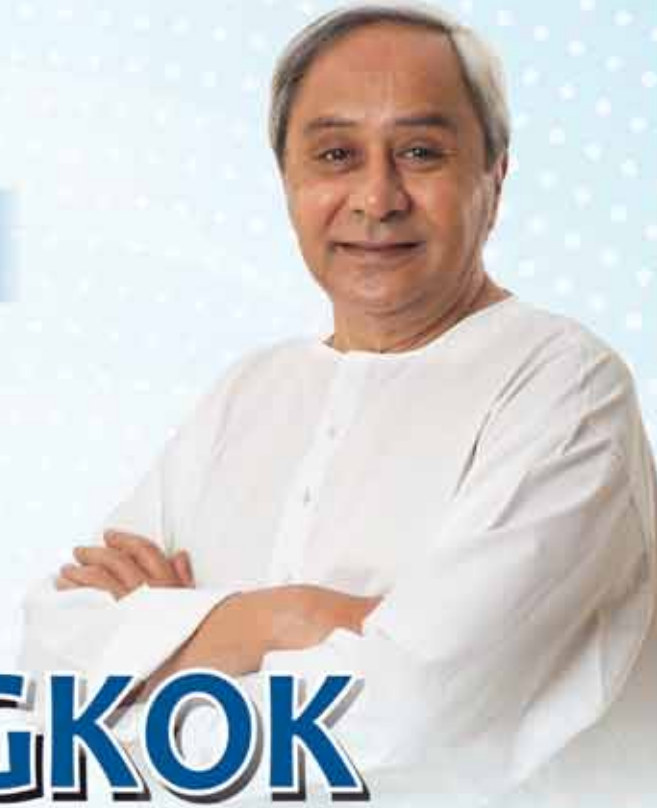




DSPL-63



Government of Odisha



## DIRECT FLIGHT SERVICES

from

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**SINGAPORE & BANGKOK**



*Inauguration by*

**Shri Naveen Patnaik**

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha

**3rd June 2023**

Biju Patnaik International Airport, Bhubaneswar

- ✈ Government of Odisha shall fully sponsor the flights which would open the world for the people of Odisha.
- ✈ Bhubaneswar will be connected by Airbus-320 of Indigo from 3rd June, 2023.
- ✈ Government of Odisha is thankful to Hon'ble Prime Minister and the Ministry of Civil Aviation for all the cooperation.
- ✈ These flights from Bhubaneswar to Singapore & Bangkok will be the threshold to the entire South-East Asian region.
- ✈ The ticket prices for Singapore & Bangkok start with ₹7,500 for one way and ₹15,000 for round trip as an introductory offer.
- ✈ Flight timing are as below :

Singapore	14:10Hrs	Bhubaneswar	18:20Hrs	Tuesday & Saturday
Bhubaneswar	06:25 Hrs	Singapore	10:35 Hrs	
Bangkok	05:35Hrs	Bhubaneswar	8:25Hrs	Tuesday & Saturday
Bhubaneswar	16:50Hrs	Bangkok	19:40Hrs	



Commerce & Transport Department





# 9 Bengal women thieves arrested in BBSR OJEE-2023 results announced

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

In a major crackdown, the Nayapalli police claimed to have busted a robbery gang operating in the capital city by arresting nine women belonging to West Bengal.

The accused were Labuni Samandar (34), Sukla Banik (30), Manjari Chakraborty (32), Amrita Roy(40), Baisakhi Mirdha (23), Putul Dev

Mohanty (35), Malaty Das (34), Rupa Mirdha (32) and Mousumi Dutta (31), all from North 24 Parganas district in West Bengal.

As per reports, since the last few days, they were staying at various lodges on rent and stealing items from various malls in the city. They were stealing apparels, cosmetics and other things by tucking the items under their clothes.

They then used to leave the spot before being caught.

Their activities came to the fore after seven women of the gang were apprehended by police for a theft at a mall in Nayapalli on May 31. After the matter was reported, police carried out investigation and nabbed them along with two others. The police also recovered consumer goods, cosmetics, food items and

other products from their possession, all of which had been shoplifted from the Reliance Smart Bazaar outlet in Krishna Plaza Mall.

Official sources said the Commissionerate Police was in talks with their Kolkata counterparts regarding the case. The crime records of the women were being investigated and probe was underway.

## List of toppers in various subjects declared

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Odisha Skill Development and Technical Education Minister Priti Ranjan Gharai and Principal Secretary Usha Padhee on Friday announced results of the Odisha Joint Entrance Examination (OJEE)-2023.

The entrance test had been conducted from May 8 to 15

at 44 centres in all 30 districts in the State and three centres in Kolkata, Patna and Ranchi for admission into 12 professional and technical courses such as B.CAT, LE-Tech (Dip), LE-Tech (B.Sc), BPharm, MBA, MCA/MSc (Computer Science), Int. MBA, LE-Pharm, M.Pharm, MArch, MPlan and MTech.

Total 55,979 candidates had been registered for the OJEE-2023, of which 48,815 candidates appeared in the examination. Of total

candidates, 48,783 were given the ranks for admission into respective courses both in government and private colleges and universities for the academic season 2023.

The candidates can collect their rank card by visiting the official website of OJEE. As per their ranks, the successful candidates can take part in OJEE counselling for admission into different professional and technical courses.

While Sourav Kumar Pati topped in BPharm, Satyajit Sahoo secured the first rank in MBA. Apurba Sundar Nayak is the topper in MCA/MSc (Computer Science) and Priyanka Dey stood first in two subjects, Int. MBA and BCAT in Cinematography and Sound Recording & Sound Design.

Subash Chandra Prusty secured first position in Civil Engineering, Rashmi Ranjan Panigrahi was ranked first in MPharm.

## Vizag patient support centre to continue

### CM provides financial assistance

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday decided to keep its Patients Facilitation Centre at Visakhapatnam operational for another year (2023-24). An amount of Rs 10 lakh from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund shall be provided to the centre.

The State Government had set up the patient support centre in Visakhapatnam in 2016. As Visakhapatnam is

very close to Odisha's Malkangiri district and has quality medical facilities, most of the patients from the district go there for treatment. Patients from Malkangiri are provided with free accommodation and food at the patient support centre.

Between 2016 and 2022, the Government provided assistance of Rs 55 lakh from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund to this centre.

Rs 25 lakh was provided in 2016 and Rs 10 lakh each was given in 2020, 2021, and 2022 respectively, according to an official release.

## Disguising as woman, prisoner flees SCB Hosp

**PNS ■ CUTTACK**

In a baffling turn of events, an under-trial prisoner managed to escape from the SCB Medical College Hospital here on Thursday by disguising himself as a woman.

The fugitive identified as Sajjan Das is a resident of Nugaon in Jagatsinghpur district.

Das had been apprehended by the Nugaon police while attempting to burglarise a residence in the Niali area. Following his arrest, he was presented in court and denied bail, subsequently being

remanded to judicial custody. Initially, he was lodged in the Alipingal jail before being transferred to the Choudwar jail.

On May 29, Das was admitted to the hospital due to illness and had been receiving treatment there. On Thursday, he requested to use the restroom, where he swiftly changed his attire, adopting a saree as his disguise, and discreetly left the hospital.

The Mangalabag police have registered a case and initiated a widespread search operation to apprehend the prisoner.

## CM's aid for nor'wester, drowning victims' kin

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday expressed condolence to the families of the four persons who lost their lives due to nor'wester in Malkanagiri district and instructed the SRC to provide assistance of Rs 4 lakh to each bereaved family. He also directed for free and quality treatment for the injured.

Notably, two persons had died due to the airstrip wall collapse and another two by boat capsizing on Thursday.

The Chief Minister also expressed deep sorrow over the death of two girl students of Chhatrapur of Ganjam district while bathing in sea and announced compensation of Rs 4 lakh each for the next of kin of the deceased.

## Geospatial meet held at Centurion Univ



**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

A two-day geospatial workshop was organised in the premises of Centurion University in its Jatni campus in association with PAN India (Trimble) on May 29 and 30.

Prof Jagannath Padhi, campus Director and Dr Sujata

Chakraborty, Dean SoET inaugurated it. PAN India consultants, Umesh Kumar and V Sharma were present as the guests who provided hands-on training regarding the advanced technology opted in various geospatial applications.

Professor Dr Ashis Kumar

Padhi from the Department of Geography of Utkal University spoke about his experience in this geospatial world. The utility of the workshop to geospatial students was briefed by workshop convenor Dr Kamal Kumar Barik (HOD, Civil Engineering

Department of Bhubaneswar campus).

The students and civil engineering staff of both the campus participated. Dr Prafulla Kumar Panda, (HOD), Civil Engineering Department of Paralakhemundi campus, gave the vote of thanks.

## Provide 200 units power free: AAP

### To begin signature campaign from June 8

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

In the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-ruled Delhi, 200 units and in Punjab 300 units of free power is being provided. Though the scheme was started in Delhi in 2019, tariffs have not been increased for the customers, who are consuming more power, said the Odisha AAP unit here on Thursday.

This has been only done through reducing corruption and by austerity measures. The AAP Odisha has distributed a booklet in which the calculation has been given on how the Odisha Government can provide 200 units of free power with the Government, power



distribution companies and customers all benefitting from the scheme.

On June 8, the AAP Odisha would collect lakhs

of signatures of people at Master Canteen Square in Bhubaneswar and submit it to the Chief Minister regarding this. If the

demand is not met, the agitation would be intensified, said AAP State secretary Soumya Ranjan Swain.

## BBSR-S'pore, BBSR-Bangkok flights from today

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

The IndiGo airline will operate direct flights from Bhubaneswar to Singapore and Bangkok from Saturday (June 3).

To make the fare affordable, there is an introductory offer of Rs 15,000 per round trip.

The direct flight service will be available twice a week on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

The Odisha Government has agreed to bear the costs of unsold tickets with total ticket costs estimated to be around Rs 120 crore per year.

