

KILLER HEAT 57 die in 4 days at UP hosp

After doctors at the health facility said on record the deaths could be linked to a heat wave, a probe committee formed to look into the matter Sunday ruled out heat as the reason

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ballia (UP), June 18: As many as 57 people admitted at Uttar Pradesh's Ballia district hospital have died in the last four days, with officials giving divergent explanations for the deaths, at a time when the eastern UP district is reeling under a sweltering heat wave.

Following the deaths, a two-member committee of the health department from Lucknow has reached the hospital to ascertain the cause of deaths, officials said Sunday. However, Ballia Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Jayant Kumar said only two people have died due to heat stroke in the district till Sunday.

The committee comprising Director (Communicable Diseases) Dr AK Singh and Director (Medical Care) KN Tiwari, which Sunday inspected the wards at the Ballia district hospital, also ruled out severe heat as main reason behind the rise in deaths of elderly patients in the district.

Meanwhile, Chief Medical Superintendent (CMS) of the district hospital, Dr Divakar Singh, was removed and sent to Azamgarh, allegedly after he made a careless remark about the cause of deaths. He had Friday said that over 20 patients at the



A massive rush is being reported at the hospital and unable to get stretchers, many attendants were seen carrying patients on their shoulders

PTI PHOTO

hospital died due to heat. Dr SK Yadav has been given the charge of CMS, a senior official said.

As per records of the district hospital, of the 54 deaths in three days, 40 per cent of the patients had fever, while 60 per cent were suffering from other diseases. So far, only two persons have died due to heat stroke in the district, CMO Kumar told PTI.

CMS Yadav said the hospital is under pressure as around 125 to 135 patients are being admitted here daily. On June 15, as many as 154 patients were admitted to the district hospital, of which 23 patients died due to various reasons. While 20 patients died June 16, 11 passed away on the following day. They were all aged above 60 years, he added.

The CMO said that three more patients died at the district hospital Sunday.

Blinken in Beijing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, June 18: On a mission to cool soaring bilateral tensions, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken Sunday held extensive talks with his Chinese counterpart Qin Gang on a range of issues, including the Taiwan issue and the Ukraine war.

Blinken arrived here Sunday morning and held an extended round of talks with Qin, besides attending a state dinner. Blinken's two-day visit to Beijing comes ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to Washington and his meeting with US President Joe Biden June 22. Ahead of Blinken's visit, US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said the US expects a "transformational moment" in Indian ties during Modi's visit to Washington and played down Blinken's visit to Beijing. P10

Double murder rocks Jagatsinghpur village

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kujang, June 18: In a shocking incident, two women were hacked to death by a youth at Express Colony about 200 metres from Kujang police station in Jagatsinghpur district, Sunday.

The deceased women were identified as Sunita Bhol (43), wife of Pramod Bhol and Nirmala Lenka (53), a tutor by profession and wife of Sahadev Malla in the area. The accused was identified as Jyoti Prakash Nathsharma (35) alias Chintu, son of late Babaji Nathsharma of nearby Jagannathpur village under Kujang police limits.

The incident occurred when Sunita was sitting on the verandah of her house. Chintu went near her and made an extortion bid which she refused to oblige. Enraged, he ran back to his house nearby and brought a sword with which he hacked her to death. Hearing her scream, Nirmala raised an alarm following which Chintu brutally assaulted her with the weapon.

Nirmala's husband Sahadev and their son Ritesh Roshan tried to save her but Chintu did not even spare them as they were rendered them critical. Soon residents of adjoining Balarampur village rushed to the spot, overpowered Chintu and tied his limbs before in-



forming the police. Locals rushed the women to Kujang hospital where doctors pronounced them "brought dead".

Police arrested Chintu, brought him to the police station and registered a case over a complaint filed by deceased Nirmala's husband Sahadev Malla in the police station. The murder weapon was seized and the bodies recovered for post-mortem.

Preliminary probe by police revealed that Chintu was under mental stress during the last few days after his wife deserted him and left home with their two children, Tirtol SDPO Prasant Majhi said. The actual reason behind the murder could be ascertained after the probe gets completed, Kujang IIC Sujit Pradhan said. Locals alleged that such incidents are taking place due to rampant sale of liquor and drugs in the area.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Time to take action! Till now they were damaging govt property but now our party offices are being torched

Gandhi Peace Prize 2021 for Gita Press

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 18: The Gandhi Peace Prize for 2021 will be conferred on Gita Press, Gorakhpur, in recognition of its outstanding contribution towards social, economic and political transformation through non-violent and other Gandhian methods, according to an official statement.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Gita Press for winning the prize and com-

mended their contribution in the field.

"I congratulate Gita Press, Gorakhpur on being conferred the Gandhi Peace Prize 2021. They have done commendable work over the last 100 years towards furthering social and cultural transformations among the people. @GitaPress," PM Modi tweeted.

The jury headed by Prime Minister Modi unanimously decided to select Gita Press as the



recipient of the Gandhi Peace Prize, said the statement issued by the Ministry of Culture.

Modi recalled the contribution of Gita Press in promoting the Gandhian ideals of peace

and social harmony. He observed that the conferment of the Gandhi Peace Prize on Gita Press, on completion of hundred years of its establishment, is a recognition of the work done by the institution in community service, the statement said.

Established in 1923, Gita Press is one of the world's largest publishers, having published 41.7 crore books in 14 languages, including 16.21 crore Shrimad Bhagvad Gitas, it said.



DSPL-96



Govt. of Odisha

"On the occasion of 'Holy Rath Yatra' symbolizing universal brotherhood and religious integrity I pray before Lord Jagannath for the peace and prosperity of all"

Public Health Guidelines for Rath Yatra

- Don't allow elderly persons, children and differently abled alone into the crowd.
- Use safe drinking water and wash hand before eating.
- Avoid stale food, artificially coloured food, rotten fruits & vegetables, and food contaminated by flies.
- Cover your head with white cap or wet cloth and take ORS to avoid sunstroke.
- Take care during sea bath to avoid accidents.
- In case of accident or illness attend nearest First-Aid Centre.

Emergency Contact Number
District Headquarter Hospital, Puri : **06752-222175**
State Health Helpline : **104**, Ambulance : **108**





Health & Family Welfare Department

facebook.com/HFWOdisha
http://www.health.odisha.gov.in/
@HFWOdisha

OIPR-10003/13/0064/2324

leisure



LINDA HAMILTON JOINS STRANGER THINGS SEASON 5

Actress Linda Hamilton who is known for her roles in *Terminator* series, *Children of the Corn* and *Beauty and the Beast* has been roped into star in the fifth season of the popular series *Stranger Things*. The announcement was made as part of Netflix's annual Tudum event, reports *Variety*.

TARON EGERTON BLUSHED WHEN FACED WITH HIS BOYHOOD CRUSH RACHEL WEISZ

Actor Taron Egerton was hugely embarrassed and blushed when his boyhood crush on Rachel Weisz was revealed during a live interview. The incident occurred during *Variety's Actors on Actors* series talk, when a staff member handed Weisz, an iPad which caused him to become noticeably embarrassed and concerned.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today will be a difficult day full of action. You may not agree with your friends about trifling matters, but you will love it. You will complete all work that has been pending, which will give you relief. Ganesh says it is an optimistic day.

TAURUS
Be careful, says Ganesh. All your calculations and conclusions, plans and moves are likely to go haywire. Time and again, you could fail and, ultimately, get frustrated. Even simple and obvious things are likely to get you worked up. Knowing that you are basically gentle, benign and large hearted, your friends and elders will rally round and provide you the help and advice you need. Things will finally get sorted out.

GEMINI
You know where you are headed, and will redouble your efforts to reach your goals today. You are full of energy and enthusiasm, which helps you to achieve all your targets. You will receive unexpected gains owing to your hard work.

CANCER
Sentimentalism will be hinder your path of success. So, says Ganesh, give up too much sentimentalism. It can be quite a hazard in the future. You will win over people with the force of speech and polite approach.

LEO
You will be able to influence people with your co-operative and accommodating attitude today. You will have discussions on various topics with people who come into contact with you. You will also come into contact with people who share the same mental wavelength as you do, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Today you may understand the utter uselessness of your dogged efforts and feel extremely anxious about success eluding you constantly. However, Ganesh advises you not to lose hope, but to re-energise your mind, give a boost to your curiosity and pay attention to long-term goals.

LIBRA
Ganesh says that today you will get worried over petty matters and be tense. To get mental peace keep yourself occupied with religious or spiritual activity. Along with that if you go to some religious place you will gain mental peace, which will stay with you for a long time.

SCORPIO
You may be in a mood to build castles in the air today, says Ganesh. You may be caught up in a whirlpool of thoughts and nostalgia. However, you will soon realise that the time once gone, never comes back and so, you make up for the lost time by beginning the new chapter of your life from today itself.

SAGITTARIUS
You rule your hear today, predicts Ganesh. You are likely to become an expert in reading people's mind. Everything is fair in love and war, is what you believe! Win over your sweetheart and set out on a journey toward destination unknown, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
You are busy as a beaver. It is extremely difficult for you to think for yourself as you are all tied up by the demands of your work. You want to be creative, but again, the workload will not let you have that freedom, says Ganesh. You have learnt the art of time management. So, you have properly lined up your priorities and success is waiting for you.

AQUARIUS
You will hit the bull's eye, today. From the smallest to the biggest, all of your plans will turn into reality. Don't get disheartened if there are some obstacles on your path; you are fully armed to face the challenges and come out triumphant. Get yourself in the top gear, you will surely succeed, says Ganesh.

PISCES
For those looking for a promotion at the work-place, now is the time to ask for it. Freelancers could find interesting projects falling into their laps. Businesses are likely to see a surge in profits. No conflicts in personal life are indicated. Overall, a progressive and pleasant day awaits, says Ganesh.

Western culture teaches us not to be considerate: Kangana

Mumbai: Actress Kangana Ranaut, who is gearing up for her upcoming directorial *Emergency*, where she will be seen portraying the late Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, has drawn the line of difference between Indian and Western cultures.

The actress took to the Stories section of her Instagram and shared a note talking about the 'essence of Indian culture'. The actress's statement came as a response to a Netizen's state-

ment about supporting his family. Giving the reasons, he wrote, "Responsibilities of an Indian son who retired his parents, pays all the bills, plans for his family's future. I want to glamorize this (sic)".

The *Queen* actress wrote, "Such a lovely thing to say. This is the essence of Indian culture. It teaches us to live for our family, and honestly there's a higher possibility of finding our own happiness in theirs (family's happiness) as opposed to what Western culture teaches us 'my life my rules' shallow and foolish ideas." She added, "It's impossible to find happiness in a self-centered, selfish life. There is no logic to why it is like this but it is true if you chase happiness it's bound to run away with double the speed."



Mumbai: Actor Salman Khan has said that he is not old-school, but Aamir Khan and Shah Rukh Khan may have become old-school at the launch of his digital debut - *Bigg Boss OTT* season 2.

When *Ved* actor Jiya Shankar came on the stage, she called host Salman Khan 'old school'. He faked being offended and said jokingly that Aamir Khan and Shah Rukh Khan are old school, but he is not.

Shah Rukh, Aamir, and Salman Khan entered the film industry within a span of few years, and the Khan-trio has been ruling the industry for more than three decades now. Salman made

his debut with *Biwi Ho To Aisi* while Shah Rukh's made his debut with *Deewana* and Aamir's made his debut with *Holi*. Salman and Aamir have fea-

SRK, AAMIR ARE OLD-SCHOOL: SALMAN

tured together in the cult comic classic *Andaz Apna Apna* while Shah Rukh and Salman have worked together in many hit films including *Karan Arjun*, *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* and the most recent actioner, *Pathaan*.

Bigg Boss OTT 2 is currently being streamed on Jio Cinema.

Zeenat reveals how she got her surname

Mumbai: Veteran actress Zeenat Aman, on Father's Day, remembered her late father Amanullah Khan and mother Vardhini Scindia, and also talked about how she got her last name.

"This precious image was taken at a photo studio when I was a child. My father is sitting behind me, and another relative is in front. My father Amanullah Khan came from royal stock. His mother Akhtar Jahan Begum was first cousins with the last ruler of the state of Bhopal, His Highness Nawab Hamidullah Khan. Aman Sahab, as he was known, was one of eight siblings, and they led a leisurely life in Bhopal. He met my mother Vardhini Scindia socially at a party in Mumbai", she said.

"They had a whirlwind courtship and got married soon after, neither family approved. She was a practicing Hindu and he came from a strong Muslim family. After a brief acting career, he went on to become a writer and he most famously worked on the screenplay and dialogues for *Mughal-E-Azam* and also *Pakeezah*. My parents de-

cidied to separate a few years after I was born and I stayed with my mother," she continued.

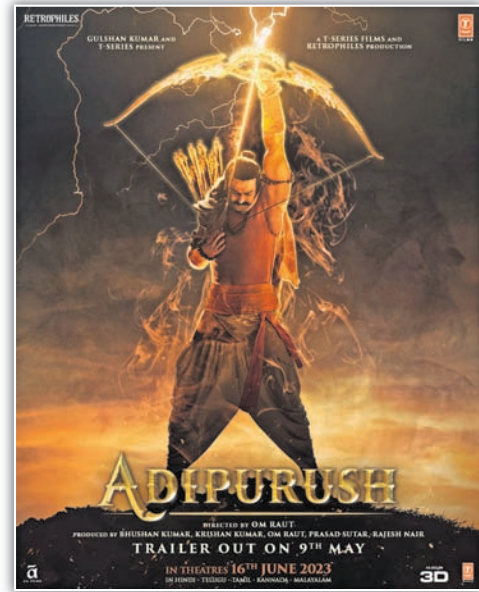
"These are my few memories of my father. He passed away at the early age of 41, when I was still in school. Amongst the few possessions I hold close to my heart, is a volume of Urdu poetry that he wrote. I hope to have this translated and published some day. On Father's Day, I am thinking of my father Amanullah Khan, whose name I chose to make my own."



Adipurush dialogues to be revised: Writer

Mumbai: *Adipurush* dialogue writer Manoj Muntashir Shukla on Sunday said the makers of the mythological epic film have decided to 'revise some of the dialogues', after the Prabhas-starrer was criticised heavily for its pedestrian language. Shukla, who has penned the Hindi dialogues and songs of the retelling of the *Ramayana*, said the amended lines will be added to the film by this week.

"...For me there is nothing greater than your feelings. I can give countless arguments in favour of my dialogues, but this will not lessen your pain. Me and the producer-director of the film have decided that we will revise some of the dialogues which are hurting you and they will be added



to the film this week," Shukla said in a statement shared on his official Twitter account.

Adipurush, which was released across the country in Hindi, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil on Friday, stars Prabhas as Raghav (Ram), Kriti Sanon as Janaki (Sita) and Saif Ali Khan as Lankesh (Raavan) been panned on social media over its poor VFX and colloquial dialogues.

"I wrote more than 4,000 lines as dialogues in *Adipurush*, some sentiments got hurt on five of those lines. In those hundreds of lines, where Shri Ram was glorified, Maa Sita's chastity was described, I was hoping to re-

ceive praise for them, which I don't know why I did not get," the writer added.

