

**Healthy competition**  
Actor Ananya Panday thinks it's good to have healthy competition because it keeps the performer in her motivated

LEISURE | P2

**Attack on minorities**  
The US State Department's 2023 religious freedom report on India notes violent attacks on minority groups

INTERNATIONAL | P10

**Bad loans decline**  
The decline in bad assets of banks to a 12-year low of 2.8 per cent and strong GDP numbers will help in sustaining the growth momentum

BUSINESS | P11

**Afghan fairytale ends**  
Afghanistan's dream run at the T20 World Cup ends with a crushing nine-wicket defeat to South Africa in the semis

SPORTS | P12



**ON WARPATH:** Police and security personnel detain a worker of Indian Youth Congress (IYC) during a protest at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi over the alleged rigging of the NEET-UG, and against the Agniveer scheme, Thursday

## CBI arrests 2 from Patna over NEET-UG paper leak

**New Delhi, June 27:** Marking its first arrests in the NEET-UG paper leak case, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Thursday took into custody two persons from Patna claiming that the duo provided safe premises to the aspirants before the examination where they were given leaked papers and answer keys.

"Manish Kumar and Ashutosh Kumar provided safe accommodation to NEET-UG aspirants before the test where they were given leaked question papers and answer keys," CBI officials said.

Both were produced before a special court in Patna which sent them to judicial custody, they said.

The CBI will now seek their remand from the court to ques-

## MARKETS ON RECORD RALLY

**Mumbai, June 27:** Benchmark Sensex breached the historic 79,000-mark while Nifty scaled the 24,000 peak for the first time Thursday as buying in blue-chip stocks like Infosys, Reliance and TCS helped markets extend gains to the fourth straight day and close at lifetime high levels.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 568.93 points or 0.72 per cent to settle at a new closing peak of 79,243.18 amid the expiry of monthly contracts in the derivatives segment. During the day, it zoomed 721.78 points or 0.91 per cent to hit the new lifetime peak of 79,396.03.

The Nifty ended at a fresh record high of 24,044.50, rising 175.70 points or 0.74 per cent. Intra-day, it soared 218.65 points or 0.91 per cent to hit the all-time peak of 24,087.45. Among the 30 Sensex companies, UltraTech Cement jumped over 5 per cent after the country's leading cement maker said it will acquire a 23 per cent stake in its Chennai-based rival India Cements Ltd.



**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**

# Emergency darkest chapter: President

**New Delhi, June 27:** A day after Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla kicked up a row in the Parliament by reading out a resolution condemning the imposition of Emergency as an attack on the Constitution by former PM Indira Gandhi, President Droupadi Murmu Thursday termed the 1975 decision as the biggest and darkest chapter of direct attack on the Constitution.

While addressing a joint sitting of the Parliament after Prime Minister Narendra Modi began his third term, Murmu said when the Constitution was being drafted, there were forces in the world who wished India to fail. "However, the country emerged victorious over such unconstitutional forces," she said.

Amid cancellation and deferment of some competitive exams like NTA-conducted NEET-UG due to suspicion of paper leaks, which have drawn protests from students and the Opposition's attack on the government, Murmu said her government is committed to a fair probe and ensuring punishment to culprits.

In her 50-minute address, she

**MARKET WATCH**

INDEX	VALUE	VIATION
SENSEX	79243.18	↑ 568.93
NIFTY	24044.50	↑ 175.70
DOLLAR	83.45	↑ ₹0.02
EURO	89.36	↑ ₹0.11
GOLD	₹71,565	↑ ₹467
SILVER	₹ 87,127	↑ ₹162

**WEATHER**

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	33.6°C	32.0°C
Min Temp	27.1°C	25.6°C
Humidity	98%	95%
Rainfall	7.7mm	15.4mm

FORECAST: PARTLY CLOUDY SKY

## SHORT TAKES

### Tigress Sara dies at Nandankanan

**Bhubaneswar:** Sara that had been a cherished wild tigress and an integral part of Nandankanan family died at the age of 18 Thursday, said reports. The beloved tigress breathed her last at 4:42am on the Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) premises. Sara's journey began when she was rescued from Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in MP October 18, 2006, when she was just five months old, and was reared at Van Vihar Zoological Park in Bhopal. She came to NZP April 18, 2009, under an animal exchange programme. "Sara became a vital participant in our conservation breeding programme. She infused new life into the tiger population by giving birth to Asha, Ankita and Subhashree January 13, 2012, sired by tiger Rishi," said an official of NZP.

### Nod to ₹903.41 crore green energy projects

**Bhubaneswar:** The state government Thursday approved investment proposals worth Rs 903.41 crore in the renewable energy (RE) sector, according to an official statement. The single window committee (SWC) of the Energy department, led by Principal Secretary Vishal Kumar Dev, cleared the investment proposals with an aim to meet the state's RE target of 10 GW by 2030. The panel approved the proposal of HPCL Renewable & Green Energy Ltd to set up a 48-MW wind energy project at Umerkote in Nabarangpur district, while ONGC Tripura Power Company Ltd got the go-ahead to develop a 49.5-MW wind energy project in Astaranga in Puri district, the statement said. The total investment for these two wind energy projects stands at Rs 881.28 crore, it said.

## GOVT'S SCRIPT, FULL OF LIES: OPPN

**Opposition leaders Thursday** dubbed the President's address to the joint sitting of Parliament as a 'script given by the government' that was 'full of lies' and castigated the government over the repeated mention of the 1975 Emergency. They alleged there is an 'undeclared emergency' in the country and the Constitution is being attacked under the Modi government. After listening to the President's address, Congress president and LoP in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge said it seems Prime Minister Narendra Modi is in a state of perpetual denial, claiming that people of India have rejected him in this election by not giving the BJP a majority. "Overall, Modi ji is making a futile attempt to garner some applause by making the Honourable President read lies, which the people of India have rejected in the 2024 elections," he said while referring to the President's address. Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra said the President read out a 'script given by the government' and added the BJP has not realised yet that it does not have a majority on its own.

## Ayushman Bharat for all above 70

**All citizens aged above 70** will be provided free treatment under the Ayushman Bharat, President Droupadi Murmu said. Under the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, free health services are being provided to 55 crore beneficiaries, Murmu said. "Now, all those above 70 years of age will also be covered and get the benefit of free treatment under Ayushman Bharat," the President said.

highlighted the government's measures in a range of sectors, from economy, defence and farming to the empowerment of

different sections of society, and laid down its priorities in its third term, amid sporadic protests from Opposition benches when she referred to issues such as paper leaks and matters related to the North East region.

Though she touched upon some of the things promised in the BJP's manifesto like bullet trains and health insurance for senior citizens, there was no mention of a few of the major highlights of the party's promises such as the Uniform Civil Code and One Nation, One Election. The President's speech to Parliament is essentially a government-approved document which outlines its agenda.

## CM meets Murmu in New Delhi

**Bhubaneswar, June 27:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi met President Droupadi Murmu and Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar in New Delhi, Thursday.

"Today, I had the privilege of meeting the Honorable President and pride of Odisha soil, Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. The whole of India and our state feel proud to have you as the President," Majhi posted on X.



**COURTESY CALL:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi meets President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi, Thursday

Besides discussing various issues related to the state, Majhi reportedly invited the First Citizen of India to the world famous Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath and His siblings, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra, in Puri. Majhi also met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to discuss various issues related to the state. He expressed gratitude for her continuous support and guidance, hoping for further financial stability and prosperity for Odisha under her leadership.

Additionally, Majhi met Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari.

Accompanied by Deputy Chief Ministers Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo and Pravati Parida, this visit marks Majhi's first to New Delhi after taking office as the Chief Minister.

The three-day tour, which began Wednesday, includes scheduled meetings with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, among others.

# Britain's true ruler? Larry, the Downing Street cat

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**London, June 27:** There has been one figure of stability in the nearly 14 years of political turmoil in the UK — Larry, the cat that has been serving as the Chief Mouser to the Cabinet Office at 10 Downing Street in London.

Now, with a general election set for July 4, the ageing tabby could be in line for his sixth prime minister.

He has already had five Conservative prime ministers serve under him but if polls are correct, he will soon get his first from the Labour party.

Incumbent Rishi Sunak's departure would see him take his fox-red labrador retriever, Nova, too. Not that Larry would mind.

According to Sunak's wife, Akshata Murty, the two have had some 'heated exchanges'. But Larry has always prevailed.

**Stabmer** leader Keir recently told the BBC that his family has a cat, Jojo, that his children spoil more than him.

They also have a hamster, Bear, he told the Metro newspaper. But it remains to be seen if either would move with him if he wins.

Larry has been fiercely protective of his territory, frequently fighting to be top cat with his counterpart at the Foreign ministry, Palmerston.

His rival



eventually retired to the countryside.

Urban foxes and unsuspecting pigeons have also been chased away, although one feathered interloper narrowly avoided his clutches, as the media looked on.

**LONGEVITY**  
Larry made his first appearance in Downing Street February 15, 2011 after being adopted from the Battersea shelter in south London.

He was recruited under then PM David

Cameron to get rid of mice and even given an official title: Chief Mouser. But his performance in that department left much to be desired, despite a few early successes.

Cameron himself tried to quash rumours that he and Larry did not get along, while reporters on the politics beat have said he is friendly with journalists. "He's interested," the appropriately named BBC political correspondent Helen Catt said in a recent item on Larry.

"He tends to come up and have a look when you're there with the camera crew. He likes to see what the press are up to."

But that has its downsides, she added.

"When you're in Downing Street and you're doing lives, you're always very aware that if he pops out behind you, a lot of people really aren't going to be

listening to what you're saying anymore," she said.

For the general election, Larry has set out his campaign manifesto on his official @Number10cat social media account.

"I don't get to vote in the general election but I do have to live with whoever you elect. No pressure," one post read after Sunak announced the election May 22.

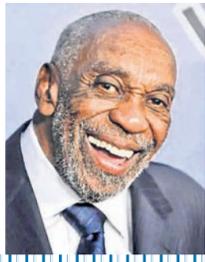
"Whatever the result of the election, I'll be here to keep an eye on things," read another.

Interviewed by AFP on the 10th anniversary of his arrival in power, Larry, via the human running his social media account, revealed the secret to his longevity.

"The key thing to remember is that I live here permanently, the politicians just lodge with me for a bit until they're fired," he said.

"They all work out sooner or later that it's me that runs the place."

# leisure



## AMERICAN ACTOR BILL COBBS DIES

Renowned film and TV actor Bill Cobbs, known for his roles in films such as *Night At The Museum*, and TV shows like *The Sopranos*, passed away at the age of 90. The actor passed away due to natural causes at his home in the Inland Empire, California.

## MONROE'S HOME DECLARED CULTURAL MONUMENT

Late Hollywood icon Marilyn Monroe's home in Brentwood, Los Angeles, has been approved as a historical cultural monument by the Los Angeles City Council, a designation that is intended to help protect the landmark from demolition, reports *Variety.com*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL \$5181\*

#### ARIES

Today you will go overboard trying to spruce up your looks. You attempt to imbibe new looks. A very desirable date will raise high expectations in you and will keep you on the edge of your seat. Ganesh advises you to take it easy as real relationships are not measured by outward expressions.

#### TAURUS

Ganesh is happy to say that you will acquire yourself well in whatever you do or undertake today. You will show outstanding caliber in handling the responsibilities given to you. If you are participating in a competition, you are likely to be way ahead of others.

#### GEMINI

You need to bear in mind that you need to concentrate on your own image and standing in society rather than worry about the actions of others. Those in the retail business will see an unprecedented spurt in their profits today, says Ganesh.

#### CANCER

You will try to improve ties with beloved ones. Your devotion and dedication will reap benefits for the future. You will have physical and mental happiness. You will keep your future in mind. This will boost your self-confidence. Ganesh's blessings are with you.

#### LEO

You will be confused with issues relating to the workplace today. You need to accept your present circumstances for what they are, and work towards resolving your immediate concerns to find your way ahead in life. This period of doubt will pass very soon, says Ganesh.

#### VIRGO

Your beloved will not only give you a surprise today but also demand one, says Ganesh. There may be some good news on the business front. Ganesh says own up to your old mistakes so that you don't repeat them, and chalk out the plans for the future. There is no need to shy from taking the advice of a loved one, as it will only benefit you, and later in the day, you may spend some good time together.

#### LIBRA

Ganesh says you will get the answers to all your questions. You will tend to worry about small things and issues. You will be able to earn from different sources today. Ganeshji assures that if you keep your mind balanced you will achieve amazing results in your work.

#### SCORPIO

You may bump into people with different tastes and temperaments, says Ganesh. Some may surprise you, while some may just shock you. Sometimes, it is difficult to understand when people react indifferently to your success. Handle it with smartness and diplomacy.

#### SAGITTARIUS

You have been experiencing the adverse effects of stressful lifestyle off-late. But not anymore, as you realise the importance of good health. Maintaining good health will begin with good news of either promotion or increment at work. This leaves you happy and satisfied, says Ganesh.

#### CAPRICORN

Today, you'll like to hold a cup of hot coffee in one hand, relax and go down the memory lane to cherish some golden moments. You may want to give another chance to your romantic relationship as you develop likings for your ex-boyfriend/girlfriend. Ganesh finds you to be busy in a lot social gatherings today.

#### AQUARIUS

You speed up your pace and try to do everything in order to complete your targets, but you won't be able to complete the tasks on time. Don't lose hope as tomorrow will be a different day, says Ganesh.

#### PISCES

You need to concentrate more on your personal life, and seriously think about the changes you need to make. You are guided more by your heart in these matters. However, there is nothing to worry about, as this is a golden period for you. Today should be a progressive day that will bring a lot of positive changes in your life, says Ganesh.

## Shilpa's gastronomic passion

**Mumbai:** Actress Shilpa Shetty, known for her vibrant personality and love for food, recently shared an Instagram video that perfectly encapsulates her gastronomic passion.

The video showcases Shilpa's enthusiastic approach to food as she explores different cuisines, savoring each bite with evident delight. Her followers were treated to a visual feast, watching her enjoy everything from local delicacies to gourmet creations. The post quickly garnered a flood of comments from fans who appreciated her candidness and shared her love for food.

In the video she captioned, "Eating my way through this holiday." It featured Shilpa indulging in a variety of mouth-watering dishes during her vacation.

Every Sunday, she treats her followers to glimpses of her indulgent meals, encouraging them to take a break from their diets and enjoy their favorite foods. These posts have become a staple for her fans, who eagerly anticipate what she will be enjoying each week.

Through her engaging content, the *Baazigar* actress continues to inspire her followers to embrace their love for food and savor every moment, making her a beloved figure in both the entertainment and culinary worlds.



## Ananya opens up about insecurity

**Mumbai:** In the glamorous world of B-town, some friendships shine brighter than the spotlights. Actors Ananya Panday and Suhana Khan are prime examples. Their bond transcends the glitz and goes way back, forming a deep connection that has blossomed since childhood.

In a recent interview, Ananya admitted that with Suhana entering the film industry, the competition would intensify. When asked if she felt insecure, Ananya shared her thoughts.

She stated, "I don't feel insecure, I feel competitive. I have always been competitive. I think it's good to have healthy competition because it keeps you motivated. It makes me want to work even harder. It is inspiring whenever new talent comes because you get to see what good work is out there, you get to learn from people."

In a light-hearted twist, Ananya showered praise on her best friend Suhana. During an appearance on Neha Dhupia's talk show, Ananya playfully declared Suhana, who isn't currently an actress, as the most dateable actor in the industry.

During a game on the show, Neha asked Ananya which Hindi film actor she found most dateable. Ananya replied, "Suhana. I think she is extremely dateable because she is the best girlfriend ever."

On the work front, Ananya has Prime Video series *Call Me Bae* in the pipeline.

### DIRECTORIAL DEBUT

## Tahira attempts to break pattern

**Mumbai:** Film director Tahira Kashyap, who is gearing up for her directorial debut *Sharmajee Ki Beti*, speaks about portrayal of women, digitalisation, realism and escapism in cinema in an exclusive interaction with Hindustan Times.

When asked about the inspiration behind the film and the challenges while navigating three different stories, Tahira said, "Your first feature films often reflect your heart and life, making them pure and true. I knew this film, featuring five women of different ages with their own insecurities and humorous stories, would be my debut. Each character has a part of me. As a writer

and director, you draw from personal experiences and observations, making your early works deeply connected to your life and perspective."

On being quizzed about her personal experiences which influenced her story, she opined, "I chose to feature multiple protagonists to break the pattern of focusing on a single character. It felt inauthentic to assign all problems, accolades, and victories to one person. Many struggles are age-specific, and films typically depict leading ladies aged 25-28 in clichéd roles. There's a vast span of womanhood yet to be explored in Indian cinema, which I aimed to highlight."

## 'Reality gets hidden in glitz of showbiz'

**Mumbai:** Actress Asha Negi, who is part of the recently-released show *Industry*, felt that the series shows people the real challenges of showbiz.

Talking about the series, which offers an insider's look into the Hindi film industry, Asha said, "*Industry* has been receiving some great reviews and a lot of appreciation, especially from people within the industry because it's very relevant and relatable to everybody."

Asha, who's also happy to see people relating to her character as ambitious Sanya Sen, said: "The feedback has been great so far. Many people, especially those in the industry, relate to the character I'm playing." The actress, who gained limelight with the TV show *Pavitra Rishta*, also said that *Industry* highlights the struggles behind the scenes. "For those outside the industry, the show reveals how glamorous it might seem from the outside as it highlights the hard work and struggles behind the scenes," she said.

"Reality gets hidden in the glitz of showbiz. This glamour hides a lot of patience, hard work, and constant hustling. People outside the industry are getting to know the real challenges, while those in the industry can resonate with every dialogue, episode, and character," concluded Asha, who worked in hit OTT projects like *Baarish*, *Ludo*, *Abhay*, and *Collar Bomb*.



