

**SHORT TAKES**  
**RBI keeps repo rate unchanged**  
**Mumbai:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Thursday left its key interest rate unchanged for a second straight policy meeting but signalled that it wants to see inflation moderate more while preserving the growth momentum. The six-member monetary policy committee (MPC) voted unanimously to keep the benchmark repurchase, or repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said headline inflation is still above the target of 4 per cent which is worrying. **P11**

## Bahanaga HS faces demolition



Dattatraya Bhausaheb Shinde, the District Collector of Balasore during his visit to the Bahanaga HS, Thursday **OP PHOTO**

■ Ghost-fearing students not ready to attend classes in school used as makeshift morgue

**Balasore, June 8:** The building of the Bahanaga Bazar High School in this district which was used as a makeshift morgue after the triple train disaster June 2, may be demolished. Collector Dattatraya Bhausaheb Shinde said Thursday. This is because students of the school are scared to return to their classes apprehending the presence of 'ghosts'. A total of 288 persons were killed in the train crash and many of the bodies were kept in the school. Such is the reluctance of the young students and their parents to come back to a building associated with tragic mass death that the school management committee (SMC) has pleaded with the Odisha government to demolish the building as it is 65 years old.

## Another accident averted at Bhadrak

**Bhadrak:** Another major train disaster was averted Wednesday night due to an alert Railway staff at Manjuri Road station in this district, sources said Thursday. They said that an employee found a boulder stuck in the middle of the inter-locking track at the Manjuri Road station. He alerted other officials and they removed the boulder at the appropriate time. Sources said that it was big enough to derail a train moving at speed. An investigation is underway by the RPF to determine how the stone was placed on the track.

"Young students are scared," admitted Bahanaga School headmistress Pramila Swain. "The school committee is planning to conduct spiritual programmes and some rituals to help them over-

come their fears," she added. Shinde visited the school premises Thursday and had a meeting with the management committee and the teachers. "The school managing committee will decide whether the particular building will be demolished or not. The students are apprehending that 'ghosts' are present in the building. However, such notions are baseless. It's our duty to develop scientific belief among the students," Shinde said. A member of the committee informed Shinde that after watching bodies lying inside the school building on TV, the children are affected and are reluctant to come to school after it reopens June 16. "Though the bodies have been shifted to Bhubaneswar and the school campus has been sanitised and cleaned, the students and the guardians are scared and in a state of panic. "It is difficult to forget that so many bodies were kept in our school building," said a student.

## Girls shine in Plus II Arts, Vocational exams

**Bhubaneswar, June 8:** Girls outshone boys with a better pass percentage in the Class XII state board exams for Arts and Vocational streams, the results of which were declared Thursday by the Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE). Of the 2,30,545 students, 1,81,869 cleared the Plus-II (Arts) examinations, this year, and the overall pass percentage was 78.88%, down from 82.80% last year. School and Mass Education department secretary Aswathy S informed. While 70.43 per cent of boys passed the examinations, the percentage of girls, who cleared the tests, was 85.66%, the official said. Similarly, 67.48 per cent of students cleared the examinations in Vocational stream this year. The pass percentage among boys was 64.23% and it was 71.10% for girls. A total of 3,860 students appeared for the Vocational exams. There were 843 students who got first division, 1,751 got second division while 1,115 cleared the examination in third division. Balasore district had the highest pass percentage of 84.97% in the Arts stream while Nabarangpur recorded the lowest pass percentage of 70.74%. Regarding the dip in pass percentage, Aswathy said, "We cannot use this result as a yardstick since the pass percentage is better than that of pre-Covid times." The exams were conducted from March 2 to April 5. The overall pass percentage in Science and Commerce streams, the results of which were declared May 31, were 84.93% and 81.12% respectively.

## Man kills live-in partner; chops, boils body parts

**Thane, June 8:** In what can be said a replica of the horrific Shradha Walker murder last year, a 56-year-old man was arrested late Wednesday night after killing his live-in partner and then chopping her body parts in this district of Maharashtra. The deceased has been identified as Saraswati Vaidya (32) while the accused Manoj Sane (56) has been remanded in police custody till June 16 by a court Thursday, a police official said. The couple resided in a flat on the seventh floor of a building in the Mira-Bhayandar area for the past three years, the official said. Police were alerted by local residents about a foul smell emanating from the flat, said an official. He informed that a forensic team which visited the spot confirmed that some of the body parts have been boiled in a pressure cooker while some parts were found in three buckets full of blood. **P7**

## Fire in Durg-Puri train, none injured

**Bhubaneswar:** Panic gripped the passengers of Puri-Durg Express as an AC coach of the train caught fire Thursday near Khariar Road in Nuapada district. The coach was engulfed in flames due to certain glitches in the brake shoe at around 10.00pm, sources said. On being informed, the Fire Brigade personnel reached the spot and doused the flames. No one was injured in the incident, sources added. ECoR officials confirmed that the problem was rectified and the train departed from Khariar Road station at 2300 hours.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



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## Monsoon in Kerala

**New Delhi:** The southwest monsoon hit India on Thursday with its onset over Kerala, a week later than normal, the IMD said. The southwest monsoon normally sets in June 1 over Kerala with a standard deviation of about seven days. In mid-May, the IMD had predicted that the monsoon may arrive in Kerala by June 4. The southwest monsoon arrived in the southern state May 29 last year, June 3 in 2021, June 1 in 2020, June 8 in 2019 and May 29 in 2018. Research however, shows a delay in the monsoon onset over Kerala (MOK) does not necessarily mean a holdup in the monsoon onset over northwest India. However, a delay in the MOK is generally associated with a delay in onset at least over the southern states and Mumbai. Scientists say a delayed MOK also does not impact the total rainfall over the country during the season. **P7**

**Team Orissa POST remembers Smt. Nandini Satpathy on her 92nd Birth Anniversary**

**Garlanding of her statue**  
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Subham Patt Nayak (609/720) | Shuvam Shankar Sahoo (597/720)

Subhasmita Sahoo (544) | Aniska Otta (540)

**JEE - 23 (Advance)**

Sai Suman (94,324) | Debashish (94,544) | Dibyajyoti (95,83) | Sahilur Rahman Khan (98,998)

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# leisure



## DICAPRIO, HADID REUNITE OVER DINNER WITH PARENTS

Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio has been spotted enjoying an evening meal with Gigi Hadid in London. The duo joined the *Titanic* star's dad and stepmom for the fine dining experience in England's capital city, reports *Mirror.co.uk*.

## SHANNEN DOHERTY SHARES HER CANCER UPDATE

Legendary American actress Shannen Doherty's cancer has spread to her brain. The 52-year-old announced in February 2020 she had been diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer, and in a new update with fans, she's shared video footage of herself undergoing radiation therapy after learning she had metastases in her brain.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
You delight in meeting new people, and today you will find yourself mingling with a lot of intelligent people. Ganesh says you will continue to be a perfectionist. Besides this, you will end up spending a huge sum of money on a gift for your beloved today.

**TAURUS**  
This day, your expenses are likely to outrun your budget, your earnings. So says Ganesh. In terms of expenditure, the situation can very well get out of hand, causing you a lot of monetary anxieties. Think twice before spending even a penny. If you have surplus funds in your hand, it is advisable to invest them sensibly instead of frittering them away uselessly. Remember, forewarned is forearmed.

**GEMINI**  
You need to guard against hurting the sentiments of anyone today. You need to pay greater attention to the problems of your elders and solve their issues. Post noon you may find yourself busy in religious or intellectual pursuits, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
You may face a hurdle, as you tend to intervene in others' matters. But your tact will save you from any untoward incident. By evening, a good news from your kin or intimate friends will cheer you up.

**LEO**  
You will receive mixed results for your labour today. Partnerships in business may see some lull. Traders will see a slow-down in sales. For those who are employed, issues related to progress may crop up. You need to carefully consider the advice given to you by your elders.

**VIRGO**  
Being open-minded with your beloved about your likes and dislikes, as much as about your ambitions, will be crucial today. You will feel very energetic. Ganesh advises you to give enough respect to customs and traditions, and pay heed to calls of higher education.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says that you will gain popularity and prestige with certain people today. Today you may be in a situation where you are amongst strangers in a strange situation but you will be able to handle it perfectly well without getting scared or tensed.

**SCORPIO**  
Keeping your personal and professional life different would prove beneficial to you, says Ganesh. Commitment and dedication towards your work will win you accolades. This definitely calls for a celebration in the evening. Raising a toast to your success story followed by candlelit dinner with your beloved would be just perfect to end the day.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
The day in itself may not materialise into anything substantial, but it will definitely provide hope for a better tomorrow. Take up a part-time course and hone your skills. This may give you room to know yourself. Ganesh advises you to keep your aspirations alive.

**CAPRICORN**  
You know your cards well, now it all depends upon how you play them to your advantage and boost your business, feels Ganesh. You have an efficient team working for you, but you will need to examine their talents without any biases.

**AQUARIUS**  
It is time to catch up some friends and have a good time. You discuss a variety of topics with them, ranging from music to spirituality, from social system to human values, and from politics to career prospects. In the evening, you will spend some romantic moments with sweetheart, may go out for dinner or just enjoy each other's company, says Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
You will find yourself experiencing problems with taking critical decisions urgently. You will need to carefully weigh the pros and cons of every alternative, before you pronounce your verdict. This is a better practice than to take decisions on a whim, even if slow. You will also plan on making some changes to your personal life.

## I have seen Nana's dark side: Dimple

**Mumbai:** Actress Dimple Kapadia who turned 66 Thursday had once called Nana Patekar obnoxious and even praised his talent.

Dimple and Nana worked together in the various films like *Prahaar: The Final Attack*, *Angaar*, *Krantiveer*, and *Tum Milo Toh Sahi*. In an interview, the Pathaan actress was asked about reuniting with Nana and she said, "I think he is obnoxious."

Dimple further added, "In a good way, and a bad way. As far as his talent goes, there's no match to him. He is an extremely talented man. When I see talent like his, *sau khoon bhi maaf hai*. *Sab kuch maaf hai*. *Meri jaan bhi lelo* (A hundred murders, every-

thing is forgiven. In fact, take my life too). That's the effect he has on me. But, as a person, with me, he has been very, very nice, kind, and a good friend. But I have also seen his terrible side...the dark side. We all have a dark side which is nicely and safely kept aside (sic)."

Dimple was last seen in Shah Rukh Khan's *Pathaan*, and the web series *Saas Bahu Aur Flamingo*.



**Salman is a very bad actor: Bebo**  
**Mumbai:** Actress Kareena Kapoor Khan did not like Salman Khan and found his acting bad. Bebo and Salman have worked together in movies like *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, *Bodyguard*, *Main Aur Mrs Khanna* and *Kyon Ki*. However, in an old interview the Agent Vinod actress said, "I'm not at all a Salman fan. I don't like him, he's a very bad actor: I tell him that he hams all the time."  
Adding further, she praised Aamir Khan and Shah Rukh Khan and said, "Aamir Khan's good, I really liked him in *Hum Hain Rahi Pyar Ke* and *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak*, but out of the Khans, I'm a total Shah Rukh fan." While talking more about King Khan, she added, "totally in love with him. Don't even ask me about him because if I start, I won't stop talking about him for hours. Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh are the only two actors I admire. There is something about Shah Rukh that is amazing. He has that very boy next door appeal, which makes every girl want to take him home to her parents. His performances touch me." AGENCIES



## Bhumi campaigns for sustainable practices

**Mumbai:** Bhumi Pednekar has been at the forefront of raising awareness about how to incorporate sustainable practices into everyday lives. Her latest effort in this regard was to create awareness about the benefits of waste segregation among people in Noida, the satellite city in the National Capital Region (NCR).

The *Badhaai Do* actress joined hands with Catch Foods for their latest *CatchTheRightBin* campaign, which acknowledged the impact of effective waste segregation and how the viability of recycling, composting and other such operations relies heavily on the availability of segregated waste.

Through this initiative, Catch Foods and Bhumi inspired people to mindfully dispose of waste by placing it in the right-coloured bins in Noida. The brand launched this important campaign through an activation at Grand Venice Mall in Noida followed by a social media contest for people to visit the venue and understand more about waste segregation.

To inculcate the practice of waste segregation among its users the brand will include coloured bin logos on all the catch products to dispose of the empty packs correctly. AGENCIES

## Ranbir-Alia to play Rama-Sita in Ramayan

**Mumbai:** As *Adipurush* gears up for its theatrical release bringing forth the tale of the epic *Ramayana*, another film on the same theme is in the making. Actress Alia Bhatt, who essayed the role of Sita in the blockbuster film *RRR*, is set to portray goddess Sita in Nitesh Tiwari's much-anticipated film, *Ramayan*.

As per media reports, Alia has been confirmed to play Sita opposite her real-life husband Ranbir Kapoor, who will be seen as Lord Rama, replacing south actress Sai Pallavi. For those wondering if Nitesh Tiwari's

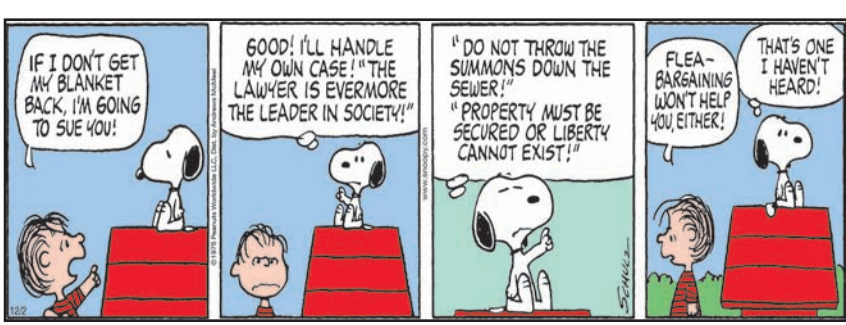
film was shelved, there's good news.

The film is totally on track. Alia was also spotted outside Nitesh Tiwari's office recently. However, netizens were quick to react on the topic. A user wrote, "Going from Sai Pallavi to Aloo is a huge step down," while another said, "Alia Bhatt snatching projects from other actresses. Reduced fees, aggressive PR, misusing connections etc. this industry is in the dumps."

A third netizen wrote, "This nepo star is legit grabbing every single chance out there. Like, she is winning all these awards for, like, mediocre acting." IANS



### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

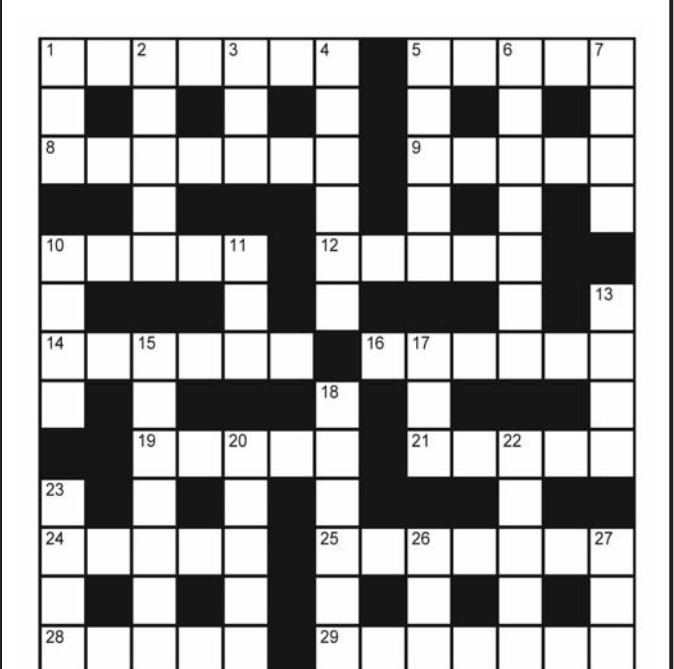


### BREVITY



### FUN post

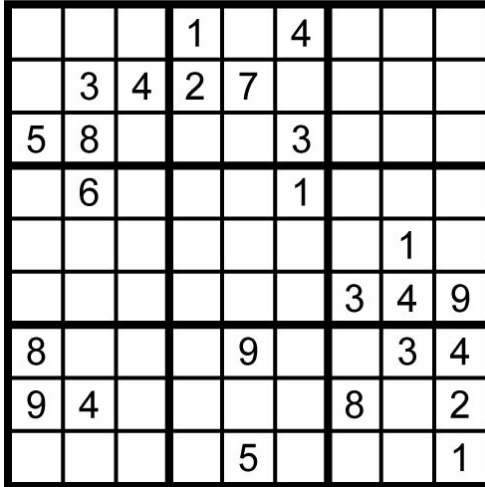
### CROSSWORD



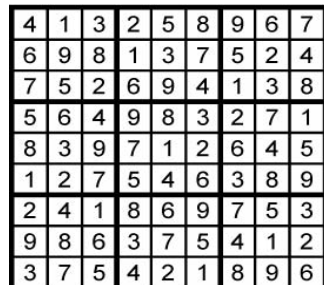
- Across**
- 1 Frog starter
  - 5 Panorama
  - 8 Risk taker
  - 9 Liveliness
  - 10 Lock site
  - 12 Close-knit group
  - 14 Mollycoddle
  - 16 Sheen
  - 19 Debonair
  - 21 Ludicrous
  - 24 Parting word, in France
  - 25 Pertinent
  - 28 Pig out
  - 29 Like some estates
  - 10 Duplicate
  - 11 Caustic chemical
  - 13 Daughter of Zeus
  - 15 Assignment
  - 17 Israeli weapon
  - 18 Criticise harshly
  - 20 Sharp as a tack
  - 22 Top dog
  - 23 Gentle one
  - 26 Seafood delicacy
  - 27 Tippler