"*Adipurush* is garnering an overwhelming response across the world and is conquering hearts of audiences across all ages. Making this visual spectacle a memorable cinematic experience, the team decides to make alterations to the film's dialogues - Valuing the input of the public and the audience," the banner said in a separate statement.

"The makers are revisiting the said dialogues, ensuring to resonate with core essence of the film and the same will reflect in the theatres in the next few days," said T-Series.

"This decision is a testament that in spite of unstoppable collections at the Box Office, the team is committed and nothing is beyond the sentiments of their audiences and harmony at large," the production house added.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

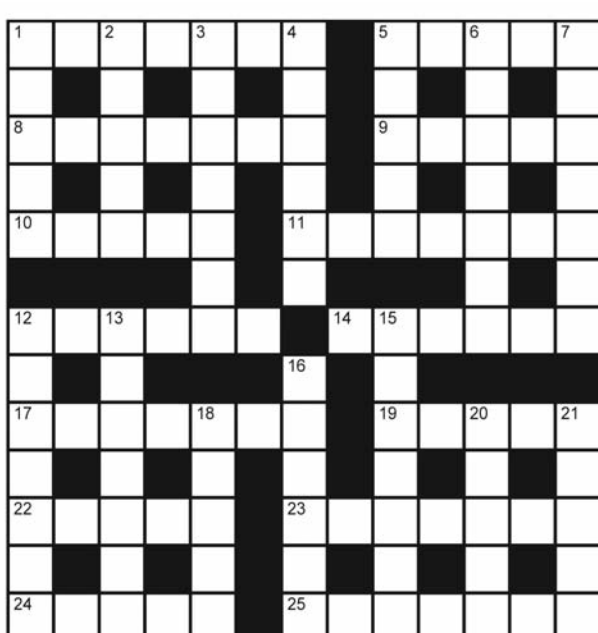


BREVITY



FUN post

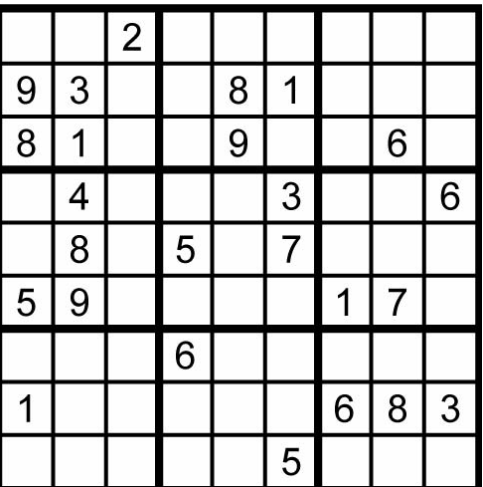
CROSSWORD



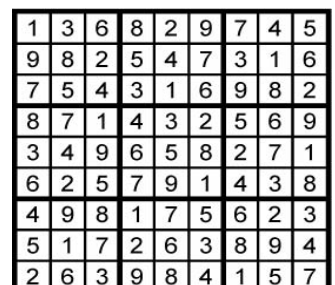
- Across**
- 1 Like hurtful words
 - 5 Mining tools
 - 8 Woman Reading painter
 - 9 Ring-tailed animal
 - 10 Saddle horses
 - 11 Nervous strain
 - 12 Thinly spread
 - 14 Deviate suddenly
 - 17 Big cat
 - 19 French holy men
 - 22 Adage
 - 23 Shakespeare character
 - 24 Highly skilled part
 - 25 Square-rigger
- Down**
- 1 Punctuation mark
 - 2 Aquarium fish
 - 3 Takes a firm stand
 - 4 Invitees
 - 5 Edible nut
 - 6 Fingerboard
 - 7 Field of study
 - 12 Dried seedless grape
 - 13 Suffer over segment
 - 16 Stupidity
 - 18 Own up to
 - 20 Model material
 - 21 Tempest

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

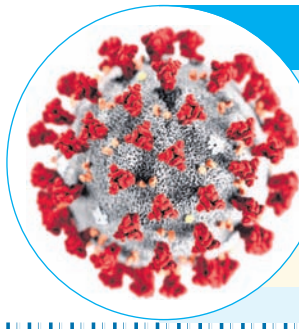


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



DANCE FEST

Artistes of Soor Mandir perform during an event at Saheed Bhawan in Cuttack, Sunday



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

COPS ROLL UP SLEEVES FOR SMOOTH CAR FEST



POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, June 18: The Odisha Police, Coast Guard and Railway Police have rolled up sleeves to ensure a smooth Rath Yatra here beginning June 20, an official said Sunday.

Addressing media here Sunday, Additional DGP (Law and Order) Sanjay Kumar said that for the first-time, Coast Guard helicopters will patrol the beach and fast patrol vehicles will be deployed during the mega festival. This apart, interceptor boats will be stationed at Paradip for any contingency till July 2.

ADGP (Railways and Coastal Security) Dayal Gangwar and DIG Satyajit Naik briefed about the arrangements.

As many as 125 special trains will run to Puri during the Rath Yatra for the convenience of

devotees.

"The Railways will install facial recognition cameras at the station to screen the crowd of suspicious characters. A large number of CCTV cameras assisted by drones, and managed from a number of control stations, will function during the Rath Yatra," said Gangwar.

About 170 platoons of police will be deployed for the Rath Yatra. For Monday's Nabajouban darshan ritual, 70 platoons of police will be deployed, informed the officials.

This apart, under special mobility plan, an advisory on vehicular movement to Puri was issued Sunday.

Vehicles from Bhubaneswar and Konark will be allowed to park near grid substation and in Talabania area, while those from Brahmagiri side will be

parked in Florence India Garden parking space.

Additionally, 24 places have been designated for two-wheeler parking.

The restriction will remain effective from June 19 midnight till June 21.

"Entire town has been divided into 14 zones and 29 sectors. An integrated traffic control room will operate round-the-clock till the end of the annual festival. Special green corridor for emergency ambulance services has been incorporated in the special mobility plan," said ADG Amitabh Thakur.

In a bid to provide relief to devotees from the heat and humidity and prevent dehydration, arrangement has been made for distribution of 50 million water bottles in addition to setting up of numerous public water fountain points.

"A large number of water sprinklers and cold-water mist sprayers will be used to cool the atmosphere," informed Additional District Magistrate PK Sahu.

Apart from these, first-aid centres and ambulances have been kept ready, he added.

A mock drill was held Sunday where the three chariots were pulled one after another.



Chitrakar servitors give finishing touches Rath structures in Puri, Sunday

PIG: YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

NABAJOUBAN DARSHAN TODAY

PURI: The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) is all set to host a hassle-free 'Nabajouban Darshan' of Lord Jagannath and His siblings - Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra - at Srimandir here Monday.

As per the tradition, the deities remained in the 'Anasara Gruha' (the sick room) inside the 12th

century shrine after their ritualistic bath on Snana Purnima day.

It is believed that the sibling deities appear in youthful form on this day after recovering from fever induced by the bath.

As per the schedule, Parmanik Darshan (paid darshan) will be held for an hour—8am to 9am. "Paramanik Darshan (paid dar-

shan) ticket holders will be allowed to enter the temple through the South Gate," SJTA chief administrator Ranjan Kumar Das said.

Later, Sahana Mela Darshan will be allowed from 9am to 11am.

Special arrangements are being made for 'Nabajouban Darshan' of the deities, who

were out of bounds for the devotees since the 'Snana Yatra' (bathing ritual) June 4, the SJTA chief administrator said.

As many as 70 platoons (on platoon has 30 personnel) of the police force will be deployed for the smooth conduct of 'Nabajouban Darshan' of the sibling deities, Puri SP Kanwar Vishal Singh said.

CM to lay stone for Ekamra project June 28

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 18: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will lay the foundation stone for Ekamra Kshetra Amenities and Monuments' Revival Plan here June 28, on the concluding day of the three-day 'Bhumi Pujan' ceremony.

The 'Bhumi Pujan' ceremony will be held here June 26, 27 and 28, and will be organised by Lingaraj Temple Trust Board.

Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) vice chairman Balwant Singh has been assigned as the chief-coordinator of the programme to ensure coordination between various agencies involved in the project.

The Ekamra Kshetra Amenities and Monuments' Revival Plan includes several infrastructure development works like construction of Lingaraj Entry Plaza, Bhajan Mandap, Heritage Park and Kedar Gouri Plaza, complete pedestrianisation of Bindu Sagar road stretch, rejuvenation of Bindu Sagar and other holy ponds in the locality, Lingaraj Heritage Project, redevelopment of Kedargauri and Mukteswar temple premises, initiation of e-auto services, and making provisions for seamless traffic management

facility.

At a preparatory meeting held here recently in the presence of

Science and Technology Minister Ashok Chandra Panda, decisions have been taken to hold yagna and several other religious and cultural programmes during the three-day event.

As lakhs of devotees are expected to gather, a detailed plan was chalked out at the preparatory meeting for the successful organisation of the programme. During the discussion, representatives of various servitor groups and local corporators assured wholehearted sup-

port for the programme.

As per sources, the meet gave special focus on arrangement of parking, sanitation, electricity and drinking water facilities during the Bhumi Pujan programme.

Bhubaneswar (Central) MLA Ananta Narayan Jena, Bhubaneswar (North) MLA Susant Kumar Rout, BMC Mayor Sulochana Das, BDA vice chairman Balwant Singh, BMC commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange, Khurda Collector K Sudarshan Chakravarty and Bhubaneswar DCP Prateek Singh were present at the preparatory meeting along with sebayats of Lingaraj Temple and members of the temple trust board.

BDA vice chairman Balwant Singh has been assigned the task to ensure coordination between various agencies involved in the ambitious project

Cuttack gets CoE for Agriculture

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 18: Sarat Kar and Anima Kar Foundation and its partner organisation, Solidaridad, went a step ahead in their 'Smart Agriculture District' project with the inauguration of a Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Agriculture at Bantala village in Mahanga block of Cuttack.

The CoE for Agriculture was inaugurated by Solidaridad Asia Managing Director Shatadru Chattopadhyay, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) former Director Jagadananda Das, Ravenshaw University former Registrar Ashok Kumar Dash and, Sarat Kar and Anima Kar Foundation Chairperson Sobhan Kar June 14.

People from various walks of



life, including hundreds of farmers and their family members, attended the event.

The two organisations had inked a pact here in September last year to create 'Smart Agriculture Districts' across Odisha by working closely with farmers to enhance their pro-

ductivity and income, help them practise sustainable agriculture and familiarise them with new technology.

Currently, the project is being implemented on a pilot basis in Mahanga block of Cuttack and Derabish block of Kendrapara district, it was learnt.

Vaishnav visits Odisha today

Bhubaneswar: Railways, Communications, and Electronics and Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnav will be on a three-day visit to Odisha starting June 19. During his visit, Vaishnav will inspect Puri railway station. In the evening, he will review the arrangements for pilgrims for the Rath Yatra. Vaishnav will also join Rath Yatra June 20 and later will proceed to Bahanaga Bazar to interact with the locals there.

WEATHER	
BHUB	CTK
MAX 41.6°C	40.2°C
MIN 29.8°C	29.0°C
Humidity 76%	85%
Rainfall Nil	Nil
Forecast HEAT WAVE	

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Vig arrests Baripada revenue asst over DA

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 18: Vigilance sleuths Sunday arrested a Revenue Assistant working at Baripada Sub-Collector office in Mayurbhanj district for amassing 201 per cent disproportionate assets (DA).

The anti-corruption sleuths had earlier unearthed movable and immovable assets worth crores of rupees belonging to Rama Chandra Sen.

A case (15/23) has been registered against Sen, his wife and



two sons under various sections of the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018.

He was produced before the Vigilance court in Baripada that later sent him to judicial custody after rejecting his bail plea.

Property unearthed so far included one palatial triple-storey

building at Raghunathganj in Mayurbhanj district worth over Rs 2 crore, a four-storey building at Padharipur in Mayoubhanj, 15 plots in Mayurbhanj district.

The Vigilance sleuths also found Sen's bank and insurance deposits over Rs 40 lakh. This apart, as many as three four-wheelers worth Rs 20.50 lakh, four two-wheelers, cash, gold jewellery and household articles worth over Rs 30.55 lakh were unearthed during the house searches.

"After a thorough search, in-

ventory and further enquiry, the income, expenditure and assets of Sen were calculated and he was found in possession of DA which was 201 per cent of his known sources of income," the anti-corruption wing said.

Notably, five Vigilance teams comprising one additional SP, five DSPs, seven inspectors and other staff on the strength of search warrants issued by special Vigilance court in Baripada conducted raids at different places related to Sen in Mayurbhanj district Saturday.

Forest employees' protest from today

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 18: Non-gazetted employees of Forest department Sunday announced to launch a symbolic protest from June 19 to July 8 in protest against killing of Forest officials by poachers.

Odisha Non-gazetted Forest Service Association president Jagabandhu Patra said 5,376 Forest Guards, 2,530 Foresters and 282 Deputy Rangers will attend duty but will not go on patrolling during the symbolic protest. Patra threatened that they would launch a mass agitation in Lower PMG from July 10 next if the government did not pay heed to their five-point charter of demands by then.

Their demands among other things included security to Forest officials during patrolling.

The Forest employees decided to go on a strike after two Forest employees were shot dead by poachers during the last couple of months while on patrolling duty.

Triple train mishap toll mounts to 292

PNN & AGENCIES

Cuttack, June 18: The death toll in the Balasore train accident rose to 292 Sunday with a 24-year-old passenger from West Bengal succumbing to his injuries at SCB Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH) here, an official said.

Paltu Naskar, a resident of South 24 Parganas of West Bengal, was undergoing treatment at the central ICU of SCBMCH and breathed his last during the day, he said.

He was injured in the train accident June 2 and admitted to the hospital in critical condition, an East Coast Railway official said, adding that the person was on ventilator support from June 17 as his condition deteriorated. Of the 205 injured people admitted to the SCBMCH, 45 are still under treatment, including 12 in ICU, an official of the state-run health facility said.

"Of the 12 patients in ICU, the condition of two remains critical," he said. Altogether 287 people died on the spot in the triple train accident earlier this month and five others succumbed to their injuries in hospitals, while 1,208 were injured.

The Shalimar-Chennai Central Coromandel Express, Bengaluru-Howrah Super Fast Express and

a goods train were involved in the pile-up, now being described as one of India's worst train accidents. The Coromandel Express crashed into a stationary goods train, derailling most of its coaches around 7pm June 2 near the Bahanaga Bazar station in Balasore.

A few coaches of the Coromandel Express whiplashed the last few coaches of the Bengaluru-Howrah Express which was passing by at the same time.

Meanwhile, 81 bodies remain unidentified at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)-Bhubaneswar.

Though 70 people have already given blood samples for DNA testing, the reports are still awaited, an official said.

The authorities of AIIMS-Bhubaneswar Saturday wrote a letter to the Delhi-based Central Forensic Science Laboratory to send the DNA sampling test reports for at least 15 people as their family members were eagerly waiting for such verification reports.

