational approach will foster students' holistic growth and prepare them for the challenges and opportunities of the modern world, they said.

The collaboration will help



strengthen student engagement and participation in aspirational areas by establishing student-led club systems across all secondary schools in the state.

S&ME Minister Sudam Marndi and department commissioner-cum-secretary Aswathy Sgraced the MoU signing ceremony.

Similarly, the pact between Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya Sangathan (OAVS) and Khan Academy aims at enhancing math learning outcomes across all OAVS in the state.

The OAVS has taken a significant step forward in enhancing math learning outcomes across all OAVS

in the state.

Through a strategic alliance with Khan Academy, a renowned online education platform, OAVS aims to redefine the way students approach and excel in mathematics, an official said.

"This partnership will empower students with innovative learning tools and resources to unlock their full potential," the official added.

Marndi said the implementation of aspirational curriculum in all secondary schools across the state will enhance the quality of education by providing a curriculum that is both relevant and engaging, while also aligning with the aspirations and goals of our students.

"This holistic approach will ensure the students receive an education that equips them effectively for their future endeavours, empowering them to pursue their aspirations with confidence and determination," the S&ME Minister said.

The US financial capital's air hit the world's worst air pollution level for cities Tuesday night topping New Delhi, prompting New York Mayor Erid Adams to issue an alert asking people to limit outdoor activities.

He said that the city's Air Quality Index (AQI) hit 218 because of smoke from forest fires in Canada up north. At the time, New Delhi's AQI was in the 190 range.

As the city choked on the drifting smoke, its skyline turned into various shades of grey and, as the evening sun filtered through, orange, obscuring the tops of some of the high-rise buildings.

New York's media and the US government have long taunted India's capital for its air quality but now the US financial capital got a first-hand experience of the environmental problem.

The New York Times, for example, has touted headlines like 'What India Looks Like When the Air Turns to Poison' and 'Choking on Air in New Delhi'.

The US Embassy in New Delhi



maintains an online dashboard of air quality data for the capital and five other cities.

Raging fires in forests of Quebec and other parts of Canada in recent days have flooded the US north-east with smoke setting off health and environmental alarms.

New York still remained the city

with the second-most air pollution level.

Unlike in New Delhi where the worst air quality problems are man-made, fuelled by farmers burning the remnants of the harvests, in the US forest fires - an annular feature of summer and late spring - are responsible.

NEW YORK'S AIR QUALITY INDEX (AQI) HIT 218 BECAUSE OF SMOKE FROM FOREST FIRES IN CANADA UP NORTH. AT THE TIME, NEW DELHI'S AQI WAS IN THE 190 RANGE

THE CURRENT WAVE OF FOREST INFERNOS IN CANADA HAS SPREAD OVER 3.3 MILLION HECTARES, ACCORDING TO REPORTS, COVERING ALSO SEVERAL OTHER PROVINCES

LAST YEAR, THE US HAD ONE OF ITS WORST FOREST FIRE SEASONS THAT ENGULFED 1,46,680 AND LED TO THE EVACUATION OF MANY TOWNS

The current wave of forest infernos in Canada has spread over 3.3 million hectares, according to reports, covering also several other provinces.

Last year, the US had one of its worst forest fire seasons that engulfed 1,46,680 and led to the evacuation of many towns.

TRIPLE TRAIN MISHAP

Job, free edu by KIIT to victims' families

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, June 7: The KIIT Deemed-to-be-University will provide employment to one of the family members of the deceased in the Balasore triple train tragedy and also free education to the children who lost their parents in the mishap. In a media briefing, Wednesday, KIIT & KISS founder Achyuta Samanta said, "We can't reduce the sorrow of the family members of those who died in the train accident, but we will try our level best to support them. We will try to support the victims' families by offering a job to one member from each family at KIIT and KISS as per their eligibility. We will also provide free education to their kids at KIIT and KISS from standard one up to higher level. We will inform them how to apply for the job as well as free education."

leadership of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik saved the lives of thousands of people. KIIT & KISS pray for the departed souls and convey sympathies to the family members. This support will provide assistance to the families of the victims and ensure a brighter future for their children", Samanta added. At the time of crisis, the university has always extended humanitarian support. During Covid-19, the university came forward to support hundreds of students who had lost their parents by giving free education, jobs to the family members of the deceased and helped common people through various means. Continuing with this humanitarian gesture, the university has come forward to help and support the victims of the train accident. The triple train accident in Bahanaga of Balasore district June 2 was one of the deadliest train crashes in the country in decades claiming 288 lives. As many as 39 victims hail from Odisha.



RAISING VOICE: Members of various trade organisations hold a demonstration in front of Raj Bhavan in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday, demanding impartial probe into triple train mishap and resignation of Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw

Financial mgmt key to development: Vathanan

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, June 7: The Housing and Urban Development department organised a one-day orientation workshop on neo financial management for accountants working in the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) here Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, Housing and Urban Development Principal Secretary G Mathi Vathanan said that transparent, disciplined and proper financial management is the key for development. The expectation of general public is very high. We all have to rise to the occasion without any hesitation. In the process we have to spend the budget allocations and it should be in a proper way. From 2023-24, the ULBs are to receive 15th Finance Commission grant but they must be eligible and fulfil the criteria as defined by the



government of India. The role of accountants is very much important in this regard. They should be sensitive in dealing with the public. No offline transaction is allowed. They must release the dues in a specific time period. There should be no dereliction of duty in handling with finance. There is timeline for release of payments, Vathanan added.

G Mathi Vathanan emphasised on implementation of MUKTA action plan for 2023-24 in all 115 ULBs

to monitor the ULBs by way of direct feedback from the community partners, beneficiaries and general public also. Moreover, the submission of utilization certificates, compliance to audit para and audit of accounts is another part which is very much important. The accountants have a big role to play. It is their foremost duty to attend and comply with properly. The department is ready all the times to extend a handholding support to them, Vathanan said. Among those present on this occasion included department's Municipal Administration Director Sangramjit Nayak, Joint Secretary Sarada Prasad Panda, OSD-cum-Additional Secretary Sanjay Pramanik and Financial Advisor Sikha Biswal. The accountants working in 115ULBs attended workshop.



Achyuta Samanta

Ex-judge Patnaik new OREAT chairperson

Bhubaneswar: The state government Wednesday appointed retired Judge Pramath Patnaik as the chairperson of Odisha Real Estate Appellate Tribunal (OREAT) with effect from the date on which he assumes the office after tenure completion of the current OREAT chairperson June 6. "As per a Housing and Urban Development notification, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 45 and in consultation with the Chief Justice of High Court of Orissa, as required under sub-section (2) of section 46 of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016, the state government hereby appoints Justice Pramath Patnaik as the Chairperson of the Odisha Real Estate Appellate Tribunal (OREAT)," read an official release.

SUDA to take control of Odisha Urban Academy

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, June 7: The state government has decided to transfer the administrative and financial control of Odisha Urban Academy (OUA) from Water Corporation of Odisha (WATCO) to State Urban Development Agency (SUDA) with immediate effect. As per reports, WATCO was allowed by Housing and Urban Development department to set up a centre of excellence namely Odisha Water Academy (OWA) here to function as a pioneering training and capacity building institution for personnel working under WATCO, Public Health Engineering Organisation (PHEO) and Orissa Water Supply & Sewerage Board (OWSSB).

Later the functions of OWA were expanded by changing its name to Odisha Urban Academy (OUA) to meet the emerging need for an institution to provide training to upgrade the skill-sets of stakeholders including officials, elected representatives and community partners such as members of Mission Shakti and SHGs to document the processes. "Considering the expanded scope of OUA's work and to cover all key areas of urban governance, after careful consideration, the state government has decided to transfer the administrative and financial control of OUA from WATCO to SUDA with immediate effect. The memorandum of association, bye-laws, and rules and regulations of OUA/OWA to be aligned with this change," informed a government official.



GRACEFUL MOVE: Artistes perform during Sri Jayadeva Rashtriya Samaroh organised by National Culture Mission at Bhanja Kala Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

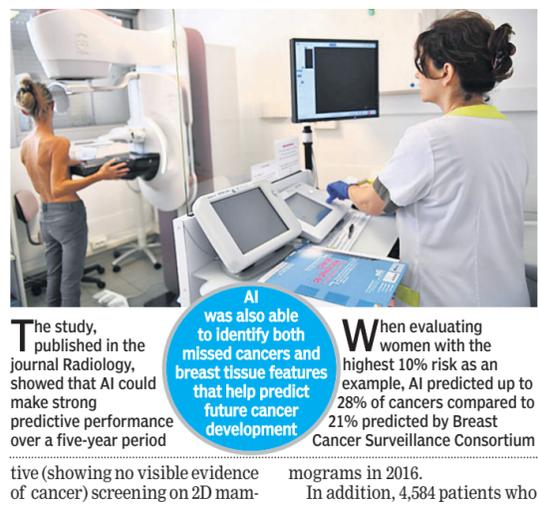
TPCODL launches e-bikes to promote clean energy

Bhubaneswar: TP Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL), a joint venture between Tata Power and the government of Odisha for power distribution, launched an eco-friendly initiative to celebrate World Environment Month. As part of its commitment to supporting the clean energy movement in India, TPCODL introduced E-Bikes. The launch event took place at TPCODL Corporate Office in City, Tuesday. TPCODL CEO Arvind Singh inaugurated the initiative by handing over one e-bike each to 15 project team members to facilitate convenient site monitoring work. Speaking on the occasion, Singh said, "Electric vehicles symbolize the future and TPCODL is dedicated to being an active participant in this transformative movement."

AI may be better at predicting breast cancer risk: Study

Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithms can outperform the standard clinical risk model for predicting the five-year risk for breast cancer according to a large study of thousands of mammograms. A woman's risk of breast cancer is typically calculated using clinical models such as the Breast Cancer Surveillance Consortium (BCSC) risk model, which uses self-reported and other information on the patient - including age, family history of the disease, whether she has given birth, and whether she has dense breasts - to calculate a risk score. The study, published in the journal Radiology, showed that AI could make strong predictive performance over a five-year period. AI was also able to identify both missed cancers and breast tissue features that help predict future

cancer development. "Something in mammograms allows us to track breast cancer risk. This is the 'black box' of AI," said lead researcher Vignesh A Arasu, a research scientist and practicing radiologist at Kaiser Permanente Northern California. When evaluating women with the highest 10 per cent risk as an example, AI predicted up to 28 per cent of cancers compared to 21 per cent predicted by BCSC. "We're looking for an accurate, efficient and scalable means of understanding a woman's breast cancer risk," Dr. Arasu said. "Mammography-based AI risk models provide practical advantages over traditional clinical risk models because they use a single data source: the mammogram itself." For the study, Dr. Arasu included 13,628 women with nega-



The study, published in the journal Radiology, showed that AI could make strong predictive performance over a five-year period

were diagnosed with cancer within five years were also studied. All the women were followed until 2021. Using the 2016 screening mammograms, risk scores for breast cancer over the five-year period were generated by five AI algorithms, including two academic algorithms used by researchers and three commercially available algorithms. The risk scores were then compared to each other and to the BCSC clinical risk score. "All five AI algorithms performed better than the BCSC risk model for predicting breast cancer risk at 0 to 5 years," Arasu said. Some of the AI algorithms also excelled at predicting patients at high risk of interval cancer, which is often aggressive and may require a second reading of mammograms, supplementary

screening or short-interval follow-up imaging. Even AI algorithms trained for short time horizons (as low as 3 months) were able to predict the future risk of cancer up to five years when no cancer was clinically detected by screening mammography. When used in combination, the AI and BCSC risk models further improved cancer prediction. A person's future risk score, which takes seconds for AI to generate, could be integrated into the radiology report shared with the patient and their physician. "AI for cancer risk prediction offers us the opportunity to individualise every woman's care, which isn't systematically available," Arasu said. "It's a tool that could help us provide personalised, precision medicine on a national level."

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Lower Suktel project reaches its last leg

AS THE PROJECT WORK IS NEARING COMPLETION, PEOPLE ARE THRONGING THE WORK SITE TO GET A GLIMPSE OF THE MEGA IRRIGATION PROJECT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, June 7: The Lower Suktel irrigation project, a dream project of the residents in Bolangir district, is finally taking shape with construction of the project reaching its last leg.

Works on the spillway and soil embankment of the dam are nearing completion while the gap in between is being filled up in war footing. The project when completed will help irrigate 40,000 hectare of farmland and supply 8.76 million cubic metre (MCM) of drinking water to the residents.

According to available information, work on the project may get completed towards the end of June. A plan has been made to store this year's rain water in the Suktel reservoir which will benefit over 1 lakh farmers.

Construction of the dam and the irrigation project is being done simultaneously. The project will be the first in the state to have underground pipelines (UGPL) to run on electricity for irrigation purpose instead of constructing conventional canals. The UGPLs will help in irrigating larger tracts of land. Over ₹1,700 crore is being spent for construction of the UGPL.



The project will be the first in the state to have underground pipelines (UGPL) to run on electricity for irrigation purpose instead of constructing conventional canals

The original Lower Suktel project had plans for construction of open canal which was expected to irrigate over 31,000 hectare of farmland in Lodingha, Bolangir, Puintala blocks in the district and Tarabha block in neighbouring Subarnapur district.

However, after authorities planned construction of UGPLs instead of open canal the area which will be irrigated by the project has increased to 40,000 hectare from initially planned area of 31,000 hectare.

It has now been planned that

the left UGPL of the project will be used to irrigate 13,000 hectare of farmland in 65 villages and the right UGPL will be used to irrigate 27,000 hectare of farmland in 140 villages.

Meanwhile, construction of a pump house for the right UGPL has started at Khuntapali while for the left UGPL a pump house is being constructed at Ranipali.

Construction of the left UGPL and its pump house is being done by a consultancy firm 'Megha company' while the construction of right UGPL and pump house is being

done by L&T consultancy firm. The project will also provide drinking water facilities to Bolangir town and nearby villages. Over 8.76 MCM of water will be supplied as drinking water which will benefit over 80,000 people.

As the project work is nearing completion, people are thronging to the work site to get a glimpse of the mega irrigation project.

Chief Construction Engineer of the project Sunil Rout said that the project work is on the final stage and efforts are on to finish other related works as soon as possible. He expressed confidence that very soon the project will be completed.

When contacted, Bolangir Collector Chanchal Rana said that work on the project is at the final stage and very soon the project will be completed. He said providing irrigation facilities for the farmlands and supply of drinking water for the residents are the priorities of the project.

He ruled out water supply to the industries and dismissed the talks in this regard as rumours and not based on facts. Water supply to the industries is also not mentioned in the detailed project report (DPR), he added.

Forest dept roadblock for new highway in Rourkela

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, June 7: The National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) is planning the construction of new National Highway No-320(D). It will be a 25-km road connecting Bandhamunda with Jarekela via Hockey Square in the Steel City, sources said Wednesday.

The NHAI has already floated a tender for the project following the sanction of funds. Sources said that funds worth ₹222.62 crore have been sanctioned for the project. However, there are allegations that the NHAI floated the tender by reducing the budget.

Some of the amount sanctioned has been earmarked for seven different government departments. The seven departments that have been provided with funds are TP-WODL (₹11.50 crore), RMC (₹60,000), SC Railway (₹6 crore), RWSS (₹1.68 crore) Forest department (₹3.2 crore) and ₹37.5 crore for land acquisition.