While opening the sale of tickets last month, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had said the initiative would promote job opportunities for the youths of Odisha, open up tourism potential and provide a boost to IT and ITES sectors

in the State.

In the last few years, the aviation traffic in Odisha has witnessed an immense growth. Though the domestic flight connectivity has seen a noticeable improvement, the Government has come forward to make a sizeable contribution to ensure direct international flight connectivity between Bhubaneswar and world-class destinations to meet the people's aspirations, the CM had said.

Notably, in the current year's budget, the State Government has made an allocation of Rs 100 crore to support the viability gap funding. Due to such support, international travelling has become affordable for passengers travelling from Odisha.

## Talcher disabled girl feted for clearing Matric exam



**PNS ■ TALCHER**

Pramila Munda, a disabled student of Ghantapada Nodal High School under Talcher Sub Division, has cleared this year's Matric examination, securing a total of 346 out of 600 marks.

Angul Collector Sidharth Shankar Swain felicitated the disabled girl student for her achievement. Pramila is the daughter of Gurubari and Niranjana, who lives in Munda

Basti. She was studying in sixth standard when she lost her right leg in a train accident while crossing the railway line near Dera over bridge.

After the accident she was treated at the SCB Medical College on behalf of the Angul District Administration. On the instruction of Collector, Angul, her artificial leg had been implanted.

Pramila's parents thanked social worker Khirad Chandra Sahu for his help.

# Work-gender identity: Talk of an equal ecosystem at home

The post-pandemic era has hyped the discussion from work-life balance to work-life integration. The transition during this phase and post has not been easy; it is like a bumpy ride and the effects remain evident. Earlier, the work was explicitly-divided concerning gender, but the changing times expect a swift switching between roles. The organisational identities could no longer be worn as a crown at home; and the homemaker tags are no longer justified to be used for women. The transition of work culture was evident and necessary to cope during these challenging times. The famous saying, "Everything is a matter of perspective", saw a shift. The perception of women being at home and ideating that they are



**ALISHA RATH**

doing nothing is hard to accept. Staying home on a normal day for a working professional was mostly around 33% of a whole day, most of which is spent sleeping and in



**LALATENDU KESARI JENA**

daily chores, for which being judgmental about a homemaker who stays round the clock back at home was easy.

During the pandemic, the allotted

time to be back at home became 100% from 33%, giving hands-on experience to companions and family members about each other's responsibilities and importance. The change of perspective was initiated in this phase for most individuals, where one could experience another's life irrespective of the workplace. Times were tough, but the lessons learnt are firm. Gender-related identities were shattered as the time demanded a switching of roles. Men were no longer asked, "What made you stay so long at work?" Women weren't asked, "What did you do the whole day other than mere household chores?"

Speaking about the changing perspective, one could understand that no one was doing more and neither other one was doing less.

Earlier, maternity leave was considered a vacation, but staying back at home on an extended vacation gave people a comprehensive feeling that staying back is more than just a vacation, rather a taxing challenge where the responsibility multiplies and the duty hour is not for a stipulated period. People understood that giving birth is also a form of contribution and a boon which is just 2.05% (fertility rate) in the country.

Everyone contributes their share of responsibility and rushing to work or staying home doesn't make much difference. Instead, it is about flexibility coupled with harmony that increases efficiency. One can comprehend that the load is not just on one individual's arm but shared. When one works towards breadwinning, the other strives for

care giving. The day is not far when both responsibilities will be treated equally important; the gender roles will not be fixated and companionship will be about equals and not like authoritarian parenting. The change in perspective is the need of the hour for organisations and individuals to sustain. The result of this change will be promoting "Vasudhaiva Kuntumbakam" (the whole world is one family), which every firm (in the form of organisational citizenship behaviour) and household (in the form of a sense of belongingness) strives to achieve.

A home is a place where one wishes to come back. It would be a beautiful destination only where the efforts would be acknowledged rather than being fixated on prioritising gender role performances. The change is a step towards work-life integration,

making a transitional shift from work-life balance. It is about equality in the workforce and building a conducive ecosystem at home keeping in mind that "charity begins at home" contributes to equity and blurs the work-gender role identity. This ideology shows a rise in happy families and increased productivity. It breaks the chain of gender role association by building a beautiful world and a pleasant place to live in.

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**OPINION 6**  
US BATON OF VALUES  
PASSES SEAMLESSLY

**WORLD 8**  
BIDEN FALLS FROM STAGE, SAYS  
HE GOT 'SANDBAGGED'

**MONEY 10**  
SENSEX, NIFTY RISE ON GAINS  
IN METAL, AUTO STOCKS

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# 70 dead in Odisha triple train crash

## Over 350 injured; one train derails, another crashes into it

PNS/PTI ■ BALESWAR/HOWRAH

In a tragic triple train crash which took place in Odisha involving the Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express, the Shalimar-Chennai Central Coromandel Express and a goods train on Friday at least 70 people were killed and more than 350 injured.

They said several coaches of the 12864 Bengaluru-Howrah train travelling to Howrah derailed at Bahanaga Bazaar in Balasore district and fell on adjacent tracks.

"These derailed coaches collided with 12841 Shalimar-Chennai Central Coromandel Express and its coaches cap-sized too," a senior official said.

A goods train was also involved in the accident as the coaches of the Coromandel Express hit its wagons after getting derailed, the official said.

The accident happened around 7 pm, he said.

Over 350 people have been admitted to different hospitals



Rescue operation being conducted after four coaches of the Coromandel Express derailed after a head-on collision with a goods train, in Balasore district, on Friday evening

PTI

across the district, officials said, adding that all private and Government hospitals have been put on alert in the nearby districts, including State

Capital Bhubaneswar. So far, 50 bodies could be brought out from under the overturned coaches, they said. A PTI reporter at the spot

said several people were trapped under the derailed coaches, and locals were assisting emergency services personnel to rescue them, but

darkness was hindering the operation.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said he was rushing to the accident site. "Rushing to the site in Odisha. My prayers for the speedy recovery of the injured and condolences to the bereaved families. Rescue teams mobilised from Bhubaneswar and Kolkata. NDRF, State Govt. Teams and Airforce also mobilised. Will take all hands required for the rescue ops," he tweeted.

He also announced ex-gratia of ₹10 lakh for the deceased, ₹2 lakh for those grievously injured and ₹50,000 for those who got minor injuries.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said he has reviewed the situation, and will be travelling to the accident site early Saturday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was distressed by the accident, and spoke with Vaishnaw to take stock of the situation.

## 1983 World Cup winners back wrestlers, hope 'justice prevails'

### Khap sets June 9 deadline for Brij Bhushan's arrest

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Members of the 1983 World Cup-winning cricket team, including Kapil Dev and Sunil Gavaskar, have expressed their support for the protesting wrestlers and urged them not to make hasty decisions, while also hoping that their issues will be heard and resolved. At the same time, a "khap mahapan-chayat" in Kurukshetra set a deadline of June 9 to take action on its demand for the arrest of Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, the outgoing chief of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) and BJP MP. Singh has been accused of sexually harassing several women wrestlers

In a joint statement, the members of the 1983 World Cup winner team conveyed their distress and concern after witnessing the visuals of wrestlers being manhandled, but they expressed their belief that rule of law will prevail.

The statement comes in response to the protest by wrestlers Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik, and Bajrang Punia, who have been demanding the arrest of Brij Bhushan for the alleged sexual exploitation of women wrestlers. The wrestlers had threatened to immerse their medals into the holy river Ganga during their protest in Haridwar on May 30 but did not carry out the act.



On May 28, police detained the wrestlers for violating law and order when they marched towards the new Parliament without permission. The police then cleared the protest site.

"We are distressed and disturbed by the unseemly visuals of our champion wrestlers being manhandled. We are also deeply concerned that they are considering discarding their hard-earned medals into the River Ganga," stated the 1983 World Cup-winning team in a release to PTI.

### WFI chief denied nod for June 5 rally

**Ayodhya:** The district administration has denied permission to BJP MP and Wrestling Federation of India chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh to hold a rally here on June 5.

Singh, however, said he postponed the "Jan Chetna Maharally" at the Ram Katha Park for "a few days" due to the ongoing police probe into the wrestlers' charges against him.

## Want justice for wrestlers via due legal process: Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur on Friday said everyone wants justice to be delivered to the wrestlers demanding action against outgoing Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, but it will hap-

pen only after following the due process of law.

Thakur's remarks came days after the country's top wrestlers, protesting for more than a month over allegations of sexual harassment against Singh, threatened to immerse their medals in the Ganga river in Haridwar.

## CAPSULE

### GO FIRST TO RESTART OPS WITH 152 DAILY FLIGHTS

**Mumbai:** Cash-strapped Go First, which is undergoing voluntary insolvency resolution process, plans to restart operations with 26 planes and 152 daily flights, and has submitted the revival plan to aviation regulator DGCA, according to a source.

### 'WILL TAKE INFORMED CALL ON SEDITION LAW'

**New Delhi:** The Government will take an "informed and reasoned" decision on the Law Commission report on sedition after holding consultations with all stakeholders, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said on Friday and noted that recommendations in the document were "persuasive" but not "binding".

### ANTI-TERROR COURT EXTENDS IMRAN'S BAIL

**Lahore:** Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan on Friday appeared before an anti-terrorism court here and secured an extension to his pre-arrest bail till June 13 in three cases including an attack on a top military commander's residence in Lahore, a court official said.

### RUPEE GAINS 1 PAISA TO CLOSE AT 82.39 AGAINST \$

**Mumbai:** The rupee ended almost flat gaining 1 paisa to 82.39 against the US dollar on Friday amid positive sentiment in domestic equities markets.

# 2024 LS elections will throw surprising outcome: Rahul

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has asserted that the Opposition's strong unity and an unseen undercurrent were poised to "surprise" the people in the upcoming general elections in India.

Rahul was speaking at a media interaction on Thursday at the National Press Club in the United States, where he is currently on a three-city tour.