Meanwhile, the Indian Railways has appealed to relatives of the deceased in the Bahanaga train accident to come forward and give their DNA samples to establish their identity and relationship with the deceased.

SHELTER FOR URBAN HOMELESS

Mobilise patrolling teams, ULBs asked

CMC Shelter for Urban Homeless team was directed to come up with an action plan by June 21 to address the issue of urban homeless people



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 18: Housing and Urban Development department said that shelter for urban homeless has been created across the state to ensure no needy are left abandoned in the street.

However, in a recent case, it was observed that in the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC)

area, some people are still sleeping on the footpath which was very disheartening. All the urban local bodies (ULBs) have been instructed to activate their patrolling team formed for the purpose.

To discuss the matter, an urgent meeting of the CMC Shelter for Urban Homeless (SUH) team, state SUH team and NGO, OPUS working for homeless people

was convened Sunday. The meeting was chaired by H&UD Joint Secretary and State Urban Development Agency (SUDA) Director Sarada Prasad Panda held in the conference hall of SUDA. Panda discussed the matter in detail and instructed all the ULBs to activate their patrolling team to look for homeless people. He asked OPUS to engage the community partners like Mission Shakti SHGs to make sure they are linked to the nearest SUH.

The CMC SUH team was directed to come up with an action plan by June 21 for driving this important issue in the city. They were asked to start taking steps immediately. The state government would bear the cost implication of the plan, Panda said.

CMC Deputy Commissioner Swetapadma Satpathy and her team, state SUH team, and NGOs working in partnership with the Urban Development department participated in the meeting and decided to "do everything possible to take care of every homeless person in the ULB areas of the state".



IN MEMORIAM: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik paying floral tribute to Utkalmani Pandit Gopabandhu Das on the occasion of his death anniversary at Naveen Niwas in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

S&ME DEPT RECRUITS 160 OES OFFICERS

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 18: The School and Mass Education (S&ME) department conducted a counselling programme for the newly recruited 160 Odisha Education Service (OES) officers at the conference hall of Krushi Bhawan Sunday. A special programme will be held Monday to distribute appointment letters to the newly appointed officers in the presence of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

Speaking on this occasion to the officers who were selected through rigorous selection process by Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC), Higher Secondary Education Director Raghuram Iyer addressed all crucial aspects of the counselling process and answered the queries of the participating candidates. The newly appointed officers were provided the important information about their appointments, including the specific posts they would hold and their respective work locations. The candidates were also provided a comprehensive understanding of the objectives of Mo Sarkar.

Odisha State Education Programme Authority State Project Director Anupam Saha while wishing the officers, offered words of advice on their roles and responsibilities. He expressed his optimistic outlook, hoping that each officer would seize the opportunity provided to them and contribute significantly to the advancement of education.

The young officers were encouraged to actively strive towards fulfilling the state's aspirations and were called upon to provide guidance and support, fostering collaboration, to drive the department towards progress and development. The officials were further encouraged to actively engage at the grassroots level and embrace innovative approaches for the holistic development of children.

Director of Secondary Education, Sushant Kumar Das, Director of Primary Education, Jyotiranjana Mishra, and Director of Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya, Durgaprasad Mohapatra, were among the officials present at the orientation programme.

Bakul film fest exposes children to foreign films



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 18: City based Bakul Foundation is organising Festival of International Children's Films at Bakul Library in Satyanagar here from June 13 to 19. Every day at 5pm, children and adults are getting to experience the best of children's cinema from around the world, including from Europe (France), Africa (Uganda), West Asia (Iran), East Asia (Japan), South America (Uruguay), North America (USA) and India.

"All foreign films have English subtitles and will appeal to children, 8 years and above, young adults and adults alike. The films have diversity of style from animation to Japanese anime to social drama and fantastic cinema," explained Bakul founder Sujit Mahapatra.

Eminent director Mira Nair's award winning film 'Queen of Katwe,' a biopic about a chess prodigy from Uganda, was screened Sunday. The inspiring and uplifting story showed how people can be empowered even when the odds are stacked against them.

The last film to be screened Monday, 'The Red Turtle' has incredible maritime animation and has no dialogues at all. It is an inspirational story about a man, shipwrecked on an island, whose life changes after he encounters a red turtle.

The first film in the festival was Karamati Coat from India, the award winning children's movie, about Raghu, a poor rag-picker who discovers a magical coat which changes his life.

The other films that have been shown include classics like 'Children of Heaven' by the Iranian director Majid Majidi and 'My Neighbor Totoro' by the Japanese master Hayao Miyazaki, about a little girl who takes the help of the Totoros, magical spirits of the forest, to find her missing sister.

According to Ashutosh Mahapatra, who sends his 8-year-old son Aditya to the festival everyday, "I want to expose him to cultures and life in different countries depicted and reflected through the films. My wife and I also go with him on holidays so that we could discuss the films with him and other children."

4 students of Aakash BYJU's excel in JEE Advanced exam

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 18: As many as 4 students of Aakash BYJU'S from Bhubaneswar have made the institute proud by securing impressive results in the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Advanced 2023. The results were announced by IIT Guwahati Sunday.

The top scorers included Aliv Sahoo, AIR 326, Pratyush Kumar Swain, AIR 439, Priyanka Sar, AIR 621 and Varun Mishra, AIR 981.

Attributing their success in JEE to the institute, they said, "We're grateful that Aakash has helped us in preparations. But for the content and coaching from Aakash, we would not have grasped many concepts in different subjects in a short



period of time." Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL) Regional Director Ajay Bahadur Singh said, "We congratulate the students for their exemplary feat. A total of 1.8 lakh plus students appeared for JEE (Advanced) 2023 from across the country. Their achievement speaks volumes of their hard work and dedication as well as the support of their parents. We wish them all the best with their future endeavours."

Aakash offers JEE coaching in multiple course formats for high school and higher secondary school students. In the recent past, Aakash increased its focus on developing computer based training. Its iTutor provides recorded video lectures. The mock tests simulate the real exam scenario, thus giving the students the required familiarity and confidence in facing the exam.

State sizzles under intense heatwave

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 18: The India Meteorological Department's (IMD) latest forecast about dip in day temperature following rainfall Monday came as a relief for the people of the state who have been reeling under intense heatwave conditions for the past several days. The IMD, Bhubaneswar, Sunday informed that the day temperature is likely to fall by 3 to 5 degree in the coming two days.



The weather agency also predicted that Odisha will witness rain from June 20, which is likely to increase during the subsequent days June 21 and 22. Light to moderate rainfall activity will likely occur in many parts of the state June 21 while some districts may witness heavy rainfall June 22.

Meanwhile, most parts of the state continued to sizzle under unprecedented heatwave conditions and high level of humidity throwing normal life out of gear. As many as 22 places in Odisha Sunday recorded maximum temperature above 40 degree Celsius and seven places recorded maximum day temperature above 45 degree Celsius. Sambalpur with 46 degree Celsius was the hottest in the state followed by Sonepur (45.8), Hirakud and Boudh (45.5 each), Jharsuguda (45.2), with Bolangir and Sundargarh 45 degree Celsius each.

New dads play a key role in successful nursing, safe sleep

Fathers can make a huge difference in the health and well-being of their infants by supporting breastfeeding and safe sleep practices, a new study has shown.

According to the study published in the journal Paediatrics, among fathers who wanted their infant's mother to breastfeed, 95 per cent reported breastfeeding initiation, and 78 per cent reported breastfeeding at eight weeks.

It is significantly higher than the 69 per cent of fathers who had no opinion or did not want their infant's mother to breastfeed - 69 per cent of these fathers reported breastfeeding initiation and 33



per cent reported breastfeeding at eight weeks.

The study included 250 fathers who were surveyed two to six months after the birth of their infant.

FATHER'S DAY

- AMONG FATHERS WHO WANTED THEIR INFANT'S MOTHER TO BREASTFEED, 95% REPORTED BREASTFEEDING INITIATION
- SCIENTISTS ALSO FOUND THAT 99% OF FATHERS REPORTED PLACING THEIR INFANT TO SLEEP
- THE STUDY INCLUDED 250 FATHERS WHO WERE SURVEYED TWO TO SIX MONTHS AFTER THE BIRTH OF THEIR INFANT

"Our findings underscore that new fathers are a critical audience to promote breastfeeding and safe infant sleep," said lead study author Dr John James Parker, an instructor of paediatrics at Northwestern University in the US.

"Many families do not gain the health benefits from breastfeeding because they are not provided the support to breast-

feed successfully. Fathers need to be directly engaged in breastfeeding discussions, and providers need to describe the important role fathers play in breastfeeding success," he added.

Moreover, the scientists also found that 99 per cent of fathers reported placing their infant to sleep, but only 16 per cent implemented all three infant sleep practices (using the back sleep position, an approved sleep surface, and avoiding soft bedding). Almost a third of fathers sur-

veyed were missing at least one key component of safe sleep education.

In the US, over 3,000 infants die as a result of sleep-related causes each year.

According to the study authors, the rate of sudden unexpected infant death (SIDS) in Black infants is more than twice that of White infants, and unsafe sleep practices may contribute to this disparity.

"Fathers need to receive counselling on all the safe sleep practices for their infants," Parker said.



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Man-croc conflicts on rise in Kendrapara

EFFORTS NOT BEING MADE TO CURB GROWING POPULATION OF THE REPTILES, OBSERVE EXPERTS



POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, June 18: Man-crocodile conflict has become a frequent occurrence in Kendrapara as well as in adjoining Jajpur and Bhadrak districts due to a sharp rise in population of the reptiles, sources said Sunday.

The issue assumes significance with the death of a 10-year-old boy in a crocodile attack at Brahmani river ghat in Nimpur village under Pattamundai block in Kendrapara district, June 14. The attack happened at a place which is not a part of Bhitarkanika National Park (BNP). The death of the boy is not an isolated case. Incidents of crocodile menace have been reported from Indupur town outskirts and in various places of the district at frequent intervals.

Observers claimed that croc menace has grown due to limited space in Bhitarkanika National Park. Hence more and more reptiles are straying into water bodies of Kendrapara, Jajpur and Bhadrak districts and unleashing a reign of terror.

Despite man-crocodile conflict occurring every month leading to deaths and injuries, the Forest department officials and the district administration have done very little to curb the rising cases of reptile attacks.

The Forest officials except for putting up an information plaque near water bodies and in riparian villages have done nothing to allay the fear of the villagers, locals alleged. The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change had issued a letter way

back in 1991 asking BNP officials to adopt measures to curb the rise in crocodile population. Locals and environmentalists have been demanding the implementation of this order but to no effect.

Environmentalist and secretary of Turtle Protection Committee Hemant Kumar Rout informed that currently Bhitarkanika houses around 1,800 crocodiles as per the last census in January this year. BNP also has albino crocodiles.

Close to 100 people have died due to crocodile attacks in the last 10 years sources informed. Similarly, over 25 crocodiles have died after getting caught in fishing nets and for other reasons.

With the population rising, the crocs are straying into various rivers and canals inside Kendrapara district and also in neighbouring

Jajpur and Bhadrak districts. This has sent shivers down the spine of the riparian residents.

Former wildlife expert BC Choudhury of Dehradun-based Wildlife Institute of India (WII) said the growth of crocodile population in Bhitarkanika within limited space is a matter of concern. He pointed out that the reptiles are facing food shortage and having mating problems. As a result fights are breaking out between the crocs with the weaker ones straying into human habitats.

The straying of crocodiles during floods and monsoons to adjoining areas of Bhitarkanika is a regular occurrence. This further aggravates the situation and an increase in man-crocodile conflicts. This should be checked and efforts should be made to increase the fish population in saline area, Choudhury stated.

Senior citizen Ganesh Chandra Samal said that the crocodile conservation programme was started in 1975 in Bhitarkanika as the number of reptiles was decreasing rapidly. Now however, steps should be taken to curb the numbers, he added. However, the collection of crocodile eggs and their conservation in hatcheries is still continuing. The growth of crocodile population in a limited space has proved detrimental for the residents, Samal pointed out.

When contacted, Kanika forest ranger Manas Dash said that crocodile conservation programme is taking place as per departmental orders.

Youth killed by dad, younger brother

POST NEWS NETWORK

Raibania, June 18: A man with the help of his younger son killed his eldest son Sunday at Rupadighi village of Raibania block under Jaleswar block in Balasore district. The gruesome incident which took place on Father's Day has shocked many residents of the village. Police said that Ratha Marandi (65) and Prashanta Marandi (25) thrashed to death Sushanta Marandi (35). Police informed that dur-

ing the weekly market, held Saturday here, Sushanta had manhandled his father. A bitter argument took place between Prashanta and Sushanta at the latter's house Sunday. Accompanying Prashanta was Ratha.

The argument soon escalated into violence as both Ratha and Prashanta started beating Sushanta mercilessly with bamboo sticks leading to his death.

On being informed, personnel from the Raibania police station reached the

crime spot and seized the bamboo sticks. They sent the body for post-mortem. A case (No-64/23) was registered at Raibania police station and police forwarded the murder-accused father and son duo to court after arresting them.

Police said that Sushanta had allegedly killed his mother three years back. Ratha, Prashanta and his wife were staying at a rented place after being evicted from their own house by Sushanta, police added.

Nominated Authority Ministry of Coal, Government of India

Room No.120, 'F' Wing, 1st Floor, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-110001 (Ph: 23384106) Email: nomauthority.moc@nic.in Website: http://www.coal.nic.in/welcome.html NOTICE FOR SUBMISSION OF CLAIMS IN RELATION TO SCHEDULE I COAL MINES

In accordance with the provisions of Section 9 of the Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015 and Rule 15 of The Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Rules, 2014, claims are invited afresh from the Secured Creditors, Central Government, State Government and local authorities for dues from the prior allottee in relation to the Schedule I Coal Mines as on 01.04.2015 (in respect of Schedule-II Coal Mines) and 24.09.2014 (for remaining Schedule-I Coal Mines) and having become due and payable within twelve months immediately before that date.

Detailed notice regarding submission of claims can be downloaded from the website of Ministry of Coal (http://www.coal.nic.in).

Last date and time for submission of claims is 5.00 P.M. of 19.7.2023

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Elephant menace returns to haunt Bonai

THE TUSKER IN NOVEMBER HAD KILLED TWO PERSONS BESIDES DAMAGING CROPS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, June 18: The wild tusker which had been spreading a reign of terror in the Bonai forest division for some time, is back to terrorise the people after a period of lull. The elephant was part of a 17-member herd that moves around in the Deogarh and Bonai forest divisions.

"It (the elephant) returned Saturday afternoon and we saw it. This is a big male elephant and has either been driven out of the herd or has left on its own. Hence it is very dangerous and is always in a rampaging mood," said Samar Pradhan, a resident of Banderpalli. People are in a state of panic as in the past, the elephant had entered Bonai town.

"That was a harrowing night when the elephant entered Bonai. I saw the jumbo just 50 metres away from my home while it was being chased away. Fortunately, it could not cause any damage but its presence was suffi-



cient to spread panic among us," said Tapan Dandia, a resident of Bonai.