However, land acquisition for the project has run into troubled waters. Certain conditions imposed by the Forest department for land acquisition is preventing the smooth completion of the project. There are doubts as to whether the project will be able to meet the deadline.



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE

Reports said that 5.98 acres of private and 21.140 acres of government land have to be acquired for construction of the highway. It will not be an easy process as thousands have set up shops and business establishments for their livelihood on the private and government lands.

Sources said that owners of the private land will get compensation. However, Bisra tehsildar Jyotshnaran Sahoo informed Tuesday that no compensation will be awarded for government land acquisition. It means that those who have their establishments on government land will not get any compensation.

The land acquisition process has also come under attack from various environmental groups. A total of 1,723 trees have been identified for felling. Among them, there are over 1,100 mango, neem and tamarind trees. However, here

also the Forest department has created a roadblock. It has asked the NHAI to plant double the number of trees that will be cut.

The Forest department has also asked the NHAI to construct three underpasses to facilitate the movement of elephants on the route. It has said that the go ahead will only be available if the conditions are met.

Junior engineer Jyotshnamayee Biswal of NHAI said that a tender has been floated while land acquisition and Forest department clearance is pending. Funds have been sanctioned to the Forest department to cut down the trees. The underpass for elephants will be constructed after receiving the clearance from higher-ups.

Rourkela DFO Jashobant Sethi said that they are yet to receive any report from NHAI on fulfillment of conditions as laid out by the Forest department.

2 minors missing as boat capsizes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, June 7: In a tragic incident, two minor boys went missing while three others had a close shave after a boat ferrying them capsized in Chitrakonda reservoir under Khairput block in Malkangiri district, police said Wednesday.

The missing minors were identified as Sanjit Kidindi, 15, and Balaram Kidindi, 14, of Sindhiguda village under Andrahah panchayat of Khairput block in Malkangiri district.

Three others accompanying them managed to swim to the bank and save themselves. They told the villagers about the mishap who in turn informed the fire services personnel.



RALLY FOR RIGHTS: Tribals take out rally demanding constitutional status to 'Ho' language and other demands before submitting a memorandum to the block development officer in Joda of Keonjhar district, Wednesday

TIGER SKIN, ANIMAL BODY PARTS SEIZED

6 poachers from Odisha held in Chh'garh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gariaband, June 7: Forest officials from adjoining Chhattisgarh's Gariaband district have arrested six persons on charges of poaching from Odisha and recovered tiger skin, four live peachicks and body parts of other wild animals from them, officials said Wednesday.

Acting on inputs, the anti-poaching team of Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve along with Odisha forest officials June 3 took action in villages under the neighbouring state's

Khariar forest range bordering the reserve, they said.

According to Deputy Director Varun Jain of the tiger reserve, the officials first raided the house of one Badan Manjhi (45) in Khudupani village on the inter-state border and recovered a big piece of tiger skin, four peachicks, bow-arrow and other materials used in poaching.

Based on Badan's statement, five more persons - Khageshwar Manjhi (62), Vidyadhar Manjhi (37), Bada Manjhi (61), Sachin Manjhi (36) and Achyutanand Manjhi (23) - were

searched in nearby villages and body parts of leopard, bear and other animals and a muzzle-loading gun were seized from them, he said.

As per preliminary information, Badan came across the rotten carcass of a tiger in a jungle close to his village two months back. He and other locals then chopped it and distributed the pieces among them, he said.

"Tiger skin, nails and teeth recovered from Badan will be sent to the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun, to establish which area the big cat belonged to. Its DNA will

be matched with five samples of scat (fecal droppings) of tigers sent to the WII from Udanti-Sitanadi tiger reserve in the last one-and-a-half years to ascertain whether the dead tiger belonged to the reserve," he said.

Badan told the forest personnel that six more poachers are also active in the area and efforts are on to trace them, he added.

All the accused have been handed over to the Odisha forest department for further action, said officials.

TRIPLE TRAIN CRASH

5 days later, people continue to flock site

WHILE ONLOOKERS CONTINUE TO THROG THE SPOT, RELATIVES OF THOSE WHO REMAIN MISSING CONTINUE TO PASS THROUGH THIS STATION AS THEIR FIRST STOP IN SEARCH OF MISSING RELATIVES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bahanaga, June 7: Five days after the tragic triple train accident near this station, it was business as usual here with a handful passengers, including a few sightseers thronging the tiny way station.

Despite the scorching heat, people armed with their mobile cameras are here to see the mangled remains of the trains involved in the crash.

Though Railway authorities had screened off the area with green cloth, the strewn coaches now removed on the sides of the tracks can be easily seen.

"I have come from Bhubaneswar to see the accident site. I'm still at a loss of words to express my feelings," said Ashok Behera, who visited the



I shiver at the thought of what the victims went through ... Though I don't suspect sabotage, I'm sure there's a need to look at every angle during any probe

ARJUN JENA | VISITOR

spot with his wife Rupa. "May God help the injured recover early," Rupa said.

Like the Behera couple, Arjun Jena, a Class XII student from Balasore town, came to the site with his friends.

"I shiver at the thought of what the victims went through ... Though I don't suspect sabotage, I'm sure

there's a need to look at every angle during any probe," Arjun said.

His classmate Gaurav also a Class XII student, said he had visited the spot Sunday too. "I had come here Sunday afternoon when everything was in a mess. Hundreds of policemen and relief and rescue personnel were at the spot then looking for bodies," he said.

"Now, almost 100 hours later, things have cooled down and normal train movement has started. Though many trains still stand cancelled, I hope the route will be fully operational in the next couple of days," he said.

While onlookers continue to throng the spot, relatives of those who remain missing continue to pass through

this station as their first stop in search of missing relatives before traveling to hospitals and morgues in Balasore, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

"I was travelling with my brother. After the accident, I managed to get off the train, though severely injured. Once out of the train, I kept calling my brother, but did not get a response. Then I fainted before waking up in a hospital in Balasore," said Krishna Das, a resident of Paschim Medinipur in West Bengal.

"Four days have passed and I have checked almost all hospitals in Balasore, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack over the last three days but haven't found him," he told reporters.

Sonali Biswas, from Bankura district in West Bengal, who was on the train and escaped unhurt, has also been looking for her aunt who was on the train.

"I looked for her for a couple of days in various hospitals. I then called up my brother to come to Bhubaneswar and help me find her. But till now, she remains traceless," she told a TV channel. AIIMS, Bhubaneswar where most of the unclaimed bodies are now housed has become most relatives' second stop after Bahanga Bazar and Balasore.

Meanwhile, a CBI team has reached Bahanaga for the investigation into the accident. The team will inspect the accident site and question railway officials.

PUBLIC NOTICE

M/S CUTTACK AGRIVET PRIVATE LIMITED Village-Banara, Tehsil-Dumpada, Dist.-Cuttack, Cuttack, Orissa-754006 This is to inform to all that, Environment Clearance was granted in favor of Greenfield Project of 125 KLD Grain Based Ethanol Plant along with 4.0 MW Co-generation Power Plant at Village- Banara, Tehsil-Dumpada, District-Cuttack, Odisha by M/s Cuttack Agrivet Private Limited vide Identification No EC22A060OR184264 dated 04/03/2022. The details of above Environmental Clearance is available in website of Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Changes.

S/d Managing Director CUTTACK AGRIVET PRIVATE LIMITED

NOTICE

I, the undersigned bring it to the notice of public that the property covered by plot No.186 appertaining to Khata No. 240, Mouza- Bagbrundaban, originally, was the ancestral property of myself and by virtue of a court partition Decree vide T.S. NO. - 285/88-I in the court of Sub-Judge, Balasore, I have acquired certain property and mutated the same in my name and obtained Mutation R.O.R. under Mutation Khata No. -259/320, Mouza - Bagbrundaban. But unfortunately the said original M.S.R.O.R. Khata No-240 and Mutation R.O.R. Khata No. -259/320, both in Mouza Bagbrundaban is missing somewhere while coming from my residence at Sahadevkhunta to Balasore court premises. In this connection I have lodged F.I.R. in Sahadevkhunta P.S. and the same is registered as S.D.E. NO.19 dtd 13.05.22. Further I have obtained the certified copy of the said M.S.R.O.R. Khata No.-240 Mouza-Bagbrundaban vide C.A. No. 4110/22 Dtd 26/04/22 and Mutation R.O.R. Khata No.259/320, Mouza bagbrundaban on 28.04. 22 and utilising the same as original and I declare that I have not availed any Loan from any Bank or financial Institution against mortgage Security by deposit of the above original M.S.R.O.R. & Mutation R.O.R. in respect of the said property. Presently I propose to deposit the above documents in State Bank of India, Proof Road Branch, Sunhat against mortgage security of the above land in respect of a loan to be incurred by me and objection if any from any quarter is invited to be placed before the concerned Bank and the undersigned within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice.

Signature & Address Smt.Mahamaya Pati W/O:Shashi Kanta Pati At-Sahadevkhunta, Po/Dist-Balasore, Pin-756001

DISTRICT OFFICE, JHARSUGUDA (Social Welfare Section) TENDER CALL NOTICE

No. 1087/SW Dt.02.06.2023 No. F-73: Short Sealed Tenders are invited from the intending Individual/Company/Firms/Corporation having registration certificate in support of their transportation work under "The Carriage by Road Act 2007" and "Carriage by Road Rules, 2011" issued by the State Transport Authority (STA) or of Regional Transport Authority (RTA) for appointment of Transporting Agent for undertaking transportation of foodstuffs under "Supplementary Nutrition Programme" and SAG (as per SAG guideline) in Jharsuguda District for the year 2023-24. Tender paper complete in all respect along with all required documents/papers/terms and conditions duly agreed to abide need to reach on or before 19.06.2023 upto 5.30 P.M. to the District Social Welfare Officer, Jharsuguda, At/P.O.: OMP Line, Jharsuguda, District: Jharsuguda, PIN - 768204 (Odisha) in a sealed cover with superscription in Block Capital Letter as 'TENDER FOR UNDERTAKING TRANSPORTATION WORK UNDER SUPPLEMENTARY NUTRITION PROGRAMME IN JHARSUGUDA DISTRICT' by Registered/Speed Post only. The tender shall be opened by the tender committee in presence of tenderers or their authorised representatives at 11.00 A.M. on 21.06.2023. The tender received after the scheduled date and time shall not be taken into consideration and shall be rejected summarily. The Collector, Jharsuguda, reserves the right to reject/cancel/withdraw the tender without assigning any reason there on and shall bear no liability what so ever consequent upon such decision.

Sd./- Collector, Jharsuguda OIPR-24022/11/0006/2324



To be free from all egoistic motive, careful of truth in speech and action, void of self-will and self-assertion, watchful in all things, is the condition for being a flawless servant.

SRI AUROBINDO



## Climate-Tech Solutions

Everything from seat belts and condoms to health care and bank bailouts invites riskier behaviour, or what economists call “moral hazard.” Even the most justified and well-meaning policy interventions can have unintended – and undesired – consequences. In the 1960s and 1970s, many environmentalists objected to nuclear power because its promise of cheap, limitless energy ran counter to their own push for energy efficiency and conservation.

The debate continues today. Which climate technologies deserve our support, and which are distractions that could lull us into complacency with the false promise of a silver bullet? The list of climate “solutions” is constantly expanding and now includes everything from futuristic fusion technologies to green hydrogen, from heat pumps to induction stoves to better insulation, and – of course – solar and wind.

The media love to fawn over greentech “unicorns” (startups with valuations above \$1 billion) that promise to provide the breakthrough innovation we have all been waiting for. But while innovation is certainly essential, not all technologies are created equal, and lists of what counts as “climate tech” often become political litmus tests. Many, for example, now look beyond solar to newer technologies. Yet the plummeting cost of solar energy is a result of technological breakthroughs and research and development subsidies, and the fact that it is becoming an established climate technology does not make it any less essential.

Of course, solar is not the whole solution. We cannot talk about solar without also talking about its land-use and grid implications, nor can we talk about green hydrogen without addressing the potential consequences of hydrogen leakage, a problem that has quickly turned natural gas from a promising “bridge” technology into a cause of major environmental problems. It is right to cheer the rapidly growing electric-vehicle (EV) market, but it is similarly important to consider the vast potential not only of transportation alternatives like e-bikes (or old-fashioned bicycles) but also of better cities.

Many of these debates are simply moot. It is not EVs or e-bikes; it is both. Climate beggars can’t be choosers. But debates about tradeoffs are crucial, and reveal quite a bit about our priors, priorities, and worldviews. Why zero in on the folly of Germany’s nuclear phase-out ten years ahead of its planned exit from coal, but not on German building codes, which should be a model for the rest of the world? Germany’s “well-sealed windows” do not make headlines, but investments in this admittedly boring climate technology could ultimately do more for cutting greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions than some of the most enthusiastically hyped innovations.

What really matters is the interplay between technology, policy, and behavioural change. While induction stoves alone will not make a big dent in global or personal GHG emissions, swapping one’s old gas range for a new induction stove is often the last step before shutting off one’s home gas line altogether. Induction stoves and heat pumps are the two main climate technologies that have allowed new buildings to go without gas altogether. And since everyone needs to eat and regulate the temperature in one’s home, neither technology creates much moral hazard.

Now consider carbon-removal technologies. They, too, have a crucial role to play in bringing about a low-carbon future, and yet they also hold the promise – justified or not – of allowing us to keep chugging along without changing our production and consumption patterns.

What to preserve is a political question. While some will welcome EVs as a way to decarbonise their suburban commutes, others will see a new moral hazard. After all, the more efficient cars become, the more guilt-free driving we can do. But rather than preserve long commutes, why not use zoning changes to create more walkable neighbourhoods? Rather than always surveying the cutting edge, we can find some of the most powerful technofixes already at work in the real world. Just look at the traditional European city. As Andrej Karpathy, the former head of artificial intelligence at Tesla, marvels, it is “more compact, denser ... [more] pedestrian/bike friendly.”

A final consideration is how some climate technologies may introduce the exact opposite of moral hazard. Solar geoeengineering, for example, might be considered to be so radical and controversial that the mere mention of it could motivate us to cut more carbon pollution sooner. But, of course, we must not bank on this effect. That, ironically, would be another case of falling into the moral-hazard trap.

How, then, to assess whether any given climate technology will deliver as promised? While there is no foolproof method, much can be learned from looking at the degree of decarbonisation that has already been achieved. By and large, there are dozens of ways to cut emissions by 5%, 10%, or even 20% in each industry or economic sector. Most of these involve small process changes aimed at teasing out additional efficiencies. A more efficient gas furnace, for example, will reduce your fuel bill and emissions by 10% or 20% overnight, and much the same can be said for a more efficient turbine at the gas plant.

But making existing fossil fuel-based processes more efficient can go only so far. Moving well beyond the 20% cuts to 80-90% or more typically means switching from fossil fuels to zero-carbon energy sources. In most sectors, there are really only one or two ways to cut emissions by that much. In the construction sector, for example, large cuts require installing insulation and heat pumps. In steel, the two options involve green hydrogen or full-on electrification, with a closed-loop carbon-recycling system emerging as a strong contender for a third path.

The key question when considering climate moral hazard, then, is whether a technology moves a company, industry, or sector closer to implementing an 80-100% solution, as opposed to a 10% or 20% measure that merely kicks the can down the road. Your new EV will not cut your transportation emissions to zero by itself – not until we have also decarbonised the steel used to make it, and the electricity that powers it. But it at least holds the potential to be an 80-100% solution.

