



BELIEVER OF DESTINY

Actor Kiara Advani reveals how destiny played a role in her getting the beautiful film 'Satyaprem Ki Katha'

LEISURE P2



PAK BANS HOLI FESTIVAL

Pakistan bans the celebration of Holi across educational institutions to save its Islamic identity, which was 'eroding'

INTERNATIONAL P10



CR7'S NEW FEAT

Cristiano Ronaldo becomes the 1st male player to play 200 international games with tie against Iceland

SPORTS P12

SHORT TAKES

Foul play suspected in BJD leader's death

Digapahandi: In a tragic incident, former BJD youth president of this block, identified as Lalit Mohan Mohapatra, died after allegedly being run over by a speeding car at Khambari village in Ganjam district late Tuesday night. However, family members cried foul over his death and alleged murder. They said Lalit was allegedly killed over an argument and fight he had with Ramkrushna Mishra of the same village. They said that after Lalit left the spot on his two-wheeler, Ramkrushna followed him in his car. At a desolate place, he rammed into Lalit's bike from the rear causing the latter serious injuries and ultimately his death. Police have registered a case and are probing the matter while Ramkrushna is absconding, officials said.

P5

UTP dies in jail, wife cries murder

Dhenkanal: An undertrial prisoner (UTP) died under mysterious circumstances at the district jail here Wednesday. The deceased was identified as Athani Dehury, 42, of Beshalia village under Sadar police limits. Dehury was arrested in connection with an Excise case June 19. Although authorities attributed his death to prolonged illness, Dehury's wife claimed that he was beaten to death for reasons best known to prison officials. Officials said Dehury complained of illness around 6.15am following which he was rushed to the district headquarters hospital. He died while undergoing treatment there at 4:30pm.

WFI election date changed to July 11

New Delhi: The IOA ad-hoc panel Wednesday rescheduled the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) elections to July 11 from July 6. This decision was taken after five disaffiliated state bodies, seeking voting rights for the polls, presented their cases in a hearing. The state bodies are from Maharashtra, Haryana, Telangana, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. Retired High Court judge Mahesh Mittal Kumar who is the Returning Officer for the polls heard their pleas. "The IOA panel needs time to decide and prepare order, so polls have been pushed by five days to July 11," a WFI official said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



It was compulsory! It's yoga day, you see!

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	63523.15 ↑ 195.45
NIFTY	18856.85 ↑ 40.15
DOLLAR	82.01 ↑ ₹0.02
EURO	89.76 ↑ ₹0.23
GOLD	₹58,702 ↓ ₹107
SILVER	₹69,190 ↓ ₹1,197

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	37.7°C	36.0°C
TEMP. MIN	28.3°C	28.2°C
Humidity	83%	79%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil



BACK TO BASICS: Excited students of St Xavier's High School (Barabati) in Cuttack have a lot to talk about as the educational institution reopened Wednesday after a long summer vacation

PHOTO: RAJKISHORE MOHANTY

Tuskers, croc kill 5 in state

The spate of attacks by animals and reptiles come at a time when Forest department staffers are observing protests over the killing of a colleague in Similipal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, June 21: Five persons have lost their lives in man-animal and reptile conflicts in the state in the last 24 hours. While four persons died due to elephant attacks in Sambalpur and Angul districts, a woman was dragged away by a crocodile in Kendrapara district, making her the second victim in a week.

The attack took place when the woman was cleaning utensils in a canal at Hatiagadi village under Chandibaunsamula panchayat under Rajnagar block, sources said. The deceased has been identified as Sitarani Das (45).

The incident happened exactly a week after a crocodile killed 10-year-old Ashutosh Acharya at Nimapur village under Pattamundai block in Kendrapara, June 14. His half-

- ELEPHANTS KILL 2 PERSONS IN SAMBALPUR AND 2 IN ANGUL
- CROC ATTACK ON WOMAN 2ND IN A WEEK IN KENDRAPARA

eaten body was found later by villagers. Villagers observed that the deaths due to crocodile attacks are increasing due to apathy of Forest department officials and the district administration.

It should be stated here that a few days back wildlife experts and environmentalists attributed the rise in crocodile population for the increase in attacks on humans and livestock. The approximate crocodile count at the Bhitarkanika National Park (BNP) is close to 1,800 as per the last census in January.



Croc attack victim Sitarani Das

Meanwhile a man identified as Gopal Pradhan (57), a resident of Kansar Panchayat under Uyumura block in Sambalpur district was killed in an elephant attack early Wednesday morning. Gopal was sleeping outside his resident due to the extreme heat when he was attacked by a tusker and trampled to death. In the second incident, an elephant tram-

pled the owner of a roadside dhaba to death on National Highway-55 near Jujumura range in Sambalpur district. His identity is yet to be ascertained.

Locals said that Forest department staffers have stopped patrolling as a mark of symbolic protest against the death of a colleague in Similipal National Park. As result elephants are straying into human habitats damaging property and killing people.

Earlier, late Tuesday night, two persons were trampled to death in a tusker attack in villages under Bantala forest range in Angul district. The deceased were identified as Srinivas Sahu, 65 of Sanakantakula village and Arun Pradhan, 55, of Aradiha village in Gadataras panchayat. The incident sparked tension in the areas as irate people scuffled with forest officials.

Rural connectivity projects worth ₹4,947cr approved

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 21: With an aim to improve rural road connectivity in the state, the state Cabinet approved Wednesday projects worth ₹4,947 crore under different components of Mukhya Mantri Sadak Yojana (MMSY) scheme.

Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena said the Cabinet has approved 15 proposals including four from the Rural Development department for construction of roads and bridges during the financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25.

The Cabinet has approved an outlay of ₹1,893 crore for construction of roads measuring 1,814.92km during two years (2023-24 and 2024-25)

under MMSY-Transferred Road Improvement Programme (TRIP). All ongoing projects under this scheme will also be completed, Jena informed.

Similarly, the Cabinet has approved implementation of MMSY-Connecting Unconnected Villages in Difficult Areas (CUVDA) for a period of two years (2023-24 and 2024-25) with an outlay of ₹976 crore.

Under the scheme, projects with a length of 361.34 km will be executed. Bridges, where necessary, will be built either to provide new connectivity or improve it, Jena said. He opined that due to this project, many inaccessible areas will become accessible in the next couple of years.

CUVDA was launched with the objective to provide improved all weather connectivity to villages of LWE affected districts, difficult hilly areas and remote unconnected places of other districts, Jena said.

Further, the government has also decided to implement MMSY-Improvement to Existing RD Roads for a period of two years (2023-24 and 2024-25) with an outlay of ₹918 crore.

The Chief Secretary said projects with a length of 554.67 km targeted will be taken up during the above mentioned period. Also all ongoing projects will be completed under this scheme.

Besides, ₹1,160 crore has been approved for execution of 673.49km of roads under

MMSY-Connecting Missing Road Links (CMRL) during the financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25.

The Cabinet has also revised the cost of the ABADHA scheme from ₹3,208 crore to ₹4,224.22 crore with scheme implementation period from 2017-18 to 2024-25.

The ABADHA scheme was launched in FY 2017-18 to develop Puri into a world class heritage city and to preserve and revitalise it. "During the course of execution of the projects, some changes were effected to the approved projects and some new ones have also been taken up, which has resulted in increase in the total cost outlay," informed Jena.

ABADHA scheme expenditure increased to ₹4,224 crore from ₹3,208cr

MUSK READY TO TOE MODI LINE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, June 21: Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Tuesday prominent US personalities, including Tesla CEO Elon Musk who asserted that India has more promise than any other large country and that he is incredibly excited about its future.

Musk told reporters that Twitter does not have a choice but to follow the local government. "Or it will get shut down," he said when asked about the company's former owner and CEO Jack Dorsey's recent allegation against the Indian government. "The best we can do is to follow the laws in any given country. It is impossible for us to do more than that. We will do our best to provide the freest speech under the law," Musk stated.

Musk was asked if Tesla will enter the Indian market. He said he is planning to visit the country next year. "I am confident that Tesla will be in India and will do so as soon as humanly possible. I would like to thank the Prime Minister for his support and hopefully we will be able to announce something in the not so distant future," Musk informed.

In a separate video statement, Musk also lauded Modi, saying he 'really cares about India because he is pursuing us to make significant investment in India'. "I am a fan of Modi," Musk said.

OTP scam: Crypto trading of ₹1cr done

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 21: The Special Task Force (STF) of state police, probing the onetime password (OTP) sharing scam by two persons from Odisha to Pakistani intelligence operatives, Wednesday claimed that the duo was involved in crypto trading worth over ₹1 crore in the last two years.

Accused Pritam Kar of Jajpur and Saroj Kumar Nayak of Nayagarh were involved in trad-

ing crypto through various Indian and foreign exchanges, an STF official said here. According to the official, Kar had signed up with a leading crypto exchange using an email ID, two bank accounts and one UPI ID.

"Analysis of the ID revealed that the volume of crypto trade in the account was more than ₹1 crore in the last two years," the official informed.

The account has 'red flag' areas in terms of crypto deposits from unidentified sources mostly

from foreign exchanges – Coinbase, FTX and Bitmart – and also transfer of crypto assets to exchanges out of India.

"Investigations further revealed that the accused Nayak had signed up with a leading crypto exchange using e-mail ID linked with two savings bank accounts and two UPI IDs," the official further said.

The STF has blocked the crypto accounts of both Kar and Nayak. So far, the STF has arrested five persons in the OTP case.

The monk who never saw a woman

AGENCIES

Athens, June 21: There are many who probably have heard about or read the book, *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari* written by Robin Sharma. However, stranger things have happened in life other than a monk owning a Ferrari. People have seen or heard about the many wonders of life, but then this is the rarest of cases where a man has not seen a woman during his entire life. It is the story of a monk who spent 82 years of his life without ever seeing a woman. Believe it or not, it is indeed true.

Call it myth or folklore, Greek Orthodox monk Mihailo Tolotos died in 1938 at the age of 82, with-

out ever seeing a woman. The man never knew, how a woman looked and behaved. Forget about women, he also never rode a car, a train or took a flight or even saw a movie.

Mihailo's mother passed away within four hours after giving birth to him in 1856 and he was left alone in the world. He was adopted by one of the monasteries on Mount Athos, situated in the northeastern part of Greece. Mihailo spent the rest of his life there without ever seeing a single woman as he never stepped out of the monastery. Also women were not allowed entry into any of the 20 monasteries located on Mount Athos. A law implemented in 1060 forbids women and ani-

MONK DIES IN GREECE WITHOUT SEEING WOMAN

ATHENS — Without ever seeing a woman in the 82 years of his life, Mihailo Tolotos has died in Mt. Athos monastery, in Greece. Neither had he beheld an automobile, a movie or an airplane. His mother died when he was born. Athens reports, and he was brought up in the monastery, where no woman ever enters. He became a monk, and monks at the onastery gave him a special burial ceremony because they believed he was the only man in the world never to see a woman.



mals from visiting Mount Athos and it stands till date.

However, monks are allowed to leave the monasteries and venture

outside. According to historians, Michael never did that as he did not have any connection with the outside world. Bred and educated in the

A law strictly forbids the entrance of women or animals in the monasteries situated on Mount Athos in Greece

walled monastery, Mihailo never felt the urge to leave the monastery, spending most of his hours reading books and praying. As a result he lost out on the charm that women have.

When Mihailo breathed his last in 1938, the other monks gave him a special burial for the dedication he showed to the monastery. They also believed that he was the only man to have never seen a woman in his entire life as he never left the monastery.

The first mention of Mihailo can be found in a cutting of the newspaper 'Edinburgh Daily Reporter'. Since then his tale has survived decades being passed on from one generation to another.

leisure



CRUISE 'STILL' DANCES IN HIS UNDERWEAR

Hollywood actor Tom Cruise jokes that he 'still' dances in his underwear 40 years after the iconic scene in *Risky Business*. Cruise, who is currently promoting his new film, *Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One*, said that the 1983 film helped him on the path to action stardom.

LAWRENCE WANTS TO HIGHLIGHT PLIGHT OF AFGHAN WOMEN

Actress Jennifer Lawrence has said that the documentary *Bread And Roses* is a real passion project for her. The Oscar-winning actress is the co-producer of the documentary which looks at the women living under Taliban rule in Afghanistan, and Jennifer has confessed to being hugely passionate about the issue.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
You are in a position to affect other peoples' lives. Since you are very compassionate and caring, people will look up to you whether as a peer or a superior. Make good use of this excess energy to solve prickly issues. Ganesh encourages large-scale projects.

TAURUS
Be prepared for taking instant decisions and acting promptly on them. Today you are likely to meet several such situations. Ganesh is pleased to see that you have the acumen and experience to deal with such contingencies. You will have no trouble finding the right solutions and seeing things through. Your exemplary managing skills will be noticed, appreciated and admired.

GEMINI
You will be faced with a slew of demands from various people today, and you will find it difficult to meet all of them. However, you will be able to meet the requirements that need to be met to salvage the day. People will praise your intelligence and creativity, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Minor ailments like cough and cold may bother you, warns Ganesh. So avoid cold or sweet items. People admire your helpful nature. Take special care of your health, says Ganesh.

LEO
You need to curb down on your expenses. You need to moderate the risks you take on in the share market. It is a good day for financial gains though. You need to understand the value of compromise, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
The thinking cap is on your head, and a passionate pulse shall run through you today. Yet, by the mid-day, expect a laid-back, cavalier attitude to grip you. Government officials and other professionals will have an inspiringly assenting day. Your professionalism will shine through, and you may be in for some serious praise from the superiors. Smile and accept the positive feedback graciously.

LIBRA
Ganesh says that there are chances that today you might start some long-pending renovation project for your house. You may decorate your home with new paintings and items. There may be guests over in the evening that will make you very happy. You may also go out for dinner with your family and friends or, more probably, with your sweetheart.

SCORPIO
You are all set to paint the town red as you feel romance and love creeping into your life slowly. You may bump into 'someone special' today and see love blossoming for you. There are also chances of marriage proposals and meeting prospective candidates, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
You are in a mood to spend money of home décor, paintings or artefacts. Go ahead, and decorate your home. Ganesh foresees success on your cards today. Workplace has never been such an interesting place before. Planning and implementation will make your day easier.

CAPRICORN
You'll have apparently no time for anything else, as partnerships and projects will keep you on your toes. You communication skills and diplomacy will fetch you accolades in meetings, and also enable you to judge a person or a situation correctly, and form the right opinion. The efforts you have in the past may come to fruition today, feels Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
Today is the day to turn dreams into reality and how! With your talent, wit, and intelligence you will make a great impression on everyone's mind, feels Ganesh. Icing on the cake will be the cash inflow. You know your cards and you play them well to your advantage. There may be a catch though, keep yourself guarded, advises Ganesh.

PISCES
You will communicate with your friends or relatives living abroad today. There is a chance that these communications could translate directly into substantial gain for you. You will find yourself in the mood for socializing. You will likely invite friends over to dinner at your place in the evening, says Ganesh.

Kiara believes in destiny

Mumbai: Actress Kiara Advani recently revealed how destiny played a role in her getting a beautiful film titled *Satyaprem Ki Katha*.

The *Shershaah* actress said, "I would like to share this with everyone and Karan (Shrikant Sharma), who wrote this script. I believe this film actually came to me before Covid. I heard this story, and I thought it was so beautiful. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, we couldn't proceed with it. Suddenly, after a couple of years, there was an announcement of a film starring Kartik and produced by Sajid (Nadiadwala) sir. At that time, I didn't know that it was the same script that I had read many years ago." She further

recalled, "We were shooting for *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* at that time, and we were chatting about it. Kartik mentioned that he was doing this film with a beautiful story, and I was like, 'Okay.' I had no idea that it had come back into my life. So, I feel that some films are just destined to happen. It was in a part of my destiny to be a part of this film and play this role." The Sameer Vidwans directorial is slated to release July 29.



WORLD MUSIC AND YOGA DAY CELEBRATION

Dhrupad, Naad Yoga leave audience in thrall

Bhubaneswar: Utkala Rangamancha of the GKCM Odissi Research Centre here witnessed a spectacular evening commemorating World Music and Yoga Day, Wednesday.

Organised by City-based Dhrupad Music Foundation, the event showcased the captivating genre of Dhrupad music, known for its profound spiritual undertones. The event also included Naad Yoga, a method for using sound to promote meditation and self-realisation. This gave attendees a very unique experience.

Vocalist Shreyaashni Pahwa from Punjab was the first to perform at the event. She enthralled the audience with Raga Bageshree (*Aye Raghbir Dhir*) composed in Sulata Taal (*Ayo Sub Mil Gaye*). Mukund Dev Sahoo, known as a master of Dhrupad style of singing, also joined in to mesmerise the audience with his Naad-Yoga.

The event was graced by Swami Atmaprabhananda, secretary of Ramakrishna Mission,



Bhubaneswar, MLA Prafulla Samal, and KC Satpathy, Regional Director, DAV School.

Swami Ji thanked to the organisers for conceptualizing such an event while MLA Samal said, "I am happy that a programme like this has been conducted in the city. And I hope it will grow more and eventually present itself at the international level."

The event, aimed at promoting the global significance of music and yoga in fostering spiritual and mental well-being, drew a diverse audience, cre-

ating an atmosphere of unity and harmony. It provided a platform for artists, musicians, and yoga en-

thusiasts to come together and celebrate the universal language of music and the ancient wisdom of yoga.

JAGANNATH ASHTAKAM UNVEILED

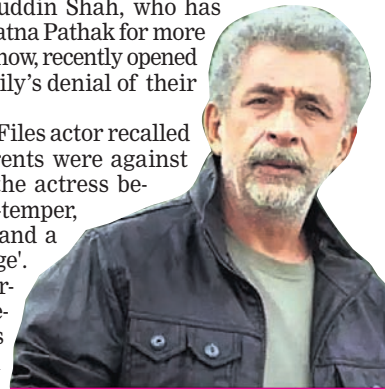
Bhubaneswar: *Jagannath Ashtakam*, a devotional song album comprising eight verses in praise of Lord Jagannath, was released in Puri, Wednesday. The singers, composer, and producer of the album were all in attendance. It is believed that by reading and hearing the lines of *Ashtakam*, which were first written by Adi Shankaracharya and recited by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, one receives the grace of Lord Jagannath and entry into Vishnulok. The tracks were created by Starmanch - Kolkata (Randeep Bhattacharya), and recorded at Usha Uthup's studio Vibrations in Mumbai with vocals provided by Abhijeet Mishra and Jayati Chakraborty. Album's music was scored by Upali Chattopadhyay.