### 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



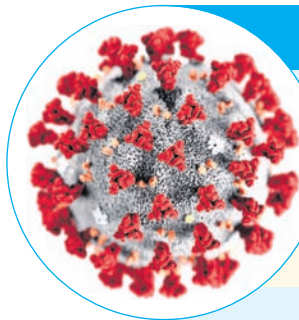
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW





**MAKING THEM SHINE**

A worker paints the charioteer idols ahead of Rath Yatra near Chandni Chowk Jagannath temple in Cuttack, Thursday



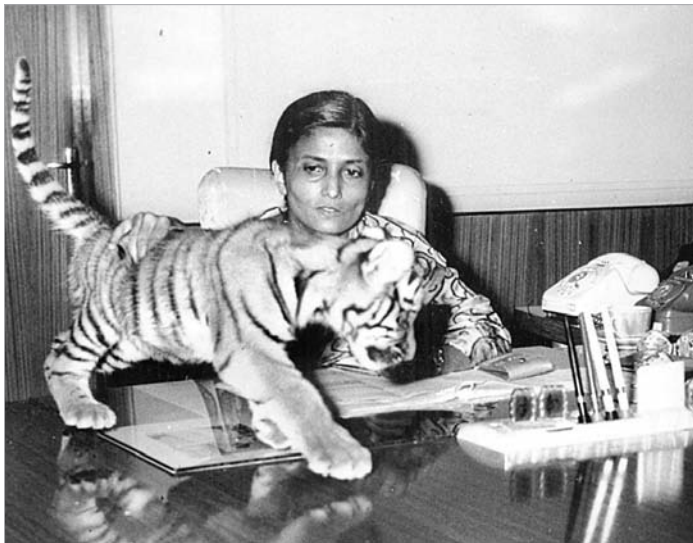
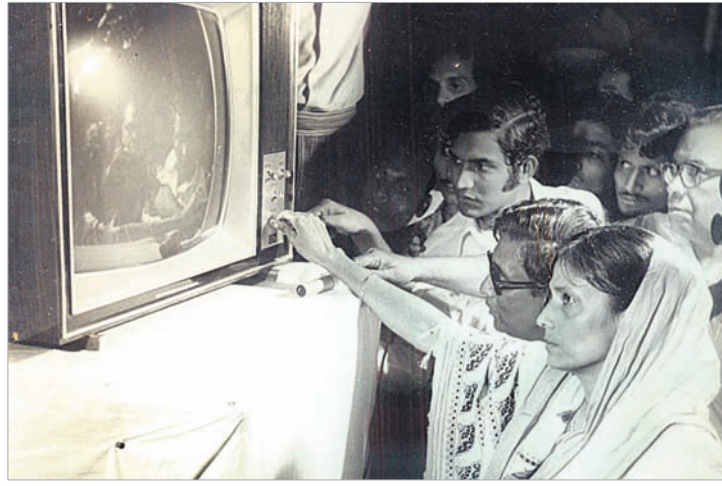
**COVID-19 TRACKER**

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	69,00,68,151	66,24,96,191	68,89,432
India	4,49,92,293	4,44,57,720	5,31,886
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204



**Nandini: A humanist with extraordinary selflessness**

THE FIRST AND ONLY WOMAN CHIEF MINISTER OF ODISHA, NANDINI SATPATHY, WAS A UNIQUE INDIVIDUAL WITH FEW CONTEMPORARIES. MILLIONS OF PEOPLE STILL VIEW HER AS A WOMAN OF UNWAVERING RESOLVE AND EXCEPTIONAL SELF-SACRIFICE. NANDINI MANAGED POLITICS AND LITERATURE WITH EASE, GAINING THE EPITHET 'IRON LADY OF ODISHA' AND RECEIVING THE PRESTIGIOUS SAHITYA BHARATI SAMMAN. **ORISSA POST** PRESENTS SOME SNAPSHOTS FROM HER EVENTFUL LIFE ON HER 92ND BIRTHDAY



**STA to start HSRP drive from June 23**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, June 8:** As the deadline for affixing High Security Registration Plates (HSRPs) on old vehicles registered prior to April 1, 2019, has ended February 28, 2023, and still many vehicles are spotted on roads without the new number plates, the State Transport Authority (STA) has decided to conduct a special drive from June 23, 2023, to detect such vehicles and impose penalty.

In a press note, Thursday, Transport, Road Safety & Enforcement additional commissioner Lalmoohan Sethi, said, "As on June 7, a total of 40,93,608 vehicle owners have booked slots, out of which HSRPs have been affixed in 35,87,577 vehicles.

Vehicles owners are advised to affix HSRPs at the earliest to avoid penalty."

"In case the vehicle is not affixed with HSRP, an e-challan will be issued against the offending vehicle and attract fine of ₹5,000 or ₹10,000 under Section 192 of MV Act, 1988, as the case may be," the press note added.

**18 projects worth ₹3,457 cr get nod**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 8:** The State Level Single Window Clearance Authority (SLSWCA) led by Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena has approved 18 industrial projects worth ₹3,457 crore, which will generate employment opportunities for 14,436 persons.

Out of 18 approved proposals, 10 investment intents were received during the Make-in Odisha (MiO) Conclave 2022.

The committee has given its go-ahead to nine projects in the metal sector; five in agro & food processing sector and one project each in textiles, cement, IT & ESDM, and pharmaceutical sectors. The approved projects will be set up in Jajpur, Khurda, Koraput, Cuttack, Sundargarh, Bhadrak, Subarnapur, Bolangir and Boudh districts.

Calderys India Refractories Ltd, an Indian subsidiary of Calderys headquartered in France, intends to set up manufacturing unit for acidic refractory bricks, acidic monolithics, refractory bricks, steel

The projects will be set up in Jajpur, Khurda, Koraput, Cuttack, Sundargarh, Bhadrak, Subarnapur, Bolangir and Boudh districts

They will generate employment opportunities for 14,436 persons

SLSWCA recommended two proposals of IOCL and Toshali Cement Pvt Ltd to HLCA

casting flux, and precast prefired shaped refractory plant with an investment of ₹500 crore. TYK Corporation has proposed to set up its unit in Jajpur district at a cost of ₹57 crore.

While Caldery and TYK Corporation are setting up their first units in the state, SMS India Private Limited is further expanding to add a fourth unit of 4,000 MT/annum capacity of steel plant equipment. The firm proposed to invest ₹160 crore in Khurda.

The SLSWCA also approved the proposal of Toshali Cement Private Limited for expansion of their ce-

ment grinding capacity to 1.75 MTPA in Cuttack with an investment of ₹525.46 crore.

In the Agro & Food Processing sector, the state has approved five projects which are expected to provide employment to more than 1,400 people of Odisha. The proposal of Abis Exports India Pvt Ltd includes the setting up of a manufacturing unit for poultry feed at Barchana in Jajpur district with an investment of ₹161.57 crore.

In the IT & ESDM sector, the panel approved one project by OgoEnergy India Private Limited worth ₹201 crore. Similarly, Cadila Pharmaceuticals Limited has proposed to invest ₹200 crore. The company proposes to set up a pharmaceutical manufacturing unit, which will provide employment opportunities to over 680 people of Odisha.

The SLSWCA also recommended two proposals of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) and Toshali Cement Private Limited to the High Level Clearance Authority (HLCA) headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

**Fresh mango from farm now at doorstep**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 8:** Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Minister Pradip Kumar Amat Thursday launched the logo of 'Odisha Mango' and flagged off the 'Mango on Wheels' campaign to promote the many mango varieties while inaugurating the ORMAS 'Gaon Amba Pasara' here near the SIRD campus.

With the mango season round the corner, like every year ORMAS is organising 'Gaon Amba Pasara' from June 8 to June 13, hosting the bazaar that features a variety of mangoes from seven districts of the state, namely Angul, Bolangir,

Kalahandi, Rayagada, Koraput, Mayurbhanj and Sambalpur.

ORMAS chief executive officer Guha Poonam Tapas Kumar and other senior officers were present at the inauguration event along with members of many farmer producer groups and companies who are there to sell their products.

While addressing the gathering, Amat commended ORMAS's efforts in linking the farmers to markets through training, procurement and online sales programmes.

"What makes these mangoes special is that they are naturally ripened and farm fresh. Apart from the stalls near the SIRD campus, the City folks can enjoy the fresh mangoes



from the mobile vans that are selling the mangoes procured from the farmers," said an ORMAS official.

A large number of varieties, including Amrapalli, Dusheri, Lengra, Baiganpalli, Totapuri and Mallika, are available at the mango bazaar. In her address, Guha Poonam

**3 held for GED slum murder case in City**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 8:** Commissionerate Police has arrested three absconding accused involved in the murder of Sushant Nayak alias Kalia at GED slum in Unit IV area under Capital police limits May 24. DCP Prateek Singh claimed Thursday. The arrested were identified as Ajit Kumar Nayak of Godipada in Nayagarh, Bishal Kumar Nayak and Tikili Kumar Nayak of Nirakarpur in Khurda.

The accused were arrested from a hotel at Daringbadi in Kandhamal. The prime accused, Sujit Nayak, a native of Sarankul area in Nayagarh, had surrendered before the SDJM court here May 31.

Recently, a case was lodged April 26 by Sushant's family alleging that a member of the accused family had misbehaved with a lady of their family. A counter case was also registered by the accused family alleging that one Papuni Nayak, a relative of Sushant, had attacked one of the lady relative of Sujit.

"Following the last fight between the families May 8, prime accused Sujit and his associates hatched a plan to eliminate Sushant. They came to know that Sushant was going away from his residence every morning. May 24, when he was returning home, they killed him," said Singh.

**TRIPLE TRAIN TRAGEDY**

**Claimants wait for DNA test reports**



AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, June 8:** Even after six days of the triple-train accident near Bahanaga Bazar station in Balasore district, some families are yet to receive bodies of their loved ones.

At least 288 passengers have died in the horrific train accident that occurred June 2. While 82 bodies have remained unidentified, other bodies have been handed over to the families of the deceased after verification of related documents, an official said Thursday.

Meanwhile, a lot of people from states like West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar are waiting at AIIMS Bhubaneswar for the mortal remains of their family members.

While no one is there to claim some bodies, multiple families claim one body. As the bodies are in very bad condition, the family members are also facing difficulties in identifying them. Now, the claimants are waiting for DNA test reports, which will be available in the next two to three days.

DNA samples of the deceased and claimants have been sent to AIIMS New Delhi for cross verification. Once the report is available, the bodies will be handed over to genuine claimants, the official said.

Meanwhile, a man from West Bengal alleged that his 22-year-old son's body has been handed over to some other people of Bihar. Sibakanta Roy from Cooch Behar

district of West Bengal is in trauma as the body of his son Bipul Roy was taken by another family from Bihar. "I was in Arunachal Pradesh when I came to know about the shocking train accident of Coromandel Express in which my son was also travelling. I rushed back home and requested our BDO to arrange a vehicle. He arranged it and I arrived at Balasore," Roy said.

After searching here and there, the father found Bipul's picture tagged in a wall among the photographs of the deceased. When a stunned Sibakanta sought his son's body, he came to know that someone from Bihar had taken it.

"After reaching AIIMS Bhubaneswar, I came to know that my son's body was taken by someone else. Now what can I do? The officials also said that they had doubts while handing over the body to the Bihar family on the age of the deceased person they were claiming," he said.

"The identification of the remaining 82 bodies is being carried out. We are coordinating with concerned state government officials for proper verification of the claimants. In the cases of any dispute, we are not handing over the bodies," said Commissioner of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation Vijay Amruta Kulange.

Government officials of West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar are here. The bodies will be given only after cross verification with the officials, he said.

**MARKET WATCH**

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	62848.64 ↓ 294.32
NIFTY	18634.55 ↓ 91.85
DOLLAR	82.56 ↑ ₹0.02
EURO	88.8530 ↑ ₹0.57
GOLD	₹60,020 ↑ ₹517
SILVER	₹ 73,759 ↑ ₹2034

**WEATHER**

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX 41.6°C	41.6°C
	MIN 24.5°C	27.2°C
Humidity	70%	69%
Rainfall	7.8	0.8
Forecast	PARTLY CLOUDY SKY	



OTP SHARING SCAM

# STF nabs another accused

THE PRESENT ACCUSED IS IDENTIFIED AS PRADYUMNA KUMAR SAHOO, 32 OF NAYAGARH DISTRICT. HE IS A GRADUATE AND HAD EARLIER WORKED AS A TERRITORY SALES EXECUTIVE IN IDEA AND AS JIO POINT MANAGER



Some of the pre-activated SIMs and wallets were used by PIOs/ISI agents who are located inside Pakistan mainly from Karachi and Balochistan. Further investigation in this regard is going on, the STF official said.

During investigation, the task force officials found that the accused used to generate multiple SIMs on the same identity by fooling the unsuspecting customers on the pretext of some technical glitches.

For activation of different wallets, i.e., PhonePe, Google Pay and others, the registered mobile phone numbers (which are linked with the bank account) were mandatory.

However, in the case of a Paytm wallet account, once activated, others along with the main customer can also operate it after using the user id and password. The STF is going to analyse this and if needed, will write to Paytm to change the settings, the official informed.

According to the STF, Pradyumna had sold more than 500 pre-activated SIMs and 150+ pre-activated Paytm Wallets to Pathani Samanta Lenka, who was arrested earlier in this case

territory sales executive in Idea and as Jio Point manager. Now he is working at Black buck, Fastag Company, the official said.

According to the STF, Pradyumna had sold more than 500 pre-activated SIMs and 150+ pre-activated Paytm Wallets to Pathani Samanta Lenka, who was arrested earlier in this case. These SIMs and Wallets were sold to various cyber criminals and PIO (Pakistani Intelligence Operatives).

The present accused is identified as Pradyumna Kumar Sahoo, 32 of Nayagarh district. He is a graduate and had earlier worked as a ter-

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhubaneswar, June 8:** The Special Task Force (STF) has arrested one more person in the OTP selling and sharing scam, a police official said Thursday.

Earlier, three cyber criminals were arrested for sharing OTP of pre-activated SIMs to some criminals and suspected Pakistani agents. They were identified as Pathani Samant Lenka 35, Saroj Kumar Nayak, 26 and Soumya Pattanaik, 19.

The present accused is identified as Pradyumna Kumar Sahoo, 32 of Nayagarh district. He is a graduate and had earlier worked as a ter-



**NOR'WESTER SCARE:** Heavy rains with gusty winds lashed the Capital city Thursday evening causing damages to vehicles and properties at many places

## HEAVY RAINS WITH STRONG WINDS WREAK HAVOC IN CITY

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 8:** The Capital witnessed a cyclone-like situation Thursday evening as heavy rains accompanied by gusty winds lashed several parts of the City for more than half an hour causing damages to property. Several trees were uprooted due to the strong winds. This apart, intense dust storm was also witnessed in various areas.

Those traveling on the roads were forced to seek safe shelter due to the wind speed. In some places, there were reports of fallen tree branches blocking the road.

However, people of the City, who have been suffering from severe heat, got some relief after the fresh spell of shower. The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) is engaged with required no of staff and ancillary equipments to clear

up road-side garbage and broken trees caused by the stormy wind Thursday evening.

Meanwhile, the Southwest Monsoon arrived in Kerala on Thursday, informed the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Bhubaneswar. The southwest Monsoon set in over Kerala one week late. It normally touches Kerala June 1.

Considering the late arrival of the

Monsoon in Kerala, Odisha will also witness the late arrival of the Monsoon. IMD DG Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said for Odisha, no specific forecast has been issued, generally monsoon makes onset in Odisha June 12, but since winds arrived in Kerala a week late, it may delay in coming to Odisha. But exact date of monsoon arrival in Odisha will be predicted after its advancement in South India.



**COMMON MAN ISSUE:** AAP members, in a rally, marching towards Naveen Niwas to press the demand for 200 units of free power to all households in City, Thursday

## 2-day capacity building prog for tribal farmers at CIFA

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 8:** With more than 54 per cent of their population belonging to scheduled tribes, Gajapati and Rayagada are hosts to several tribes like Sauras, Langia Sauras and Danagarika Kondhs. To enhance their livelihood security and economic wellbeing, a two-day exposure-visit-cum-capacity-building programme was organised here on integrated aquaculture for tribal beneficiaries.

The programme was inaugurated by additional secretary Pradeep Rout and ICAR-CIFA director PK Sahoo.