It is moral hazard to think that technology will save us. However, it is equally hazardous to ignore innovations that could be game changers if they are accompanied by the right kinds of policies, investments, and political commitments. Whether a climate solution creates a moral hazard has little to do with the solution itself, and everything to do with us.

The writer is a climate economist at Columbia Business School.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

### WISDOM CORNER

No valid plans for the future can be made by those who have no capacity for living now.

ALAN WATTS

It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple: one must be a woman manly, or a man womanly.

VIRGINIA WOOLF

I have learned silence from the talkative, toleration from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind; yet, strange, I am ungrateful to those teachers.

KHALIL GIBRAN



Jagdish Rattanani

**WE LIVE IN AN INDIA WHERE SLICK CITY AIRPORTS ARE SHINING BUT RAILWAY STATIONS ONLY A LITTLE FAR AWAY ARE POORLY MAINTAINED**

As India emerges from the shock and horror of the triple train crash in Balasore June 2, and as investigations pick up into the cause or causes of the disaster that has claimed 288 lives and left over 1,000 people injured, the nation must ask some difficult questions that will begin with the railways but may not end there. They will stretch to a wider canvas to ask about the idea, the purpose and indeed the philosophy of development that has brought political capital and other investments in high-tech, world-class bullet-train technology at one end and a poorly maintained, almost languishing infrastructure that is accident-prone at the other end. In this specific case, the CBI has been called in to probe what the authorities have said could be “deliberate interference” in the signaling system – a quick side-tracking that has been appropriately and fiercely criticised by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, a former railway minister, who has raised a whole set of important questions. Kharge’s open letter to the Prime Minister points to a larger directional approach that is at the root of the present state of the Indian Railways. It is important to note from the reports that the railway authorities have pulled in the CBI not because they found something specific – their case according to reports is that this monumental signaling error that reportedly caused the crash could not have happened but for interference, and so they have turned to the CBI to look for this interference. Railway Board Member (Operation and Business Development) Jaya Varma Sinha Sunday was quoted as saying that “there may be outside interference in the signaling system.”

In a cruel irony, June 2 was also the day the railways ended a two-day ‘Chintan Shivir’ which was “centered on preparing an action plan to implement Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Vision 2047,” and was presided on June 2 by Railway Minister Ashwini

### FOCUS RAIL SAFETY

# APPLY THE BRAKES



The future of India will need a development model very different from the one on which we are pressing the accelerator

Vaishnav. The entire top railways leadership was here, with some 400 participants in attendance. To quote the railways: “The objective of the Chintan Shivir was to brainstorm on finding new ways and methods and adopt innovative ideas to achieve commissioning of more track/year (New line, GC & Multi-tracking), higher loading per day, achieving 160 Kmph on 50% routes, and attaining Zero Consequential Accidents and reduction in CRO & MRO by 90%... The two-day Chintan Shivir event witnessed deliberation on various issues and boosting Railway’s pace further in making New India.” CRO and MRO in the railways usually refer to cases of cattle run over and trespassing people/man run over.

It is true that the meeting also talked of safety; the minister is said to have emphasised safety and adoption of newer technologies. But the thrust of the meetings and the broad approach has been huge investments in fancier projects. For example, the budget for FY 2023-24 provided an outlay of Rs 2.40 lakh crore, significantly up from Rs 1.40 lakh crore in 2022-23. This was also a nine-fold jump in a decade. But the higher outlay

was to feed a new pipeline of Vande Bharat trains, the speed of which is now being called the symbol of India moving ahead. As the Prime Minister put it while inaugurating the first of the Vande Bharat trains on May 25: “The country is not going to stop now, the country has now caught its pace. The whole country is moving ahead at the speed of Vande Bharat and will continue to move ahead.”

Indian Railways of course needs newer technology, faster trains and more conveniences. But this story of development at one end is worrisome because it also leaves behind a vast part of India where these investments won’t reach, where services won’t improve and some trains will never reach their destinations because they derailed and passengers died. Saying this is not necessarily to criticise the march ahead but to raise important questions on the kind of development and the purpose of this development model. The story of ‘India Shining,’ because this what the entire narrative of growth and smart technology and newer services adds up to, was never liked by the vast majority who continue to languish. This was the ‘India Shining’ campaign mas-

termined by the BJP elite and an advertising agency, a campaign that was thought to have brought defeat for the BJP under Atal Behari Vajpayee in the 2004 general elections.

We live in an India where slick city airports are shining but railway stations only a little far away are poorly maintained. The bus infrastructure is even weaker – rickety buses are the only means of transport for the remotest parts of India and no government has ever cared to provide a decent bus service to connect the people living in remote villages. Similarly, public land goes to fancier schools and specialty hospitals, which are often out of bounds for the ordinary citizen given the for-profit models that tend to extract the most even in services that should be affordable, accessible, available and acceptable in quality and standards. It should be easier to take a bus from an airport than a car. It should be easier to be treated in public hospitals than in private hospitals. Our citizens should be drawn to public schools, not private schools with air-conditioned classrooms. Trains in the remotest corners of India should be first safe, then run on time and then provide conveniences. If this order is reversed, and select pockets get the benefits, the story of development will produce more cracks that will destabilise the house and shake the foundations. Speed around houses that are weak will weaken the foundations further.

None of this is a new skew. But it has a new bent these days. It has an air of certainty, a suspected disdain for the old and an eagerness for the new that disregards many realities of a nation that is growing unequally. The future of India will need a development model very different from the one on which we are pressing the accelerator. It is time to apply the brakes.

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

THE BILLION PRESS

### SPECTRUM EDUCATION

# Who’s afraid of Darwin?

The NCERT’s decision to remove the periodic table and evolution from high school science textbooks has justifiably raised considerable uproar. This has been done in a move to “rationalise” the syllabus i.e. reduce the burden of studies on children. The NCERT listed “difficulty level, overlapping content, and content irrelevant in the present context” as reasons for the deletion of sections. Predictably, the Minister of State for Education Subhas Sarkar has rejected all criticisms as “false and malicious propaganda.” Nothing has been removed, argues Sarkar; certain topics have just been moved to higher classes i.e. 11 and 12.

Certain criticisms are indeed unfair. The historian Aditya Mukherjee, for instance, claimed that the changes were brought under the influence of RSS due to the incompatibility of evolution with creation stories. This claim simply does not hold up even under the slightest scrutiny. It is true that a former minister has publicly flaunted his ignorance by critiquing the theory of evolution. Nevertheless, it is not an issue that the BJP or the RSS has given any attention to. The leading ideologue of Hindu nationalism VD Savarkar was influenced by Herbert Spencer, who coined the term “survival of the fittest.” Indian nationalists and

Hindu spiritual thinkers like Aurobindo Ghose, Swami Vivekananda, Bipin Chandra Pal and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee enthusiastically praised evolutionary theory. Bankimchandra used Darwin’s theory to show Hinduism’s compatibility with science while Sri Aurobindo referenced Darwinian evolution in his spiritual philosophy. According to the Pew Research Centre, Hindus (80 per cent) and Buddhist (81 per cent) are far more likely to accept evolution than Catholics (58 per cent) and Muslims (45 per cent). Similar results were found in a recent survey from the Central University of Punjab.

The removal of evolution is a consequence of misplaced priorities, not any persistent ideological opposition. Taking the justifications given by NCERT at face value, one wonders what makes the NCERT think Ohm’s law is less difficult than the basics of evolution. What exactly makes heredity more relevant than evolution? The absurdity of such criteria is quite obvious. Thus, it is difficult to argue that the removal is motivated by anything other than pure thoughtless arbitrariness.

What makes the theory of evolution so necessary, so fundamental that everyone, regardless of their field of interest, ought to be aware of it? First, it answers a question that all of us, at some

point in our lives, have pondered over: What is the origin of the diversity of life that we see around us? The process of natural selection and random mutation explains elegantly our evolution from simple to complex beings. In the words of Charles Darwin, the theory of evolution explains how “endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful” have been and are being evolved from simple beginnings. This is a direct negation of creation stories that various religions around the world have propounded for thousands of years. God did not create us as we are. Homo sapiens in their present forms emerged only 300,000 years ago. The oldest archaic human i.e. Homo Habilis was as different from us as it gets. The fact that the theory of evolution is a superior evidence-based explanation for biodiversity than the fanciful and simplistic creation stories of religions should be enough to necessitate its inclusion in our early school textbooks.

The relevance of evolution is further magnified by its utility and explanatory value in identifying pathogens and their cure. The prevalence of sickle-cell anaemia in malaria-endemic Africa served as a resistance mechanism to malaria. JBS Haldane and AC Allison showed that in malaria-endemic regions, humans evolved this sickle-cell trait to fight malaria.

This is just one of many examples that point to the relevance of evolution in medicine.

Evolutionary theory has altered the way we think about anthropology, psychology, economics, religion, philosophy, medicine, neuroscience and much, much more. The basics of evolutionary theory are not only essential and necessary to those venturing to study science but also humanities. The basics of evolutionary theory are taught in virtually all developed countries at the high school level. The Prime Minister often speaks of projecting India as a “vishwaguru” while the repercussions of such educational policies ensure that our kids remain ignorant of basic science in contrast to developed countries. This is doubly baffling given that the religious backlash in India to the theory of evolution is virtually non-existent. Supporters of the government advocate for changing and adding more to history textbooks while defending the decision to remove crucial chapters in science textbooks. If India is to capitalise on its demographic dividend, then we must ensure that our educational policies are exhaustive, relevant and comparable to global standards.

The writer is an author and a student at Jindal School of International Affairs.



Anwesh Satpathy

**IF INDIA IS TO CAPITALISE ON ITS DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND, THEN WE MUST ENSURE THAT OUR EDUCATIONAL POLICIES ARE EXHAUSTIVE, RELEVANT AND COMPARABLE TO GLOBAL STANDARDS**

### Unfettered jurisdiction

Sir, This refers to “Evidence must for summon: SC” (OrissaPOST June 7). With due regard to the apex court, I humbly state that for summoning a person detailed and meticulous evidence is not always required. The object of the Section 204 of the Criminal Procedure is to test whether or not allegations make out a prima facie case prompting the magistrate to issue process. This is also applicable in Section 319 CrPC. The magistrate has to give reasons while coming to the conclusion that there is a prima facie case against the accused. If the magistrate is not satisfied with the prima facie evidence, he may inquire into the matter by examining witnesses under Section 202 CrPC. Issuance of process against the accused depends on the satisfaction of the magistrate who has unfettered jurisdiction.

Arun Gupta, KOLKATA

### Decongest prisons

Sir, The Prisons Act, 1894 is antiquated. Its main thrust is on retribution. A new Act that focuses on correction and rehabilitation was felt badly for long in India. The Ministry of Home Affairs is said to have prepared a draft of Model Prisons Act, 2023, that has a good number of salient features, in its endeavour to reform and rehabilitate prisoners. India’s jails are packed with little provision for ensuring health and hygiene. Some undertrials’ waiting time in jails has exceeded the period of maximum years of imprisonment they would have undergone if convicted. The Justice Amitava Banerjee Committee setup by the Supreme Court in 2018 has emphasised on technology to hasten trials. The new Act should decongest prisons. Segregation of prisoners, provisions for parole, furlough and remission, setting up special courts and increasing the lawyers to prisoners ratio – all this need to be incorporated in the amended law.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

### Ecocide alert

Sir, The collapse of the Nova Kakhovka dam in the Russian-run Kherson region in southern Ukraine has set alarm bells ringing. Russia and Ukraine blamed each other for the dam explosion. The incident caused flooding, endangered Europe’s largest nuclear power plant and threatened water supplies. Kyiv alerted of a possible “ecocide” because of the 150 tonnes of engine oil that contaminated the river after the attack. The dam break added a stunning extra dimension to Russia’s war on Ukraine.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

# national

## of the day quote

My message to everyone is India is unity in diversity. Let us protect the diversity. It will protect the unity of the country



FAROOQ ABDULLAH | FORMER J&K CM

Recently we heard about Ahmednagar. Today, I saw news from Kolhapur. People came out on roads, and giving religious colour to a small incident of sending a message over the phone is not a good sign. The ruling parties are encouraging such things



SHARAD PAWAR | NCP PRESIDENT

The tiffin meeting is part of the BJP's mega public outreach programme with an eye on the 2024 Lok Sabha elections



J P NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

## SHORT TAKES

### Security tightened in U'khand's Purola

Uttarkashi: Security was stepped up in Purola on Wednesday as communal tension prevailed in the town, days after an alleged attempt to abduct a minor girl. The alleged bid to abduct the Hindu girl on May 26 by two men, including a Muslim, was foiled by local people. After this, threatening posters appeared on the shops owned by members of the minority community asking them to leave Purola. A platoon of the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) was deployed in the town as a preventive measure, Uttarkashi Superintendent of Police Arpan Yaduvanshi said.

### Minor dies after being gangraped

Basti (UP): A 12-year-old girl died here allegedly after being raped by three men, police said Wednesday. The incident took place in the Gaur area on Monday when the girl had gone to buy vegetables. Three accused, identified as Monu Sahni, Rajan Nishad and Kundan Singh, allegedly took her to a secluded place and took turns to rape her, they said. When the girl did not return to her home and the family members started searching for her, Sahni informed them that she was lying unconscious near Singh's house. The girl was taken to hospital, where she died Monday evening, police said.

### Four killed as two motorcycles collide

Guna: Four persons were killed and two others seriously injured after two motorcycles collided head-on in Madhya Pradesh's Guna district Wednesday evening, police said. The incident occurred at Konyakala village under Chachoda police station area. Chachoda police station in-charge Balbir Gaur said that a total of six persons were travelling on two motorbikes.

### 3 drown in river

Betul: Three minor boys drowned while taking bath in a river in Madhya Pradesh's Betul district, an official said Wednesday. The incident took place Tuesday afternoon at the Kharpada river in Dhodhrmahar village, about 40 km from the district headquarters, he said. The three boys, aged 6 to 10 years, entered deep waters while taking bath and drowned, Saikheda police station's assistant sub-inspector Pritam Singh Thakur said. Some other boys who were also taking bath in the river alerted their family members and villagers, who took out the three victims but could not save them, he said.

# Riots in Kolhapur over social media posts

Tension rose in Kolhapur city Tuesday after two men allegedly put 18th-century Mysore ruler Tipu Sultan's image along with an offensive audio message as their social media "status"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolhapur, June 7: Wielding lathis, police in Maharashtra's Kolhapur on Wednesday dispersed hundreds of protesters after they pelted stones during a demonstration against the alleged use of Tipu Sultan's image along with an objectionable audio message as social media "status" by a few locals, an official said. In view of the protest, internet services have been suspended till Thursday in Kolhapur, a senior police official said.

While personnel from the State Reserve Police Force (SRPF) have been deployed in the city in western Maharashtra, police have sought more cops from Satara, he said. Prohibitory orders have been issued till June 19 banning the assembly of five or more persons, he said. As there was a possibility that a few groups of protesters may go to the neighbouring Sangli district, police are put on alert and prohibitory orders may be issued. Maharashtra Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis wondered if there was any link between the statement of a



leader from the Opposition camp about likely riots and the subsequent "glorification" of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb and Tipu Sultan. "Some organisations had called for a Kolhapur bandh and their members gathered at Shivaji Chowk today. After their demonstration ended, the crowd began to disperse but some miscreants started throwing stones, forcing police to use force against these people to disperse them," said Kolhapur Superintendent of Police Mahendra Pandit.