### PEANUTS



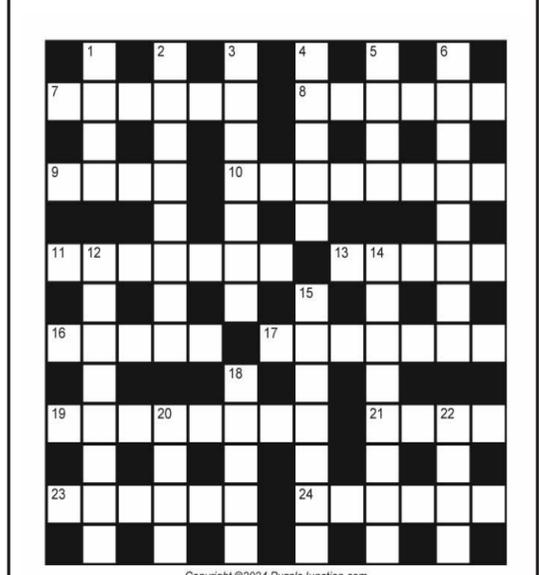
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



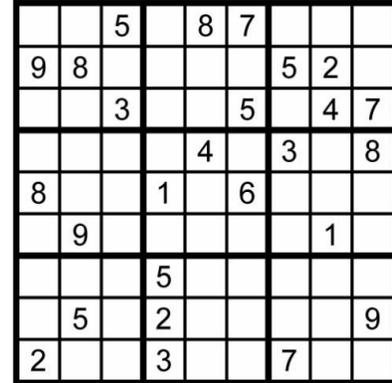
### FUN post CROSSWORD



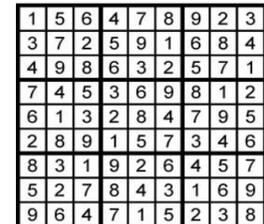
- Across
- 7 Tear into
  - 8 Insufficient
  - 9 Mold-ripened cheese
  - 10 Initials, usually
  - 11 Fainted
  - 13 Beer mug
  - 16 Origami bird
  - 17 Prairie wolves
  - 19 Ripped up
  - 21 The Bard's river
  - 23 Large lizard
  - 24 Playground item
  - 6 Kind of imagination
  - 12 African wild swine
  - 14 Duplicitous (3-5)
  - 15 Diana, for one
  - 18 Spiralled-horned antelope
  - 20 Joie de vivre
  - 22 Milky-white gem
- Down
- 1 Bygone autocrat
  - 2 South African port (4,4)
  - 3 Inkling
  - 4 Muscat native
  - 5 Zingy taste

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown

## Govt okays ₹903.41cr green energy projects



The investment in green energy projects to reduce pollution includes a 48-MW wind power project to be set up by HPCL Renewable and Green Energy Ltd at Umerkote in Nabarangpur district and the 49.5-MW wind power project to be set up by ONGC Tripura Power Company Ltd at Astaranga in Puri district

A total investment of ₹881.28 crore will be made for these two projects

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, June 27:** The Single Window Committee (SWC) chaired by state energy secretary Vishal Kumar Dev Thursday approved an investment proposal of ₹903.41 crore to generate 102-MW renewable energy in Odisha. The investment in green energy projects to reduce pollution includes a 48-MW wind power project to be set up by

HPCL Renewable and Green Energy Ltd at Umerkote in Nabarangpur district and the 49.5-MW wind power project to be set up by ONGC Tripura Power Company Ltd at Astaranga in Puri district. A total investment of ₹881.28 crore will be made for these two projects. Similarly, in the field of solar energy, the SWC has approved a 0.72-MW solar project at Manesar, Sambalpur by

Vishakha Industries Ltd, 0.8-MW solar project at Jatni, Khurda district by ITC Ltd, 2.2-MW at Kansbahal, Sundargarh district by Amp Energy, and 1-MW solar project at Sarau in Khurda district by Odisha Television Limited with a total investment of ₹22.13 crore. As per the Odisha Renewable Energy Policy-2022, the SWC of the Energy department has approved investment proposals to the tune of ₹3723.57 crore for generating 499.48-MW of renewable energy in the state.

### FIGHTING CHILD LABOUR

Cuttack ADM Dibya Lochan Mohanta flags off an awareness vehicle for eradication of child labour, at the Collectorate, Thursday



**HERBAL CARE:** Servitors carrying 'Phuluri Tela' - sesame oil with fragrant flower extracts and other herbs - to Srimandir which would be applied to sibling deities for their recovery from fever they had caught after the grand bath during 'Snana Yatra'. The herbal oil is prepared at Bada Odia Mutt

## Govt seeks info on Ashish Singh

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 27:** The state government Thursday asked the Director General of Police (DGP) to provide information regarding the leave availed by IPS officer Ashish Kumar Singh. In the letter, Muralidhar Mallick, Officer on Special Duty (OSD) cum additional secretary, Home said that Singh was allowed to avail leave for one month, from May 4, 2025, on health grounds by the Home department. "In the meantime more than one month has passed, but no communication is received in this department weather Singh has resumed duty after availing the leave or he extended the leave. It is therefore

requested to kindly furnish information to Home department for further necessary action in the matter," the letter stated. It may be noted that the Election Commission of India (ECI) had directed Singh to appear before a board of AIIMS-Bhubaneswar for a health check-up following complaints from the BJP that the IPS officer was working in favour of the BJD in polls though officially he was on sick leave. After a six-member board of the AIIMS submitted its report stating that Singh was mentally and physically fit, the Election Commission had written to the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Odisha to forward the AIIMS report to the Chief Secretary for necessary actions against the IPS officer.

## Tigress Sara dies at NZP

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 27:** Sara that had been a cherished wild tigress and an integral part of Nandankanan family died at the age of 18 years Thursday, said reports. The beloved tigress breathed her last at 4:42am Thursday on the Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) premises. She was 18 years and one month old, according to zoo sources. Sara's journey began when she was rescued from Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh October 18, 2006, when she was just five months old, and was reared at Van Vihar Zoological Park in Bhopal.



She joined NZP April 18, 2009, under an animal exchange programme. "Sara became a vital participant in our conservation breeding programme. She infused new life into the tiger population by giving birth to Asha, Ankita and Subhashree January 13, 2012, sired by tiger Rishi. Asha was later transferred to Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad, under another ani-

mal exchange programme," said an NZP official. On February 29, 2024, Sara was observed to be dull, unable to stand, and had laboured breathing. After treatment with antibiotics and supportive therapy, she was able to stand up and accept meat March 3, 2024. She was confined to the feeding and small paddock area, the official added. She developed debilitus ulcers on both hip joints March 21, 2024, and was being treated, the official said. Despite accepting food, she gradually became emaciated, he added. June 26, 2024, Sara was seen in lateral recumbency with feeble respiration. Despite all efforts, she breathed her last at 4:42am Thursday.

### INTERNATIONAL LGBT PRIDE DAY

## BNS may spell doom for LGBTQ: Activists

ARINDAM GANGULY

**Bhubaneswar, June 27:** LGBTQIA++ activists in the City have raised fears about an increase in sexual assault cases against community members once the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) comes into effect from July 1 this year. "The soon to be implemented Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita does not include Section 377 or any other law that deals with rape of men and transgender persons," said activist Amit Bisoi.

Rupak Das an LGBTQ activist demanded a discrimination free society and also a progressive new law for LGBTQIA+ community to live a dignified life with all human rights like other gender people in society. Asisha Behera, a trans woman, said the community members should be proud of who they are and must work together to take the community forward. The Odisha government has been working towards making transgender people part of mainstream society through various programs, like giving them jobs under government schemes.

He said IPC Section 377 protected consensual sex between same sex individuals, rape against animals and transgender persons and non binary persons in same-sex relations. Now that this law has been removed, sexual assault cases in India against the community will increase," Bisoi said while speaking to Orissa POST on the eve of the International LGBTQ Pride Day, Thursday. Samikshya Behera, a trans woman, said her demands from the government include the creation of an inclusive environment for the LGBTQIA++ community in the state. Behera, who is a state government employee, said facilities such as toilets for community members, assistance for medical insurance for transgender for their Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) and strong action against harassment are the need of the hour.

Meanwhile, Bisoi has a message for the new governments in the state and at the Centre. "We are not just a few lines in your manifestos, we are more than that. We are the voices of a group of underprivileged, marginalized minority individuals. We deserve equal amount of opportunities just like any other citizen in this country. Every queer child deserves to be with the family, safe and loved. It is high time the government should see LGBTQIA++ issues in public forums just like any other issues," he said. The International LGBTQ Pride Day June 28 is dedicated to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and others to commemorate the anniversary of the Stonewall riots which started the modern LGBT rights movement.

## ROBBERY BID FOILED; 4 HELD

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

**Bhubaneswar, June 27:** The Commissionerate Police here Thursday claimed to have foiled a robbery attempt and arrested four members of a gang near Baramunda Durga Puja Ground here. A car, one sword, two iron rods, one toy gun, one knife and a sharp weapon have been seized from their possession. Bhubaneswar Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Prateek Singh said the arrested were identified as Sibabrata Swain, 23, Rajesh Behera, 26, Aman Champaty, 22, and Karan Mandal, 25. Meanwhile, another gang member gave a slip, said the DCP adding that all the accused are history-sheeters, with nearly two dozens of criminal cases registered against them by the City police.



Khandagiri IIC received a tip-off that a few unidentified men had gathered near National Highway-16 and were planning to rob the motorists and pedestrians, said the DCP. The cops swung into action and took them into custody. None of the accused was able to give a proper answer as to why they had gathered there at such late hours, said Singh. Later, during interrogation, the hoodlums confessed before the cops about their motive, said a senior police official. Khandagiri police have booked the accused under Sections 399 and 402 of IPC, along with Section 25 of Arms Act, and produced them in a local court Thursday.

**POLITICKLE by MANJUL**

©MANJUL

## Chorus grows for OPCC chief's scalp

**Bhubaneswar:** Cries for resignation of Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Sarat Pattanayak grew louder with senior party leaders coming out in support of the idea openly. Speaking to mediapersons, senior leader Panchanan Kanungo Thursday said: "I don't know whether the PCC president has resigned or not. It is my personal opinion that as the party suffered a poll debacle and the PCC president himself lost the elections, he should resign." Similarly, another senior leader and former OPCC president Jayadev Jena said that he had resigned from his post in the past when the Congress failed to form the government in the state in the 2014 elections. Meanwhile, Pattanaik asserted that the party performed well in the 2024 elections as compared to the previous Assembly election.

## Ultra-processed foods need tobacco-style warnings

Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) are displacing healthy diets "all over the world" despite growing evidence of the risks they pose and should be sold with tobacco-style warnings, according to the nutritional scientist who first coined the term. Prof Carlos Monteiro of the University of São Paulo will highlight the increasing danger UPFs present to children and adults at the International Congress on Obesity this week. "UPFs are increasing their share in and domination of global diets, despite the risk they represent to health in terms of increasing the risk of multiple chronic diseases," Monteiro told the Guardian ahead of the conference in São Paulo. "UPFs are displacing healthier, less processed foods all over the world, and also causing a deterioration in diet quality due

to their several harmful attributes. Together, these foods are driving the pandemic of obesity and other diet-related chronic diseases, such as diabetes." The stark warning comes amid rapidly rising global consumption of UPFs such as cereals, protein bars, fizzy drinks, ready meals and fast food. In the UK and US, more than half the average diet now consists of ultra-processed food. For some, especially people who are younger, poorer or from disadvantaged areas, a diet comprising as much as 80 per cent UPF is typical. In February, the world's largest review of its kind found UPFs were directly linked to 32 harmful effects to health, including a higher risk of heart disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes, adverse mental health and early death. Monteiro and his colleagues



first used the phrase UPF 15 years ago when designing the food classification system "Nova". This assesses not only nutritional content but also the processes food undergoes before it is consumed. The system places food and drink into four groups: minimally processed food, processed culinary ingredients, processed food and ultra-processed food.

Monteiro told the Guardian he was now so concerned about the impact UPF was having on human health that studies and reviews were no longer sufficient to warn the public of the health hazards. "Public health campaigns are needed like those against tobacco to curb the dangers of UPFs," he told the Guardian in an email. "Such campaigns would include

UPFs should also be heavily taxed due to impact on health and mortality, says scientist who coined term

The stark warning comes amid rapidly rising global consumption of UPFs such as cereals, protein bars, fizzy drinks, ready meals and fast food

In February, the world's largest review of its kind found UPFs were directly linked to 32 harmful effects to health, including a higher risk of heart disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes, adverse mental health and early death

and health facilities should be banned, and there should be heavy taxation of UPFs, with the revenue generated used to subsidise fresh foods." Monteiro will tell the conference that food giants marketing UPFs know that, in order to be competitive, their products must be more convenient, more affordable and tastier than freshly prepared meals. "To maximise profits, these UPFs must have lower cost of production and be overconsumed," he said. However, Dr Hilda Mulrooney, a reader in nutrition and health at London Metropolitan University, said comparing UPF to tobacco was "very simplistic". "There is no such thing as a safe cigarette, even second-hand, so banning them is relatively straightforward in that the health case is very clear.

# Landmark SC ruling could spur more climate cases in India

### The Supreme Court recognises the right against adverse effects of climate change part of rights to life and equality

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 27: A landmark ruling by the Supreme Court of India which recognised the right against adverse effects of climate change as a distinct fundamental right could drive more climate litigation in the country, according to a global report released Thursday.

Citing the case of MK Ranjitsinh and Others vs Union of India, the report by the London School of Economics' Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment said that climate cases in the Global South are increasing and gaining more attention.

The report said that over 200 climate cases from Global South countries are recorded in databases, comprising about eight per cent of all cases globally.

"While research indicates a growing trend in utilising the courts as instruments in climate policy responses in some Global South countries, there may be a strategic avoidance of climate litigation in others," the report said.

For instance, it noted that India's historically low number of climate cases reflects a conscious decision to avoid an overly narrow focus on emissions, as this can overlook broader issues related to livelihoods, rights, and ecological concerns.

"However, there may be a shift following a landmark judgment by the Supreme Court of India," the report added.



Ranjitsinh case originated from concerns about the impact of overhead power cables on the Great Indian Bustard. It evolved into a broader discussion on balancing climate action with other conservation measures, as the government argued that the power transmission lines were essential to India's climate change response.

The authors said the case exemplifies a significant type of non-climate-aligned litigation that has emerged in recent years, known as green versus green litigation. These cases involve a trade-off between climate and biodiversity or other environmental aims.

The authors analyzed a database of 2,666 climate litigation cases compiled by the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University. Around 70 per cent of these cases have been filed since 2015, the year the Paris Agreement was adopted. In 2023 alone, 233 new cases were filed.

Although only five per cent

of climate cases have been brought before international courts, the authors said these have significant potential to influence domestic proceedings.

The United States leads in the number of documented climate cases, with 1,745 cases in total and 129 new cases filed in 2023. Following the US, the UK, Brazil, and Germany have the highest numbers of recorded cases.

Climate cases were filed in 2023 for the first time in Panama and Portugal, while older cases in Hungary and Namibia were identified, bringing the total number of countries with recorded climate cases to 55.

The report also noted a rise in cases concerning 'climate-washing' - exaggerated or misrepresented climate credentials - with 47 such cases filed in 2023, bringing the total to over 140.

The year 2023 saw a significant increase in cases against climate action, with 50 filed, including backlash litigation against environmental, social, and governance initiatives, as well as lawsuits targeting NGOs and shareholder activists.

Internationally, 2023 was an important year for climate litigation. The European Court of Human Rights confirmed that Switzerland's failure to act on climate change violated the European Convention on Human Rights. Other significant cases included the Swiss Senior Women's case, the Montana case in the US, and the Canadian youth's case against Ontario.



RAISING VOICE: Members of All India Democratic Students' Organisation stage a protest at Master Canteen in Bhubaneswar, Thursday, demanding scrapping of National Testing Agency over alleged irregularities in NEET-UG examination

# Extend skill devpt to higher education: Swain

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 27: Skill development programmes should not be confined to a few categories of students, rather they should be extended to higher education courses, Skill Development Minister Sampad Chandra Swain said Thursday.

At a review meeting, the minister highlighted the extension of programme offerings to industrial sector and Mission Shakti.

"Due to lack of skill development, our youths are being deprived of employment outside the state. That is why it is necessary to link the skill development training programme to higher education," said Swain.

Skill Development Principal Secretary Usha Padhee briefed



the minister about ongoing projects of the department. She proposed to launch 'Kaushal Rath' initiative to create awareness among youths on various skill development programmes.

The initiative shall cover all districts and focus on schools,

childcare institutions, vulnerable tribal groups, government ITIs and polytechnics, she said.

Two OSRTC buses, equipped with audio-visual system and experimental labs will be engaged for the purpose, Padhee added.

The first 'Kaushal Bhawan' with a capacity of providing training to around 300 youths annually, is also being developed at World Skill Center (WSC) here. The center will provide training in culinary science, food and beverages, housekeeping services and hospitality.

Additionally, Chief Minister's Skill Development Fellowship Programme, in line with Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship Programme, has been initiated to support the employment officers at district levels.

A dedicated National Institutional Ranking Framework cell will also be established at Biju Patnaik University of Technology, Rourkela, to monitor and guide registered technical institutions and colleges.

# SOA installs air quality monitoring device

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 27: Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA) Deemed to be University has partnered with Aurassure Private Limited, an Odisha-based startup, to install state-of-the-art sensor-based weather and air quality monitoring device on its campus.

Aurassure COO Satyanarayan Bishoyi said that an initiative 'University Clean Air Network (UCAN)' has been launched which is aimed at developing network of universities dedicated to monitoring and improving air quality and weather across the state.



This device will provide real-time data on various air quality and weather parameters, including particulate matter, relative humidity, and ambient temperature, he said.

"The sensor will measure weather conditions, offering comprehensive environmental insights that can help formulate effective policies and create community awareness," he added.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in this regard was recently signed between SOA and Aurassure.

"We are happy to be part of Aurassure's UCAN initiative as it aligns with our commitment to sustainability and empowers students and researchers with the necessary tools to study and address environmental challenges," said director of SOA's Centre for Environment and Climate (CEC) Sarat Chandra Sahu.

# Govt aiming to strengthen IITs, IIMs, AIIMS: Murmu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 27: The government is aiming to strengthen institutions like IITs, NITs, IIMs and AIIMS and increase their numbers as per requirement, President Droupadi Murmu said Thursday.

In her address to the joint sitting of Parliament, Murmu said that earlier students who studied in Indian languages faced an unfair situation but with the implementation of the new National Education Policy (NEP), the injustice has been removed.

"In the past 10 years, seven new IITs, 16 IIITs, seven IIMs, 15 new AIIMS, 315 medical colleges and 390 universities have been established. It is the endeavour of the government to further strengthen these institutions and increase their numbers as



per requirement," Murmu said in her first address to the 18th Lok Sabha.

The president said the government is working towards establishing a digital university as well.

"Programmes like Atal Tinkering Labs, Start-up India and Stand-up India have helped improve the capacity of youth of the country. It is due to these ef-

forts that today India has become the third largest start-up ecosystem in the world," she added.

Murmu noted that the government is creating an enabling environment for the youth of this country to dream big and realise those dreams.

"Earlier, the students who studied in Indian languages faced an unfair situation. With the implementation of the new National Education Policy, my government has been able to remove this injustice. Now students can take up engineering courses in Indian languages," she said.

Murmu cited self-attestation of certificates and abolishing interviews for certain categories of government job recruitment as key good governance initiatives of the government.

# Service dogs can reduce severity of PTSD for veterans

Service dogs can alleviate some symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for veterans, according to a study published in June 2024 in the medical journal JAMA Network Open.

Over the past decade, a group of researchers has been studying whether trained service dogs can help veterans with PTSD - a mental health condition that some people develop after experiencing a traumatic event.

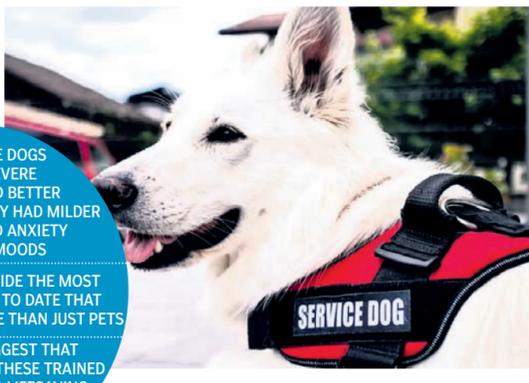
Building off the preliminary findings, they conducted the first and largest clinical trial of its kind to assess the complementary intervention.

Researchers recruited 156 post-9/11 veterans from the waitlist of K9s for Warriors, a nonprofit that matches trained service dogs with veterans who have PTSD. Of that total, 81 received service dogs and 75 remained on the waitlist throughout the

three-month study. Most had been deployed and had served in the Army, three-quarters identified as male, and the average age was 38 years old.

All veterans initially completed online surveys about their well-being and were interviewed about their PTSD symptoms by expert clinicians. The group followed up three months after they either got a service dog or remained on the waitlist.