'I WAS A DRUG ADDICT AND ILL-TEMPERED'

Mumbai: Naseeruddin Shah, who has been married to Ratna Pathak for more than four decades now, recently opened up about her family's denial of their marriage.

The Tashkent Files actor recalled that Ratna's parents were against him marrying the actress because of his 'ill-temper, drug-addiction and a broken marriage'. He elaborated during one of his recent interviews and said, "We did not live together, we were courting. I courted her for seven years before marriage. Her parents were against it, as I was a drug addict, ill-tempered and married before, but she did not pay any heed to that."

It was love at first sight for Naseer, he further revealed. "I took to Ratna right away... the moment I saw her. I had done my first film at the time when we were introduced. She was working in a Satyadev Dubey play and I had done one film. It just felt like I'd like to know this person. She also liked what she saw. It has been a great blessing. We stood by each other through thick and thin, in fact she stood by me through very difficult and very good times," concluded Naseer.



Sobhita talks about her ideal man

Mumbai: Actress Sobhita Dhulipala, who is seen playing a variety of roles in various Indian entertainment industries and platforms, is also an established model in reality, and now her personal life has come under scanner, especially after a couple of pictures of her with Naga Chaitanya were out on the internet last year.

Speculation is rife that the duo will get married soon. Speaking to a media house about her relationship, she reportedly said that she did not want to get disturbed by revealing her personal life to the public, as that would take the focus away from her professional work.

She also stated that even people do not want to know about her life, and she added that the public will not know if she hides something from them. Hence, she prefers keeping her media interactions limited to her accomplishments and film projects rather than talking about her personal life.

Moreover, on asking about her ideal partner, she said that she wants someone who is grounded and close to the earth and has the understanding that life is short and we will all go in a short span.



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

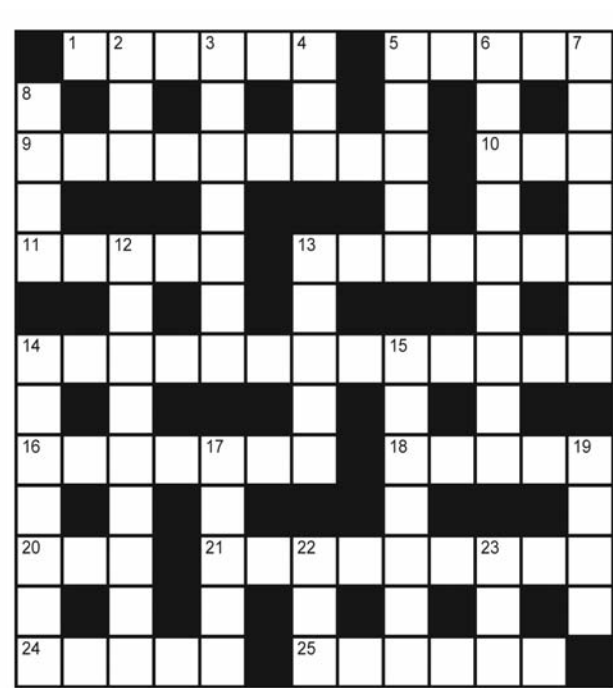


BREVITY



FUN post

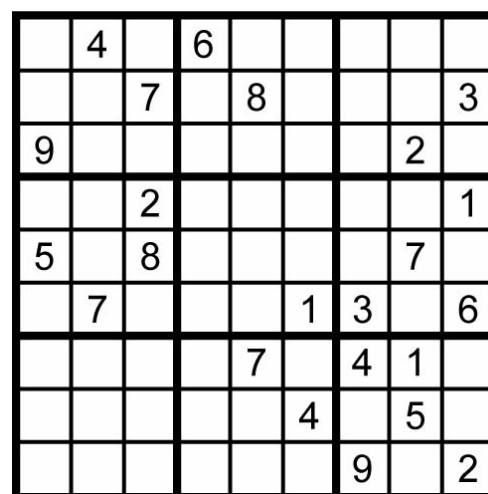
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Tooth covering
 - 5 Decrees
 - 9 Swiss instrument
 - 10 According to
 - 11 Banquet
 - 13 Quartz glass
 - 14 Mortification
 - 16 Cradlesong
 - 18 Glyceride, e.g.
 - 20 Goat god
 - 21 Precious stone
 - 24 Hostile force
 - 25 Billiards shots
- Down**
- 2 Snooze
 - 3 Leviathan, e.g.
 - 4 Sign before
 - 5 Comedian's stock in trade
 - 6 Flat
 - 7 Crimson
 - 8 Baby elephant
 - 12 Vehicle with flashing lights
 - 13 Like a fox?
 - 14 Overshadow
 - 15 Sanctuary
 - 17 Analyse
 - 19 Coral formation
 - 22 Resinous deposit
 - 23 Belief system

SUDOKU

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

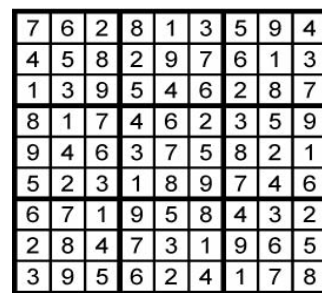


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



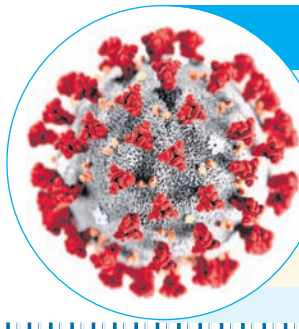
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



MEGA FAIR

Visitors during a 'Pallishree Mela' at Bholanath Bidyapitha in Puri, Wednesday



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

Four get life imprisonment for 2016 rape

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, June 21: The District and Sessions Judge Court here Wednesday awarded life imprisonment to four persons after holding them guilty of outraging the modesty of a married woman in 42 Mouza area here in July 2016.

Justice Soumendra Kumar Rajguru awarded life imprisonment to Sanjay Das, 25, Gadadhar Das, 35, and Dilip Das, 21, of Nuapada village under Dhamnagar police limits of Bhadrak and Jaga Das, 25, of Singiri village under Aul police limits in Kendrapara after taking into account the statements of 14 witnesses and 35 documentary evidences, prosecution lawyer Kshetramohan Behera said.

According to the case details, the victim's husband was away when the four took turns to force themselves on her. The victim lodged a complaint with Cuttack Sadar police. Soon, a case (253/16) was registered and a probe was launched. After a few days, the four were arrested from Bhadrak.

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After a few days, the four were arrested from Bhadrak.

Nandighosha, Darpadalana reach Gundicha Temple

LORD JAGANNATH AND HIS SIBLINGS— LORD BALABHADRA AND DEVI SUBHADRA— TO BE TAKEN TO ADAPA MANDAP IN CUSTOMARY 'PAHANDI' RITUAL TODAY

PNN & AGENCIES

Puri, June 21: The chariots of Lord Jagannath and Devi Subhadra, pulled by devotees, reached their destination at Gundicha Temple Wednesday after being stranded for the night on the Grand Road which connects the temple to the 12th century Srimandir here.

Devi Subhadra's chariot Darpadalana was stranded at Bandasakha, about 200-metre away from the destination, while Lord Jagannath's Nandighosha at Balagandi, about two km from Gundicha Temple, during the Ratha Jatra Tuesday.

Lord Balabhadra's chariot Taladhwa, which leads the three, had reached Saradhali, in front of Gundicha Temple.

The chariot pulling was stopped at 8pm Tuesday.

The idols are, however, yet to be taken inside Gundicha Temple, where they will be pres-



Devotees gather near the chariots of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra stationed at Gundicha Temple in Puri, Wednesday

ent till June 28. They will then be taken back to the Srimandir on Bahuda.

Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) officials said that the sibling deities will remain on their chariots for the time being and will be taken to the Adapa Mandap of the Gundicha Temple in the customary 'Pahandi' ritual Thursday evening.

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Lord Balabhadra's chariot Taladhwa, which leads the three, had reached Saradhali, in front of Gundicha Temple

According to senior servitor Binayak Dasmohapatra, there were more people on the chariots and also in the inner cordons, which affected the pulling of the gigantic chariots and led to the delay

SJTA is looking into the reason for the delay by the chariots in reaching Gundicha Temple, they said. The sibling

deities were taken out of the Srimandir after completing the myriad rituals ahead of time and were slated to reach

Gundicha Temple, which is about three km away, by 6pm Tuesday, they added.

Senior servitor Binayak

Dasmohapatra said there were more people on the chariots and also in the inner cordons, which affected the pulling of the gigantic chariots and led to the delay. When asked, SJTA chief administrator Ranjan Kumar Das said, "All happens as per the wishes of Lord Jagannath."

Meanwhile, the seaside town Wednesday witnessed the same enthusiasm which was seen on Ratha Jatra when the chariots were pulled towards Gundicha Temple. Thousands of people joined in and the police arrangements were the same as it was on the previous day.

With the chariots stranded, many devotees who could not make it Tuesday rushed to Puri and to avail the opportunity to pull the chariots.

About 12 lakh devotees had thronged the Grand Road outside Srimandir Tuesday to witness the annual ride of the deities in their chariots to Gundicha Temple, which is their birthplace. Elaborate arrangements were made by the district administration and Odisha Police for smooth conduct of the festival. It continued Wednesday too.

Though 14 people were injured due to the heavy rush of people during the pulling of Lord Balabhadra's chariot Tuesday, Puri superintendent of police (SP) Kanwar Vishal Singh said five people sustained minor injuries due to the heavy rush. No stampede broke out in Ratha Jatra, Singh said.

Pregnant women, girls to get nutrition boost

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 21: The state Cabinet, led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Wednesday approved Mukhyamantri Sampurna Pushti Yojana (MSPY) that aims at transforming nutrition outcomes of adolescent girls (15-19 years), pregnant women and malnourished children across the state.

The scheme will be implemented over a period of five years with effect from 2023-24 with a projected cost of Rs 3,354.40 crore, said Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena.

Under the scheme, nutritional support such as eggs, laddoos and nutrition supplements will be provided for all adolescent girls in the age group of 15-19 years across the state, he said.

Kishori Melas will be organised at Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) project level for screening of nutritionally at risk adolescent girls, anaemia screening and other awareness activi-



CABINET DECISIONS

Mukhyamantri Sampurna Pushti Yojana will be implemented over a period of five years with effect from 2023-24 with a projected cost of Rs 3,354.40 crore

The govt will provide additional take-home ration in the form of nutrient-rich food products, including millets and additional eggs to pregnant and lactating women

Cabinet has approved Long Term Linkage policy of minerals for state-based industries through Odisha Mining Corporation Limited (OMC) —2023

ties. Similarly, Jena said, the state government will provide additional take-home ration

(THR) in the form of nutrient-rich food products, including millets and additional

eggs to pregnant and lactating women across the state.

THR and additional eggs will be distributed to malnourished children and severely underweight children, he added.

The Chief Secretary further said that the Cabinet has approved Long Term Linkage (LTL) policy of minerals for state-based industries through Odisha Mining Corporation Limited (OMC) —2023.

The new policy provides long term raw material security for upcoming greenfield or brownfield projects to be set up in the state which are approved by government or any other competent authority, Jena said.

For such cases, he said, the Allotment Committee constituted under the policy will determine the allotment criteria, final allocation quantity, tenure and other terms and conditions.

The parity in the existing pricing mechanism for fixation of floor prices for all the minerals governed under this policy is ensured by the new policy, he added.

State for inclusion of Saora language in 8th Schedule

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 21: In an attempt to woo tribal voters ahead of the general elections, the state Cabinet Wednesday decided to recommend the Union government to include Saora language in 8th Schedule of the Constitution.

The Cabinet headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik recommended the proposal for inclusion of Saora language in 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India, said ST & SC Development Minister Jagannath Saraka.

Inclusion of Saora language in 8th Schedule of the Constitution will help in preservation, promotion and propagation of this language and culture, he added.

It will create an ecosystem to facilitate research & studies anchored around preservation, promotion and propagation of the tribal language.

Besides, activities such as publication, creation of content

Relief for single DQ allottees

The state Cabinet decided Wednesday to exclude the names of the Discretionary Quota (DQ) allottees getting one plot/house/flat through fair means and by following the prescribed procedure and provisions from the purview of the Task Force Report.

Allottees, who transferred such allotments in favour of his/her legal heirs, under the category of post possession transfer cases will also be ex-

cluded, Chief Secretary PK Jena informed. The Task Force in its report; Para 48(7) recommends that post possession transfers by Discretionary Quota allottees and multiple allottees should be cancelled, he said.

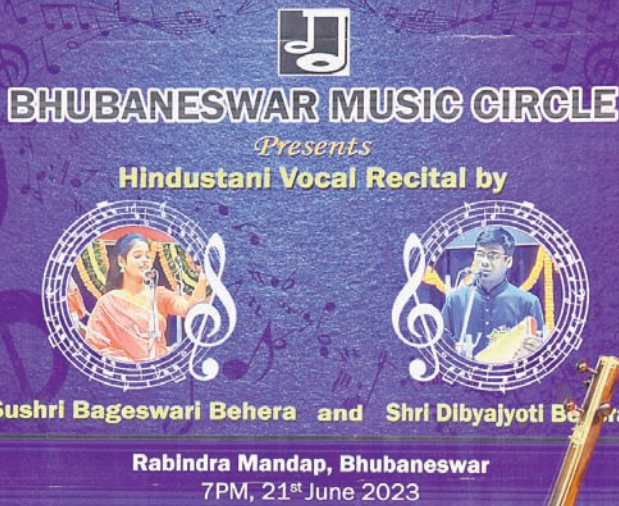
However, it has been suggested in the report that the cancellation may not be done in respect of an allottee getting only one plot/house/flat through fair means.

and recognition will get a momentum, Saraka said, adding that the decision would benefit more than 5 lakh Saora speaking indigenous people.

The Cabinet decision to recommend the inclusion of Saora language in 8th Schedule of the Constitution will have no financial implications, he asserted. The Cabinet also gave its nod to

the lease of land measuring 6.30 acre in Ramachandrapur Mouza under Rayagada tehsil obtained in exchange of equal value of land from the Ministry of Railways on free of premium and incidental charges basis in favour of Maa Majhighariani Temple Management Trust for development of infrastructure, Saraka said.

MUSICAL EVENT



Artists perform during a musical event organised by Bhubaneswar Music Circle at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

Man flees 5-star hotel with ₹58L unpaid bill

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 21: A five-star hotel here has alleged to have suffered a loss of Rs 58 lakh when one of its guests colluded with some hotel staff and stayed for almost two years without making any payment.

The hotel, Roseate House in Aerocity near the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport, has lodged a case at IGI Airport police station.

According to the FIR lodged recently by Vinod Malhotra, an authorised representative of Bird Airports Hotel Private Limited, which operates Roseate, guest Ankush Dutta stayed for 603 days which cost Rs 58 lakh but checked out without paying a single penny.

The FIR alleges that Prem Prakash, head of Front Office Department of the hotel, who was authorised to decide room rates and had access to the hotel computer system to track dues of all guests, allowed Dutta's long stay violating the hotel norms.

The hotel management suspects that Prakash might have received some cash amount from Dutta for letting him overstay by manipulating its in-house soft-



ware system that maintains and monitors stay/visit of guests and their accounts.

"A criminal conspiracy was hatched by guest Ankush Dutta along with some known and unknown hotel staff, including Prem Prakash with a motive to gain wrongfully and deprive the hotel of its rightful dues," the FIR said.

"In pursuance of the said conspiracy, the alleged staff of the hotel forged, deleted, added accounts entries and falsified a large number of entries in the account of the said guest Ankush Dutta in the Opera software system of the hotel," it added.

The hotel has alleged that Dutta checked in May 30, 2019 and booked a room for one night. He was supposed to check out the very next day May 31 but he kept

on extending his stay till January 22, 2021.

The hotel norm says that if a guest's pending outstanding dues exceed 72 hours, it should be brought to the notice of CEO and Financial Controller for their information and seeking instruction. However, Prakash did not send Dutta's dues to the CEO and FC of the hotel.

According to the FIR, Prakash did not make any outstanding payment report from May 30, 2019 to October 25, 2019. Even when he created the outstanding payment report after October 25, he forged it by clubbing pending bills of other unrelated guests into one bill with the motive to camouflage the pending dues of Dutta.

The hotel has alleged that Prakash resorted to various

modus operandi to help Dutta enjoy a long stay there. He even fudged the account to show that other guests, who stayed in the hotel, paid for Dutta which turned out to be fabricated.

"The scrutiny of record of the alleged officials of the hotel revealed that they created several fake and false pending bills to benefit Ankush Dutta by adopting various ways like by removing room nights from his bills, transferring his debits into the bills of other guests' bills, using settled bills of other guests by incorporating his name in the bill," the FIR said.

The hotel also noticed that Dutta paid three cheques of Rs 10 lakh, Rs 7 lakh and Rs 20 lakh at different dates but all of them bounced and Prakash did not bring this fact to the notice of the hotel management.

The hotel has demanded a strict legal action against the culprits as they have committed criminal offences, criminal breach of trust, cheating, forgery and falsification of accounts.

A preliminary inquiry by the IGI police showed that prima facie the offences were made out, and now they are further probing the matter.

Keep Aahaar centres open 7 days, urges H&FW Secy



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 21: The Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department Wednesday directed Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department to open Aahaar centres at 93 health facilities under the 5T Ama Hospital initiative.

In a letter to H&UD secretary, Health and Family Welfare secretary Shalini Pandit said, "As per the decision of the government, in the first phase, 147 public health facilities have been undertaken for transformation under the 5T initiative of Ama Hospital. It has been targeted to complete all the work under different components in these hos-

pitals latest by October 31, 2023." Out of the 147 hospitals meant to undergo transformation under the 5T initiative, Aahaar centres are available only at 54 hospitals leaving the other 93 hospitals without a centre. "As Aahaar Kendras (centres) provide great support to attendants of the patients, it is requested to kindly explore opening them in these 93 hospitals," said the letter.