Kolhapur district collector Rahul Rekhawar said the situation is

under control and additional police forces have been brought in. Fadnavis told reporters that statements of some politicians fearing a riot-like situation in the state and a section of people of a particular community glorifying Aurangzeb and Tipu Sultan cannot be a mere coincidence. His reaction came against the backdrop of some youths displaying photos of 17th Century Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in a procession in Ahmednagar and tension in Kolhapur city.

Fadnavis said he was surprised that in Kolhapur, a chief leader of the opposition said that he was

aware that riots will happen.

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has appealed for peace and said nobody should law into their hands. Against the background of the incidents in Ahmednagar and Kolhapur, NCP chief Sharad Pawar has claimed "religious colour" was being given to some small issues and the ruling parties are encouraging such things, which he said is a cause of concern.

Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole has demanded the resignation of Fadnavis alleging he has failed to handle the law and order situation and also cited the alleged rape and murder of a collegian in a Mumbai hostel. At Sangamner in Ahmednagar district, stones were hurled during an rally of Sakal Hindu Samaj two days back in response to the alleged murder of a boy.

Two persons were injured and five vehicles were damaged. Separately, a poster of Aurangzeb was displayed with the raising of objectionable slogans during a religious procession, also in Sangamner, police had said.

## JOB SCAM

### CBI raids multiple locations in Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, June 7: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Wednesday conducted raids at multiple locations in West Bengal in connection with its probe into alleged irregularities in recruitment in civic bodies, an official said.

Sleuths of the central agency started search operations this morning in 14 municipalities, including South Dum Dum, Panihati, Kanchrapara, Chinsurah and Dum Dum. The CBI teams also raided the office of the state urban development department in the Salt Lake area, he said.

According to the official, allegations of cash-for-jobs had surfaced over appointments of personnel in these civic bodies for which the search operations were taking place.

Reacting to the CBI raids, state Municipal Affairs and Urban Development Minister Firhad Hakim said this is "part of a conspiracy" hatched by the BJP. "There are reasons to believe that it is an act of revenge by the BJP which has been using central agencies against its political opponents. We have nothing against fair investigations but we believe that such raids are part of a conspiracy. We want the truth to come out," he told reporters.

BJP state spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya claimed that the CBI is investigating the alleged job scam in municipalities on the direction of the Calcutta High Court, and thus, the TMC's claim about conspiracy is "baseless". "Hakim is aware of the fact that sections of TMC workers are disgruntled for not getting jobs in local civic bodies and they are happy with the court's order and CBI searches," he added.



SELF-DEFENCE: Young athletes play 'kabaddi' during a public interaction programme of J&K Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha, near India-Pakistan border in Akhnoor, Jammu

# Cyclone may delay onset of monsoon in India

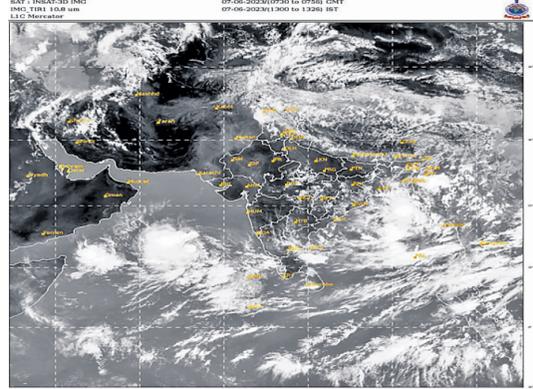
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 7: The wait for southwest monsoon might be a little longer for India with cyclonic storm Biparjoy developing in the Arabian Sea, met experts said Wednesday.

The weather system is presently sustaining the strength of a very severe cyclone.

According to meteorologists, atmospheric conditions and cloud masses are indicating that the system is likely to sustain the strength of a very severe cyclone till June 12. The India Meteorology Department (IMD) said the system is likely to be more organised and may intensify up to a very severe cyclonic storm by June 9.

"Weather conditions are very ripe for the system to continue to gain more strength. With long sea travel ahead, sea surface temperatures are very warm, infusing



more heat and moisture into the atmosphere. This would help the system sustain its strength for a longer period," said GP Sharma, President,

Meteorology and Climate Change, Skymet Weather. "The oceans have become warmer already on account of cli-

## MANIPUR VIOLENCE

# 'No security personnel killed in June 6 firing'



PNN/ AGENCIES

Imphal, June 7: At a time when officials claimed that a Border Security Force (BSF) jawan was killed and two Assam Rifles personnel were injured in an encounter with suspected Kuki insurgents in Manipur's Serou area early Tuesday, the Kuki Chiefs' Association refuted the claims, Wednesday.

According to sources, clashes first broke out in the north-eastern state May 3 after a "Tribal Solidarity March" was organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. Since the violent ethnic strife broke out, more than 10,700 people, mostly tribals, have taken shelter in Mizoram and southern Assam after being displaced from their state.

As per the official statement, a BSF jawan was killed and two Assam Rifles personnel suffered injuries in an encounter with suspected Kuki insurgents in Serou area early Tuesday.

As per a statement issued by the office of the Kuki Chiefs' Association Wednesday, the villages' chief of the area were convinced at a meeting June 5 at Sajik Tampak by the IGAR(S) that the security forces would dominate Serou-

Thingkangphai area so that neither side of the warning groups attacks each other. Reluctantly, the village chiefs agreed to trust the security forces at the meeting.

However, within 24 hours, the agreement was breached by the security forces and they themselves abetted and physically joined in the burning down of many villages in the area June 6 morning, the outfit said.

"On June 6, a security vehicle came in the Thingkangphai area and the personnel started indiscriminate firing. The alert village volunteers retaliated with licensed guns. However, the village guard volunteers were forced to flee as the security personnel intensified the use of heavy automatic guns and mortars on them. As the resistance was weak, the combined security forces managed to burn down all the villages without much effort," it added.

"No Kuki UG cadre was killed in the area. A civilian village volunteer was killed due to mortar shelling," the association said, adding that no security personnel were killed or injured by the village defence volunteers as claimed.

Meanwhile, the Manipur government Tuesday extended its ban on internet services till June 10.

## CENTRAL ORDINANCE

### SP ANNOUNCES SUPPORT TO AAP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow June 7: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav Wednesday announced his party's support to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal against the Centre's ordinance on control of services in the national capital after a meeting here with the AAP convener.

Kejriwal was accompanied by Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann at the meeting. "We had discussion with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav... We thank him as he has assured his party's support when the ordinance comes in the Rajya Sabha," Kejriwal told a joint press conference after the meeting.

The SP chief termed the ordinance as "anti-democratic" and said, "My party is with you (Kejriwal)." Kejriwal said that if the ordinance gets defeated in the Rajya Sabha, it will send a "strong message" before the 2024 parliamentary elections.

The Aam Aadmi Party chief has been reaching out to leaders of non-BJP parties to garner their support against the ordinance so that the Centre's bid to replace it through a Bill is defeated when it is brought in Parliament.

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray, NCP chief Sharad Pawar, and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee have so far extended their support to the AAP. Bihar Chief Minister and JD(U) leader Nitish Kumar and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin have also supported Kejriwal in the matter.

# Leave bats alone for a pandemic-free future: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 7: Scientists make the case that pandemic prevention requires a global taboo or ban whereby mankind agreed to leave bats alone, to let them have the habitats they need, undisturbed, in a study published in the journal The Lancet Planetary Health.

The researchers from Cornell University, US, along with those from Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), US, say that while we may never know the exact means by which a bat virus, to which the Covid-19 pandemic and SARS coronavirus outbreak of 2003 can be traced, we do not need to know all of the details in order to act.

This analysis, the researchers said, points to the value of humanity globally not fearing them or trying to chase them or culling them, all of them being activities only serving to disperse them and increase the odds of a zoonotic



spillover.

They emphasised that humanity simply must take the most basic, common-sense upstream steps to lower our risk of incurring another pandemic - at the interface where dangerous viruses can actually move from animals into people. "In a globalised world with 8 bil-

lion people, we can no longer ignore our interconnectedness with the wildlife and ecosystems around us. We must change humanity's relationship with nature if we want to prevent the next pandemic of zoonotic origin - and that can start

with bats," said Susan Lieberman, WCS's Vice President for International Policy.

Calling for humanity to change its broken relationship with nature, specifically wildlife and bats in particular, the study said that the costs of implementing human behavioural changes were insignificant compared to those of another global pandemic.

"If we can actually stop hunting, eating, and trading bats, stay out of their caves, keep livestock away from areas where bats are concentrated, and if we can

stop deforesting, degrading, or even start restoring, their natural habitats, we can indisputably lower the chances of another pandemic," said Steven A. Osofsky professor at Cornell and lead author of the study.

Allowing bats to survive and thrive will also pay billions of dollars in dividends in the form of the ecosystem services that bats provide, such as control of mosquitoes and other harmful insects, as well as pollination of a wide array of important crops, the authors said in their paper.

They further said that while humanity's relationships with other kinds of animals merited close scrutiny, respecting bats and the habitats they needed was truly the lowest hanging fruit of genuine upstream pandemic prevention - an important better-late-than-never message now that we've passed the third anniversary of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bats are known to be a source of rabies, Marburg filoviruses, Hendra and Nipah paramyxoviruses, coronaviruses such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) Coronavirus, and fruit bats are strongly believed to be a source of Ebolaviruses

RESTORING PEACE

# Women take centre stage in Manipur

## Court nixes Nagaland govt's order banning dog meat sale

Around 4,000 vendors of the world's largest all-women-run market "Ima Keithal" begin a 3-day long sit-in-demonstration demanding the restoration of peace and normalcy in Manipur



A large number of the CSOs that met Union Home Minister Amit Shah during his four-day visit are women-run bodies

**Imphal, June 7:** Women in Manipur have always been at the centre stage, and there is no exception when it comes to playing a role in restoring peace and normalcy amidst the ongoing ethnic violence in the north-eastern state, where over 100 people have been killed and more than 320 others injured since the strife broke out May 3.

Around 4,000 vendors of the world's largest all-women-run market "Ima Keithal" or the "Mother's Market", located in Imphal, began Tuesday a three-day long sit-in-demonstration demanding the restoration of peace and normalcy in Manipur.

The agitating women vendors also demanded the implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the identification and pushback of infiltrators from Myanmar, Nepal and Bangladesh.

"The vendors in the Ima Market, which has a history of over 500 years, are known as 'imas' or moth-

ers, and the majority of the sellers are between the ages of 50 and 70 years," Manipuri intellectual and writer Rajkumar Kalyanjit Singh said, adding that in 1891, the British introduced stringent political and economic reforms leading to adverse impact on the market.

"Several measures including high taxation were imposed that eventually troubled the socio-economic fabric of the state in general and Manipuri society in particular. All these led to the formation of the 'Nupi Lana' (Women's War) movement in 1939 to revolt against the atrocities of the British. Protest rallies, mass gatherings and campaigns were held to denounce the British policies and measures. The Britishers, to thwart the agitation, tried to sell the market's buildings

to external buyers and foreigners but women of Manipur stood against them and defended their market aggressively," said Singh, who is also the Editor of Manipuri newspaper, 'Marup'.

Of the 47 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that met Union Home Minister Amit Shah during his four-day visit (May 29 to June 1) to the violence-torn state, a large number of the CSOs are women-run bodies.

The women in Manipur, besides various other social evils, have also been fighting against alcoholism since the 1970s, forcing the then Manipur People's Party-led government headed by RK Ranbir Singh to pass the Manipur Liquor Prohibition Act in 1991.

The law is still in place.

In 1991, Manipur officially became a dry state with an exemption for people belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe communities to brew liquor for traditional purposes only. However, despite the prohibition, liquor consumption could not be successfully controlled and alcohol remained widely available, leading to agitations in different parts of the state against liquor-related menaces.

The present Manipur government headed by Chief Minister N Biren Singh last year decided to partially lift the prohibition as the government is expecting to earn a revenue of ₹600 crore annually. As per the government decision, the sale of liquor would be confined to district headquarters and some other identified locations, such as tourist spots, resorts, security camps and hotels having at least 20-

bed lodging facility. Several women activists and organisations, including the Coalition Against Drugs and Alcohol (CADA), reiterated that they would never accept the government's decision since it would harm future generations. These organisations anticipated that if the government implements its decision, it would be the death knell for a large section of the population, especially the younger generations.

Senior Congress leaders, mostly women MLAs, were critical of the BJP government's policy. To curb crimes against women, female citizens formed the All Manipur Women's Social Reformation and Development Samaj or Nupi Samaj in the late 1970s.

The 'Meira Paibis' (women torch-bearers) conducted patrolling in villages at night and detained drunkards and bootleggers and even gave them punishments. The punishments were innovative with the accused being asked to do a frog march wearing garlands of empty bottles, while shouting out, "I am a drunkard, I am a bootlegger".

Since British rule, women in the erstwhile princely state have been playing a prominent role in society. From economic activities to mass agitations, domestic affairs to sports and cultural activities, and societal awareness to fight against drug menace and militancy, women have been in a dominating role. However, in a male-dominated society, they (women) have an insignificant chance to become a lawmaker or a minister or at least be in a commanding administrative position.

In November 2020, the High Court stayed the Nagaland govt order that had banned import, trade and sale of dog meat in the state



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Guwahati, June 7:** A Nagaland government order prohibiting the sale and eating of dog meat in the state issued in 2020 was recently quashed by the Kohima Bench of the Gauhati High Court.

On June 2, Justice Marli Vankung ruled that the state government could not have prohibited the consumption of dog meat without a valid legal basis.

The court order mentioned: "The prohibition of sale and consumption of dog meat, by the Executive branch of the Government, without there being any law passed by the legislation in relation to trade and consumption of dog meat is liable thus to be set aside even though the impugned notification dated July 4, 2020 is said to have been passed in accordance with a Cabinet decision."

The court reasoned that there is no indication of any authority to issue prohibition orders in the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act, which served as the foundation for the government's issuance of the order.

It also observed that dog meat was not covered by the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards

and Food Additives) Regulations, though this was not 'surprising'.

"The meat of dogs is consumed only in some parts of the North Eastern states and the very idea of consuming dog meat is alien in other parts of the country. The thought of adding canine/dogs as an animal for human consumption under regulation 2.5.1(a) would be inconceivable, since consumption of dog meat would be considered unthinkable..."

"The consumption of dog meat appears to be an accepted norm and food amongst the Nagas even in modern times, wherein the petitioners are able to earn their livelihood by transporting dogs and selling of dog meat," the court said.

The court emphasised that under long-standing precedent, the FSS Act's Commissioner of Food Safety -- not the State's Chief Secretary -- was the only person authorised to issue orders outlawing the sale of any meat within the state.

It was acknowledged that the management of the dogs intended for slaughter in the current situation was not entirely hygienic or in accordance with the Slaughter House Rules. The court ruled that the same did not, however, support a blanket ban.

## Himachal roadways' woman bus driver breaks barriers!

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Shimla, June 7:** Breaking stereotype barriers and empowering the fair sex at workplace, state-run Himachal Road Transport Corp (HRTC) driver Seema Thakur, the first and only woman driver in the fleet of 2,773 buses, has become the first woman on the wheel to drive on some of the toughest and long inter-state motorable roads.

Believing the women have multiple roles in society, she drove the HRTC's luxury to and fro bus from Rohru to Delhi via Shimla, a distance of 500 km with the travel time of over 12 hours.