"I strongly believe that the Congress party will perform exceptionally well in the next two years," He added, "I sense the emergence of a hidden undercurrent...something that will catch people by surprise."

Citing the recent outcome of the Karnataka Assembly elections, where Congress achieved a comfortable majority and ousted the BJP from power, Rahul pointed out the importance of observing the results of the next three or four State elections.

He emphasised that these upcoming contests serve as a better indicator of the future political landscape.

In response to a question about the unity of the Opposition in India, Rahul confirmed their strong alliance.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during an interactive session at the National Press Club, in Washington, USA on Thursday

PTI

"The Opposition in India is quite well united, and I see this unity growing stronger with time. We are engaging in constructive conversations with all Opposition parties, and there is considerable progress being made," he stated.

However, he acknowledged the complexities that arise from competing with other Opposition parties, requiring some negotiation and compromise.

Nonetheless, Rahul expressed confidence in overcoming these challenges.

During the interaction, Rahul also addressed a range of

## IUML fully secular, claims Rahul, sparks political row

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's remark that the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) is a "completely secular party" ignited a political battle on Friday.

The BJP accused the Kerala-based party of being influenced by the same ideology as the Muslim League,

topics, including press and religious freedoms in India, issues faced by minorities, and the State of the economy.

When questioned about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's high global popularity, Rahul expressed his concerns about the capture of institutions and the press in India, indicating that he approached such information with caution.

Regarding the protection of minority rights in India, Rahul emphasised the importance of a robust and independent institutional framework.

while the Congress reminded the saffron party of its veteran leader LK Advani praising Mohammad Ali Jinnah during his visit to Pakistan in 2005.

During a media interaction at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, Rahul was questioned about his party's alliance with the IUML in Kerala in relation to secularism.

## Playing mischief with Odisha C'garh Govt closes Kalma gates again



**NIMAI CHARAN SAHU ■ SAMBALPUR**

The Chhattisgarh Government has been playing mischief with Odisha since the tenure of Raman Singh. After the visit of the Mahanadi Water Tribunal, the Chhattisgarh Water Resources Department has closed all gates of the Kalma barrage only except two.

The result being the areas downstream both in CG and Odisha portions and Hiraakud reservoir again face water scarcity like before. The power generation in the Burla and Chilpilima power houses is also badly affected.

From November 2022, the CG Government kept all the gates of Kalma and Kelo bar-

rages closed and created artificial water scarcity in the Hiraakud Dam reservoir. But before the visit of the water tribunal members, very cleverly, it released water through 15 to 20 gates to hoodwink the members.

When contacted, Hiraakud Dam Project Chief Engineer Anand Chandra Sahu said CG has no proper water management. Monsoon is well ahead. So, they are sure to waste water or create threat for us.

"Once monsoon breaks, there will be sufficient water in their barrages. What they will do with the water, they hardly think. It is further astonishing that neither they are using water for themselves nor they do so for us," Sahu remarked.

## HC allows jailed Sisodia to meet ailing wife at home

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday permitted AAP leader Manish Sisodia, under arrest in cases related to alleged irregularities in the city Government's excise policy, to meet his ailing wife at his residence on Saturday.

Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma directed the Tihar Jail Superintendent to take Sisodia, the former Deputy Chief Minister, to his residence where he has been allowed to meet his wife from 10 am to 5 pm.

Sisodia was first arrested by the CBI on February 26 for his alleged role in the scam and has been in custody since then. The HC has already denied him bail in the CBI case on May 30. He was arrested on March 9 in the case lodged by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and is currently in judicial custody.



# Cyclonic circulation forms over State

## Heat wave to continue despite thunderstorms

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A cyclonic circulation lies over south Odisha and its neighbourhood.

The southwest monsoon has further advanced into some more parts of south Arabian Sea and Maldives area, some parts of Lakshadweep area, entire Comorin area, some more parts of south Bay of Bengal and east-central Bay of

Bengal on the day, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Friday.

Several parts of Odisha are currently experiencing intense heat and humid conditions and such weather conditions are likely to continue even though there is a possibility of thunderstorm activities, said the Regional Office of the IMD here.

"There will be no large change in maximum temperature at many places over the districts of Odisha. It is likely to be 42 degree C or more at

one or two places in the districts of interior Odisha during next five days," predicted the weather office.

Thunderstorms with lightning are very likely to occur at one or two places in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Baleswar, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Cuttack, Khordha, Nayagarh, Kandhamal, Gajapati, Ganjam, Malkangiri, Koraput and Rayagada on Saturday, said the IMD, issuing a Yellow warning.

Thunderstorms with lightning are very likely to occur at

one or two places in the districts of Gajapati, Ganjam, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Jajpur, Bhadrak, Baleswar, Cuttack and Dhenkanal on Sunday,

On Monday, thunderstorms with lightning and gusty surface wind speed reaching 40 to 50 kmph are very likely to occur at one or two places in the districts of Ganjam, Gajapati, Kandhamal, Boudh, Nayagarh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Jajpur, Bhadrak and Baleswar, said the weather office, issuing a Yellow warning.

## Eye on 2024 polls

### Amit Shah to visit Odisha on June 17 JP Nadda to come on June 22

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Apparently with an eye on the crucial 2024 elections, top BJP central leaders are set to arrive in Odisha this month to hold people-connect programmes. They will take part in the month-long Maha Jansampark Abhiyan being undertaken by the party's State unit to mark the completion of nine years of the BJP-led NDA Government at the Centre.

BJP State president



Manmohan Samal on Friday said Union Home Minister Amit Shah would visit the State on June 17 while BJP national president JP Nadda will arrive in Bhubaneswar on June 22.

Samal also stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit Odisha soon.

The BJP, the main rival of the ruling BJD in Odisha, has

never been able to nail the latter ever since 2009 when it was thrown out of an 11-year-old coalition with the regional party headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

Despite top BJP leaders, including PM Modi, Shah, Rajnath Singh, campaigning hard during each Assembly and Lok Sabha polls, the saffron party has never been able to reap significant gains.

The BJP in 2009, 2014 and 2019 Assembly elections won 6, 10 and 23 seats, respectively, out of the total 147. Its vote percentage in

the respective Assembly elections stood at 15.05, 18 and 32.49.

In 2019, the BJP had won 8 of the 21 Lok Sabha seats in Odisha while the BJD and Congress bagged 12 and 1, respectively. The BJD has won Patkura, Bijepur, Tirtol, Pipili, Padampur, Brajarajnagar, Baleswar and Jharsuguda Assembly by-polls held after the 2019 elections. The BJP's only consolation performance was in the Dhamnagar by-poll as it retained the seat largely because of the infighting in the BJD camp.



## 7.6% rise in accidents in a year Govt to provide funds to DRSCs for road safety measures

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Government has decided to provide funds to the District Road Safety Committees (DRSCs) to undertake various road safety activities in view of the significant rise in road accidents across the State.

Departmental Principal Secretary Usha Padhee has written a letter in this regard to all Collectors and SPs/DCPs.

"As reported by the CID & Crime Branch, during the year 2022 in Odisha, 5,467 persons were killed in road accidents

at a growth of 7.6% compared to 2021. The situation has further worsened during the months of January and February 2023. There is growth in fatalities by 24.91% compared to the months of January and February of the year 2022. It is observed that there is growth in fatalities by more than 50% in the districts like Deogarh, Gajapati, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Jharsuguda, Kendrapada, Khordha, Malkangiri and Nuapada," the official said in the letter.

"All the district authorities are being impressed upon

from time to time to initiate education, engineering, enforcement and emergency care measures for reduction of road accidents and fatalities in the districts. Also, all districts have been requested to hold a meeting of the District Road Safety Committee (DRSC) once every month to review the road safety scenario," said Padhee.

"In view of the importance of the issue, it has been decided to provide funds to the DRSCs for taking up various road safety activities. Small interventions like painting of medians, pasting

of reflective tapes, conducting awareness programmes, installing CC cameras for deterrence, etc., may have significant effect in improving road safety. These initiatives become important for the districts having major SHs, NHs, urban centres etc. It has been proposed to provide funds to the DRSCs to take initiatives for reduction of accidents and fatalities," she added.

The Collectors and SPs/DCPs have been requested to submit detailed proposals by June 20 indicating requirement of funds.

## 'Centre to establish 87 Ekalavya schools in Odisha'

PNS ■ PARALAKHEMUNDI

Union Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Bishweswar Tudu visited Gajapati district for laying the foundation stones of various developmental projects.

Tudu first inaugurated a memorial temple of the founder of Shabar Samaj Kalyan Samiti and eminent social reformer late Pradhani Gamang at N Jhalar Singh under Nuagadh block and then attended a programme on the occasion.

Acting president of Shabar Samaj Kalyan Samiti Trinath Shaba presided. Mohana MLA Dasharathi Gamang, State BJP

leader Bhrgu Baxipatra, Shabar Samaj Kalyan Samiti editor Krishnachandra Gamang were present.

Later, Minister Tudu participated in the ground-breaking and foundation-laying ceremony of Eklabya Adarsh Residential School at Tekubul in Nuagadh Block and Subhadrapur in Rayagad Block.

In order to provide good and quality education to tribal students in India, the Modi Government has decided to build more than 700 Ekalavya residential schools across the country and 87 of them will be established in Odisha, Tudu said.

## In Athagarh Bhoomi Puja for Rs 75-cr NCC training unit



PNS ■ ATHAGARH

At least five acres of land near Kuspangi village of Athagarh has been allotted to the Higher Education Department for establishing the National Cadet Corps' training centre project estimated at Rs 75 crore.

Over 700 cadets, both boys and girls, would take training at a time at the centre. Ultra modern training facilities would be given to the trainees which is a first of its kind in the history of NCC in India. The Bhoomi Puja

programme was held here in presence of Cuttack DM Bhabani Shankar Chayani, ADM PC Mishra, Director Higher Education Narahari Sethi, Deputy DG NCC Odisha J Suresh, Group Commander NCC Cuttack Colonel Rajnish Kapoor, First Odisha Artillery Battery Commanding Officer Soumya Prakash Otta and other line department staff.