Rout spoke about his experience of working in tribal areas in various capacities and lauded that tribal people as the saviours of our culture and heritage, while advocating their empowerment. He admired the efforts of scientists in development of new technologies and farming practices which suited for the tribals to support their livelihood development and nutritional security.

In his address, Sahoo congratulated the team for conducting



such a programme. He recommended for the participants a live demonstration on fish harvesting and fish species cultured at the Institute. He also urged to show the participants different high yield varieties of fruits and vegetable plants available at different sister institutes.

Principal scientist P Routray highlighted the purpose of the capacity development programme and expressed that field demonstration will help the participants in practising fish culture. Principal scientist and Gajapati-Rayagada programme team leader SS Mishra briefed about the activities being undertaken by ICAR-CIFA in those

districts since 2018 with adoption of 28 tribal women self-help groups. He urged the beneficiaries to effectively utilise inputs and resources for their economic upliftment. KN. Mohanta, STC project coordinator, highlighted the activities and achievements of CIFA STC programme in various adopted districts.

During these two days, the trainees were given training and demonstration on carp culture, catfish culture, water quality management, feed formulation and management, health management, integrated farming system development, tuber crop farming, horticulture, backyard poultry and duckery.

## Odisha man held with 3.5 kg ganja



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Panaji, June 8:** Goa Police Thursday arrested a native of Odisha for allegedly possessing 3.5 kg ganja. The raid was conducted in Margao-South Goa.

Margao Police Inspector Tulshidas Naik informed that the accused person was arrested at the railway station.

"We got information about the accused person and after raiding we found ganja in his possession," Police said. The accused person is identified as 25-year-old Bullu Maji.

"We found 3.5 kg ganja worth Rs 3, 50,000 from his possession. He has been arrested and will be produced before court," Police added. Police are further investigating the case.

## Greenhouse gas emissions at "all-time high": Study

A group of 50 leading scientists have said in an analysis that human-caused global warming has continued to increase at an "unprecedented rate" since the last major assessment of the climate system published two years ago

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have been found to be "at an all-time high", with human activity resulting in the equivalent of 54 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere on average every year over the last decade.

A group of 50 leading scientists have said in an analysis that human-caused global warming has continued to increase at an "unprecedented rate" since the last major assessment of the climate system published two years ago.

One of the researchers said the

analysis was a "timely wake-up call" and it comes as climate experts meet in Bonn, Germany, to prepare the ground for the major COP28 climate conference in the UAE in December, which will take stock of progress towards keeping global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2050.

The researchers wrote in the analysis that human-induced warming, largely caused by fossil fuel burning, reached an average of 1.14 degrees Celsius for the most recent decade (2013 to 2022) above pre-industrial levels, up from 1.07 degrees Celsius between 2010 and 2019.

It is now increasing at a pace of over 0.2 degrees Celsius per decade, they wrote in the journal Earth System Science Data.

In an initiative being led by the University of Leeds, UK, the scientists have developed an open data, open science platform - the Indicators of Global Climate Change. Its website will update information on key climate indicators every year.



Arguing that policymakers, climate negotiators and civil society groups need to have access to the latest and robust scientific evidence for decision-making, the scientists said that these key climate indicators have changed since the publication of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC's) Sixth

Assessment Working Group 1 report in 2021, which produced the key data that fed into the subsequent IPCC Sixth Synthesis Report.

While there has been a positive move away from burning coal, it has, in fact, added to global warming by reducing particulate pollution in the air, which has a cooling effect, the analysis noted.

Coordinator of the initiative, Piers Forster, Director of the Priestley Centre for Climate Futures at Leeds, said, "Long-term warming rates are currently at a long-term high, caused by highest-ever levels of greenhouse gas emissions. But there is evidence that the rate of increase in greenhouse gas emissions has slowed."

"We need to be nimble footed in the face of climate change. We need to change policy and approaches in the light of the latest evidence about the state of the climate system. Time is no longer on our side. Access to up-to-date information is vitally important."

Decline in remaining carbon budget, an estimate of how much carbon that can be released into the atmosphere to give a 50 per cent chance of keeping global temperature rise within 1.5 degrees Celsius, another major finding of the analysis, has been attributed to a combination of continued emissions since 2020 and updated estimates of human-induced warming. The IPCC calculated in 2020 this

budget to be around 500 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide.

By the start of 2023, the figure was roughly halved to 250 gigatonnes.

"Even though we are not yet at 1.5 degrees Celsius warming, the carbon budget will likely be exhausted in only a few years as we have a triple whammy of heating from very high CO2 emissions, heating from increases in other GHG emissions and heating from reductions in pollution."

"If we don't want to see the 1.5 degrees Celsius goal disappearing in our rearview mirror, the world must work much harder and urgently at bringing emissions down," said Forster.

Maisa Rojas Corradi, Minister of the Environment in Chile, IPCC author and a scientist involved in this study, said, "An annual update of key indicators of global change is critical in helping the international community and countries to keep the urgency of addressing the climate crisis at the top of the agenda and for evidence-based decision-making."

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# OMBADC aid boost to Keonjhar road infra



**Till now, 224.04 km of roads have been laid in Keonjhar district out of the targeted 262.32 km**  
**A total of 14,000 people in 34 villages of the district have been benefited through the scheme**

the targeted 262.32 km. A total of 14,000 people across 34 villages have been benefited through the initiative.

“Earlier, there was no pucca road in the village. Now, a concrete road has been constructed through the hill. We can easily go to the health facility now. Our children can move quickly to the schools and colleges and it has become hassle free to go to the markets and to the city,” says Benudhar Danaik, a resident of Lungajhar GP in Banspal block.

Three bridges of total length 195.39 metre have been constructed at Nayakot Gram Panchayat of Banspal block. The bridges connect seven villages easing the lives of over 3,800 people.

“Our village is surrounded by several small water bodies. During the rains, the whole area used to get flooded leaving us stranded. Now, bridges have been constructed preventing the flooding while helping us easily navigate in and out of the village”, says Sumati Nayak of Nayakot gram panchayat.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 8:** In a bid to connect the remote villages of Keonjhar district, which is surrounded by hills and forests, the district administration has taken up road connectivity projects with support from Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation (OMBADC).

“OMBADC supports various welfare programmes being run by the Keonjhar district administration. Road connectivity is among one such major initiatives in the area. With the construction of new roads and bridges in the rural belt, people’s life, education, healthcare,



and bridge construction work at three blocks of Harichandanpur, Banspal and Jhumpura in Keonjhar district. Till now, 224.04 km of roads have been laid in the district out of

# Poverty forces Mayurbhanj kids to abandon studies

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, June 8:** Dropout rate of students in tribal dominated Mayurbhanj district is very high as many of them give up studies due to poverty and a variety of other reasons, a report said.

Many of them simply abandon studies due to poverty and leave the state with the help of middlemen to work as migrant labourers.



REPRESENTATIVE PHOTO

However, government officials have done precious little in rescuing and rehabilitating the children, alleged a local outfit Bhanja Sena as Mayurbhanj Collector Vineet Bhardwaj flagged off an awareness vehicle on child labour recently.

Bhanja Sena president Pintu Maiti and its OBC cell president Rakesh Behera have alleged that the government officials only remain busy organising awareness programmes but have done little for the betterment of these children.

According to their complaint, this year

■ AS PER A COMPLAINT BY A LOCAL OUTFIT, 34,417 STUDENTS HAD FILLED UP FORMS FOR HSC EXAMS BUT AROUND 1,000 STUDENTS DID NOT APPEAR IN THE TESTS

■ LIKEWISE, 67 STUDENTS IN PLUS II SCIENCE AND 98 IN COMMERCE SKIPPED THE EXAMINATIONS

34,417 students had filled up forms for the High School Certificate (HSC) Examinations but around 1,000 students did not appear in the examinations. Similarly, 67 students in Plus II Science and 98 in Commerce skipped the examinations.

A total of 1,166 students have been found to have dropped out and working as child labourers to earn a living for their families. Many among them have left for other districts and states to work as migrant labourers.

They alleged that the district administration has completely failed in rescuing and rehabilitating the child labourers and absolving their obligation by making awareness vehicles take tour of the district.

Locals have demanded to rescue the children and bring them to the mainstream of society.

Reports said that 23 child labourers were rescued in the district in 2022-23 of which four were from Bihar. Among the rest of the children, 17 are below 14 while two of them are juveniles.

When contacted, district labour commissioner Monalisa Nayak said many child labourers have been rescued and rehabilitated while efforts are being made to rehabilitate those who have crossed their age as minor.

# Fish catch drops due to pollution in rivers



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, June 8:** Release of untreated effluents and drain water straight into the rivers has polluted the water bodies and led to a decline in fish population, thereby causing loss of livelihood for fishermen in riparian villages here.

According to sources, hundreds of fishermen depend on rivers like Brahmani, Koel and Sankha flowing through the Steel City. However, they are a worried lot nowadays with a sharp drop in fish catch from the rivers. They alleged that their livelihood has been seriously hit as their fish catch is dwindling by the day.

The fishermen used to catch fishes like Boal (balia), Rohu, Catla (Bhakur), Sheula and prawns from these three rivers. However, river pollution stands as a stumbling block for a good catch.

Toxic and chemical effluents as well as solid waste and sewage of the city are being discharged into Brahmani river through a large drain which runs from Civil Township to Balughat, Tarekela in the city.

The waste water of seven big hospitals in the city as well as that of other establishments is being discharged into the river without proper treatment. However, the authorities are silent on the issue and yet to take any step to protect the rivers.

Discharge of chemical and toxic effluents into the river is the reason behind a sharp fall in fish population, alleged a fisherwoman Archana Naik and her male counterparts Ajay Naik and Bipin Toppo living near the river banks.

‘Save River’ movement coordinator Gurupada Arabinda Swain said that rampant pollution in the rivers and decline in fish population is a matter of serious concern and all should work in tandem to save these three rivers. When contacted, ADM, Rourkela Subhankar Mohapatra said the Rourkela Municipal Corporation has been taking a slew of measures to keep the rivers pollution free. He added that action will be taken if any organisation is found discharging chemical and toxic effluents into the rivers.

**Toxic and untreated effluents as well as solid waste and sewage of the city are being discharged into Brahmani river through a large drain**

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## India test-fires new-gen ballistic missile ‘Agni Prime’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Balasure, June 8:** ‘Agni Prime’, the new-generation ballistic missile, was successfully flight-tested from an island off Odisha coast Thursday, officials said.

The test was conducted from APJ Abdul Kalam Island by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), and all ob-

jectives were successfully met, they said. This was the first pre-induction night launch conducted after three successful developmental trials of the missile, validating the accuracy and reliability of the system, they said.

Range instrumentation such as radar, telemetry and electro-optical tracking systems were deployed at



different locations, including two down-range ships, to capture flight data covering its entire trajectory, they added. Senior officials of DRDO and Strategic Forces Command witnessed the successful flight test, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO and the armed forces for the success.

## As water helps the plant grow, your tax helps the country prosper

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Jealousy is a dead poison that is fatal to the soul.

THE MOTHER



# Geopolitics of Nature

From Russia's war against Ukraine to America's rivalry with China, tectonic geopolitical shifts have shaken multilateralism in recent years. While many of the consequences – from surging food and energy prices to the rising risks of major conflict – have been discussed at length, more attention must be devoted to the implications of these shifts for efforts to address the multifaceted climate and nature crisis.

The geopolitical change we are now experiencing threatens to split the world order in two. A key sign of this is the decision by much of the Global South to support – or at least refuse to condemn – Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year, despite the West's efforts to isolate and punish the Kremlin.

Moreover, the BRICS group of major emerging economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) – which has always sought to create alternatives to Western-led international institutions – may be set to grow, as 19 countries have expressed interest in joining. There is also discussion of creating a new BRICS currency to challenge the US dollar's global dominance.

In the meantime, China is working hard to expand the international use of its own currency, the renminbi, and is achieving some success. Most recently, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has taken steps to facilitate renminbi-denominated trade settlement between China and Brazil.

Forging the shared sense of purpose and marshaling the coordinated action needed to tackle the climate and nature crisis would be difficult in the best of times. In a world characterised by distrust, competition, fiscal constraints, and divergent political priorities, it appears almost impossible. And yet, far from building bridges, many – particularly in the Global North – are exacerbating divisions.

The European Union's recent legislation banning imports of products linked to deforestation is a case in point. The law – which requires companies selling goods like coffee, beef, and soy in the EU to provide verifiable proof that they were not grown on recently deforested land – has been welcomed by green activists and European politicians. But the measure has also met with considerable criticism – and not only from agri-business interests seeking to avoid incurring costs for environmental destruction. Shortly before it was passed, the Brazilian and Indonesian governments submitted a letter, signed by 14 World Trade Organization member states, lamenting that the EU was pursuing "unilateral legislation," rather than "international engagement." By failing to consult with the relevant countries, the EU devised "costly and impractical traceability and geolocalisation requirements" for an "uncertain and discriminatory" list of products.

Voluntary carbon-credit markets and emerging biodiversity-credit markets are similarly flawed. Rich-country critics complain that these markets have failed to deliver credible "additional" reductions of atmospheric carbon. Scandals arising from widespread flaws in certified nature-based carbon credits are a case in point. Leaders from the Global South, for their part, highlight the inequalities they perpetuate, with carbon credits being bought for as little as \$5-10 in the Global South and then sold for \$100 or more in Europe.

Moreover, developing-economy leaders highlight wealthier countries' reluctance to fund the preservation of existing forests. At the recent One Forest Summit, co-hosted by Gabonese President Ali Bongo Ondimba and French President Emmanuel Macron, Gabon's environment minister, Lee White, noted that, as some of the world's most important carbon sinks, "forests potentially represent 20-30% of the solution to climate change." Carbon credits can help channel financing toward forest preservation, but only if they are purchased at fair and predictable prices.

There are relatively straightforward ways to improve engagement and accelerate progress toward shared climate and nature goals. For example, the EU's deforestation law could have a far greater impact – and inspire more effective cooperation – if it included support for measures to advance, rather than override, relevant legislation in affected countries. Moreover, building on the insights shared during the One Forest Summit, rich countries could embrace the idea of delivering ecosystem-service payments to countries that maintain their forests, and establish a price floor for carbon and biodiversity credits.

The G7's recently announced Alliance of Nature Positive Economies – conceived as a "forum to share knowledge and create information networks on a voluntary basis in collaboration with the private sector and civil society" – could support the shift toward greater collaboration beyond the G7. Key would be to focus on how to address nature and climate goals without deepening existing technological advantages and erecting more trade barriers, and instead to focus on inclusivity and equity.

Brazil's G20 presidency in 2024, and its role as host of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2025 (COP30), also represent important opportunities. As the world's most influential representative of nature-rich developing economies, Brazil could use these platforms to mobilise greater support for the countries that are doing the most to protect the climate and preserve nature, despite having done the least to cause the crises we face. Transforming the global economic and financial architecture to advance sustainability goals will be key.

Nature and climate will be part of the new geopolitics, for better or worse. The alternative to a more inclusive approach is not slower progress, but potentially no progress at all. Just as Russia has redirected its energy exports to countries that have not embraced Western sanctions, food exporters, facing de facto deforestation "sanctions" from the EU, may simply find new buyers for their goods. In such situations, everyone loses, including nature.

Without a collaborative approach, nature-rich countries may even decide to create a sovereign sellers' club aimed at improving their terms of trade, like OPEC has long done for oil producers. Already, Brazil, Indonesia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo – which possess the world's largest tropical forests – have formed an alliance focused essentially on pressuring the rich world to finance forest conservation.

Measures like the EU's deforestation legislation or voluntary carbon markets may look like steps in the right direction. And they may bring short-term benefits. But by alienating the developing world – at a time of global geopolitical realignment, no less – their long-term costs may be too high.

The writer is Executive Director of NatureFinance.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

## WISDOM CORNER

A happy life must be to a great extent a quiet life, for it is only in an atmosphere of quiet that true joy dare live.

BERTRAND RUSSELL

You must take personal responsibility. You cannot change the circumstances, the seasons, or the wind, but you can change yourself. That is something you have charge of.

JIM ROHN

Gratitude is the healthiest of all human emotions. The more you express gratitude for what you have, the more likely you will have even more to express gratitude for.

ZIG ZIGLAR

## FOCUS SEDITION LAW

# REPEAL OR RETAIN?



The constitutionality and legality of sedition law have been challenged before the Supreme Court several times, but the apex court has declined to scrap this law with the logic that mere abuse of a law is no ground for its abolition

When the Supreme Court stayed all proceedings relating to cases of sedition under Section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code on 11 May 2022 till its further order in SG Vombatkere Vs Union of India case, there was an apprehension that this archaic law of the imperialistic era would encounter its demise at any moment. But it does not seem to be so. The 22nd Law Commission of India (LCI), in its 279th Report (2023) has not only reiterated its justification for retention of this law, but also has recommended for a harsher punishment for this crime.



Jayakrishna Sahu

WHAT A DISGRACE THAT WE ARE RETAINING THIS COLONIAL-ERA LAW, EVEN AFTER WE BECAME A DEMOCRATIC-REPUBLIC 73 YEARS AGO!