As a trendsetter in a man's world, local residents and politicians of Theog, Jubbal, Kotkhai and Rohru towns honoured Seema Thakur, who joined the HRTC as a driver May 5, 2016, while she was on the wheel.

An elated Seema Thakur told IANS: "It is really a marvellous experience to drive on an inter-state bus and that is of longer duration. I am the only first woman bus driver in the region."

"I will continue to serve the people of Himachal Pradesh," she added. Earlier, Seema Thakur was the only woman driver among the nearly 9,000 HRTC employees who drove on the Shimla-Chandigarh



It is really a marvellous experience to drive on an inter-state bus and that is of longer duration. I am the only first woman bus driver in the region. With my new responsibility, now more and more women will come forward to work with HRTC's buses and cabs

SEEMA THAKUR | 1ST WOMAN HRTC DRIVER

route and became the first woman driver on an inter-state route.

She believes gender equal leadership will lead to a more inclusive and effective society. "With my new responsibility, now more and more women will come forward to work with HRTC's buses and cabs."

Earlier, her work as Covid-19 warrior was recognised by the Government of India for helping people. Her father was also in the state Transport Department and she took over his duties after he died. "For Himachal, Seema Thakur

is proud. We feel safe while travelling a long distance with her even during night," remarked an elderly passenger Kanta Negi.

Describing Seema Thakur's feat a source of inspiration for women and a step towards women empowerment, apple grower-turned-politician Chetan Bragta, who honoured her by donning a Himachali cap and offering a woollen shawl along with other, remarked that it was for the first time that a woman bus driver of the state reached Rohru from Delhi by taking a Volvo bus.

## Agitators demand Roman script for Tripura's Kokborok language

FOR OVER FIVE DECADES THERE HAS BEEN A DEBATE OVER THE USE OF THE BENGALI AND ROMAN SCRIPTS FOR THE KOKBOROK LANGUAGE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Agartala, June 7:** Hundreds of tribals organised a sit-in demonstration in Agartala Wednesday demanding the adoption of the Roman script for the tribal Kokborok language, the second official language in Tripura.

The agitation was spearheaded by 'Roman Script for Kokborok Choba' (RSKC), an apex body of 56 small tribal organisations.

Holding placards and banners and chanting slogans in support of their demand, the agitators said that the Kokborok script issue has been pending for over five decades, and accused the previous and current governments of failing to take the matter seriously.

RSKC convenor Mintu Debbarma claimed that several commissions, formed earlier to decide the script for the Kokborok language, had recommended the Roman script but the government has remained silent on the matter.



The main opposition party -- the Tipra Motha Party -- has also been spearheading agitations across Tripura demanding the introduction of the Roman script for Kokborok.

Some Kokborok speakers favour Bengali, while the majority of the tribal intellectuals and academicians advocate for the Roman script.

The protesters cited a recent RTI (Right to Information) reply that revealed more than 99 per cent of Kokborok-speaking students prefer to answer their examination papers in the Roman script when given the choice between Bengali and Roman.

Noting that no one can be compelled to use the Bengali script, Debbarma said that the Roman script must be used by nursery to university students and they should be permitted to answer in the Roman script in all levels of examinations.

If the government fails to promptly address this issue, we will have no choice but to escalate our agitation across the state, Debbarma added.

Tripura has a 12 lakh tribal population out of its 40 lakh inhabitants and 70 per cent of the tribals spoke in the Kokborok language, which was recognised as the second official language by the then CPI-M led Left Front government in 1979.

The demand for the Roman script for Kokborok recently got strength after there were reports that stu-

dents in various schools in Tripura, specially the Central Board of Secondary Education run schools, were compelled to write answers for the Kokborok subject in the CBSE board examination in the Bengali script.

The main opposition party -- the Tipra Motha Party -- has also been spearheading agitations across Tripura demanding the introduction of the Roman script for Kokborok. Some Kokborok speakers favour Bengali, while the majority of the tribal intellectuals and academicians advocate for the Roman script.

Since 1988, two commissions have been set up under former tribal leader Shyama Charan Tripura and linguist and academician Pabitra Sarkar.

## 868 sophisticated arms recovered in Manipur

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Imphal, June 7:** With the recovery of another 57 arms and 318 pieces of ammunition during the last 24 hours, security forces in Manipur have so far recovered 868 sophisticated and automatic arms and 11,518 pieces of ammunition, that were looted from the police and various other establishments during the ethnic riots that broke out May 3, a top official said Wednesday.

Security advisor to Manipur government Kuldip Singh said that 57 arms, 318 pieces of ammunition and five bombs have been recovered from the area of Porompat Police Station in Imphal East and Sognu Police Station in Kakching districts of Manipur during the last 24 hours.

Talking to the media, Singh said that curfew was relaxed for 12 hours in five valley districts, and 10 hours and eight hours in neighboring hill districts.

There is no curfew in six other hill districts, including Tamenglong, Noney, Senapati, Ukhrul, and



Kamjong. Movement of vehicles through the National Highway-37 (Imphal-Jiribam) carrying essential items was ensured.

A defence spokesman said that the security forces launched joint that security operations in hill and valley areas across Manipur to dominate sensitive areas and recover snatched weapons and ammunition. Locals in possession of such weapons being urged to surrender them to the security forces for the sake of peace and harmony, he said.

Media reports claimed that thousands of different types of arms and large quantities of ammunition were looted by mobs from many police stations and security camps after the riots broke out.

## Bhutan's Queen Jetsun Pema, 33, has Himachal connection

JIGME KHE SAR NAMGYEL WANGCHUCK, THE OXFORD-EDUCATED KING OF BHUTAN, THE HAPPIEST COUNTRY IN ASIA, WAS MARRIED TO JET SUN IN OCTOBER 2011

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Sanawar (HP), June 7:** Bhutan's Queen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck, who celebrated her 33rd birthday Sunday has a connection with this picturesque Himachal Pradesh hill station.

For two years, Jetsun Pema, the youngest queen consort in the world, was a student of the prestigious Lawrence School here. At that time no one knew that the tall, slim girl would one day marry Bhutan's king.

In 2011, Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck had announced that he would marry Jetsun Pema, a former student of Lawrence School, the 176-year-old prestigious co-educational residential near Kasauli where actor Sanjay Dutt and former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah once studied. Pema's younger sister Serchen

Doma was also a student of this school.

"On this auspicious occasion of the 33rd birth anniversary of our beloved Gyaltsuen, Her Majesty The Queen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck, we would like to offer our deepest respects, gratitude and love to Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen, our most beloved Gyaltsuen on Her Majesty's 33rd Birth Anniversary," said the Royal Family of Bhutan in an Instagram post, by posting her photo.

"Happy Birthday la Your Majesty!"

In another post, it said Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen and HRH Princess Euphelma Choden Wangchuck attended the wedding of Crown Prince Al Hussein Bin Abdullah of Jordan.

Responding to her birth anniversary, a teacher in Lawrence School, who has taught both the sisters, told IANS: "We are proud



that a student of our school is the Bhutan's Queen. We wish her success to change the lives of others with her positivity, love, and beautiful spirit."

Jetsun was in the school for two years from 2006. One of her former teachers remarked, "She was just like a commoner and never portrayed herself to be someone belonging to a royal family. We only knew that she was from Bhutan." She was born in Thimphu June

4, 1990. Initially, she studied in St Joseph's Convent, Kalimpong.

Well-versed in Hindi and English, Jetsun, as her English teacher recalled, was good in sports, including athletics and basketball.

"Basketball was her favourite game. Her impressive height of 5'10" benefits her in the game. In studies, she was very well focused, clear in her perceptions and quite sharp in cooperative skills," the former teacher said, adding that

"her cheerful face always catches one's attention".

She was also a member of the school band and participated in western dance contests too.

Jetsun, a blue blood herself, completed her Class 12 from Lawrence School in March 2008.

Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, the Oxford-educated king of Bhutan, the happiest country in the Asia, was married to Jetsun in October 2011. They now have two sons, Crown Prince Jigme Namgyel and Prince Ugyen Wangchuck.

Before his wedding, the king said the most important characteristic of the future queen is that she should be a good human being and unwavering in her commitment to serve the people and country.

"As my queen, I have found such a person and her name is Jetsun Pema," said the king, who took over after his father Jigme Singye Wangchuck abdicated in 2006. The nation embraced democracy in 2008.

Though Jetsun has not contacted her school since she passed out, her alma mater is hoping to receive a royal invite.

# national

## of the day quote

The BJP was least interested in installing 'Kavach' system in Railways but was busy providing 'Kavach' (shield) to corrupt people who have looted money. People accused of harassing wrestlers have received BJP's 'Kavach'

ABHISHEK BANERJEE | SENIOR TMC LEADER

These corrupt leaders did irreparable damage to the health and education sector by joining hands with private players, thereby causing huge loss to the general public. Likewise, the transport mafia too flexed their muscles during their tenures that also at the cost of public transport service

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

But why is the Prime Minister still silent? Why doesn't he visit the state (Manipur) and make an appeal for reconciliation between communities? Why can't he at least encourage an all-party delegation to go to Manipur?

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS LEADER

## JNU students allege kidnapping attempts

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 7: In two separate complaints, students of the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) have alleged physical assault, molestation and attempted kidnapping during incidents that occurred within the campus premises, a top police official said Wednesday, adding that the accused in the cases was the same. "Two complaints, one regarding physical assault and another regarding molestation, attempt to kidnaping have been received from JNU Students. Cases have been registered. In both the cases, accused and vehicle are same and have been identified. Further investigation is on," said Manoj C, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southwest).

The ABVP students' outfit said that at around 1 a.m. Wednesday, a drunk man in a white Swift attempted to kidnap two girls walking on one of the campus roads. In a statement, the JNU Students' Union (JNUSU) said that after immense pressure from the student community, the university's security office has registered a complaint with the Delhi Police regarding the stalking, eve-teasing, harassment and physical attack that has happened in the campus.

# Cong seeks FIR against PM, Vaishnav

AT LEAST 288 PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND MORE THAN 1,000 WERE INJURED IN THE ACCIDENT

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 7: The Congress Wednesday accused the BJP-led Centre of dereliction of duty of Himalayan proportions in the Balasore train tragedy and said an FIR should be lodged by the CBI against Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for negligence.

At a press conference here, Congress spokesperson Ajoy Kumar alleged that there was a conspiracy on the part of the railway minister that caused the death of 288 people and injuries to more than 1,000 in the crash in Odisha's Balasore, involving three trains.

He also accused the railway minister of doing "theatrics" after the horrific accident and said he should be given an Oscar award for it. "It was sabotage done by the rail minister as part of a conspiracy with the prime minister for which an FIR should be registered against them," Kumar said.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh shared a news report on Twitter about the New



## Freight trains jump tracks in MP, Assam

Jabalpur: Two oil tankers of a goods train derailed under Jabalpur railway division in Madhya Pradesh while another goods train derailed in Kamrup district of Assam, sources said Wednesday. In the first incident, the oil tankers went off the track Tuesday night when the goods train was on the siding line of an oil depot near Bhitoni railway station, said West Central Railway Chief Public Relations Officer Rahul Shrivastava. Since restoration in such cases is done in daylight, the work started Wednesday, he said. The position of the oil tankers that got derailed was fifth and sixth of the rake, he said. Similarly, 20 wagons of a coal-laden train jumped the tracks at Singra near Boko in Assam's Kamrup district Wednesday but no injuries were reported, a railway official said. The derailed wagons were at the centre of the train which had a total of 60 wagons.

Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express making a miraculous escape from crashing in Jharkhand and asked, "Will the CBI investigate this as well? Or will the Modi government finally accept that something is seriously wrong with safety in Indian Railways." "Shocking really. But the other central agency has been roped in to divert attention from the report of this central institution," he said in another tweet, referring to a CAG report of March

## BIG DECISION

Approving Guaranteed Pension Scheme (GPS) to employees, 6,840 new government jobs and regularisation of nearly 10,000 contract employees are some of the key decisions taken by the Andhra Pradesh Cabinet presided by Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy Wednesday



## Oppn meet in Patna June 23

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, June 7: The much-vaunted meeting of anti-BJP parties, organised by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, will be held in Patna June 23, his deputy Tejashwi Yadav said Wednesday.

Addressing a press conference, the RJD leader, with JD(U) national president Rajiv Ranjan Singh 'Lalan' by his side, said that opposition leaders including Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal and Left leaders, have agreed to sit together and chalk out a strategy for next year's Lok Sabha polls.

Also, the CPI, the CPI (M) and the CPI(ML) Liberation will be represented by their respective general secretaries D Raja, Sitaram Yechury and Dipankar, Lalan said. He, however, brushed aside questions about speculations that the Congress was insistent on contesting "not less than 350 seats", stating, "As our deputy CM has pointed out, the country is witnessing a state of undeclared emergency. The top priority of all like-minded parties is to rid the country of the BJP."

Notably, the meeting had earlier been scheduled for June 12, but was postponed as some parties, including Congress and DMK, found it to be inconvenient.

## SHORT TAKES

### Centre gives nod to Atishi for UK travel

New Delhi: The Centre Wednesday informed the Delhi High Court that it has given clearance to city Education Minister Atishi to travel to the United Kingdom for an official visit next week. The counsel for the Centre said the proposal has been sent to the economic affairs department for further approvals, which would also be processed and the petitioner can apply for requisite visa permits. While Atishi's lawyer said the clearance was given by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Wednesday morning, the counsel for the Centre said it was granted Tuesday itself.

### Sisodia's ailing wife pens emotional note

New Delhi: Jailed AAP leader Manish Sisodia's ailing wife Seema Sisodia Wednesday said she met her husband "after a gap of 103 days" and that the police was stationed outside their bedroom to hear their conversation. In a message posted on her Twitter handle, Seema mentioned how the policemen were stationed outside their bedroom to watch the two and listen to every word they uttered during their seven-hour interaction.

### Farooq meets Deve Gowda

Bangalore: National Conference President and former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah called on former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda at his residence here Wednesday. The meeting has assumed importance against the backdrop of rumors of Deve Gowda's JD-S and BJP allying for upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

## HOSTEL HORROR

# Maha cracks whip, sets up probe panels



AGENCIES

Mumbai, June 7: Under severe fire from the Opposition and others, the Maharashtra government on Wednesday set up two probe committees to investigate the issue of women safety-security following the brutal rape-cum-murder of an 18-year-old girl student at the state-run Savitridevi Phule Women's Hostel. Higher & Technical Education Minister Chandrakant Patil said that two panels shall probe on the issue from two fronts and submit their reports as soon as possible. "One panel will go into the circumstances and the incident that happened in the hostel. The crime is extremely heinous and disturbing. The second panel will examine the aspect of women's security at all the government-run hostels in the state," said Patil.

This will be in addition to the Mumbai Police investigation into the crime for which it has set up three special teams which have left for different parts of the country by flights today, he added. The Minister assured that after the reports of the two committees of his department and the police

probe report are received, the government will formulate suitable measures to beef up women's security at such institutions.

"This was a very unfortunate incident. We shall take stringent remedial measures... Nobody will be spared," said a grim Patil.

The government has already issued the necessary orders for the committees headed by the Director, Higher Education Department, which will start its work soon, he added.

It may be recalled that earlier Wednesday, top women leaders from various Opposition political parties and the social spectrum expressed outrage over the shuddering incident which happened in the heart of south Mumbai, within close proximity of various police establishments and VVIP enclaves.