Those with service dogs had less severe symptoms and better quality of life. For example, they



THOSE WITH SERVICE DOGS HAD LESS SEVERE SYMPTOMS AND BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE. THEY HAD Milder DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY AND BETTER MOODS

THESE RESULTS PROVIDE THE MOST DEFINITIVE EVIDENCE TO DATE THAT SERVICE DOGS ARE MORE THAN JUST PETS

THE FINDINGS SUGGEST THAT PARTNERSHIPS WITH THESE TRAINED ANIMALS CAN YIELD LIFESAVING BENEFITS FOR CURRENT AND FORMER SERVICE MEMBERS

had milder depression and anxiety and better moods. They also had significantly lower odds of still meeting the diagnostic criteria for PTSD.

These results provide the most definitive evidence to date that

veterans dying by suicide daily, their mental health is a pressing concern. Up to 29 per cent of post-9/11 veterans have been diagnosed with PTSD at some point. Some treatments for PTSD are available, such as exposure therapy and medications. But barriers to care, stigma, and high dropout rates from treatment programs limit their effectiveness; thus, there is a push to identify additional treatment options.

For example, there has been recent research on the use of the drug MDMA, combined with psychotherapy, for PTSD. However, a Food and Drug Administration advisory panel voted in June 2024 against approving the drug's use as a PTSD treatment due to concerns about safety and the potential for abuse.

Service dogs are trained in specific tasks to help with a disability. For veterans with PTSD,

a dog's role could include interrupting a panic attack or lying across veterans' laps to calm them. People with disabilities have a legal right to be accompanied by their service dogs in public, whether they're at a supermarket or a baseball game.

The findings can inform policymakers, health clinicians and insurance companies on the value of service dogs for veterans with PTSD, potentially increasing funding for groups that train and place service dogs and shortening wait times.

What's next The researchers are conducting a randomised clinical trial called the Service Dog and Veteran Experiences Study, or SERVES. It's being done in collaboration with K9s for Warriors and Canine Companions, another nonprofit that trains and provides service dogs to veterans.

THE CONVERSATION

**FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS**

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

# Lower Suktel oustees live in darkness

# Vig court convicts 3 corrupt RDA officials

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bolangir, June 27:** The landless villagers of Kharsabahal village in Bolangir district, who were displaced for the Lower Suktel Irrigation Project, have been pushed to darkness after the district administration rehabilitated them at Barapudagia village without power supply to their makeshift houses.

The displaced villagers comprising 15 landless families mostly from Scheduled Caste (SC) and Muslim community have been rehabilitated on government land. They earn their living by working as daily wagers or by peddling bangles in the nearby villages.

Being landless, the villagers have been deprived of government assistance except for a ration card with which they get rice every month. The state government has neither given them any plot to build houses nor announced a big package for them

for being landless. The oustees have built makeshift houses on the land at their own cost. Living in the temporary huts, they are passing through a harrowing time in complete darkness after evening due to lack of power supply. It has been over a year since they have been rehabilitated but their sufferings do not seem to end. They were not even given solar panels or even a torch to light up their houses.

Sources said the first rainwater was stored in the reservoir in July, 2023. However, people in many of the villages were in the submergence area were not displaced then. Later, incessant rainfall occurred. As a result, the backwaters of the reservoir gushed into the riparian Kharsabahal, Gadashankar, Dunguripalli, Banchhorpali and Kumiapalli villages. Alarmed over the development, the district administration hurriedly evacuated hundreds of



landless families and rehabilitated them at the hostel of a tribal school at Chudapali, August 2, 2023. The evacuation was so swift that the displaced villagers even failed to bring with them many of their belongings. The state government only announced financial assistance of ₹3.45 lakh for each family. Later, the district administration announced that a government land at Barapudagia village has been identified for their rehabilitation and shifted

the villagers there. It was also announced that the displaced families will be given a housing plot each under Vasundhara Yojana. The villagers were rehabilitated on the government land but the place does not have basic facilities such as a good road, drinking water, power supply or readymade houses to live in. As a result, the villagers constructed houses on their own and started living in the area. Meanwhile, over 10 months have

passed since then, but the district administration is yet to ensure the basic facilities for them. The whole area plunges into darkness after sundown.

Women are the worst sufferers as there is no pond or any water body in the area. Children have failed to study sans an Anganwadi centre in the area. The villagers always live in constant fear of wild animals and snakes as the area is close to a forest. Rains further worsen their sorrows. They have lodged several complaints but the district administration is yet to address their pleas.

When contacted, Nutan Seth, project director (in-charge) of Lower Suktel Irrigation Project (rehabilitation and resettlement), a final estimate has been prepared for power supply and sent to TPWODC. The RWSS department has also installed two tube wells for the villagers. Rest of their problems will be resolved gradually, he added.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, June 27:** A Vigilance Court in Sundargarh has sentenced three officials of Rourkela Development Authority (RDA) to Rigorous Imprisonment (RI) after convicting them for corruption.

The convicted officials are Mediseti Seshadri, ex-secretary, Siva Charan Mohanty, ex-executive engineer, PHD-cum-engineering member and Manoj Kumar Dash, legal assistant, of RDA. They were chargesheeted by Odisha Vigilance U/s 13(2) r/w 13(1)(d) of PC Act, 1988/34 IPC for their alleged involvement in a corruption case.

The first two accused Seshadri and Mohanty were convicted by the Special Judge, Vigilance, Sundargarh for abusing their official power and showing undue official favour by violating rules of the government for pecuniary gain.

The court sentenced both Mohanty and Dash to rigorous imprisonment for a period of



two years and slapped a fine of ₹5,000. In case of default, they will undergo additional jail term of three months or more.

A non-bailable warrant has been issued against Mediseti Seshadri as he did not appear before the court for hearing of sentence.

Vigilance will now move the competent authority for stoppage of pension of Mohanty, and dismissal of Dash from service following their conviction. Bishnu Charan Dash, Ex-DSP, Vigilance, Sambalpur Division had investigated the case and Special Public Prosecutor Shyam Sundar Mishra conducted the case on behalf of Vigilance, Sundargarh.

# Court awards life sentence to man for double murder

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jagatsinghpur, June 27:** The Additional District and Sessions Judge in Kujang awarded life imprisonment to a man Thursday in connection with a brutal double murder in Jagatsinghpur district.

The convict Jyotiprakash Natharma alias Kalia had murdered two women separately in June 2023. Kalia hacked a woman who was plucking flowers on the roadside in Kujang Expressway Colony with a sword killing her on the spot. Kalia did not stop there. On his way home, he again attacked another woman who was opening the gate of her house and killed her brutally.

Kujang police had arrested him and investigated the case. The court's judge passed the judgement based on statements of witnesses and scientific evidence one year after the crime was committed.

# ABHYAS ready for production

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Balasure, June 27:** Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully completed six consecutive development trials of High Speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) 'ABHYAS' with improved booster configuration from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, the Defence Ministry said Thursday.

With this, ABHYAS has successfully completed 10 development trials demonstrating the reliability of the system, a statement added.

The trials were carried out with improved radar cross section, visual and infrared augmentation systems. During the trials, various mission objectives covering safe release of

booster, launcher clearance, and endurance performance were successfully validated, it said.

Two launches were conducted back-to-back within a gap of 30 minutes, demonstrating the ease of operation with minimum logistics. Representatives from the services witnessed the flight trials, the statement added.

ABHYAS, designed by DRDO's Aeronautical Development Establishment in Bangalore and developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Larsen & Toubro (L&T), offers a realistic threat scenario for weapon systems practice.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh praised DRDO, the Armed Forces, and the industry for the successful development trials of 'ABHYAS', highlighting the synergy between scientists and industry

# Three cops transferred for assaulting woman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhadrak, June 27:** Three personnel from Chandbali police station in Bhadrak have been transferred to the district police headquarters for allegedly assaulting a woman.

Bhadrak Superintendent of Police (SP) Varun Guntupalli ordered their transfer Thursday after a video of the incident went viral on social media platforms.

Assistant sub-inspector Nepali Saha, constable Rabindra Kumar Sethi, and home guard Kishore Mohapatra have been sent to the district police headquarters and relieved of their duties and responsibilities, Chandbali SDPO Kartik Chandra Mallick said.

On seeing the video in which the three policemen were allegedly

# CHANDBALI POLICE EXCESS



seen dragging a woman out of Chandbali police station, Bhadrak SP Wednesday directed Chandbali Inspector In-Charge to conduct an inquiry. SDPO Mallick later said Mita

Sethi (23) from Barua village under Chandbali police station limits had come to the police station to collect monthly alimony from her divorced husband Sambhuram, who was also present there.

The incident reportedly occurred over the throwing of a shoe box inside the police station compound. According to Mita, her four-year-old kid was playing with the box and threw it inside the police station when constable Sethi intervened and asked her to put it in a dustbin.

"When I refused, he slapped me. When I protested, two other policemen came and dragged me out. My sister-in-law, who accompanied me, was also assaulted when she protested," Mita said in her FIR.

In a counter FIR, Sethi alleged that Mita abused him when he approached her to collect the shoe box and used offensive language. Chandbali IIC Panchanan Mohanty said inquiry into the allegations is underway.

# EAST COAST RAILWAY

e-Tender Notice No. : eTenderCPMGSU BBS2024001, Dtd. 15.06.2024  
Name of the Work : SUPPLY, FABRICATION, ASSEMBLING AND LAUNCHING IN POSITION OF PLATE GIRDERS INCLUDING ALLIED WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH EXECUTION OF ROAD OVER BRIDGE (ROB) NO. 2 (1x36M) COMPOSITE GIRDER AND ROAD OVER BRIDGE (ROB) NO. 30A (1x36M) COMPOSITE GIRDER INSIDE MCL/TALCHER AREA UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF DEPUTY CHIEF ENGINEER/GSU/ANGUL.  
Approximate cost of the work: ₹ 1061.01 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 6,80,600.00, Period of Completion : 09 (Nine) Months.  
Date & time of tender closing: At 11:00 hrs. on 16.07.2024.  
No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.  
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)  
The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigendum issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS portal. Only registered tenderer/bidder can participate on e-tendering.  
The tenderers should read all instructions to the tenderers carefully and ensure compliance of all instructions including check lists, para 3.1 (additional check-list) of Tender form (Second sheet) Annexure-I of chapter 2 of Tender documents, submission of Annexure-B duly verified and signed by Chartered Accountant.  
Dy. Chief Engineer/GSU/ PR-34/CH/24-25 Angul

**Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited**  
BMC-ICOMC Building, 5th Floor, Bhoi Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751022  
E-mail Id: [bbsr.bscl@gmail.com](mailto:bbsr.bscl@gmail.com), CIN: U74990OR2016PLC020016  
Telephone-0674-2548428 FAX: 0674-2540811  
Letter No. 933/BSCL/Tech/2024 Dated 27.06.2024

# TENDER FOR SELECTION OF AGENCY FOR HIRING OF VEHICLES IN BHUBANESWAR SMART CITY LIMITED, BHUBANESWAR.

No. C-108- M/s. Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL), Bhubaneswar invites sealed proposals for Selection of Agency for Hiring of Vehicles. The details of Terms of Reference (ToR) can be downloaded from the website of BSCL i.e. [www.smartcitybhubaneswar.gov.in](http://www.smartcitybhubaneswar.gov.in). Interested agencies may submit their proposals in a sealed cover super-scribing as "Tender for Selection of Agency for Hiring of Vehicles in Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL)." with advertisement number and Date to the General Manager (Admin), Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited, 5th Floor, ICOMC Tower, Satya Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751022 through Speed Post / Registered Post / Courier services only, which should reach on or before 5.00 P.M. on 15th July, 2024 positively and the same will be opened at 11.30 AM on 16th July, 2024. Proposals received after the due date and time shall be rejected. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof. For any queries you reach through email: [bbsr.bscl@gmail.com](mailto:bbsr.bscl@gmail.com) or telephone: 0674-2548428 / 2540811.  
By order of Managing Director  
Sd./ General Manager,  
Bhubaneswar Smart city Limited  
OIPR-13070/11/0001/2425

**GRIDCO LIMITED**  
(A Govt. of Odisha Undertaking)  
Regd. Office : Janpath, Bhubaneswar-751022, ODISHA  
E-Tender Notice

No. GRIDCO/RE NODAL AGENCY/ E-TENDER/05/2023-24 Date: 28.06.2024  
No. CAD-361: GRIDCO invites Expression of Interest (EOI) in e-Tender mode only from reputed and eligible bidders for "Empanelment of consultants to evaluate Small Hydro Project (SHEP) DPRs in Odisha" conforming to the terms and conditions mentioned in the tender document.

The interested bidders would be required to enrol themselves on the e-tender portal [www.tenderwizard.com/GRIDCO](http://www.tenderwizard.com/GRIDCO). Complete set of bidding documents are available at the tender portal, [www.tenderwizard.com/gridco](http://www.tenderwizard.com/gridco) or GRIDCO website: [www.gridco.co.in](http://www.gridco.co.in) or RE Nodal Agency Portal website: <https://greenenergyinvest.odisha.gov.in/> from 28.06.2024 for downloading the scope of supply and terms & conditions in detail.  
Start date of the bid- 28.06.2024  
Date of pre bid meeting- 12.07.2024 11.30 AM, GRIDCO Conference Hall / VC  
Last date for submission of bid - 30.07.2024, 1:00 PM.  
The due date & time of opening of techno-commercial bid - 30.07.2024, 5:00 PM.

N.B: - All subsequent addendums/corrigendum to the tender shall be hosted in GRIDCO's official website <https://www.gridco.co.in>, [www.tenderwizard.com/gridco](http://www.tenderwizard.com/gridco) and <https://greenenergyinvest.odisha.gov.in/> only. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the offers without assigning any reason thereof.  
Sd./  
Chief Project Manager, RE Nodal Agency  
OIPR-04056/11/0002/2425

# UNION PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION PROGRAMME OF EXAMINATIONS/RECRUITMENT TESTS (RTs) - 2025

No.22/23/2024-E.(I)(B) - The Commission's Programme of Examinations and Recruitment Tests (RTs) for the year 2025 is given below for the information of candidates. The annual calendar has also been placed on the Commission's website ([www.upsc.gov.in](http://www.upsc.gov.in)). Aspirants and candidates are advised to retain this advertisement for use as a ready reckoner for applying for the Commission's Examinations in 2025.

Sl. No.	Name of Examination	Date of Notification	Last Date for receipt of Applications	Date of commencement of Exam	Duration of Exam
1.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			11.01.2025 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
2.	Combined Geo-Scientist (Preliminary) Examination, 2025	04.09.2024	24.09.2024	09.02.2025 (Sunday)	1 DAY
3.	Engineering Services (Preliminary) Examination, 2025	18.09.2024	08.10.2024	09.02.2025 (Sunday)	1 DAY
4.	CBI (DSP) LDCE	27.11.2024	17.12.2024	08.03.2025 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
5.	CISF AC(EXE) LDCE-2025	04.12.2024	24.12.2024	09.03.2025 (Sunday)	1 DAY
6.	N.D.A. & N.A. Examination (I), 2025	11.12.2024	31.12.2024	13.04.2025 (Sunday)	1 DAY
7.	C.D.S Examination (I), 2025				
8.	Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination, 2025	22.01.2025	11.02.2025	25.05.2025 (Sunday)	1 DAY
9.	Indian Forest Service (Preliminary) Examination, 2025 through CS(P) Examination 2025				
10.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			14.06.2025 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
11.	I.E.S./I.S.S. Examination, 2025	12.02.2025	04.03.2025	20.06.2025 (Friday)	3 DAYS
12.	Combined Geo-Scientist (Main) Examination, 2025			21.06.2025 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
13.	Engineering Services (Main) Examination, 2025			22.06.2025 (Sunday)	1 DAY
14.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			05.07.2025 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
15.	Combined Medical Services Examination, 2025	19.02.2025	11.03.2025	20.07.2025 (Sunday)	1 DAY
16.	Central Armed Police Forces (ACs) Examination, 2025	05.03.2025	25.03.2025	03.08.2025 (Sunday)	1 DAY
17.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			09.08.2025 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
18.	Civil Services (Main) Examination, 2025			22.08.2025 (Friday)	5 DAYS
19.	N.D.A. & N.A. Examination (II), 2025	28.05.2025	17.06.2025	14.09.2025 (Sunday)	1 DAY
20.	C.D.S. Examination (II), 2025				
21.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			04.10.2025 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
22.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			01.11.2025 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
23.	Indian Forest Service (Main) Examination, 2025			16.11.2025 (Sunday)	7 DAYS
24.	S.O./Steno (GD-B/GD-I) LDCE	17.09.2025	07.10.2025	13.12.2025 (Saturday)	2 DAYs
25.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			20.12.2025 (Saturday)	2 DAYS

Note : The dates of notification, commencement and duration of Examinations/ RTs are liable to alteration, if the circumstances so warrant.  
CBC-55101/14/0001/2425

**Bank of India** POSSESSION NOTICE  
Zonal Office : Star House, 1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015  
[Rule-8(1)] of security Interest (Enforcement) Rules-2002

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Bank of India under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice calling upon the Borrower/Co-Borrower in the loan Account given below to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice plus interest & expenses thereon within 60 days from the date of the said Notice.  
The Borrower/Co-Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Co-Borrower and the Public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under sub-section (4) of section 13 of Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The Borrower/Co-Borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Bank of India, Sailashree Vihar Branch for an amount mentioned below with interest & other expenses thereon, less the amount repaid after the date of the said Notice.  
The Borrower/Co-Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the Secured Assets.

Name & Address of Borrower/ Co-Borrower	Liabilities due as per Demand Notice	Date of Demand Notice/Date of Possession	Description of the Immovable Property
Borrower: Smt Mamata Swain, W/o: Mr Iswar Chandra Swain, Co-Borrower: Mr Iswar Chandra Swain, S/o: Mr Sankar Swain, both are residing at Flat No. LC-12/1/8, Sailashree Vihar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha - 751021.	Rs.2,22,763/- + interest & expenses thereon	11.01.2024 / 25.06.2024	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Plot No. HB-1(P), LC 12/1/20, in Survey No./City or Town Survey No./Khata No. Drg No. C-7835 within the registration Sub-Registrar Khandagiri and District: Khordha, Bounded by: North- Road, South- House No. LC 12/1/19, East- House No. LC 12/1/17, West- House No. LC 12/1/21.

Place : Bhubaneswar, Date : 27.06.2024  
Authorised Officer, Bank of India

A smile acts upon the difficulties as the sun upon the clouds - it disperses them.

THE MOTHER



## Pathway to Peace

French President Emmanuel Macron's decision to dissolve parliament and call a snap election this Sunday will divert the world's attention from another possible political earthquake. On Friday, Iranian voters will fill the vacancy left by President Ebrahim Raisi's death in a helicopter crash last month.

Even without the French vote, it would be tempting to trivialise the Iranian election's significance. After all, the Islamic Republic's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, is a bitter opponent of the West, and Raisi, his loyal follower, won decisively in 2021. So, won't Khamenei simply manipulate the upcoming vote in a way that will assure the victory of another extreme hardliner?

Not so fast. Iranian politics has taken a decisive turn in the three years between Raisi's rise and fall. Under Iran's constitution, candidates must be approved by the Council of Guardians, dominated by the clerical elite, before they can run for office. In 2021, Raisi owed his victory to the Council's refusal to award a place on the ballot to any strong opponent of Khamenei's militant anti-Westernism.

But escalating public protest forced the Council to allow a leading opponent of Khamenei to enter the race this time - under conditions that make it very likely that he will win and revolutionise policy in a pro-Western direction. As a consequence, if US President Joe Biden's administration plays its cards right, the victory of an Iranian peacemaker could well permit - believe it or not - lasting peace in the Middle East.