The Commission, headed by Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi, former Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court, in its latest report cites how some people weaponise the powerful social media to propagate hatred and topple democratically elected governments through violent means, and for that it has recommended to increase the lower limit of punishment from 3 years to 7 years. At present the punishment for sedition is 3 years or life imprisonment.

The LCI has been vocal on reform of sedition law since very long. In its 42nd Report (1971) the LCI made three broad suggestions – first, incorporate mens rea or criminal intent in the Section; second, widen scope of the Section by incorporating the Constitution, Legislature and the Judiciary along with the Government; and third, bridge the abnormal gap of fine or 3 years' imprisonment to life imprisonment, by making the maximum imprisonment to 7 years. Regarding abolition of sedition law, however, the LCI also vacillated between yes and no.

The 267th Report (2017) of the LCI makes clear distinction between sedition and "hate speech." The report suggests that only those expressions which threaten the sovereignty, integrity and security of India should attract the provision of sedition. In 2018 the Law Commission was again asked by the Central government to examine various pros and cons of Section 124-A of the IPC and make recommendations for reforming

the law. The Commission put up a Consultation Paper in public domain for a wider discussion over the topic. The present suggestions come through the 279th Report.

This latest proposal of the LCI has once again given life to an animated national-debate over the highly controversial and archaic sedition law. It is to be noted here that the present Central government is in no mood to abolish this law and that has been cleared on the floor of the House by then Minister of State for Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai who clarified: "There is a need to retain this provision to effectively combat anti-national, secessionist and terrorist elements."

The present sedition law was enacted by the British government against its colonized subjects to prevent the repetition of the 1857-type mutiny and other such serious uprisings. The original law of sedition was drafted by Thomas Macaulay and it was introduced into the IPC in 1870.

The original law mentioned: "Whoever by words, either spoken or intended to be read or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, excites or attempts to excite, feelings of disaffection to the Government established by law in British India, shall be punished with transportation for life or any term to which fine may be added, or with

imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added, or with fine."

The British enacted this draconian law to intimidate and silence the Indian subjects, and punished freedom-fighters like Mahatma Gandhi, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Maulana Azad, Annie Besant and innumerable others. What a disgrace that we are retaining this one-and-half century-old law, even after we became a democratic-republic 73 years ago! We retain the law word for word, the only changes being the deletion of the word "British", and substitution of the word "transportation" with "imprisonment".

Our first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was a fierce critic of this sedition law, and even in a Parliamentary debate in 1951, he had condemned this law as "highly objectionable and obnoxious." He opined that the sooner the nation got rid of it, the better. But Nehru preferred not to walk his talk on this issue during the next 13 years of his tenure. Even his subsequent governments did nothing to abolish or amend this archaic and ambiguous law.

Should we retain this law or abolish it? Curiously, both supporters and opponents of this law have equally strong arguments in their favours. While the supporters give emphasis on "integrity and security" of the nation, the op-

ponents emphasise on "liberty" of the individual. The former argues that the security, unity and integrity of the nation is the supreme concern, and it can't be compromised or sacrificed for the sake of freedom of expression of individual citizens. They also argue that the constitutionally guaranteed right to freedom of expression is not absolute, and according to Article 19(2) it can be reasonably restricted in the interest of sovereignty, integrity and security of the nation.

Their opponents, with equal vigour, argue that freedom of expression is the soul of democracy, sine qua non for a modern-civilised society, and indispensable for all intellectual and artistic creations. They consider this law a serious threat to freedom of expression, and allege that this ambiguous and archaic law is more abused than used, mostly to harass and intimidate the political or ideological rivals of the party/people in power. That's why most of the accused of this "crime" are hardly convicted by the courts of law.

The constitutionality and legality of sedition law have been challenged before the Supreme Court several times, but the apex court has declined to scrap this law with the logic that mere abuse of a law is no ground for its abolition. In the landmark Kedar Nath Singh Vs State of Bihar case (1962), the 5-Judge Constitution Bench of the SC upheld the constitutional validity of the sedition law, with the explanation that sedition charge can be made only when there is incitement to violence in speech or writing, or there is intention to disturb law and order.

Justifying its necessity, the SC explains in this judgement that crime of sedition is crime against the State and this law is intended to protect the very existence of the State. This logic seems to be more infallible now in view of the changed circumstances. So we must retain this law, but of course, with proper reforms.

The writer is an advocate and columnist.

## SPECTRUM FOOD SECURITY

# Unravelling India's food paradox

India is a country with rich agricultural heritage, which has made remarkable strides in food production. As per the NSSO's latest annual Periodical Labour Force Survey for 2021-22, the farm sector's share in India's employed labour force is 45.5%. No wonder, India produces more food than it requires for thriving! The food grain production in India touched a record quantity of 323.55 million tonnes in 2022-23. Yet in the 2022 Global Hunger Index, India fared poorly with a rank of 107th out of 121 countries scoring merely 29.1 on a 100-point scale. India faces a paradoxical challenge of grappling with food insecurity despite its significant over-production. As per the UN Food Waste Index Report, 2021, India wasted 50 kilos of food per person per year. Before shedding light on the factors contributing to India's food security conundrum, let us have a look at some more statistics.



Swastik Suman Satapathy

DESPITE RECORD-BREAKING FARM OUTPUT, INDIA CONTINUING TO SUFFER FROM FOOD INSECURITY HIGHLIGHTS A CRITICAL DISCREPANCY BETWEEN PRODUCTION AND ACCESS

India has one of the highest rates of malnutrition in the world. As per the last National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), around 37.9% of children under the age of five in India are stunted (low height for age), 20.8% are wasted (low weight for height), and 35.7% are underweight. The State of Food Security

and Nutrition in the World 2021 report estimated 189.2 million people in India to be undernourished, accounting for 13.4% of the total world population. As per the last available government data on per capita calorie intake presented in the Parliament, people in rural areas consume 2,233 kcal a day, while those in urban take 2,206 kcal, which are lower than the recommended daily dietary allowance of 2,320 kcal.

Despite record-breaking farm output, India continuing to suffer from food insecurity highlights a critical discrepancy between production and access. The wastage of food is rampant from the point of production to the point of distribution. The system of agricultural marketing suffers from several defects. Lack of warehouse is a major infrastructural concern in rural areas, in absence of which farmers are compelled to store products in kutchha storehouses which lead to considerable wastage. Approximately 1.5% of the products get rotten in this process rendering them unfit for human consumption. Due to this reason, supply in rural markets increases substantially and farmers fail to get fair price for their products. Along with post-harvest management and ware-

housing, transportation network also plays a key role in ensuring that food reaches those in need. Many villages in rural India are not yet joined by railways and pucca roads to the mandis and transportation of farm produce on slow moving vehicles is often not feasible to carry them to far-off places.

The socio-economic disparities among the regions also contribute to unequal access to food. If we see the history of India, the green revolution of 1960s which modernised agriculture through technology adoption primarily benefited Punjab, Haryana and UP leaving other parts mostly unaffected. Food insecurity is also not evenly distributed across India where some states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh face higher levels of food insecurity compared to other states. So, poverty continues to affect access of the under-privileged section to food. Apart from the above-mentioned factors, low farmer income, lack of crop diversification, lack of financial support mechanism to safeguard livelihood and land fragmentation also contribute to the misery.

It is not that the government is not making efforts to curb these problems. Starting from AG-

MARKNET to strengthen marketing network to establishing cold storages at district level and mid-day meal scheme in schools, successive governments have introduced several policies. However, the effect is not as visible as they should be after 76 years of Independence. The GHI ranking us lower than Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan is embarrassing for us and calls for serious action. It is high time food insecurity in India, particularly malnutrition among children, is addressed properly. As citizens we can also serve the cause and extend help to our citizens by simply not wasting food in our day to day lives.

India's struggle with food security, despite its impressive agricultural production, calls for a comprehensive approach that addresses systemic challenges. By focusing on improving storage and distribution, reducing inequality, implementing farmer-friendly policies, building resilience to climate change, India can make significant strides towards a future where food security is a reality for all its citizens.

The writer is Assistant Professor of Commerce, Govt. Model Degree College, Nuapada.

## Support EV industry

Sir, The recent decision made by the Indian government to reduce subsidies for electric two-wheeler manufacturers has raised concerns among proponents of clean fuel and sustainable transportation. The subsidy amount for electric two-wheelers has been decreased from 40% to 15% of the ex-factory price, effective from June 1. This move has left the entire industry in a precarious position and is likely to impede the mass adoption of electric mobility. The current market size of the Indian electric two-wheeler industry stands at \$890 million in 2022 and is projected to reach \$6 billion by 2030. Unfortunately, the sudden and substantial cuts in subsidies are likely to lead to a major decline in sales, which will have a detrimental effect on the entire industry. It also poses long-term challenges for achieving India's clean energy and emission reduction goals through increased EV penetration. India should look to successful models implemented in countries like China, United States and some European nations, which provide more substantial subsidies to promote faster adoption of EVs. The Indian government should reconsider its decision and extend the FAME (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles) subsidy support to ensure sustained growth in the EV industry. Additionally, government must emphasize domestic manufacturing of electric vehicles and their components along with building a robust, localized EV ecosystem. India has the potential to become a global leader in clean and sustainable transportation but this vision can only be achieved by maintaining a favourable policy environment, incentivising domestic manufacturing and providing long-term support to the industry.

Bishal Kumar Saha, MURSHIDABAD

## Social media impact

Sir, Social media has changed our lives, for better or for worse is up for debate. A change that social media has bought is not talked about much. It is the change in the pattern of our decision-making. Earlier, before the tsunami of social media, decision-making or choosing the right thing for us was not difficult as it is now. With the coming of social media and with our droopy heads glued to the screens of our mobiles and tablets we get very less time for self-reflection which is a matter of concern. Not being able to self-reflect can also lead to serious mental depression as we will be bogged down by our choices in life. Life is all about choices, the better we make, the happier we are. The sooner we realize this, the better.

Noopur Baruah, TEZPUR

## 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

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# national



The people of the Assam will join hands to plant 100 lakh saplings on Gandhi Jayanti this year  
HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CHIEF MINISTER

### AIMING HIGH

Haryana is set to host a two-day G-20 conference on crime and security from July 13 in Gurugram amid the presence of over 600 delegates. Chief Secretary Sanjeev Kaushal Thursday reviewed the preparations for the summit in collaboration with officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the state government



### of the day quote

The interests of common people should be protected. I am sure the situation will change if a majority of the people and state government adopt a wise approach. I am sure this picture will change

SHARAD PAWAR | NCP CHIEF

After 60 years, we should wipe out signs of the Portuguese. We need to start afresh. We are celebrating the 75th year of India's Independence...how Goa should be and what Goa is going to be when India celebrates 100 years of independence, we have started thinking of it now

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CHIEF MINISTER

If I am at fault anywhere I apologise for the same but we must all unite to defeat the forces who want to weaken the 'Panth'

SUKHJIR SINGH BADAL | SAD CHIEF



BEATING THE HEAT: A tiger cools off in a pond inside the enclosure of Maharajbagh Zoo on a hot day in Nagpur, Maharashtra

### Girl rescued from borewell in MP dies

Sehore (MP): A two-and-a-half-year-old girl, who fell into a 300-foot borewell in Sehore district of Madhya Pradesh, was pulled out by rescuers Thursday evening after more than 52 hours of efforts, but was declared dead at a hospital soon later, officials said. A police official said on the condition of anonymity that the girl already died in the borewell and when she was pulled out, her body was found decomposing. The girl - Srishti - had fallen into the borewell in Mungavali village around 1 pm on Tuesday. She was pulled out at 5.30 pm Thursday and was rushed to the district hospital in an ambulance for a check-up, where she was declared dead, another official said.

## Monsoon arrives in Kerala

The southwest monsoon normally sets in over Kerala June 1 with a standard deviation of about seven days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 8: The southwest monsoon hit India Thursday with its onset over Kerala, a week later than normal, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) announced.

Meteorologists earlier said Cyclone 'Biparjoy' had been impacting the intensity of the monsoon and that its onset over Kerala would be "mild". In a statement Thursday, the IMD said, "The southwest monsoon has set in over Kerala today, June 8."

"The monsoon has advanced into remaining parts of south Arabian Sea and some parts of central Arabian Sea, entire Lakshadweep area, most parts of Kerala, most parts of south Tamil Nadu, remaining parts of Comorin area, Gulf of Mannar and some more parts of southwest, central and north-east Bay of Bengal today," it added. The southwest monsoon arrived in the southern state on May 29 last year, June 3 in 2021, June 1 in 2020, June 8 in 2019 and May 29 in 2018.

Research shows a delay in the monsoon onset over Kerala (MOK)



Dark clouds cover the city skyline during the onset of monsoon over Kerala

does not necessarily mean a delay in the monsoon onset over north-west India. However, a delay in the MOK is generally associated with a delay in onset at least over the southern states and Mumbai. Scientists say a delayed MOK also does not impact the total rainfall over the country during the season. India is expected to get normal rainfall during the southwest monsoon season despite the evolving El Nino conditions, the IMD had earlier said.

Northwest India is expected to see normal to below-normal rainfall. East and northeast, central, and south peninsula are expected to

## Thane 'house of horror' reveals secrets

THE ACCUSED KEPT THE WOMAN'S CHOPPED BODY PARTS IN THREE BUCKETS IN THEIR RENTED FLAT IN MIRA ROAD (EAST), AND TRIED TO HIDE THE STENCH BY SPRAYING ROOM FRESHENER

AGENCIES

Thane, June 8: A Thane court Thursday sent Manoj Sane, who allegedly killed his live-in partner at their rented flat in Mira Road town, to police custody till June 16 even as it emerged that he is reportedly suffering from AIDS, while his "house of horror" revealed more macabre secrets.

Sane, 56, was arrested late Wednesday after he tried to flee from a police team that barged into his flat following complaints from the neighbours of a stench emanating from his home for the past couple of days.

In a new twist, Sane has claimed to the investigators that the victim - his live-in partner, Saraswati Vaidya, 32, had allegedly consumed poison and committed suicide, but the police have rubbished the claims as an attempt to "mislead" the probe into the mind-numbing crime.

Continuing its probe, the police discovered that the flat in which the chilling crime was committed is a veritable "house of horrors" bang in the midst of a quiet and unsuspecting middle-class residential locality.

There were at least three buckets stuffed with body parts of the victim, lots of blood splattered on the floor, walls and the bathroom, an electric saw, sharp knives, a mixer-grinder and a pressure cooker, a nauseating stench emanating from there, which Sane tried to "kill" by spraying lots of air-



Police personnel take 56-year-old accused Manoj Sane into custody

According to FIR registered by the police, Sane not only boiled body pieces in a pressure cooker and an utensil after cutting them, but also roasted them and put in a bucket and tub

It is suspected the murder took place June 4, but came to light June 7

Neighbours told the police Sane had been feeding stray dogs for the past few days, something he had never done before

fresheners. Police have also recovered some bottles of oil, which he purportedly used to smear on the body parts to delay the stench, and later surreptitiously disposed off many pieces.

He allegedly boiled some body parts in a cooker and fed them to stray dogs in the vicinity and is also suspected to have dumped

some pieces into the nearby mangroves. Now, Sane - charged with murder, conspiracy, attempt to destroy evidence, etc - is said to be suffering from HIV but police are awaiting his medical report for further verification.

The police are also waiting for the forensic reports on the woman's body parts and other evidence the accused attempted to unsuccessfully destroy in his nearly-barren 7th floor flat in Akashdeep Building in Geeta Nagar area of Mira Road, a town that developed 35 years ago.

The exact motives of the chilling murder are yet to be ascertained, but Sane, who appears unrepentant, is being grilled by police teams.

Rattled by the revelations, the

### Women's panel demands full probe

Mumbai/Thane: The Maharashtra State Commission for Women (MSCW) took a strong note of the rape-cum-murder of an 18-year-old girl in a government-run Mumbai hostel and the gory killing of a 32-year-old woman in Thane by her live-in partner, here Thursday. Meanwhile, Nationalist Congress Party MP Supriya Sule sought death sentence for the accused live-in partner. MSCW Chairperson Rupali Chakankar said that these shocking incidents have shaken entire Maharashtra, and demanded strong action from the Mumbai Police and Mira Bhayander-Vasai Virar (MBVV) Police in the matters.

shaken residents in Mira Road discuss the sensational case in hushed tones, and some recall the couple as aloof, not mingling with the people around them and mostly keeping to themselves. The inhuman murder - coming to light barely 24 hours after the brutal rape-cum-murder of an Akola girl in a government hostel in Mumbai - has created an uproar in political circles and rage among the masses and an outpour of angst on the social media.

The incident has uncanny similarities to the Shradha Walkar murder case that stunned the country last year

## 'Filed false sexual harassment allegations against WFI chief'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 8: The father of the minor wrestler told PTI Thursday that they deliberately filed a false police complaint of sexual harassment against WFI chief because they wanted to get back at him for the perceived injustice against the girl.