The lone elephant has a very bad track record in the last one-and-a-half years. The animal first made its appearance in January 2022. So far it has killed two elderly people, one on

November 16, 2022 and the other November 22. One other person was lucky to survive an attack by the tusker. It had also entered Bonai town September 3 last year and went on a rampage destroying kuccha houses and food stuff.

Locals have blamed Forest department officials for their failure to drive away the animal. Five of them were nearly manhandled November 22, the day the elephant killed a man and damaged vegetable plantations.

DFO Lalit Kumar Patra said that they are watching the movements of the elephant. "My squad is tracking the animal. At the moment it is in Kalloposh forest division. It entered from the Rajamunda side. The return of elephant is certainly worrying, but we have to protect it and also see that it does not cause any damage," Patra said. "Depending on the situation, we will soon make an effort to drive it back into the forests of Bonai division," he added.

Fisherman dead in boat accident

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rupsa, June 18: A fisherman drowned Sunday while five others had a close shave after a mechanised fishing boat overturned in the sea near Bahabalpur fishing centre under Bahabalpur Marine police limits in Balasore district. The deceased was identified as Kalipada Manna of Kashaphala village. There were seven fishermen and the driver on the boat when it overturned. Six of them managed to swim to ashore, but two fishermen, Kalipada and Babudhar Behera went missing. The mishap occurred when the boat 'Himadri' was returning to the shore after the day's catch.

Coastguard and fire department personnel launched a rescue operation and rescued the two from sea. They were rushed to the Basta community health centre where doctors pronounced Kalipada dead on arrival and admitted Babudhar who was in critical condition for treatment. Medical outpost police registered a case and sent the body for post-mortem.



Market complex awaits rightful owners in Steel City

AUTHORITIES SAY HANDING OVER OF SHOP SPACES TO TAKE PLACE VERY SOON



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, June 18: The massive modern market, which was constructed in Panposh, is still under lock and key after its inauguration. Keeping in mind, the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup, construction of the market complex was completed. However, since its inauguration in March this year, it has remained closed as the shopkeepers are yet to open their shops.

The construction of the market began during the tenure of the Congress government in the state in 1985. Initially it was decided to set up 36 shops in each floor. However, due to the poor quality of construction, the condition of the building started deteriorating and by the mid-1990s, it became inhabitable.

A new complex close to it was constructed by the then Janata government. The total number of shop spaces was 150. However, then also the condition of the building was not up to the mark. In fact, 36 shops on the first floor were not fit to carry out any activity. Many of the shops were abandoned.

When Rourkela became a part of the 'Smart City' project it was decided to construct a modern shopping complex. A decision was also taken to give prior-

ity for allotting of spaces to the original shopkeepers.

In 2021 through the tender process, the work was awarded to UR Construction at a cost of ₹38.38 crores. It was decided to have 216 shops with underground parking facilities.

However, then cropped up a new problem - the rehabilitation of vegetable vendors who plied their trade close to the modern market complex. This vegetable market caters to large areas including Panposh and old Panposh residential localities, Civil Township, STI and ITI. Vendors come from far-off places to this marketplace. However, they were facing a lot of problems over parking their vehicles. Also during the monsoons, water logging created hurdles for the vegetable vendors.

An official of the 'Smart City Limited' informed recently, that a vegetable vending zone will be constructed behind the new modern market. There will be provisions for 128 platforms and shades.

Speaking to the media here Sunday, president of the Market Committee Umakanta Pandey informed, "We have held a discussion with the authorities and they have assured that very soon the shops will be handed over to us. They have also assured us that construction of the vegetable vending zone will begin soon."

Deputy Commissioner of Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC) Gourabmaya Pradhan said, "The complex has been handed over to RMC and the process of handing over the shops to the shopkeepers is being expedited and will be completed soon."

Officials pointed out that once the market complex becomes functional it will be a landmark building in this city.

Advertisement for Special Trains for Rath Yatra, including a table of train schedules and promotional text for the UTS app and Helpline 139.

Peace is the first condition, without which nothing else can be stable.

SRI AUROBINDO



Manipur Mayhem

Manipur is burning. It has been turned into a virtual 'necropolis', as some women of the state have said with acute pain, with killings in ethnic clashes continuing in the valley and the hills with frightening regularity. Interestingly, the Chief Minister of Manipur had stated on 28 May that "it is not a fight between communities" but "between the state and central forces against the terrorists who are trying to break Manipur."

Temples and Churches have been burnt down, more than 40,000 people are in refugee camps in their own state and, according to unofficial sources, more than 400 deaths are all indicators of a planned pogrom being carried out in that state.

The Hindoo Meitis living predominantly in the valley and Christian Kukis in the hills are battling for each other's blood and a fratricidal war has broken out with sophisticated arms being used by groups supporting the warring communities. The state administration has collapsed. The state government and the Centre - both controlled by the BJP in the 'Double Engine' fashion since last 6 years - have miserably failed to tackle the situation which has spun frighteningly out of control.

This has prompted women groups in Manipur drawn from various ethnic groups, including the two in conflict, to send poignant appeals to the PM to break his silence and act decisively to stop the blood-letting. The convener of one such group has even asked the PM, "How dare you keep silent!"

Chief Minister N Biren Singh, it is being said, has lost his credibility of neutrality and some Kuki MLAs belonging to his party have expressed their lack of confidence in him. Amit Shah visited the state at the height of the strife, but his prescription did not work.

Manipur, a lush green, hilly state which borders Myanmar, is home to an ethnically diverse group of Sino-Tibetan communities, each with their own language, culture and religion. Manipur was once a princely state under the British rule, and incorporated into India in 1949, two years after the country gained Independence.

The ongoing turmoil has already seen some of the worst violence in recent years. There is huge criticism from the Opposition and critics, saying the PM and the BJP are showing a lack of empathy and urgency in tackling the problem and hence failing to stop the bloodshed.

Many intellectuals and civil society activists of Manipur have advanced the argument that successive governments in New Delhi have shown apathy towards the problems in the North-East in general and Manipur in particular. There are over 60 ethnic groups living in the state with distinct cultural and sociological characteristics.

The prolonged use of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) has had a very negative impact on the social and political growth in this state. Historically, the state has always been toeing the line of whichever party is in power at the Centre. That also may be a major cause of political degeneration and decay.

The delay in taking decisive action by the Centre and the state government only fuels rumours that the ruling party is setting the majority ethnic group - the Meitis - against the minority Kukis for political gain. The Meitis account for about 53 per cent of the population, according to the latest census, while the Kukis' share of the state population is 14 per cent.

It has to be remembered that Manipur is a border state. The formula of 'Double-Engine' has obviously failed resulting in massive bloodshed. In the meanwhile, the state administration has debarred entry of MPs belonging to other parties who wanted to visit as a committee, thereby blocking any means of political inclusiveness in solving the problem.

WISDOM CORNER

- In a day when you don't come across any problems, you can be sure that you are travelling in a wrong path. - SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
- There are two different types of people in the world, those who want to know, and those who want to believe. - FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE
- The real question is not whether life exists after death. The real question is whether you are alive before death. - OSHO

WORDSWORTH

Kangaroo court

A kangaroo court is one that's illegal, not properly constituted or is manifestly unfair or unjust and in which the likelihood of the prisoner's being found guilty doesn't depend on the evidence. You might reasonably assume the term is Australian - only in that country, after all, does one find kangaroos. But the term is definitely American, with no known links to Australia apart from the animal's name.

FOCUS ELECTIONS

BJP NOT INVINCIBLE



Sagarnel Sinha

ONLY AIRING ANTI-BJP OR ANTI-MODI VIEWS AND FOCUSING ON ARITHMETIC ISN'T GOING TO HELP THE OPPOSITION MUCH

Less than a year is left for the Lok Sabha elections and the Opposition parties have started working out efforts to defeat the BJP juggernaut led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. After a few hiccups and initial cancellations, the meeting of the Opposition is scheduled on June 23 at Patna where top leaders of the parties are to attend.

After the BJP's defeat in the Karnataka Assembly elections last month, despite a strong campaign led by Modi himself, Opposition parties have realised that the battle for 2024 isn't over and the saffron party is not invincible.

If the Opposition has to defeat the BJP, there has to be a proper coordination among them and importantly the contest has to be reduced into one-on-one fight vs. BJP. This strategy has already been put forward by some Opposition leaders such as Mamata and Nitish. Accordingly, the dominant party in the respective state would fight against the BJP to reduce the fight into a bipolar contest in order to lessen any chances of division of anti-BJP votes.

As Barbadian PM Mia Mottley warns, the Global South, including its emerging economies, remains in critical financial condition, much like Europe after World War II. Back then, the US committed reconstruction funding equal to 3% of the recipient countries' combined national incomes, because it knew that the investment would pay off both economically and geopolitically.

SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

What the Paris Finance Summit must do



Sébastien Treyer & Bertrand Badré

THIS IS THE MOMENT TO ARTICULATE A REFORM AGENDA THAT IS AMBITIOUS ENOUGH TO GIVE THE GLOBAL SOUTH REAL HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Lack of investment in sustainable development in the world's poorest, most vulnerable countries is one of the most pressing global issues today, especially now that many of these countries are in debt distress, or will be soon. The fallout from COVID-19, Russia's war on Ukraine, and ongoing climate-driven disasters are preventing many developing economies from achieving liftoff and exacerbating the global economy's structural asymmetries.

This is the decade when we should be ratcheting up investments in sustainable development. In Sub-Saharan Africa, an additional two million decent jobs must be created each month until 2035, just to keep up with growth in the working-age population. Yet major powers like the US, the EU, and China are paying scant attention to such challenges.

As Barbadian PM Mia Mottley warns, the Global South, including its emerging economies,



If the Opposition has to defeat the BJP, there has to be a proper coordination among them and importantly the contest has to be reduced into one-on-one fight vs. BJP

polls, the collapse of JD(S) dashed the incumbent BJP's hopes of division of anti-BJP votes and as a result, Congress won with a comfortable majority. Importantly, BJP's vote share almost remained same as it got in 2018 elections, but it was the shift of the votes of the JD(S) that made the big difference.

But the main problem is that some parties are unlikely to follow this model properly. Take the case of Congress. If this one-on-one strategy vs. BJP is implemented, the grand old party has to let go of many seats. It has to do so in states like Uttar Pradesh, barring seats like Amethi and Rai Bareilly. Will it be possible for the party? Will the state Congress leaders accept this? Let's not forget that even the grand old party itself still believes that it continues to be the only national party other than the BJP and it should be leading the fight. More so, after Karnataka's big win.

However, parties like the TMC and AAP are averse to any Congress dominance. This appears to be the case as both Mamata and Kejriwal give the clear impression of eyeing the Prime Ministerial post. Although TMC's attempts to grow its base

outside Bengal have failed and it suffered a setback after the Election Commission recently withdrew its national party status, the AAP in contrast has national dreams as it got a boost having acquired that status.

The AAP has been targeting Congress voters in the Hindi belt and it's the main rival in Punjab, where it came to power defeating the grand old party last year. On the other hand, Congress is in partnership with TMC's arch-rival CPM in Bengal. The Left after being reduced to zero in the 2021 state Assembly elections has been gaining strength and has been strategically targeting both TMC and BJP. So, the model of one-on-one strategy vs. BJP is unlikely to be implemented in Bengal too. Similarly in Kerala, where CPM and Congress are traditional rivals, there is zero possibility of implementation of this strategy against BJP. Same goes for Telangana where Congress will challenge BRS of K Chandrashekar Rao.

Therefore, it is unlikely to be a full-fledged anti-BJP alliance in some states. This will only strengthen the perception that the Opposition is divided but united to only defeat the BJP

without any alternative vision. Such an image is unlikely to sway voters in favour of the Opposition. It also knows this reality as it's impossible for them to unite in some states - and that's the reason it is opting for a common minimum programme. According to reports, NCP chief Sharad Pawar is likely to prepare its draft - a very good strategy by Opposition so that there exists a platform to address the concerns and differences of the parties amiably. Although one-on-one fight vs. BJP is unavoidable in some states, a better coordination, as much as possible, among Opposition parties is likely to reduce the existing friction among some parties at the state level. Even this remains a big dream for the conflicting Opposition parties to achieve.

Even if better coordination happens among the Opposition, this won't be enough to defeat the BJP. Elections are not just about arithmetic. They are also about chemistry. But it seems that the Opposition is mostly working on arithmetic forgetting the fact that in the last Lok Sabha elections, BJP along with its small allies secured more than 50% votes in UP, MP, HP, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Haryana and Delhi - and all these states together have 241 seats in the Lok Sabha.

Alliances or seat adjustments are likely to only reduce the division of anti-BJP votes but until and unless the Opposition is able to dent BJP's base, which remains strong in the Hindi belt, it won't be able to defeat the saffron party. And for that to happen, it should have an alternate vision to draw voters towards it. Only airing anti-BJP or anti-Modi views and focussing on arithmetic isn't going to help Opposition much because voters look for a government, which is efficient on delivery and importantly stable.

INFA

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

Orissa POST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Poll violence

Sir, This refers to, "WB moves SC against Central forces' deployment," Orissa POST, June 18. As is depressingly usual, bombs and bodies are the main motifs as Bengal gets ready for another round of panchayat polls. Three days ago, two political workers from TMC and ISF were killed, and five others suffered gunshot wounds in poll-related violence. Escalating violence has prompted the Calcutta High Court to order the state election commission to requisition central forces for all districts in the state. Political violence in Bengal has a long history. But it manifests itself in its most vicious form during the panchayat polls. This is due to a combination of factors: a highly politicised society, a significant number of unemployed young men, an entrenched patronage model adopted by successive governments. The scale of political violence in Bengal remains unparalleled as 54 cases of political murder were registered in 2018 of which 13, the highest, were from Bengal. Parties control their area of domination through violence and intimidation, to ensure the flow of resources and manpower. The CPM may have conceptualised this model. But the TMC, the BJP and the Congress are willing adopters. Any change requires, first, that the unemployed young in villages find other ways to earn a living. That's not happening anytime soon.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, WASHINGTON

Combat divisiveness

Sir, The newly elected Congress government in Karnataka has finally acted on the pre-poll promises by deciding to repeal the anti-conversion law. The law was undoubtedly one of the well concerted tactics of the previous BJP government to appease Hindu voters. Karnataka's protection of right to freedom of religion act had mandate to prohibit unlawful conversions from one religion to another, although the National Investigation Agency had no statistics in this regard. The omission of certain parts from school textbooks related to RSS founder KB Hedgewar is also apt in decimating the current course of hateful ideologies. The Congress party must further trade in such path that outrightly combats the divisive policies of the BJP. Any efforts to find a middle ground would only sabotage their chances for the 2024 elections.

Debadurllav Harichandan, BHUBANESWAR

Power crisis deepens in J'khand amid heatwave

SEVERAL AREAS OF CAPITAL RANCHI, WHICH RECORDED THE SEASON'S HIGHEST OF 41.4 DEGREE CELSIUS, WITNESSED POWER CUTS THAT LASTED HOURS FRIDAY

AGENCIES

Ranchi, June 18: Prolonged power outages amid the heatwave have added to the woes of Jharkhand residents.