During the event, Cuttack DM Chayani said it is a proud privilege for the State and especially for Cuttack district to have such a centre.

## Bags first prize in Nat'l Dance Fest at Ahmedabad

RAJESH BEHERA  
■ KENDRAPADA

The scintillating Sambalpuri folk dance performance of the Royal Dance Academy, Kendrapada at Ahmedabad was highly appreciated by the audience. The Academy became the winner in the folk dance category.

The 9th All India Cultural National Dance Contest and Festival was organized at Ahmedabad from May 22 to 25 by the Akhil Natrajam Aantar Sanskrutik Sangh (ANASS), Nagpur, which is a member of the International Dance Council CID, Paris - France. As many as 381 artists from 28 States from India



participated. The Royal Dance Academy sponsored by the Kendrapada Municipality in collaboration with the district administration and Culture Department participated in the event.

The Academy won the 1st prize along with trophies, medals and certificates by

leaving behind the folk troupes of Kerala, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra. Choreographer Mahesh Padhi received the special "Nrutya Abiskar Award, while Smruti Rekha Pani who participated in solo free style Bollywood dance also bagged third position in the festival.

District Collector Amrit Raturaj and Kendrapada MP Aanubhav Mohanty congratulated the Academy on the occasion. The most important thing was that the artists of the Academy also received a warm welcome during their visit to the Sabarmati Ashram.

## RPDAC meet for Utkal-C coal block a success

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

The Rehabilitation and Peripheral Development Advisory Committee (RPDAC) for Utkal-C coal block of Jindal Steel & Power (JSP) has been conducted here successfully under the chairmanship of RDC Dr Suresh Chandra Dalai.

Angul district Collector Sidharth Shankar Swain, MLA Sushant Behera, representatives of project-displaced and project-affected families, civil society members, NGO/SHG representatives and company



officials were present.

The committee discussed in details about the multiple facets of rehabilitation and resettlement of land losers and project-affected people.

Each displaced family in Utkal-C coal block project will get Rs 35 lakh for resettlement and rehabilitation.

Keeping in view of public sentiments, the ex-gratia of Rs 10 lakh/ acres of land loss has been enhanced upward to Rs 12 lakh/ acre which will also be paid to the land-losing families.

The members expressed satisfaction over the packages and the ex gratia for land loss.

A pro-development ambience has been created in the Utkal C coal block project area.

## He defies cancer, gets 60% marks in +2 exam

NALINI SAHU  
■ BHUBANESWAR

A teenager suffering from blood cancer has defied the challenges posed by the life-threatening ailment to secure good marks in this year's Plus II Science examination.

Meet P Achyuta Rao of Jeypore town in Koraput district. He never lost his spirit and consistently pursued his studies to secure 60% mark in the examination. Although the disease forced him to remain confined to his bed most of the time, he never bowed down to the situation.

Achyuta, who was diagnosed with cancer in 2019, did not treat the examination any less seriously than his fellow students, ultimately coming out with flying colours.

"I pray God to be kind for everyone and see that nobody suffers like me. I was diagnosed with blood cancer after my matriculation examination. Huge sums of money have been spent on my



treatment. Survival was difficult. But in between my treatment, I never neglected my studies. I am very happy that I secured a 60% mark," said he, adding that he had assured his parents and relatives to clear the examination at any cost.

Achyuta's father P Pratap Kumar said, "We have no words to express our joy. Despite his struggle with the disease, he secured 60% marks. He has the ambition to continue higher studies. After another round of checkups, we will decide the further course of action."

## No Tobacco Day observed by Brahmakumaris

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The World No Tobacco Day was observed by the Prajapita Brahmakumari Iswariya Biswavidyalaya, Bhubaneswar, on Wednesday at Om Niwas here.

Jayadev MLA Arbinda Dhali, who was chief guest, stressed upon the need for an addiction-free society. Chief Speaker Director of Sunshine Hospital Prof PK Sahu spoke about the importance of shunning tobacco for good health.

The event was presided over by chief of the institution Sister Brahmakumari Gita. She



said how the Raja Yoga taught by Brahmakumaris' organisation can help people to de-addict from tobacco, cigarette, alcohol and other such vices. She called upon the people of Bhubaneswar and Odisha to practise Raja Yoga

and make the city and the State addiction-free.

Honourable guest social worker Jugal Kishore Sahoo said a healthy society is possible when people give up addiction to tobacco and other drugs.

Brahmakumari Sister

Tripura coordinated the event and offered a vote of thanks.

Under the leadership of Jugal Kishore Sahoo, a free health camp was organised at the Bayababa slum by the Sun Shine Hospital where more than 200 people were treated.

## INBRIEF

### JAGANNATH TEMPLE CLOSED FOR 16 HOURS

Puri: The Jagannath Temple in Puri remained closed for devotees for 16 hours from 10 pm on Friday. The temple would reopen on Saturday at 2 pm, the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) informed. The decision was taken in view of the preparations for the Debasnana Purnima festival as several rituals in this regard will be carried out by the servitors during the period. Debasnana Purnima falls on Sunday (June 4) this year.



### OAS OFFICER BIMALENDU RAY NEW SUBARNAPUR DM

Bhubaneswar: The State Government on Friday appointed OAS officer Bimalendu Ray as the new Collector of Subarnapur district. He was serving as the Special Secretary to Government, Works Department. Ray will replace Suryanarayan Dash as the Collector of the district.



### YOUTH FOUND DEAD NEAR PARADIP POLICE STATION

Paradip: A youth was found dead a few meters away from the Paradip police station on Friday. The deceased was identified as Tubulu Jena of Lokanathpur village under Pattamundai block of Kendrapada district. He was working at a bar in Paradip for last 15 days. The blood-stained body was spotted near the bar. Police recovered the body for postmortem and initiated an investigation to ascertain the circumstances under which he died. It was suspected that he was killed over past enmity. Cops were questioning the bar employees in connection with the incident.

### LEGAL METROLOGY OFFICER HELD TAKING BRIBE

Baleswar: The Vigilance police on Friday caught Sagarika Sabat, Assistant Controller, Legal Metrology, Baleswar, while accepting a bribe of Rs 10,000. Sabat had demanded the money from a petrol pump manager for issuance of inspection and re-verification report of fuel dispense units of the petrol pump. Following the trap, simultaneous searches were carried out at three locations connected with Sabat in Baleswar and Ganjam districts from the disproportionate assets angle.

### INTER CITY TRAIN HALT AT HUMMA DEMANDED

Chhatrapur: Locals of Humma of Ganjam block under the leadership of Humma Samiti Member Dhruv Charan Pallai submitted a memorandum to East Coast Railway General Manager Manoj Sharma on Wednesday demanding halt of the Bhubaneswar-Vizag Inter City Express at the Humma station because this would help the local students, labourers, farmers, businessmen, fisher folk and daily commuters. The team was accompanied by Santosh Mahapatra, Santanu Bariki, Prasant Parida among others. They threatened bigger protests if the railway authorities fail to listen to their grievance.

### SAN AND NEEL DISTRIBUTES BUTTERMILK

Brahmapur: Heat wave has been affecting normal life in Berhampur city like any other place of the State. The San and Neel Foundation led by its president Lion Dharma Rao has been distributing cold buttermilk for last five days to the commuters of the city to give them relief. Locals have appreciated the efforts of the foundation.



### MAKEMYTRIP OPENS FRANCHISE STORE IN CUTTACK

Bhubaneswar: MakeMyTrip, an online travel company, has opened a new franchise store in Cuttack. After Bhubaneswar, the Cuttack outlet is MakeMyTrip's second in Odisha. The franchise network will help serve those customers who may be more comfortable talking to someone they trust.

### NEMHA WINS AITA WOMEN'S TITLE

Bhubaneswar: Leading Odisha tennis player Nemha Sarah Kispotta won her maiden AITA women's title at the age of 16 defeating 2nd seed West Bengal opponent Yubrani Banerjee in the final of the Gurukul AITA-OTA 1 Lakh Tournament at Gurukul Resorts, Bhubaneswar on Thursday.



## Rotary Dist Guv reviews projects

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

District Governor of Rotary 3262 Rtn Pravudutta Subudhi and First Lady Rtn Manjusha Subudhi visited Rotary E Club 3262. On this special occasion of official club visit, the District Governor interacted with the club members about the status of ongoing social projects and also discussed future action plans to accelerate service projects for the upliftment of unreached people and

divyangs. He also took a review on the current projects to make them successful.

President of the club Rtn Dr Chidatmika Khatua delivered the welcome speech. Directors of different committees presented their achievements and also their future action plan to serve the underprivileged and needy.

ADG Rtn Ritu Agarwal and Zonal chair PP Satya Singh Patnaik spoke among others. Rtn Maj Dr Kalpana Dash proposed a vote of thanks.

## JSW, MoEF promote 'Mission LiFE'

### To protect environment

PNS ■ BARBILL

The JSW Steel aims at a philosophy of building sustainable businesses which are rooted in the community and demonstrate care for the environment. The company's thrust is on reducing carbon footprint, using renewable energies, and focusing on a regenerative approach to business.

Also, JSW Steel has taken initiatives to support Mission Life drive, initiated by Government of India. In this

connection, JSW Steel and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India organized a meet here at Barbil office on May 31, 2023 to promote the drive. AT Mishra, Dy Director General of Forest, MoEF& CC, IRO, Bhubaneswar, was the speaker at the event.

Mishra said, "A small changes in environmental conscious lifestyle can minimise global warming. Under Mission Life, we need to follow seven steps: save energy, save water, say no to single use plastic, adopt sustainable food system, reduce waste, adopt healthy



lifestyle and reduce e-waste to minimize the global warming for better future."

Mishra invited all employees to practice sustainable lifestyle and contribute in healing the earth.