Should that happen, rather than aiming for a fragile ceasefire agreement, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken can begin constructing a multilateral arrangement in which the US and Iran serve as military guarantors of a two-state solution for Israelis and Palestinians.

To see how, step back to 2021 and consider how the Guardians' ban on serious opponents provoked widespread public alienation. Although Raisi won handily over rival hardliners, this was because most Iranians refused to vote. To be precise, only 49% of Iran's 59 million voters went to the polls - down from 70% four years earlier.

That tacit boycott served as the foundation for grassroots activism. A turning point came in the fall of 2022, when a young woman, Mahsa Amini, was arrested for failing to veil her face in public and died in police custody three days later. Her death provoked countrywide demonstrations, and the government responded with media blackouts, tear gas, and gunfire that killed hundreds of protesters over the next year. Despite the brutal repression, students and workers continued to engage in peaceful protest against Raisi's extremism.

Raisi's death triggered another cycle of protest. The opposition movement demanded that, in contrast to 2021, some of its own leaders be allowed to campaign for the presidency, and vowed that otherwise they would organise massive street demonstrations that would catapult the country to the brink of civil war.

The Guardians caved in to this demand. While they approved five hardliners to run in the election, they also allowed Masoud Pezeshkian to place his name on the ballot. Pezeshkian represents a stunning contrast to his rivals. Instead of seeking divine inspiration, he went to medical school, became a cardiac surgeon, and served as president of the University of Medical Sciences in Tabriz for five years. Between 2001 and 2005, he was Iran's health minister, before turning to electoral politics, serving as the parliament's first deputy speaker from 2016 to 2020.

Few Iranians have combined academic, bureaucratic, and political achievement in such a remarkable fashion. What is more, Pezeshkian responded to Amini's brutal death in 2022 by immediately denouncing the police efforts "to implement religious faith through the use of force." At the time, he could not know whether Raisi would respond by ordering his arrest - which is why many other Iranian elites held their tongues.

The Guardians' decision to allow five hardliners to run will only improve Pezeshkian's chances. In fact, with the religious vote fragmented, a champion of the Enlightenment could win a landslide victory.

If Pezeshkian wins, a dramatic shift in America's long-standing view of Iran as its archenemy will be essential to respond constructively. Blinken, thankfully, is nimble enough for such an about-face. Moreover, his nonstop shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East means that he can readily reach out to potential Iranian negotiators.

No less important, Biden will be eager to take Blinken's reports seriously, because the split in the American Jewish community and Arab-Americans' growing opposition to his candidacy represent a major threat to his re-election. The threat will get even bigger after Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu arrives in Washington to address a joint session of Congress on 24 July. By that point, Biden could be in a position to invite Netanyahu to join multilateral negotiations with Iran. Such a scenario could not only dramatically reduce the risk of nuclear proliferation and a wider war in the Middle East, but also prepare the way for a two-state solution that would permit both Israel and Palestine to coexist in peace.

Raisi's death represents a rare opportunity in which political leaders of long-standing rivals have powerful incentives to inaugurate a new era of diplomacy. But Biden must seize the moment. If he views Pezeshkian as an enemy, Khamenei will be able to sabotage the new president's popular standing and convince voters to repudiate his Enlightenment vision the next time around.

This is not the first time in recent history that a few quick decisions in the White House determine the future of the Middle East. Some have led to years of bitter conflict. This one could mark out a pathway to peaceful coexistence for decades to come.

The writer is Sterling Professor of Law and Political Science at Yale.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

### WISDOM CORNER

In the struggle between yourself and the world second the world.  
FRANZ KAFKA

However difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at.  
STEPHEN HAWKING

Yesterday is but today's memory, and tomorrow is today's dream.  
KAHLIL GIBRAN

# WHOSE CONSTITUTION?

FOCUS NATION

The idea that the Constitution is an elitist document drafted by the privileged has been expressed even as the document was being deliberated upon. During Constituent Assembly debates, Congress leader K. Hanumanthaiya argued that members of the Constituent Assembly have drafted a document that has the "music of an English band" instead of the "music of Veena or Sitar." In his book A People's Constitution, lawyer-historian Rohit De argues that, unlike such presuppositions, the Constitution is in fact a document that reflects and stands for the values and rights of the common people. The book's central argument is defended not merely through legal analysis but through narratives of marginalised Indians.



Anwesh Satpathy

THE IDEA THAT THE CONSTITUTION IS AN ELITIST DOCUMENT DRAFTED BY THE PRIVILEGED HAS BEEN EXPRESSED EVEN AS THE DOCUMENT WAS BEING DELIBERATED UPON

De buttresses his argument by citing the rise of cases in judiciary. In the colonial era, most cases involved civil litigations. Post Independence, civil litigation declined while cases against State increased exponentially. In 1950, the Supreme Court heard 600 writ petitions compared to 169 cases of its colonial predecessor in a span of over a decade. The cases increased to 3833 in 1962. De contrasts this with the cases of US Supreme Court during the same period. Such a comparison, however, is not valid given that US Supreme Court only hears cases relating to the federal law while the Indian Supreme Court is the final court of appeal in all cases.

In this review, I will focus on the case of butchers. Post Independence, agitation and demand for a nationwide ban on cow-slaughter grew. Seth Govind Das, a Congress parliamentarian, led the charge for a ban on cow slaughter. Though Das introduced a Private Member's Bill in Parliament on cow-slaughter, it was opposed by Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru con-



In the colonial era, most cases involved civil litigations. Post Independence, civil litigation declined while cases against the State increased exponentially

sidered it to be against the spirit and the letter of the Constitution. Nevertheless, Congress state governments enacted laws which completely banned cow slaughter. A group of Muslim butchers petitioned arguing that ban on cow slaughter violated the right to practice their occupation as well as religion. Tackling the issue of the fundamental right to religion, the court ruled that it did not prohibit religious practice as Muslims were not enjoined to specifically sacrifice a cow during Bakr Id but an animal which could also be a goat or a camel. There was a precedence of Muslim rulers in the past having banned cow slaughter. The question of the fundamental right to livelihood was more complex. The court noted the strong sentiments that the Hindus have towards this issue. While noting that sentiment cannot solely be enough, it was one of the factors that the court explicitly took into consideration. Cattle slaughter was justified on the ground that the cow was extremely useful to

India's agricultural economy. The court also recognised that banning of cattle slaughter would lead to dislocation of the business of butchers while depriving many of their source of protein. Taking all these factors into account, the court ruled that the slaughter of bulls, bullocks, and buffaloes were permitted when the animals stopped being useful. The court did, however, uphold complete ban on cow slaughter.

De argues that the judgement ensured that in practice cattle slaughter would not be penalised as strongly as the state laws prescribed it to be. The court echoed views of Nehru by prioritising economic logic. This did not do much to position itself against majoritarian sentiments. The slaughter of cow was prohibited but not consumption or possession of beef. The sale of beef was prohibited but not gift of beef. Such ambiguity in the judgements creates conditions to protect the livelihood of butchers while being cautious towards sentiments of Hindus. De does not ad-

dress the fact that such ambiguity has created unclear precedence. A ban on cow slaughter is upheld on the argument that it is not mandatory in Islam. One could similarly argue that the singing of Bhajans in temples is not mandatory. Does that give the government the right to make a law that bans the singing of Bhajans across the country? There are many regional rituals that are specific to certain states and hence not obligatory in Hinduism. This does not make it permissible for the state to ban them. It is also hard to argue that the worship of cow is mandatory in Hinduism. There is no reason to assume that the cow that is not slaughtered will necessarily be used for agricultural economy. The owner may choose to abandon the cow. Moreover, there are other animals like sheep, goat and mules which are equally crucial for the agricultural economy in providing manure and milk. Yet, there is no discussion concerning a law prohibiting their slaughter. There is a serious argument to be made that under the veneer of faulty economic logic the law is specifically made to satiate the sentiments of the majority. These arguments are not addressed by De. It is hard to see through this case how the Constitution stands up for the subaltern.

De's book is important, thought provoking and for the most part well-argued and extremely well written. At the same time, it falls prey to its own belief in the Constitution. While De certainly looks at the Constitution cautiously, he does not sufficiently address the centralising tendency of the Constitution which seems to be clearly a reflection of elite romanticisation of the State.

is a columnist and a student at Jindal School of International Affairs.

SPECTRUM DIPLOMACY

## Bolstering ties or balancing act

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was in Delhi last week on a two-day official visit. She was earlier here on 9 June at the oath-taking ceremony of the present government. To make another visit, that too official, in the same month perhaps signifies the importance accorded by Bangladesh to its relations with India. She is scheduled to be in Beijing in July. Given India's sensitive ties with her neighbours and China's attempt to penetrate into South Asia, it is in order that both perspectives on her visit are examined.



DK Giri

IT IS NO SECRET THAT SMALLER COUNTRIES IN SOUTH ASIA WOULD LIKE TO EXPLOIT THE TENSION BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA TO THEIR BENEFIT

Decidedly, India's bilateralism with Bangladesh is by far the best of her relations with all South Asian countries. Bangladesh has been one of the main beneficiaries of India's 'neighbourhood first policy' in terms of grants and Line of Credit funding to different projects in the sectors of energy, finance and physical connectivity. Prime Ministers Modi and Sheikh Hasina had wide ranging talks on 22 June to expand

cooperation in multiple areas. The talks were followed by 10 agreements. The focus has been on boosting trade and increasing connectivity.

This was the first bilateral state visit by a foreign head of government after the formation of a new government in Delhi following the Lok Sabha elections. Both countries have been undergoing intense interaction in recent times. Back home, Hasina said in a press conference, that her visit opened many new avenues of cooperation for the socio-economic development of the people of both countries. She added that her discussion with her Indian counterpart focussed on defining the future course of action to ensure the establishment of 'Smart Bangladesh' and 'Viksit Bharat'.

She also talked about the Teesta River project which has been somewhat a bone of contention between West Bengal and Bangladesh. Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee asserted that her government would like to be a part of any discussion on sharing of Teesta water.

Note that Bangladesh is planning to develop their side of the

river by making new constructions funded by China. That raises many questions including the security risk. Bangladesh maintains that they will be open to suitable proposals on Teesta river projects including a reservoir. Both India and China have given proposals for this mega project. When asked which side she would favour, Hasina said, "We maintain our friendships with countries based on the developmental needs of our country. When we receive a proposal, we consider factors such as its suitability for us, our capacity to repay any loans, the returns we will enjoy after project completion and above all, how it will benefit the people of our country."

Note again that China has completed the physical survey on the project while India has offered to do a feasibility study for the implementation of the Teesta project. On the security risk, referred earlier, India has reservation over China's involvement in a major project near Siliguri Corridor, a strategic spot known as the Chicken's Neck. Bangladesh Foreign Ministry has tried to assuage India's concerns and said that

Dhaka would, "Take into cognizance the geo-political issues in going ahead with the proposals. Several observers have pointed out that Chinese involvement in the project could complicate the India-Bangladesh dispute over the major common river."

It is no secret that smaller countries in South Asia would like to exploit the tension between India and China to their benefit. India and China represent two contrasting political systems and radically different foreign and economic policies. Sri Lanka has tasted the bitter pill by taking loan from China. Bangladesh has its own set of problems including Rohingya refugees numbering about 1.4 million. Dhaka would want them to return. For that to happen, liveable conditions must exist in Myanmar. Dhaka may be looking at Beijing to give them a hand on repatriating Rohingyas. At the end of the day, it is Dhaka's call whether to build bridges with Beijing and burn them with New Delhi.

The writer is Secretary General, Association for Democratic Socialism.

INFIA

### Curbing emissions

Sir, Denmark is making history by becoming the first country to implement a carbon tax specifically for agriculture. This groundbreaking policy, reached after months of collaboration with farmers and environmental groups, marks a significant shift in tackling climate change. The tax will begin in 2030 and will require farmers to pay a fee based on the amount of greenhouse gas their operations produce. This fee will start at 120 Danish kroner (€16) per ton of carbon dioxide equivalent and increase to 300 kroner (€40) by 2035. To ease the transition, the government will offer a 60% tax break with even greater reductions for farms demonstrating lower emissions. The primary goal of the carbon tax is to curb agricultural emissions, a major contributor to climate change. Denmark has set a bold target of reducing its overall emissions by 70% by 2030, and this policy is expected to play a crucial role in achieving that goal. While environmental benefits are a priority, the Danish government is also mindful of the economic impact on farmers. The tiered tax structure and tax breaks aim to ensure that the policy is financially sustainable for the agricultural sector. Beyond the immediate environmental and economic benefits, the carbon tax is likely to trigger a wave of innovation. Farmers will be incentivised to explore new technologies and practices to minimise emissions. This could lead to breakthroughs in areas like sustainable feed production, manure management, and even selective breeding programmes for livestock. The entire world will be watching Denmark's experiment closely.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

### Honour mandate

Sir, The Prime Minister's call for consensus signals his commitment to honouring the people's mandate. Now, it's crucial for the Opposition, particularly the INDIA bloc, to align with the Prime Minister. In the previous Lok Sabha, the government faced minimal opposition due to the disarray among opposing parties. The unity displayed by the INDIA alliance resonated with voters, who expect them to act as an effective check-and-balance in Parliament. Despite differing ideologies and occasional conflicts, their parliamentary performance must reflect the electorate's wishes.

Vijaykumar HK, RAICHUR

## Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST  
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

SWEARING-IN ROW

# Elected TMC MLAs sit on dharna as impasse drags

Sitting on dharna at the Bengal state Assembly, MLA Sayantika Bandyopadhyay says 'scared' to go to Governor's house after molestation allegations



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, June 27:** The row over the venue for the swearing-in ceremony of the two newly elected TMC MLAs escalated Thursday as the legislator refused to take oath in the Raj Bhavan as asked by Governor CV Ananda Bose and sat on a dharna in the Assembly complex. Baranagar MLA Sayantika Bandyopadhyay and Bhagabangola MLA Rayat Hossain Sarkar sat on the dharna in front of the BR Ambedkar statue in the West Bengal Vidhan Sabha complex and demanded that Bose enable them to perform their duties as legislators by facilitating the oath-taking ceremony in the Assembly.

The Governor had invited the two MLAs, who were elected in the recent bypolls, to take the oath at the Raj Bhavan Wednesday. However, they declined the invitation, claiming convention dictates that in the case of bypoll winners, the Governor assigns the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker to administer the oath. The Governor refused to hold the programme in the Assembly and went to New Delhi. "We had waited till 4 pm Wednesday for the Governor to conduct the oath-taking cere-

## Assembly Speaker writes to President

**KOLKATA:** West Bengal Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee Thursday wrote to President Droupadi Murmu seeking her intervention to resolve the impasse concerning the oath-taking ceremony of two newly elected TMC MLAs. "I have written to the Honourable President and sought her intervention into the matter so that she can speak to the Governor and end this impasse. What is happening regarding the swearing in of the MLAs is unacceptable. We hope to get justice," he told PTI.

mony?" he asked. Speaker Biman Banerjee Wednesday accused Bose of turning the swearing-in ceremony into an "ego battle". The dharna began around 12.30 pm and continued till 4 pm. After the dharna, Bandyopadhyay said she would again write to the Governor demanding that the ceremony be conducted in the Assembly. Sarkar said that he was not being able to work for the people despite being elected as the swearing-in ceremony was not happening. "We are not being able to work and losing vital time. Why is the Governor not coming here and conducting the cere-



A man escorts his cattle back to home in Nadia district, Thursday

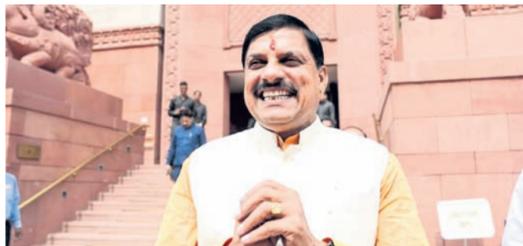
PTI PHOTO

# MP schools to introduce chapter on 'Emergency'

ACCORDING TO CM MOHAN YADAV, THE MOTIVE BEHIND THIS STEP IS TO MAKE THE PRESENT GENERATION AWARE OF THE STRUGGLE FROM 1975 TO 1977 DURING EMERGENCY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhopal, June 27:** A chapter explaining the excesses and repression committed during the 1975-77 Emergency in the country and a spirited fight by those opposed to the drastic measure will be included in the school curriculum in Madhya Pradesh, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has said.



Speaking Wednesday, Yadav also announced several additional facilities for "Loktantra Senanis" (democracy fighters) who took part in the struggle against Emergency, whose 50th anniversary was June 25. "With an aim of making the present generation aware of the struggle during the Emergency, a lesson on circumstances that prevailed in the country, repression and determination of Loktantra Senanis to oppose the drastic step taken by the then-Congress government will be included in the school curriculum," he said.

The CM was addressing a gathering of those who fought against the Emergency, a 21-month-long period characterised by the suspension of civil liberties, suppression of dissent, and erosion of democratic principles, at his residence in Bhopal. Yadav said these Loktantra Senanis will be provided the facility of staying in government circuit and rest houses for three days on a discount of 50 per cent in tariff. They will also get relaxation in paying toll on highways. There will be no delay in payment of expenses incurred by

democracy fighters on treatment through their Ayushman health card. The respective collector will ensure payment to them within three months, he stated. In case of serious health problems, air ambulances will be made available to them to travel to big hospitals or other metros for treatment, Yadav declared on the occasion. Under the air taxi service started in the state, a 25 per cent discount will be provided in fares to anti-Emergency crusaders, he said. Arrangements will be made for

the last rites of Loktantra Senanis with state honours. Besides, the amount given to their families at the time of funeral will be increased to Rs 10,000 from Rs 8,000 now, Yadav maintained.

Employment opportunities will be made available to family members of democracy fighters by providing them necessary training for setting up industries or other business ventures, he said. This initiative comes shortly after Yadav revealed plans to incorporate the teachings of Lord Ram and Lord Krishna into the state's educational curriculum. He mentioned that places visited by Lord Ram in the state would be identified, developed as religious sites, and included in the state's manifesto. The then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi imposed Emergency in the country June 25, 1975, jailing Opposition leaders, dissidents and effecting press censorship.

# Bengal Hawkers given a month to clear encroachments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, June 27:** Stating that hawkers' eviction is not the goal of the West Bengal government, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Thursday gave them one month to clear the footpaths and the stretch of roads they have encroached on to carry on with their business. Banerjee's statement came amid the ongoing eviction of encroachers including hawkers from various parts of the state. The chief minister, who held a review meeting regarding the issue of hawkers' encroachment, also constituted a committee to conduct a survey in this regard and submit a report to her office within 15 days.

She said that the state government would identify 'hawking zones' in the state, erect buildings to accommodate the hawkers, godowns for keeping their wares and issue identity cards to them. "I have no right to take away anyone's source of income or render anyone unemployed. Millions run their family by doing hawking. There will be no eviction for one month. During this period, the hawkers have to clear footpaths," said Banerjee, also the Trinamool Congress supremo. "We will conduct a survey. The government will see where legal hawkers can be accommodated. Godowns will also be set up. But roads cannot be occupied. If new hawkers are found (encroaching footpaths), they will be arrested,"



she said. Senior ministers, bureaucrats and police officers, mayors of all corporations, and chairmen of municipalities were present in the meeting. Banerjee asserted that political leaders and policemen were responsible for occupying the

streets. "Councilors should have kept a watch on this from the start. But they don't even see it. If you help a new hawker (to encroach), you will be arrested. The leaders of the area first take money (from hawkers) and allow them to sit and start doing business. Afterwards they bulldoze them... This cannot be allowed," she said. "What is the use of blaming the hawkers? It's our fault. Why are we not making a building in the New Market area? The hawkers will be shifted there," Banerjee stated. Established during British rule, New Market, which was earlier known as Hogg Market, is a market complex in Esplanade region in the heart of Kolkata. The market area is crowded with hawkers. The chief minister said she would review the situation in a month. She also ordered removal of all illegal parking lots in and around Kolkata. Banerjee said her government will not allow littering streets with garbage.