On Friday, several areas of capital Ranchi, which recorded the season's highest of 41.4 degree Celsius, witnessed power cuts that lasted hours.

The affected areas included Kokar, Harmu, Doranda and Ashok Nagar. In Kokar's New Colony area, there was a 12-hour power cut. "There was a power fault around 1.30am. It was finally restored around 3.30pm in the afternoon," Amit Mahto, a resident of the colony, said.

Jharkhand BJP president Deepak Prakash tweeted, "Due to power cuts in this scorching heat, people admitted in government hospitals are facing trouble."

The general manager of Jharkhand Bijli Vitaran Nigam Limited (JBVNL), Ranchi, PK Srivastava, told PTI, "There was power outage in some areas last night. Transformer breakdowns were also reported from a few places. Supply was restored by Friday afternoon."

According to the weather department, there won't be any relief from the scorching heat for at least the next three-four days. The department Friday



issued a heat wave red alert for East and West Singhbhum districts, orange alert for Saraikela-Kharswan and Simdega districts

and yellow alert for other districts till Saturday, a weather official said.

In-charge of Ranchi Meteorological Centre, Abhishek Anand, said, "There won't be any respite from the extreme heat or heatwave for at least three-four days. Thereafter, temperature may dip by two to three degrees. Light to moderate rains are likely in some parts of the state till June 20."

Godda district logged 45.2 degree Celsius, the highest maximum temperature in the state, followed by Pakur at 44.5 degree Celsius.

Jamshedpur and Daltonganj simmered at 43.8 degree Celsius, while Deoghar recorded a maximum of 43.5 degree Celsius Friday.

Monsoon likely to reach state between June 18-21

Ranchi: The monsoon, considered crucial for agriculture, is likely to hit Jharkhand between June 18 and 21, providing relief to people of the state from the current heat conditions, a meteorological department official said. The monsoon reached near Sahibganj district in the northeast part of the state June 12 but "it did not proceed further as conditions were not favourable", Ranchi Meteorological Centre in-charge Abhishek Anand said. "Conditions are likely to become favourable for further advancement of the monsoon from June 18 in the eastern region. It may enter Jharkhand between June 18 and 21," he told PTI. The mercury level has been hovering around 40 degree Celsius in the last few days, and the situation is likely to remain the same for at least the next four days, Anand said in a statement.



Navy boat to sound out Yamuna's depths

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 18: An Indian navy boat will be used to vet Yamuna's potential as a waterway channel, a statement from the LG office has said.

The navy boat christened 'Barahsingha' has been berthed at a jetty created near the Signature Bridge, it said in a statement.

"The boat has been brought to ascertain the navigability of the river and explore the possibility of utilising the clean channel as an inland waterway for transport, recreation and tourism," the statement said. The 11-metre-long work boat of the navy was moored near the Signature Bridge because a trailer that brought it from Kochi, could not access any other suitable location on Yamuna, it said. The LG office refuted reports that the boat was "stuck" in mud or that it was meant for dredging.

The boat has been requisitioned from the Indian Navy at Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena's initiative, read the statement. His request for the boat was routed through the Irrigation and Flood Control, and Tourism departments of the Delhi government.

"The boat, an 11-metre work



THE NAVY BOAT CHRISTENED 'BARAHSINGHA' HAS BEEN BERTHED AT A JETTY CREATED NEAR THE SIGNATURE BRIDGE

THE AUTHORITIES HAVE DEPLOYED DREDGING EQUIPMENT IN THE RIVER TO CREATE A SUITABLE CHANNEL OF IDEAL DEPTH FOR THE BOAT TO NAVIGATE

THE DREDGING EXERCISE IS LIKELY TO BE COMPLETED BY JUNE 20

boat of the Indian Navy, was brought from Kochi on a trailer. It was transported from Kochi May 25 and reached Delhi June 3. The draft of the boat is 1.7 metres (minimum depth required)," the statement said. A hydrographic survey of Yamuna was done by the navy through its team from Dehradun and Karwar. The survey completed June 8 revealed depths ranging

from 0.9 metres to up to more than 4 metres in Yamuna. Stretches 1.7 metres deep or less have been physically marked in the river, the statement said.

The authorities have deployed dredging equipment in the river to create a suitable channel of ideal depth for the boat to navigate. The dredging exercise is likely to be completed by June 20, the statement read.

BIKE TAXI BAN Drivers write to Delhi LG citing livelihood threat



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jun 18: A section of bike taxi drivers has sought Delhi LG V K Saxena's intervention in helping them stave off a Delhi government ban which proscribed them from plying on city roads in absence of a policy.

The Delhi government had earlier in the week banned app-based taxi services such as Rapido and Uber in view of ab-

sence of a policy for plying of bike taxis on city roads.

In a memorandum they handed over to LG's office, the drivers said the Delhi government was adamant on banning their services.

"We will face difficulties in meeting household expenses, getting our children educated and getting our parents treated," read the memorandum.

The Supreme Court had

Monday stayed a Delhi High Court order that essentially allowed Rapido and Uber to operate in the national capital by asking the Delhi government not to take any coercive action against them till a new policy was formulated.

A vacation bench of Justices Aniruddha Bose and Rajesh Bindal at Supreme Court granted liberty to the two aggregators to request urgent hearing of their pleas by the Delhi HC.

Transport Commissioner Ashish Kundra said the government will write to aggregators and also appeal to them through the media to comply with the Supreme Court order or face action.

The bench, which stayed the May 26 order of the Delhi HC, also recorded the Delhi government counsel's submission that the final policy will be notified before July-end.



TAKING REST: A monkey sits on a tree on a hot summer day in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

BOOSTING INCOME

J'khand beneficiaries to get fruit bearing trees

AGENCIES

Ranchi, June 18: The Jharkhand government has decided to provide at least two fruit bearing trees to PDS card holders and beneficiaries of different schemes in the state in a bid to augment villagers' income and push its environment protection initiative, officials said.

Chief Minister Hemant Soren, who reviewed the progress of various government schemes on Friday at a meeting, asked the deputy commissioners of all districts to ensure that all the card holders and beneficiaries of different schemes are provided with at least two fruit bearing trees.

"This will not only increase the income of the villagers, but will also be a step towards environmental protection," he said.

Soren said that the government's Birsa Harit Gram Yojana too will be effective in making the villages green. The scheme, which is aimed at the financial uplift of the senior citizens and widows, is being implemented in 9,538 villages of the state, an official statement said.

Expressing concern over the migration of workers from rural areas in search of employment, Soren said that at least five schemes are to be implemented in every panchayat. The government is running several



schemes under MGNREGA for employment generation and are operational in 4,153 panchayats of the state. Against the target of generating 297 lakh man days by June, around 240 lakh man days have been created by now, which is 80 per cent of the total target, the release said.

In a bid to promote sports at the school level in the state, the chief minister directed officials that one day in a month should be celebrated as sports day in schools. Reviewing the progress of the panchayati raj department, he directed the officials to increase the number of Prgya Kendras from the existing 20,000 to 35,000 in the state and ensure essential facilities including electricity, water, generator, internet connectivity and security in the centers in the next three months.

J'khand: Summer vacation up to Class 8 extended till June 21

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, June 18: The Jharkhand government Sunday again extended the school closure for students up to Class 8 till June 21 due to the prevailing heatwave conditions.

This is for the third time that the summer break was extended this year. Earlier, the government had announced the extension of summer vacation June 11 and June 14. The schools were to open

for primary and middle-level students June 19.

However, students of Classes 9 to 12 would have to attend schools from 7 am to 11 am, an order issued by the secretary of the school education and literacy department K Ravi Kumar said.

"All categories of government, non-government, aided/ non-aided (including minority) and all private schools operating in the state will remain closed from June 19 till June 21 for classes



from KG to 8 while the Classes 9 to 12 will be conducted from 7

Making reels in Delhi Metro? DMRC says no

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 18: With a number of controversial videos filmed in the Delhi Metro going viral in the last several weeks, the DMRC urged commuters not to make reels inside metro trains and warned that any activity that may cause inconvenience to passengers is strictly prohibited.

Recently, a video of a young woman gyrating to popular Bollywood song "Assalam-e-Ishqum" surfaced online. Prior to this, a string of other videos made inside metro trains and at station platforms went viral on social media, prompting the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) to appeal to commuters to refrain from indulging in such activities.

On Friday, the DMRC used a nursery rhyme to drive home



its point. "Open your camera, Na Na Na! #DelhiMetro," the DMRC said in a tweet.

Along with the tweet, it also shared a poster which read, "Johnny Johnny! Yes Papa? Making Reels in Metro? No Papa!" "Any such activity that

the DMRC urged its commuters to "refrain from indulging in such obscene activities".

It also requested commuters to report such incidents to the "nearest available metro staff/CISF immediately, so that appropriate action can be taken".

Social media users have responded to these videos with anger and humour. After the video of the couple kissing surfaced online, many social media users had urged the DMRC to take action against the couple, while some had questioned the need for filming the act. Some people made mirth.

Reacting to the video, a social media user said, the youth was "performing CPR on her, what is wrong with that?"

In a statement, the DMRC had said it "expects commuters to behave responsibly while using the Delhi Metro and follow all social etiquette and protocols which are acceptable in the society".

"Commuters should not indulge in any indecent/obscene activity that may cause discomfort or could offend the sensibilities of other fellow commuters. DMRC's Operations and Maintenance Act in fact lists out indecency as a punishable offence under Section 59," it said.

The moves comes after several videos, including of people dancing and doing some objectionable acts were doing rounds on social media

PHOTO POST



A peacock on Raj Bhavan premises in Mumbai



Farmers plant paddy saplings in Amritsar



A villager crosses a flooded area following heavy rainfall in Nagaon district of Assam



Tourists enjoy river rafting in Manali



Fishermen return after catching fish in Chennai



Tea garden workers pick leaves in Darjeeling



A huge samosa named 'Bahubali Samosa' being sold at a shop in Meerut



Army personnel trying to rescue stranded tourists in north Sikkim

national

of the day quote

Why did the Modi government snatch 3.84 lakh jobs from only seven PSUs? Why did the jobs of women decrease by 42 per cent in the central government? Why contract and casual government jobs increased by 88 per cent?

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

I will persuade all opposition parties to forge unity based on a common minimum programme to provide an alternative to the Narendra Modi government at the Centre

SHARAD PAWAR | NCP CHIEF

It is the responsibility of every citizen to ensure the wise use of nature's gifts

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | VICE PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

BJP candidate's kin found dead

Kolkata: Amid the violence in the run up to the July 8 panchayat polls in West Bengal, a BJP candidate's brother-in-law was found stabbed to death in Cooch Behar district. Sambhu Das, aged around 30 years, was called outside his home by unidentified youths on Saturday night, police said. Hours later his body with stab wounds was found near a pond.

Female doctor verbally abused

Kottayam (Kerala): A female postgraduate doctor was allegedly verbally abused and threatened a day ago at the government medical college hospital here by a patient, police said Sunday. The incident brings to the fore memories of the brutal killing of a young woman doctor last month by a patient at a taluk hospital in Kollam district of the state.

3 Maoists held

Bijapur: Security forces have arrested three Maoists and seized explosives, including a tiffin bomb, from them in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, police said Sunday. Those nabbed were tasked with planting explosives and putting Maoist posters and banners in the area, an official here said. A joint team of security personnel that was out on a search operation on Friday nabbed the three Maoists near their village Pusnar under Gangaloor police station limits, the official said.

Three boys killed

Farrukhabad (UP): Three minor boys were killed after being hit by a train here, police said Sunday. Hirithik (13), Vineet (15) and his cousin Hari Om (12) had come to attend a wedding function at Jajpur Banjar village under Mohammadabad police station area, they said.

Woman found dead

Lucknow: A 27-year-old Ukrainian woman has been found dead at her in-laws' house in Ashiana area in Lucknow Saturday. Police said that the woman, Oksana Manchar, was married to one Jude Augustine of Ashiana and had given birth to a baby boy on June 14 and since then, was under depression. Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), Cantonment, Abhinav Yadav, said that they got CCTV footage in which Oksana was spotted going on the second floor of the house towards the storeroom while other members of the house, including her mother-in-law Meenu, sister-in-law Yulan were asleep on the ground floor.



BJP has realised that an impending defeat stares them in the face. To hide the failures of BJP, it is resorting to acts of cowardice and arrogance, instead of fighting the opponents politically. The coming together of opposition all over India will be the final nail in the coffin of 'autocratic' BJP

MK STALIN | TN CM

MAN STABS SON

On the occasion of Father's Day, a 64-year-old man was arrested for allegedly stabbing his 23-year-old son in a fit of rage when the latter was trying to pacify him during an altercation in East Delhi's IP Extension, police said Sunday



Manipur violence: Cong slams PM, RSS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 18: The Congress Sunday criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not speaking on the Manipur crisis in his 'Mann Ki Baat' radio broadcast and asked when will he say or do something about the "unending violence" in the northeastern state.

While slamming the Prime Minister's "continuing silence", Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh also hit out at the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) for issuing an appeal for peace in Manipur "after 45 days" and asked if the prime minister had "outsourced" the appeal to the organisation that "moulded him".

"So one more Mann ki Baat but Maun (silence) on Manipur. The PM patted himself on the back for India's great capabilities in disaster management. What about the entire man-made (actually self-inflicted) humanitarian disaster that is confronting Manipur. Still no appeal for peace from him. There is a non-auditable PM-CARES Fund but does the PM even care for Manipur is the real question," Ramesh said on Twitter.

Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram also took a dig at the prime minister, saying he is "too busy" to find the time to visit Manipur. "I have a practical suggestion: the PM's special aircraft can make an unscheduled stop at Imphal on the way to Washington giving the Hon'ble

PM an opportunity to 'visit' Manipur. That way, he can effectively silence all the opposition to him," Chidambaram said on Twitter.

Ramesh said the Sangh has finally issued a public appeal for peace and harmony in Manipur after 45 days of "unending violence", and targeted the Sangh as well as the prime minister. "The RSS well-known duplicity is in full display as its divisive ideology and polarising activities are changing the very nature of a diverse NorthEast, of which Manipur is one tragic example," he alleged.

"But what of its much-celebrated former Pracharak, who now controls the administrative machinery at the Centre and in the state? Has he outsourced the public appeal to the organisation that moulded him, Ramesh asked.

"When will Mr. Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, say something, do something on Manipur? Is he only a Prachar Mantri and not Pradhan Mantri?" Ramesh said on Twitter. The RSS on Sunday condemned the ongoing violence in Manipur and appealed to the government, including local administration, police, security forces and central agencies to take every possible step to restore peace immediately.

In a statement, RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale stressed that there is no place for hatred and violence in a democratic setup.



An aerial view of a flooded area after heavy rainfall caused by cyclone Biparjoy in Sanchole, Rajasthan

PTI PHOTO

DMK sacks platform speaker for remark on Khushbu Sundar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, June 18: BJP leader and actor Khushbu Sundar Sunday slammed a DMK platform speaker for his purported remarks about her, taking exception to his "crass comments" and said the National Commission for Women, of which she is a member, will take up the matter by itself.