Pandit also urged the H&UD secretary to consider keeping the Aahaar centres open all seven days a week, saying, "It is reported that in all the hospitals of the state, Aahaar Kendras (centres) are functioning for six days a week and remain closed

Out of the 147 hospitals meant for transformation under the 5T initiative, Aahaar centres are available only at 54 hospitals, leaving rest 93 without a centre

As these centres provide great support to patients' attendants, the H&FW secretary requested to keep them open for all seven days of the week

Aahaar centres, which were initially opened at 21 places in five municipal corporations, are now functioning at 167 places in all 115 urban local bodies of the state

Sundays. As patients come to government hospitals on all days of the week, it is requested to kindly consider running Aahaar Kendras (centres) attached to public health facilities for all 7 days."

Notably, Aahaar centres, which were initially opened at 21 places in five municipal corporations, are now functioning at 167 places in all 115 urban local bodies (ULBs) of the state. As per government record, over 150 million meals are served at these centres on daily basis.



OFFICIAL VISIT: Cuttack Collector Bhabani Shankar Chayani joins World Skill Centre, Bhubaneswar, CEO Alka Arora Misra as she takes a tour of Barabati Palace in Cuttack, Wednesday

Workshop held to end discrimination among children

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 21: The women's wing of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, FICCI FLO, in partnership with 'So Am I Foundation' recently organised the much-anticipated workshop Dishantika, 2023, for children in Bhubaneswar and Baripada with an aim to bridge

the class divide and end the discrimination and inequality children still face in today's society. FLO Bhubaneswar chairperson Poonam Mohapatra said, "Since its inception in 2013, Dishantika has brought together children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, fostering compassion, selfless service, and the joy of sharing. We believe our collaboration with the foundation

will give this workshop a new direction and help us reach more children." So Am I founder Pinaki Mohanty said, "Children in their growing years don't deserve to be subjected to disparity based on the earnings of their family members, as we never know what future they behold. Dishantika aims to create an inclusive society where all children have equal opportunity to

succeed." The workshop in Bhubaneswar took place at Utkal Galleria, bringing together other groups like FLO, YI, and Art of Living. The event saw participation of 80 children, including 65 underprivileged and 15 privileged children, fostering empathy and understanding without biases. The event was attended by Olywood actor Akash Dasnayak.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA

Clinical integration of yoga need of the hour: AIIMS dir

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 21: The 9th International Day of Yoga was observed Wednesday in several health and educational institutions across the state including those in Capital City where participants relished the moment by performing yoga.

AIIMS Bhubaneswar

Yoga day was observed in AIIMS Bhubaneswar where clinical integration of yoga was emphasised. Addressing the yoga event, AIIMS, Bhubaneswar executive director Ashutosh Biswas said, "To make the healing process swift and better, clinical integration of yoga is need of the hour. Managing stress to keeping ourselves calm, yoga is very helpful in post-surgery rehabilitation." Biswas said that AIIMS is working to integrate yoga into all its departments to make the rehabilitation process better. "Departments like gastroenterology, medical oncology, general surgery and cardiology have already integrated yoga in different treatment processes," he added.

The event was attended by faculties of MBBS and nursing along with para-medical students, officers, and employees, Yoga instructor Santosh Kumar Sahu practised yoga while Subhashish Sarkar (Homeopathy) extended vote of thanks.

Department of Community Medicine and Family Medicine (CMFM) in collaboration with the department of AYUSH, observed International Yoga Day at Government High School at IRC Village in Nayapalli. On this occasion, Swayam Pragyan Parida and Prajna Paramita Giri stressed on the importance of yoga in life for improving men-



tal health. ILS, Bhubaneswar

Institute of Life Sciences (ILS), Bhubaneswar organised a special yoga session on the relevance of yoga for human body, breathing system and mind. The session was conducted by yoga expert Manorama Panigrahy and Naturopathy and Yogic Sciences expert Nancy Sharma. They demonstrated a few yoga exercises before the participants that could be practiced at home and workplace. ILS director Debasis Dash spoke on this year's theme "Yoga for Humanity" and emphasised on the numerous benefits of yoga. The event was coordinated by Rajeeb Swain and participated by scientists, students and staffers of ILS.

KIIT-KISS

The 9th International Yoga



BJEM School



UTKAL UNIVERSITY



AIIMS Bhubaneswar



ILS, Bhubaneswar

Day celebrated at KIIT & KISS was attended by around 5,000 staffers of the twin institutions. Inaugurating the event, vice-chancellor of KIIT Deemed to be University Sasmita Samanta said, "India was the land where yoga was originated in the ancient times and it has also become the lead nation to give yoga an international platform and arena." She said that during the last nine years, India has taken yoga to every individual across the world. "Yoga is one of the most important aspects of our lives to maintain balanced mind and a healthy body," she added.

CUO, Koraput

Vice-chancellor of Central University of Odisha, Koraput Chakradhar Tripathi Wednesday inaugurated the 9th International Day of Yoga on the varsity cam-

pus. Addressing the event, Tripathi said, "The effort to find pleasure (Ananda) is yoga; to connect with Purnabrahma with reverence through yoga is great pleasure (Mahananda). This effort has been continued by the great persons of India since time immemorial. Understanding the value and significance of yoga, the world is celebrating International Day of Yoga today." A yoga workshop was organised on this occasion. Yoga expert Jaya Krishna Padhan performed various yogasanas as per the Common Yoga Protocol. 'Asanas' like Bhramari, Dhyana, Sitali, Kapala Bhati, Nadisodhan, Sabasana, Pawan Mukhtasan, Ardha Halasana, Uttana Padasana, Setu Bandhasana, Bhujangasana, Makarasana, Bakrasana, Uttana

Mandukasana, Sasakasana, Ustrasana, Ardha Ustrasana, Bajrasana, Bhadrasana, Ardha Chakrasana, Tadasana and different body movements. **ODM School, Bhubaneswar** Chairman-cum-founder of ODM School Satyabrata Minaketan along with students and teachers participated a yoga session organised by the institution on the occasion of Yoga Day, Wednesday. Minaketan advised the students to practise yoga regularly to stay fit both mentally and physically. **BJEM School** On the occasion of International Yoga Day, BJEM School also organised a yoga session on the institution premises where students, teachers and school principal Sandhya Jena and others performed yoga.

ITER RANKED 3RD IN TIMES' SURVEY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 21: Institute of Technical Education and Research (ITER), faculty of engineering and technology of Siksha 'O' Anusandhan deemed to be university (SOA), was ranked third among engineering institutes of the country in the Times All India Engineering Institutes Ranking Survey, 2023.

ITER, established in 1996-97, has been evaluated as the top engineering institute in Odisha and in the eastern region, as per the rankings published Tuesday.

Among the top 125 private engineering institutes in the country, ITER was ranked second, while in terms of research capability it was placed fourth



in the country, the highest rank obtained an institute in the eastern region. Altogether, 170 engineering institutions across the country have been ranked for the survey, which was conducted considering the parameters of desk research, factual data collection and perceptual survey.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Nabajul Khan, S/o. Rabbul Khan, At/PO-Lataharan, PS- Kakatpur, Dist-Puri-752119 declare by this affidavit 20377, dated 21.06.2023 that now onwards, I shall be known as Nabajul Khan for all future purposes.

LOST

I, Mr. Pratap Kumar Palai, S/o-Parsuram Palai, residing at Bhubanpur, PO-Brahmagiri, Dist-Puri, PS- Brahmagiri, stated that on 19.06.2023 while I was travelling to Brahmagiri Market. My Original link Saledeed No-1313 executed between seller Mr. Jagannath Pradhan and buyer Bilasini Pattanayak on 12.11.1991 was lost somewhere. If anybody found above document please contact with our advocate.

Adv. Name- Deepak Kumar Sahoo
Contact No.99370 58785

I, Jharana Dalei, W/o-Duryodhana Dalei, Vill.-Anantapur, Kanti, Pipili, Anantapur, Dist-Puri - 752014, beg to state that, while visiting the market on dtd.5.6.2023 I have inadvertently lost the Hal Sale Deed No.-11531901188, dtd. 13.03.2019 and Hal Patta No. - 242/65. If the same is found by someone, I request them to kindly contact me on 8917597810.

Himalayan glaciers melting 65% faster: Study

Himalayan glaciers providing critical water to nearly two billion people disappeared 65 per cent faster from 2011 to 2020 compared with the previous decade due to climate change, exposing communities to unpredictable and costly disasters, according to a report by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) released. "As it gets warmer, ice will melt, that was expected, but what is unexpected and very worrying is the speed," lead author Philippus Wester told AFP, Tuesday. "This is going much faster than we thought."

Glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region are a crucial water source for around 240 million people in the moun-

tainous regions, as well as for another 1.65 billion people in the river valleys below, the report said. Based on current emissions trajectories, the glaciers could lose up to 80 per cent of their current volume by the end of the century, said the Nepal-based ICIMOD, an inter-governmental organisation that also includes member countries Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar and Pakistan. The glaciers feed 10 of the world's most important river systems, including the Ganges, Indus, Yellow, Mekong and Irrawaddy, and directly or indirectly supply billions of people with food, energy, clean air and income.



A bird flies with Mount Everest seen in the background from Namche Bajar, Solukhumbu district, Nepal. (AP)

"With two billion people in Asia reliant on the water that glaciers and snow here hold, the consequences of losing this

cryosphere (a frozen zone) are too vast to contemplate," said ICIMOD's deputy chief Izabella Koziell.

'Too vast to contemplate' Even if global warming is limited to the 1.5 to 2.0 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels agreed to in the Paris climate treaty, the glaciers are expected to lose a third to a half of their volume by 2100, the peer-reviewed report said. "It underscores the need for urgent climate action," Wester said, adding, "Every small increment will have huge impacts and we really, really need to work on climate mitigation... that is our plea." Wester said improving technologies and previously classified high-resolution satellite imagery meant predictions could be made with a good degree of accuracy. The world has warmed an av-

erage of nearly 1.2 C since the mid-1800s, unleashing a cascade of extreme weather, including more intense heatwaves, more severe droughts and storms made more ferocious by rising seas. Hardest hit are the most vulnerable people and the world's poorest countries, which have done little to contribute to the fossil fuel emissions that drive up temperatures. Amina Maharjan, a livelihoods and migration specialist at ICIMOD, said communities do not have the support they need. "Most of the adaptation is communities and households reacting (to climate events). It is inadequate to meet the challenges posed by climate change," Maharjan said.

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BJD youth leader run over by car; family cries foul



ing a post-mortem at MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur.

Berhampur SP Saravana Vivek M visited the spot Wednesday and took stock of the situation. A scientific team was also pressed into service while a two-wheeler used by the deceased was also seized by the police.

Family members cried foul over the death and alleged that Lalit had been murdered. They alleged that Lalit had been involved in a heated brawl with a co-villager Ramakrushna Mishra at Shankarkhali Square in the village, Tuesday evening.

The spat between the two grew uglier as the two scuffled and showered blows on each other.

The fight came to an end after some villagers intervened. Later, Lalit left the spot on his two-wheeler but Ramakrushna allegedly followed him in a car.

Later, Ramakrushna hit his car with Lalit's bike on the road between Khambarigaon High School and the local panchayat office. As a result, Lalit lost his balance and fell on the road after hitting a roadside coconut tree.

Notably, Ramakrushna even rescued Lalit in a critical condition and rushed him to the Digapahandi community health centre before absconding. There, the doctors pronounced Lalit brought dead. On being informed, several BJD leaders and kin of the deceased reached the hospital.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Digapahandi, June 21: In a tragic incident, a BJD youth leader was allegedly run over by a speeding car by a co-villager at Khambarigaon village under Digapahandi block in Ganjam district, Tuesday night.

The deceased identified as Lalit Mohan Mohapatra was a former president of BJD's youth wing in Digapahandi block. The matter came to the fore after the deceased's brother Rajat Mohapatra lodged a complaint at K Nuagaon police station, Wednesday.

Tension was palpable in the area after reports of Mohapatra's death spread. However, the situation is under control, K Nuagaon IIC Mrutyunjaya Swain said.

Police have registered a case and handed the body over to his family members after conduct-

The deceased identified as Lalit Mohan Mohapatra was a former president of BJD's youth wing in Digapahandi block



SOAKED IN DIVINITY: Girls performing Odissi before the chariots at Ratha Jatra in Udala in Mayurbhanj district, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

Livestock numbers falling sharply in Jajpur dist

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, June 21: The population of livestock which is a major source of livelihood for the people in the country is on decline, a report said. This development has set alarm bells ringing, it added. Livestock like cattle and buffalo population plays an important role in income generation for people and help in maintaining ecological balance and bio-diversity. Experts pointed out that decline in livestock population coupled with loss of green cover, decrease in bird and animal species are posing a threat to environment. They claimed that cattle smuggling, poaching, burying up natural water bodies are the main causes behind decrease in livestock population.

The sharp decline in livestock population in Jajpur district is a case in this point. The district had 4,86,933 livestock pop-



ulation in 2012 which came down to 4,77,306 in a 2019 survey. Similarly, the population of various species of buffaloes was 5,332 in 2012 which came down to 3,884 in 2019.

Preparations have started for another livestock census in 2024 which is held in every five years. It is being apprehended that livestock population might witness further decrease during the census.

Sources said the Odisha gov-

ernment has stopped giving importance to livestock after introduction of modern farming methods and availability of equipment. The state government is sanctioning only ₹10 crore per year for protection of the livestock under various schemes. However, farmers pointed out that it is too meager amount.

The sharp rise in cattle smuggling has also resulted in decline of the population. The indigenous varieties of cows which once were a mark of financial strength of rural households have been the most affected. The exact reason behind their decline is yet to be ascertained but sources pointed out that smuggling and slaughtering of the animals are the main reasons behind the dwindling numbers. They added that in the recent past bovine population has also decreased due to various diseases.

Jajpur district spread over 2,899 square kilometres has a forest cover of approximately 725.27 square kilometres. The district has also over 26,944 acres of pasture land which is under the Revenue department. However, 10,000 acres of pasture land has been encroached in the district. It is alleged that several influential people have encroached upon pasture and forest lands leading to reduction of green cover. The shrinking of pasture land has hit the livestock population as animals like cows, bulls, buffaloes, goats, sheep and pigs are not getting sufficient food for which their numbers are decreasing rapidly.

In the past, over 80 per cent of the families were into livestock rearing which continued till 1998 as there was abundance of pasture land till 1998. However, the livestock population started declining after the Super Cyclone in 1999.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/23-24/
E-Tender/37, Dt. 13.06.2023

(1) Tender No. : e-Tender-South-KUR-108-2023, Dtd. 08.06.2023

Description : EXECUTION OF THROUGH SLEEPER RENEWAL BY TRT MACHINE FOR A LENGTH OF 43.60 KMS ON UP AND DN LINE IN DIFFERENT PATCHES OF KHURDA ROAD-PALASA SECTION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

Approx. cost of the work : ₹ 365.15 Lakh, EMD: ₹ 3,32,600.00.

(2) Tender No. : e-Tender-Cent-KUR-109-2023, Dtd. 08.06.2023

Description : RENEWAL OF EXISTING DAMAGED PSC FANSHAPED LAYOUTS AND GLUED JOINTS AT DIFFERENT LOCATIONS UNDER SR. DIVISIONAL ENGINEER (CENTRAL) OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

Approx. cost of the work : ₹ 263.41 Lakh, EMD: ₹ 2,81,700.00.

Completion period : 10 (Ten) Months (for sl. no. 1) and 12 (Twelve) Months (for sl. no. 2).

Tender closing Date & Time: At 1500 hrs. of 03.07.2023 (for both tenders).

No manual offers sent by post/courier/Fax in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

Note : The prospective tenders are advised to visit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigendum issued for this tender.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.)
PR-279/O/23-24 Khurda Road

BALASORE TRAIN ACCIDENT

School used as makeshift mortuary reopens

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Balasore, June 21: The Bahanaga High School, which was used as makeshift mortuary during triple train tragedy in Balasore district, reopened Wednesday following completion of summer vacation.

The 65-year-old school is just 500 metre from the accident site. The school was hastily turned into a temporary morgue, following the deadly train accident that claimed the lives of 292 people and injured over 1,000.

The school having classes from I to X was reopened after conducting a puja in a new classroom. While the mid-day meal serving hall, which was used as mortuary, has been demolished, the classrooms have been coloured to give a fresh environment to the students.

However, the first day of the school witnessed a poor attendance. Out of over 550 students, about 200 students attended the school. May be the parents of the students are getting nervous about sending their children back to the building.



"Students are still nervous to come to the school as such a huge number of bodies were preserved in their school. We have tried to convince the students and also their parents," said a woman member of the School Management Committee.

Balasore District Collector Dattatraya Bhausaheb Shinde and District Education Officer (DEO) Bishnu Charan Sutar visited the school to monitor the situation.

"As per the instructions of the School and Mass Education secretary, I am visiting different

schools on the first day of re-opening. So, I visited the Bahanaga school too," said Shinde.

DEO Bishnu Sutar said students are very much encouraged to attend classroom teaching.

In the absence of half of the students, Sutar said, "Many of the students are residing on the opposite side of the railway tracks (accident site). The tracks were sealed. We hope the school will bounce back to its normal attendance when the situation normalises."

The collector also informed that he had spoken to the Divisional Railway Manager to allow the students to attend the school putting their work on hold during school timing.

Notably, the Odisha government has decided to redevelop Bahanaga High School as a model school. Considering children's mental health, a decision was taken to demolish the primary and elementary schools in the vicinity of the High School and reconstruct a completely new building with modern facilities.

Aditya Aluminium helps improve peripheral villagers' quality of life



BHUBANESWAR: Aditya Aluminium, an Aditya Birla Group company has been engaged with the communities since decades to qualitatively impact their lives. These are the underprivileged living in and around the company's plants. Over the last decade, more than 50,000 villagers spanning 40 villages in six gram panchayats under Rengali block in Sambalpur district have felt the changes for the better, being made here.

Besides constructing the black-top roads and road-over bridges, Aditya Aluminium has also built community centres and Kirtan Mandap, excavated ponds, reno-

vated temples and other places of worship, ensured provision of safe drinking water, and provided healthcare services for the people in these villages. These community assets and social infrastructure have improved people's quality of life in multiple ways. Among the measures are providing quality healthcare at people's doorsteps, reducing crimes against women, safety measures, and helping minimise accidents.