# LS poll results show India not 'Hindu Rashtra': Sen

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, June 27:** Nobel laureate Amartya Sen has asserted the recent Lok Sabha poll results point to the fact that India is not a 'Hindu Rashtra'. He also expressed displeasure that keeping people behind bars "without trial" has continued in the country since the British rule and it is more in practice under the BJP government in comparison to the Congress regime. "That India is not a Hindu Rashtra only has been reflected in the election results," Sen told a Bengali news channel at the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport here. The 90-year-old economist arrived in Kolkata from the US Wednesday evening. "We always hope to see a change after every election. Some of what happened earlier (during the BJP-led central government) like putting people behind bars without trial, and widening the gap between the rich and poor, are still continu-

ing. That must stop," he said. The eminent economist said there is a need to be politically open-minded, especially when India is a secular country with a secular Constitution. "I do not think the idea of turning India into a Hindu Rashtra is appropriate," Sen said. He was also of the opinion that the new Union cabinet is "a copy of the earlier one". "The ministers continue to hold similar portfolios. Despite a slight reshuffle, the politically powerful are still powerful," he said. Sen recalled that during his childhood when India was under the British rule, people were jailed without any trial. "When I was young, many of my uncles and cousins were put in jail without trial. We had hoped that India would be free from this. Congress is also to blame for the fact that this did not stop. They didn't change it... But, this is more in practice under the present government," the Nobel laureate said.

# 9 candidates in fray for Amarwara bypoll

**BHOPAL:** Nine candidates will fight for the Amarwara (ST) Assembly seat in Madhya Pradesh, where a bypoll was necessitated after the Congress leader representing the constituency crossed over to the BJP and resigned, an official said Thursday. After the last date for withdrawal of nominations Wednesday, nine candidates remained in the fray for the bye election, which will be held July 10, the state's Chief Electoral Officer Anupam Rajan said. Seven candidates withdrew from the contest Wednesday, he said. The main contest here is between the former Congress MLA-turned-BJP leader Kamlesh Shah and the grand old party's Dheeran Shah Inwati, sources said. In a major setback to the Congress ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, Shah, a three-time party MLA from Amarwara seat under Chhindwara Lok Sabha constituency and a confidante of former chief minister Kamal Nath, had resigned March 29 and joined the ruling BJP soon after.

## FROM TRASH TO TREASURE

# Indore's '3R' artists turn junk into art

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Indore, June 27:** People generally discard or sell as scrap items like old footwear and defective parts of vehicles, but some artists in Indore city of Madhya Pradesh are using such objects to create beautiful artworks. These artists have adopted the "3R" (reduce, reuse and recycle) model of waste management into their art that is catching people's attention. One such artist is Milind Dhawale, who is by profession a trader of chemicals used in factories, but says he does not use chemicals in his artworks at all. "I work on the 'zero waste' and '3R' models of waste manage-



MILIND DHAWALE AND ANITA PAL ARE NOTABLE FIGURES, WITH PAL EVEN CREATING A PORTRAIT OF NEPAL'S PM FROM SCRAP. THESE ARTISTS HAVE ADOPTED THE "3R" (REDUCE, REUSE AND RECYCLE) MODEL OF WASTE MANAGEMENT INTO THEIR ART THAT IS CATCHING PEOPLE'S ATTENTION.

## Artworks aim to show that nothing is useless

ment in my artwork," he told PTI. Dhawale's house is decorated with different artefacts made of junk. He says that he tries to give a beautiful look to junk through his artistic vision. His works made of scrap have been exhibited in Indore as well as in Mumbai and Pune. Another artist, Anita Pal, specialises in creating art from scrap. Her artworks are displayed in two gardens and other public places in the city. According to her, she has prepared these artworks from the lids of plastic bottles found in the scrap, the wheels of the garbage cart, old chain and handle of bicycles, bathtub and sink. Pal has also made a portrait of Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' using discarded clothes. The portrait was presented to Prachanda last year by the then Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan when the former was on a two-day visit to the state. "My philosophy behind creating art from scrap is that nothing in the world is useless," she added.

**WORKS DEPARTMENT**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER**  
**BHADRAK (R&B) DIVISION**  
**No. B-48:** e-mail:-bhadrakrnbdivision@gmail.com  
 Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice  
 Bid Identification No. SE (R&B) BDK-06/ 2023-24  
 No. 3628/ dt. 25.06.24

- Nature of work - Electrical Work
- Number of works - 7 (Seven) Nos
- Amount put to Tender - Rs. 23,84,429/-, Rs. 24,52,800/-, Rs. 30,53,351/-, Rs. 10,15,808/-, Rs. 25,25,573/-
- Class of Contractor - HT
- Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal - 01.07.2024 at 11.00 AM
- Last Date / Time of receipt of bid in the portal - 08.07.2024 upto 05.00 PM
- Date of opening of bid - 01.09.2024 at 11.30 AM
- Name & Address of the Office Inviting Bid - Superintending Engineer, Bhadrak (R&B) Division
- The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only.
- Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "http://tender-sodisha.gov.in"
- All future corrigendum will be available on ONLINE mode only.

**Sd./- Superintending Engineer**  
**Bhadrak (R&B) Division, Bhadrak**  
 OIIPR-34079/11/0001/2425

### of the day quote

Subsequently, when this subject (three laws) came up in 2019, the consultation process began. Letters were sent to all high court judges and Chief Justice of India by Ministry of Home Affairs. It also wrote to all state governments, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MPs

The state government is committed to uplifting the person standing at the last end of the row by taking forward the concept of 'Integral Humanism and Antyodaya' of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay

Even people from almost all states of India are part of the civil services, increasing diversity which is a healthy sign

### SHORT TAKES

#### SAD announces support to BSP nominee

**Chandigarh:** The SAD will support the BSP nominee in the bypoll for the Jalandhar West Assembly seat instead of the officially fielded candidate, as she was picked by a panel two of whose members have now rebelled against party chief Sukhbir Singh Badal. The Shiromani Akali Dal is unable to change its authorised candidate now as the last day for this has already past. The SAD now does not have its own authorised candidate for the July 10 bypoll. On Wednesday, SAD's Jalandhar district unit chief announced that the party has withdrawn support to its Jalandhar West candidate Surjit Kaur who is a two-time municipal councillor.

#### Dalit shot dead, six injured in group clash

**Faridabad:** In an old rivalry, a 25-year-old Dalit man was shot dead and six others sustained injuries in a clash between two groups last night in Fatehpur Billoch village in Haryana's Faridabad district, police Thursday said. An FIR has been registered at the Sadar police station, Ballabhgarh, they said. According to the complaint filed by Sunder Lal, a resident of Fatehpur Billoch village, the incident took place in the village around 8 pm Wednesday when his cousin Devendra was going towards the market.

#### LG temporarily dissolves DDCD

**New Delhi:** Lieutenant Governor (LG) V K Saxena has approved temporarily dissolving the Delhi Dialogue and Development Commission (DDCD) and the removal of its non-official members till a mechanism is developed for the screening and selection of domain experts as its vice-chairperson and members, Raj Niwas officials said Thursday.

#### Amarnath Yatra: Security intensified

**Pahalgam (J&K):** Unprecedented security measures, including electronic surveillance along the entire yatra route and access control arrangements, have been made for the annual Amarnath yatra scheduled to begin Saturday. A senior police official said the security measures have been beefed up for this year's Amarnath yatra given the recent terror attacks in the Jammu region, including the one where a bus was carrying pilgrims to Shiv Khori Shrine.



I am pleased to announce in this House that an international airport will be set up on 2,000 acres of land in Hosur, capable of handling 30 million passengers per annum  
**M K STALIN | TN CHIEF MINISTER**

#### DELHI POLICE POISED TO ENFORCE NEW CRIMINAL LAWS

Delhi Police is all set to implement the three criminal laws in the national capital starting July 1, with the completion of training of 25,000 personnel, officials said Thursday. It has also launched a dedicated application -- 'E Pramaan' -- for carrying out procedures under the Bhartiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA) to help its personnel record videos and audio of search and seizures related to the crime, they said



### PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT

# Govt's script, full of lies: Oppn

Congress president and Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge said after listening to the President's address it seems Prime Minister Narendra Modi is in a state of perpetual denial, claiming that people of India have rejected him in this election by not giving the BJP a majority

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 27:** Opposition leaders Thursday dubbed the President's address to the joint sitting of both houses of Parliament as a "script given by the government" that was "full of lies" and castigated the government over the repeated mention of the 1975 Emergency.

They alleged there is an "undeclared emergency" in the country and the Constitution is being attacked under the Modi government. In her address, President Droupadi Murmu described the imposition of Emergency in 1975 as the "biggest and darkest chapter" of a direct attack on the Constitution and said the country emerged victorious over unconstitutional forces.

Congress president and Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge said after listening to the President's address it seems Prime Minister Narendra Modi is in a state of perpetual denial, claiming that people of India have rejected him in this election by not giving the BJP a majority.

He also said that there was no mention of the NEEET issue resolution, price rise, unemploy-



ment, violence in Manipur, terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, train accidents and the plight of passengers in trains and atrocities on Dalits, adivasis and minorities in the BJP-ruled states. "Listening to the President's address written by the Modi government, it seemed as if Modi ji is in a perpetual state of denial! The mandate was against him because the people of the country rejected his slogan of '400 plus' and kept the BJP away from the figure of 272. Modi ji is unable to accept this, that is why he is pretending that nothing has changed, but the truth is that the people of the

country had asked for change," Kharge said in a post on X.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav punched holes in the government's claim of India being the fifth largest economy in the world.

Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra said President Murmu read out a "script given by the government" and added the BJP has not realised yet that it does not have a majority on its own.

"The government's problem is that they are not yet able to understand that they have come to 240 from 303. They prepared the speech based on the major-

ity of 303. That is why she said there is a clear majority government when the government is actually in minority," she said.

Speaking about the recent general elections, Murmu said the whole world is talking about India's Lok Sabha polls and "the world is witnessing that the people of India have elected a stable government with clear majority for a third consecutive term". CPI(Marxist-Leninist) Liberation MP Sudama Prasad said the President's address was "full of lies".

Congress leader Tariq Anwar said there was nothing new in the President's speech. "They just made a few changes to old speeches. There was nothing new in the President's address to Parliament today," he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla have also condemned the imposition of Emergency. In her first address 50-minute address to a joint sitting of both houses after Prime Minister Modi began his third term, the President highlighted the government's measures in a range of sectors from economy, defence and farming to the empowerment of different sections of society, and laid down its priorities in its third term.

# War of words over SP MP's remark on Sengol



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



**New Delhi, June 27:** Samajwadi Party MP R K Chaudhary's demand to replace the Sengol installed next to the Lok Sabha Speaker's chair with a copy of the Constitution triggered a war of words Thursday, with Opposition leaders backing him, and the ruling BJP castigating him for "disrespecting" Indian and Tamil culture.

In a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Chaudhary demanded that the Sengol, which was used as a symbol of transfer of power when India got Independence, should be removed as it represents monarchy. "India is a democratic country. But when we got independence, priests suggested that a symbol of transfer of power should be given. So a 'rajdand' (sceptre) was prepared. Lord Mountbatten transferred it to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. But he realised what it meant, and kept it in a museum in Allahabad. What was the need to place it in Parliament?"

"A sceptre is a symbol of the way of decision-making of a king. Before democracy came, there were over 500 kingdoms in India. They were made to surrender, and democracy was established. Now the nation is independent. If there is no king, there should be no sceptre," he said. In a monarchy, Chaudhary said, the decision of the king is supreme, which is not the case in a democracy. "Hence the 'sengol', which represents monarchy, should not be in the House." "This is not a dictatorship, it's not a monarchy. This is a democracy. Sengol should be sent back to where it came from

and a big copy of the Constitution should be kept there," he said. BJP leaders, meanwhile, called the demand outrageous.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said Chaudhary's remarks betray the "ignorance" of SP leaders and demonstrate their lack of respect for Indian history and culture. "The Samajwadi Party has no respect for Indian history and culture. The comments of its top leaders on Sengol are reprehensible. It shows their ignorance and also reflects the hatred of the INDIA alliance especially towards Tamil culture,"

he wrote on his X handle. He further said Sengol is a matter of pride for India, and it is an honour that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given it the highest respect by placing it in Parliament. PM Modi installed the historic Sengol in the Lok Sabha next to the Speaker's chair in the new Parliament building on May 28, 2023, after performing a puja.

BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla slammed the Samajwadi Party, saying that through the letter written by its MP to Birla, the party has insulted Indian and Tamil culture. He asked if the DMK and the Congress agree with Chaudhary's remarks.

"He has said that Sengol is the symbol of monarchy and a 'rajadanda' (king's stick). It is an outright insult to Indian culture and Tamil culture. On this, the DMK and the Congress, especially Tamil Nadu Congress, should clarify if they accept such an insult to Sengol," Poonawalla told a press conference at party headquarters when asked for comment.

#### 'NDA open to having Deputy Speaker in LS'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 27:** The ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is open to the idea of having a deputy speaker in the Lok Sabha, sources said Thursday, stressing that a call on the matter will be taken later. They said the NDA has not rejected the opposition's claim on the post but criticised its insistence that its nominee should be given the position, saying such a precondition could not be considered during the speaker's election. There was no deputy speaker during the previous Lok Sabha.

It may be noted the government's efforts to reach a consensus on Om Birla's choice as the speaker fell through as the Opposition INDIA bloc insisted that it should be promised the position of his deputy as per "convention". The NDA's brains trust had said that the Opposition's demand can be considered when the election for the deputy speaker takes place but it should not impose any precondition.

The opposition ended up putting up seasoned Congress leader K Suresh as its candidate, with Birla getting elected by a voice vote.

Though different governments in past have allowed the Opposition to have its nominee as the deputy speaker, the BJP has noted that it has not always been the case.



Yakshagana artistes perform during the birth anniversary celebration of Bangalore's founder Nadaprabhu Kempegowda, at Kanteerava stadium in Bangalore, Karnataka

# AAP MPs boycott President's address over Kejriwal's arrest

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 27:** AAP MPs boycotted President Droupadi Murmu's address to the joint sitting of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha Thursday to protest against the arrest of party convenor Arvind Kejriwal.

Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal was Wednesday arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the alleged excise policy scam being probed by it. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MP Sanjay

## Nationwide protest tomorrow

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will hold a protest across the country on June 29 against the arrest of party national convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by the CBI. A meeting of senior AAP leaders at its headquarters here decided to take to the streets and expand the protests by the party over Kejriwal's arrest in the whole country, said a party statement. "The AAP workers across the country will hold massive 'dharna' against the BJP for misuse of investigation agencies and Arvind Kejriwal's arrest Saturday," AAP national general secretary (organisation) Sandeep Pathak.

Singh submitted a notice of special mention to the Rajya Sabha secretariat on the "misuse" of investigative agencies, the party said in a statement. AAP MPs boycotted the President's ad-

# SAD is not personal property of anyone, says Chandumajra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chandigarh, June 27:** Launching a vitriolic attack on the party leadership, rebel Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Prem Singh Chandumajra Thursday said the party is not a personal property of anybody, adding it is an ideology and principle.

A section of senior party leaders revolted against Badal, demanding that he should step down as the party chief following its debacle in the recently held Lok Sabha elections in Punjab. Among prominent leaders who raised a banner of revolt included former MP Chandumajra, former SGPC chief Bibi Jagir Kaur, ex-MLA Gurpartap Singh Wadala, former ministers Sikandar Singh Maluka, Parminder Singh Dhindsa, Sarwan Singh Phyllaur, and Surjit Singh Rakhra, and party leader Sucha Singh Chhotepur.

When asked that the party had asked leaders not to put forth their views at the party platform, Chandumajra said, "We want to make it clear that the party is not a personal property of anybody. The party is an ideology and principle." The SAD's working committee Wednesday passed a resolution, asking all party members to put forth their views at the party platform only and said if anybody violates party discipline then it will mean that he or she does not have faith in the party and he considers himself out of the party.

# Few cities have effective heat action plans: Report

The International Forum for Environment, Sustainability and Technology (iFOREST) assessed the heat action plans of nine cities and five districts, which revealed that none had allocated separate resources or mentioned financial allocations in their plans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 27:** Only a small fraction of cities with heat action plans have mapped vulnerable populations and developed specific strategies to mitigate the impact of extreme heat, according to an analysis published Thursday.

The International Forum for Environment, Sustainability and Technology (iFOREST) assessed the heat action plans of nine cities and five districts, which revealed that none had allocated separate resources or mentioned financial allocations in their plans.

The environmental think tank also recommended redefining

heat waves based on the "feels like" temperature or heat index and developing new thresholds for warm nights. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) guidelines require cities to develop local thresholds for early warning systems, considering factors such as the built environment, slum population, and urban heat island effect.

However, very few cities, including Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, and Thane, have implemented such measures, iFOREST's CEO and President Chandra Bhushan said. Delhi, which recorded at least 21 heat wave days this summer season — the highest in at least 14 years — has not developed local thresh-



olds. It is instead using the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) maximum temperature threshold to declare heatwaves, he said. The IMD's threshold for a heatwave is met when the maximum temperature reaches at least 40 degrees Celsius in the plains, 37 degrees in coastal areas, and 30 degrees in hilly regions, with a departure from normal of at least 4.5 degrees. A severe heatwave is declared if the departure exceeds 6.4 degrees. Chandra Bhushan stressed the need to declare heatwaves based on the heat index, which considers air temperature and relative humidity. The iFOREST analysis showed that Delhi's

heat index ranged from 51 to 53 from June 21 to June 26, when the maximum temperature was below 40 degrees Celsius and no heatwave was declared.

From June 15 to June 19, Delhi's maximum temperatures hovered around 44-45 degrees Celsius, prompting the IMD to declare a heatwave, but the heat index ranged from 48 to 51.

Highlighting shortcomings in Delhi's heat action plan, Bhushan pointed out that the city's warmest temperatures are recorded on the outskirts, yet none of the heat hotspots identified by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority are in these areas. Delhi, which has experienced 40 consecutive days of temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius since May 13, recorded around 60 heat-related deaths this year, according to media reports. Bhushan also noted that while India has around 5,000 urban local bodies, only around 120 have heat action plans.