Among those who have targeted the government included state Mahila Congress President Sandhya Savalalke, Nationalist Congress MP Supriya Sule, Shiv Sena (UBT) top leaders Neelam Gorhe and Manisha Kayande, Bhumata Ranragini Brigade chief Trupti Desai, besides male leaders like Nana Patole, Ajit Pawar, Sanjay Raut, and others.

Late Tuesday, the victim, hailing from Akola was found dead in her room, in a naked state and hours later, the prime suspect, the hostel's watchman-cum-laundryman, Omprakash Kanojia - earlier reportedly missing - was also found dead on the railway tracks near Charni Road station nearby.

The 35-year-old security guard, who was the prime suspect, was not officially appointed but was a laundry man who committed suicide after the crime, police said



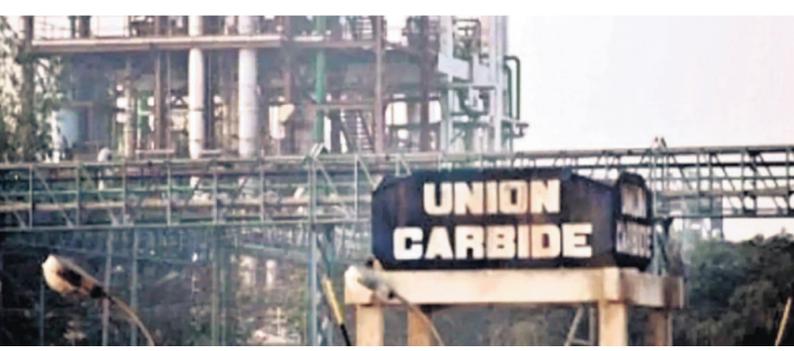
BEATING THE HEAT: Visitors at a water park on a hot summer day in Agra, Uttar Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

## BHOPAL GAS DISASTER

# 'Industrial disasters may cause higher rates of disability and cancer for future generations'

THE RESEARCH, PUBLISHED IN THE JOURNAL BMJ OPEN, SUGGESTS THAT INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS MAY HAVE A MUCH LONGER-TERM AND SERIOUS IMPACT ON PEOPLE'S HEALTH THAN JUST THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 7: The 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy, one of the worst industrial disasters in India, may have led to men born during and after the accident having a higher risk of developing disabilities and cancer later in life, a study has found. "Our paper finds evidence that one of the worst industrial disasters in India, the Bhopal gas disaster in December 1984, may have led to

men who were in-utero at the time of the accident having a higher risk of developing disabilities and cancer later in life," said study corresponding author Gordon McCord, associate teaching professor at the University of California San Diego, US.

In the Bhopal incident, there was a methyl isocyanate gas leak at a pesticide plant and the leak of toxic gas which spread for a 7 kilometre radius, exposing more than half a million people in the city of Bhopal to the gas and led to over 20,000 deaths in the region. The leak's toxins also affected groundwater and the reproductive health and other health outcomes of ex-

posed women, suggesting that generations not exposed to the toxic gas directly may nevertheless have suffered adverse health and social impacts of the event.

The study also cites previous literature that found, for example, that there was a fourfold increase in the rate of miscarriage following the gas leak, as well as increased risk of stillbirth and neonatal mortality. However, the study is the first to extensively research the multi-generational impacts of such an event and recognise the potential far-reaching repercussions by investigating these impacts on children born to female survivors of the Bhopal gas disaster.

The researchers looked at official health and education data, such as National Family Health Survey, to estimate the long-term health effects - specifically adult cancer rates and disability - and the educational attainments of people who were exposed to the leaked gas in utero or as children in 1984.

They also used data to examine the health effects of exposure to the event among 47,817 people aged 15-49 years living in Madhya Pradesh in 2015-16 as well as socioeconomic data on 13,369 men born between 1960 and 1990. The data also included 1,260 people who were born between 1981 and 1985 to women who lived within 250km of Bhopal.

## EC initiates process to hold bypoll in Wayanad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kozhikode (Kerala), June 7: The Election Commission has initiated the process to hold a bypoll in the Wayanad Lok Sabha seat which Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had held until he was disqualified following his conviction in a criminal defamation case over his 'Modi surname' remark.

A court in Gujarat had sentenced Gandhi to two years in jail, following which the Lok Sabha Speaker disqualified him from the lower house.

A communication sent to recognised political parties by Kozhikode



deputy collector on June 5 in his capacity as district election officer said that a mock poll after verification of the Electronic Voting Machines and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) systems will be held June 7 ahead of the Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency bypoll.

The parties were informed that the mock poll and verification of the EVMs and VVPAT system will be held at the Kozhikode Civil Station Aswasakendram Godown.

The Election Commission's move comes at a time when Gandhi's criminal revision application against the Surat Sessions Court order rejecting his plea to stay his conviction is pending before the Gujarat High Court. The Congress alleged that there was a "mystery" behind the Election Commission's move, asking how the poll panel came to know in advance the judgment of the court in the appeal pending before it.



**We're at a real juncture where more efficient, more clean, more affordable technology is starting to dominate**  
BRIAN MOTHERWAY | CHIEF OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY, IEA

## ANTI-OBESITY DRUG PILOT IN UK

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak Wednesday unveiled a two-year pilot scheme to reduce pressures on the state-funded National Health Service (NHS) which will see general practitioners (GPs) prescribe "game-changer" anti-obesity drugs to patients with at least one weight-related health condition



## of the day quote

There are simply no so-called secret police stations. China urges the UK to respect the facts, stop hyped-up exaggeration and smearing China, and stop creating obstacles to China-UK relations

WANG WENBIN | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON, CHINA

The relationship between the United States and India is strategic and global. It's a partnership guided by strong political will on both sides. It's built on the shared values of democracy, freedom and respect for the rule of law

DREW FERGUSON | CONGRESSMAN, US

The government of Nepal is fully committed to supporting the travel industry, improving infrastructure, and empowering entrepreneurs to provide competitive services, ensuring that Nepal stands as a globally competitive and unique travel destination

PUSHPAKAMAL DAHAL PRACHANDA | PM, NEPAL

## SHORT TAKES

### 30th anniversary of India-SA relations

**Johannesburg:** Indian Navy frigate INS Trishul arrived in the South African port of Durban Tuesday for a three-day goodwill tour marking several historic events, including the 30th anniversary of the restart of India-South Africa diplomatic relations after a break of almost four decades due to apartheid. The visit also marks the incident 130 years ago when Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, then a young lawyer in South Africa, was thrown off a train in Pietermaritzburg Station because he was in a compartment reserved for white passengers only. The incident triggered him to carve the path to establish Satyagraha, leading the fight against oppression in both South Africa and India, and eventually becoming the Mahatma.

### Gunman shoots 2 dead, wounds five

**Virginia:** A man armed with four handguns killed two people and wounded five others when he fired into a crowd outside a high school graduation ceremony in Richmond, Virginia, Tuesday, police said. Police said they arrested one suspect, a 19-year-old man who knew one of the victims and shot at him amid the crowd that had just emerged from the Huguonot High School's commencement ceremony inside a theater on the campus of Virginia Commonwealth University. The suspect was likely to be charged with two counts of second-degree murder in addition to other offenses, Interim Richmond Police Chief Rick Edwards said.

### Fiji reconsiders ties with China

**Wellington:** Fiji's leader indicated Wednesday his nation is reconsidering its security ties with China at a time that geopolitical tensions in the Pacific are rising. Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka said Fiji was reviewing a contentious police cooperation agreement it signed with China in 2011 that has allowed Chinese police officers to be stationed in Fiji. At one point during a news conference in Wellington with his New Zealand counterpart Chris Hipkins, Rabuka appeared to go one step further by referring to Fiji's "discontinuation" of the agreement. "If our systems and our values differ, what cooperation can we get from them?" Rabuka said.

## WARTIME SABOTAGE

# Destroyed dam risks thousands

Floodwaters from a collapsed dam kept rising in southern Ukraine, forcing hundreds of people to flee their homes in a major emergency operation that brought a dramatic new dimension to the war with Russia, now in its 16th month

AGENCIES

**Kherson, June 7:** Floodwaters in southern Ukraine were expected to crest Wednesday with tens of thousands of civilians fleeing in peril from the destruction of a vast dam that both sides called an act of wartime sabotage.

Residents waded through flooded streets carrying children on their shoulders, dogs in their arms and belongings in plastic bags while rescuers used rubber boats to search areas where the waters reached above head height. Ukraine and Russia each accuse the other of deliberately destroying the Nova Kakhovka dam in desperation at a major turning point in the war.

Everything is submerged in water, all the furniture, the fridge, food, all flowers, everything is floating. I do not know what to do, said Oksana, 53, in the city of Kherson downriver from the dam.

Ukraine says 42,000 people are at direct risk from flooding and hundreds of thousands will be left without access to drinking water.

Residents blamed the disaster on Russian troops who controlled



- RUSSIA, UKRAINE BLAME EACH OTHER FOR COLLAPSE OF DAM
- AROUND 3K PEOPLE WERE EVACUATED FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE RIVER
- ZAPORIZHZHIA N-PLANT HAS ENOUGH WATER TO COOL: UN

The whole world will know about this Russian war crime. It is an environmental bomb of mass destruction  
VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYI | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

the dam from their positions on the opposite bank.

Russia imposed a state of emergency in the parts of Kherson province it controls, where many towns and villages lie in lowlands below the dam. Residents there have told Reuters by telephone that Russian troops patrolling the streets in waders were threatening civilians who approached.

A zoo by the riverbank on the Russian side flooded, killing all the animals inside, staff said.

The consequences of the disaster will be felt for decades in south-

ern Ukraine. The huge reservoir behind the dam was one of Ukraine's main geographic features, and its waters irrigated huge swathes of agricultural land in one of the world's biggest grain exporting nations, including Crimea, seized by Russia in 2014.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Tuesday Ukraine had sabotaged the dam to distract attention from a new counteroffensive he said was faltering.

Washington said it was still gath-

ering evidence about who was to blame, but that Ukraine would have had no reason to inflict such devastation on itself.

"Why would Ukraine do this to its own territory and people, flood its land, force tens of thousands of people to leave their homes - it doesn't make sense," Deputy US Ambassador to the United Nations Robert Wood told reporters.

Ukraine has kept largely silent about the counterattack, apart from suggesting troops had advanced around the eastern city of Bakhmut, finally captured this month by Russia after nearly a year of Europe's deadliest ground combat since World War Two. Russia claims to have thwarted major Ukrainian assaults in heavy fighting along the front since Sunday.

The emptying reservoir supplies water that cools Europe's biggest nuclear power plant at Zaporizhzhia

## MURDER OF SC LAWYER

# Khan booked under anti-terrorism law



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Khan is facing over 100 cases across the country since he was ousted from power in April last year

**Islamabad, June 7:** Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan has been booked under the anti-terrorism law in the murder case of a supreme court lawyer, his party said Wednesday.

Advocate Abdul Razzaq Shar was killed Tuesday in a drive-by shooting in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan province, while on his way to the provincial high court when targeted by the unknown assailants.

Shar's son Siraj Ahmad registered a case Tuesday, accusing in his FIR that his father was killed at the behest of Khan, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party chairman.

The PTI party, in a WhatsApp message, confirmed that Khan, 70, was named in the FIR lodged at the Shaheed Jamil Kakar police station of the city.

According to the copy of the FIR shared by the party, the complainant told police that his father had registered a case against Khan and he was receiving threats. "I name Imran Khan in the FIR because threats were being given to my father at his behest," he said.

Shar had filed a constitutional petition against Khan and former deputy speaker Qasim Suri in the Balochistan High Court for proceedings under Article 6 that pertained to high treason for illegally dissolving the National Assembly in April 2022 after the joint opposition had moved a no-trust motion against the PTI government.

Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's aide Attaullah Tarar had alleged that Shar was killed at the behest of Khan to evade accountability in a treason case.

PTI spokesman Raouf Hassan rejected the claim and instead accused Prime Minister Sharif and Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah of planning the murder.



**PENSION PROTESTS:** A protester reacts in front of a burning construction trailer during a demonstration as part of the 14th day of nationwide protests against the French government's pension reform law, in Paris, France

# B'desh sees longest heatwave in decades

AGENCIES

**Dhaka, June 7:** Bangladesh has shut thousands of schools as it struggles through its lengthiest heatwave in half a century, with widespread power cuts only compounding locals' misery.

Temperatures in the South Asian nation's capital of Dhaka have surged to around 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit), with the poor bearing the brunt of the blazing sun. "We have never seen such a prolonged heatwave since Bangladesh's independence in



1971," said Bazlur Rashid, a senior official at the Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

Tens of thousands of primary schools were shut down by the gov-

ernment, and electricity production has been drastically cut, even as demand for air conditioners and fans has surged. On Monday, the country was forced to suspend operations at its biggest power plant because the government was unable to afford the coal to fuel it.

The Bangladeshi taka depreciated about 25 percent against the US dollar last year, driving up the cost of fuel imports and power utilities. Other plants have fallen well short of meeting demand, leading to hours-long blackouts.

The heatwave began in April

and ran into early May before easing, then resumed late last month, with forecasters predicting the mercury will remain high until the end of the week.

A study last month by the World Weather Attribution group found that climate change had made record-breaking deadly heatwaves in Bangladesh - as well as India, Laos and Thailand - at least 30 times more likely. On June 3, the temperature in the northern Dinajpur district hit 41.3 degrees Celsius (106.3 degrees Fahrenheit), the highest recorded there since 1958.

# Canada on track for worst-ever wildfire season

WILDFIRES ARE COMMON IN CANADA'S WESTERN PROVINCES, BUT THIS YEAR FLAMES HAVE BEEN MUSHROOMING RAPIDLY IN EASTERN CANADA, FORCING HOME EVACUATIONS AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO SEND IN THE MILITARY

REUTERS

**Ottawa, June 7:** Canada is on track for its worst-ever year of wildfire destruction as warm and dry conditions are forecast to persist through to the end of the summer after an unprecedented start to the fire season, officials said.

Blazes are burning in nearly all Canadian provinces and territories, and federal government officials said their modeling shows increased wildfire risk in most of Canada through August.

"The distribution of fires from coast to coast this year is unusual.

At this time of the year, fires usually occur only on one side of the country at a time, most often that being in the west," said Michael Norton, an official with Canada's Natural Resources ministry.

Quebec, in eastern Canada, was currently the worst impacted due to multiple fires ignited by lightning, Norton said. "The rate of increase of area burned is also high... if this rate continues, we could hit record levels for area burned this year," he said.

Flames have been mushrooming rapidly in eastern Canada and have forced evacuations in the Atlantic



This is a scary time for a lot of people. When people lose their homes, they don't just lose a roof and their possession; they lose a special place where they saw their children grow up, where they built a life

JUSTIN TRUDEAU | PM, CANADA

province of Nova Scotia as well as coastal Quebec.

"Over the last 20 years, we have never seen such a large area burned so early in the season," said Yan Boulanger, a researcher with Natural

Resources Canada. "Partially because of climate change, we're seeing trends toward increasing burned area throughout Canada."