Sameer Nayak, Unit Head of Aditya Aluminium, says, "We are always concerned about the convenience of the inhabitants of our peripheral villages. In recent years, the company has built more than 15 km of black-top road at six locations in the villages to boost connectivity and improve the quality of life. It has built a road over bridge on Bendujor big drain, facilitating the movements of the villagers of Dhorrapani."

Furthermore, the company has installed over 150 solar lights in these villages, making it easier for the people, especially women and children, not only to commute safely at night but also enabling the students to prepare well for the exam," Nayak added.

Sundargarh farmers make hay with 'mango revolution'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, June 21: A mango revolution is taking shape silently in Sundargarh district with the fruitful signs becoming gradually visible now. The local markets are getting flooded with locally produced mangoes.

The 'baiganapalei' mango, a favourite of every Odia household, is surprisingly going off the shelves and locally produced varieties like 'amrapali', 'lengda', 'akhuras', 'dusher' and other indigenous varieties are becoming available in the market. Not all these mango varieties were available here earlier as they were being procured from outside.

Shankar Chowdhury, a fruit seller near Bisra Chowk said, "Saab! Baiganapalei ko bhool jaiye (sir forget baiganapalei) enjoy all the local varieties. They are good and tasty."

Another one echoed the same



sentiment as he explained, "We are getting the local varieties cheap whereas customers are not ready to pay for baiganapalei as the mango variety is costlier for them."

Similarly, another seller said, "Customers who are not very conscious about a particular va-

riety just ask for the tasty and cheaper variety of local mangoes. They don't bother about any fancy variety, they just want mango."

The rate varies between ₹40 to ₹60. The local mangoes were earlier visible in the weekly haats, where the tribal producers would

come and sell the indigenous fruits, which hardly have any name.

But, this year, the emerging trend is that the local markets, particularly the organised fruit sellers, have preferred to sell the local mangoes.

Basant Pradhan, a former agriculture and particularly horticulture officer said, "We urged them to plant trees on their lands and wait for a few years and they are reaping the benefits just after five to seven years."

"They will be benefitting for the rest of their lives. And I am sure that like vegetables, Sundargarh will become a hub of mango export." Notably, Sundargarh's capsicum, coloured cauliflower, broccoli and beans are finding their way to metro cities. And these are being produced by farmers with small land holdings with relatively fewer trees ranging from 50 to 200.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is being brought to the notice of all that M/s Jindal Stainless Limited (JSL) has obtained amendment of Environment Clearance from Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, New Delhi; vide MoEFCC Letter No. F.No. J-11011/281/2007-IA.II(I), dated 16th June, 2023 for crude steel production (SMS) of 2.2 MTPA and Cold Rolling Mill (CRM) Production of 2.6 MTPA within the existing Steel Plant post transfer of partial facilities in the name of M/s. JSL Ferrous Limited at Kalinga Nagar Industrial Complex (KNIC), Danagadi, Dist.- Jajpur-755026. The copies of the clearance letter are available with SPCB, Odisha and may also be seen at Website of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change at <http://envfor.nic.in>.

Sd./
Director
M/s Jindal Stainless Limited

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is being brought to the notice of all that M/s JSL Ferrous Limited (JSLFL) has obtained Environment Clearance from Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, New Delhi; vide MoEFCC Letter No. F.No. J-11011/281/2007-IA.II(I), dated 16th June, 2023 for Iron making facilities of 2.35 MTPA and Steel making facilities of 2.3 MTPA post transfer of facilities from M/s. Jindal Stainless Limited at Kalinga Nagar Industrial Complex (KNIC), Danagadi, Dist.- Jajpur-755026. The copies of the clearance letter are available with SPCB, Odisha and may also be seen at Website of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change at <http://envfor.nic.in>.

Sd./
Director
JSL Ferrous Limited

CUTTACK MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE
Tender ID: 2022_ORULB_89231
Tender Call Notice No.3278 (PW), Date:21.06.2023
No. of Works: 3 Nos.
Bid Value: Rs.10.24 Lakhs to Rs.44.24 Lakhs
Period of Completion: Three Calendar Months
Date and Time Schedule:

Start	End	Opening
11.00 AM on dt. 22.06.2023	5.00 PM on dt.29.06.2023	11.00 A.M. on dt.03.07.2023

Tender Details: Can be seen from the procurement portal: www.tendersorissa.gov.in.

Sd./- Executive Engineer
City Division-II, CMC
OIPR-13031/11/0029/2324

Nothing, not even the darkest falsehood can stop the ultimate triumph of Truth.
THE MOTHER



Fertilizer Conundrum

The global food system is broken. Largely dominated by multinational corporations, it enables and encourages unsustainable and unhealthy production and consumption patterns and generates enormous waste across all stages of production and distribution.

The global food system also produces massive greenhouse-gas emissions, thereby inflicting substantial ecological damage, and deprives small-scale farmers in many countries of secure and viable livelihoods. Perhaps worst of all, food access remains profoundly unequal, causing extreme hunger to increase rather than decline.

Addressing this multifaceted dysfunction represents a huge and complex undertaking. Any potential solution will likely involve difficult trade-offs, given the apparent tension between responding to short-term price increases and implementing long-term strategies for more sustainable production and equitable distribution.

The global fertilizer shortage is a case in point. Prices soared in 2021, owing to the rising cost of natural gas, an essential input for nitrogen-based fertilizers, and continued to skyrocket in 2022 after the war in Ukraine triggered economic sanctions on Russia, a major fertilizer exporter. But it has become increasingly clear that companies exploited this crisis to raise prices by more than the increase in costs. A recent study by GRAIN and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy finds that the profits of the world's nine largest fertilizer companies increased from around \$14 billion in 2020 to \$28 billion in 2021 – and then soared to \$49 billion in 2022.

It is important to note that the rise in fertilizer prices was not due to higher sales volumes. Rather, the price increases reflected "greedflation": corporations leveraged supply shocks to increase their profit margins dramatically – from roughly 20% of sales in 2020 to 36% in 2022.

While fertilizer prices have declined somewhat since the start of the year, they remain exorbitantly high for most small farmers around the world. Farmers in predominantly low-income countries currently must pay nearly three times what they paid just a couple of years ago to fertilize their crops. As smallholder farmers sink deeper into debt, many are forced to reduce their fertilizer usage, which affects yields and threatens domestic food security. Persistently high fertilizer prices, the United Nations warned in late 2022, threaten to turn the current "crisis of affordability" into a "crisis of availability."

To prevent further disruptions to food supply chains, the governments of India, Kenya, and the Philippines have increased farmer subsidies, whereas the European Union has adopted measures to encourage domestic fertilizer production. But the use of chemical fertilizers is itself associated with major ecological problems, posing risks to sustainable agriculture and the planet. In addition to accounting for 2.4% of all greenhouse-gas emissions, chemical fertilizers are responsible for soil degradation, ozone depletion, biodiversity loss, and air pollution.

Given these risks, governments must avoid knee-jerk responses that will likely undermine ecological sustainability in the long run. Instead, policymakers must subsidize alternative agroecological technologies based on practices like crop rotation, natural fertilizers, and pesticides, which could help reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers while maintaining high yields. This approach would not only reduce costs for farmers, but also mitigate the environmental damage caused by nitrogen fertilizers. Moreover, these alternative technologies already exist. Although viable, they are the Cinderellas of agricultural policy, waiting for their immense potential to be recognized.

To be sure, this transition should not be pursued too rapidly. When Sri Lanka abruptly banned imports of chemical fertilizers in 2021, the result was a dramatic reduction in domestic food production and acute food shortages. But a growing body of evidence suggests that carefully implemented agroecological approaches could significantly boost productivity and soil quality and could be scaled up as needed.

Unfortunately, most private investment and foreign aid, both from public and private donors, continues to bet on increased use of chemical fertilizers, rather than channeling more resources toward agroecological farming. For example, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), founded in 2006 with the support of major foundations, advocates an industrial model of agriculture that involves extensive use of high-yielding seed varieties in conjunction with reliance on chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Independent studies, as well as evaluations commissioned by AGRA itself, have found that the organization is far from meeting its goals of doubling yields and incomes for millions of smallholder African farmers. Meanwhile, farmers across the continent are increasingly vulnerable as they become more dependent on chemical fertilizers and other purchased inputs whose prices have soared.

To tackle the environmental challenges facing our world and mitigate the worst effects of climate change, we must reorient the global food system toward a more sustainable and equitable path. This requires transforming many areas of food production, particularly the highly oligopolistic markets for agricultural inputs and crops. By reducing our reliance on chemical fertilizers, we could turn the current food crisis into a genuine opportunity.

The writer is Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

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WISDOM CORNER

- Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair. -KAHLIL GIBRAN
- I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars. -WALT WHITMAN
- Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves. -CARL JUNG

WORDSWORTH

Kith
We meet this most often now in the set phrase kith and kin. What that means isn't always obvious. Some use it as no more than a wordy way of describing one's relatives; for others, it refers also to a wider group of friends and acquaintances. It can also have the sense of a group of people with the same ethnic origin, usually one under a threat of some kind. As a phrase, kith and kin has been in the language for more than 600 years, the first known user being William Langland in his poem Piers Plowman of 1362. Kith is Old English, cýðð, which meant knowledge or information. It's closely related to couth, which meant something or somebody known to the speaker. Its opposite uncouth then meant an unknown or unfamiliar person or place.

FOCUS NATURE

EL NINO RETURNS



Debasis Pahi & Dillip Kumar Muduli

COUNTRIES CAN MITIGATE THE DEVASTATING IMPACT OF EL NINO BY INVESTING IN NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

In the past four years (2019-22), Indian agriculture has experienced good monsoons. It was largely due to the La Lina (means "little girl" in Spanish) effect. This pattern of monsoon may come to an end due to El Nino (means "little boy" in Spanish) event this year given the forecasts are correct. Recently, the Australian Bureau of Meteorology forecasted a 70 per cent chance of an El Nino this year. The Bureau upgraded its status from "El Nino watch" to "El Nino alert". Further, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the US also warned about El Nino this year. Statistically, the probability could be high given the four consecutive years of good monsoons from 2019-2022.

El Nino is a natural climate pattern that occurs when the surface waters of the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean become warmer than usual. This warming can have far-reaching effects on weather and climate patterns around the world – droughts, floods, hurricanes, and changes in temperature and precipitation. El Nino can have a devastating impact on the global economy, with some of the most intense past events costing trillions of dollars in economic losses over the following years.

The 1982-83 El Nino led to \$4.1 trillion in global income losses, while the 1997-98 El Nino cost about \$5.7 trillion. According to a recent study, potentially big El Nino predicted for 2023 alone could hold the global economy back by as much as \$3 trillion by 2029. The study warns that there will likely be a major economic toll that depresses economic growth in tropical countries for potentially up to a decade. The result could be trillions of dollars in productivity lost globally relative to a world without

El Nino can have a devastating impact on the global economy, with some of the most intense past events costing trillions of dollars in economic losses over the following years. The 1982-83 El Nino led to \$4.1 trillion in global income losses, while the 1997-98 El Nino cost about \$5.7 trillion

this El Nino. Another study at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, estimates that an El Nino starting in 2023 could cost the global economy as much as \$3.4tn (£2.7tn) over the following five years. Some of the specific sectors are most vulnerable to the impact of El Nino. Agriculture sector could be severely affected by deficit rainfall. Production and export of agricultural commodities can decline. Hence, there is a possibility of rise in food inflation. El Nino can also cause heavy rains, flooding or extremely hot or cold weather. This can lead to animal disease outbreaks, including zoonosis and food-borne diseases, as well

as plant pests and forest fires. In previous El Nino events, people whose livelihoods depend on fisheries had been heavily affected in certain areas. Second, El Nino can cause a decrease in tourism, as people may be less likely to travel to areas affected by El Nino-related weather events. This can have a significant impact on the tourism industry, which is a major source of revenue for many countries. Third, El Nino can cause energy prices to rise, as demand for heating and cooling increases in areas affected by the climate pattern. Fourth, El Nino can damage infrastructure, leading to significant economic losses. For example, the 1997-1998 El

Nino caused deadly flooding and mudslides in Peru, and the government calculated that damage to infrastructure amounted to about USD 3.5 billion.

El Nino could have negative impact on Indian agriculture and the economy through deficit rainfall. However, the intensity of impact depends on the intensity of rainfall. Indian agriculture has been somewhat resilient to a weak monsoon over time due to several factors. Those factors are increased area under irrigation, diversification of agriculture, increase in the share of the rural non-farm sector in income and employment for rural households, and increase in water storage in reservoirs.

However, even though the resilience of Indian agriculture to weather shocks has gone up over time, deficit rainfall could have several adverse effects on agriculture and the overall economy. It could reduce crop production as well as overall GDP growth.

The return of El Nino is a cause for concern for the global economy, with the potential for significant economic losses in the years to come. While policymakers are taking steps to address the risks associated with climate change, more needs to be done to build climate resilience and adapt to the changing climate. Countries can mitigate the devastating impact of El Nino by investing in new technologies and infrastructure. This can ensure a more sustainable and prosperous future for all.

Debasis Pahi is Assistant Professor (Commerce) and Dillip Kumar Muduli is Assistant Professor (Economics) at KIIT Deemed to be University. Views are personal.

SPECTRUM SEDITION LAW

Law panel report outdated!

The Law Commission of India's 297th report 'Usage of the Law of Sedition' would come as a great disappointment to civil and human rights activists. A year after the Supreme Court ordered a halt on all proceedings and registering of fresh cases under the sedition law, the report has strongly recommended retaining the sedition offence, albeit with some substantive and procedural safeguards. While acknowledging the grave misuse of the law, both by colonial and post-colonial governments, the report conveniently attributes the misuse to police 'complicity' and 'whimsical' interpretations. There is no mention whatsoever of political complicity in misusing the law for the ruling party's gains and suppressing the Opposition.

The question that arises is whether India needs a sedition law. This can be strongly questioned for three reasons: one, the law of sedition was framed by the British to suppress the rebellious Indians, who were engaged in activities which were against the decorum of the colonial rule and is hence out of place in a democratic republic; two, the law of sedition is more likely to be a law for which the political parties crave for their own benefits as the ruling party

has been found to misuse the power against anyone questioning its policies and criticising the government's functioning; and three, the existing provisions of IPC are sufficient to address all threats to violence and public order.

The sedition law is a contentious law that civil liberties activists, human rights lawyers and journalists have questioned. Many have argued that India's sedition law is long past its expiry date. The global movement has been overwhelmingly anti-sedition with different countries either easing the law or simply getting rid of it. Many democratic countries, including the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, Canada, Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda, have held sedition law as undemocratic, undesirable and unnecessary.

The Commission suggested implementation of procedural guidelines and preliminary inquiry before registering an FIR. While this may, to a limited extent, reduce arbitrariness and police power, the track record of our executive bodies in ensuring impartiality and transparency makes it evident that this recommendation is simply an empty gesture.

The report also proposes amending the provision to in-

clude the phrase "with a tendency to incite violence or cause public disorder" aligning with the apex court's decision in Kedar Nath Singh vs. State of Bihar (1962) where it clarified that only speech that has the tendency to incite violence or create public disorder would be criminalised. But this appears quite vague, and the State would be free to use it to its advantage.

There can be no justification in continuing with this colonial law as this clearly impinges on the right to protest and air grievances freely in a democratic society like ours. Only an authoritarian government would like to continue with such a law as is being widely perceived in India. The situation in the country is increasingly witness to the fact that the right to dissent is being eroded or even being taken away by the ruling dispensation. And in this regard, the minorities, specially the Muslims have been the worst affected.

Though a section of experts may vouch for continuation of the law, there is need for more clarity of when this law could be imposed on the citizens. Mere protest and movements against government policies and decisions cannot be deemed to be seditious. However, this was the case during the farmers' move-

ment for which Twitter was threatened to shut down operations in India. Even a few days back, the Editors Guild of India urged political parties not to harass or intimidate journalists and media houses for doing their job honestly.

The Law panel now has recommended the inclusion of the word "tendency" in the sedition law. The panel asserts that the phrase "tendency to incite violence or cause public disorder" is defined as a "mere inclination to incite violence or cause public disorder," rather than requiring proof of actual violence or an imminent threat of violence.

Social transformation cannot become a reality if dissent is not tolerated. There must be a change and even though the use of the sedition law has been put on hold, law enforcing agencies need to work judiciously, keeping the interests of the people in mind. Though this is easier said than implemented, all eyes would be on the final word of the country's apex court. Or what the temple of democracy, Parliament, will do.

The author is Sr. Consultant & Guest Faculty of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kolkata



Dhurjati Mukherjee

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION CANNOT BECOME A REALITY IF DISSENT IS NOT TOLERATED

Living with cyclones

Sir, After cyclones Amphan, Yass, Tauktae and Mandous, that originated from the Bay of Bengal, it was cyclone Biparjoy of the Arabian sea that battered parts of western India. The hitherto 'cool and calm' Arabian sea that paves way for an average of one cyclone per year; is destined for more. In the last two decades, there has been fifty-two per cent rise in Arabian sea cyclones. In Bay of Bengal, constant source of fresh water from large rivers propels the sea to be constantly warm. Faster rate of warming coupled with increased sea surface temperature and more moisture in the middle layers of the atmosphere lead to quicker cyclones there. Also, not high enough hills mean less dissipation of winds to the land in case of Bay of Bengal, whereas high mountains direct winds towards Arabian peninsula so that the heat dissolves more effectively from the Arabian sea. Biparjoy has served a warning to all stakeholders: constant high sea temperatures due to increased global warming consequent to high emission of carbon dioxide is a persistent threat India can hardly afford to ignore.

Hypersonic generator

Sir, Chinese scientists say one formidable explosion inside a shock tunnel can turn hot gas into the most powerful hypersonic generator a military has ever seen—strong enough to charge military lasers, rails guns, microwave weapons, and more. The Chinese scientists were able to use a controlled detonation to turn hot gas into plasma filled with racing ions, which converted to current. With shock waves accelerating the compressed argon gas to 14 times the speed of sound, the charged ion-filled plasma then passed through magneto hydrodynamics generators to produce electric current up to 212 kilowatts while using .26 gallons of gas. That's enough power for a burst of energy unlike anything available now in a compact system. "It has a large capacity and high efficiency," the scientists write, in The South China Morning Post. "There is no need for intermediate energy storage components. The energy can be directly transferred to the load without a high-power switch. And the device can start up quickly." The generator also has no rotating parts, increasing efficiency and ease of use.