## of the day quote

As soon as the elections are over and Rahul Gandhi is made the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, the Congress reappointed Sam Pitroda as chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress as he is Rahul Gandhi's mentor, advisor and 'guru'

SHEHZAD POONAWALLA | BJP SPOKESPERSON

Pilgrims are the brand ambassadors of Jammu and Kashmir. Greater synergy between all stakeholder departments, police, security forces and service providers will ensure the best arrangements for the hassle-free pilgrimage

MANOJ SINHA | JAMMU AND KASHMIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

The central government does not have enough focus on the roadmap for the next five years

MAYAWATI | BSP CHIEF

## X POST OF THE DAY

President Murmu "Opposing policies is different from disrupting Parliament proceedings" True But remember: Arun Jaitley (Jan30,2011) "...parliamentary obstruction is not undemocratic." Later said "occasions when obstruction in Parliament brings greater benefits to the country" Sushma Swaraj (Sept11,2012) "Not allowing Parliament to function is a form of democracy like any other form of democracy" Your response Modiji? @KAPILSIBAL

## SHORT TAKES

### Heavy rains lash Kerala

**Thiruvananthapuram:** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued an orange alert for northern Kerala districts and yellow alert for nine other districts for Thursday as heavy rains continued to lash many parts of the state. The rains and their subsequent impact on nature have prompted authorities to urge people to exercise utmost caution while traveling through hilly and inundated areas. Earlier in the day, the IMD issued an orange alert for seven districts but revised it later. The weather agency has now issued an orange alert for three districts -- Kasaragod, Kannur, and Wayanad -- and a yellow alert for nine districts in the state for Thursday.

### Advani discharged from AIIMS

**New Delhi:** Veteran BJP leader Lal Krishna Advani, who was admitted to the AIIMS here last night, was discharged Thursday, a hospital official said. The 96-year-old former deputy prime minister was evaluated by a team of doctors from different specialties including urology and geriatric medicine and is learnt to have undergone a minor procedure.

### 3 die in mishap

**Aizawl:** At least three persons, including a Myanmar national, died in an accident while digging sand on the banks of the Tiau river in Mizoram's Champhai district Thursday, police said. The incident occurred around 11 am near Melbuk village when a portion of the surface caved in as they were engaged in the digging operation, a police officer said.



The public is troubled by the injustice and atrocities of the BJP government. There is anger among the people  
AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

## DIBRUGARH GRAPPLES WITH FLASH FLOODS

Dibrugarh town has been grappling with flash floods, with most streets waterlogged after heavy rains on Thursday morning. Mancotta Road, one of the busiest stretches in this Upper Assam town, is now submerged in knee-deep water



# NEET-UG CASE SC issues notice to NTA over OMR sheets

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 27:** The Supreme Court Thursday asked the National Testing Agency (NTA) to apprise it whether there is any time limit for raising grievances regarding the OMR sheets provided to the candidates who appeared in NEET-UG 2024.

A vacation bench of Justices Manoj Misra and SVN Bhatti, which issued notice to the NTA on a fresh plea filed by a private coaching centre and few NEET candidates, tagged the petition with the pending matters and listed it for hearing July 8.

Senior advocate R Basant, appearing for the coaching institute and the candidates, submitted that a few students, who have appeared for the examination, have not got the OMR sheets. The bench at the outset pointed out to Basant as how can a private coaching institute file an Article 32 petition in the Supreme Court and what kind of fundamental rights of the institution are affected.

Counsel appearing for the NTA submitted that the OMR sheets have been uploaded on the website and given to the candidates. The bench asked him whether there is any time limit for raising the grievance of OMR sheets. The NTA counsel said that he needs to take instructions and sought listing of the petition along with the pending matters. "We will file a short reply by then to the query," he said. Basant pointed out that there is no set procedure or time limit to raise the grievance and therefore as an interim relief the candidates are seeking grant of OMR sheets. The bench then issued notice and tagged the petition with the pending matters while asking the counsel for NTA to file a



## NSUI members barge into NTA headquarters

**New Delhi:** Members of NSUI, Congress's student wing, barged into the headquarters of the National Testing Agency (NTA), which is under the scanner over alleged irregularities in the conduct of NEET-UG and UGC-NET exams, and locked its doors as a sign of protest. Police have reached the spot and are trying to control the situation. National Students' Union of India (NSUI) members stormed into the testing agency's office here in Okhla during a protest led by its national president Varun Choudhary as they raised slogans of "shut down NTA". There was no immediate reaction from officials of the NTA about the incident. Visuals from the scene shared by NSUI showed scores of its members raising slogans inside the building of the NTA. It also showed students locking the entrance of the NTA office.

short written reply to the court's query on time limit.

The top court June 20 sought responses from the Centre, the NTA and others on a slew of petitions, including those seeking scrapping of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) 2024 and a court-monitored probe, amid mounting outrage over alleged irregularities in conducting the all-India medical entrance test.

While hearing separate pleas on the NEET-UG 2024, the apex court had June 18 said even if there was "0.001 percent negligence" on the part of anyone in the conduct of the examination, it should be thoroughly dealt with. It had listed all the petitions for hearing July 8.

The NEET-UG is conducted by the NTA for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions across the country. The Centre and the NTA had June 13 told the top court that they had cancelled the grace marks given to 1,563 candidates who took the examination for admission to MBBS and other such courses.

## NEET aspirant hangs self; 12th suicide since Jan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kota, June 27:** A 17-year-old medical aspirant allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself from a ceiling fan in his rented accommodation here, police said Thursday.

This is the twelfth case of suspected suicide by a coaching student in Kota since January. The number of student suicides in Kota stood at 26 in 2023. Bihar native Hrishit Kumar Agrawal, a student of Class XII, was preparing for NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test) at a coaching institute here, Dadabari ASI Shambhu Dayal said.

He lived in a rented room in a building in Chota Chaurahin Dadabari area where some other coaching students also resided, he said. At around 1 pm Thursday, the other students informed police after Agrawal did not open his door when they knocked, he said. When a police team broke open the door, they found Agrawal hanging from a ceiling fan inside his room, he said, adding that no suicide note was recovered from the room.

The body was in a decomposing state. It is suspected that he committed suicide sometime Wednesday, he said.

Agarwal was preparing for the medical college entrance exam and taking coaching for the same in Kota for the last two years, Dadabari circle inspector Naresh Kumar Meena said, adding that the boy's parents have been informed.

The body has been sent to MBS hospital for a post-mortem, which will be conducted after the arrival of his parents, he said. Another Bihar native, Ayush Jaiswal (17) committed suicide June 16 inside his PG room in Kota. He was preparing for the IIT-JEE competitive exam.

## Vokkaliga seer asks K'taka CM to pave way for DKS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, June 27:** A Vokkaliga seer Thursday publicly urged Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to step down and make way for his deputy D K Shivakumar, amid a power tussle within the ruling Congress.

His appeal has come at a time, when there is growing demand within the Siddaramaiah Cabinet to have three more Deputy Chief Ministers -- from Veerashaiva-Lingayat, SC/ST and minority communities.

Vishwa Vokkaliga Mahasamastana Math seer Kumara Chandrashekarath Swamiji raised the pitch for Shivakumar at the Kempegowda Jayanti event here to commemorate the birth anniversary of Bangalore's founder; in the presence of both Siddaramaiah and the Deputy Chief Minister on the dais.

Shivakumar, who is also the state Congress President, is a Vokkaliga -- a dominant community in the southern parts of the state. Currently, he is the only Deputy Chief Minister.

"Everyone has become Chief Minister and has enjoyed power; but our D K Shivakumar has not become the Chief Minister. So the request is, Siddaramaiah, who has experienced (the post), should please give up the power to our D K Shivakumar in the future, and bless him good," Chandrashekarath Swamiji said. Addressing the gathering, he said: "only if Siddaramaiah makes up his mind, this can happen, or else it won't happen. So with 'Namakaras', I request Siddaramaiah to make D K Shivakumar the Chief Minister."

Reacting to a question on the seer's appeal, Siddaramaiah, later speaking to reporters, said: "Congress is a high command party...this is a democracy. We

## Shivakumar mocks demand for 3 more DCMs

**Bangalore:** Karnataka Congress chief D K Shivakumar Thursday mocked demand from some Ministers to create three more posts of Deputy Chief Minister, saying they will get no "solution" by discussing it before the media. Some of the Ministers have been pitching for leaders from Veerashaiva-Lingayat, SC/ST and minority communities to be given the post of Deputy Chief Minister. Currently, Shivakumar, a member of the Vokkaliga community, is only the Deputy Chief Minister in the Siddaramaiah-led government. "Let those speaking to papers (newspaper or media) go and speak to high command, get a solution and come. Let them go and get whatever solution they want. There is no need to discuss before the media. I will also not discuss anything before the media," Shivakumar said, making no secret of his displeasure.

will follow whatever the high command says." Shivakumar said: "things have been said... We both (him and Siddaramaiah) are travelling to New Delhi to discuss with MPs from the state, regarding the state's projects (pending approval from the Centre)." Later, speaking to reporters in New Delhi, both Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar chose to downplay the seer's comments. Siddaramaiah said: "We are in a democracy...whatever high command decides is final...he (the seer) has said things; he does not know, this is a political party."

There was stiff competition between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar for the Chief Minister's post after the declaration of Assembly election results in May last year, and the Congress had managed to convince the latter and made him the Deputy Chief Minister.

## Fourth bridge collapses in 10 days in Bihar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kishanganj, June 27:** A bridge caved in at Kishanganj district Thursday in the fourth incident of its kind in Bihar in just over a week, officials said.

The bridge, situated in Bahadurganj block, was 70 meters long and 12 meters wide, District Magistrate Tushar Singla said.

"The bridge was built in 2011 over Madiya, a small tributary that connects the Kankai river to the Mahananda. Heavy rainfall in the catchment area in Nepal has led to a sudden rise in the water level. No one was injured in the incident, he said. Barricading has been done at both ends of the bridge to prevent any type of movement while repair work was on, he added.

Three incidents of bridge collapse were reported last week from Araria, Siwan and Araria districts. In the last few years, a number of similar incidents have taken place in various parts of the state, and though no fatalities have been caused, these have led to questions being raised on the quality of public works in the state.



An excavator being used by Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC) to demolish an illegal bar after Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde gave directions to take action against illegal pubs and bars in the state in Thane

## SNIPPETS

### 2 fall to their deaths while taking pics

**Dehradun/Manali:** The desire to click the perfect picture proved fatal for two women as one of them fell into a gorge in Uttarakhand while the other got washed away in the gushing Parvati River in neighbouring Himachal Pradesh. Sonal Payal (37), a resident of Roorkee in Haridwar district, was clicking a photograph of herself from a hill in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh Thursday when she apparently lost balance and fell into a 100-metre-deep gorge, the disaster control room said. She died on the spot. In Himachal Pradesh's Kullu district, a tourist from Haryana was washed away after she slipped in the gushing waters of the Parvati River while taking photographs near the riverbed, police said.

### Hooch tragedy: AIADMK holds hunger strike

**Chennai:** Led by party general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami, AIADMK MLAs and party workers held a hunger strike here Thursday to press for a CBI probe into the Kallakurichi hooch tragedy. DMDK chief Premalatha Vijayakanth visited the venue and lent her party's support to the protest. Clad in black shirts, the AIADMK legislators, who have been suspended from the ongoing Assembly session for disrupting proceedings, began their fast here by 9 am at the Rajarathinam stadium. The fast is also to condemn 'denial of permission' to raise the issue in the state Assembly, according to the main Opposition party. Palaniswami, in a post on X, demanded Chief Minister M K Stalin's resignation and reiterated that the hooch deaths be investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

### Rahul Gandhi meets LS Speaker

**New Delhi:** Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi met Speaker Om Birla Thursday and voiced his displeasure over the reference to Emergency made by the chair, saying it was "clearly political" and could have been avoided. It was a courtesy call during which Gandhi also raised the issue of Emergency being invoked by the Speaker in the House, Congress general secretary K C Venugopal told reporters after the meeting in the Parliament House. "It was a courtesy call. The Speaker declared Rahul Gandhi as the Leader of Opposition and after that, he along with other INDIA bloc partner leaders met the Speaker," he said. Asked whether Gandhi discussed the issue of Emergency being raised in the House, Venugopal said, "We discussed so many things about Parliament functioning. Of course, this issue also came up."

# Only 4% could not access an urban centre in 2020: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 27:** In 2020, only four per cent of India's population lacked access to an urban centre -- a densely populated built-up area -- and three per cent could access only towns within an hour of travel, according to a study published in the journal Nature Cities.

The research, led by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, Italy, looked at over 30,000 urban centres around the world and, based on the number of people accessing them, classified them as one of four -- town, small city, intermediate city or large city. Of the 92 per cent, 55 per cent were found to live in or near a

town or a small city, while 37 per cent were found to live in or near an intermediate or a large city. Further, in 2020, 41 per cent of the 7.8 billion world population could access multiple tiers (such as a town and a small city) within an hour's travel, while 57 per cent and 64 per cent (five billion) were able to reach multiple tiers by travelling for two and three hours, respectively.

However, many locations close to a town or a small city can also access a higher tier within an hour's travel and, therefore, the authors summed up that two-thirds of the people around the world (five billion) live within an hour's travel from either an intermediate or a large city providing more specialised serv-



While a town had about 20,000 people living there, accessing basic facilities, such as groceries and primary education, a large city housed more than a million people and offered the most diversified facilities, including an airport, according to the research

Even with half the world's population living outside the urban centres, the authors found "substantial interconnectedness" as 92 per cent were able to access them in under an hour of travel, which could be seen as 'commuting distance'

ices. They added that "large cities are less relevant than smaller ones in regard to engaging populations outside their urban core". The study repre-

sent the "first systematic worldwide delineation of city-regions across multiple urban tiers," according to lead author Andrea Cattaneo, Senior Economist at FAO.

"This unprecedented dataset (spanning across 213 countries and territories) offers a powerful tool for understanding how societies are organised around urban centres, unlocking new insights for sustainable development strategies," Cattaneo said. In a warmer world and with commuting on the rise, such studies are increasingly imperative for assuring energy-efficient and equitable transportation, as well as effective natural resource management, the lead author said.

# international



They (Indian officials) have announced that they are conducting an inquiry (Pannun case), and we will look forward to the results of that inquiry  
MATTHEW MILLER | STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESPERSON, US

## VATICAN ON TRIAL

The Vatican is on trial in a London court as a British financier sought to recover from the harm he said he suffered to his reputation as a result of a Vatican investigation into its 350 million euro (around \$375mn) investment in a London property. It is believed to be the first time the Holy See has been forced to stand trial in a foreign court



## of the day quote

This is not a meeting about recognition. This is not a meeting to lead to recognition. Having engagement doesn't mean recognition. This isn't about the Taliban. This is about Afghanistan and the people

ROSEMARY DICARLO | POLITICAL AFFAIRS CHIEF, UN

Due to the growing involvement of the West in the conflict over Ukraine, the Russian Federation cannot but consider various options for responding to such hostile Western intervention in the Ukrainian crisis

DMITRY PESKOV | KREMLIN SPOKESMAN, RUSSIA

As we three (US, South Korea, Japan) are leading economies in manufacturing, services, technology and innovation and we have to work together to the benefit not just for our countries, but the safety and security of the world

GINA RAIMONDO | COMMERCE SECRETARY, US

## SHORT TAKES

### No relief for Khan

**Islamabad:** A Pakistani district court Thursday rejected appeals by former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi to suspend their sentences in the illegal marriage case. The former couple was sentenced to seven years in jail with a fine of \$5,000,000 each February 3 by a district and sessions court in the case, popularly known as Iddat case, for contracting marriage during the period when a Muslim woman should wait after divorce or death of her husband before second marriage.

### UK docs on strike

**London:** Thousands of doctors in England are staging their 11th walkout Thursday in a long-running dispute with the government over pay and working conditions, disrupting hospital services just days before the UK general election. Junior doctors, who form the backbone of hospital and clinic care, have been locked in the pay dispute with the government since late 2022. They went on strike for six days in January, the longest in NHS history, and hospitals had to cancel tens of thousands of appointments and operations.

### Fresh protests erupt in Kenya

**Nairobi:** Kenyan police put up roadblocks on streets leading to the presidential palace Thursday as some protesters vowed to "occupy State House", despite the President's climbdown on proposed tax hikes that sparked a week of demonstrations. It was not clear how far protesters would be mollified by President William Ruto's Wednesday decision to withdraw the finance bill, a day after clashes killed at least 23 people and parliament was briefly stormed and set alight. Ruto is grappling with the most serious crisis of his two-year-old presidency.

### Taiwan raises travel warning for China

**Taipei:** Taiwan's government raised its travel warning for China Thursday, telling its citizens not to go unless absolutely necessary, following a threat from Beijing last week to execute those deemed "diehard" Taiwan independence supporters. Liang Wen-chieh, spokesperson for Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council, told reporters the raised travel warning also applied to the Chinese-run cities of Hong Kong and Macau.

## RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

# US report notes violence against Indian minorities

The Indian government denies discriminating against minorities, and says its welfare policies, like food subsidy schemes and electrification drives, aim to benefit all Indians

REUTERS

**Washington, June 27:** The US State Department's 2023 religious freedom report on India noted violent attacks on minority groups, especially Muslims and Christians, including killings, assaults and vandalism of houses of worship.

The report on international religious freedom released Wednesday said that in 2023, senior US officials continued to "raise concerns about religious freedom issues" with their Indian counterparts.

Human rights experts say India has seen a rise in attacks on minorities under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who recently won a third term, and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

"In India, we see a concerning increase in anti-conversion laws, hate speech, demolitions of homes and places of worship for members of minority faith communities," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said when the report was released, in a rare direct rebuke of India.

Criticism of India by the US is usually restrained due to close economic ties and New Delhi's importance for Washington to counter China, political analysts say.

The US report listed dozens of incidents. Among them was a fatal shooting of a security official and three Muslims on a train near Mumbai by a suspect who was a railway security official. A probe by Indian authorities into that case is ongoing and the suspect was in jail, according to the Indian Express newspaper.



## France saw rise in all types of racism in '23

Racism and intolerance are rising in France, fuelled by the war in Gaza and far-right ideas in public debate, France's human rights commission, the CNCDH, said in an annual report published Thursday. The far-right National Rally (RN) is leading in the polls for upcoming legislative elections, running on a platform that proposes restricting the rights of immigrants in France, which the CNCDH has said is in "frontal opposition to the principles of equality, fraternity and freedom" enshrined in the French constitution and will embolden racist opinions. The Gaza war has triggered a rise in antisemitism and Islamophobia in France, as in other parts of the world. Reports of antisemitic and anti-Muslim acts increased by 28.4% and 29% respectively, while other types of racist acts increased by 21%. 51% of survey respondents from the general population don't feel at home in France anymore, compared to 43% of French citizens in 2022, which the report authors link to a rejection of immigration. This sentiment rises to 91% among RN supporters. 43% of French residents surveyed think that insecurity is mainly due to immigration, compared to 83% of RN supporters. 69% do not support the RN's "national preference" idea that French people should be favoured for jobs, benefits and housing over foreigners.

In India, we see a concerning increase in anti-conversion laws, hate speech, demolitions of homes and places of worship for members of minority faith communities

ANTONY BLINKEN | SECRETARY OF STATE, US

comment. The Indian government denies discriminating against minorities, and says its welfare policies, like food subsidy schemes and electrification drives, aim to benefit all Indians.

The State Department report also cited violence in the north-eastern state of Manipur that started in May last year between minority, mostly Christian, Kuki and majority, mostly Hindu, Meitei ethnic groups.

Hindu and Christian places of worship were destroyed in Manipur. Citing a local tribal leaders' forum, the report said over 250 churches were burnt down, more than 200 people were killed and over 60,000 were displaced.

The report cited examples of attacks against Muslims based on allegations that Muslim men were participating in the slaughter of cows or beef trading.

The Indian embassy in Washington had no immediate

comment. The Indian government denies discriminating against minorities, and says its welfare policies, like food subsidy schemes and electrification drives, aim to benefit all Indians.

The State Department report also cited violence in the north-eastern state of Manipur that started in May last year between minority, mostly Christian, Kuki and majority, mostly Hindu, Meitei ethnic groups.