The CSR team of JSW Foundation elaborated the initiatives that have been taken for the conservation of

energy. The company promised to practice sustainable activities for the environment.

Mission LiFE is an India-led global mass movement to nudge individual and community action to protect and preserve the environment. Mission LiFE follows the P3 model, which stands for Pro Planet People, focusing on a lifestyle of the planet, for the planet, and by the planet. It advocates for a circular economy, where the concept of reduce, reuse and recycle is crucial to balance development, economic growth, and sustainability.

## S'garh DCC VP Sethi quits, may join BJD

AUROBINDA DAS ■ ROURKELA

Sundargarh District Congress Committee vice president and erstwhile MLA candidate of Raghunathpali Assembly constituency Prasant Sethi resigned from the party's primary membership.

Submitting his resignation to the PCC president, Sethi mentioned that due to certain personal reasons he was quitting the party. In a reply to the scribes regarding his future plan, Sethi said he had not yet thought about his

future political career but he would continue his social activities as usual.

It may be noted here that Sethi had been in regular touch with the people of different slums through his work 'chala bastiku jiba (let's go to slum)' under the banner of his NGO 'Manabikata'. But the political pundits say here that very soon Sethi will be joining the BJD.

According to them, once upon a time Sehi was a close aide to Rourkela MLA and Minister Sarada Nayak. Since 2009 he had been trying for a BJD ticket for Raghunathpali

constituency. When repeatedly he was denied ticket, in 2019 he had joined Congress and contested from Raghunathpali Assembly seat. Though he continued in Congress since then, but he was not comfortable there. Rather, he was still carrying good rapport with Nayak who is now in focus after being inducted in the Naveen Patnaik's Cabinet. So Sethi's sudden resignation from Congress indicates there must be a green signal from the BJD high command on his joining the party.

Secondly, sitting BJD MLA Subrat Tarai is most of the time absent in the area for which the party is also in an awkward position here. Besides, in 2024 Tarai may not be eligible to contest from Raghunathpali seat which is reserved for SC. In this situation, Sethi could be a better choice for the BJD and the vice-versa, say political experts. It may be noted here that in April 2022, the then Rourkela DCC president and former Biramitrapur MLA George Tirkey had also resigned from the primary membership of the party.



# ‘Month-long riots left 310 hurt, 98 dead’

## 37K people in 272 relief camps, says Manipur Govt



PTI ■ IMPHAL

At least 98 people lost their lives and 310 others were injured in the ethnic violence in Manipur that broke out a month ago, the Government said in a statement on Friday. A total of 37,450 people are in 272 relief camps at present, said the statement, issued by the Chief Minister’s Office (CMO).

In all, 4,014 cases of arson have been reported since the violence broke out in the State on May 3, it said. “The number of deaths is 98 and the number of injured reported is 310,” it said.

Over the last one month, the State police has registered 3,734 cases and arrested 65 people for their involvement in the violence, the statement said.

“Sporadic incidents of firing or torching of houses by miscreants are becoming rare now as coordinated effort is made by different security agencies,” it said. The Army, Assam Rifles, CAPFs and local police have been deployed in vulnerable places, it added. Till now, 84 companies of central armed forces have been deployed, the statement said.

“More companies are being

deployed. Flag march and area domination exercises are being carried out widely. Search operations will be conducted from today to recover snatched arms and ammunition,” it said.

Meetings were being held with village heads and civil society organisations to resolve conflict and bring peace, it said, claiming that the situation is normal in most of the districts.

Curfew has been relaxed for 12 hours in Imphal West, Imphal East, Bishnupur and Pherzawl, for 11 hours in Kangpokpi, for 10 hours in Churachandpur and Chandel, for eight hours in Jiribam and Tenugopal, and for seven hours in Thoubal and Kakching districts, it said.

There is no curfew in Tamenglong, Noney, Senapati, Ukhrul and Kamjong, it added.

“Movement of essential items along the NH-37 has been ensured,” the statement said, noting that around 450 trucks were on the move with essential items. An uneasy calm prevailed in Manipur a day after Home Minister Amit Shah left the state, concluding his four-day visit and announcing a slew of measures to bring back normalcy.

# Another district-level BJP leader killed in West Bengal

## Suvendu demands Didi’s resignation, TMC claims intra-party rivalry

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Yet another district-level BJP leader was murdered in Bengal prompting State Opposition leader Suvendu Adhikari to demand Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee’s resignation for her alleged failure as the State’s police Minister.

The demand by Adhikari came after Prashant Roy Basunia an Anchal general secretary of the BJP at Dinhata in Coochbehar district of North Bengal was on Friday morning shot dead in front of his mother following brief heated exchanges with some alleged Trinamool Congress goons, sources said.

Basunia’s mother said that the entire family had fled to Delhi in the face of rampant TMC attacks after the 2021 Assembly elections that saw Mamata Banerjee roaring back to power for the third-consecutive term.

“As soon as we returned to Dinhata they started threatening us... Finally they came today and shot my son from point blank range,” the victim’s mother said. Trinamool legislator from Dinhata Udayan Guha however, said that



Basunia had fallen victim to intra-party rivalry in the BJP.

“It was the result of intra-party bickerings,” he said adding, Basunia himself had a criminal past. “He was under police radar because of his involvement in anti-social activities,” Guha said.

Demanding the Chief Minister’s resignation Adhikari said, “Today’s incident once again proves that the law and order of Bengal has completely collapsed... As the police minister she has failed to control bomb blasts, political murders ... We demand her immediate resignation.” The BJP leader demanded CBI investigation into the murder.

As hordes of TMC workers were deserting TMC and joining the BJP, the ruling party was resorting to political murders, he said reminding how scores of BJP workers had been murdered by the TMC after it came back to power in 2021.

## I can change Bengal in six months if made CM: Mithun

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

In what is being seen as Mumbai cine star Mithun Chakraborty’s hidden chief ministerial ambitions, the BJP leader on Friday said that he would change the face of Bengal in six months’ time if he were to become the State Chief Minister. Alleging that there was a complete collapse of the State administrative system Chakraborty said that he would change things in six months if he was given the chance to become the Chief Minister.

“There is complete collapse of the system in Bengal... It is all round deterioration... But it can be corrected... If by default I am made the Chief Minister for six months then you will see the change,” Chakraborty said inviting immediate attack from the ruling Trinamool Congress.

Calling Chakraborty a chit fund accused who had gone to the BJP to evade arrest, State ruling party spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said, “This is a man who was accused in the chit fund scam... In order to escape arrest he has joined BJP ... And now he is saying all sorts of things against Mamata Banerjee who made him an MP. He is a traitor... He doesn’t deserve any attention because the BJP will never come to power in Bengal.”



# HC defers hearing in Chhota Rajan’s suit against Netflix

## Jailed don seeks to restrain release of series ‘Scoop’

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Friday deferred the hearing of a suit filed by incarcerated underworld don Rajendra S Nikhalje alias Chhota Rajan seeking to restrain release of a Netflix television-series ‘Scoop’ - based on the killing of journalist Jyotirmoy Dey -- on the grounds of infringement on his

personal life, till June 7.

Rajan, who is lodged at Tihar Jail in the national Capital, had moved the High Court on Thursday - had sought restraint on the release of the tele-serial alleging that the serial makers had made a reference to his name (Rajan), image, purported voice and other names associated with Rajan. Rajan has sought Re 1 as damages for personal infringement. The HC Vacation Judge Justice Shivkumar G Dige adjourned the hearing of Rajan’s suit till June 7 after noting that since the television series was already on the air, there was no urgency in the matter. He grant-

ed time to the makers of the television serial to have their say on the serial. “Scoop” is based on a biographical account of one of the co-accused in the Dey murder case, journalist Jigna Vora, who was later acquitted in the case. In his suit, Rajan told the High Court: “My client has been shown as the one behind the murder of Dey. He is convicted in the case. His appeal is pending before the High Court. Should he be portrayed like this in front of the whole world? Lakhs of people are going to watch it. It is going to create a lot of problems for him” Desai argued on behalf of Rajan.



Fifty-six-year-old Dey, who was an Editor (Special Investigations) with ‘Mid-Day’, was gunned down by a group of motorbike-riding gangsters at Powai in north-east Mumbai on June 11, 2011. It may be recalled that a Special Court had on May 2, 2018 convicted Chhota Rajan and eight others for the sensational murder and sentenced

# Guj court rejects anticipatory bail plea of BJP MP’s father in case of abetting doctor’s suicide

PTI ■ VERAVAL

Sessions court in Gujarat’s Gir Somnath district on Friday rejected the anticipatory bail plea filed by BJP MP Rajesh Chudasama’s father Naranbhai Chudasama in a case of abetment to suicide.

The court of sessions judge P G Gokani in Veraval town rejected 62-year-old Naranbhai’s anticipatory bail plea, citing that the police investigation in the case has just started and it will not be appropriate to give any relief at this juncture,

especially when the crime is of a serious nature. An FIR was registered against the Chudasamas in May after Dr Atul Chag, a well known MD physician in the town, was found hanging from a ceiling fan at his house on February 12.

The police registered an FIR against the MP from Junagadh Lok Sabha seat, and his father under Sections 306 (abetment to suicide) and 506-2 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code.

While the legislator has not filed any plea as yet, Naranbhai filed a plea a few days ago seeking anticipatory bail on var-

ious grounds.

As per the FIR, registered three months after the doctor’s death, the Chudasamas had a close relationship with him for the last 20 years and had borrowed nearly Rs 1.75 crore from him in instalments since 2008 by winning his trust. They allegedly gave Dr Chag a few cheques.

However, when they stopped responding to Dr Chag’s repeated requests to return the money, he deposited one of their cheques of Rs 90 lakh in a bank, but it was dishonoured, the FIR

stated.

Days before the suicide, the duo allegedly abused Dr Chag verbally and threatened to kill his only son Hitarth for demanding the money back, the FIR stated, adding that the threat and the thought of losing money and his son deeply upset the doctor, who took the extreme step out of shock and fear.