The startling admission by the father substantially weakens the case against Brij Bhusha Sharan Singh who has relentlessly faced protest for the past six months by wrestlers, who have accused him of sexual harassment. The complaint by the minor wrestler has also led to investigation under POCSO Act.

"It's better that truth comes out now instead of court," he told PTI when asked why he is changing his story now. "Now that interactions have

started, the government has promised fair enquiry into my daughter's defeat (in Asian U17 championship trials) last year, so it is also my duty that I rectify my mistake," he said.

He also provided elaborated explanation for the origin of his and his daughter's animosity against Singh, who has vehemently denied the sexual harassment allegations, including against the minor. The origin of the animosity goes back to the 2022 Under 17 Asian Championship trials in Lucknow when the minor lost the final and missed out on selection to the Indian team. They blamed Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh for the referee's decision. "I was filled with rage my child's one-year hard work had gone down the drain because of that referee's decision in final and I decided to take revenge," he said.

### AI to refund ticket fare to all 216 passengers

New Delhi: The Tata-owned Air India Thursday said that the airline will fully refund ticket fare to 216 passengers of a Delhi-San Francisco flight that made an unscheduled two-day stop at Magadan in Russia after the aeroplane developed a technical issue. "We will fully refund the fare for the journey and, in addition, provide a voucher for future travel to the passengers on Air India," senior airline executive Rajesh Dogra said, while apologising to the passengers in a letter. On Tuesday, Air India flight AI173, from Delhi to San Francisco, was forced to divert and make an emergency landing at Magadan airport due to a technical issue with one of its engines. Alternate flight AI173D was sent to Magadan airport from Mumbai by the airline June 7.

## Miss World 2023 competition returns to India after 27 yrs

INDIA HAD LAST HOSTED THE INTERNATIONAL PAGEANT IN 1996

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 8: India is set to host the Miss World 2023 competition, as the coveted international beauty pageant makes its return to the country after nearly three decades. The much anticipated 71st edition of Miss World is expected to take place in November this year, the final dates of which are yet to be ascertained.

"I am delighted to announce India as the new home of the 71st Miss World Final... We cannot wait to share your unique and diverse culture, world class attractions and breathtaking locations with the rest of the world. "The 71st Miss World 2023 will showcase the Achievements

of 130 National champions in their one-month journey across 'Incredible India' as we present the 71st and most spectacular Miss World final ever," said Julia Morley, chairperson and CEO of Miss World organization at a press

The month-long event, which would witness contestants from over 130 countries, will feature a series of rigorous competitions, including talent showcases, sports challenges, and charitable initiatives - all aimed at highlighting the qualities that make them ambassadors of change.

The reigning Miss World, Karolina Bielawska of Poland, who is currently in India spreading the word about the beauty competi-



tion, said she is excited to hand over her crown in this "beautiful country" which stands for the same values as Miss World. "India has the greatest hospital-

India has won the prestigious title six times -- Reita Faria (1966), Aishwarya Rai (1994), Diana Hayden (1997), Yukta Mookhey (1999), Priyanka Chopra (2000), and Manushi Chillar (2017)

ity in the entire world. It is my second time here .. And you make me feel like home. You stand for the same values.. Diversity, unity.. Your core values are family, respect, love,

kindness and this is something that we would love to show to the world. There is so much more to see here, and bringing the whole world here for a month and showing everything that India has to offer is the best idea," said the Miss World 2022.

Equally excited and looking forward to India hosting the event was the current Miss India World Sini Shetty, who'll represent the country in the high-octane competition.

"I am so excited to meet all my sisters across the globe to welcome them to India to show them what India truly stands for, what India is, what is the diversity in India... I am really excited and looking forward to this journey. I hope you guys have the best time here in India," she said.

EAST COAST RAILWAY E-PROCUREMENT SYSTEMS Tender Notice No. Sr. DMM/KUR/EP/2023-24/04, Dated : 05.06.2023

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# Samudrayaan project on track: Rijiju

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, June 8: India's mission to send a manned submersible vehicle to a depth of 6,000 metres to explore the sea, as part of the Samudrayaan project, is progressing as scheduled and the vehicle will be ready soon, Union Minister for Earth Sciences Kiren Rijiju said Thursday.

The indigenous mission, which the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) here is working on, will involve three people going to a depth of 6,000 metres under the sea in the submersible vehicle called 'Matsya 6000'. "The Samudrayaan, comprising manned and unmanned exploration, is a very critical effort started by the ministry of earth sciences. The unmanned mission has gone beyond 7,000 metres, while the submersible for the manned mission is under construction," the minister said.

"I will be overseeing the progress of the construction with our scientists and engineers. I hope we will complete it on time," the minister told reporters here after speaking at the World Ocean Day celebrations at NIOT.

He said India will have to play a critical and leadership role in exploration of the ocean and develop resources in a sustainable manner for a balanced ecosystem. "Similar to space exploration, we need to go deeper into the ocean and do research. We must be prepared to go



Union Minister of Earth Sciences Kiren Rijiju visits Ocean Research Vessel 'Sagar Nidhi' at the Chennai Port, Thursday

much deeper and make India proud... Life in the ocean and life on the land are directly connected," Rijiju said at the event and called upon people to rededicate themselves on World Ocean Day to contribute in a much better way to humanity.

"We must build our future more secure and enrich ourselves with better knowledge systems, live with dignity and respect nature. God has been kind to us. Whatever has been gifted to us through nature must be preserved," the minister said.

Rijiju, who earlier in the day launched a coastal cleaning drive

at Besant Nagar here, said the initiative would send out a strong positive message that the government is concerned about the lives on land as well as the ocean.

He called upon the NIOT scientists to showcase their research outcomes, as these are basically meant to benefit the people. Success stories should be told to people in a better and candid manner, he added. He regretted that the blue economy's contribution to the national GDP is less than 10 per cent.

"We are underperforming. Smaller countries with shorter

coastlines have larger contributions to their national economy. This means India will have to ensure that oceans do not remain as a vast potent canvas but utilise the resources in the best possible manner," he said.

Secretary of Ministry of Earth Sciences M Ravichandran, Director of NIOT G A Ramadoss, Rear Admiral of Indian Navy Ravi Kumar Dhingra, NSS volunteers as well as representatives of the Norwegian Embassy along with the public participated in the beach cleaning drive.

# BJP 'scared' of facing united opposition in 2024: Tejashwi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, June 8: Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav Thursday claimed that the BJP was "scared" of fighting the 2024 Lok Sabha polls in which it may have to face a united opposition.

The RJD leader was responding to questions from journalists about remarks of some BJP leaders who have sought to make light of the conclave of opposition parties to be held in Patna on June 23.

"It is not for the BJP to decide what impact the opposition conclave is going to have. They are scared of facing the Lok Sabha polls. They recently lost assembly elections in Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka. They are starting at a series of defeats in states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi and Haryana," claimed Yadav.

Notably Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the JD(U)'s supreme leader, who dumped the BJP last year, has since been advocating a "united opposition" to take on the NDA in the Lok Sabha polls.

Yadav and JD(U) national president Rajiv Ranjan Singh Lalan had on Wednesday announced that the opposition parties' conclave will be held on June 23 and leaders as diverse as Rahul Gandhi, Arvind



**It is not for the BJP to decide what impact the opposition conclave is going to have. They are scared of facing the Lok Sabha polls. They recently lost Assembly elections in Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka. They are starting at a series of defeats in states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi and Haryana**

TEJASHWI YADAV | BIHAR DEPUTY CM

Kejriwal, Mamata Banerjee and Sitaram Yechury have given their assent to attend the meeting.

Yadav said "about 15 parties" will be represented at the June 23 meet. However, when asked about Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) founder and Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, he said, "We have not spoken to him so far". Notably, Rao had flown down to Patna last year, shortly after Nitish Kumar's exit from the NDA, and endorsed the latter's pitch for national unity.

However, there have been apprehensions that the Telangana CM might flinch from joining any formation of which the Congress, currently his principal rival in the

state, was a part.

Moreover, of late the BRS has dropped ample hints that instead of becoming a part of a "united opposition" it would try to showcase the "Telangana model". Yadav, who spoke to journalists outside the regional passport office here, was accompanied by his wife Rajyashri and three months old daughter Katyayani. He said that he was at the passport office to get documents prepared for the child.

Meanwhile, state-level leaders of the RJD reached the JD(U) office, situated right across the road on the city's Birchand Patel Marg, understandably to discuss preparations to be made for the June 23 mega event.

# BUILT IN 1862, ABDUL BARI BRIDGE DETERIORATING



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, June 8: After the under-construction bridge collapsed in Bihar's Bhagalpur on June 4, concerns are rising about a number of old bridges, some of which are British-era ones, including the 161-year-old Abdul Bari bridge in Bhojpur district.

The rail-cum-road bridge connects Patna district at Parev village and Koilwar of Bhojpur district on the Sone River. The Abdul Bari Pul was constructed in 1862. Generally, the department of railways puts over 100-year-old bridges in the dangerous category list.

In 2015, some intellectuals of the region had written a letter to the then Union railway minister and brought into the notice its de-

**THE RAIL-CUM-ROAD BRIDGE CONNECTS PATNA DISTRICT AT PAREV VILLAGE AND KOILWAR OF BHOJPUR DISTRICT ON THE SONE RIVER**

terioration. However, no major initiative was taken except for minor rectifications and painting jobs.

The NHAI constructed a six lane road bridge parallel to this

bridge to take the load of the Abdul Bari bridge. But, the Railways has done nothing on its part and more than six dozen trains cross over it every day at slow speed.

The Sone River is known for sand mining, which also takes place near the bridge, thus threatening the base of the pillars.

Local villagers claim that a new rail bridge at this place is badly needed.

Besides, old Railways over-bridges in Kaimur district are also in deteriorating conditions. These are - Durgavati-Karanpura, Mohania-Patna bridge, Mohania-Dadwa bridge and Kudra Lalpur bridge. Heavily loaded trucks frequently ply on these bridges despite the district administration having put up signboards on either side of the bridges.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, June 8: After the collapse of the four-lane Sultanganj-Aguwani Ghat Bridge in Bhagalpur, the Bihar Engineering Services Association (BESA) has demanded a structural audit of all recently completed and under-construction bridges in the state.

The BESA, which is an association of members of the Bihar Engineering Services as well as other state government undertakings, said the audit will identify flaws, weaknesses and deficiencies, if any, in the structures of all recently completed and under-construction bridges.

The Khagaria side of the bridge collapsed Sunday around 14 months after its Sultanganj side pillar number 5 had fallen on April 30 last year. BESA general secretary Rakesh Kumar said, "We must learn lessons from such incidents. A team of BESA members is collecting all relevant information from the ground. We will soon come out with our own report."

"We, however, demand that the state government orders structural audit of all completed and under-construction bridges in the state," he said. He said the audit will identify the flaws, weaknesses and deficiencies, if any.

The exercise will also safeguard properties and human lives, besides enhancing the longevity of structures, Kumar said. Commenting on the Bihar government's decision to suspend the executive engineer of Khagaria division following the incident, he said, "The BESA is not questioning the government's action... But why no action was taken against the authority engineer of the project? It is the responsibility of the contractor and the authority engineer



**We must learn lessons from such incidents. A team of BESA members is collecting all relevant information from the ground. We will soon come out with our own report**

RAKESH KUMAR  
BESA GENERAL SECRETARY

The Khagaria side of the bridge collapsed Sunday around 14 months after its Sultanganj side pillar number 5 had fallen on April 30 last year

The Haryana-based company, which was awarded the contract, has already been served with a show-cause notice by the Bihar Rajya Pul Nirman Nigam and asked to give its reply within 15 days of the incident

for any lapses in execution and quality work at the site."

"There are several questions that need to be answered," he said, adding that the body also demands specialised training for engineers before engaging them in the construction of bridges involving modern technology and high-technology construction techniques.

The Haryana-based company, which was awarded the contract, has already been served with a show-cause notice by the Bihar Rajya Pul Nirman Nigam (BRPNN) and asked to give its reply within 15 days of the incident.

The department concerned also suspended the executive engineer for his failure to keep an eye on the quality of the work. In a statement issued on Monday, the Canadian design and engineering firm behind the bridge, McElhanney, had said,

"McElhanney is aware of the partial collapse of the Aguanj-Sultanganj Ghat Bridge over Ganga River in India. We are deeply concerned about the safety and well-being of all affected by this incident and will cooperate with any investigation related to this incident. While we are unable to comment on the specifics of the incident at this time, we are committed to our core values of safety and care of our communities."

The under-construction bridge, a portion of which collapsed on Sunday, involved a cost of over Rs 1,700 crore and was supposed to be completed by 2019. The foundation stone of the structure was laid in February 2014 by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

Soon after the collapse, Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav had said that the state gov-

ernment was anyway planning to demolish the under-construction bridge because of structural flaws. "It may be recalled that a portion of this bridge had collapsed on April 30 last year. We had, thereafter, approached IIT-Roorkee, which is esteemed for its expertise in construction matters, to conduct a study. It is yet to come up with a final report but experts who had studied the structure had informed us that there were serious defects," Yadav had said.

However, according to the latest data uploaded by the BRPNN on its website on May 29, the administrative approval of the project was given on November 14, 2013 by the then Nitish Kumar-led Bihar government and the project was supposed to be completed by November 2019, later rescheduled to June 30, 2023.

## PLASTIC WASTE IN ELEPHANT DUNG

# TN's Valparai municipality in the dock

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, June 8: The Valparai municipality in Tamil Nadu is in the dock after plastic waste was found in the dung of wild elephants in Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR).

Forest department field staff and elephant researchers found plastic waste in more places like Rottikadai and Nallamudi Pooncholai viewpoints in the ATR.

It may be noted that in September 2022, ATR officials had requested the Valparai municipality to collect garbage and process it fast as food waste would attract wild animals, including elephants and monkeys.

Sources in the Anamalai Tiger Reserve told IANS that the Valparai municipality did not pay heed to the request made by the ATR and hence several wild animals, including elephants used to feed on the food wastes left by humans

Forest department field staff and elephant researchers found plastic waste in more places like Rottikadai and Nallamudi Pooncholai viewpoints in the Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR)



leading to the presence of plastic granules in their stomach.

The presence of plastic granules in elephant dung, according to the forest department, is critical to the health of these pachyderms and urged the municipality to take action at the earliest to process waste garbage at source.

It may be noted that in September 2022, ATR officials had requested the Valparai municipality to collect garbage and process it fast as food waste would attract wild animals, including elephants and monkeys

The lack of segregating the plastic waste from the garbage dumped is another reason for the presence of plastic granules in the stomach of the elephants.

G. Manikantan, Forest Range Officer, Valparai told media persons that the presence of plastic waste in elephant dung is a reality, and added that Valparai municipality has to adhere to solid waste management techniques.

The Valparai municipality Chairman, Alagu Sundaram while speaking to IANS said that the municipality was buying a machine to shred plastics from the waste generated. He also said that door to door waste collection has commenced in the municipality.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, June 8: The Tamil Nadu forest department has appointed a five-member research team for the protection and conservation of the state animal, Nilgiri tahr.

According to the department, the team will conduct a month-long field visits to Nilgiri tahr habitats across the state and will interact with local NGOs and people who are involved in the conservation of the animal.

The team will function from the department's campus in Coimbatore North till a new building is constructed. S. Balasubramanian, Field Director of the Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR), briefed the research team on the nature and scope of the ambitious Nilgiris Tahr Project, which the state government launched in 2022.

GIS application will be used for



tracking the animal population and senior WWF scientists who were present during the briefing explained the usage of technology in mapping the animal population.

The team is headed by the research coordinator and senior scientist S. Priyanka and comprises B. Subbaiyan (Ph.D Botany), S. Gokul Prasath (Msc. Zoology), N. Rajesh Kumar (Msc Environmental Science) and K. Manigandan (Msc Wildlife Biology).





They (BJP government) send the ED before elections but we are not afraid. Let the ED do its work, we do not have any problem ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

WB PANCHAYAT ELECTION JULY 8

The three-tier panchayat polls in West Bengal will be held on July 8, State Election Commissioner Rajiva Sinha said. The polls for the village councils will be held in a single day and the last day for filing nominations will be June 15



of the day quote

Rahul Gandhi has a habit of criticising the country and making comments on our politics whenever he goes abroad. The world is looking at us and what the world is seeing? Elections are held in the country and sometimes one party wins and at times the other party wins S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

Whether it is Covid Vaccination, telemedicine, hospital registration, or accessing health records, healthcare now is at the fingertips of citizens AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

There will be an announcement soon about the space agency's testing facility with regard to the hypersonic air breathing vehicle 'Hava' S SOMANATH | ISRO CHAIRMAN

SHORT TAKES

BJP supporter held for spreading fake news

Chennai: The Tamil Nadu Police Thursday arrested an advocate, who is a supporter of the BJP, for spreading false information regarding the Odisha train accident. Advocate Senthil Kumar, a supporter of BJP in Thuckalay in Kanniyakumari district, had tweeted that Bahanaga Bazaar railway station master Mohammed Sheriff Ahmed went underground after the tragic train accident and that he should be questioned. Inquiries revealed that one SB Mohanty was on duty as Station Superintendent at the time of the accident and one SK Patnayak was the station manager.