Hindu and Christian places of worship were destroyed in Manipur. Citing a local tribal leaders' forum, the report said over 250 churches were burnt down, more than 200 people were killed and over 60,000 were displaced.

## In a first, 2 ex-Chinese defence ministers to be tried for corruption

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Beijing, June 27:** Two former Chinese defence ministers, Wei Fenghe and his successor Li Shangfu, who worked under President Xi Jinping's watch were Thursday expelled from the ruling Communist Party and are set to be prosecuted in what was regarded as the worst scandal to hit the People's Liberation Army.

The Communist Party headed by Xi, has expelled General Wei, 70, and General Li, 66, for alleged corruption and launched prosecution proceedings against them after investigations reportedly found both of them indulged in corruption, separate official announcements said.

The year 2023 will also go down as the worst year for Chinese ministers as three of them including former Foreign Minister Qin Gang besides Wei and Li disappeared from public view.

Li, who went missing last year following an investigation into alleged corrupt practices, was expelled from the party Thursday for serious violation of Party discipline and the law, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

A similar announcement said Wei too was expelled from the party and to be prosecuted.

Wei served as Defence Minister from 2018-23 and Li barely served a few months as his successor.

Li, a Chinese aerospace engineer who headed the People's Liberation Army's all-important Rocket (Missile) Force and was personally picked up for the top defence post by Xi himself, went missing last year, sparking speculation that he was being investigated for corruption and indiscipline.

Both served as State Councillors, the top post in the party and as a member of the Central Military Commission (CMC), the overall high command of the PLA headed by Xi.



# New strain of Mpox causing miscarriages, killing children

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Paris, June 27:** A new deadlier strain of mpox that transmits more easily between people is killing children and causing miscarriages in the Democratic Republic of Congo and may have already spread to neighbouring countries, researchers have warned.

All countries should be prepared for "this new strain before it spreads to other places, before it is too late," Jean Claude Udahemuka, a researcher at the University of Rwanda studying

the outbreak, told AFP.

A global outbreak of a new strain of Mpox, previously known as monkeypox, in 2022 spread to more than 110 countries, mostly affecting gay and bisexual men. That was the clade II strain.

But there have been regular outbreaks of the clade I strain, which is 10 times deadlier, in Africa since it was first detected in DR Congo in 1970.

While the global outbreak was largely sexually transmitted, people in Africa normally caught clade I from infected animals, such as when eating bushmeat.

## Bolivia coup attempt fails

Tensions have been building in Bolivia ahead of general elections in 2025, with leftist ex-President Evo Morales planning to run against former ally Luis Arce



REUTERS

**La Paz, June 27:** Bolivian armed forces pulled back from the presidential palace in La Paz Wednesday evening and a general was arrested after President Luis Arce slammed a "coup" attempt against the government and called for international support.

Earlier in the day, military units led by General Juan Jose Zúñiga, recently stripped of his military command, had gathered in the central Plaza Murillo square, home to the presidential palace and Congress.

"Today the country is facing an attempted coup d'état. Today the country faces once again interests so that democracy in Bolivia is cut short," Arce said in comments from the presidential palace, with armed soldiers outside.

"The Bolivian people are summoned today. We need the Bolivian people to organize and mobilize against the coup d'état in favor of democracy."

Inside the presidential palace, Arce swore in José Wilson Sanchez as the military commander, Zúñiga's former role. He called for calm and order to be restored.

"I order that all personnel mobilized on the streets return to their units," Sanchez said. "We entreat that the blood of our soldiers not be spilled."

The United States said it was closely monitoring the situation and urged calm and restraint.

Tensions have been building in Bolivia ahead of general elections in 2025, with leftist ex-President Evo Morales planning

to run against former ally Arce, creating a major rift in the ruling socialist party and wider political uncertainty.

Many do not want a return of Morales, who governed from 2006-2019 when he was ousted amid widespread protests and replaced by an interim conservative government. Arce then won election in 2020.

Zúñiga said recently that Morales should not be able to return as President and threatened to block him if he attempted to, which led Arce to remove Zúñiga from his post.

Ahead of the attack on the presidential palace, Zúñiga had addressed reporters in the square and cited growing anger in the landlocked country, which has been battling an economic slump with depleted central bank reserves and pressure on the boliviano currency as gas exports have dried up.

"The three chiefs of the armed forces have come to express our dismay," Zúñiga told a local TV station, calling for a new cabinet of ministers. "Stop destroying, stop impoverishing our country, stop humiliating our army," he said in full uniform, flanked by soldiers, insisting the action being taken was supported by the public.

Zúñiga told reporters later Wednesday that Arce had Sunday asked him to "raise something up" to boost his popularity, without offering evidence.

Interior Minister Eduardo del Castillo later said Zúñiga was seeking to court popular support and that the nine people injured in the attempt proved "this was not a drill."

## Indian fishermen held in SL to be charged with death of Navy sailor



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Colombo, June 27:** Ten Indian fishermen, arrested for allegedly engaged in illegal fishing in the Sri Lankan waters Monday, will be charged with the death of a Navy sailor, who was killed in an operation to seize their trawler, authorities here said.

A senior sailor from the Navy Special Boat Squadron sustained critical injuries due to "the aggressive manoeuvres of the Indian trawler, resisting its seizure," said a statement issued by the Sri Lankan Navy.

"Unfortunately, the senior sailor succumbed to his injuries after being admitted to the Teaching Hospital, Jaffna," it added.

The Navy said that 10 Indian fishermen were arrested and their trawler was seized Monday.

The trawler was brought to the Kankesanthurai Harbour and the fishermen were handed over to the Mailadi Fisheries Inspector for legal proceedings.

The Kankesanthurai Police had filed a 'B' report with the Mallakam Court in Jaffna, seeking the prosecution of 10 Indian fishermen.

"They face charges for illegal fishing in Sri Lankan waters, death of a naval person during the operation and for causing damage to naval property," the statement said.

## 'UNFLINCHING' WRITING

# Arundhati awarded Pen Pinter Prize

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, June 27:** Booker Prize-winning author Arundhati Roy, currently facing the threat of prosecution over historic comments on Kashmir 14 years ago, was Thursday honoured with the prestigious Pen Pinter Prize 2024 for her "unflinching and unwavering" writings.

The prize, established in 2009 by the charity English PEN, defends freedom of expression and celebrates literature in memory of Nobel-Laureate playwright Harold Pinter.

Roy expressed her delight at being named this year's winner amid an "incomprehensi-



ble turn" the world is taking. "I am delighted to accept the PEN Pinter prize. I wish Harold Pinter were with us today to write about the almost incomprehensible turn the world is taking. Since he isn't, some of us must do our utmost to try to fill his shoes," said 62-year-old Roy.

## DEBARRING DEMOLITION

# Monroe's home declared historic landmark

WHILE THE DESIGNATION DOESN'T COMPLETELY STOP A PROPERTY FROM BEING DEMOLISHED, THE STATUS SUBJECTS IT TO A STRINGENT REVIEW PROCESS IF DEMOLITION WERE PROPOSED

AGENCIES

**Los Angeles, June 27:** The Los Angeles home where Marilyn Monroe died was declared a historic landmark Wednesday, thwarting plans by its current owners to demolish the property.

The house was home to the "Some Like It Hot" screen siren for the final six months of her life up to her death from a drug overdose in 1962.

More than half a century on, Monroe remains one of the most beloved figures in US pop culture, and fans as well as conservationists have closely followed a row over the future of the home.

Property heiress Brinah Milstein and her reality TV producer husband Roy Bank bought the Spanish Colonial-style home

in the swanky Brentwood neighbourhood last summer for \$8.35 million.

The couple owned the house next door and intended to combine the two properties. That construction would have involved razing the Monroe home.

But when a demolition permit was issued last September, a furore quickly followed, and local politicians moved quickly to designate the building's protected status.

Last month, the owners sued the city of Los Angeles for "illegal and unconstitutional conduct."

Their petition noted Monroe had "occasionally" lived in the home for "a mere six months", and the couple claim that more than a dozen previous owners since 1962 have already changed the building beyond recognition.

Those objections were over-



ruled Wednesday, as city councillors approved the designation of the house as a historic cultural monument.

Monroe bought the 3,000-square-foot single-story hacienda in 1962 just after her divorce

from playwright Arthur Miller. "There is no other person or place in the city of Los Angeles as iconic as Marilyn Monroe and her Brentwood home," said councillor Traci Park, whose district includes

There is no other person or place in the city of Los Angeles as iconic as Marilyn Monroe and her Brentwood home

TRACI PARK | COUNCILLOR, LOS ANGELES

the house in question.

"Some of the most world-famous images ever taken of her were in that home, on those grounds and near her pool."

"There is likely no woman in history or culture who captures the imagination of the public the way Marilyn Monroe did. Even all these years later, her story still resonates and inspires many of us today."

Monroe's smouldering looks and breathy delivery made her one of the most bankable movie stars of her era.

# business

## of the day quote

The highest priority must be assigned to governance as strong governance is at the core of resilience of stakeholders in the financial system

SHAKTIKANTA DAS | GOVERNOR, RBI

The deployment of our flagship A350s and the B777s with upgraded cabin interiors to London Heathrow marks a significant milestone for Air India

CAMPBELL WILSON | CEO & MD, AIR INDIA

The quarterly decline seen in housing sales is essential because of the all-time high base considered in the previous quarter when more than 1.30 lakh units were sold

ANU PURI | CHAIRMAN, ANAROCK

## SHORT TAKES

### UltraTech to acquire stake in India Cements

**New Delhi:** Aditya Birla Group flagship company UltraTech Cement Thursday announced the acquisition of a 23 per cent stake in former BCCI president N Srinivasan-led India Cements Ltd for over Rs 1,900 crore as it looks to shore up capacity to compete against Adani Group. UltraTech Cement has acquired Damani-group's stake in India Cements Ltd (ICL) through two block deals, according to a statement and stock exchange data. ICL promoters, however, will continue to be the largest shareholder with a 28.42 per cent stake. As per the block deal data on the BSE, UltraTech Cement bought a total of 7,05,64,656, amounting to a 22.77 per cent stake in India Cements. The shares were purchased in the price range of Rs 265.05-283.3, taking the combined transaction value to Rs 1,889.27 crore. The sellers are Gopikishan Shivkishan Damani, Kiran Devi Damani, Radhakishan Shivkishan Damani and Shrikanta Devi Damani, as per the data.

### Infosys CEO settles case with Sebi

**New Delhi:** IT giant Infosys' MD and CEO Salil Parekh has settled with markets regulator Sebi a case pertaining to alleged violation of insider trading norms after paying Rs 25 lakh. He allegedly failed to put in place "adequate and effective systems" of internal control to ensure compliance for preventing insider trading, according to an order passed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi). The case emerged from Sebi's investigation between June 29, 2020, and September 27, 2021, in the matter of alleged insider trading in the scrip of Infosys. The regulator probe found that certain information which was Unpublished Price Sensitive Information (UPSI) had not been considered as such by Infosys.

### CCI dismisses complaint against Google

**New Delhi:** The Competition Commission of India has dismissed a complaint against Google India alleging the tech giant abused its dominant position to favour Truecaller in the market for caller ID and spam protection apps, as it found no evidence of violation of competition law. While dismissing the complaint, the fair trade regulator said, "The Commission finds that no prima facie case of contravention of the provisions of Section 4 of the Act is made out against Google in the instant matter". Section 4 of the Competition Act, deals with the abuse of dominant position.



This budget will be an effective document of the government's far-reaching policies and futuristic vision. Along with major economic and social decisions, many historic steps will also be seen in this budget

DROUPADI MURMU | PRESIDENT

## Foxconn clarifies stand on hiring married women

The iPhone maker refutes allegations of employment discrimination based on marital status, gender, religion or any other form

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 27:** Apple iPhone maker Foxconn has informed the government that 25 per cent of its new hires are married women and its safety protocol, which requires all employees to avoid wearing metal irrespective of gender or religion, is not discriminatory, sources said.

In an informal note shared with the government after reports suggested it is not hiring married women, Foxconn stated that such stipulations are not part of its policy and these claims may have been made by those in-

dividuals who were not hired, sources said.

They added that such media reports malign the fast-growing Indian manufacturing sector.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Labour and Employment Wednesday sought a detailed report from the Tamil Nadu labour department on the issue of married women not being allowed to work at the Foxconn India Apple iPhone Plant, as reported by the media.

"Foxconn had clarified that 25 per cent of the latest hires are married women. This would mean nearly one-third of the total women are married. This ratio compares favourably to any factory in this sector currently operating in India," one of the sources said.

The Foxconn factory currently has about 70 per cent women and 30 per cent men and the Tamil Nadu plant is the largest factory for women employment



in the country with the total employment having touched 45,000 workers during peak periods, they said.

The company has also informed that the discussion around Hindu married women being discriminated against for wearing metals (ornaments and jewellery) is "entirely slanted" and wearing metal in such factories is a safety issue, a fact well recognised by both the industry and the government.

"Any person wearing metals - man or woman - regardless of their status (single or married) and their religion (Hindu,

25% of new hires are married women; nearly 70% of workforce are women, says the firm

Muslim, Christian, Sikh etc) are required to remove metals while working in the factory," the source said quoting the company's informal note. For safety reasons, no one wearing metal is allowed to work on the shop floor and this is a prevalent practice in several industries.

According to sources, the company has stated that the media report is based on anecdotal comments by 5-10 people or potential job seekers.

These comments likely came from candidates who did not get the job or no longer work at Foxconn. When contacted on the issue, Foxconn said that they

hire workers of all backgrounds, genders, races and marital status, and they do not discriminate in hiring or recruitment.

"We enhanced our management process for hiring agencies in India in 2022 and identified four agencies that were posting ads that did not meet our standards. We took corrective action with those agencies and more than 20 job ads were removed," Foxconn said in a statement.

"In our latest round of hiring almost 25 per cent of women are married. Married women are welcome to wear traditional metal ornaments while working in our facilities," it said.

It added that the company provides qualified job seekers equal treatment and it works with relevant local agencies to ensure that all recruitment efforts follow Foxconn's recruitment standards and guidelines, as well as local labour regulations.

## Tata Group retains top spot as most valuable brand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 27:** Tata Group has retained its position as India's most valuable brand, according to the latest report from Brand Finance.

The salt-to-software group is followed by IT major Infosys and HDFC Group, which have been ranked second and third respectively in the report of the brand valuation consultancy.

Tata Group has a 9 per cent growth in brand value to \$28.6 billion, it said.

"Tata Group's brand value highlights the first time an Indian brand is close to the \$30 billion brand value mark, reflecting the prevailing optimism in the Indian economy," said a statement.



## NEW PEAKS D-St on dream run



Shares' record-high rally chugs on for fourth consecutive session; set for best month in 2024

REUTERS

**Bangalore, June 27:** India's benchmark stock indexes scaled new peaks Thursday and were on track for the best monthly gain this year, helped by a strong economy, policy continuity and the return of foreign investors.

The NSE Nifty 50 rose 0.74% to end at 24,044.5 points, topping 24,000 for the first time. The S&P BSE Sensex added 0.72% to close at 79,243.18 points, breaching 79,000 for the first time.

The indexes have closed at record highs for three straight sessions. The Nifty and Sensex have gained 6.72% and 7.14%, respectively, so far in June, set for their best one-month gain since December 2023.

Remarkably, the BSE benchmark took just two trading sessions to cover the journey from the 78,000 level hit June 25 to breach the 79,000 mark June 27.

The Sensex surpassing 79,000 marks a historic milestone, reflecting healthy investor confidence and strong fundamentals in key sectors like banking and telecom. Remarkably, it took only 23 sessions to rise from 23,000 to 24,000, compared to 88 sessions previously

TRIVESH D | COO, TRADEJINI

IN A FIRST	
NIFTY BREACHES 24K MARK	SENSEX CLOSES ABOVE 79K

The Nifty ended at a fresh record high of 24,044.50, rising 175.70 points or 0.74 per cent.

Intra-day, it soared 218.65 points or 0.91 per cent to hit the all-time peak of 24,087.45. The Nifty hit the 23,000 mark May 24 this year.

Equity benchmarks corrected sharply at the start of the month after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party came back to power with a narrower-than-expected margin. But since then, its cabinet assignments have signalled political continuity.

### Mcap of BSE-listed firms at all-time high of ₹438.41L-cr

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms hit an all-time high of Rs 438.41 lakh crore Thursday fuelled by a record-breaking rally in equities where the Sensex breached the historic 79,000 mark for the first time. In the past four trading days, the BSE benchmark jumped 2,033.28 points or 2.63 per cent. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies hit a lifetime high of Rs 4,38,41,960.73 crore (\$5.25 trillion). Investors' wealth has gone up by Rs 3.93 lakh crore in four trading sessions.

That not only led to a relief rally but also pulled back foreign portfolio investors to the market. Their purchases of shares worth Rs 172.93 billion so far in June is already a three-month high.

"No surprises to guess that the recent move has been supported by the private banking sector, which is a usual favourite among foreign investors," said Jaykrishna Gandhi, head of business development at institutional equities at Emkay Global Financial Services.

Private banks have jumped 9% in June, outperforming the Nifty's 6.7% increase.

ICICI Bank gained 0.16% on the day, rising 10.3% in eight straight sessions in its longest such rally since January 2015. The bank, India's No 2 private lender, crossed \$100 billion in market capitalisation earlier in the week.

Reliance Industries, the second-heaviest Nifty stock, was up 1.09%, after gaining 4% in the previous session. IT stocks jumped 2.03%, with all ten constituents logging gains.

## Sebi okays norms for influencers

Influencers have significantly impacted their followers' financial decisions in the last few years and thus Sebi's regulatory framework can make them accountable and responsible for their advice

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, June 27:** Capital markets watchdog Sebi Thursday decided to regulate financial influencers or finfluencers amid growing concerns about potential risk associated with such persons.

In order to address the concerns related to certain persons including unregulated entities inducing investors to deal in securities based on inappropriate claims, Sebi board approved norms to restrict associations between its regulated entities and unregistered individuals.

This came amid growing con-

cern over the potential risks associated with unregulated influencers who might offer biased or misleading advice. They usually work on a commission-based model.

The persons regulated by Sebi and the agents of such persons will not have any association like any transaction involving money, referral of a client, interaction of information technology systems with any other person who, directly or indirectly, provides advice recommendation or makes explicit claim of return or performance.

Also, the regulator has decided to create a closed ecosystem for fee collection by Sebi-registered Investment Advisers (IAs) and Research Analysts (RAs) from their clients.

This ecosystem will help investors ensure that their payments are reaching only registered IAs and RAs. This would also help investors identify, isolate, and avoid unregistered entities, who would be unable to access this closed ecosystem.

## Bad loans drop to 12-years low

Financial system remains resilient, gross NPAs of banks at 2.8%, says RBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, June 27:** The decline in bad assets of banks to a 12-year low of 2.8 per cent and strong GDP numbers will help in sustaining the growth momentum and withstanding global shocks, said the Reserve Bank's Financial Stability Report (FSR) released Thursday.

The real gross domestic product (GDP) rose by 8.2 per cent in 2023-24 against 7 per cent in the preceding fiscal, despite muted private and government con-



sumption and external demand conditions acting as a drag.

The FSR report showed that the gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) fell to 2.8 per cent and the net non-performing assets (NNPA) ratio to 0.6

per cent at the end of March 2024.

The GNPA ratio of all SCBs may improve to 2.5 per cent by March 2025, the report noted.