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

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

Assam parties slam EC over plan to realign constituencies



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, June 21: A day after the Election Commission published draft delimitation proposals for assembly and parliamentary seats in Assam, the ruling alliance and opposition parties Wednesday criticised the plan to realign constituencies. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma expressed sadness over trifurcation of his Jalukbari constituency, while the opposition slammed the EC for acting as an extended arm of BJP under a conspiracy to safeguard the vote bank of the safe-fron party.

"The draft delimitation published by ECI stipulates that the current Jalukbari constituency, which I have represented since 2001, will no longer exist as it has been divided into three parts. I am feeling very saddened by this news. However, I welcome the draft paper as it accurately reflects the sentiments of Assam," Sarma said in a tweet.

He later told reporters that with implementation of the proposals, Assam will be politically saved with interests of indigenous communities protected for the future.

Assam Congress President Bhupen Kumar Borah questioned the central election agency for hurriedly publishing the draft when the matter is sub-judice in the Supreme Court.

"Some eminent citizens moved the Hon'ble SC, and the SC has given 25th July 2023 as the date for final hearing. Therefore, while the matter is sub-judice, it is astonishing - and a direct affront to the Hon'ble SC - that the ECI has come out with a draft Delimitation document without waiting for the SC judgement," he tweeted.

Borah said the state Congress never opposed the delimitation exercise in-principle, but it had January 1 this year met EC officials in Delhi and asked for

IN A NUTSHELL

The draft delimitation document retains the number of assembly seats in Assam at 126 and the Lok Sabha constituencies at 14. The state also has seven Rajya Sabha seats

As per the draft, the assembly seats reserved for SCs are increased to nine from eight and for STs to 19 from 16. For the parliamentary constituencies, two have been proposed under the ST category and one for the SC community

The commission has also planned to alter the geographical boundaries of most of the constituencies, both assembly and the Lok Sabha, while eliminating some seats and creating a few new ones

clarification on various aspects. "However, they failed to give us a reply... Doesn't this show that the EC is acting like an extended arm of the BJP," he said.

Ruling alliance Asom Gana Parishad's Prodip Hazarika strongly opposed the draft proposal, which eliminated his constituency Amguri in Upper Assam.

"Amguri has historical importance and we cannot accept complete deletion of the constituency. This cannot be accepted at all. We will protest this move when the EC members visit Assam next month," he said.

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioners Anup Chandra Pandey and Arun Goel are slated to visit Assam in July for a public hearing on the draft proposal. The All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) also took umbrage over the EC decision, with its chief and Dhubri Lok Sabha MP Badruddin Ajmal alleging that the draft was prepared as per the BJP's planning.

"The plan is to eliminate the

AIUDF from Assam's scene. It will benefit both BJP and Congress. We will meet the EC officials and oppose the proposals. We will discuss with legal experts on the necessary steps," he said.

AIUDF organisational general secretary and MLA Aminul Islam said the last delimitation in Assam took place in 1976 on the basis of the 1971 census.

"Now it's 2023 and the delimitation is taking place on the basis of the 2001 census. It means a gap of more than 20 years. Why not take the 2011 census? Why is this exercise being done mid-term? In 2026, delimitation will happen across the country. The assembly and parliamentary constituencies will increase. Why not do it then? If it does not take place in 2026, Assam will be deprived of getting more seats," he said.

Islam also alleged that there are a lot of anomalies in the draft proposal, as no logic has been given for increasing the number of SC and ST seats.

The seat alterations are politically motivated decisions. Upper Assam has not seen any major changes. Most of the changes have been implemented in Lower and Middle Assam, where there is a strong Muslim population base. The main attempt has been to reduce the number of Muslim majority seats, he said.

Rajior Dal MLA Akhil Gogoi, too, slammed the draft document and alleged that it has been prepared on the basis of the BJP's idea.

The delimitation has been done by altering demographics of the constituencies in order to suit the BJP's needs. The safe-fron party's draft report and EC's one are almost the same. The increased ST seats will give space to Bengali Hindus, not the indigenous people, he claimed.

Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) president Lurinjyoti Gogoi said the draft proposal is very unfortunate and conspiratory, as the party had told the EC that carrying out delimitation on the basis of the 2001 census will finish indigenous communities of Assam.

EC officials had visited Assam March 26-28 and held interactions with political parties, public representatives, civil society members, social organisations in the state regarding the delimitation exercise.

In total, representations from 11 political parties and 71 other organisations were received and considered.



MATTER OF FAITH: Sadhus take part in a religious procession on Kamakhya temple premises on the eve of the annual Ambubachi Mela, in Guwahati, Wednesday

Incessant rainfall in Bhutan linked to Assam floods

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati, June 21: Amid speculations that the water levels in Brahmaputra river and its tributaries are rising due to release of water from the Kurichhu Dam in Bhutan, the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) said Tuesday that the incessant rainfall in the upper catchment area of the neighbouring country is also responsible for the surge.

The current flood situation in many parts of Assam is linked with that, a senior ASDMA official said.

In a statement, the ASDMA said, "There has been a panic situation among the population of western Assam, linking the rising water levels and floods to the release of water from the Kurichhu Dam.

However, it is crucial to understand that the flood situation in western Assam is not solely caused by the water release from the dam but is also a result of continuous rainfall in both the upper catchment area of Bhutan and Assam."

The disaster management authority further said that the Royal Government of Bhutan has issued a weather advisory on Tuesday stating that light to moderate rainfall may occur in isolated areas of Bhutan in the next 2-3 days, potentially leading to rising water levels in the Brahmaputra and its tributaries.

Guvs, CMs lead Yoga Day fete in Northeast, barring in Manipur

Protesting PM Modi's silence over the violence in Manipur, a large number of people held a sit-in protest at the Thoubal fair ground on the occasion of International Yoga Day, raising slogans against the PM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agartala/Imphal, June 21: Governors, Chief Ministers, senior security forces officers along with prominent personalities performed yoga across the Northeast region, except in violence-hit Manipur, to mark the 9th International Day of Yoga Wednesday.

It was a very low-key affair in Manipur where only some ministers and security officials performed yoga to mark the occasion. As Manipur continues to reel under ethnic turmoil, yoga practitioners in Imphal under the banner of All Manipur Yoga Fraternity Union decided not to observe the day. Instead, they mourned the victims of the violence.

Protesting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's silence over the violence in Manipur, a large number of people held a sit-in protest at the Thoubal fair ground on the occasion of International Yoga day, raising slogans against the Prime Minister.

Rizorio Okram, one of the protesters, said that the Prime minister is preaching the message of peace and harmony in the world while conveniently ignoring the fact that a part of his own country is burning for the last 50 days.



Accompanied by his Cabinet colleagues, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma attended a yoga session at Dhubri, in which MLAs, senior government officials and hundreds of people also took part.

After taking part in a yoga event in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu tweeted, "Yoga cultivates the ways of maintaining a balanced attitude in day-to-day life and endows skill in the performance of one's actions - BKS Iyengar."

"Let's make #Yoga a way of life to stay fit and give our best to build a happier and healthier society. Heartiest greetings and wishes of #InternationalYogaDay to lovely people of #ArunachalPradesh." Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha, accompanied by ministers, leaders and officials, also took part in a yoga session in Agartala.

Saha later tweeted, "Yoga is rooted in ancient Indian tradition. It keeps our body and mind healthy. Attended the state-level yoga session at the international exhibition hall, Hapania, on the occasion of International Yoga Day."

This year, the theme for International Yoga Day is 'Yoga for Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' which reflects Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji's vision for wellness of the people across the world as one family.

Defence, para-military and security personnel, civil officials, along with people from all walks of life also participated in yoga sessions organised at hundreds of locations across the north-eastern states.

UP Police to recruit 52K cops this year

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, June 21: The Uttar Pradesh Police Recruitment and Promotion Board (UPPRPB) will recruit 52,699 constables, the process for which will begin within the next couple of months.

This will be one of its biggest ever recruitment drives. The state will recruit 41,811 constables for the civil police wing, 8,540 for the provincial armed constabulary (PAC) along with 1,007 firemen and 1,341 constables for Uttar Pradesh Special Security Force (UPSSF).

According to a senior officer, 1.75 lakh cops have been recruited on different ranks by UPRPB since Yogi Adityanath took over as chief minister in 2017. At least, 46 defunct PAC units were restored and resources were arranged for its efficient working.

Senior officers said that by July 15, a notification will be published for the same. UPRPB is searching for an agency to conduct the exam. Written test will be conducted by the year-end.

In 2022, UP Police had selected 9,534 candidates as police sub-in-

spectors, of which 1,477 were engineering graduates. This was the first time when so many candidates from technical background were selected in police force.

Significantly, 125 selected candidates were BCA degree holders while 43 had done BBA.

The state police had also added 1,805 women sub-inspectors, which was a historic achievement in terms of women empowerment as well as women's safety.

Another senior officer said that before the Yogi government, the earlier governments used to recruit 1,000 or 1,500 cops on different ranks.

The UP government is now gearing up to fill 2,386 vacant posts in the intelligence department and equip it with state-of-the-art technology.

Chief minister Yogi Adityanath gave his consent to a proposal in this regard during a recent review meeting.



Women in sarees make this band rock

India's first all-female music band 'Meri Zindagi' has, so far, performed in 50 cities in more than 550 concerts

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, June 21: They dress in sarees, groove to rocking beats and sing songs with meaningful lyrics that convey a social message.

The 'Meri Zindagi' music band from Lucknow that comprises five homemakers is setting the stage on fire.

India's first all-female music band has, so far, performed in 50 cities in more than 550 concerts. Started in 2010 with modest resources by Dr Jaya Tiwari, the band gained significance because of its songs where the emphasis is more on lyrics than on rhythm.

Instead of choosing quick money by agreeing to perform Bollywood songs, all members of the band juggle their passion for music and social change with a regular job for financial stability.

Another striking feature about the band, as mentioned earlier, is that they only perform in saris.

"We do not want to dress in flashy clothes and come across to our audience as distant personalities. On the contrary, we want to become the voice of those who have been suppressed, wronged, or just neglected. When we perform in sarees, regular homemakers identify with us,"



said Tiwari. Jaya Tiwari recalls, "It started with three women and one guitar in 2010. We used kitchen utensils as music instruments during our initial days. We would think of the lyrics and the rhythm of our songs while doing household chores."

For raising awareness towards social issues, the band has received several awards from government, social, and private organisations.

The band is credited with creating jingles for 1090 Women Power Helpline, Women Honour Cell, and a song for Mahila Bal Kalyan Vibhag which was launched by the chief minister himself.

Recently, the band performed for the Indian Army in Kashmir. "I remember how hard it would be for us to find a place and

Despite popular demand and lucrative money, we do not perform Bollywood songs. We only perform the songs that we write and compose. Social change and not money has been our motivation. We would never promote songs with lyrics that deride or sexualise women

DR JAYA TIWARI | BAND FOUNDER

time for jamming sessions. Sometimes, it still is. We could not do it in our houses as others would get disturbed. So, a lot of times, we jam together in public parks," said Tiwari.

Tiwari added, "Our music is a fusion of Indian and Western. While our band may use rap music to highlight a cause, we also take inspiration from Uttar

Pradesh folk music. Not all our songs highlight women's issues. We also sing about the water crisis, pollution, and tobacco usage, among others. I also want to highlight here that just because our band raises women's issues, it does not mean that we are 'anti-men' in any way."

Niharika Dubey, who plays synthesizer for the band, said, "After every concert, we feel like warriors fighting against social evils. Our instruments are our weapons. Our band gives a platform to women who can sing or play an instrument and are passionate about bringing a social change. I want to highlight the mission of our band through one of our songs - hum hi hain shakti, hum hi tarakki, humein garv hai, hum beti hain (we are the power; we are progress, we are proud to be daughters)."

Polo players take out peace rally of ponies in Manipur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, June 21: A rally of ponies seeking peace and normalcy was organised here Wednesday in ethnic strife-hit Manipur, where the modern-day game of polo is said to have originated.

Around 100 polo players rode horses carrying placards reading 'We want peace'.

"We fear the integrity of Manipur is in question, so we decided to take out a rally," Manipur Horse Riding and Polo Association president H Dilip Singh said.

N Tombi Raj, vice-president of the association, said, "The rally started from the pony farm and covered major localities of Imphal West district."

Modern-day polo is believed to have originated in Manipur where it was played as 'sagol kangie' (sagol means pony and 'kangie' is a game of sticks).

More than 100 people have lost their lives in the violence between Meitei and Kuki communities in Manipur that broke out over a month ago.





Bajrang Sena activists burn an effigy of writer and lyricist Manoj Muntashir while protesting against film 'Adipurush' in Bhopal



Students perform yoga on the bank of Hooghly river on International Day of Yoga in Nadia



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken shakes hands with Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal during the Ukraine Recovery Conference in London. Blinken's trip to London comes after his meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping Monday



Children play on a makeshift swing in Bangalore



Villagers waded through a flooded area at Dhamdharma village in Nalbari district, Assam. The flood situation in Assam deteriorated drastically Wednesday with nearly 1.2 lakh people reeling under the deluge across 10 districts



Sikh pilgrims at Attari before leaving for Pakistan for a gathering to observe the death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh falling June 27 near Amritsar



Police use water cannon to disperse Kerala Students' Union (KSU) activists protesting outside the State Secretariat over the fake degree certificates controversy in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala



Israeli border police officers are seen on a main road next to the West Bank town of Turmus Ayya. The Israeli army has beefed up its forces across the occupied West Bank and prepared to demolish the homes of two Palestinian gunmen who killed four Israelis in one of the worst attacks in the past year of violence



national



See, no can pressurise me and no one can influence me. Tickets would be decided only on the basis of surveys
KAMAL NATH | VETERAN CONGRESS LEADER

TASMAC TO SHUT 500 LIQUOR OUTLETS IN TN

Tamil Nadu government-controlled cooperative, Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation Limited (TASMAC), will shutdown 500 outlets starting from June 22. TASMAC in a statement Wednesday said that it has identified 500 outlets in the state and would start to shutdown the outlets from Thursday (June 22) onwards on the basis of the government order issued April 20, 2023



of the day quote

We have taken up work on 450 km of roads in the first phase costing ₹6,000 crore and another 450 km in the second phase. The same will be replicated in Thane too
EKNATH SHINDE | MAHARASHTRA CM

Today, this Amaranth Yatra is a golden chance for us to remind the whole country once again of the Kashmiriyat. I appeal to all my party workers to make this yatra successful, welcome the yatis and help them in every way
MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP PRESIDENT

People in UP are battling problems of price rise, poverty, unemployment, lack of security for women and other exploitation
MAYAWATI | BSP PRESIDENT

JUNE 23 OPPOSITION MEETING

Kejri urges leaders to ensure defeat of Centre's ordinance

The Friday meeting of Opposition parties has been called by Bihar Chief Minister and Janata Dal (United) leader Nitish Kumar in Patna to chalk out a joint strategy to take on the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls

claimed that the ordinance was "very dangerous for democracy". "I have studied this matter thoroughly. It would be wrong to assume that such an order can only be imposed in the context of Delhi because it is a half-state. Through a similar order, the Central government can strip the rights of any full-fledged state mentioned in the concurrent list." "Hence, it becomes extremely crucial for all parties and individuals to come together and ensure that it is not passed in Parliament under any circumstances," he wrote. Kejriwal asserted that if a Bill related to the ordinance is introduced in Parliament, the opposition parties need to come together and defeat it. "If this Bill gets passed in Parliament, it will be the end of democracy in Delhi. The people of Delhi will have no power to choose the government they desire. The central government will directly govern Delhi through the Lieutenant Governor. Regardless of which party the people elect, they will have no power. After Delhi, democracy will be abolished in all states one by one," he added. The AAP national convener thanked all opposition parties for standing in solidarity with the citizens of Delhi and firmly opposing the "unconstitutional" ordinance promulgated by the Centre. The Centre had May 19 promulgated an ordinance to create an authority for the transfer and posting of Group-A officers in Delhi, with the AAP government calling the move a deception with the Supreme Court verdict on control of services. The ordinance came a week after the Supreme Court handed over the control of services in Delhi, excluding police, public order and land, to the elected government. It has set up a National Capital Civil Service Authority for the transfer of and disciplinary proceedings against IAS and DANIGS officers. Transfer and postings of all officers of the Delhi government were under the executive control of the lieutenant governor before the May 11 verdict of the apex court.

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 21: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has written to opposition leaders, asking them to discuss the Centre's ordinance on the control of administrative services in the national capital at the June 23 meeting of non-BJP parties and clear their stand on the matter. Kejriwal, who is also the AAP national convener, asked the opposition leaders not to think of it as a "Delhi-centric problem" and claimed that if not resisted the BJP-led Centre may bring similar ordinances for other states too. In his letter, Kejriwal stressed the first thing to be discussed in the meeting should revolve around defeating the bill related to the Centre's ordinance in the Rajya Sabha. "The Centre has carried out an experiment in Delhi by bringing this ordinance. If it is successful, it will bring similar ordinances in non-BJP states and snatch away the powers with respect to subjects in the concurrent list," he said in the letter dated June 20. "The day is not far when the prime minister will run 33 states through lieutenant governors and governors," Kejriwal said, adding, "I request all parties to clear their stand on the ordinance in the meeting and also discuss the strategy to defeat this in parliament." The AAP national convener asked the opposition parties to look at the issue in a holistic manner and not think of it as a "Delhi-centric" problem. Kejriwal

claimed that the ordinance was "very dangerous for democracy". "I have studied this matter thoroughly. It would be wrong to assume that such an order can only be imposed in the context of Delhi because it is a half-state. Through a similar order, the Central government can strip the rights of any full-fledged state mentioned in the concurrent list." "Hence, it becomes extremely crucial for all parties and individuals to come together and ensure that it is not passed in Parliament under any circumstances," he wrote. Kejriwal asserted that if a Bill related to the ordinance is introduced in Parliament, the opposition parties need to come together and defeat it. "If this Bill gets passed in Parliament, it will be the end of democracy in Delhi. The people of Delhi will have no power to choose the government they desire. The central government will directly govern Delhi through the Lieutenant Governor. Regardless of which party the people elect, they will have no power. After Delhi, democracy will be abolished in all states one by one," he added. The AAP national convener thanked all opposition parties for standing in solidarity with the citizens of Delhi and firmly opposing the "unconstitutional" ordinance promulgated by the Centre. The Centre had May 19 promulgated an ordinance to create an authority for the transfer and posting of Group-A officers in Delhi, with the AAP government calling the move a deception with the Supreme Court verdict on control of services. The ordinance came a week after the Supreme Court handed over the control of services in Delhi, excluding police, public order and land, to the elected government. It has set up a National Capital Civil Service Authority for the transfer of and disciplinary proceedings against IAS and DANIGS officers. Transfer and postings of all officers of the Delhi government were under the executive control of the lieutenant governor before the May 11 verdict of the apex court.