With Sundar raking up the issue on Twitter and later emotionally addressing a press conference, the ruling party announced that the platform speaker, Sivaji Krishnamurthy, was being dismissed from the party for indiscipline and bringing disrepute to it.

At a press meet hours after tweeting on the issue, Sundar broke down. Sundar said she has already taken up the matter with the Tamil Nadu State



Commissioner for Women.

Earlier, she uploaded a video of Krishnamurthy on her Twitter page and said, "The crass comments of this habitual offender shows the political culture prevalent in DMK." "There are many like him in that rut. Abusing women, passing lewd cheap comments about them goes unchecked and is probably rewarded with more opportunities."

Tagging Chief Minister M K Stalin, she said, "What you don't realise is he not only insults me, but you & a great leader like your father (the late M Karunanidhi). The more space you provide him, the more political space you will lose. Your party is becoming a safe haven for uncouth hooligans. It's such a shame," Sundar said.

Later, addressing the media, Sundar questioned the bad outlook about women in general that political parties had, and said she was talking for all women. "Don't be afraid. I am there, we (NCW, apparently) are there. I will stand up for you," she said. "The issue was not about a DMK man speaking ill of a BJP woman leader, but it was an attack on women. This is the new Dravida model. Such persons are being nurtured in the DMK," she said.

10 hurt in shuttle bus accident at airport

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, June 18: Ten people were injured when the shuttle bus they were traveling in from Terminal-1 to 2 of the Kempegowda international airport here crashed into a pillar early on Sunday, airport authorities said.

The injured have been taken to the hospital for immediate medical treatment. So far five people were discharged, they said. "On June 18, 2023 at approximately 5.15 AM, a shuttle bus operating between T1 and T2 of the BLR airport collided with a pole near the T2 arrival exit road, resulting in minor injuries to 10 people. There were a total of 17 passengers (15 pax and 2 crew) in the bus. The injured have been taken to hospital for



immediate medical treatment," the BIAL spokesperson said in a statement.

"AISATS operates the shuttle services at the airport as per the service contract awarded to them by BIAL. We are working with the operator to investigate the matter and will take all necessary mitigating measures as per the agreement," he said.

Investigation is on, the spokesperson added. Meanwhile, AISATS issued a statement regretting the incident. "We deeply regret the incident involving a shuttle bus carrying 15 passengers and 2 staff members that collided with a pole while operating between Terminals 1 and 2 at BLR Airport." "While six passengers were hospitalized for minor injuries to ensure they receive the best care, the remaining passengers continued to their respective destinations after undergoing a thorough inspection by the medical team," the operator said.

"The well-being and safety of our passengers and staff are our top priorities. We have extended all support to the authorities for further investigations," it added.

DU STUDENT KILLED OUTSIDE COLLEGE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 18: A first-year student of Delhi University (DU) was allegedly stabbed to death outside Aryabhata College in the South Campus Sunday, police said.

The victim - 19-year-old Nikhil Chauhan - was a resident of Paschim Vihar and pursuing BA (Hons) in Political Science from the School of Open Learning, they said. The police received a call from the Charak Palika Hospital about Chauhan's admission with a stab wound and rushed to the spot.

Preliminary investigations revealed that a student of the School of Open Learning allegedly misbehaved with Chauhan's girlfriend in college around a week ago. On Sunday, around 12.30 pm, the accused and three of his associates met Chauhan outside Aryabhata College and allegedly stabbed

Gunmen kill two women; slugfest erupts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 18: Gunmen allegedly shot dead two women in southwest Delhi's RK Puram in the early hours of Sunday over a suspected financial dispute with their brother, police said.

Three accused have been arrested in connection with the shooting incident at RK Puram's Ambedkar Basti, they said. In grainy footage from a purported video shot by local residents, gunshots can be heard amid a barrage of abuse. The video also purports to show the gunmen firing their weapons before escaping while one woman is seen lying on the ground as the locals scream in panic.

The incident has triggered a political slugfest in the national capital. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, while condoling the deaths of the two women, asserted that if the AAP dispensation had control over the city's law-and-order system, Delhi would have been the safest place.

The Lt Governor has control over public order, land and police in the national capital. BJP leader and Union Minister Meenakashi Lekhi, on the other



Family members of women who were shot dead by unidentified assailants at RK Puram, mourn their loss in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

hand, said the incident was the fallout of personal enmity. Sharing details about the incident, the police said they received a call around 4.40 am from the victims' brother Lalit about his sisters being shot at.

"Acting on the information, a police team reached the spot where it was found that two women were shot at and shifted to Safdarjung Hospital, where they succumbed," said a senior police officer.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the assailants were after the victims' brother Lalit

and the motive seems to have been a monetary dispute, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southwest) Manoj C said. The prime accused and his two associates were arrested in connection with the incident," he added.

They have been identified as Arun, Michael and Dev, the police said. A case has been registered and further investigation is underway. Lal, another brother of the victims, said, "My elder brother Lalit had given money to someone as a loan. On Saturday, when my brother asked them to return the money, a

Congress proposes next meet in Shimla

The Congress is understood to have offered to host the next meeting of the like-minded Opposition parties at Shimla. Since the Patna conclave in Patna of 16-18 Opposition parties is a first structured dialogue to identify common issues and programmes, the Shimla conclave will be a concrete step to cement ties and iron out differences. The Patna conclave is a single-day affair but Shimla will be a two-day conclave.

In Shimla, the Opposition parties will fine tune the agenda for May 2024 polls and may form a number of sub-committees for various issues to be sorted out.

Modi's sermons to ministers

An interesting experiment is currently underway in the Modi government. According to insiders, all Union Ministers have been asked to acquaint themselves with the functioning, landmark projects and achievements of a ministry



other than his/her own. It is believed that this proposal has come from the Prime Minister's Office and aimed to ensure that the knowledge base of ministers should not necessarily be limited to a particular field. Instead, they should have an overview of the functioning of the government and

also their success stories. It is argued that this will help the ministers in responding to queries from the media and on other occasions. The government obviously does not want its ministers faltering when information is sought on issues outside their respective areas of expertise.

PM fixing nuts and bolts

PM Modi is fixing nuts and bolts before undertaking the much-

awaited Cabinet reshuffle. Reports from the PMO indicate that the date may be announced only when discussions are complete. It could perhaps happen after Modi's return from US and before the Monsoon session of Parliament. Since this may be his last reshuffle before the Lok Sabha polls in May 2024, extensive internal assessment is going on. Secondly, the BJP and all Union Ministers are busy celebrating nine years of Modi government until June 30. Therefore, the probability is that it may take place only in July.

international



This week, we will begin the practical steps. We will do them in a measured way, responsibly, but in accordance with the mandate we received to make corrections to the justice system
BENJAMIN NETANYAHU | ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER

PUNJAB ANTI-CORRUPTION BODY SUMMONS IMRAN KHAN

Imran Khan has been asked to appear before the Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) of Punjab Monday in connection with a case related to the purchase of over 5,000 kanals (625 acres) of land at throwaway prices through fraud



of the day quote

PML-N party would win the upcoming general elections with a thumping majority
MARYAM NAWAZ | PAK MUSLIM LEAGUE (NAWAZ) (PML-N) CHIEF ORGANIZER

Iran faces no obstacle to expanding relations with Muslim countries
EBRAHIM RAISI | IRANIAN PRESIDENT

The world needs to phase out fossil fuels if it wants to curb global warming
SIMON STEILL | EXECUTIVE SECRETARY (CLIMATE), UN

SHORT TAKES

1 dead, at least 20 injured in shooting
Willowbrook (US): At least 20 people were shot, one fatally, early Sunday during a gathering in a parking lot in suburban Chicago, authorities said. TV news video showed the strip mall lot filled with debris and police tape in Willowbrook, about 20 miles (32.1 kilometres) southwest of Chicago. "There were at least 20 individuals shot. One victim is deceased," said Eric Swanson, deputy chief at the DuPage County sheriff's office. "The motive behind this incident is unclear. ... We transported numerous victims from the scene. Others just walked into area hospitals."

1 dead, 17 missing in Nepal floods
Kathmandu: At least one person died and 17 others went missing in floods triggered by heavy rains in Sankhuwasabha district in eastern Nepal, local police said Sunday. Three more people were injured after the Hewa Khola river became swollen Saturday night under heavy rains, said district police official Birendra Godar.

Ukraine, Russia suffer heavy casualties
Kyiv: Russia and Ukraine are suffering high numbers of military casualties as Ukraine fights to dislodge the Kremlin's forces from occupied areas in the early stages of its counteroffensive, British officials said Sunday. Russian losses are probably at their highest level since the peak of the battle for Bakhmut in March, UK military officials said in their regular assessment.



In this handout photo provided by the Philippine Coast Guard, a man pushes a boat beside a burning Philippine ferry M/V Esperanza Star as it caught fire at the waters off Panglao, Bohol province, central Philippines Sunday June 18, 2023. The Philippine ferry carrying up to 65 passengers and crew members caught fire at sea Sunday and a coast guard vessel was deployed to rescue those onboard and try to extinguish the flames

Indian jailed for nearly 7 yrs for rape in Wales

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

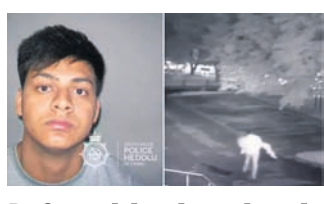
London, June 18: A 20-year-old Indian-origin man has been sentenced to six years and nine months' imprisonment in the Welsh capital of Cardiff after admitting raping a woman in the city.

Preet Vikal was caught on CCTV camera carrying the victim in his arms and later across his shoulders in Cardiff city centre, Wales, in the early hours of June 4 last year.

It was this footage, along with an Instagram message exchange between him and the victim, that led to Vikal being identified and arrested by South Wales Police.

He was sentenced this week and has been directed to serve two-thirds of the sentence in custody and the remainder on licence, or under strict parole conditions.

"Stranger attacks such as these are extremely unusual in Cardiff but in Preet Vikal we had a dangerous individual," said Detective Constable Nick Woodland of South Wales Police. "He took advantage of an intoxicated and vulnerable young woman who became separated from her friends. From the minute this was reported, we were absolutely 100 per cent committed to identifying the person responsible and bringing him to justice," he said. The victim told the court of being left shaken, unable to sleep, and feeling a sense of guilt as a result of the attack. According to the police, Vikal came across the woman while she was on a night out with friends in Cardiff. She began to walk home from the Friary area in the city centre with friends but after an extensive trawl of CCTV footage from the night by the police she was later caught on camera being carried by Vikal on King Edward VII Avenue and North Road, a video released to the public showed this week.



PIO stabbed to death

London: A 38-year-old Indian-origin man was killed in a fatal stabbing outside an apartment block in south London and a 25-year-old man has been charged with his murder, as the Scotland Yard said its Specialist Crime Command is leading the investigation. Aravind Sasikumar died after being found with stab injuries outside a residential property in Southampton Way in Southwark Friday. The Metropolitan Police launched a murder investigation and charged Salman Salim, 25, with murder Saturday, when he appeared before Croydon Magistrates' Court to be remanded in custody. Salim is scheduled to appear at the Old Bailey court in London Tuesday.

ing a sense of guilt as a result of the attack. According to the police, Vikal came across the woman while she was on a night out with friends in Cardiff. She began to walk home from the Friary area in the city centre with friends but after an extensive trawl of CCTV footage from the night by the police she was later caught on camera being carried by Vikal on King Edward VII Avenue and North Road, a video released to the public showed this week.

Blinken lands in China on rare trip

AGENCIES

Beijing, June 18: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken Sunday kicked off two days of high-stakes diplomatic talks in Beijing aimed at trying to cool exploding U.S.-China tensions that have set many around the world on edge.

Blinken opened his programme by meeting Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang for an extended discussion to be followed by a working dinner. He'll have additional talks with Qin, as well as China's top diplomat Wang Yi and possibly President Xi Jinping, Monday. Neither Blinken nor Qin made any substantive comments to reporters as they began the meeting at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse.

Despite Blinken's presence in the Chinese capital, prospects for any significant breakthroughs are slim, as already strained ties have grown increasingly fraught in recent years. Animosity and recriminations have steadily escalated over a series of disagreements that have implications for global security and stability.

Blinken is the highest-level American official to visit China since President Joe Biden took office and the first secretary of state to make the trip in five years.

Biden and Xi agreed to Blinken's trip early at a meeting last year in Bali. It came within a day of happening in February but was delayed by the diplo-



matic and political tumult brought on by the discovery of what the US says was a Chinese spy balloon flying across the United States that was shot down.

The list of disagreements and potential conflict points is long, ranging from trade with Taiwan, human rights conditions in China and Hong Kong to Chinese military assertiveness in the South China Sea and Russia's war in Ukraine.

Blinken will also be pressing the Chinese to release detained American citizens and to take steps to curb the production and export of fentanyl precursors that are fueling the opioid crisis in the United States.

US officials have said Blinken

will raise each of these points, though neither side has shown any inclination to back down on their entrenched positions.

Shortly before leaving, Blinken emphasized the importance of the US and China establishing and maintaining better lines of communication. The US wants to make sure "that the competition we have with China doesn't veer into conflict" due to avoidable misunderstandings, he told reporters.

Biden and Xi had made commitments to improve communications "precisely so that we can make sure we are communicating as clearly as possible to avoid possible misunderstandings and miscommunications,"

Blinken said Friday.

Xi offered a hint of a possible willingness to reduce tensions, saying in a meeting with Microsoft Corp. co-founder Bill Gates on Friday that the United States and China can cooperate to "benefit our two countries."

Chances for such a meeting could come at a Group of 20 leaders' gathering in September in New Delhi and at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in November in San Francisco that the United States is hosting. Since the cancellation of Blinken's trip in February, there have been some high-level engagements. CIA chief William Burns traveled to China in May, while China's commerce minister traveled to the US and Biden's national security adviser Jake Sullivan met with Wang in Vienna in May.

Switzerland backs climate Bill with net-zero target

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Berlin, June 18: A majority of Swiss citizens Sunday voted in favour of a bill aimed at introducing new climate measures to sharply curb the rich Alpine nation's greenhouse gas emissions.

Final results released by public broadcaster SRF showed that 59.1 per cent of voters were in favour of the bill, while 40.9 per cent voted against.

The referendum was sparked by a campaign by scientists and environmentalists to save Switzerland's iconic glaciers, which are melting away at an alarming rate.

Campaigners initially proposed even more ambitious measures but later backed a government plan that requires Switzerland to achieve "net zero" emissions by 2050. It also sets aside more than 3 billion Swiss francs (USD 3.357 billion) to help wean companies and homeowners off fossil fuels.

The nationalist Swiss People's Party, which demanded the popular vote, had claimed that the proposed measures would cause electricity prices to rise.



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The referendum was sparked by a campaign by scientists and environmentalists to save Switzerland's iconic glaciers, which are melting away at an alarming rate

of the law. The argument with the costs has brought many no votes." Greenpeace Switzerland welcomed the result of the referendum.