By Sunday, about 3.3 million hectares had already burned - about

## Smoke triggers health alerts in NY, Ottawa

Authorities in New York, Toronto and Ottawa Tuesday warned residents about the health risks from air polluted by smoke from unprecedented early summer wildfires in eastern Canada. An unusually early and intense start to wildfire season has set Canada on track for its worst-ever year as warm and dry conditions are forecast to persist for months. There are blazes in nearly all of Canada's 10 provinces and territories, with Quebec the worst impacted due to multiple fires caused by lightning. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation issued a health advisory for counties including New York, Bronx, and Queens. The state recommended residents consider limiting strenuous outdoor physical activity to reduce the risk of adverse health effects. The Canadian capital of Ottawa, which neighbors Quebec, was covered in haze Tuesday morning, with air quality in category 10+, the worst level on Environment Canada's Air Quality Health Index, indicating "very high risk".



13 times the 10-year average - and more 120,000 people had been at least temporarily forced from their homes. There are currently 413 active

wildfires, including 249 deemed out of control, and about 26,000 people are under evacuation orders across Canada.

## of the day quote

With every progressing year, the solar is becoming the more dominant renewable energy generation technology as the world moves towards net zero

**RK SINGH** | UNION MINISTER FOR POWER AND NEW & RENEWABLE ENERGY

The global economy has begun to improve. We are projecting a recovery over 2023 and 2024. However, at this point, it is a recovery to low global growth

**MATHIAS CORMANN** | SECRETARY-GENERAL, OECD

Gauging is just not a good thing. The airfares on an average in India are the most customer friendly in the world in any kind of sizeable aviation economy.

**VINAY DUBE** | CEO, AKASA AIR

## SHORT TAKES

### China trade dips 7.5% in May YoY

**Beijing:** China's exports fell 7.5 per cent from a year earlier in May and imports were down 4.5 per cent, adding to signs an economic rebound following the end of anti-virus controls is slowing as global demand weakens under pressure from higher interest rates. Exports slid to \$283.5 billion, reversing from April's unexpectedly strong 8.5 per cent growth, customs data showed Wednesday. Imports fell to \$217.7 billion, moderating from the previous month's 7.9 per cent contraction. China's global trade surplus narrowed by 16.1 per cent to \$65.8 billion.

### JAL defaults on ₹3,961cr loans

**New Delhi:** Crisis-hit Jaypee Group's flagship firm Jaiprakash Associates has defaulted on loans worth ₹3,961 crore, including principal and interest amount. In a regulatory filing, Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL) informed that the company May 31 defaulted on repayments of a principal amount of ₹1,600 crore and interest of ₹2,361 crore. The loans pertained to various banks, and the nature of the obligation is fund-based working capital, non-fund-based working capital, term loans and FCCB (foreign currency convertible bonds). "The total borrowing (including interest) of the company is ₹29,429 crore, repayable by 2037, against which only ₹3,961 crore is overdue as on May 31, 2023," JAL said.

### Meta Verified unveiled in India

**New Delhi:** Social media giant Meta, which owns Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, has started verified service in India at a monthly subscription price of ₹699 for mobile apps, the company said Wednesday. Meta Verified is planning to roll out its service on the web in the coming months at a subscription price of ₹599 per month. For a verified account subscription, Facebook and Instagram users will need to verify their account with a government ID.

### BoM raises ₹1K-cr

**New Delhi:** State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) Wednesday said it has raised ₹1,000 crore through Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP). The QIP opened June 1 and closed June 6, 2023. The board of the bank had approved the issuance of equity shares to Qualified Institutional Investors at the rate of ₹28.50 per unit (with premium of ₹18.50 per share), BoM said.



**It's now or never (for India in the semiconductor industry). Because it takes years to come to the speed and this is a time to do it. Also if we don't do it now, I think we'll lose credibility forever**

**AJIT MANOCHA** | PRESIDENT AND CEO, SEMI

# US cracks down on crypto's 'web of deception'

**THE COUNTRY IS TARGETING CRYPTOCURRENCY FIRMS IT THINKS ARE BYPASSING REGULATION AND HAS SUED COINBASE AND BINANCE**

REUTERS

**New York, June 7:** The top US securities regulator sued cryptocurrency platform Coinbase Tuesday, the second lawsuit in two days against a major crypto exchange, in a dramatic escalation of a crackdown on the industry and one that could dramatically transform a market that has largely op-



erated outside regulation.

The US Securities and Exchange Commission Monday took aim at Binance, the world's largest cryptocurrency exchange. The SEC accuses Binance and its CEO Changpeng Zhao of operating a "web of deception".

If successful, the lawsuits could

transform the crypto market by successfully asserting the SEC's jurisdiction over the industry which for years has argued that tokens do not constitute securities and should not be regulated by the SEC.

In its complaint filed in Manhattan federal court, the SEC said Coinbase has since at least

**The two cases are different, but overlap and point in the same direction: the SEC's increasingly aggressive campaign to bring cryptocurrencies under the jurisdiction of the federal securities laws. If the SEC prevails in either case, the cryptocurrency industry will be transformed**

**KEVIN O'BRIEN** | FORMER FEDERAL PROSECUTOR, US

2019 made billions of dollars by operating as a middleman on crypto transactions, while evading disclosure requirements meant to protect investors.

The SEC said Coinbase traded at least 13 crypto assets that are securities that should have been registered, including tokens such as Solana, Cardano and Polygon.

Coinbase suffered about \$1.28 billion of net customer outflows following the lawsuit, according to initial estimates from data firm Nansen. Shares of Coinbase's par-

ent Coinbase Global Inc closed down \$7.10, or 12.1%, at \$51.61 after earlier falling as much as 20.9%. They are up 46% this year.

Securities, as opposed to other assets such as commodities, are strictly regulated and require detailed disclosures to inform investors of potential risks.

The Securities Act of 1933 outlined a definition of the term "security," yet many experts rely on two US Supreme Court cases to determine if an investment product constitutes a security.

## ₹2,980cr approved for Exploration of Coal and Lignite scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 7:** The government Wednesday approved the continuation of the central sector plan 'Exploration of Coal and Lignite scheme' with an estimated expenditure of ₹2,980 crore.

The time period for the extension is from 2021-22 to 2025-26 co-terminus with the 15th Finance Commission cycle, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) said in a statement.

"The CCEA chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the continuation of the Central Sector Scheme of 'Exploration of Coal and Lignite scheme' with an estimated expenditure of ₹2,980 crore from 2021-22 to 2025-26 co-terminus with the 15th Finance Commission cycle," it said.

Under this scheme, exploration for coal and lignite is conducted in two broad stages: (i) Promotional (Regional) Exploration and (ii) Detailed Exploration in non-Coal India Limited blocks.

The approval will provide an outlay of ₹1,650 crore for promotional (Regional) exploration and ₹1,330 crore for detailed drilling in non-CIL areas, the statement said.

Approximately 1,300 sq km area will be covered under Regional exploration, and about 650 sq km area will be covered under detailed exploration, it added.

Exploration for Coal and Lignite is required to prove and estimate coal resources available in the country, which helps in preparing detailed project reports to start coal mining.

The geological reports prepared through these explorations are used for auctioning new coal blocks, and the cost is thereafter recovered from successful allocatee.

## 4G, 5G ALLOCATION

# Govt okays ₹89K-cr revival plan for BSNL

*BSNL has been struggling with poor infrastructure for a long time. It has been buffeted by strong competition from Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea*



**BSNL should become a player, which should bring connectivity in the places where normal commercial consideration companies will not be able to go. It should be able to provide digital India services to the weakest of weak sections**

**ASHWINI VAISHNAW** | TELECOM AND IT MINISTER

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 7:** The Union Cabinet Wednesday approved the third revival package for BSNL with a total outlay of ₹89,047 crore, primarily for expenses related to spectrum for 4G and 5G services, Telecom and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

With the third and last revival package, the total financial support extended to BSNL has crossed ₹3.22 lakh crore.

Also, the authorised capital of BSNL will be increased from ₹1,50,000 crore to ₹2,10,000 crore.

The package comprises allotment of premium wireless frequencies 700 MHz band spectrum worth ₹46,338.6 crore; 70 MHz of frequencies in the 3300 MHz band worth ₹26,184.2 crore; frequencies in the 26 GHz band worth ₹6,564.93 crore; in the 2500 MHz band worth ₹9,428.2 crore and ₹531.89 crore for miscellaneous items.

The spectrum allocation will en-

able BSNL to roll out pan-India 4G and 5G services, 4G coverage in rural and uncovered villages under various connectivity projects, provide Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) services for high-speed internet and provide services/spectrum for Captive Non-Public Network (CNPN).

BSNL has already awarded a tender worth ₹19,000 crore for rolling out over 1.2 lakh mobile towers for 4G and 5G to a consortium led by IT major Tata Consultancy Service and state-owned technology development organisation Centre for Development of Telematics (CDoT).

State-owned ITI has been allocated 20 per cent of the work but

it will also source technology from the TCS-CDoT-led consortium.

### REVIVAL PACKAGES

The minister said that the capex was part of the second package worth ₹1.64 lakh crore that was approved by the Cabinet in 2022.

The government provided the first revival package worth ₹69,000 crore for BSNL and MTNL in 2019.

It provided financial support for capex, viability gap funding for rural landlines, financial support for de-stressing the balance sheet and settlement of AGR dues, merger of BBNL with BSNL, etc. As a result of these two packages, the total debt of BSNL has been reduced from ₹32,944 crore to ₹22,289 crore.

The minister said that with the help of the first and second package, BSNL posted an operational profit of ₹1,559 crore in the financial year ended March 2023 and it will become a debt-free company in the next three years.

BSNL has started rolling out a 4G network with 200 sites, and after a three-month trial, it will launch an average of 200 sites per day.

BSNL Chairman and Managing Director PK Purwar said the tender that has been awarded to the TCS-CDoT consortium is sufficient to roll out services in all the spectrum bands that the company will get.

He said that BSNL has taken over mobile service operations of its debt-ridden sister concern MTNL in Delhi and Mumbai.

When asked about the expected timeline for the rollout of 4G and 5G services in Delhi and Mumbai, Purwar said it will be available after a year. On the revival status of MTNL, Vaishnaw said that it is a complex issue and is being dealt with separately.

**TOTAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT EXTENDED TO BSNL HAS CROSSED RS 3.22L-CR**

**AUTHORISED CAPITAL WILL BE INCREASED FROM RS 1,50,000CR TO RS 2,10,000CR**

**BSNL HAS TAKEN OVER MOBILE SERVICE OPERATIONS OF MTNL IN DELHI, MUMBAI**

## 'Steel sector saved ₹34,800cr forex'

*India now world's second largest steel producing nation leaving Japan behind*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 7:** The government policies for steel sector helped the country save ₹34,800 crore in foreign exchange by reducing imports and added around 60 million tonne (MT) of crude steel capacity, Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said.

India pushed Japan to third place to become the world's second largest steel producing nation, the minister for steel said while addressing a press conference titled 'The 9-years of government's seva, sushasan and gareeb kalyan focusing on steel sector'.

From an installed capacity of 109.85 MT in 2014-15, India's steel capacity increased by a sharp 46 per cent to 160.30 MT in 2022-23, he said, adding the total production rose 42 per cent from 88.98 MT to 126.26 MT.



The per capita steel consumption also rose from 60.8 kilogramme to 86.7 kg during the period, registering a rise of 43 per cent.

As per the National Steel Policy 2017, the country aims to scale up the capacity to 300 MT by 2030-31 and production to 250 MT. While the target is to increase the per capita consumption to 160 kg.

Scindia also informed that 57 agreements involving 27 companies have been signed under the scheme. This will attract committed investment of ₹29,530 crore with a downstream capacity addition of 24.7 million tonnes and employment generation potential of 55,000.

# Sensex bounces back to 63K-mark

## RALLY FOR 4TH DAY

**FRESH FOREIGN CAPITAL INFLOWS AND A STRENGTHENING RUPEE SUPPORTING THE DOMESTIC EQUITY MARKETS**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, June 7:** Equity benchmark Sensex climbed over 350 points to reclaim the 63,000 mark Wednesday, propelled by robust buying in metal, energy and FMCG stocks amid a mixed trend in global equities.

Rising for the fourth straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 350.08 points or 0.56 per cent to settle at 63,142.96. During the day, it jumped 403.55 points or 0.64 per cent to 63,196.43. The NSE Nifty advanced 127.40 points or 0.68 per cent to end at 18,726.40.

"Investors are becoming more op-



timistic due to the anticipation of a positive revision in the RBI's inflation forecast during the ongoing MPC meeting. It is expected that the RBI will maintain its pause on rate hikes, considering the significant improvement in inflation, which has now come within the RBI's comfort zone. Furthermore, the participation of FIIs as net buyers, after a brief halt, contributed to today's market rally, particularly driven by mid-and

small-cap stocks," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.10 per cent to \$76.45 a barrel.

The rupee gained 8 paise to settle at 82.52 against the US dollar. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital market as they purchased shares worth ₹1,382.57 crore, according to exchange data.

# Starbucks brews up cheaper drinks as local rivals expand

*The company has launched, "Picco", which starts at \$2.24, and milkshakes for \$3.33 as part of its revamp to target affluent Indians who prefer smaller servings*

REUTERS

**Mumbai, June 7:** Starbucks is revamping its strategy to lure Indians, including children, with smaller, cheaper beverages as it looks to expand in small towns amid a fierce challenge from domestic startups in one of its fastest-growing markets.

Among the first foreign coffee brands to enter tea-loving India, the US giant has taken almost 11 years to open 343 stores, in contrast with private equity-backed chains Third Wave and Blue Tokai that opened about 150 in the last three years.

"As you grow in size, you need to get new consumers," said Sushant Dash, the chief executive of Starbucks in India, adding that the chain's "pricing play" would help shatter a perception that it is expensive.

The company has launched a six-ounce drink, "Picco", which starts at \$2.24, and milkshakes for \$3.33 as part of its revamp to tar-

get affluent Indians who prefer smaller servings.

Starbucks plans to open more stores in smaller towns, said an industry source, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Both its new offerings are unique to India and unavailable in China, Singapore and the United States.

India's small but fast-growing specialty tea and coffee cafe market is worth \$300 million and set to grow 12% each year, Euromonitor estimates. Canada's Tim Hortons and Britain's Pret A Manger are also expanding, but have only a handful of outlets.

"Excessively large portion sizes are an American phenomenon," said Devangshu Dutta, head of retail consultancy Third Eyesight. "Indian consumers are value-conscious. If adjusting portion sizes down to what is more normal helps make prices accessible, that's a double win."

He was among the analysts who felt the move by Starbucks, oper-



ating in India in a joint venture with Tata Group, could further boost its sales, which hit a record \$132 million in fiscal 2022/23.

Although Starbucks still dominates in India, rivalry is fizzing in the capital, New Delhi, and the technology hub of Bangalore, where many Third Wave cafes are often as crowded as Starbucks outlets.

"We've lost 30 cups a day to

them," said a barista at a Starbucks shop in Delhi that sells 7,500 drinks a month, referring to a Third Wave that opened nearby months ago, but already sells 3,700.

Starbucks has faced homegrown challengers elsewhere, most notably in China, where its 6,200 stores service the biggest market outside the United States.

There, in just the last five years,

- STARBUCKS FACES COMPETITION FROM LOCAL INDIAN STARTUP CAFES
- US CHAIN LAUNCHES SMALLER COFFEE SIZE UNIQUE TO INDIA
- STARBUCKS LOOKS AT SMALL CITIES, RIVALS OPEN IN BIG TOWNS
- AMERICAN BRAND STILL SOUGHT AFTER BY MANY AFFLUENT INDIANS

**The launch of smaller, cheaper beverages in India indicates Starbucks may have seen a decline in traffic related to a pushback on higher prices**

**CHAS HERMANN** | FORMER EXECUTIVE | STARBUCKS

Luckin Coffee has used discounts to lure customers to its 10,000 mostly pickup or delivery stores.