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BENGAL PANCHAYAT POLLS

HC asks SEC to deploy over 82K central forces personnel

Maintaining that the number of districts in West Bengal has increased from 17 in 2013 to 22 at present, and also that the number of the electorate has increased in these 10 years, the court directed the SEC to requisition more than 82,000 central forces within 24 hours

Kolkata, June 21: The Calcutta High Court Wednesday directed the West Bengal State Election Commission (SEC) to requisition more than 82,000 central forces personnel within 24 hours for deployment in panchayat elections. Hearing the matter, a division bench headed by Chief Justice TS Sivagnanam also admonished State Election

Commissioner Rajiva Sinha, observing that if it is difficult for him to take orders, he can step down. The court noted that for the July 8 elections, the SEC requisitioned just 22 companies of central forces, which is a fraction of the 82,000 central policemen brought in during the 2013 panchayat polls in the state. The petitioner's counsel submitted that one company consists of 80 personnel, thus the total number



RAIN WOES: Vehicles negotiate a waterlogged road after rainfall at Subhash Chowk in Gurugram, Haryana

DRDO SCIENTIST CASE

ATS makes Pak agent co-accused

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, June 21: The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has informed a court here that it has made a woman Pakistani agent who apparently honey-trapped DRDO scientist Pradeep Kurulkar a co-accused in the case. ATS has also sought permission to run a psychoanalysis test on the scientist. Kurulkar was the director of one of the labs of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in Pune when he was arrested by the ATS May 3 on the charges of leaking confidential information to a woman Pakistani intelligence operative. Sources said the woman operated under the name of Zara Dasgupta and was in touch with Kurulkar. ATS added the name "Zara Dasgupta" to the first information report (FIR) after the agent's IP address was traced to Pakistan, the sources said.

ATS has now added to the FIR Section 4 of the Official Secrets Act that pertains to "communications with foreign agents to be evidence of commission of certain offences", they said. As per the ATS, the DRDO scientist was in touch with the Pakistani agent through WhatsApp and video calls. The agency has also submitted an application to the court requesting permission to conduct a "voice layer and psychological analysis test" on Kurulkar and sought his temporary custody for that. Additionally, the ATS has sought Kurulkar's consent to undergo a polygraph test. Defence counsel Rhishikesh Ganu said they will file an appropriate reply to the ATS applications in court as per his client's instructions. The court will hear the matter next June 26.



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Balaji undergoes bypass surgery

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, June 21: Arrested Tamil Nadu Minister V Senthil Balaji Wednesday underwent a bypass surgery and was hemodynamically stable, the private hospital treating him here said. In some relief to the beleaguered DMK leader, the Supreme Court refused to stay a Madras High Court order allowing him to be shifted to the private hospital. The Enforcement Directorate (ED), which arrested Balaji in connection with an alleged cash-for-jobs scam in the state transport department, had moved the apex court against the Madras HC order. The HC had last week allowed the minister's plea to be shifted from a government super specialty hospital here to the private Kauvery Hospital, where he underwent the bypass



surgery early Wednesday. The opposition AIADMK staged protests across Tamil Nadu seeking his dismissal from the state cabinet led by Chief Minister M K Stalin. The minister underwent Beating Heart Coronary Artery Bypass surgery Wednesday morning, a medical bulletin issued by Kauvery Hospital said. "Four bypass grafts were placed and coronary revascularization was established," the bulletin from Dr Aravindan Selvaraj, co-founder and executive director, Kauvery Group of Hospitals, said.

Sonia appeals for peace in Manipur

The Congress has been accusing the BJP of playing "divisive politics" in Manipur and alleged that the governments in the state and at the Centre have failed in their duty to maintain law and order in the northeastern state

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 21: Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi Wednesday issued an appeal for peace in Manipur and said the unprecedented violence that has devastated the lives of people of the state has left a deep wound on the nation's conscience. In a video message shared by the Congress on social media, she expressed her condolences to all those who have lost their loved ones and said she was sad that people were forced to flee the only place they called home and leave behind all that they had built over their lifetime. "For nearly 50 days, we have witnessed a great human tragedy unfolding in Manipur. The unprecedented violence that has devastated the lives of



people in your state and uprooted thousands has left a deep wound in the conscience of our nation," she said in her message. "It is heartbreaking to witness our brothers and sisters who have coexisted peacefully turn against each other," she also said. Sonia said the history of Manipur stands testament to its ability to embrace people of all ethnicities, religions and backgrounds, and the myriad possibilities of a diverse society. "It takes tremendous trust and goodwill to nurture the spirit of brotherhood, and a single misstep to fan the flames

ED raids Raut aide in Mumbai Covid centre scam case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 21: The Enforcement Directorate Wednesday raided 15 locations in Mumbai in connection with a money laundering case related to an alleged Covid centres scam against businessman Sujit Patkar, believed to be a close aide of Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut, and others, an official said. Raids were also being conducted at the residence of Suraj Chavan, a core committee member of Yuva Sena (Thackeray faction) and at the locations of some officials of Mumbai civic body and others, including IAS officer Sanjeev Jaiswal, in connection with the alleged hospital management contracts scam, he said in a statement. Patkar and his three partners allegedly bagged Mumbai civic body contracts fraudulently for managing Covid-19 field hospitals during the pandemic, the official said.

The ED team raided the residences of Patkar, Jaiswal, and Chavan at Santacruz, Bandra, and Chembur, respectively. ED officials are at Jaiswal's premises in suburban Bandra for the last several hours. Chavan identifies himself as a secretary of Shiv Sena and a core committee member of Yuva Sena on his social media handle. Shiv Sena (UBT) spokesperson Sachin Ahir termed the raids unfortunate and wondered whether the intention was to exact political revenge. The Mumbai Police had registered a forgery case against Lifeline Hospital Management Services firm. Patkar, and his three partners in August last year. Based on the FIR at Azad Maidan police station in south Mumbai, the ED registered a case to investigate the money laundering angle, the official said.

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3 civilians injured

Three civilians were injured in Bishnupur district in ethnic violence-affected Manipur after an SUV parked at a culvert in Kwakta area exploded Wednesday, sources said. A bomb inside the vehicle was possibly triggered after the driver alighted and slipped away. The three injured were standing near the vehicle and were shifted to Bishnupur District Hospital.

of hate and divisiveness," she noted. "Today, we are at vital crossroads. Our choice to embark on the path of healing will shape the kind of future that our children will inherit. I appeal to the people of Manipur, especially my brave sisters, to lead the way in bringing peace and harmony to this beautiful land," Sonia Gandhi added. The former Congress chief said that as a mother, she understands their pain and appealed to their good conscience to lead the way.

SHORT TAKES

2 prisoners found hanging from tree

Sultanpur: In a shocking incident, two prisoners were found hanging from a tree in Uttar Pradesh's Sultanpur district jail compound Wednesday. The deceased inmates have been identified as Karim Pasi and Manoj. Both were in jail on charges of murder and both belong to Amethi district. District Magistrate Jasjeet Kaur and SP Somen Barma reached the jail on getting information of the incident. Forensic teams and dog squad were also called in to assist in investigation.

Dalit gangraped, murdered in Raj

Jaipur: A 20-year-old Dalit woman was allegedly gang-raped and murdered while she on the way for her coaching classes in Rajasthan's Bikaner district, officials said Wednesday. Two policemen have been suspended for their suspected role in the incident. However, the victim's family members are staging a dharna demanding the arrest of all the accused. Inspector General of Police (IG) Om Prakash said the body of the 20-year-old woman was found in the Khajuwala area Tuesday afternoon.

IMD predicts heavy rainfall in 10 states

New Delhi: The India Meteorological Department Wednesday predicted heavy to very heavy rainfall with extremely heavy falls at isolated places over four states - Sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim, Assam and Meghalaya - and heavy rainfall over six states -- Arunachal Pradesh, Gangetic West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and Coastal Andhra Pradesh. The weather forecast agency also predicted heatwave conditions very likely at isolated pockets in Vidarbha, Interior Odisha and Chhattisgarh.

CBI questions Sanville for 2nd day

New Delhi: The CBI questioned suspected middleman Sanville Adrian D'Souza for over eight hours on the second day in a case of alleged attempted extortion of ₹25 crore from actor Shah Rukh Khan for bailing out his son Aryan in NCB's Cordelia drug bust case, officials said Wednesday. D'Souza arrived Wednesday at the CBI headquarters where he was quizzed till 7 pm about his interactions on the night of October 2-3, 2021, alleged negotiations over payment of ₹25 crore with the staff of the actor, details of the token amount of ₹50 lakh allegedly extorted, among other matters, they said.



can step down. Probably, his Excellency, the Governor may appoint somebody else in his place," the bench observed during the hearing. The bench, also comprising Justice Uday Kumar, said that it was very unfortunate that no responsible officer of the SEC was present in the court during the hearings, including Wednesday. A visibly irritated chief justice said that if the SEC was so busy that they cannot instruct their senior counsels, then "they better wind up their business". The court also warned that any attempt to make the order unworkable may result in adverse consequences. The SEC counsel submitted

that he has been instructed that whatever the court feels will be adequate regarding central forces, instructions for such will immediately be sent to the Centre. The high court had June 13 directed the SEC to requisition central forces for deployment in the districts it noted as sensitive, and to assess the situation and deploy accordingly in other districts. Expressing unhappiness over the delay in complying with the previous order, the court on June 15 directed the deployment of central forces in all districts. The SEC and the state government then moved the Supreme Court against the high court's orders. The apex court dismissed their petitions.

international



It's clear that Russia must pay for the destruction that they've inflicted. So, we're working with allies to explore lawful routes to use Russian assets
RISHI SUNAK | PM, BRITISH

AFRICA WORLD'S TERRORISM HOT SPOT

Counter-terrorism experts said Tuesday that Africa is now the world's terrorism hot spot, with half of the victims killed last year in sub-Saharan Africa, though al-Qaida and Islamic State affiliates remain widespread, persistent and active elsewhere around the globe



of the day quote

The people of Myanmar do not have decades. They need a strong international response to the crisis that is carried out in the same time zone' as the brutal attacks that they are suffering

TOM ANDREWS | SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR (HUMAN RIGHTS), UN

Our judgement is that we have done what was expected of us, now it is time for the Turkish parliament to start the ratification process

TOBIAS BILLSTROM | FOREIGN MINISTER, SWEDEN

There is no doubt that Italy and France will continue to support Ukraine as long as this is necessary. We would be facing a much more chaotic world, a world in which war is coming closer to home. What the Ukrainians are doing is also defending our freedom

GIORGIA MELONI | PREMIER, ITALY

LOST TITANIC SUB Rescuers race against time to save tourists

A submersible vessel taking tourists on a deep ocean journey to view the wreckage of the Titanic has been missing since Sunday as clock ticks down on its presumed air supply

REUTERS

Washington, June 21: Rescue teams were racing on Wednesday to trace the origin of sounds heard from the depths of the North Atlantic in a search for a tourist submersible with five people on board that vanished on its descent to the century-old wreck of the Titanic.

The US Coast Guard said remotely operated vehicle (ROV) searches were deployed in the area where Canadian aircraft detected the undersea noises Tuesday, as the clock ticked in the last 24 hours of the missing craft's presumed air supply.

"Those ROV searches have yielded negative results but continue," the US Coast Guard wrote on Twitter Wednesday.

The 21-foot submersible Titan, operated by US-based OceanGate Expeditions, began its descent at 8 am Sunday, according to the US Coast Guard. It lost contact with its parent surface vessel soon after that during what should have been a two-hour dive to the Titanic.

The mini-sub was designed to remain underwater for 96 hours, according to its specifications. That would give its occupants enough air until roughly 1200 GMT Thursday, if it remained intact. Experts said a range of factors affected that deadline including whether it still had power in the icy depths.

The wreck of the British ocean liner, which sank when it hit an iceberg on its maiden voyage in 1912, lies on the seabed at a depth



of about 12,500 feet. It is about 900 miles east of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and 400 miles south of St John's, Newfoundland.

Those aboard the submersible, the highlight of a tourist expedition that costs \$250,000 per person, included British billionaire and adventurer Hamish Harding, 58, and Pakistani-born businessman Shahzada Dawood, 48, with his 19-year-old son Suleman, who are both British citizens.

French explorer Paul-Henri Nargeolet, 77, and Stockton Rush,

founder and chief executive of OceanGate Expeditions, were also reported to be on board. The authorities have not confirmed the identity of any passenger.

Teams from the United States, Canada and France have been involved in the search covering an area of open sea larger than the US state of Connecticut or about half the size of Belgium.

'BANGING' SOUNDS Aircraft and ships from the US Coast Guard, U.S. Navy and Canadian armed forces had combed more than 19,700 square km of the North Atlantic, US Coast Guard Captain Jamie Frederick said Tuesday.

The Canadian military dropped sonar buoys to listen for any sounds that might come from the Titan and a commercial pipeline-laying vessel with a remote-controlled deepwater submersible was also searching, he said.

A French research ship car-

rying a deep-sea diving robot submersible was dispatched to the area at the request of the US Navy and was expected to arrive later Wednesday, France's Ifremer ocean science research institute said.

BIGGER CHALLENGES The submersible is sealed with bolts outside, preventing occupants escaping without assistance even if it surfaced.

If Titan were stuck on the ocean floor, a rescue effort would face even bigger challenges because of the huge pressures and total darkness at a depth of more than 2 miles. Titanic expert Tim Matlin said it would be "almost impossible to effect a sub-to-sub rescue" on the seabed.

The sinking of the Titanic, which killed more than 1,500 people, has long been immortalized in books and films. Popular interest was renewed by the 1997 blockbuster movie "Titanic".

China fumes as Biden labels Xi a 'dictator'

A DAY EARLIER, BIDEN SAID HE THOUGHT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE ON THE RIGHT PATH

REUTERS

Kentfield, June 21: China hit back Wednesday after US President Joe Biden referred to President Xi Jinping as a "dictator", saying the remarks were absurd and a provocation, in an unexpected spat immediately following efforts by both sides to lower tensions.

Biden's comments came just a day after top US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Beijing to stabilize bilateral relations that China says are at their lowest point since formal ties were established.

Attending a fundraiser in California, Biden said Xi was very embarrassed when a suspected Chinese spy balloon was blown off course over US airspace early this year, making a personal comment on the Chinese leader when the "chapter" should be closed.

"The reason why Xi Jinping got very upset in terms of when I shot that balloon down with two box cars full of spy equipment in it was he didn't know it was there," Biden said.

"That's a great embarrassment for dictators. When they didn't know what happened. That wasn't supposed to be going where it was. It was blown off course," Biden added.

Xi became China's most powerful leader since Mao Zedong after securing a precedent-break-



ing third term as president in March and head of the Communist Party in October.

Biden also said China "has real economic difficulties."

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said Biden's remarks were "extremely absurd" and "irresponsible".

Expressing China's strong dissatisfaction, foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said Biden's comments seriously violated facts, diplomatic protocol and China's political dignity.

"They're an open political provocation," she said.

Asked how aware Xi had been about the balloon's movements,

Mao reiterated China's previous explanation that the passage of the balloon through US airspace had been unintended and caused by circumstances beyond its control.

Chiming in from Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Biden's comments contradicted the efforts of his secretary of state to ease tensions with Beijing, describing the remarks as "incomprehensible".

"These are very contradictory manifestations of US foreign policy, which speak of a large element of unpredictability," Peskov told reporters Wednesday.

China's foreign ministry spokesperson said Biden's remarks were "extremely absurd" and "irresponsible".

Modi leads historic Yoga session at UN

THE YOGA CELEBRATION LED BY PRIME MINISTER MODI AT THE UN HEADQUARTERS CREATED THE GUINNESS WORLD RECORD FOR PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE OF MOST NATIONALITIES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, June 21: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday described Yoga as "truly universal" and "free from copyrights and patents" as he led a historic event at the UN Headquarters here to commemorate the 9th International Day of Yoga, attended by top UN officials, diplomats and prominent personalities.

Modi, who is here on the first leg of his maiden state visit to the US at the invitation of President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden, began the celebration by paying respects to the bust of Mahatma Gandhi in the North Lawn of the UN headquarters.

The prime minister, wearing a customised white yoga T-shirt and trousers, began his address with a 'Namaste' and thanked people for coming here from far away to attend the celebration.

"I'm delighted to see you all. And I thank you all for coming. Friends, I'm told that almost every nationality is represented here today," Modi told the gathering.

He was joined by President of the 77th session of the UN General Assembly Csaba Korisi, deputy Secretary General Amina Mohammed, and New York City mayor Eric Adams. Hollywood actor Richard Gere, Iyengar yoga exponent Deidra Demens and prominent American singer Mary Millben were among the eminent personalities who joined Prime Minister Modi.

"I remember about nine years ago right here at the UN, I had the honour to propose celebrating the International Day of yoga on 21st June," Modi said. "It



Yoga comes from India and it is a very old tradition. But like all ancient Indian traditions, it is also living and dynamic. Yoga is free from copyrights, patents and royalty payments. Yoga is adaptable to your age, gender and fitness level. Yoga is portable and is truly universal

NARENDRA MODI | PM, INDIA

was wonderful to see the entire world come together to support the idea back then," he said, adding that it is wonderful to see the entire world come together again for yoga.

Hundreds of yellow yoga mats were placed on the ground where yoga enthusiasts and practitioners, wearing customised white yoga T-shirts, joined the event. LED screens playing videos of Indian culture and heritage were set up on the lawn.