In his plea, Naranbhai claimed that although no concrete evidence has been found against them so far, the police suddenly lodged an FIR against them just because his son is an MP.

# Guv ‘dismisses’ Bengal Govt’s claim of not being consulted on VC appointments

PTI ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Governor Dr CV Ananda Bose on Friday “dismissed” state Education Minister Bratya Basu’s claim that Bose had appointed interim vice-chancellors for 11 universities without consulting the State Government. He implicitly said that there had been consultation but that his office had not necessarily agreed with the State Government’s recommendations. “Consultation does not mean concurrence,” said Bose on the sidelines of a programme held at Raj Bhavan.

Calcutta, Jadavpur and Burdwan universities are among the 11 varsities where interim VCs have been appointed by the Governor, who is the chancellor of all the State-aided or run varsities.

Sources in Raj Bhavan claimed that 10 interim VCs, barring one in Dakshin Dinajpur district, joined duty and signed the guidelines issued by the Chancellor.

“The interim vice-chancellor of a university in Dakshin Dinajpur district was getting threatening calls from unidentified people, hence he chose not to join,” a source in the state education



department said.

Hours after the Governor’s office issued a list appointing interim VCs on Thursday, Basu said the Raj Bhavan’s decision was “unilateral” and “violates the law”.

“We came to know from the news media that the honourable chancellor has appointed Vice-Chancellors of 10 State-aided universities. These

appointments were made without consulting the department. This was done in contravention of the rules laid down for the appointment of VCs and this is illegal. In these unprecedented circumstances we, on behalf of the department, are taking legal opinions on what steps could be initiated in future,” Basu tweeted.

“On behalf of the higher education department, we are respectfully requesting the vice-chancellors who have been appointed illegally to reject this appointment,” the minister tweeted.

In an apparent response to Basu’s tweet, the governor said, “Raj Bhavan clarifies that consultation in the matter of appointment of interim VCs or authorising someone to perform the functions of an interim VC has been done.”

# Vijayan to preside over World Kerala Sabha in New York

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his Cabinet colleagues are on Cloud Nine as they are set to leave the Indian shores for a ten-day trip to the US and Cuba. Vijayan will preside over the World Kerala Sabha to be held in New York, which according to the CPI-M leaders in the State as well as in the US, is the largest-ever congregation of Malayalees seen anywhere outside India.

Tickets to share the podium with the Chief Minister are being sold at an unbelievable price of Rs 85,00,000 per person. The holders of these tickets can share the table with Vijayan, according to Manmadhan Nair, a New York-based CPI-M activist.

The donors would get special audience with the Chief Minister when they call on their relatives in Kerala and this is being seen as a scheme by the industries department of the State to make overseas Malayalees invest in their home State.

Though the CPI-M-led Kerala Government had completed seven years in office, the Ministers and party leaders are groping in the dark when asked about the economic and industrial development of the State. To make matters worse, three farmers committed sui-



cide in the State in quick succession as a result of debt they accrued because of the indifferent approach of cooperative banks in Kerala.

“We do not expect the Chief Minister’s trip to yield any results because people in US know well that Kerala under the CPI-M is not a safe bet,” said Ramesh Chennithala, former Leader of the Opposition and slammed the sale of tickets for premium seating next to the Chief Minister.

However, the Chief Minister’s entourage is confident of attracting US entrepreneurs to Kerala to set up businesses here.

The fact that the Central Government could not do any harm to the Chief Minister or his family despite unleashing all central agencies on them over charges of gold smuggling, money laundering and high-level corruption, has bolstered their confidence.

# Saddled with ₹8 lakh-crore loans, Telangana plunged into debt trap: Union Min



PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Union Minister for Tourism G Kishan Reddy on Friday slammed the K Chandrasekhar Rao-led BRS government for plunging Telangana into a debt trap on the back of alleged rampant corruption and suicides of farmers.

After hoisting the national flag at the historic Golconda Fort on Telangana’s 10th State Formation Day, Reddy said there is a need to introspect whether the State is transforming according to the aspirations of the people and martyrs of the statehood movement.

“The budget debt of the State is Rs 3.12 lakh crore. Through PSUs, corporation banks, NBFCs, NABARD, Power Finance Corporation and RBI, the Government raised

about Rs 8 lakh crore debt. The State is plunging into a debt pile... Telangana borrowed over Rs 8 lakh worth loans from various organisations,” he charged.

He alleged that the State Government has slipped into a position where it is unable to pay salaries to its employees and bills to small contractors.

“Telangana was made as a slave in the hands of one family. There is rampant corruption in the state,” he further fired.

He said as many as 360 people in the first phase of the struggle and about 1,200 people died in the third phase of the Telangana statehood struggle. He claimed that the state government has borrowed money from all the institutions that can give loans in the world and the debt funds were not spent on welfare and development.

## TDP fought for equal justice for both: Naidu

PTI ■ AMARAVATI

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) fought for equal justice for both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana States during bifurcation, N Chandrababu Naidu said on Friday.

The TDP chief made these remarks as nine years have passed since the bifurcation of the former undivided Andhra Pradesh, and the 10th anniversary of Telangana Formation Day has been grandly celebrated. “With a view to developing the State after bifurcation, TDP had taken the ‘Nava Nirmana Deeksha’ and despite the State being in a deficit budget, we have taken all possible measures to take Andhra Pradesh on the progressive path,” said the former Chief Minister in a Press note shared on Friday night.

He said that freedom fighter Potti Sriramulu, who is considered the founding father of Andhra Pradesh, had sacrificed his life for the formation of the Telugu State in 1952 and former Chief Minister NT Rama Rao had floated the TDP for the progress of the Telugu community.



The Indian flag flutters alongside the EGRIP Dome on the breathtaking Greenland ice sheet on Friday.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

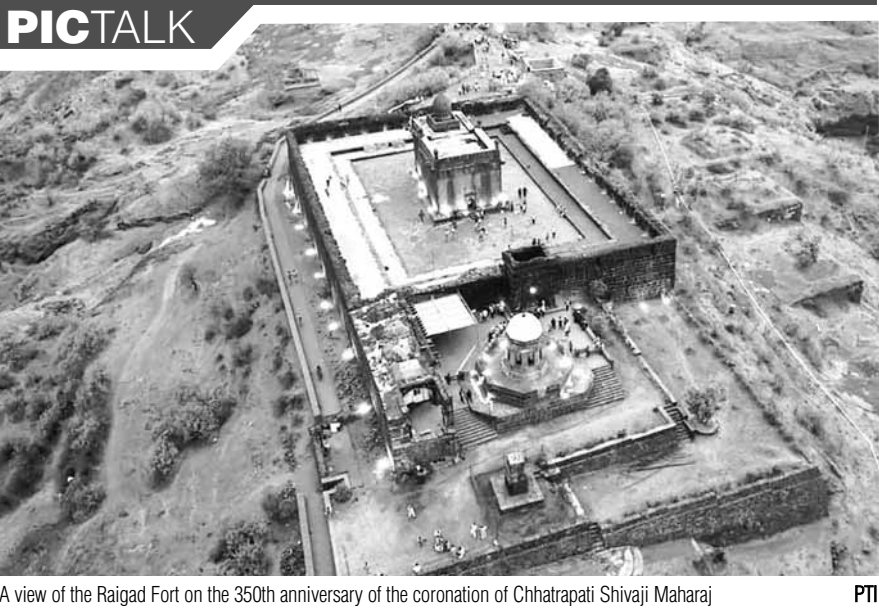
## Green Day

We must realise that we can afford to ignore environmental issues only at our own peril

The World Environment Day, celebrated annually on June 5, is unlike any other for, if nothing else, the sheer importance it holds for our survival and that of our future generations. It's quite understandable to scoff at yet another 'World This Day' or 'World That Day', especially since it doesn't hold any personal or intimate meaning in our lives such as our birthday or Mother's Day or Father's Day but what lends it gravitas is that it's much more than an individual's celebration: It calls for joint efforts by the global communities - in fact all of humanity - to protect, safeguard and conserve nature, lest we all shall perish before too long. With the increasing urgency of environmental issues, this day serves as a powerful reminder that we cannot afford to overlook the state of our environment. Unfortunately, and as a result of mankind's own doing, the world today faces unprecedented environmental challenges, including climate change, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, pollution and water scarcity, among others. These issues not only impact ecosystems and wildlife but also pose severe threats to human health, livelihood and future generations. The day aims to unite diverse stakeholders, including individuals, organisations, Governments and communities around the world, in fostering global collaboration and solidarity. It also serves as a platform for sharing ideas, best practices and innovative approaches to tackle environmental challenges effectively.



In this light, we must train ourselves to make sincere efforts in becoming more aware of the causes that have led to, and are still leading to, issues like global warming, water scarcity and deforestation. On a very basic scale, it's also high time to plant and nurture trees as well as to reduce mankind's carbon footprint by cutting down on the greenhouse gas emissions by adapting to greener and healthier technologies rather than shamelessly using air-conditioners and fossil fuel-guzzling vehicles. In this time and age, when we have technologies such as electric vehicles available to us for use, what stops us from holding out that little bit of extra down payment initially and go for an electric vehicle which would stand us and the environment in good stead in the years to come? From minimising waste, recycling material and conserving energy to promoting eco-friendly transportation and embracing renewable resources, the global citizen must vow individual action in mitigating environmental degradation. Though the Governments have already woken up to this existential threat, what with a host of groupings like COP 27 working overtime to tackle the menace, it also helps promote policy changes and advocacy efforts. The day reminds Governments to enact and enforce environmental regulations, supports the development of sustainable policies and encourages lawmakers to prioritise environmental protection. So let's not stand in the way of a green Earth; in fact, let's help lay a new path that rejuvenates our tiring planet.