Zomato deletes 'Kachra' campaign

New Delhi: Apologising for unintentionally hurting sentiments, restaurant aggregator Zomato on Thursday withdrew an ad after it came under fire for depicting the actor who played the Dalit character Kachra in the film "Lagaan" as items made of recycled waste. The ad, which draws a link between the character Kachra with 'kachra', the Hindi word for garbage, was aired on World Environment Day June 5.

J'khand: NIA raids seven locations

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has conducted searches at seven locations in Jharkhand and Bihar in connection with a brutal murder by cadres of the CPI (Maoist), a banned terrorist organisation, about five years ago, an official said Thursday. The victim, Naresh Singh Bhokta, was abducted and killed on the night of November 2, 2018, after being labelled as a police informer by the top leadership and Naxal cadres of CPI (Maoist) at a so-called 'Jan Adalat' (public hearing) convened by the banned terrorist outfit. His body was found near Badhai Bigha village in Madanpur police station area in Aurangabad district, Bihar.

20 children fall ill after eating poisonous fruit

Jalpaiguri(WB): At least 20 children fell ill after eating poisonous fruit in West Bengal's Darjeeling district, officials said Thursday. The children were playing in a field at Monirom Jot village on Wednesday evening when they found the fruit and ate it Wednesday evening, they said. After eating the fruit they started vomiting and were rushed to Naxalbari Hospital. The condition of the 20 children was stated to be stable, they said.

BRAMPTON EVENT

Not good for bilateral ties: India to Canada



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 8: India Thursday warned Canada against giving space to separatists and extremists elements, saying it was not good for the bilateral ties, days after a video of a float, depicting the assassination of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, at a parade in Brampton went viral on social media.

At a media briefing, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said he has a similar message to the United Kingdom and Australia against allowing pro-Khalistani elements to operate from their territories.

On the issue of around 700 Indian students facing deportation from Canada due to fraudulent admissions, the external affairs minister said that India is in touch with Canada over it.

Asked about the Brampton event, the minister said, "I think there is a bigger issue involved. And the bigger issue involved really is the space that Canada has continuously and frankly, we are at a loss to understand other than the requirements of vote bank politics, why anybody would do this."

"Because if you look at their history, you would imagine that they learn from history and they

A MASSIVE CONTROVERSY HAS ERUPTED OVER A SOCIAL MEDIA VIDEO OF A PARADE FLOAT DEPICTING LATE PRIME MINISTER INDIRA GANDHI'S ASSASSINATION IN CANADA

THE PARADE BY PRO-KHALISTANI RADICALS IN BRAMPTON CITY OF THE NORTH AMERICAN COUNTRY, WHICH HAS WITNESSED A RISE IN ANTI-INDIA ELEMENTS RECENTLY

would not like to repeat that history. It is not only one incident, however egregious it may be," Jaishankar said.

"I think there is a larger underlying issue about the space which is given to separatists, to extremists, to people who advocate violence and I think it is not good for relationships and not good for Canada," he added.

A video has emerged on social media that showed a float depicting the assassination of Indira Gandhi, in what appeared to be a glorification of violence by Sikh separatists. It was reportedly part of a parade that was organised by some Khalistani elements in Brampton.

Asked about reports of the Canadian NSA criticising India. For commenting on Canada's in-

ternal matter, Jaishankar used a Hindi phrase.

"The phrase that came to mind is actually a Hindi phrase which is 'Ulta Chor Kotwal Ko Date' (the pot calling the kettle black). If anybody has a complaint, we have a complaint about Canada...I was very perplexed by what I heard," he said. Canadian High Commissioner in India Cameron MacKay tweeted that there is no place in Canada for "hate or for the glorification of violence".

"I am appalled by reports of an event in Canada that celebrated the assassination of late Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. There is no place in Canada for hate or for the glorification of violence. I categorically condemn these activities," he said. On the activities of Khalistani elements, Jaishankar said India has issues in the UK and Australia as well, apart from Canada.

On some Indian students facing deportation from Canada over charges that they did not study in the colleges they applied for, Jaishankar said India has taken up the issue with Canadian authorities. "If there were people who misled them (the students), the culpable parties should be acted upon. It is unfair to punish a student who undertook education in good faith," he said.

The external affairs minister said the Canadian prime minister has also made a statement in the House of Commons on the issue. "We are in touch with Canada on the issue," he said.

Meanwhile, the Congress leader and former Union minister Milind Deora shared the purported video on Twitter and said, "as an Indian, I'm appalled by the 5 km-long parade which took place in the city of Brampton, Canada, depicting the assassination of Indira Gandhi," he tweeted.

Kolhapur returning to normalcy, 36 held so far



Tension gripped the 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

Pune, June 8: The situation in Maharashtra's Kolhapur is gradually returning to normal, a day after violence 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, a senior police official said on Thursday.

At least 36 people have so far been arrested and cases registered in connection with the violence, he said. Businessmen opened their establishments and people were seen buying items of daily need from shops in Kolhapur city.

Tension gripped the 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". Wielding lathis, police Wednesday dispersed hundreds of protesters

after they hurled stones during a demonstration at Shivaji Chowk against the alleged use of Tipu Sultan's image. The situation was brought under control Wednesday afternoon, and district guardian minister Deepak Kesarkar held a meeting of a peace committee in the evening, Kolhapur Superintendent of Police Mahendra Pandit said. Members from various organisations and communities pledged to maintain peace in the city, he said.

"Precautionary measures have been taken, with police deployment in sensitive areas of the city and district along with the ongoing patrolling," he said. Asked about the situation in the city, Pandit said, "The situation is gradually returning to normal. Shops in the main market area have started reopening." He said three cases have been registered in connection with the riots that took place Wednesday. So far, 36 people have been arrested in connection with the violence, the official said. Additionally, five cases have been registered by police in the district pertaining to objectionable posts. Five persons, including juveniles, have been detained in two of these cases, the police said.

COAL CASE

ED questions Abhishek's wife



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, June 8: Senior TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee's wife Rujira was grilled by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) Thursday for nearly four hours in connection with the coal pilferage case, officials said.

The investigators had a three-page questionnaire for Rujira, who reached the ED office at CGO Complex around 12.40 pm.

"She (Rujira) was asked questions about certain accounts in foreign banks. Her statements were recorded," an ED official told PTI.

Asked about Rujira's questioning by the ED sleuths, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee declined to comment, stating that

Rujira would speak in case she felt there was any need. "Please, (since) it's my family matter and I do not want to talk about it. Rujira is a mature girl. If needed she will talk about it," Banerjee told reporters at the state secretariat.

Rujira was stopped at the Kolkata airport Monday when she attempted to board a flight to UAE with her two children. She was then served summons to appear before the agency at 11 am June 8.

However, she reached the CGO Complex around 12.40 pm along with her lawyer. She left the ED office around 4.20 pm following her questioning. Abhishek, the Chief Minister's nephew has alleged the questioning was an attempt at "harassing" his family and was aimed at halting his mass outreach campaign ahead of the panchayat elections in the state.

Meanwhile, the ED observed a notice to Abhishek, summoning him to appear before its sleuths June 13 in connection with the central agency's probe into the primary school jobs scam.



GIANT WAVES: High tidal waves crash on the shore at the Vizhinjam harbour in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala PTI/PHOTO

AAP, BJP get 3 seats each in MCD's standing committee poll

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 8: The Municipal Corporation of Delhi's standing committee will have three members each from the AAP and the BJP as the results of the poll held on February 24 to elect members of the key panel were declared Thursday. The results were declared days after the Delhi High Court set aside the decision of Mayor Shelly Oberoi to call for a repoll and directed her to declare forthwith the results of the poll.

Oberoi said following the court order, the result of the election for members of the standing committee has been declared.

"The AAP government of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is committed to form committees as soon as possible," she said. The names of the elected councillors were announced during a meeting of the civic body's House, according to an MCD notification.

Mohd Aamil Malik, Mohini and Raminder Kaur from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Kamaljeet Sehrawat, Gajender Singh Daral and Pankaj Luthra from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are the six councillors who have been elected to the standing committee of the MCD.

Although the AAP is the ruling party in the MCD, the results of the standing committee election could affect the working of the civic body since all the executive decisions are taken by the committee which now has equal members from both the parties. The high court's May 23 order came on petitions by BJP councillors Kamaljeet Sehrawat and Shikha Roy against the mayor's decision to order repoll to elect the members of the panel, amid the running feud between the saffron party and the AAP.

The petitioners had alleged that the mayor, who belongs to AAP and was the returning officer, wrongly invalidated one of the votes and interdicted the election process upon finding the results "politically unpalatable".

7 killed in MP road accident

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sidhi, June 8: Seven persons, including a 10-year-old child, were killed and two others injured when a speeding truck hit a jeep and a two-wheeler in Madhya Pradesh's Sidhi district Thursday, a police official said.

The accident took place near village Dol around 10 am after the truck driver tried to save a scooter that suddenly came in its way, said Sidhi Superintendent of Police (SP) Dr Ravindra Verma. However, the truck overturned, crushing the scooter and a jeep, he said.

Six occupants from the jeep and the two-wheeler rider died on the spot, the official said. Those in the jeep were relatives and part of a marriage party, he said.

The injured persons, including the helper of the truck, were admitted to the district hospital, the official said. The truck driver was arrested and was found to be in an inebriated condition, Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Anjulata Patle said.

Covid can cause brain cells to fuse: Study

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 8: Infection with the SARS-CoV-2 virus can cause brain cells to fuse, initiating malfunctions that lead to chronic neurological symptoms, according to a study.

SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, has been detected in the brains of people with "long Covid" months after their initial infection.

The new research, published in the journal Science Advances explored how SARS-CoV-2 alters the function of the nervous system. "We discovered Covid-19 causes neurons to undergo a cell fusion

process, which has not been seen before," said Professor Massimo Hilliard from The University of Queensland, Australia.

"After neuronal infection with SARS-CoV-2, the spike S protein becomes present in neurons, and once neurons fuse, they don't die. They either start firing synchronously, or they stop functioning altogether," Hilliard said.

The researcher likened the role of neurons to that of wires connecting switches to the lights in a kitchen and a bathroom. "Once fusion takes place, each switch either turns on both the kitchen and bathroom lights at the same time, or neither of them," Hilliard said.



"It's bad news for the two independent circuits," he added. The discovery offers a potential explanation for persistent neurological effects after a viral infection, the researchers said.

SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, has been detected in the brains of people with "long Covid" months after their initial infection

"In the current understanding of what happens when a virus enters the brain, there are two outcomes—either cell death or inflammation," said Ramon Martinez-Marmol from The University of Queensland. "But

we've shown a third possible outcome, which is neuronal fusion," Martinez-Marmol said.

The researchers noted that numerous viruses cause cell fusion in other tissues, but also infect the nervous system and could be causing the same problem there. "These viruses include HIV, rabies, Japanese encephalitis, measles, herpes simplex virus and Zika virus," Martinez-Marmol said.

"Our research reveals a new mechanism for the neurological events that happen during a viral infection. This is potentially a major cause of neurological diseases and clinical symptoms that is still unexplored," he added.



# international



**Australia's government plans legislation to ban swastikas and other Nazi symbols nationwide due to an increase in far-right activity**  
MARK DREYFUS | ATTORNEY-GENERAL OF AUSTRALIA

## POPE FRANCIS 'WELL, AWAKE & ALERT'

Pope Francis was in 'good general condition' Thursday, alert and breathing on his own following a three-hour operation to remove intestinal scar tissue and repair a hernia in his abdominal wall, the Vatican said



## of the day quote

If Europeans are to have faith in our Union, its institutions should be open and beyond reproach on ethics, transparency and integrity



URSULA VON DER LEYEN | PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

India and the US must work on making bilateral ties stronger and focus on collaboration on education and cultural fronts



SHRI THANDEKAR | INDIAN-AMERICAN CONGRESSMAN

It is necessary to increase contacts at all levels with a concrete and positive agenda in the direction of Turkey's full membership to the EU, which has great strategic value for Europe



RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN | TURKISH PRESIDENT

## 4 CHILDREN CRITICALLY HURT IN KNIFE ATTACK

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Annecy, (France), June 8: As bystanders screamed for help, a man with a knife stabbed four young children at a lakeside park in the French Alps on Thursday, assaulting at least one in a stroller repeatedly.

The children between 22 months and 3 years old suffered life-threatening injuries, and two adults also were wounded, authorities said.

A suspect, identified by police as a 31-year-old Syrian, was detained in connection with the horrific attack in the Alpine and lake-side town of Annecy. French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne said he had refugee status in Sweden.

A prosecutor leading the investigation said the man's motives were unknown but did not appear to be terrorism-related. The helplessness of the young victims and the savagery of the attack sickened France.

Lead prosecutor Line Bonnet-Mathis said all four children suffered life-threatening knife wounds. The youngest is 22 months old, two are age 2 and the oldest is 3, she said. Two of them were tourists, she said. One of the young victims is British, the prosecutor and British authorities said. There was confusion over the nationality of the other child who was not from France. Bonnet-Mathis said the

child was Dutch, but Germany's chancellor said one of the child victims was German.

One adult also suffered knife wounds and a second adult was hurt both with the attacker's knife and later by a shot fired by police as they were making the arrest, Bonnet-Mathis said. Video appearing to show the attack in and around a children's play park was posted on social media. The footage showed a man in dark glasses and with a blue scarf covering his head brandishing a knife, as people screamed for help.

The man appeared to shout "on name of Jesus Christ" as he waved his knife in the air, while people nearby could be heard screaming: "Police! Police!"

He slashed at a man carrying rucksacks who tried to approach him. Inside the enclosed play park, a panicked woman frantically pushed a stroller as the attacker approached, yelling "Help! Help!" and ramming the stroller into the barriers around the site in her terror.

She tried to fend off the attacker but couldn't keep him from leaning over the stroller and stabbing downward repeatedly. Afterward, the man strolled almost casually out of the park, letting himself out through a gate, with the man carrying two rucksacks still chasing after him.

French President Emmanuel Macron described the assault as an "attack of absolute cowardice."



## Bomb blast kills 11

IsLAMABAD: A bomb ripped through a memorial service in Afghanistan's northeastern Badakhshan province Thursday, killing at least 11 people, officials said. A former Taliban police official was among those killed and more than 30 were also wounded in the explosion near Nabawi Mosque, according to Abdul Nafi Takor, the Taliban-appointed spokesman for the interior ministry. There were concerns that the number of casualties could rise further as more information becomes available, Takor added. The bombing apparently targeted the memorial service for Nisar Ahmad Ahmadi, the deputy governor of Badakhshan who was killed in a car bombing on Tuesday. That attack in Faizabad, the capital of Badakhshan, also killed the deputy governor's driver and wounded 10 other people. Moazuddin Ahmadi, the Taliban official in charge of information and culture, confirmed Thursday's explosion and the killing of Safulah Samim, a former Taliban police chief in Baghlan.

## Wildfires burn across Canada with little relief in sight

REUTERS

Canada, June 8: Forest fires continued to burn across Canada Thursday as the country endured its worst-ever start to wildfire season, forcing thousands of people from their homes and sending a smoky haze billowing across US cities.

About 3.8 million hectares (9.4 million acres) have already burned, roughly 15 times the 10-year average, according to federal Minister of Emergency Preparedness Bill Blair. Warm, dry conditions were expected to persist in the months ahead.

Although wildfires are common in Canada, it is unusual for blazes to be burning simultaneously in the east and west, stretching firefighting resources and forcing the Canadian government to send in the mili-



India's President Droupadi Murmu being accorded a guard of honour in a ceremony at the Serbian Presidential Palace with full state honours, in Belgrade, Serbia, Thursday. President of Serbia Aleksandar Vucic is also seen. PTI PHOTO

## Russia shells flooded Ukrainian city

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kherson, June 8: Russian forces Thursday shelled a southern Ukrainian city that was inundated in a catastrophic dam collapse, Ukrainian officials said, forcing a suspension of some rescue work hours after President Volodymyr Zelenskyy travelled to the area to assess the damage.

At least five people have died, many are homeless, and tens of thousands are without drinking water after the Kakhovka dam's destruction. Ukraine accused Russia of blowing of the facility, which Moscow's forces controlled, while Russia said Ukraine bombarded it.

The ensuing flooding has ruined crops, displaced land mines, wrought widespread environmental damage, and set the stage for long-term electricity shortages. Exclusive drone footage captured by The Associated Press showed the ruined dam falling into the flooded river and hundreds of submerged homes, greenhouses and even a church. In Kherson city, the largest mu-



OFFICIALS SAY MORE THAN 6,000 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN EVACUATED FROM DOZENS OF INUNDATED CITIES, TOWNS AND VILLAGES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE RIVER. THE ENSUING FLOODING HAS RUINED CROPS, DISPLACED LAND MINES, WROUGHT WIDESPREAD ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE, AND SET THE STAGE FOR LONG-TERM ELECTRICITY SHORTAGES.

unicipality affected, repeated Russian shelling echoed overhead in the early afternoon not far from a square where emergency crews and volunteers were dispensing aid. Some evacuation points in the city were hit, wounding eight people, according to

Ukraine's Ministry of Internal Affairs. As shells landed in floodwaters, rescue workers temporarily suspended efforts to retrieve stranded residents and pets in an area that Zelenskyy had visited only hours earlier: "The strikes began during evacuation of the residents, whose houses were flooded," the

ministry said. "Russia has abandoned people in calamity in the occupied part of the Kherson region. It continues to prevent Ukraine from saving the most valuable — human lives."