The historic yoga session was attended by top UN officials, ambassadors, envoys, delegates from Member States as well as prominent members of the global and diaspora community.

The first International Day of Yoga was commemorated in 2015 and has since then been marked with several sessions and events highlighting the benefits and universal appeal of

Yoga at the UN, Times Square and iconic locations across the world.

The UN underlined that Yoga is an ancient physical, mental and spiritual practice that originated in India. The word 'yoga' is derived from Sanskrit and means to join or to unite, symbolising the union of body and consciousness. Today it is practised in various forms around the world and continues to grow in popularity.

Recognising its universal appeal, in December 2014, the UN proclaimed June 21 as the International Day of Yoga. The draft UNGA resolution establishing the International Day of Yoga was proposed by India and endorsed by a record 175 member states. The proposal was first introduced by Prime Minister Modi in his address during the opening of the 69th session of the UN General Assembly.

SHORT TAKES

EU agrees on new Russian sanctions

Brussels: European Union countries Wednesday agreed on a new package of sanctions against Russia for its war against Ukraine. Sweden, which currently holds the rotating EU presidency, said that the package includes measures aimed at countering sanctions circumvention and individual listings. The EU had previously imposed 10 rounds of sanctions on Russia since President Vladimir Putin ordered his forces into Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Banks, companies and markets have been hit — even parts of the sensitive energy sector. More than 1,000 officials are subject to asset freezes and travel bans.

2.5mn flee Sudan

Cairo: Clashes resumed between Sudan's military and a powerful paramilitary force after a three-day cease-fire expired Wednesday morning, a protest group and residents reported. The fighting has killed thousands of people and forced more than 2.5 million people to flee their homes to safer areas in Sudan and neighbouring countries, according to the UN migration agency. Sudan descended into conflict in mid-April after months of worsening tensions exploded into open fighting between rival generals seeking to control the African nation. The war pits the military, led by Gen Abdel-Fattah Burhan, against the Rapid Support Forces, a militia-turned-paramilitary force commanded by Gen Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo.

41 inmates killed

Tegucigalpa: A riot Tuesday at a women's prison in Honduras killed at least 41 women, most of them burned to death, in violence linked to gang activity, authorities said. Most victims were burned but there also were reports of inmates shot at the prison in Tamara, about 30 miles (about 50 kilometers) northwest of the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa, said Yuri Mora, the spokesman for Honduras' national police investigation agency. At least seven female inmates were being treated at a Tegucigalpa hospital for gunshot and knife wounds.

Khan gets bail

Lahore: A Pakistani anti-terrorism court Wednesday cancelled the arrest warrants against former prime minister Imran Khan and granted him pre-arrest bail till July 7 in two cases related to arson attacks during the May 9 violence which erupted following his arrest in a corruption case.

Pak to ban Holi in varsities to check 'erosion of Islamic identity'

THE LETTER FROM HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION ADVISED EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS TO "PRUDENTLY DISTANCE" THEMSELVES FROM ALL SUCH ACTIVITIES "OBVIOUSLY INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE COUNTRY'S IDENTITY AND SOCIETAL VALUES"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, June 21: Taking an exception to a Pakistani university celebrating the Hindu festival of Holi, the country's Higher Education Commission has voiced concern over the erosion of the country's Islamic identity and asked them to "prudently distance" themselves from all such activities, a media report said Wednesday.

While the letter from the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Executive Director Shaista Sohail to the heads of educational institutions did not name the varsity in question, it comes days after Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad gained attention on social media for

hosting an event for Holi, which took place March 8.

In its letter issued Tuesday, the HEC said that it had "caused concern and disadvantageously affected the country's image", reported the Dawn newspaper.

"Unfortunately, it is sad to witness activities that portray a complete disconnect from our socio-cultural values and an erosion of the country's Islamic identity," the letter read.

"One such instance that has caused concern was the fervour exhibited in marking [the] Hindu festival of Holi... This widely reported/publicised event from the platform of a university has caused concern and has disadvantageously affected the country's image," the letter said.



In one of the videos circulating on social media March 8 event, students can be seen dancing and throwing colours in the air as loud music plays in the background.

"While there is no denying the fact that cultural, ethnic,

and religious diversity leads towards an inclusive and tolerant society, that profoundly respects all faiths and creeds; albeit it needs to be done so in a measured manner without going overboard. The students need to be apprised to be aware of the self-

serving vested interests who use them for their own ends far from the altruistic critical thinking paradigm," the HEC letter read.

It said that HEIs had the "ultimate responsibility to polish and nurture the exuberance of youth into learned, mature, and responsible citizens - ready to take on the reins of the country and play their role in nation building".

The HEC director said the notification was not a "ban" on such celebrations.

Meanwhile, the HEC's letter has drawn a lot of flak from netizens online including a Sindhi journalist who said that

Islamabad needed to understand that

Hindu festivals of Holi and Diwali were part of Sindhi culture.

"Islamabad neither accepts our Sindhi language nor does it honour the Hindu festivals," she said.

Lawyer Jahanzeb Sukhera termed the HEC directive illegal as it was "well beyond the mandate of the HEC as contained in S.10 of the HEC Ordinance".

Allies pledge billions for Ukraine rebuilding

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, June 21: Ukraine's allies pledged several billion dollars in non-military aid Wednesday to rebuild its war-ravaged infrastructure, fight corruption and help pave the country's road to membership in the European Union.

The World Bank has estimated the cost of the reconstruction at more than \$400 billion, a figure rising daily alongside the human toll of Russia's invasion.

Politicians from Europe and the US vowed that Russia would one day be made to pay for the destruction — though officials acknowledged that day is some way off.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the US would give more than \$1.3 billion in new aid, including more than \$500 million to restore and improve Ukraine's battered energy grid.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced 50 billion euros (\$55 billion) in support through 2027, while Britain pledged 240 million pounds (\$305 million) in aid and 3 billion pounds (\$3.8 billion) in World Bank loan guarantees for Ukraine. Germany announced a further 381 million euros (\$416 million) in humanitarian aid.

Our universities are not even ranked in the top 1,000. Yet, HEC is more worried about students celebrating Holi. Such misplaced priorities are the reason for the intellectual/moral decay we see in society

AMMAR ALI JAN | ACTIVIST



Demand for residential real estate is rising because of healthy economic growth and offices continuing with a hybrid working model, especially for bigger and premium residences

ANIKET DANI | DIRECTOR, CRISIL RATINGS

INDIA 'FASTEST GROWING' 5G REGION

The 5G subscription in India is estimated to have reached about 10 million by 2022 end, and is seen accounting for about 57 per cent of mobile subscriptions in the country by the end of 2028, making it "the fastest growing" 5G region globally, according to Ericsson Mobility Report



of the day quote

We have already raised ₹500 crore through a bond issue and will be doing issuances in tranches of ₹2,000-3,000 crore going ahead



PR JAISHANKAR | MD, IIFCL

The opening of our new branch in Belagavi signifies our commitment to providing exceptional services to our clients while strengthening our position in the aerospace market



ALEX BIKAR | CEO, BIKAR AEROSPACE

Staying true to our mission, we will continue to provide holistic experiences to our customers by facilitating such simplified solutions and further catalyse the digital payments revolution in India



VIKAS BANSAL | WHOLE-TIME DIRECTOR, AMAZON PAY INDIA

SHORT TAKES

Akasa Air to buy four more planes

New Delhi: Akasa Air Wednesday said it will acquire four more Boeing 737 Max planes and announce a "three-digit" aircraft order this year as part of its expansion plans. These four planes will be in addition to the original order book of 72 Boeing 737 Max. While announcing the decision to buy four more planes Wednesday, Akasa Air also said it is on course to announce another significant three-digit aircraft order by the end of 2023. It is a follow-up to the already placed order of 72 aircraft taking it to a total of 76 aircraft which include 23 737-8s and 53 high-capacity 737-8-200 planes, the airline said.

Piramal Ent exits Shriram Finance

Chennai: Non banking finance company (NBFC) Piramal Enterprises Ltd Wednesday said it has sold its 8.34 per cent stakes in Shriram Finance Ltd. In a regulatory filing, Piramal Enterprise said it has sold its entire direct investment of 8.34 per cent (3,12,21,449 shares) in the fully paid-up share capital of Shriram Finance to third party investors, on the floor of the stock exchange. Piramal Enterprises - part of the Piramal Group having interests in pharmaceuticals, real estate apart from financial services - bought stakes in the South-based financial services group companies - Shriram Transport Finance Ltd in 2013, Shriram Capital Ltd (Unlisted) in 2014 and Shriram City Union Finance Ltd in 2018.

India's spot jumps in mobile speed

New Delhi: India climbed three ranks in mobile speeds globally to claim the 56th spot in May, up from 59th in the previous month, according to Ookla Speedtest Global Index. The median mobile download speeds in India increased to 39.94 Mbps in May, from 36.78 Mbps in April. Ookla's Speedtest Global Index ranks mobile and fixed broadband speeds from across the world, monthly. According to the Speedtest Global Index report, in the month of May, India climbed three ranks up in median mobile speeds globally, making a consistent improvement in overall global median mobile speeds.

In a first, black cocaine seized

New Delhi: In a first, revenue intelligence officers have seized 'black cocaine' weighing 3.22 kg worth ₹32 crore being smuggled into India via Ahmedabad International Airport.

UPWARD TRAJECTORY

Indices touch new peaks

THE RETURN OF FIIS TO INDIAN MARKETS SINCE APRIL HAS BOOSTED SENTIMENTS EVEN AS DOMESTIC INVESTORS CONTINUE TO REPOSE CONFIDENCE IN INDIAN EQUITIES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 21: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rallied to close at all-time highs on Wednesday following buying in index majors HDFC twins and Reliance Industries.

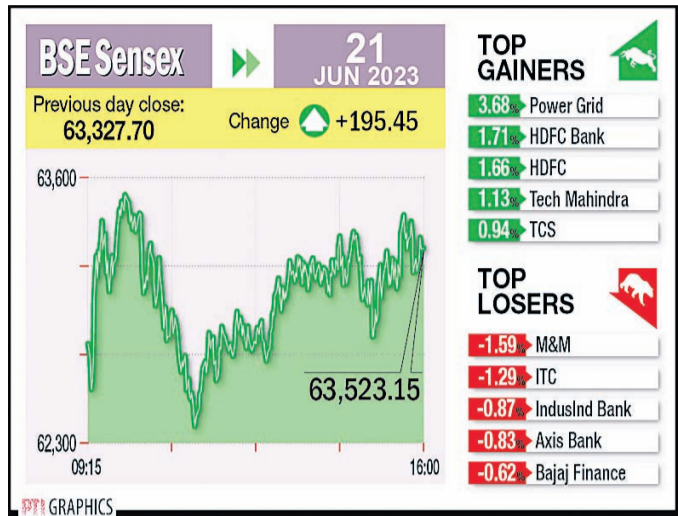
Positive trends in European markets also added to the momentum in domestic equities.

Rising for a second straight day, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 195.45 points or 0.31 per cent to settle at a record high of 63,523.15. During the day, it jumped 260.61 points or 0.41 per cent to its all-time intra-day peak of 63,588.31. On December 1 last year, the Sensex hit its intra-day record peak of 63,583.07.

The NSE Nifty advanced 40.15 points or 0.21 per cent to end at its lifetime closing peak of 18,856.85. The stock touched an intra-day high of 18,875.90 following gains in financials, IT and power shares.

Mcap of BSE-listed firms at record high

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms hit a fresh all-time high of ₹294.49 lakh crore in Wednesday's morning trade as the benchmark Sensex reached its lifetime peak of 63,588.31. The optimistic trend in equities helped the market capitalisation (mcap) of BSE-listed firms reach an all-time peak of ₹2,94,49,069.63 crore in morning trade.



SENSEX CLIMBED 195.45 POINTS TO SETTLE AT A RECORD HIGH OF 63,523.15

NIFTY ROSE 40.15 POINTS TO END AT LIFETIME CLOSING PEAK OF 18,856.85

It's a pleasure to see Sensex reaching a new all-time high in spite of several challenges from the global front. We are waiting for the June quarterly results to trickle in with hopes that it would be by and large in sync with expectations

RAKESH MEHTA | CHAIRMAN, MEHTA EQUITIES

lowing gains in financials, IT and power shares.

From the Sensex pack, Power Grid rose the most by 3.68 per cent. HDFC Bank rose by 1.71 per cent, HDFC by 1.66 per cent, Tech Mahindra by 1.13 per cent, and Tata Consultancy Services by 0.94 per cent. Wipro, Reliance Industries and Larsen & Toubro were among the gainers.

Mahindra & Mahindra fell the most by 1.59 per cent, followed by ITC, IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finance and Maruti.

"Sensex rallying to all-time-high is in tune with the global rally in stock markets. Most markets are at 52-week highs. Last year, global markets had corrected discounting a US recession early this year and its impact on global growth and corporate earnings," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services said. In the broader market, the

BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.68 per cent and smallcap index gained 0.24 per cent. Among the indices, utilities jumped 1.19 per cent, services climbed 1.18 per cent, power (1.08 per cent), telecommunication (0.81 per cent), financial services (0.60 per cent) and oil & gas (0.57 per cent).

Commodities, industrials, auto, metal and realty were the laggards.

In Asian markets, Tokyo ended in the green, while Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower. Equity markets in Europe were trading mostly in the green. The US markets ended lower Tuesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.03 per cent to \$75.98 a barrel.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹1,942.62 crore Tuesday, according to exchange data.

Govt okays \$2.7bn Micron's chip plant

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 21: The government has cleared US-based chip maker Micron's project to set up a semiconductor test and packaging unit worth \$2.7 billion in the country, according to sources.

The approved project is expected to create 5,000 jobs. "The project was cleared about a week back," a source said, confirming details of the project.

Micron specialises in computer memory products, flash drives etc. It will set up an OSAT plant in India which will test and package its product to make it ready for use. Micron's OSAT (outsourced semiconductor assembly and test) proposal was cleared after the government modified the semiconductor programme and increased the incentives.

In the first phase, the government had cleared four OSAT projects which included proposals by Tata Group, Sahasra Semiconductors.

TCS inks \$1.1 billion deal with UK's Nest

REUTERS

Bangalore, June 21: India's top IT services provider Tata Consultancy Services said Wednesday that it has signed a new contract worth 840 million pounds (\$1.1 billion) with British pension scheme Nest for an initial tenure of 10 years.

The contract, to help Nest transform its administration services, if extended to the entirety of its 18-year tenure would be worth 1.5 billion pounds, TCS said in a statement.

The deal comes at a time when Indian IT services companies are facing demand challenges in their key markets, the United States and Europe, where clients have cut

spends amid worries about recession. TCS and Nest have been working together since 2011.

India's Russian oil buying binge scales fresh highs in May

Russian oil accounted for about 40% of India's crude imports in May, cutting imports from Iraq to a three-year low and from Saudi Arabia to their lowest since September 2021



REUTERS

New Delhi, June 21: India's rising imports of Russian oil hit a record high of about 1.95 million barrels per day (bpd) in May denting purchases from Iraq and Saudi Arabia fell, tanker data from trade and industry sources showed.

India, the world's third biggest oil consumer and importer, buys more than 80% of its oil from overseas markets.

Its refiners have been gorging on Russian oil since the West imposed sanctions over Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine.

Russian oil accounted for about 40% of India's crude imports in May, cutting imports from Iraq to a three-year low and from Saudi Arabia to their lowest since September 2021, an analysis of the data showed.

India imported 801,400 bpd of Iraqi oil in May, down about 13.7% from April, while supply from Saudi fell 15% to 616,100 bpd, the data show.

India's overall May oil imports rose marginally from April to 4.8 million bpd, the data showed.

Its imports from Russia are expected to remain high, as its landed price remains far cheaper than Middle East crude.

In April the landed price of a tonne of oil from Russia was about \$500, equivalent to \$68.21/barrel using a conversion factor of 7.33, while that from Iraq cost \$570 and from Saudi Arabia was \$637.40, according to the government data. Price details for May arrival cargoes have not yet been updated.

Due to higher purchases of discounted Russian oil, the share of imports from the Middle East - traditionally its top source - fell to an all-time low of about 39% in May from 44% in April, the data showed.

OPEC's share of India's oil imports in May fell to a record low of 42.6% and averaged 44.3% in the first two months of this fiscal year, the data showed.

BIZ BUZZ

CSR activity during Ratha Jatra by SBI

Puri: As a part of Corporate Social Responsibility during Ratha Jatra festival in Puri, State Bank of India Bhubaneswar Circle has donated 100 umbrellas, 500 rain coats, 10,000 water bottles, 10,000 juice bottles and 100 road barricades to Police Administration for smooth functioning and crowd management June 21. In Puri, donation was given in auspicious hands of Anita Khara, All India Chief of SBI Ladies Club in presence of senior officials including Chander Shekhar Sharma, CGM. Khara also donated 2 water coolers and groceries for two months to 'Sahaya', a NGO working for destitute in presence of senior Ladies' Club members from Mumbai Poonam Tewari, Meera Swaminathan and Sridevi Surya. Members of SBI Ladies Club including Odisha State Chief Geetu Sharma and other officials from SBI were also present in the event.



PPL observes Int'l Yoga Day

Paradeep: International Yoga Day was celebrated at Paradeep Phosphates Limited June 21. Employees and their family members showed much enthusiasm in celebrating the day. The initiative is much needed for a 'Good Health and Good Mind' which is an essential factor for every industrial workforce, said an official. This year theme is "Yoga for Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam". Yoga is a great tool to connect brotherhood among counties and can bring peace among them resolving the crucial issues. Pranab Bhattacharyya, Chief Manufacturing Officer and Unit Head inaugurated the event. Prime Minister

Shram Veer awardee and Yoga Guru Daitari Bindhani conducted the yoga session in association with Yoga Instructor Artatrana Sahoo and Padmalaya Rout. Around 150 employees and their family members participated in the session.

Livestock export, import bill junked amid criticism

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 21: The government has withdrawn a draft Live-stock and Live-stock Products (Importation and Exportation) Bill after concerns over a provision in the legislation to allow for the import and export of "live animals".

The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has issued an office memorandum dated June 20 withdrawing the draft bill amid concerns raised by animal rights activists and other groups.

The Ministry circulated the draft bill June 7, 2023, and sought public comments/suggestions on the bill that seeks to regulate the export of live animals from India.