A view of the Raigad Fort on the 350th anniversary of the coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

## The multiple benefits of community-driven learning

Learners band together in a supportive environment, pooling knowledge and focusing on growing personally as well as professionally

Remember the days when getting a job meant you were pretty much set for life, and learning one skill meant you could get through your entire career until retirement? Well, those days are long gone! We're living in an age where tech is the real boss, and it's changing faster than you can say 'artificial intelligence'.

So, what's the secret to staying employable in this rapidly changing world? It's simple: never stop learning, folks. That's where upskilling comes in. And as more of us realise the importance of keeping up with the times, community-driven learning is starting to make waves.

Community-driven learning is a whole new approach where learners band together in a supportive environment, pooling their knowledge and focusing on growing personally, as well as professionally. It's all about learning together and getting better together.

Collective knowledge and experience – The thing about community learning is that you've got people from all walks of life coming together. That's a treasure trove of



insights and perspectives to tap into! Active discussions, project collaborations, and sharing of experiences can enable learners to tap into this extensive pool and gain a much broader understanding of the subject. Further, the peer-to-peer learning opportunities enrich the experience and provide real-world opinions that classic educational settings don't usually offer.

Enhanced motivation and engagement – Let's face it, learning on your own can get lonely. But when you part of a community, there's a sense of belonging and accountability. You're not just learning buddies; you're each other's cheerleaders. It's that sense of camaraderie that makes the learning experience a whole lot more enriching and fun.

Networking opportunities – Since the premise of

community-driven upskilling is based on collaborative learning and engagement, it fosters networking among learners. Also, learners might find their future business partner, their next job, or just some cool people to help them stay updated on the latest industry trends. It's precisely connections like these that we turn to in times of professional hardships, and what's a better way to forge these meaningful connections than by learning and struggling on projects together?

Continuous learning and lifelong engagement – Community-driven learning is not only helpful in better understanding different industries and functions but also fosters a lifelong learning and development mindset. As the skills, tools, and technologies keep changing every few years, it has become crucial for the modern workforce to regularly upskill, relearn, and engage with others to remain up to date on trends and technologies. Community-driven upskilling initiatives bring together like-minded individuals who all have the same

drive for continuous learning and growth.

Flexibility – Community-based learning offers great flexibility in terms of upskilling. The courses offered by digital platforms are of short durations such as one to four weeks, and sessions are held on weekends or in the evenings to accommodate learners with full-time jobs. The courses are affordable and what's not to love about learning real-world skills from industry experts, all from the comfort of your own home?

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So, here's the bottom line: community-driven upskilling is revolutionizing professional development. It's not just about climbing the ladder; it's about fostering rapid growth. For those new to the corporate world, it's your pathway to better job satisfaction and stronger compensation. And this isn't a fleeting trend. It's about long-term resilience in your career. So get ready, because this journey into upskilling is just getting started.

(The author is Founder & CEO, of Growth School)



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FIRST COLUMN

KARNATAKA GOVT TO  
CREATE A MILLION JOBS

Its mass entrepreneurship programme will create 10 lakh jobs in the first 100 days



LAKSHMI VENKATARAMAN **VENKATESAN**

With expectations running high, the newly minted Karnataka Government of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has both an obligation and an opportunity to redress the unemployment concerns raised by 28% of Karnataka's youth and fulfil their aspirations. Rahul Gandhi, taking full cognisance of this issue, has promised 10 lakh jobs in the next five years. The Congress Government led by Siddaramaiah can get a head start on fulfilling these promises, in its first 100 days, by laying the foundation for sustainable job creation and by instituting programs and policies for mass skilling and entrepreneurship. The challenges for Karnataka are manifold. As per an analysis of Karnataka PLFS data, overall youth unemployment is at nearly 16% but of that subset, educated young people are the most vulnerable. Nearly 35% of educated young people are unemployed and only 14% of women are gainfully employed. To give immediate relief to the unemployed, Rahul Gandhi has proposed the Yuva Nidhi scheme of providing Rs. 3000 per month to unemployed graduates and Rs. 1500 every month to unemployed diploma holders. This, however, needs to be augmented by bold, new long-term solutions that address the root cause of unemployment rather than symptom management. While doing so the new government needs to avoid the pitfalls of past misguided interventions - mismatches between types of skilling and industry needs and mandating the private sector to hire a fixed number of workers - to name a few. Mass entrepreneurship in Karnataka has the potential to empower a significant number of young people to set up their own enterprises spread across a wide range of geographies – especially in Northern Karnataka and in rural areas. An imaginative collaboration between government, private sector, civil society, and youth could be a game changer in democratising enterprise creation, setting up innovation funds, and building industry-specific programmes and partnerships with incubators, accelerators and youth-centric NGOs. To make entrepreneurial opportunities widely accessible, awareness generation campaigns can be launched through Rural Business Idea Contests, and Entrepreneurial Hackathons in educational institutions. Entrepreneurship needs to be made an integral part of education in schools and colleges in Karnataka similar to what the Delhi Government has done.



Banks must lend more to micro-enterprises rather than dole out small loans (the average Mudra loan is Rs. 27,000) to create viable businesses that build assets and generate jobs. Additional efforts should be made to support women as 85% of them face challenges in availing bank loans. Karnataka can also launch state-wide mentor programmes, particularly for the educated unemployed as mentoring greatly improves chances of entrepreneurs' success, according to a study conducted across 17 countries by Sage. Rural and sector-specific entrepreneurship can be encouraged by providing rural-specific infrastructure, connectivity, grants, subsidies, low-interest loans, and tax breaks. Special schemes, grants, and mentorship programs should be instated to address gender disparities and promote gender equity. Digital entrepreneurship can be encouraged through digital literacy training, support for digital platforms and marketplaces, and digital innovation. Key gaps in the policy landscape need to be filled by providing an enabling ecosystem with infrastructure and connectivity, simplifying regulations and expanding incentives to non-technology and non-Bengaluru-based startups. These steps, planned and executed synergistically, can help Karnataka realise the vision of creating 10 lakh jobs in five years for its youth and women, through a grassroots mass entrepreneurship movement spanning every town, taluka and village. *(The writer is the Founding and Managing Trustee of Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust)*

# India's stake in Awami League's Victory

Bangladesh will again become a centre of anti-India activities, should a BNP-Jama'at-led coalition return to power in Dhaka in coming elections



India must do everything possible, within four corners of international law and with absolute respect for Bangladesh's sovereignty, to help Sheikh Hasina-led Bangladesh Awami League win the parliamentary elections scheduled in that country in January 2024. Begum Khaleda Zia-led Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the main opposition party, which is allied to the Bangladesh Jama'at-e-Islami (Jama'at) and other fundamentalist Islamist organisations, is pathologically anti-India. Bangladesh will again become a centre of anti-India activity and promoter of north-eastern India's secessionist insurgent groups, should a BNP-Jama'at-led coalition return to power in Dhaka. A look at the record of the BNP-Jama'at-led coalition government when it was in power from 2001 to 2006, makes this clear. The issuance of threats to India, the active promotion of secessionist insurgent violence in north-eastern India, and attempts to create a climate of hostility toward India in Bangladesh were the three main features of Dhaka's policy towards Delhi. An important example of the threats was one by its foreign minister, M. Morshed Khan, at a seminar in Dhaka on September 7, 2004. Referring to what he said were restrictions imposed by India on the import of goods from his country, he said, "Dhaka could end India's three billion-dollar trade here by issuing an SRO (Statutory Rogatory Order) on all Indian goods entering Bangladesh." Striking an even more minatory note, he said, "Bangladesh is India-locked. Delhi should also remember that the seven north-eastern Indian states are Bangladesh-locked." While an attempt to

THREATS TO INDIA, THE ACTIVE PROMOTION OF INSURGENTS, VIOLENCE IN NORTH-EASTERN INDIA, AND ATTEMPTS TO CREATE A CLIMATE OF HOSTILITY TOWARD INDIA WERE MAIN FEATURES OF DHAKA'S POLICY TOWARDS DELHI

*(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)*

intimidate India was implicit in his reference to the vulnerability of India's north-eastern states vis-à-vis Bangladesh, an attempt to sow discord between these states and the rest of India was scripted into his blasting of the "Central Bank of India" (Reserve Bank of India?) for acting unilaterally against the interests of the common people of India (by imposing non-tariff barriers) such as not allowing individual states to open letters of credit without permission from Delhi. The policy of providing sanctuary and support to north-eastern India's rebel groups, began when Bangladesh was East Pakistan, but halted after liberation in 1971 when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was in power and resumed after his assassination. Begum Khaleda Zia's government pursued it with vigour. In fact, when she was the leader of the opposition in Bangladesh's national parliament, she had referred to rebels of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and other insurgent groups of north-eastern India as "freedom fighters." Not surprisingly, her government ridiculed India's protests supported by information. Referring to the list of insurgent camps in Bangladesh provided by India's Border Security Force (BSF), Major-General Mohammad Jahangir Alam Khan of the Bangladesh Rifles, visiting India for talks with BSF's director-general, Ajay Raj Sharma, said in Delhi on September 28, 2004,

"There is not a single camp in Bangladesh. We looked for the camps' locations given in the BSF list. Some of the addresses were of our cantonment area and of our headquarters....some of the addresses even pertained to the Bay of Bengal." In sharp contrast, the present government under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has not only shut these camps down but handed over to India some of the key insurgent leaders it could apprehend. As a part of its attempt to create an anti-India temper in Bangladesh, Begum Khaleda Zia's government even insinuated that India was behind the dastardly grenade attack on the Awami League's rally in Dhaka on August 21, 2004. Sheikh Hasina survived—albeit with injuries—the attack, which was aimed at killing her and eliminating the Awami League's top leadership. Twenty-four (including 22 on the spot) died and 300 were injured. Among those who succumbed to their injuries was Ivy Rahman, secretary of the Awami League's women's affairs wing and wife of Zillur Rahman, then the party's general secretary and subsequently the country's president. Justice Joynul Abedin, a senior judge of the High Court Division of Bangladesh's Supreme Court, appointed on August 22 as a single-person commission to inquire into the attack, submitted his report on October 2, 2004. He said at a press briefing before submitting his report that local and

foreign terrorists and other culprits had launched the attack in a pre-planned way to destroy Bangladesh's democracy, independence and sovereignty. A report in the Independent of Bangladesh on October 3, 2004, which cited dispatch by the Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha, the country's government-controlled national news agency as stating this, further said that, according to the commission, the attackers were foreign agents. Justice Abedin, who had once been a BNP functionary, did not identify the foreigners. Asked to elaborate on what he meant by saying that the grenade attack was the work of foreign agents, he said during a telephone conversation with Golam Mohiuddin of Bangladesh's daily, Prothom Alo on October 3, that he had taken into special consideration Bangladesh's geographical location and the politics of the sub-continent. He further said, "it becomes foreign the moment one crosses the geographical boundary of the country." Asked whether the commission's report mentioned the foreign country which was the closest (obviously India) he did not deny it but said, "I cannot answer this question of yours." This clearly implied that India could have been the country. Significantly, among those sentenced by a special tribunal on October 10, 2018, for complicity in the grenade attack, were important BNP leaders.