The dam lay along Dnieper River, a pivotal waterway that forms part of the front line between Russian and Ukrainian forces. In recent weeks, Ukraine intensified shelling of Russian positions, signalling a long-expected counteroffensive could finally be getting underway. Kyiv has been silent about the start of any such campaign. Amid the fighting, both sides were coping with the fallout from the burst dam. On Thursday, Ukrainian rescue workers stepped up efforts to get drinking water, medical care and other support to beleaguered residents.

Zelenskyy travelled to Kherson to see the efforts firsthand. He visited an aid distribution point and a medical facility and ordered Ukrainian officials to provide a "fair valuation" of the devastation to help compensate residents, his office said in an online update.

## SHORT TAKES

### Imran granted protective bail

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistan high court Thursday granted protective bail to former premier Imran Khan in a case registered against him for the murder of a senior lawyer and reserved its verdict on bail petitions filed by Khan in eight other cases. Khan, 70, was named in the killing of Supreme Court lawyer Abdul Razzaq Shar, who was shot dead in Quetta on June 6 by unknown gunmen. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party chief filed a petition in the Islamabad High Court (IHC), where a division bench comprising IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the case.

### US announces aid for Syria, Iraq

DUBAI: Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Thursday that the US would provide nearly \$150 million in aid for areas in Syria and Iraq that were liberated from the Islamic State extremist group. He spoke at a ministerial conference hosted by Saudi Arabia on combating the group, which no longer controls any territory — but whose affiliates still carry out attacks across Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

### Fourteen injured

SEOUL: Fourteen people were injured Thursday after an escalator reversed at a subway station in South Korea, police said. The accident occurred at around 8.20 a.m. when the upwards escalator leading to exit 2 of Sunae Station on the Bundang Line reversed suddenly and went backward for several seconds, Yonhap News Agency quoted police and fire authorities as saying. Three people were transported to a hospital after sustaining injuries on the back and legs.

## PAK POLITICS

## PTI DEFECTORS LAUNCH NEW POLITICAL PARTY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, June 8: In a setback to Pakistan's beleaguered former Prime Minister Imran Khan, scores of disgruntled leaders Thursday launched a new political party — believed to be backed by the powerful military — to fight the general elections likely to be held in October.

Sugar baron and Khan's old friend Jahangir Khan Tareen, who is leading the group of leaders who quit the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party in the wake of May 9 attacks on military installations, announced the launch of the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) during a press conference in Lahore.

"We are laying the foundation of a new political party - Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party," said Tareen, flanked by former PTI leaders including Aleem Khan, Imran Ismail and others. Tareen, who played a major role in the formation of the Imran Khan-led government in 2018, said that he joined politics to play his role for the betterment of the country.

The millionaire parted ways with Khan when a money laundering case was registered against him during the PTI-led government. "We have gathered at one platform to make joint efforts to lift the country out of this quagmire," said Tareen, who was disqualified for life after the Supreme Court ruled in 2017 that he was found guilty in assets beyond means case.

He said that the country needed a political leadership which could resolve all prevailing issues including social, economic and others. He said that May 9 vandalism culprits should be brought to book "or else the houses of political opponents will be attacked in the future".

## Arctic summer could be practically ice-free by the 2030s: Study

Arctic sea ice area has been declining rapidly throughout the year during recent decades with a steeper decline since 2000, the study said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 8: The Arctic could get its first summer free of sea-ice by as early as the 2030s, a new study published in the journal Nature Communications has found.

The study by an international team of researchers, led by Yeon-Hee Kim at Pohang University of Science and Technology in South Korea, predicted that the sea ice-free Arctic could happen 10 years earlier than previously thought, re-

gardless of the greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions scenario.

Arctic sea ice area (SIA) has been declining rapidly throughout the year during recent decades with a steeper decline since 2000, the study said.

In the Arctic Ocean, the sea ice area grows and shrinks over the course of the year. Additional sea ice forms in the winter, increasing sea ice area and usually reaches its maximum extent in March. In contrast, sea ice area reduces to its lowest in September, following melting in summer.

The study attributed GHG increases, increased human influence in the Arctic cryosphere and reduction in aerosol emissions since the 1980s following the El Chichon volcanic eruption to be the drivers



of the Arctic SIA reduction, observed throughout the year.

Previous models have underestimated the extent of contribution

of GHG to SIA reduction, the study said. This study compared satellite observations with advanced climate models and conducted an up-

dated detection and attribution analysis of the observed Arctic SIA changes across all months over the 1979 - 2019 period.

It also said that this study had a smaller observed uncertainty because it used SIA for analysis. Previous studies were mostly based on sea ice extent, it said. While SIA is defined as the actual area covered with sea ice, sea ice extent is the total area of all grid cells with at least 15 per cent sea ice concentration and hence is strongly grid dependent.

Further, based on the quantified GHG contribution to the observed Arctic SIA reduction, the study has projected the future timing of the ice-free Arctic Ocean under the different Shared Socioeconomic Pathway (SSP)

emission scenarios, which are scenarios of projected socioeconomic global changes up to 2100, used to derive greenhouse gas emissions scenarios with different climate policies.

GHG forcing was found to be the factor dominating, the study said, after it showed that the GHG influence is separable from that of other factors including anthropogenic aerosols, solar and volcanic forcing, as well as natural internal variability.

"Our observationally-constrained projections based on attribution results also suggest that we may experience an unprecedented ice-free Arctic climate in the next decade or two, irrespective of emission scenarios," the study authors wrote.



## of the day quote

We are in 40 plus markets and what we are going to do is to double down on 8-10 big markets out of those and disproportionately put resources there and therefore move those on a faster track while catering to the rest of the markets as well

NIRANJAN GUPTA | CEO, HERO MOTOCORP

The 966 MW RTC (round the clock) hybrid renewable power project marks a significant step towards our combined efforts to accelerate the adoption of clean and green energy to meet the net zero target

PRAVEER SINHA | CEO & MD, TATA POWER

The G-Class has been a highly anticipated luxury lifestyle vehicle for Indian customers and its launch reiterates our aim of offering them the most desirable vehicles from our global portfolio

SANTOSH IYER | MD & CEO, MERCEDES-BENZ INDIA

## SHORT TAKES

### SpiceJet partners with FTAI Aviation

Bangalore: SpiceJet said Thursday that FTAI Aviation would lease up to 20 engines, the first few of which the low-cost carrier would use to reactivate some of its grounded fleet over the next 2-3 months. The partnership with the US-based engine services provider "will reduce maintenance expense and minimise aircraft downtime, enhancing the airline's overall performance," SpiceJet said. The airline said last month it had begun to revive 25 of its grounded fleet using its own money and a \$50 million line of credit through an Indian government scheme it secured. SpiceJet had also said there were no plans to file for insolvency, quelling fears of a spillover after rival Go Airlines (India) filed for voluntary bankruptcy.

### May hiring activity slows down by 7%

Mumbai: Hiring activities have slowed down by 7 per cent in May compared to the same month last year mainly due to companies adopting cautious approach to cut expenses on the back of economic slowdown, a report said Thursday. Foundit (formerly Monster APAC & ME) released foundit Insights Tracker (FIT), presenting the latest findings on monthly hiring trends. The latest tracker indicates there has been a 7 per cent slowdown in hiring compared to the same time last year. The tracker indicated that hiring activity is declining across all industries, with a 4 per cent month-over-month (MoM) decline.

### Fuel demand rises

New Delhi: India's fuel consumption, a proxy for oil demand, climbed by 8% month on month in May to about 20.03 million tonne, data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) of the oil ministry showed. Sales of gasoline rose 16.4% to 3.35 million tonne and sales of diesel increased around 5% to 8.22 million tonne in May from the previous month.

### Byju's to axe 1K jobs

Mumbai: Edtech major Byju's is expected to let go of 1,000 staffers as it embarks on another cost cutting exercise to streamline operations further, sources said. The cost correction comes right on the heels of the company skipping a quarterly interest payment of about \$40 million earlier this week on a \$1.2 billion term loan B (TLB), which is the subject of litigation.



The RBI is reviewing the entire guidelines on the fraud classification in consultation with various stakeholders and will come out with our guidelines very shortly

MUKESH JAIN | DEPUTY GOVERNOR (BANKING SUPERVISION), RBI

## NO REGULATIONS FOR FINFLUENCERS

The Reserve Bank is not planning to issue any separate norms to regulate social media influencers pedaling their personal views on the financial markets since sector watchdog Sebi is already on it



# REPO RATE RBI maintains hawkish stance

INDIA GREW BY 7.2% IN THE PREVIOUS FISCAL, MAKING IT ONE OF THE FASTEST-GROWING NATIONS IN THE WORLD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 8: After unanimously pausing for the second time in a row, the Reserve Bank Thursday reiterated that leaving the key rates and the stance unchanged "is not a pivot but only a pause" and that future policy actions will purely be data-dependent as a durable fall in inflation is still a long way.

Earlier in the day, the RBI governor-led rate-setting panel MPC unanimously left the repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent and maintained that they will continue to work towards withdrawing policy accommodation.

The six-member panel also reiterated continuing measures to bring inflation under the target in a durable manner.

While consumer price index-based inflation eased in March and April and moved into the tolerance band, headline inflation is still above the mandated target of 4 per cent and is expected to remain so during the rest of the current fiscal, said Governor Shaktikanta Das announcing the monetary policy.

"Therefore, close and continued vigil on the evolving inflation outlook is absolutely necessary, especially as the monsoon outlook and the impact of El Nino remain uncertain. Our goal is to achieve the inflation target of 4 per cent in a durable manner and not just keeping inflation within the comfort band of 2-6 per cent," Das told reporters at a post-policy presser.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- REPO RATE REMAINS UNCHANGED AT 6.5%
- RBI MAINTAINS PAUSE FOR 2ND TIME IN A ROW
- INFLATION FORECAST FOR FY24 MARGINALLY LOWERED TO 5.1%
- GDP GROWTH PROJECTION RETAINED AT 6.5% FOR FY24
- GROWTH FOR Q1 PEGGED AT 8%; Q2 6.5%, Q3 6%, AND Q4 5.7%
- CAD EXPECTED TO HAVE MODERATED FURTHER IN Q4 2022-23
- RBI PERMITS NON-BANK PPI ISSUERS TO ISSUE E-RUPI VOUCHERS
- BANKS TO ISSUE RUPAY PREPAID FOREX CARDS

The governor parried repeated questions from the media about what holds back the MPC and RBI from uttering the words 'end of rate hikes' or the beginning of a neutral or accommodative policy stance.

"It is not a pivot; I reiterate this is only a pause, which is the second one in two successive reviews. Our future policy actions will purely be dependent on evolving situations. Because even though the recent fall in headline inflation to within the target band (led mainly by the cooling core inflation), we need to ensure that it is durable, and therefore there is no room for complacency on inflation," Das said. Explaining that RBI is only on

a pause and that there is no change to a neutral/accommodative stance, Das said, "our objective is to ensure that inflation aligns with the mandated target on a durable basis and not a one-off.

"Therefore, given the uncertainties, we need to maintain 'Arjuna's eye' on the evolving inflation scenario. Let me re-emphasise that headline inflation still remains above the target and being within the tolerance band is not enough. Our goal is to achieve the target of 4 per cent, going forward," the governor said, adding it is always the last leg of the journey that's the toughest. Retail inflation fell sharply to



## 50% of ₹2,000 notes returned to banks: RBI



Out of ₹3.62 lakh crore of ₹2,000 notes in circulation, ₹1.80 lakh crore have come back after the withdrawal decision

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 8: Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das Thursday said about 50 per cent of ₹2,000 notes in circulation has come back in the banking system since the RBI announced withdrawal of the highest denomination currency last month.

As March 31, 2023, he said, ₹2,000 notes worth ₹3.62 lakh crore were in circulation.

"So far, ₹1.80 lakh crore have come back after the announcement," he said during an interaction with media after releasing the bi-monthly monetary policy here.

About 85 per cent of ₹2,000 notes are coming as deposits in bank accounts and this is in line with expectation, he said. On May 19, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced the withdrawal of ₹2,000 denomination banknotes as part of its currency management and permitted the exchange of such notes (up to ₹20,000 in one go) from May 23 onwards. The exchange or deposit window is available till September 30, 2023.

The governor also urged the public not to panic for exchange or deposit of ₹2,000 notes but should avoid last minute rush.

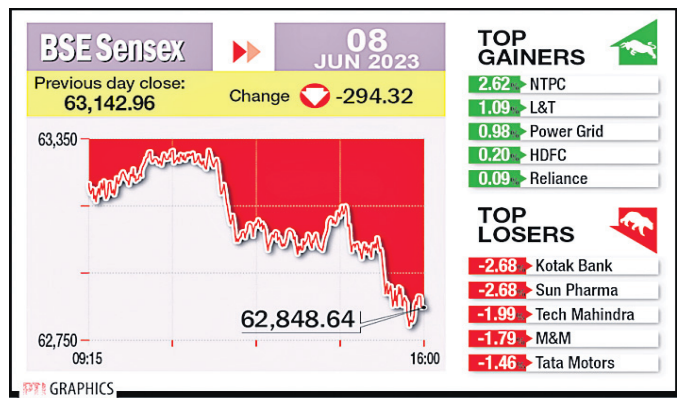
He also made it clear that RBI is not thinking of withdrawing ₹500 notes, or even re-introducing notes in the ₹1,000 denomination, and requested the public not to speculate on this.

Last month, the RBI governor had said the majority of the withdrawn ₹2,000 currency notes are expected to be returned to the banking system by the September 30 deadline.

## PROFIT-TAKING

# Markets snap 4-day rally

Shares snapped winning streak after RBI pushed bets of a rate cut further ahead, with inflation seen to be staying above its target



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 8: Equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty surrendered early gains to close with losses Thursday, snapping their four-day winning streak as investors pared exposure to auto, bank and IT stocks after the RBI left its key interest rate unchanged. After remaining in the positive

territory for most of the session, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 294.32 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at 62,848.64. During the day it tumbled 353.23 points or 0.55 per cent to 62,789.73. The NSE Nifty declined 91.85 points or 0.49 per cent to end at 18,634.55.

"Investor sentiment took a downturn following the in-line monetary policy announcement by the

RBI, as the market had higher expectations for a more optimistic revision in the inflation outlook, taking into account the recent easing of inflation data. The RBI's decision to lower the inflation rate by only 10 bps suggests a cautious stance due to geopolitical uncertainties, the potential impact of El Nino and the increase in Minimum Support Price," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

The rupee appreciated by 1 paise to close at 82.51 against the US dollar. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Thursday as they purchased shares worth ₹212.40 crore.

Kotak Mahindra Bank was the biggest loser in the Sensex pack, sliding 2.68 per cent, followed by Tech Mahindra, Mahindra & Mahindra, Axis Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Motors, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, Nestle and Titan. In contrast, NTPC, Power Grid, Larsen & Toubro, HDFC, Reliance and HDFC Bank were the gainers. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge fell by 0.87 per cent and small-cap index declined by 0.47 per cent.

International oil prices had spiked to \$139 per barrel in March 2022 in the aftermath of the Russia-Ukraine war. They have since cooled to \$75-76. At peak, oil firms lost ₹17.4 per litre on petrol and ₹27.7 a litre on diesel. In the October-December quarter, oil firms earned ₹10 a litre margin on petrol but lost ₹6.5 on diesel. In the following quarter, the margins on petrol moderated to ₹6.8 a litre while diesel earned ₹0.5 per litre.

## Mother Dairy cuts MRP of Dhara edible oils by ₹10/L

The industry had informed that the global prices of different edible oils have fallen by \$150-200 per tonne in the last two months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 8: Mother Dairy, which is a leading milk supplier in Delhi-NCR, Thursday said it has reduced the maximum retail price (MRP) of edible oils sold under Dhara brand by ₹10 per litre and the stocks with new rates will be available in the market from next week. The reduction in the MRP is in line with a fall in prices of edible oils in the global market, the company said.

Last week, the Centre directed edible oil industry bodies to advise their members to further reduce the MRP of major edible oils by ₹8-12 per litre with immediate effect. "The maximum retail price (MRP) of all variants of Dhara edible oils is being reduced by ₹10 per litre on

## Fuel margins turn positive; price cut will have to wait

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 8: Margins on petrol and diesel have turned positive following softening of international oil prices but a revision in retail prices may happen only after state-owned oil firms recoup losses they incurred last year, officials said.