The FSR said there are several positives for the near-term economic outlook, including robust domestic demand conditions, high business optimism, the government's sustained focus on capital expenditure (which should crowd in more private investment through multiplier effects), firms utilising high profits to augment investible resources, and real estate activity gathering pace.

Another big positive is that credit growth is deepening, supported by healthier bank balance sheets, it said.

## What to expect as India enters JPMorgan EM debt index

INDIAN GOVERNMENT BONDS TO BE INCLUDED IN JP MORGAN-EMERGING MARKET BOND INDEX, A MOVE THAT WILL BRING DOWN BORROWING COST FOR THE CENTRE

REUTERS

**Mumbai, June 27:** India's government bonds will gradually become a part of JPMorgan's widely tracked emerging market debt index, beginning Friday.

The announcement of the change was made in September, setting the stage for billions of dollars to flow into the world's fifth-largest economy.

Here are five things to know as the South Asian nation draws more investment from global bond

investors and its stock markets attract increased portfolio inflows.

### WHAT KIND OF INFLOWS?

Indian bonds should receive \$2 billion inflows from index-tracking funds around the June 28 inclusion date, followed by a similar quantum each month and total inflows of at least \$20 billion over the next 10 months as the country slowly reaches maximum weight in the index.

The market has received inflows from active fund managers and other investors totalling \$10.5 billion since September's announcement, nearly six times the inflows received from early 2021 to August 2023.

About 32-40% of the expected \$20-25 billion of index-related inflows to India may have already arrived, JPMorgan strategist wrote in a note on June 25.

### WHAT FACTORS ARE LURING FOREIGN INVESTORS?

Global investors are keen on India's high growth, the gov-



ernment's commitment to fiscal prudence, the rupee's low volatility and the central bank's pledge to bring inflation down.

Foreign holdings of India's debt are around 2.4% of total outstanding debt and JPMorgan expects the level to nearly double by the end of 2025.

Small firms often rely on more debt and are usually heavily reliant on consumer spending which tends to slow when interest rates are high.

India offers a positive real yield. Although lower than other big emerging markets, its appeal is increased by a backdrop of moderate and controlled inflation and that government's commitment to fiscal prudence and low currency volatility.

### HOW WILL LARGE INFLOWS IMPACT THE RUPEE?

Any dollar inflows should boost the local currency, but a large appreciation is not expected as

Lower volatility of the Indian rupee makes it an attractive carry story

SERGEI STRIGO | CO-HEAD OF EMERGING MARKETS FIXED INCOME, AMUNDI ASSET MANAGEMENT

the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to absorb dollars and accumulate forex reserves.

At \$652.9 billion, India's currency reserves are the fourth largest in the world. This indirectly benefits the rupee as large buffers allow the central bank to intervene and smooth volatility.

### HOW WILL THE FLOWS IMPACT THE BOND MARKET?

Large foreign flows have pushed government bond trading volumes to the highest in nearly five years.

### WILL THE INCLUSION CHANGE MUCH FOR INDIAN ECONOMY?

The increase in inflows related to the inclusion, alongside a moderate current account deficit, estimated at 1.1% to 1.3% of GDP, is expected to keep India's balance of payments in surplus.

A larger set of buyers for Indian debt and the heavy inflows will ensure yields are capped, but analysts say the government may lose some of its budget flexibility as there will be greater scrutiny of its finances.

# Rohit, Surya prop India

AGENCIES

**Georgetown (Guyana), June 27:** On a day the ICC faced severe criticism for not keeping a reserve day, for the semifinal of the T20 World Cup, Indian skipper Rohit Sharma (57, 39b, 6x4, 2x6) guided his team to a fighting total of 171 for 7 in 20 overs.

Frequent rain interruption hampered the flow of the game, with the toss getting delayed and a more than an hour break with India at 65 for two. However, on a pitch where the ball spun and also kept viciously low at times, Rohit held the Indian innings together after the cheap dismissals of Virat Kohli (9) and Rishabh Pant (4). His third wicket partnership of 73 runs with Suryakumar Yadav (47, 36b, 4x4, 2x6) helped India reach a fighting total.

This T20 World Cup the pitches have left much to be desired, both in the US and the West Indies. The game between Afghanistan and South Africa was played on a pitch where batters could have got seriously hurt with the ball bouncing steeply. And the pitch at the Providence Stadium here was slow and low, not fit for entertaining cricket at all. If a bowler like Liam Livingstone could spin the ball a mile, imagine what regular spinners could have done.

India were put in after England skipper Jos Buttler won the toss. It wouldn't have made much of a difference as Rohit



Rohit Sharma watches the ball after hitting it for a six during the game against England Thursday

PHOTO: ICC

would have batted also if he had won the toss. Both India and England went into the game with unchanged teams. "With the rain around, we thought it'll be a bit of an advantage to bowl first," said Buttler.

Kohli was dismissed when he tried to hit Reece Topley over mid-wicket and was clean bowled with the ball keeping low. The previous ball, he had hit the bowler through the same area for a six. Pant was caught inside the circle off Sam Curran.

Earlier in the day former England captain Michael Vaughan alleged that ongoing T20 World Cup is 'purely set up for India' and global body ICC should have been a bit more

'fairer' to other countries as this is not a bilateral event organised solely for commercial gains.

Vaughan, 49, has often criticised the BCCI and India for flexing their muscle and financial might in international cricket.

"Well, it's their tournament isn't it? Literally it's that. You know that. They get to play whenever they want, they know exactly where their semifinal is, they play every single game in the morning so people can watch them at night, obviously in India on the television," Vaughan said during a podcast with Australian great Adam Gilchrist on the YouTube channel Club 'Prairie Fire'.

"I get that money is a big play in the world of cricket, and I get that in bilateral series but you would think that when you get to a World Cup, the ICC should be a little bit fairer to everybody," said the man, who scored 18 hundreds in 82 Tests and was the English skipper of the historic Ashes-winning side of 2005.

"When you get to a World Cup, there can't be sympathy or any kind of sway towards one team in this tournament, and this tournament is purely set up for India. As simple as that," Vaughan alleged.

**Brief scores:** India (Rohit Sharma 57, Suryakumar Yadav 47) versus England.

## SHORT TAKES

### Rahane to play for Leicestershire

**Leicester:** Former India skipper Ajinkya Rahane has signed with English County side Leicestershire for the second half of the ongoing season, the club announced Thursday. As per the deal, Rahane will be featuring in the team's final five games of the ongoing County Championship, besides playing in the 'One Day Cup', where the Foxes are the defending champions. The 36-year-old joins Leicestershire in place of Wiaan Mulder, who is expected to travel to the West Indies with South Africa in August.

### 3 Indians in semis of Jr Asian squash

**Islamabad:** India's Shiven Agarwal, Aadya Budhia and Gowshika M moved into the semifinals of their respective age groups at the 31st Asian Junior Individual Squash Championships here Thursday. However five others lost in the quarters. The second-seeded Agarwal beat local challenger Abdul Ahad Butt 11-4, 11-7, 11-5 in the boys' U-15 quarterfinals, while Aadya and Gowshika, the second and fourth seeds in the girls' U-13 section, put it past Mahnoor Ali (Pakistan) 11-4, 11-8, 6-11, 11-6 and Makaela Lin Cassidy (Hong Kong) 11-8, 11-9, 11-8.

### Kapil lauds Bumrah

**New Delhi:** Iconic former India all-rounder Kapil Dev feels Jasprit Bumrah is a '1000 times better' bowler than what he was at his prime. Bumrah has so far captured 11 wickets at the ongoing T20 World Cup with an astonishing economy rate of 4.08. "Bumrah is 1000 times better than me. These young boys are far better than us. We had more experience, but they are better," Kapil said. The 65-year-old also lauded the overall fitness levels of the current national team. "They are very good, outstanding. They are fitter. They are much more hard-working. They are fantastic," Kapil added. Kapil finished his international career with 434 Test wickets and 253 in ODIs

### Venezuela in Copa quarters

**Inglewood:** Salomón Rondón scored from a penalty kick in the 57th minute, and Venezuela advanced to the Copa America quarterfinals with 1-0 victory over Mexico Wednesday night. Venezuela, who opened with a 2-1 win over Ecuador, are assured finishing among the top two in Group B. Venezuela face Sunday already eliminated Jamaica at Austin, Texas. "I'm happy that we were able to give some joy to the people in Venezuela, we played for that, but we need to remain calm and with our feet on the ground," Venezuela coach Fernando Batista said. "We are going to enjoy this, but we are going to be focused on Jamaica."

## Gukesh starts in positive fashion

1st triumph for Indian in 'Classical' format after Candidates tournament

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bucharest (Romania), June 27:** Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh started off on a positive note, beating Deac Bogdan-Daniel of Romania in the first round of the Superbet Classic chess tournament here Thursday.

Set to challenge reigning World Champion Ding Liren of China later this year, Gukesh got a bit lucky in the middle game as both players missed a tactical nuance but the Indian emerged on top soon after to give his campaign a positive start in his first 'Classical' game since winning the Candidates tournament.

The other Indian in fray, R Praggnanandhaa tried hard but had to settle for a draw against Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan in a keenly-contested game.

The other winner of the round was Fabiano Caruana of the United States, who beat Firouzja Alireza of France, while the other two games in the 10-player round-robin tournament ended in draws.

It was a 'Nimzo Indian defense' by Bogdan-Daniel that led to a complicated middle game. The Romanian was up to the task in finding counter-attacks and won a sacrificed pawn in the middle game. The position looked promising when Gukesh erred and allowed a tactical skirmish.

However, Bogdan-Daniel failed to spot the best move and ended up trading his rook for a minor



piece. The position remained complicated but Gukesh converted it with ease.

Praggnanandhaa faced the Ruy Lopez with black against Abdusattorov and, after initial opening duel, won a pawn to reach a rook and pawns endgame.

While the position remained within the boundaries of a draw, the Indian tried hard for over 60 moves. However Abdusattorov

did not give much as the two players eventually decided to split points.

Caruana was in a spot of bother in the middle game arising out of a 'London System' but Alireza could not find the right attacking moves. The American exchanged pieces at regular intervals and his extra pawn came in handy in the ensuing queen and minor piece endgame.

## Chanu eyes +90kg snatch lift in Paris

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 27:** Tokyo Olympics silver medallist weightlifter Mirabai Chanu, who is taking it easy since returning to action following a six-month injury lay-off, is targeting a lift of above 90kg in snatch in next month's Paris Games.

Chanu, who suffered hip tendonitis and finished fourth in the 49kg women's category in the last Asian Games, returned to competition with a lift of 184kgs (81kg snatch and 103kg clean and jerk) at the Phuket World Cup in April this year.

She knows that anything less than a 200kg total lift won't be enough to win a medal in Paris and she is working towards that with her long-time coach Vijay Kumar Sharma.

"The injury is fine, I have completely recovered from it but I am going slowly in training. In train-



ing now I am lifting 80-85 per cent in repetitions. I am not lifting 100 per cent till I am close to the Olympics," Chanu said Thursday.

"So far 88kg in snatch and 119kg in clean and jerk are my best lifts, but my target is 90kg-plus in snatch at Paris, and I will try my best," Chanu added.

Chanu said that she will try her level best to win a medal in Paris. "I will do what it takes and try to give my best performance to win a medal, but I can't predict the colour of the medal," Chanu said with a smile.

## SA END SEMIFINAL JINX

PROTEAS IN T20 WORLD CUP FINAL WITH QUICK DEMOLITION OF AFGHANISTAN IN THE SEMIS

AGENCIES

**Tarouba (Trinidad), June 27:** South Africa exorcised their agonising semifinal jinx through an exceptional spell of pace bowling as they walloped an emotionally drained Afghanistan by nine wickets to enter their first-ever T20 World Cup final here.

However after the game South African skipper Aiden Markram stated that he is happy that they 'will not play on this pitch anymore' while Afghanistan coach Jonathan Trotter termed it as 'unfit for a contest of this magnitude'.

Marco Jansen (3/16) Kagiso Rabada (2/14) and Anrich Nortje (2/7) ripped the soul out of the Afghanistan top-order while bundling them out for a paltry 56 in just 11.5 overs after being invited to bowl. Spinner Tabraiz Shamsi (3/6) also came to the party by demolishing the tail.

Despite the early departure of Quinton de Kock, bowled through the gate by impressive pacer Fazalhaq Farooqi, the Proteas had little trouble in reaching 60 for one in 8.5 overs.

Reeza Hendricks (29 n o) and skipper Aiden Markram (23 n o) navigated them safely to the shores of victory as they finally freed themselves from the painful tag of chokers in global events.



STAR PLAYER: Pacer Marco Jansen (right) was instrumental in derailing the Afghanistan innings

AP PHOTO

Afghanistan batters looked unusually edgy against the South African pacers, who summoned a 'spell from hell'. They reduced the Afghans to 28 for five inside the power play and there was no coming back from that depth as they crashed to their lowest total in a T20 International. Their 56 was also the lowest total in a T20 World Cup semifinal clash.

While the South Africa pacers were on the money, the Afghan batters too should take some blame for being edgy on a pitch which had steep and uneven bounce at times.

Opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz (0) was the first to perish, chasing Jansen's delivery outside the off-stump to give Hendricks an easy catch at slip. The dismissal of in-form Gurbaz seemed

to inject doses of panic in the Afghanistan line-up, and Gulbadin Naib (2) was consumed by a lovely in-coming delivery by Jansen. Then the Afghan innings just fell apart.

After Jansen it was the turn of Rabada to pick up the wickets of Ibrahim Zadran (2) and Mohammad Nabi (0). Such was the plight of the Afghan batters that 'Mr Extras' with 13 emerged the highest scorer.

Leg-spinner Shamsi then applied the coupe de grace on Afghanistan with two wickets in one over, jettisoning Karim Jannat and Noor Ahmad.

**Brief scores:** Afghanistan 56 in 11.5 overs (Marco Jansen 3/16, Tabraiz Shamsi 3/6) lost to South Africa 60 for 1 in 8.5 overs (Reeza Hendricks 29 n o) by 9 wickets.

### Murray undecided about Wimbledon

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Wimbledon (England), June 27:** Two-time Wimbledon champion Andy Murray still has not decided as of Thursday whether he will be able to compete at the grass court Grand Slam tournament which begins next week but his management company said "he is working towards that".

The 37-year-old Murray has indicated this is likely to be his last season on tour before retirement. He has been dealing with a series of injuries in 2024, and had a surgical procedure on his back over the weekend after stopping during a match at a tune-up event.

"Andy is recovering well from his surgery and has started training again," Murray's representatives said in a statement Thursday. "At this stage it is too soon to confirm for definite whether he will play Wimbledon, but he is working towards that and a final decision will be made as late as possible to give him the best chance of competing," the statement added.

Play at the All England Club begins Monday. The draw to determine the singles brackets is Friday. Murray had planned to compete at Wimbledon and then the Paris Olympics, before retiring. He has won three major championships, twice at Wimbledon and once at the US Open and also has two Olympic gold medals in his kitty.

## NADA turns heat on dope offenders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Panchkula (Haryana), June 27:** More than 30 dope control officers (DCO) from the national anti-doping agency (NADA) have descended here for sample collection from the athletes participating in the National Inter-State Championships, the final Olympics qualifying event. The members of the team have been instructed to do target testing also.

Usually, dope samples of the medal winners are collected at big events like the national championships, and the unprecedented number of DCOs present at the Tau Devi Lal Stadium is expected to lead to a large sample size.

The DCOs have mostly come from New Delhi where NADA's head office is located.

"I can't tell much, but we have a big team here because it's the most important domestic event of the year as it's the final Olympics qualifying event in athletics," one of the officers, who can't be named for obvious reasons, told this agency Thursday. "We are also doing target selection of athletes for collection of samples. That much I

Not just samples of medal winners will be collected, even those finishing fourth or below will have to take the test if NADA wants

can tell," the officer added.

Even athletes who finished third or below at the heat races in the morning session of the opening day Thursday were seen being asked by the DCOs to sign the receipt of notification form and the agreement to undergo the test.

The NADA team landed here Wednesday, a day before the start of the championships. A source also said there

was out-of-competition collection of samples, which would mean that it was done Wednesday.

The officers refused the divulge the exact or the possible sample size.

Meanwhile, 100m national record holder Manikanta Hoblihdhar qualified for the semifinals despite finishing fifth in his heat race with a time of 11.10 seconds. His national record stands at 10.23 second. Gold medal contenders Gurindervir Singh of Punjab, Amlan Borgohain of Assam and Animesh Kujur of Odisha won their respective heats easily to make it to the semifinals.

Later in the day Haryana's Kiran Pahal qualified for the Paris Olympics in the women's 400 metres, clocking 50.92 seconds. The qualifying mark for the Games was 50.95 seconds.

## Georgia stun Portugal, in pre-quarters

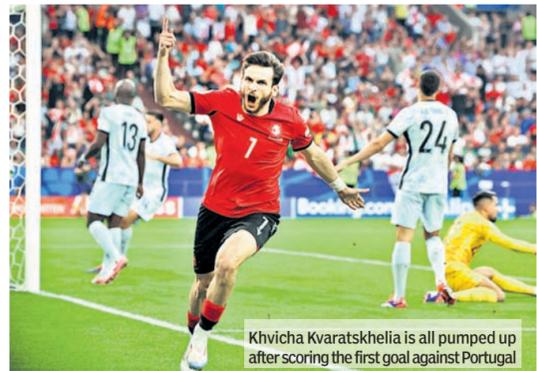
Cristiano Ronaldo's frustration continues as he fails to score for the 3rd game in succession

AGENCIES

**Gelsenkirchen, June 27:** Georgia secured a historic place in the knockout stages of Euro 2024 after a stunning 2-0 win over Portugal here Wednesday, while Turkey, Belgium, Romania and Slovakia all advanced to the last 16 as the group stage came to an end.

Appearing at their first European Championships, Georgia had to register their first-ever victory at the tournament to reach the last 16 when they played Portugal. The latter had already qualified for the last 16 as Group F winners, and their coach Roberto Martinez made eight changes to his team.

Georgia went ahead inside the opening two minutes thanks to a fine finish from their star player, Napoli winger Khvicha



Khvicha Kvaratskhelia is all pumped up after scoring the first goal against Portugal

Kvaratskhelia. Georges Mikautadze, who set up the goal, made it 2-0 from the penalty spot early in the second half to become the competition's top scorer on three.

It was a frustrating night for Portugal, who were denied on several occasions by Georgia's impressive goalkeeper Giorgi Mamardashvili. The 39-year-old Cristiano Ronaldo, who has a

Euros record tally of 14 goals, was left still waiting for his first at this year's competition.

Turkey finished second in the same group after a 2-1 win over the Czech Republic as their opponents were eliminated. Cenk Tosun's goal in stoppage time sealed the victory for Turkey, who had been playing with an extra man since the 20th-minute sending-off of Antonin Barak.

## Sreeja targets Olympics glory

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 27:** India's top-ranked women's table tennis player Sreeja Akula credits her enhanced mental and physical strength over the past two years for her stunning victories against higher-ranked players as she hopes to carry this momentum into the Paris Olympics.

Sreeja created history last week by becoming the first Indian table tennis player to win a WTT Contender singles title and Tuesday she became the country's top paddler with a career-high ranking of 24.

"For the last two years, I have been working a lot on improving my mental strength and I think that is the first aspect where I have improved, especially in 2024. I am mentally well-prepared to play against any opponent, whoever it is," Sreeja said.

"It's my debut Olympic Games but I think I am well prepared for the tournament. I just want to play my best," she added.