### BET ON CHAI

In India, where Starbucks has added domestic touches to its offerings over the years to boost their appeal, it is now stepping up that game, just as global giants McDonald's and Domino's have done.

It estimates that just 11% of Indian homes drink coffee, as opposed to 91% drinking tea. Hot milky tea, or "chai" as it is known

in Hindi, is sold at roadside stalls by the hundreds of cups each day for as little as ₹10.

Starbucks, which offered for years just one milk chai "latte" made with tea syrup, has launched "Indian-inspired" tea offerings laced with spices and cardamom, both favourites in many Indian homes, which start at ₹185.

The drinks were introduced to attract those who do not drink coffee and shun Starbucks, said Dash, adding the company would retain its focus on coffee and not make chai a primary offering.

# Head, Smith assault rattles India

UNBROKEN 4TH WICKET STAND OF 251 RUNS TAKE GAME AWAY FROM INDIA ON 1ST DAY OF WTC FINAL



**BLISTERING KNOCK:** Travis Head acknowledges the applause after reaching his century against India at the Oval; (Inset): Steve Smith after his half century, Wednesday

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
London, June 7: Travis Head (146 batting, 156b, 22x4, 1x6) struck like a tornado with a counter-attacking century that left an out-of-sorts Indian attack bereft of ideas as Australia made hay under bright sunshine scoring 327 for the loss of three wickets on the opening day of the World Test Championship (WTC) final here Wednesday. Giving him company was former Australian skipper Steve Smith (95 batting, 227b, 14x4).  
Coming together with the team in trouble at 76 for three, the two have so far put on an unbroken stand of 251 runs for the fourth wicket to put their team in a posi-

tion of strength. Unless something miraculous happens, it seems that India's more than decade-long drought as far as ICC trophies are concerned will continue.  
The ploy of leaving out Ravichandran Ashwin backfired once there was bright sunshine as both Umesh Yadav (0/54) and Shardul Thakur (1/75) looked undercooked and India were completely outplayed in the second and third sessions with Rohit Sharma's captaincy leaving a lot to be desired.  
The third wicket of Marnus Labuschagne (26) came in the 25th over. Then in the sunshine that followed Smith and Head made the most of batting friendly conditions through the afternoon and

**BRIEF SCORES**  
Australia 327 for 3 (Travis Head 146 batting, Steve Smith 95 batting) versus India. Match to continue.

evening sessions. In all there were 44 boundaries hit along with a maximum, depicting the plight of Indian pace attack.  
Mohammed Siraj (1/67) was the pick of the bowlers for India, who have a lot of work to do going into day two. Indian pacers tried the short ball tactic to upset the rhythm of both Smith and Head but were unsuccessful.  
Ashwin's non-selection will be debated for the remainder of the

## Minute's silence for Odisha train victims

**London:** The Indian and Australian cricket teams Wednesday observed a minute's silence and wore black armbands on the opening day of the WTC final in memory of the victims of the tragic train accident in Odisha last week which led to the loss of 288 lives. In a noble gesture, even the Australian team sported black armbands in solidarity with the opposition in this hour of grief. "The Indian cricket team observed a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the Odisha train tragedy," the BCCI said in a media statement.

game but at least on the opening day, there was not much turn on offer for Ravindra Jadeja who bowled 14 overs without a wicket.  
Head, who has built a reputation of playing impactful innings in his 36-Test-old career, single-handedly changed the course of the game with his aggressive approach. The fuller deliveries didn't trouble him even one bit. When the Indian pacers targeted his pads, the southpaw used his quick wrists to flick them away and anything short and wide on the off side was also ferociously cut.  
Smith, on the other hand, was happy to bide his time playing the role of a sheet anchor to perfection. Such has been the impact of the two that India may well have to play the chasing game for the remaining four days.  
Only the morning session went India's way as Siraj breathed fire in his opening spell before Thakur got rid of a well-set David Warner (43, 60b, 8x4) to reduce Australia to 73 for two at lunch.

# SINDHU'S FORM NOT WORRYING: GOPICHAND

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, June 7:** Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu's lack of consistency after coming back from an injury should not be a cause of 'concern', feels chief national badminton coach Pullela Gopichand. The Indian shuttler suffered yet another first round exit Tuesday when she lost to World No.1 Akane Yamaguchi in the Singapore Open.

"She's (Sindhu) very young in saying that she's just 26-27. It's a good age, there is no reason for concern," Gopichand said Wednesday. A silver medallist at the 2016 Rio Olympics and bronze winner in the Tokyo Games, Sindhu suffered an ankle injury in August last year to slip out of the top 10 in the BWF women's singles rankings. She remained out of action for four months because of that injury.

Gopichand, who guided Sindhu since she was 10 and till she became

**In the Olympic year, it's everybody's need to have personal coaches. I think it's a trend that has started; many also follow it in other sports. I'm okay with that**

PULLELA GOPICHAND

an Olympic medallist, firmly believes she will bounce back stronger. "She has come out on top in the six-eight months. She is starting to play well. I do expect her to play better in future. She is definitely one of India's bets for the future," Gopichand asserted. "It's the beginning of the season and beginning of Olympic qualification. The results have been mixed so far. We have a lot of pressure on players to perform. We have to just back them up," he added.

The top shuttlers of India are currently training with personal

coaches. Sindhu is training with Vidhi Chaudhary, while the struggling Kidambi Srikanth has roped in Wiempie Mahardi of Indonesia with an eye on the Paris Olympics next year. "In general, the rigours of having to play back-to-back, players have started to feel that they need personal coaches," said Gopichand. "In the Olympic year, it's everybody's need to have that personal attention. I'm okay with that," Gopichand said.

The high point of the season for Indian badminton was HS Prannoy's title win at the Malaysia Masters last month, the 30-year-old's first men's singles crown since the 2017 US Open.

"From our perspective in general, Prannoy winning in Malaysia was a good one. It is something I'm really happy about. It's the beginning of the season, so it is promising," Gopichand said. "However, Indian shuttlers will have to be more consistent," he signed off.



## SHORT TAKES

### U-20 athletes sign off with rich medal haul

**Yecheon (South Korea):** The Indian women's 4x400m relay team and 1,500m runner Laxita Vinod Sandila won a gold medal each to help the country bag third spot in the Asian U-20 Athletics Championships that ended here Wednesday with 19 medals. Sandila ran her personal best of 4:24.23 seconds to clinch gold. She bettered her earlier personal best of 4:26.48s by more than two seconds to bag India's fifth gold of the meet. Later in the day, dependable quarter-miler Rezoana Mallick Heena anchored the longer relay (4x400m) team to gold, clocking 3:40.49s. The men's 4x400m team settled for a silver with a time of 3:08.78 seconds. Mehdi Hasan added a bronze in the men's 1,500m while Shivaji Parashu bagged a silver in the men's 5,000m.

### Ali back in Tests for Ashes series

**London:** Veteran England all-rounder Moeen Ali has come out of his Test retirement to join the squad for the five-Test Ashes series against Australia beginning June 16 at Edgbaston. The 35-year-old had announced his Test retirement after the 2021 tour of India. However, skipper Ben Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum convinced him to revisit his decision as the spin-bowling all-rounder replaced an injured Jack Leach in the squad that was announced Wednesday. A top official said that Moeen is happy to be back in the Test squad again.

### 2 Chinese cueists banned for life

**London:** Chinese snooker players Liang Wenbo and Li Hang have been handed lifetime bans as part of a group of 10 players penalised by the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA) for match-fixing. The WPBSA issued a statement Tuesday evening here, confirming that the 10 players were charged. It pronounced lifetime bans for Liang and Li and imposed significant suspensions for the other players involved. Liang has been held guilty of fixing nine matches while Li has been charged with manipulating players.

## Brazilian Maia creates Roland Garros history



Beatriz Haddad Maia is all pumped up after winning a point against Ons Jabeur at Roland Garros

AGENCIES

**Paris, June 7:** Beatriz Haddad Maia became Wednesday the first Brazilian woman to reach the Roland Garros semifinals in the Open Era after upsetting No.7 seed Tunisian Ons Jabeur 3-6, 7-6 (7-5), 6-1, here.

Even though Jabeur comfortably won the first set in 45 minutes, Maia never gave up and matched the Tunisian shot for shot in the second set and won it in the

tie-breaker. In the third, it seemed that Jabeur had run out of steam as Maia romped home 6-1 to clinch a historic win.

The 27-year-old Brazilian will now meet top seed Iga Swiatek who swept away the challenge of American Coco Gauff 6-4, 6-2 in just 90 minutes. Prior to this tournament, the Brazilian player had not gone beyond the second round in 11 previous Grand Slam main draw appearances.

However, more than that match, people are talking about the upcoming men's singles semifinal clash between top seed Carlos Alcaraz and third-seeded Novak Djokovic. It is being billed as the 'final' before the 'final'. Alcaraz gave a masterclass in tennis Tuesday evening as he sent Stefanos Tsitsipas packing 6-2, 6-1, 7-6 (7-5).

Djokovic is aware of the challenge he is up against. The 36-year-old Serb, who is in his 45th semifinal in Grand Slams however, is relishing the prospect.

"That's the match that a lot of people want to see. It's definitely the biggest challenge for me so far in the tournament," said Djokovic, who lost his only meeting with Alcaraz in Madrid last year. "If you want to be the best, you have to beat the best. He's definitely the guy to beat here," Djokovic added.

## Benzema goes the CR7 way



AGENCIES

**Madrid, June 7:** Karim Benzema has followed the path of his one-time club mate Cristiano Ronaldo (also known as CR7). The Frenchman signed Wednesday a two-year deal with Jeddah-based club Al-Ittihad in Saudi Arabia. Speculation has been rife since the time Benzema announced his decision to quit Real Madrid. Finally it all came to an end with Benzema going the Ronaldo way.

According to 'AlEkhbariya' channel, the president of Saudi champions Al-Ittihad and his deputy reached the Spanish capital Wednesday to put pen to the deal and 'to officially sign' Benzema in a 'record transfer with Real Madrid'. It was duly completed. The broadcaster said Benzema had agreed to a two-year deal with the club, based on the Red Sea shores of the Gulf Kingdom. Benzema incidentally is Real Madrid's second top scorer of all-time, with 354 goals, behind only Ronaldo on 450.

## Bhub swimmers emerge champs

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 7:** Bhubaneswar and Sambalpur bagged the top honours in the 63rd All Odisha State Swimming Championships which concluded Wednesday at the Biju Patnaik Swimming Pool complex inside the Kalinga Stadium here.

Bhubaneswar with 930 points won the team championships while Sambalpur were the runners-up with 693 points.

In the individual section, Subhanto Patra of Ganjam district became the men's champion with

35 points. There were two categories in the junior boys' section. Vashist Anshuman representing Bhubaneswar emerged champion in the Group 1 category with 35 points. In the Group II segment, Somswarup Dash with 33 points emerged as the best swimmer. In the sub-junior segment Shibanshu Satapathy with 28 points took home the title.

More than 300 swimmers from 15 districts participated in the event which started Sunday. Overall, swimmers from Bhubaneswar and Sambalpur dominated the show.



Members of the Bhubaneswar swimming squad pose with their trophies

## Eves need draw to reach semis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kakamigahara, June 7:** Unbeaten India would look to seal their semifinal berth when they face Chinese Taipei in their final pool match of the Women's Junior Asia Cup hockey tournament here Thursday. The Indian eves blanked Uzbekistan 2-0 and then registered a hard-fought 2-1 win over Malaysia. In their last pool match, they came from two goals down to salvage a point with a fighting 2-2 draw against Korea. India currently have seven points and are sitting atop Pool A. Even a draw would be sufficient for the eves to qualify for the semis.

Mumtaz Khan and Deepika have been brilliant for India scoring goals at will, while Deepika Soreng too has sparkled. In fact, Soreng has scored in all the three games India have played.

"The tournament so far has been good for us. The matches against Malaysia and Korea were closely fought, but they gave us a chance to prove our mettle as we bounced back in both games after conceding first," India captain Preeti said.

"We consistently keep our plans and objectives in focus, ensuring that we remain steadfast against any opposition we may encounter. Regardless of the challenges we face, we are committed to giving our best and staying dedicated to our strategies," Preeti added.

# Footballers laud training facilities

TOP INDIAN STARS EYEING TROPHY IN INTERCONTINENTAL CUP

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar June 7:** The Indian football team are currently training at the Kalinga Stadium here for the upcoming Intercontinental Cup 2023. In the tournament, India will lock horns with squads from Lebanon, Vanuatu and Mongolia. Even though India start the event as firm favourites, head coach Igor Stimac is leaving nothing to chance. The footballers are following a strict routine as they prepare for the tourney.

Indian hopes will depend a lot on defender Sandesh Jhingan and striker Sunil Chhetri. Both know about the expectations on them and hence are working tirelessly to deliver when the crunch comes. The tournament will begin Friday with the final being played June 18.

Chhetri is happy that they will get home advantage by playing at the Kalinga Stadium. He recalled his previous visits to the stadium and said that he is impressed with the facilities. "This is the third



The Indian footballers during a training session at the Kalinga Stadium

time I will play at the Kalinga Stadium. I've enjoyed my visits. The newly-inaugurated football centres so close to the stadium is a fantastic development and will certainly help all budding footballers," Chhetri said.

"We have enjoyed the training sessions here. Even the smallest details, such as the ice baths, have been meticulously handled. We are wait-

ing so that our hard work gets justly rewarded," the Indian captain added.

Sandesh also opined on the same lines as Chhetri. "I've had the good fortune to play in India and abroad. Everything at the Kalinga Stadium is of top quality. The facilities, training, and our experience here have been absolutely refreshing," Jhingan stated. The benefit of hav-

## AIFF in a mess says, Bhaichung

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Former India captain Bhaichung Bhutia slammed the All India Football Federation (AIFF) as he is not too impressed with the recent formation of a core committee. He feels there is 'no trust or coordination' among the current members of the apex body, who have 'no idea as to who is doing what'. He also questioned the credibility of some of the people in the core committee including Odisha's Avijit Paul who is the deputy chairman of the panel. "Avijit Paul (Football Association of Orissa) is not even the president or secretary of his state association. Now, I don't know how he got to represent Odisha. As far as I know, he is some junior joint secretary who has nothing to do with football," Bhutia stated.

ing a home ground in a place like Bhubaneswar will undoubtedly inspire many youngsters to fulfil their football dreams," he added.

## Odisha rugby eves win junior national crown



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 7:** The Odisha U-18 girls have emerged champions at the Junior National Rugby 7s Championships which recently concluded in Balewadi, Pune. In the final played Tuesday evening, the Odisha eves trounced hosts Maharashtra 52-0. Earlier in the quarterfinals, the Odisha eves thrashed Uttarakhand 56-0 and in the semis they defeated last year's champions Bihar 22-17 in a hard-fought match. The Odisha girls also topped their pool with victo-

ries against Jharkhand and Gujarat. Coach of the team Sanjukta Munda is delighted with the efforts of the girls. "We are thrilled with the result. The girls put in a lot of effort leading up to the tournament and they have got the desired results by emerging champions. We had great training facilities and that helped us to achieve our goals. We are thankful to the Sports and Youth Services department and the Odisha Rugby Football Association." Munda said in a release issued Wednesday.