State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) have temporarily abandoned the daily price revision since last year and have not revised petrol and diesel prices in line with the cost. And the losses they incurred when the oil prices were higher than the retail selling prices are now being recouped with rates dropping.

Officials said the three firms have been making positive margins on petrol since the fourth quarter of the 2022 calendar year but diesel, which accounts for the bulk of the fuel sales, had been in red.

But last month, margins on diesel turned positive with a small 50 paise a litre profit, they said, adding, this, however, was not enough to make up for the past losses.



International oil prices had spiked to \$139 per barrel in March 2022 in the aftermath of the Russia-Ukraine war. They have since cooled to \$75-76.

At peak, oil firms lost ₹17.4 per litre on petrol and ₹27.7 a litre on diesel. In the October-December quarter, oil firms earned ₹10 a litre margin on petrol but lost ₹6.5 on diesel. In the following quarter, the margins on petrol moderated to ₹6.8 a litre while diesel earned ₹0.5 per litre.

Officials said besides past losses, oil companies want to see if the drop in oil prices will last.

"I guess they will watch for the prices for one more quarter (April to June) before deciding to restart fuel price revision," an official said.

Holding prices when input cost was higher than retail selling prices led to the three firms posting net earnings loss. They posted a combined net loss of ₹21,201.18 crore during April-September despite accounting for ₹22,000 crore announced but not paid LPG subsidy.

International oil prices have been turbulent in the last couple of years. It dipped into the negative zone at the start of the pandemic in 2020 and swung wildly in 2022 - climbing to a 14-year high of nearly \$140 per barrel in March 2022 after Russia invaded Ukraine, before sliding on weaker demand from top importer China and worries of an economic contraction.



account of the continued decline in edible oil prices internationally and better availability of domestic crops such as mustard," a company spokesperson said.

The revised MRP stocks are slated to hit the market within a week, the spokesperson added.

A major importer of edible oils, India imported cooking oils worth ₹1.57 lakh crore during 2021-22 marketing year (November-October).

It buys palm oil from Malaysia and Indonesia while soyabean oil is being imported from Argentina and Brazil. India imports more than 50 per cent of its total edible oil requirements.

Edible oil import bill rose 34 per cent to ₹1.57 lakh crore in 2021-22 marketing year, while in volume terms, it rose 6.85 per cent to 140.3 lakh tonne.



# Advantage Oz in WTC final

# Ponting slams India for dropping Ashwin

INDIA REACH 151/5 AT STUMPS ON DAY 2 AFTER BOWLING AUSTRALIA OUT FOR 469



he was adjudged lbw off a Cummins no ball when he was batting on 17. Resuming the day on 327/3, Travis Head (163, 174b, 25x4, 1x6) and Smith (121, 268b, 19x4) walked into the middle under bright sunshine at The Oval.

Smith, who was on 95 overnight, got two freebies on the pads from Siraj in the first over of the day and he happily put them away for consecutive boundaries to complete his seventh hundred in England and third at the venue.

India were guilty of not using the short ball tactic early enough on the opening day but Siraj went for that from the get Thursday. Mohammed Shami too tried to mix it up with an odd bouncer but was not able to get the same zip from the surface as Siraj.

While Smith was not bothered by India's tactic, Head looked in a bit of discomfort. Siraj banged one short onto his body in the sixth over of the day and Head walked across the stumps to pull it but ended up edging it to wicket-keeper KS Bharat, ending an epic 285-run stand. Green was the next to go as he went for an expansive drive off a full ball from Shami but ended up being caught at second slip by an alert Gill.

The prized wicket of Smith came out of nowhere as he dragged an innocuous ball from Shardul Thakur back on to his stumps. It was Thakur's first ball of the day, highlighting his uncanny ability to provide a breakthrough out of the blue.

A brilliant piece of fielding from substitute Axar Patel got India their fourth wicket of the day as his one-handed direct hit from mid off left Starc well short of his ground.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Australia 469 (Travis Head 163, Steve Smith 121, Alex Carey 48; Mohammed Siraj 4/108, Shardul Thakur 2/83); India 151/5 (Ravindra Jadeja 48, Ajinkya Rahane 29 n o; Nathan Lyon 1/4, Cameron Green 1/22). Match to continue.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, June 8:** Australian great Ricky Ponting has slammed India's decision to drop premier off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin for the World Test Championship final against Australia.

Ashwin, who is the No.1 bowler in Test cricket and India's leading wicket-taker in the 2021-23 WTC cycle, was dropped as the Rohit Sharma-led side bolstered the pace ammunition by playing four seamers.

"I feel that R Ashwin is such a key factor; the leading wicket taker in the Tests cycle is not there. There are a few factors worth pondering on in Team India's perspective," Hayden told ICC after the day one's proceedings.

In the absence of Ashwin, left-arm Ravi Jadeja is the sole spinner in the playing XI and he went wicketless as India struggled to break the 251-run partnership between Travis Head and Steve Smith. World Cup-winning captain Ponting termed Ashwin's exclusion a "mistake".

"So far for me, it looks like it was a mistake from them by playing the four seamers, but we will see how the game pans out," Ponting told the ICC.

"As this game goes on, I have got no doubt that there is going to be turn. Australia have got a lot of left-handers in their batting line-up to which Ashwin would have been perfectly suited for," he said, as Ashwin is the most successful bowler in Tests against left-handers.

There was also debate over Rohit's "bowl-first" decision after winning the toss and Hayden said the Indian skipper may have "missed a trick". "I feel they may have missed a trick at the toss. Even if Pat Cummins said he would have liked to bowled, I secretly think Australia always like to bat first in Tests. "I feel like Rohit Sharma was caught into thinking that we're going to play the day rather than playing the Test match."

### Bowlers at fault

Ponting further said India's pacers erred with their length early against Head. "I think when he first comes in you need to execute perfectly to him. It is no good trying to over attack him because if you bowl any bad ball, he is going to put it away," Ponting noted.

"They will learn by the way they bowled to him in this first innings, and they will definitely adjust in this second innings, but sometimes it is too late."

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, June 8:** The failure of India's famed top-order against a high-quality pace attack in a pressure game put Australia in firm control of the World Test Championship final here Thursday.

Ravindra Jadeja (48, 51b, 7x4, 1x6) and Ajinkya Rahane (29 batting) offered hope to the partisan Indian supporters at The Oval with a 71-run stand off 100 balls before the former fell to Nathan Lyon 20 minutes before close of play. India were reeling at 151/5 at stumps in re-

sponse to Australia's first innings score of 469, trailing by 318 runs.

While the Indian bowlers failed to use the bouncer effectively on day one, the likes of Shubman Gill (13) and Cheteshwar Pujara (14) committed the cardinal sin of misjudging the line and length on a pitch with variable bounce.

Credit should also go to the relentless Australian pace trio of Mitchell Starc (1/52), Pat Cummins (1/36) and Scott Boland (1/29), who got much more out of The Oval surface than their Indian counterparts.

Australia added 142 runs to their

overnight total for the loss of seven wickets before being bowled out one hour into the afternoon session. Mohammed Siraj (4/108) cleaned up the tail and was the pick of India's bowlers with four wickets.

Leaving the ball is a key element of batting in English conditions and that is where Gill and Pujara were found wanting. The in-form Gill showed promise before he inexplicably decided to leave an incoming ball from Boland, leaving his stumps rattled.

Pujara, who had the advantage of being in England well before

his teammates arrived, offered no shot to a length ball from Cameron Green (1/22) that cut in sharply from fourth stump.

The slide began with the fall of skipper Rohit Sharma (15) who missed an angled in ball from Cummins in the sixth over to be trapped lbw. Indian superstar Virat Kohli (14) got a snorter from Starc that he could not do much about, leaving India at 71/4.

Rahane and Jadeja tried to hang in there but the Aussie pacers were constantly asking questions. Rahane also had some luck going his way as

# Eyes on Chhetri as India begin campaign

# India thrash Argentina 3-0

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, June 8:** In the last leg of his glittering career, Indian talisman Sunil Chhetri will be the cynosure of all eyes as the Blue Tigers look to regain the Intercontinental Cup, which begins here Friday.

While Lebanon and Vanuatu will play in the tournament opener, hosts India will take on Mongolia in the day's second match, kicking off their campaign against the lowest-ranked team (No.183) in the tournament.

The Blue Tigers, ranked 101 in the FIFA rankings, will enter the tournament as the second-highest-ranked team, with Lebanon (99) ahead of them by two places.

With 84 goals to his name from 131 international appearances, the most by an Indian, Chhetri has set numerous records over the last two decades. As far as the tournament is concerned, no player has made an impact like the Indian skipper who has scored 11 of India's 16 goals in the event.

Chhetri is the only player to score a hat-trick in the competition. "Sunil has always been a role model and a leader in every sense for the boys and girls. But he's not only talking, he's showing that with his test results once again," Stimac



had said.

"In this camp, he was in top-five positions in all the tests we executed. So that's the best way of leading the team and showing them how much it can be done.

"Never mind the age, never mind the month or the year, so let alone what he speaks what he does on the pitch and how he works. That's what is the most important thing," the coach was effusive in his praise for Chhetri.

The Blue Tigers won the inaugural edition in 2018 but found the going tough in 2019, which was won by Korea, while India finished fourth in the group.

Fresh from winning the Tri-

in form, who are in best position in December, they (players) are coming after a long domestic season behind. They need to stay in form and enter the Asian Cup on a positive note," Stimac said.

### Tricky contest

It will be a tricky contest against Mongolia, an unknown entity for Chhetri and Co.

The Blue Wolves beat Brunei Darussalam 3-2 on aggregate to progress to the second round for the first time in the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers.

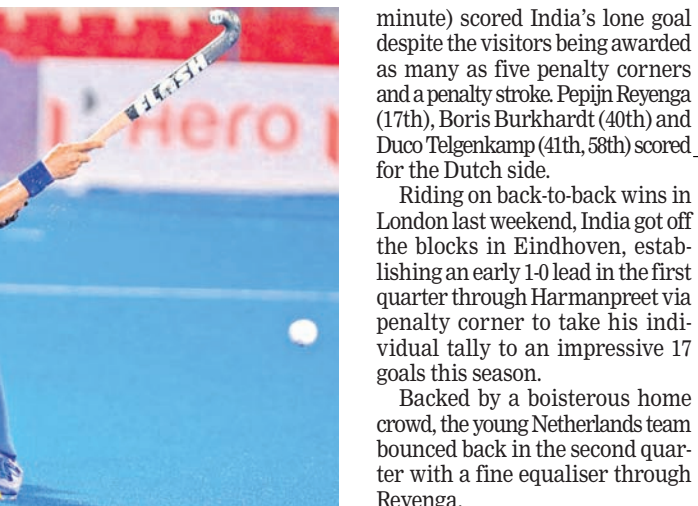
In the second round, they registered 1-0 wins over Myanmar and Kyrgyz Republic, two opponents India also beat, to win the Tri-Nation tournament earlier this year.

Mongolia also beat Yemen 2-0 in the AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers last year after suffering narrow defeats to Philippines and Palestine.

In March this year, under Japanese coach Ichiro Otsuka, Mongolia faced a UEFA opponent for the first time, 77-ranked Georgia, who they held 1-1 until half-time before going down 1-6 in a friendly game in Batumi.

After this, India are set to play Vanuatu (June 12), and Lebanon (June 15). The top two teams will play the final on June 18.

# Srikanth loses, Indian campaign ends



Harmanpreet Singh scored the lone goal for India against Argentina

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Eindhoven, June 8:** India displayed great resilience a day after suffering a stunning loss to outclass Argentina 3-0 in a FIH Pro League match here Thursday.

A profligate India squandered a one-goal lead to go down 1-4 to hosts the Netherlands Wednesday night, but the Harmanpreet Singh-led side bounced back in style with a commanding win over Argentina.

Skipper Harmanpreet led from the front converting a penalty cor-

ner in the 33rd minute. Amit Rohidas also converted from a penalty corner in the 39th minute before Abhishek's field goal in the 59th minute nailed it for India.

By virtue of this win, India moved to the top of the standings with 27 points from 14 games, ahead of Great Britain (26 points from 12 matches). India will next play Netherlands in their reverse tie here Saturday.

It was an anti-climax for India Wednesday night, despite taking an early lead. Harmanpreet (11th

minute) scored India's lone goal despite the visitors being awarded as many as five penalty corners and a penalty stroke. Pepijn Reyenga (17th), Boris Burkhardt (40th) and Duco Telgenkamp (41th, 58th) scored for the Dutch side.

Riding on back-to-back wins in London last weekend, India got off the blocks in Eindhoven, establishing an early 1-0 lead in the first quarter through Harmanpreet via penalty corner to take his individual tally to an impressive 17 goals this season.

Backed by a boisterous home crowd, the young Netherlands team bounced back in the second quarter with a fine equaliser through Reyenga.

The deadlock ended in the 40th minute when the Netherlands managed a PC. Boris Burkhardt picked up a good injection to put it past Pathak. Seconds later, Duco Telgenkamp extended the lead to 3-1 with a well-timed field goal.

It didn't help that India were down to 10 men with Mandeep Singh being awarded a green card seconds before the Netherlands scored back-to-back goals. While a late surge for India looked unlikely at this moment with the Netherlands defence being relentless, India conceded as Telgenkamp sealed the issue.

# WRESTLERS WANT TO TAKE PART IN ASIAN GAMES TRIALS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 8:** A day after calling off their protest against outgoing WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh having received assurance from the government, the wrestlers Thursday expressed intent to take part in the Asian Games selection trials scheduled to be held later this month.

Sports Minister Anurag Thakur Thursday said that all national federations are aiming to finalise the squads for the Asian Games, well before the July 15 deadline set by the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA). The Games are set to take place in Hangzhou, China from September 23 to October 8.

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) had April 27 announced that a three-member ad-hoc committee. A two-member ad hoc com-

mittee of Bupender Singh Bajwa and Suma Shirur, which is running the day-to-day affairs of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) since May 4 will be conducting the selection trials most likely in the last week of June.

However, the wrestlers want some more time to get ready for the trials. "We want to take part in the selection trial but to prepare for it, we need at least a month and a half of training," international wrestler Satyawart Kadian, who is also Sakshi Malik's husband, told PTI Thursday.

Getting back into competition mode will be a tough task for the wrestlers as some haven't competed since the World Championships in September last year while some of others last hit the mat even earlier, during the Commonwealth Games in August, 2022.

**Singapore, June 8:** India's campaign ended at the Singapore Masters badminton tournament after Kidambi Srikanth lost in straight games to Chia Hao Lee of Chinese Taipei in the men's singles second round here Thursday.

Srikanth lost 15-21, 19-21 in just 37 minutes against Lee in their first meeting on the professional circuit. The 2021 World Championships silver medallist Srikanth beat Thailand's Kantaphon Wangcharoen 21-15, 21-19 in the opening round.

Chia Hao Lee, on the other hand, beat Japan's Kenta Nishimoto in his opening match after being promoted to the main draw from the reserve.

Earlier, upcoming Indian shuttler Priyanshu Rajawat's dream run ended with a second round loss to third seed Kodai Naraoka. The unseeded Rajawat, who had



stunned World No.15 Kanta Tsuneyama of Japan in the opening round, lost to Naraoka 17-21, 16-21 in straight games.

Having ousted HS Prannoy in the first round, the World No.4 Naraoka of Japan maintained his lead as the World No.37 Indian played catch-up throughout to go down in a 47-minute match.

In the men's doubles, MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila lost to England's Ben Lane and Sean Vandy 15-21, 19-

21 in a 41-minute affair.

PV Sindhu had lost to World No.1 Akane Yamaguchi of Japan in the opening round. Lakshya Sen and Saina Nehwal, too, exited in the first round.

World No.11 doubles duo of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty and women's doubles pair of Tressa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand, also crashed out in their respective opening round matches.

# Messi stuns football world with MLS move

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Miami, June 8:** Lionel Messi has pulled off his latest stunning feat: He is headed to Major League Soccer (MLS) and joining Inter Miami.

After months — years, even — of speculation, Messi Wednesday finally revealed his decision to join a Miami franchise that has been led by another global football icon, David Beckham, since its inception but has yet to make any real splashes on the field.

That likely will soon change. One of Inter Miami's owners, Jorge Mas, tweeted out a photo of a darkly silhouetted Messi jersey shortly before the Argentinian great revealed his decision in interviews with Spanish news outlets Mundo Deportivo and Sport.

It was widely believed that Messi

eventually would choose to play for Al-Hilal in Saudi Arabia, following longtime rival Cristiano Ronaldo to a nation where some clubs now are funded by the state's sovereign wealth fund. Going back to Barcelona, a storied franchise where he spent most of his career, was another possibility.

But in the end, he made the call that surprised many: Messi is joining MLS. He said in the interviews Wednesday that some final details still need to be worked out, but that he has made the call to "continue my path" in Miami.

"After winning the World Cup and not being able to return to Barcelona, it was my turn to go to the league of the United States to live football in another way," Messi said. He didn't take the money. He didn't choose the memories. He picked Miami instead.