"The Live-stock Importation Act, 1898, being the pre-constitutional/pre-independence Central Act, a need has been felt



to align it with the contemporary requirements and prevailing circumstances related to sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and its extant Allocation of Business Rules, 1961," the memorandum said.

Some animal rights activists criticised certain provisions which they said were cruel to animals as the proposed legislation allowed for unregulated and large-scale import/export of animals. This could impact the gene pool of native animals.

The memorandum said that the role of the department of animal husbandry and dairying is primarily pertaining to support by having upgraded live-

stock health facilities, hygiene etc., including animal welfare aspects for overall development of animal husbandry sector.

"However, during the consultation, it has been viewed that enough time is required to understand the proposed draft and to make further comments/suggestions. Further, the representations have been made expressing concerns on the proposed draft involving sensitivity and emotions with animal welfare and related aspects, and, hence, would need wider consultation," the memorandum said.

Considering these views and with the approval of the competent authority, the proposed draft Bill stands withdrawn, the ministry said. The memorandum has been issued by GN Singh, Joint Secretary, Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

Wheat output 10% lower than govt estimates: Trade body

LOWER WHEAT PRODUCTION FOR A SECOND STRAIGHT YEAR COULD COMPLICATE NEW DELHI'S EFFORTS TO KEEP A LID ON PRICES OF THE STAPLE AND OVERALL FOOD INFLATION, A MAJOR CONCERN AMID FORECASTS OF AN EL NINO WEATHER PATTERN

REUTERS

Mumbai, June 21: India's wheat harvest in 2023 is at least 10% lower than the government's estimate, a leading trade body told Reuters Wednesday, amid a sharp rise in local prices during the past two months.

According to the government, wheat output rose to a record 112.74 million metric tonne in 2023, up from 107.7 million metric tonne a year earlier. India consumes around 108 million metric tonne of wheat annually.

Farmers start harvesting wheat from March, selling most of their crop to state agencies and



private traders by June. Supplies from farmers have already dropped, suggesting the agriculture ministry's production

GOVERNMENT PEGS 2023 OUTPUT AT RECORD 112.74MM METRIC TONNE

OUTPUT SEEN BETWEEN 101 AND 103MM METRIC TONNE: TRADE BODY

FALLING SUPPLY, PRICE RISE INDICATE LOWER OUTPUT

Availability of wheat is very poor in the market. It suggests production was around 101 million to 103 million tonne

PRAMOD KUMAR S | PRESIDENT, ROLLER FLOUR MILLERS' FEDERATION

estimate is more optimistic than the reality, traders said.

Wheat prices in New Delhi have jumped 10% in the past two months to ₹24,900 a metric tonne, prompting the government to impose a limit on the amount of wheat stocks traders can hold for the first time in 15 years.

A New-Delhi based trader with a global trade house also said the farm ministry had overestimated this year's wheat output, while a Mumbai-based trader said the government had failed to take into account heatwaves in February and March and untimely heavy rainfall in April. "The government was forced to

U-turn on exports last year because of the wrong estimate. This year, it could be forced to allow duty-free imports in the December quarter," the Mumbai trader said.

India, the world's second biggest wheat consumer; banned exports in May 2022 after a sudden rise in temperature clipped output at a time when shipments were picking up to meet the global shortfall triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The government has bought 26.2 million metric tonne of new-season wheat from farmers against initial projections of 34.15 million tonne, indicating lower output.

PORTUGUESE GREAT SCORES THE WINNING GOAL IN HIS 200TH APPEARANCE FOR HIS NATIONAL SIDE AGAINST ICELAND IN A EURO 2024 QUALIFYING MATCH

RONALDO'S DAY OUT

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Berlin, June 21: Cristiano Ronaldo became the first men's player to make 200 international appearances and celebrated the milestone by scoring the winning goal in the 89th minute as Portugal beat Iceland 1-0 in European Championship qualifying.

The 38-year-old Ronaldo was honoured by Guinness World Records before kickoff for reaching 200 games for Portugal almost 20 years after he made his debut.

And he was celebrating at the end, too, after being on hand to score the later winner from close range Tuesday and keep Portugal on track for Euro 2024 qualification with its fourth win from four games in Group J.

Erling Haaland scored twice in Norway's 3-1 win at home over Cyprus, as did Romelu Lukaku in Belgium's 3-0 victory over Estonia. But another star forward - Robert Lewandowski - was left disappointed as



his Poland team squandered a two-goal lead to lose 2-3 away to Moldova. Euro 2024 hosts Germany lost 0-2 to Colombia in a friendly game.

GROUP J

Ronaldo padded his record for international goals as well, by netting his 123rd for Portugal - making it another memorable night for the former Real Madrid and Manchester United star.

"So happy. It's that kind of moment that

a 2-0 win over Georgia in a game. Callum McGregor gave hosts an early lead before play was suspended. Scott McTominay made it 2-0 early in the second half despite lots of water still on the field.

It was Scotland's fourth win from four games and it lifted the team four points above Georgia. Norway are third

with four points from four games, while Spain are a point further back after playing just two. Spain won the Nations League Sunday.

GROUP E

Lewandowski scored but couldn't prevent Poland slumping to a loss in Moldova, its second in three games. Albania earned a 3-1 away win over the Faeroe Islands to stay second in the group, one point behind the Czech Republic after three games played. Poland dropped to second last in the group with three points.

GROUP F

Lukaku scored twice in the space of three minutes to lead Belgium to a 3-0 win in Estonia. Lukaku broke the deadlock with a flick after an uneventful first half-hour and doubled Belgium's lead with another clinical finish for his 75th goal in 108 internationals. Johan Bakayoko marked his first start for Belgium by adding the third goal in the 90th minute.

Christoph Baumgartner scored twice for Austria to defeat Sweden 2-0 in the other group game. Austria lead the group with 10 points from three games, three points ahead of Belgium.

GROUP G

Hungary defeated Lithuania 2-0 and Bulgaria drew with Serbia 1-1. It left Hungary top of the group on seven points, ahead of Serbia on goal difference.

you never expect to do it, 200 caps. For me it's an unbelievable achievement," Ronaldo told UEFA's website. "Of course, to score the winning goal, it's even more special."

Ronaldo's teammates Rafael Leao and Bruno Fernandes had looked more likely to provide an opening in Reykjavik, until Iceland midfielder Willum Willumsson was sent off with 10 minutes of normal time remaining for a second yellow card.

Ronaldo had missed several chances and was booked for diving in the 83rd, before he finally got the winner when Goncalo Inacio headed the ball down for the forward to score from close range. Even then there was an anxious wait for a VAR check before Ronaldo could celebrate in his own distinctive style.

Also, Luxembourg upset Bosnia and Herzegovina 2-0 away thanks to goals from Danel Sinani and Vyandro Borges Sanches, while Slovakia beat Liechtenstein 1-0.

GROUP A

Despite Haaland's goals for Norway, Scotland stayed top of Group A with

Chhetri hat-trick lifts India



LEADING FROM FRONT: Skipper Sunil Chhetri strikes the ball during India's SAFF Championship match against Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, June 21: Sunil Chhetri's glittering hat-trick laced India's 4-0 win over Pakistan in their SAFF Championship opener here Wednesday as the talisman became the second-highest Asian goal-scorer in international football. Ali Daei of Iran holds the record with 109 goals from 149 matches. Chhetri has 90 goals to his name.

From the beginning of the match itself India brought forth their experience and class into play. Pakistan had pockets of doughty resistance, but they were not a match to India's cohesion and purpose on a rain-drenched night at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium.

Chhetri had shown sparks of his old ebullient self in the Intercontinental Cup final against Lebanon at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar Sunday, and the Indian skipper stepped on the pedal on his 'home turf'.

After getting a quick feel of

the surface and their opponents, India started the goal rush as early as in the 10th minute through Chhetri, who netted through a fine field goal.

Six minute later, the talismanic forward doubled the lead through a penalty and at 2-0, the route which the match took was clear. India pressed for more goals in the first half, but they could not add to the tally as Pakistan defence held their own. India too missed a couple of chances, though not easy, to pile pressure on their rivals.

However, the first half ended in a rather disappointing note for India despite a handy 2-0 lead. An unnecessary attempt to impede a Pakistan player from taking the throw-in by coach Igor Stimac resulted in him slapped with a red card, and he had to leave the dug out for the night.

But that did not snap India's momentum in the second half. The hosts pressed forward like a giant wave in search of more goals. The big moment came in the 74th minute when India made it 3-0.

Pakistan defenders brought down Chhetri inside the box and referee Prajwal Chhetri allowed a penalty kick for India, and the Indian skipper converted it to complete his hat-trick, also putting the match beyond the grasp of Pakistan.

From that point, it was a case of India's victory margin and Udanta Singh passed more agony on the visitors with a goal in the 81st minute. Fed by a through pass by Sandesh Jhingan, Udanta made a good, speedy run down the pitch to slot the ball past Pakistan goalkeeper.

"Happy to keep clean sheet, happy to start tournament. Matches in these kinds of conditions are never easy. Happy people turned up, this is amazing, this is what we play for," Chhetri said after the match.

It was a sumptuous performance by India that thrilled the 22860-strong crowd that thronged the stadium despite a heavy downpour. India will next face minnows Nepal in their second Group A match Saturday.

Prannoy, Kashyap reach pre-quarters



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Taipei, June 21: Indian shuttlers HS Prannoy and Parupalli Kashyap cruised into the men's singles pre-quarterfinals of the Taipei Open with straight game wins over their respective rivals here Wednesday.

World No.9 Prannoy hardly broke a sweat as he took just 26 minutes to dispatch local shuttler Lin Yu-hsien 21-11, 21-10 in the opening round of the BWF World Tour Super 300 tournament.

The third-seeded Prannoy, who claimed the Malaysia Masters Super 300 title last month, will next take on Indonesia's Tommy Sugiarto in the men's singles second round.

Former Commonwealth Games gold medallist Kashyap too notched up an easy 21-15, 21-16 over Germany's Samuel Hsiao. He will take on local favourite Su Li Yang in the pre-quarterfinals.

National champion Mithun Manjunath put up a splendid fight before going down to second-seed and local favourite Chou Tien Chen 18-21, 21-14, 16-21 in a one-hour 11 minutes battle.

Tanya Hemanth was the lone Indian to win in the women's singles as she handed a 21-7, 21-17 loss to Agnes Korosi of Hungary. But a tough second round awaits the 19-year-old Indian as she is up against World Championship and Olympic silver medallist Tai Tzu Ying, the tournament top-seed.

In the mixed doubles, Sikki Reddy and Rohan Kapoor beat



compatriots Navaneeth Bokka and Priya Konjengbam 21-14, 21-17 in all-Indian tie. Sikki and Rohan will meet Chiu Hsiang Chieh and Lin Xiao Min in the pre-quarters.

However, it was the end of the road for S Sankar Muthusamy Subramanian, Kiren George, Meiraba Luwang Maisnam, Sathish Kumar Karunakaran, Ruthvika Shivani Gadde and Akarshi Kashyap.

Subramanian provided some resistance in the opening game but was completely outplayed in the second game by sixth seed Japanese shuttler Kanta Tsunayama to go down 13-21, 5-21 in his men's singles opening round.

Kiren, on the other hand, fought hard before going to Malaysia's Leong Jun Hao 20-22, 21-12, 9-21 while Meiraba Luwang Maisnam lost to fifth seed Hong Kong shuttler NG Ka Long Angus 18-21, 17-21. Sathish was handed a straight game (10-21, 10-21) defeat by local favourite Chi Yu Jen.

Among women, Gadde lost to local shuttler Chiu Pin-Chian 12-21, 5-21 while Akarshi squandered a one game lead to lose 21-10, 16-21, 11-21 to Huang Yu-Hsun.

The BWF World Tour is divided into six levels, namely World Tour Finals, Super 1000, Super 750, Super 500, and Super 300 in order. One other category of tournament, the BWF Tour Super 100 level, also offers ranking points. Each of these tournaments offers different ranking points and prize money.

HURKACZ PASSES TOUGH EUBANKS TEST

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Halle, June 21: Hubert Hurkacz withstood a strong challenge from American Christopher Eubanks before starting his Halle Open title defense with a 6-4, 6-7(11-13), 6-3 win.

The sixth-seeded Polish player hit 22 aces and needed more than two hours to overcome the 77th-ranked Eubanks. Hurkacz next faces Tallon Griekspoor at the grass-court tournament. Griekspoor defeated Spain's Roberto Carballes Baena 6-2, 7-5.

Third-seeded Andrey Rublev defeated Wu Yibing 6-4, 6-7(5-7), 6-2 to set up a second-round meeting with German wild-card entry Yannick Hanfmann.

Fourth-seeded Jannik Sinner defeated Richard Gasquet 6-3, 5-7, 6-2 and home favorite Alexander Zverev beat Dominic Thiem 6-3, 6-4. Alexander Bublik, Roberto Bautista Agut and Lorenzo Sonego also advanced. **JABEUR STUNNED** German qualifier Jule



Niemeier upset defending champion Ons Jabeur 7-6(7-4), 6-4 in the first round of the Berlin Open. The 120th-ranked Niemeier

saved two set points at 5-3 down in the opening set, then won the last four points of the tie-breaker. Niemeier broke Jabeur in the

first game of the second set and held on to her lead to win in 1 hour, 35 minutes for the 23-year-old's third victory against a top-10 player.

Coco Gauff defeated Czech player Katerina Siniakov 6-3, 6-4 for the American teenager's 23rd win of the year. The fourth-seeded Gauff next faces big-hitter Ekaterina Alexandrova, who defeated fellow Russian Liudmila Samsonova 6-4, 6-3.

Top-seeded Aryna Sabalenka eased into the second round with a 6-3, 6-2 win over veteran Vera Zvonareva in another all-Russian match.

Sabalenka converted three of her nine break points without facing any from the 38-year-old Zvonareva, a Wimbledon finalist in 2010. Sabalenka next faces Veronika Kudermetova or Zheng Qinwen.

Elina Avanesyan saved two match points and upset sixth-seeded Daria Kasatkina with a 6-2, 3-6, 7-6(9-7) win for a meeting with another Russian compatriot, Anna Blinkova.

Paris 2024 could join list of Olympics marred by scandals

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, June 21: The news that French law enforcement officials are looking into possible corruption in awarding contracts for the Paris Olympics threatens to place those Games on the ever-growing list of Olympics that have been tarnished by scandals. A look at notable bidding scandals of the 21st century:

SALT LAKE CITY, 2002

Possibly the most wide-ranging bidding scandal of all time resulted in the removal of 10 members of the International Olympic Committee and a complete overhaul of the bidding process.

The first whiff of scandal came in 1998 when a letter emerged suggesting the Salt Lake City bid committee was paying college tuition for the

child of an IOC member. Payments totaling more than USD 1 million in cash, gifts, trips and scholarships were later discovered.

The US Department of Justice opened a case alleging 15 counts of bribery and fraud, though it was later thrown out. One major change is that IOC members were no longer allowed to visit bid cities.

RIO DE JANEIRO, 2016

The investigation started in 2017, the year after the Olympics were over, when French newspaper Le Monde reported that IOC members had been bribed three days before the vote in 2009. The head of Brazil's Olympic Committee, IOC member Carlos Nuzman, received a sentence of nearly 31 years in jail for the vote-buying scheme.

Nuzman and others were found to have bribed the then-



president of the global track federation, Lamine Diack, and his son, Papa Massata Diack, for their votes. The Diacks have been sentenced to jail for corruption in his role at the track federation.

TOKYO, 2020

Several Japanese companies have been charged with rigging bids for lucrative contracts for the Tokyo Olympics. One of Japan's largest advertisers, Dentsu, which played a big role in helping Tokyo land the Games, was their chief marketing arm.

The company raised a record \$3.3 billion in local sponsorships. These cases are still winding through the Japanese courts. A Japanese consulting firm also made payments to Papa Massata Diack at around the time the Games were awarded, though Diack has denied the payments

were related to the bid.

BEST OF THE REST

Most other 21st-century Olympics have been tarnished by scandals that haven't grabbed as many headlines. Among them were payments from Australia's Olympic chief to African Olympic committees. There was a dust-up over a purchase of security systems at the Athens Games in 2004.

Though there was no overt bidding scandal for the 2014 Sochi Games, Russia spent more than USD 50 billion to stage them and many believe that played into the IOC's treatment of the country after a wide-ranging doping scandal emerged from those Games.

The IOC has been criticized for turning a blind eye to human rights issues in China while holding two Olympics there, in 2008 and 2022.

SHORT TAKES

Copa America to kick-off June 20

NEW YORK: Next year's Copa America tournament in the United States will kick-off June 20, with the final to be played July 17. South American football body CONMEBOL confirmed the dates Tuesday but said tournament organizers have yet to pick the host cities. Ten South American teams plus six from Central and North America will take part in the 2024 Copa America. Argentina are the defending champion. The previous Copa America held in the US in 2016 also included 16 teams. CONMEBOL president Alejandro Dominguez said in a statement that the "a new edition will invite (fans) to celebrate and live the passion that this competition makes us feel."

Messi's MLS debut expected for July 21

MIAMI: Lionel Messi is expected to make his Major League Soccer (MLS) debut with Inter Miami at a July 21 home game, the team has confirmed. Owner Jorge Mas told selected outlets Monday that his club and Messi have agreed to terms and are finalizing paperwork and a visa. The team confirmed certain details Tuesday to The Associated Press, including that Messi will be signing a contract through the end of the 2025 season with an option for 2026. Messi's contract will be worth USD 50 million to USD 60 million per year, the team said Tuesday. He cannot sign until sometime in July, after his contract with PSG expires. The 35-year-old's first game in Fort Lauderdale would be against Cruz Azul in the Leagues Cup.

India win Emerging Asia Cup T20 crown

MONG KOK (HONG KONG): Spin duo of Shreyanka Patil and Mannat Kashyap starred with the ball after a sedate batting effort to guide the India U-23 team to the Women's Emerging Asia Cup T20 title with a 31-run win over Bangladesh in the final here Wednesday. Electing to bat, India first posted a modest 127/7 before the bowlers rose to the occasion with Patil (4/13) and Kashyap (3/20) sharing seven wickets between them to bundle out Bangladesh for 96 in 19.2 overs. Off-break bowler Kanika Ahuja (2/23) also chipped in with two wickets.