"This victory means that at last the goal of achieving net zero emissions will be anchored in law. That gives better security for planning ahead and

allows our country to take the path toward an exit from fossil fuels," said Georg Klingler, an expert on climate and energy at Greenpeace Switzerland.

"The result of the vote shows that the citizens of our country are committed to the aim of limiting global warming to 1.5 Celsius in order to preserve as much as possible our glaciers, our water reserves, our agriculture and our prosperity. I am very relieved to see that the lies disseminated by the opposite camp during the campaign did not sow the seed of doubt in people," he added.

Swiss glaciers experienced record melting last year, losing more than 6 per cent of their volume and alarming scientists who say a loss of 2 per cent would once have been considered extreme.

Experts such as Matthias Huss, a glaciologist at the Swiss Institute for Technology in Zurich, have taken to posting dramatic snapshots of retreating glaciers and rockslides from melting permafrost on social media to highlight the changes taking place in the Alps.

CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS ROW

Trump faces heat from Republicans



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Washington, June 18: Fresh off Donald Trump's 37-count indictment, several top Republicans, including presidential contenders Mike Pence and Asa Hutchinson, criticized the former US president's handling of classified information Sunday.

The comments, including harsh criticism from former Trump defense secretary Mark Esper, came on the first round of major weekend political talk shows since Trump pleaded not guilty in a Miami courtroom Tuesday to mishandling some of the US government's most

sensitive secrets. These were included in reams of documents Trump took with him upon leaving the White House and scheming to prevent investigators from recovering them. The remarks Sunday stand in sharp contrast to those of many Republicans in congress who have either defended Trump or declined to criticize him.

"I can't defend what is alleged," Pence, Trump's former vice president, told NBC's Meet the Press, alluding to his ex-boss's behavior in the documents affair. Hutchinson, the former governor of Arkansas, went further, calling the allegations "serious and disqualifying."

Trump, who has claimed the Department of Justice is being weaponized against him, is accused of endangering national security by illegally keeping top secret military plans and nuclear weapons information at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida.

of the day quote

Our estimation is over five years, we'll invest about ₹1,200 crore to ₹1,500 crore of capital expenditure...Most of the expenditure will happen in year four and five, which is where we are pushing for and the rest in the initial years. We have enough capacity and capex already laid out

As a market leader, we have always placed the customer at the core of all our business operations and our endeavour is to provide them with technologically advanced products to meet their everyday needs

We are transforming healthcare via an AI-driven approach with the most advanced, personalized content and message delivery for globally leading healthcare companies

SHORT TAKES

FPIs stay glued to Indian equities

New Delhi: Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) continued to invest in Indian equities for a fourth straight month as they injected ₹16,405 crore in June so far on the country's strong economic rebound and positive growth outlook. FPI flows touched a nine-month high of ₹43,838 crore in equities in May, ₹11,631 crore in April, and ₹7,936 crore in March, data with the depositories showed. Before that, FPIs had pulled out over ₹34,000 crore during January-February. "Considering the current investment trend, it is expected that FPIs will continue to show interest in the Indian market throughout the month," Mayank Mehra, Smallcase manager and principal partner at financial consultancy Craving Alpha, said.

RBL aims to expand NIMs

Mumbai: RBL Bank is targeting to expand its net interest margin (NIM) to over 5.2 per cent by the end of FY24 by upping the share of higher-yielding assets in its loan book, a top official has said. The private sector lender will continue to maintain the share of unsecured loans like credit cards and microfinance by growing them at over 20% overall loan book increase targeted for every year till FY26, R Subramaniakumar told PTI. The bank had reported an expansion in NIMs to over 5 per cent in the March quarter, in line with the industry trend. "NIM will be 5.2-5.3 per cent by the end of the year. The mix of products will deliver the higher yield," he said.

Mcap of most valued firms up

New Delhi: Six of the top-10 most valued domestic firms together added ₹1,13,703.82 crore in market valuation last week, with Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest gainer, in an overall bullish trend in the equity market. Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 758.95 points or 1.21 per cent. The 30-share BSE index zoomed 466.95 points or 0.74 per cent to settle at a record closing high of 63,384.58 Friday. While Reliance Industries, Hindustan Unilever Limited, ITC, Infosys, HDFC and Bharti Airtel were the gainers, TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and State Bank of India faced erosion from their market valuations last week. Reliance Industries added ₹ 63,259.05 crore taking its valuation to ₹1,72,415.47 crore.



I keep telling our team that our competition is really the bank's fixed-deposit rates, not our peers. Most retail investors question whether taking the added equity risk is worthwhile when govt bonds and FDs yield 7 per cent plus

NITIN KAMATH | FOUNDER AND CEO, ZERODHA

POWER DEMAND MAY NOT TOUCH PEAK

Peak power demand is unlikely to touch or cross 229GW in summer this year due to unseasonal rains and the after-effects of cyclonic storm Biparjoy in the country, say industry experts. Unseasonal rains have affected the demand and brought down temperatures during summer, resulting in fewer use of cooling appliances.



Solid Q4 results, return of FII, improving macros drive markets

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, June 18: A combination of factors - better corporate Q4 results in FY23, return of the foreign institutional investors (FII), India's improving macroeconomic data, being the brightest among the emerging markets and small investors not wanting to be left out and coming into the market - have together taken the country's stock markets on a record high, said experts.

The market indices - NSE's Nifty and the Sensex of the BSE - are nearing their 52-week high points.

The Nifty Friday opened at 18,723.30 and touched a high of 18,864.70. The 52-week high point was 18,887.60.

Similarly, the Sensex opened at 62,960.73, touched a high of 63,520.36 and closed at 62,917.63 points. The highest level was 63,583.07 points.

"The domestic economic indicators continue to remain healthy and showing sustained momentum in both manufacturing and services growth along with now declining inflation numbers raising hopes of increase in consumer demand as well. This has been one of the key reasons for our



markets performing relatively well since a few weeks ago. Now recently, with global macros also showing some improvement on the inflation front is helping to sustain the positive sentiments," Roop Bhootra, CEO, Investment Services, Anand Rathi Shares and Stock Brokers, told IANS.

"One of the key drivers of the Indian stock market's upward trend is the overall positive economic outlook of the country India's robust economic growth, supported by government initiatives such as infrastructure development, taxation reforms and efforts to improve the ease of doing business are moving the market upwards," said Hardick Bora, Co-Head, Equity, Union Asset Management Company

Private Ltd, told IANS. Given the structural nature of these factors, India's economic growth is expected to be one of the fastest over the five years. This has enhanced overall investor confidence, Bora added.

Experts do not agree that the return of the FII to Indian markets as the sole or major factor for the markets to go up.

"We believe that even though FII activity can impact stock prices in the short term, in the medium to long term, prices tend to move in line with their intrinsic values. Moreover, FIIs often invest in markets based on their long-term growth potential and the attractiveness of the particular economy," Bora said.

Govt to invite bids to privatise NMDC Steel



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 18: The government is likely to invite financial bids for privatising NMDC Steel only after the commissioning of the blast furnace at the company's steel plant in Chhattisgarh, according to officials.

Officials expect the value of the company to go up once the blast furnace of the steel plant becomes operational. NSL is expected to have a production capacity of 3 million tonnes per annum. The government holds a 60.79 per cent stake in NMDC Steel Ltd (NSL) after it got demerged from NMDC, which is India's largest iron ore producer. The facility is located in Nagarnar, Chhattisgarh. The re-

maining 39.21 per cent stake is with the public.

NSL is up for privatisation with the government looking to sell 50.79 per cent of its shareholding, along with management control. The government had received multiple preliminary bids or expressions of interest for the company. Officials said the government will get to know the fair value of NSL once the blast furnace, which is the heart of a steel plant, is commissioned and production starts. Financial bids would be invited only after investors gain confidence about the real capacity of the company.

NMDC Steel, which was listed on the stock exchanges in February this year at ₹30.25, is currently trading at around ₹44 a share. Based on the current market price, the sale of a 50.79 per cent stake would fetch the government around ₹6,500 crore. In October 2020, the CCEA gave 'in-principle' approval to the merger of the Nagarnar steel manufacturing unit from NMDC and strategic disinvestment of the resulting entity by selling the entire stake of the Government of India.

Petrol, diesel sales fall as monsoon sets in

Demand for diesel, the most consumed fuel in the country accounting for about two-fifths of the demand, fell 6.7 per cent to 3.43 million tonne in June 1-15 compared to the year-ago period

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 18: Petrol and diesel sales fell in first half of June as the arrival of monsoon cut demand in agri sector and reduced vehicular movement, preliminary industry data showed. Demand for diesel, the most consumed fuel in the country accounting for about two-fifths of the demand, fell 6.7 per cent to 3.43 million tonne in June 1-15 compared to year-ago period.

Sales of diesel had soared 6.7 per cent and 9.3 per cent in April and May, respectively as agriculture demand picked up and cars yanked up air-conditioning to beat summer heat. Month-on-month sales were up 3.4 per cent when compared with 3.31 million tonne of diesel consumed in May 1-15.

Petrol sales dropped 5.7 per cent to 1.3 million tonne during the first half of June 2023 when



compared with the same period last year. Sales were down 3.8 per cent month-on-month, the data showed. Petrol and diesel sales had been on the rise since the second half of March on the back of a pick-up in industrial and agriculture activity. But the arrival of monsoon has cooled temperatures and reduced demand for running diesel gensets to irrigate fields as well as cut down consumption in tractors and trucks in first half of June. Consumption of petrol during June 1 to 15 was 44.2 per cent more than Covid-marred June

Sebi for urgent action against Zee promoters

AGENCIES

Mumbai, June 18: Market regulator Sebi in its reply to the Securities and Appellate Tribunal (SAT) on the Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd's plea has called for urgent action against the promoters in the alleged fund diversion case to safeguard the management, investors and other stakeholders.

In its affidavit, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) pointed out that the applications made by Chairman Emeritus Subhash Chandra and Managing Director and CEO Punit Goenka on July 6, 2022, that "there was no urgency and that the same issue is the subject matter of the show cause notice dated July 6, 2022, is completely false and misleading."

Sebi further stated that "not only have there been violations but also the issuance of multiple false disclosures and submission of statements to cover up such wrongdoings."

"In the instant case, we have a situation before us where the Chairman Emeritus and the Managing Director and CEO of this large listed company are involved in a myriad of different schemes and transactions through which vast amounts of public money belonging to listed companies are diverted to private



entities owned and controlled by these persons," Sebi said affidavit to SAT.

June 15, SAT had directed them to respond to Sebi's submission on or before June 19, when the tribunal would take up the matter for final disposition. In the interim order June 12, Sebi barred Essel Group chairman Subhash Chandra and Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) MD and CEO Punit Goenka from holding the position of a director or key managerial personnel in any listed company for siphoning off funds of the media firm.

Both Chandra and Goenka moved SAT seeking a stay on the Sebi order, citing injustice.

Sebi also submitted that the appellants had not produced any material to indicate they had suffered any prejudice by not getting a personal hearing before the interim order was passed.

The regulator said it was willing to give an immediate hearing for the appellants "as early as required".

Reliance may earn \$10-15bn from new energy biz

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 18: Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries may by 2030 earn USD 10-15 billion from its new energy business spanning solar to hydrogen but will need acquisitions or partnerships to make up for limited expertise in technology, said a report by Sanford C Bernstein.

Clean energy represents a new growth pillar for Reliance with USD 2 trillion in investment in India through 2050. India is targeting solar capacity of 280GW and 5 million tonne of green H2 production by 2030. "We expect EV penetration will reach 5 per cent for passenger and commercial vehicles and 21 per cent for two-wheelers. Clean energy could have a TAM (total addressable market) of USD 30 billion in 2030."

By 2050, "we estimate the TAM could reach USD 200 billion and cumulative spending of USD 2 trillion," the brokerage said in the report.

Reliance has announced forays into solar manufacturing as well as hydrogen in pivot away from fossil fuels.

G20 MEETINGS

Hospitality players look to cash in on ₹850cr opportunity

WITH THE G20 SPURRING DEMAND IN CITIES WHERE MEETINGS ARE SCHEDULED, ROOM RATES FOR FIVE-STAR HOTELS IN KEY BUSINESS CITIES HAVE INCREASED BY ABOUT 20 PER CENT SINCE THE LAST QUARTER OF 2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 18: Hospitality players are looking to cash in on a ₹850-crore revenue opportunity arising out of India's G20 Presidency through delegation-related travel and accommodation requirements, while also looking to consolidate the foundation for future growth.

With the G20 spurring demand in cities where meetings are

scheduled, room rates for five-star hotels in key business cities have increased by about 20 per cent since the last quarter of 2022, and the trend is expected to continue in the coming months, Hotel Association of India Vice President K B Kachru told PTI. "The event is expected to generate about ₹850 crore in revenue towards delegation-related travel and accommodation requirements. So it is bound to have a positive impact on the growth of business," he said in an emailed response.

There is a visible impact in the increase in hotel occupancies and revenues as also in the employment prospects in the sector, said Kachru, who is also Chairman Emeritus and Principal Advisor, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, adding, "The hospitality industry is expected to witness a 5.5 per cent CAGR."

According to him, the sector's bullishness during the G20 presidency year stems from the fact that India will host over 200 meetings in 59 different loca-



tions across the country with over 1.5 lakh delegates from the Group of 20 countries expected to participate.

In a similar vein, Chalet Hotels Ltd Managing Director & CEO Sanjay Sethi said, "The G20 summit, hosted by India as part of its presidency, is set to provide a major boost to the country. The positive impact of the summit extends beyond the immediate year, encompassing increased international exposure, infrastructure development, and des-

tinuation branding."

The benefits of India's G20 Presidency will not be limited to just a single year, as the exposure the country is receiving will have long-term spin-off effects, he said adding a growth in travel to India is anticipated, driven by the signing of new business ventures and the expansion of existing relationships and businesses.

"The G20 summit, combined with the rising demand for domestic business travel, will con-

tribute significantly to the uptick in the performance of the hospitality industry," Sethi added.

Regenta & Royal Orchid Hotels Chairman & Managing Director Chander K Baljee said G20 presidency will also be a critical enabler of showcasing and promoting "India's rich heritage, landscape, tourist attractions and the diversity in a greater canvas and thereby attracting a larger influx of international tourism-something that is yet to come back at pre-Covid levels."

"The Indian hospitality sector, known as a 'sunrise industry' is highly profitable and a major contributor to the economy and G20 presidency will play a significant catalyst in strengthening India's position as a promising nation in the global hospitality sector," he added.

When asked about the increase in room tariffs, Kachru said, "Price is a factor of demand and supply. G20 has spurred demand especially in cities where the meetings are scheduled."

Citing a report by JLL, he

said, "Room rates for five-star hotels in key business cities have increased by about 20 per cent since the last quarter of 2022. There has been a threefold growth in rates and occupancy. Rates also vary with seasonality and market mix."

He further said, "We expect this trend to continue in the coming months, supported by sporting events, weddings and the beginning of the tourist season."

On the business outlook in terms of occupancy and room tariff, Kachru said industry estimates suggest that we will surpass pre-crisis levels in the coming quarters, driven by some key tail winds such as the wedding season, the G20 summit, the Cricket World Cup (ICC ODI) and the revival of foreign inbound travel.

"All tourism levers, such as MICE, inbound tourism, medical tourism, business and leisure travel are on the upswing. The outlook for the Indian hospitality industry remains favourable, as can be seen in the good start to 2023," he said.

Chhetri inspires Indian triumph

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik announces ₹1 crore award for champion squad

Bhubaneswar, June 18: Captain Sunil Chhetri, as is his wont, rose to the occasion with his 87th international goal as India won the Intercontinental Cup with a 2-0 victory over Lebanon in the final here Sunday. The other star of the summit show-down, Lallianzuala Chhangte, struck the evening's second goal to cap an impressive display as India enjoyed another clean sheet. After the game Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik presented the trophy to Chhetri and also announced an award of rupees one crore for the victorious team.

This is India's second title triumph in the tournament, following their win in the inaugural edition in 2018. North Korea won in 2019.

In the last leg of his career, the 38-year-old Chhetri found the back of the net in the 46th minute of the title clash, breaking the deadlock right after a goalless first half. Buoyed by the lead and backed by a near-capacity crowd at the Kalinga Stadium, India consolidated their position when Chhangte, the provider of the first goal, found the target in the 66th minute.

Head coach Igor Stimac told reporters after the game that he had given a dressing-down to the players during the interval. "We were good in the first 10 minutes but then we seemed to have disappeared. I was angry and spoke to the players at the half time break. We were very good in the second half but still



(Left): Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik presents the winners' trophy to Indian captain Sunil Chhetri; the Indian team celebrate with the Cup



PHOTOS: BIKASH NAYAK

lots of work need to be done to prepare ourselves for teams like Australia (in AFC Asian Cup)," Stimac said win.

In hot and humid conditions, both the teams had their fair share of chances in the first half but could not make use of them, just like the goalless stalemate they played out in an inconsequential match two days ago.

And while India had more possession of the ball – nearly 58 per cent – the Lebanese had

seven shots at goal as compared to three by the home team which again seemed to be lacking in ideas in the final third of the opposition.

However, all that changed after the interval. First a charging Chhangte surged into the box and cut the ball back for Chhetri, who calmly tapped the ball in past Lebanese goalkeeper Ali Sabeh from close for the opener. The goal was a result of an excellent build-up as Nikhil Poojary managed to slip in the

ball through little space to Chhangte who then laid it for his inspirational skipper.

Their tails up after the opener, the Indians looked to press home the advantage and were rewarded with a second goal through Chhangte. Having received a ball from Chhetri, substitute Naorem Mahesh Singh attempted to put it past the Lebanese custodian, who saved the shot, but could not hold the ball. Chhangte converted off the rebound to double India's lead.

Satwik, Chirag create history

FIRST INDIAN DOUBLES PAIR TO WIN SUPER 1000 EVENT
STUNNING WORLD CHAMPIONS FROM MALAYSIA

AGENCIES

Jakarta, June 18: The Indian duo of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty won a historic men's doubles title at the Indonesia Open badminton tournament here Sunday. In the process they became the first doubles pair from India to claim a Super 1000 event. The World No. 6 pair who won a gold medal at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games and bronze at the World Championships last year, thrashed Aaron Chia and Soh Woo Yik of Malaysia in straight games 21-17, 21-18.

Earlier, the 2022 World Championships bronze medalists had become the first ever Indian pair to reach the final of any Super 1000 tournament after a sensational comeback to get the better of the Korean combination of Kang Min Hyuk and Seo Seung Jae 17-21, 21-19, 21-18 in a thrilling semifinal played Saturday.

The Indians, who are also Asian champions, defeated the current World Champions in 43 minutes. Both Satwik and Chirag were excellent at the net and while defending. Satwik also played some telling smashes at crucial junctures to upset the rhythm of their Malaysian opponents.

The Badminton Federation of India (BFI) took to Twitter to congratulate the doubles duo quoting a famous dialogue from the movie *Uri*. "How is the JOSH?" BFI asked to which the duo replied later 'High Sir'.

Satwik and Chirag were slow to get off the blocks in the first game but unleashed a flurry of attacking shots to win six consecutive points and take a 9-7 lead. The Indian pair then protected their slender lead and closed the game with two straight points.



Chirag Shetty (left) and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy pose with their medals and trophies after their historic win Sunday

PTI PHOTO

Both teams took an aggressive approach in the second game and were level at 6-6. However, Chirag and Satwik demonstrated quicker reflexes to stun their higher-ranked opponents and went into the break with a four-point lead at 11-7. Just like in the first game, the Indian pair never allowed Aaron and Soh to mount a comeback and registered their first-ever win over the Malaysians in 11 meetings.

"We had prepared very well

for this event. We knew the crowd will be supporting us as they had been doing the entire week. We played amazing badminton today (Sunday). We didn't have good head-to-head record against them (Malaysians), so wanted to play one point at a time and it fetched the desired result for us," Satwik said after the match.

Both stated that the last two months had been very bad for them and it was due to 'their lazy attitude'. 'We had become very passive and that led to bad results,' Chirag said. "However, before this tournament we really worked hard and it paid off," Satwik added.

SHORT TAKES

Rahane to play for Leicestershire

New Delhi: Senior India batter Ajinkya Rahane will be plying his trade for the English County side Leicestershire in division two, after finishing his two-Test assignment with Indian team against the West Indies. Rahane recently made a successful comeback to the Indian team during the World Test Championship final against Australia earlier this month. "Ajinkya, after the two Tests in West Indies is supposed to fly directly to England and join Leicestershire for the remainder of the season. He will play the Royal London Cup in August and a possible four County games in September," a BCCI official stated on conditions of anonymity.

Scots stun Norway, Portugal win easily

Lisbon: Erling Haaland scored on his return for Norway, but it wasn't enough as Scotland came back to win 2-1 Saturday and keep a perfect record in qualifying for next year's European Championships. The goals for Scotland were scored by Lyndon Dykes and Kenny McLean. Both the goals came in the last 10 minutes. Elsewhere, Bruno Fernandes scored twice in a 3-0 win for Portugal against Bosnia-Herzegovina as Cristiano Ronaldo played his 199th international game, and Belgium drew with Austria 1-1 without the injured Kevin de Bruyne.

Verstappen bags 25th career pole

Montreal: Max Verstappen won the 25th pole of his career and moved one step closer to tying the late Ayrton Senna for Formula One (F1) victories as the two-time reigning World Champion overcame wet conditions Saturday at the Canadian Grand Prix. Incidentally, Verstappen has won five of the seven races this season. Nico Hulkenberg of Haas initially qualified second, but hours later was handed a three-place penalty on the starting grid for violating rules during a red flag. He'll now start fifth while Fernando Alonso of Aston Martin who was initially third, will now start second on the grid.

AGENCIES

Shaili aims to break mentor Anju's record

Athlete says hot and humid conditions affected her performance

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 18: She is just 19 and two years into the senior circuit, but Shaili Singh is already India's number one woman long jumper. She is aiming to break her mentor Anju Bobby George's national record this year itself.

Shaili jumped 6.76m in April, the second longest distance by an Indian woman, behind the legendary Anju's 6.83m, which has stood for 19 years. Anju herself believes that her protegee could erase her national record very soon.

"Anju madam says I can break her record since I am very near to it (7cm short) and she wants that to happen this year. She says I am in that range, and so I feel I can do it," Shaili said after the women's long jump qualifying round at the National Inter-State Athletics Championship here Sunday. She made it to the final round in third place with a best jump of 6.27m, behind Kerala jumpers Ancy Sojan and Nayana James.

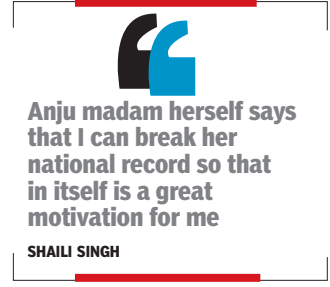
Shaili said she will try to jump farther in the final Monday. She has already breached the Asian Games qualifying mark with that 6.76m jump in Bangalore

and 6.65m effort while finishing third at the prestigious Seiko Golden Grand Prix in Japan last month.

"I tried to cross 6.45m (Asian Games qualifying mark), but it did not happen. But I am still happy, I will improve in the final. The best effort will certainly come in the final and I hope to win the gold medal and qualify for the Asian Games," Shaili stated.

Shaili pointed out that the hot and humid conditions at the Kalinga Stadium here is like having a 'Sauna Bath'. "The conditions are difficult but the target given to me by my coach is to do better than the 6.76m. So I need to work on that. Conditions will vary, but will have to adjust," Shaili stated.

Shaili currently trains at the Anju Bobby George Sports Foundation in Bangalore under Anju's husband Robert who is also a high performance coach with the Sports Authority of India (SAI).



SHAILI SINGH

Sreeshankar qualifies for WC

ODISHA'S KISHORE TOPS JAVELIN PRELIMS WITH BRILLIANT THROW

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 18: Star long jumper Murali Sreeshankar produced a huge 8.41m effort in his very first attempt in the qualifying round at the National Inter-State Athletics Championships to qualify for the World Championships (WC), here Sunday. The 24-year-old Sreeshankar's jump was just one centimetre shy of Jeswin Aldrin's national record of 8.42m set earlier this year. However, the effort was Sreeshankar's personal best. The men's long jump qualifying distance for the World Championships in Budapest, Hungary in August is 8.25m.

"The wind reading was fine, it was 1.5m/s. Just short of the national record but I am happy to have made this jump," Sreeshankar, representing Kerala, said after the event.

Aldrin was second with a best jump of 7.83m while Muhammed Anees Yahiya was third with 7.71m, as 12 long jumpers made it to the final to be held Monday. However, both Aldrin and Anees were short of the Asian Games qualifying mark of 7.95m.

Sreeshankar became June 9 only the third Indian, after Olympic champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra and former discus thrower Vikas Gowda, to win a Diamond League medal with a bronze in the Paris leg



with an effort of 8.09m.

In men's javelin throw qualification, three athletes breached the Asian Games qualification mark of 78.23m. Kishore Kumar Jena of Odisha took the top spot in the qualification round with a throw of 18.91m, nine centimetres short of the Asian Games qualifying mark of 19m.

National record holder Amlan Borgohain eased to the men's 200m semifinals after topping the Round 1 heats while Srabani Nanda of Odisha and Shabnam of Delhi clocked identical 24.31 seconds in corresponding women's race.

and India No.1 Shaili Singh (6.27m) of Uttar Pradesh, who also made it to Monday's final.

Asian record holder shot putter Tajinderpal Singh Toor topped the qualification round with a throw of 18.91m, nine centimetres short of the Asian Games qualifying mark of 19m.

National record holder Amlan Borgohain eased to the men's 200m semifinals after topping the Round 1 heats while Srabani Nanda of Odisha and Shabnam of Delhi clocked identical 24.31 seconds in corresponding women's race.

Compound gold for archer Verma

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Medellin (Colombia), June 18: Archer Abhishek Verma added a gold medal to India's tally by clinching the top prize in the men's compound individual final at the World Cup Stage 3 here Saturday. The 33-year-old Abhishek, winner of the compound team gold and an individual silver medal at the 2014 Asian Games, defeated James Lutz of USA 148-146.

Abhishek, who is making a comeback after missing the first two stages of the World Cup, had earlier stunned the World No 1 and top seed Mike Schloesser of the Netherlands 148-148 (10-9) in a thrilling shoot-off to advance to the individual semi-final. The eighth-seeded Verma then defeated Luccas Abreu of Brazil in the last four clash, which helped him secure a place in the final.

This is Abhishek's third individual World Cup gold and his first since the 2021 Paris leg. He had won his maiden individual World Cup gold in Wroclaw (Poland) in 2015. He also has two silver medals and a bronze in the individual section of the World Cup.

The Indian contingent, that have won one gold and three bronze medals so far, have a chance to further increase their tally as the recurve mixed team will compete for the bronze later Sunday.

Sakshi, Babita engage in war of words

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 18: Olympic medalist Sakshi Malik accused Sunday, BJP leader and former Commonwealth Games gold medalist grappler Babita Phogat of trying to use the wrestlers for selfish motive and weaken their protests.

Sakshi and her husband Satyawart Kadian had also posted a video Saturday alleging that it was Babita and another BJP leader Teerath Rana who had initially taken permission for the wrestlers to protest at Jantar Mantar but later started advising them that the platform should not be used by parties for political purposes.

Rana, however, denied the allegations. He said that neither he nor Babita tried to initially instigate the protest and then weaken it. He said the wrestlers are the pride of the nation and the respect of



sportspersons is uppermost on the mind of the BJP.

"Look, wrestlers are the pride of the nation and the respect of sportspersons is uppermost on the mind of the BJP, and I also respect them a lot. I have always supported sportspersons,"

said Rana in a video.

Babita also refuted the claims made by Sakshi and her husband. "I felt very sad and laughed too when I watched the video of my younger sister and her husband. First of all I want to make it clear that the

permission paper which my younger sister was showing did not have my signature or my name anywhere on it. There is no proof of consent and I have nothing to do with it," Babita said in a statement.

The country's top wrestlers including Sakshi, Vinesh Phogat and Bajrang Punia have accused outgoing Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief and BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh of sexual harassment and demanded his arrest.

Sakshi, in a tweet Sunday, wrote, "In the video (posted Saturday), we had taunted Teerath Rana and Babita Phogat that how they were trying to use wrestlers for their selfishness and that when the wrestlers were in trouble, they went and sat on the lap of the government. We are definitely in trouble, but our sense of humour should not become so weak that we cannot even laugh at the jokes of the powerful."

Aussies strike twice before rain stops play

AGENCIES

Birmingham, June 18: England, after dismissing Australia for 386 in the first innings and obtaining a lead of seven runs, were 28 for the loss of two wickets in their second when rain stopped play at Edgbaston here Sunday. The third day's play of the first Ashes Test was marred at times by rain, but as of now neither of the two sides have been able to get a stranglehold on the game.

The two England batters to be dismissed were openers Pat Crawley (7) and Ben Duckett (19). While Scott Boland took the wicket of Crawley, skipper Pat Cummins sent back Duckett. The match is delicately poised and if Australia manage to get some English batters cheaply, they will certainly have the upper hand.

Earlier resuming at their overnights score of 311 for five,

Australia proceeded serenely to 338 before James Anderson (1/53) struck dismissing Alex Carey (66, 99b, 10x4, 1x6). However, before his dismissal, Carey and Usman Khawaja (141, 321b, 14x4, 3x6) added 118 runs for the sixth wicket to put Australia in a position of strength. Cummins (38, 62b, 3x4) played a valuable innings to take the Aussies close to the England total.

Khawaja's marathon stint came to an end when he was bowled by Ollie Robinson (3/55). The bowler then accounted for Nathan Lyon and Cummins to hasten the closure of the Australia innings. Stuart Broad (3/66) also came to the party as he dismissed Boland.

Brief scores: England 393 for 8 declared and 28 for 2; Australia 386 (Usman Khawaja 141, Ollie Robinson 3/55, Stuart Broad 3/66). Match to continue.