# Flawed ICMR paper on vaping continues to cause harm

Another year records over 13 lakh tobacco deaths in India alone because regular combustible cigarettes and tobacco remain widely available to all ages

While other countries reconsider their tobacco control options and embrace tobacco harm reduction, with some even reversing previous bans on nicotine vaping, we in India seem obsessed with the "implementation" of an ill-conceived ban on ENDS/E-cigarettes. People have even filed PILs against e-cigarettes and become instant celebrities. In all this noise, no one appears to care that regular combustible cigarettes and tobacco remain widely available to all ages - with the last GYTS (Global Youth Tobacco Survey - 4) even showing 8.5% of current underage tobacco users with an average age of initiation at 9-11 years (Total population of 0-16-year-olds: ~ 38-40 crores or



KIRAN **MELKOTE**

*(The author is the director of the Association of Harm Reduction Education and Research)*

25% of our population) – there are multiple tobacco sellers in plain sight of schools yet we hardly bat an eyelid. Why is this not worrying anyone enough to file PILs against this? Why no one is calling for the "implementation" of the cigarette and tobacco laws banning sales to minors? Yet, if we are fixated on e-cigarettes or rather nicotine vapes (or I'll start calling nicotine gum cigarette gum), it's time we take a long hard look at the infamous ICMR white paper on ENDS released 4 years ago that led to the ban on the manufacture, transport, sale etc. of nicotine vapes. The paper called for a complete ban on vaping but the law does allow personal use. This paper was roundly criticized at the time by

renowned global experts as well as by senior doctors at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi. The claim of harm reduction was incorrectly assessed by the ICMR paper. The contrast should have been between risks posed by nicotine vapes versus risks posed by cigarettes and bidis. Instead, the contrast was between uncertain long-term health effects versus widespread nicotine addiction in youth. So what harm exactly does "nicotine addiction" cause? Especially if the nicotine is separate from tobacco. Looking at the various proven carcinogens and toxic chemicals in tobacco and the clear absence of these in nicotine vapes, there is no magical process by which

vaping becomes nearly as dangerous as smoking. The relative risks have been estimated as 95% to 99% safer than cigarettes and even if these figures are overstated, the fact remains that nicotine vapes are far, far safer than cigarettes or bidis. There is no combustion in nicotine vapes (apart from poorly designed lab studies where vaping coils are overheated and burned to failure and the smoke is inhaled by poor trapped rats). In the real world, a vaper getting a "burnt taste" from a dried coil would immediately stop and get a new coil or cartridge. Every single time. Nicotine vapes were also implicated in the EVALI outbreak where illegal THC cut with Vitamin E acetate was found to be the culprit. Despite the wide availability of nicotine vapes, there has not been a corresponding rise in EVALI. Papers with an unsound methodology that claimed vaping caused heart disease have also been retracted. The ICMR paper also called into question "tobacco cessation claims" of nicotine vapes saying they were unproven. On the contrary, nicotine vapes are now the most popular means to quit smoking worldwide. A recent Cochrane review in Nov 2022 (78 studies, 40 RCTs, total of 22052 subjects) showed "high-certainty evidence that ECs with nicotine increase quit rates compared to NRT". The UK government has even launched the "swap to stop" programme where 1 million

smokers will receive free nicotine vapes to reach a smoke-free society by 2030. A statement by 15 past presidents of SRNT (Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco) calls for considering the use of nicotine vaping as a means to double the quit rate. The preponderance of evidence globally is in favour of nicotine vaping as preferable to smoking. A prominent concern also raised by the ICMR paper was about vaping being a "gateway" into tobacco use and ending up in a "nicotine addiction" even after cessation of smoking or as some folks have put it: exchanging one addiction for another. We need to consider two things here. First, nicotine is not carcinogenic and is not associated with the detrimental effects of tobacco. There are no studies that have established any detrimental effects of long-term nicotine replacements. Second, the "gateway" theory has been comprehensively debunked in the real world. The same youth who smoke tend to also vape. It's not vaping that has suddenly led to young people picking up a smoking habit. The ban on nicotine vaping has not served the cause of tobacco control. It has instead boosted cigarette sales and led to the current situation where youth awareness of vaping has increased to nearly 25%. A situation where tobacco control people think nicotine vapes are more dangerous than cigarettes or bidis and have largely ignored the latter.



# Debt ceiling deal gets Senate nod

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Fending off a US default, the Senate gave final approval late on Thursday to a debt ceiling and budget cuts package, grinding into the night to wrap up work on the bipartisan deal and send it to President Joe Biden's desk to become law before the fast-approaching deadline.

The compromise package negotiated between Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy leaves neither Republicans nor Democrats fully pleased with the outcome.

But the result, after weeks of hard-fought budget negotiations, shelves the volatile debt ceiling issue that risked upending the US and global economy until 2025 after the next presidential election.

Approval in the Senate on a bipartisan vote, 63-36, somewhat reflected the overwhelming House tally the day before, relying on centrists in both parties to pull the Biden-McCarthy package to passage — though

Democrats led the tally in both chambers. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said ahead of voting that the bill's passage means "America can breathe a sigh of relief."

Afterward he said, "We've saved the country from the scourge of default."

Biden said in a statement following passage that senators from both parties "demonstrated once more that America is a nation that pays its bills and meets its obligations — and always will be."

He said he would sign the bill into law as soon as possible. "No one gets everything they want in a negotiation, but make no mistake: this bipartisan agreement is a big win for our economy and the American people," the president said.

The White House said he would address the nation about the matter at 7 pm EDT Friday.

Fast action was vital if Washington hoped to meet next Monday's deadline, when Treasury has said the US will

start running short of cash to pay its bills, risking a devastating default.

Raising the nation's debt limit, now \$31.4 trillion, would ensure Treasury could borrow to pay already incurred US debts.

In the end, the debt ceiling showdown was a familiar high-stakes battle in Congress, a fight taken on by McCarthy and powered by a hard-right House Republican majority confronting the Democratic president with a new era of divided government in Washington. Refusing a once routine vote to allow a the nation's debt limit to be lifted without concessions, McCarthy brought Biden's White House to the negotiating table to strike an agreement that forces spending cutbacks aimed at curbing the nation's deficits. Overall, the 99-page bill restricts spending for the next two years, suspends the debt ceiling into January 2025 and changes some policies, including imposing new work requirements for older Americans receiving food aid

and green lighting an Appalachian natural gas line that many Democrats oppose.

It bolsters funds for defense and veterans, cuts back new money for Internal Revenue Service agents and rejects Biden's call to roll back Trump-era tax breaks on corporations and the wealthy to help cover the nation's deficits. It imposes automatic 1 per cent cuts if Congress fails to approve its annual spending bills. After the House overwhelmingly approved the package late on Wednesday, Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell signaled he too wanted to waste no time ensuring it became law.

Touting its budget cuts, McConnell said on Thursday, "The Senate has a chance to make that important progress a reality." Having remained largely on the sidelines during much of the Biden-McCarthy negotiations, several senators insisted on debate over their ideas to reshape the package.

But making any changes at

this stage would almost certainly derail the compromise and none were approved.

Instead, senators dragged through rounds of voting late into the night rejecting the various amendments, but making their preferences clear. Conservative Republican senators wanted to include further cut spending, while Democratic Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia sought to remove the Mountain Valley Pipeline approval. The energy pipeline is important to Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., and he defended the development running through his state, saying the country cannot run without the power of gas, coal, wind and all available energy sources. But, offering an amendment to strip the pipeline from the package, Kaine argued it would not be fair for Congress to step into a controversial project that he said would also course through his state and scoop up lands in Appalachia that have been in families for generations.



President Joe Biden falls on stage during the 2023 United States Air Force Academy Graduation Ceremony at Falcon Stadium, on Thursday at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo. AP/PTI

## Iran releases 1 Danish, two Austrian citizens

**Berlin (AP):** Iran has released one Danish and two Austrian citizens, the European countries said on Friday, thanking Oman and Belgium for their help in getting the trio freed. Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg said he was "very relieved" that Kamran Ghaderi and Massud Mossaheb were being brought home after "years of arduous detention in Iran".

Denmark's foreign minister, Lars Lokke Rasmussen, said that he was "happy and relieved that a Danish citizen is on his way home to his family in Denmark after imprisonment in Iran". He didn't name the person, saying their identity was "a personal matter" and he couldn't go into details.

Schallenberg thanked the foreign ministers of Belgium and Oman for providing "valuable support", without elaborating on what form it took. Lokke Rasmussen thanked Belgium and said that Oman "played an important role". An Oman Royal Air Force Gulfstream IV, which had been on the ground in Tehran for several days, took off shortly before the announcement.

## Albanese stresses need for diplomacy, guardrails in dealing with China

AP ■ SINGAPORE

As tensions grow between the United States and China in the Asia-Pacific, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese told a gathering of top defense officials on Friday that open channels of communication are critical for preserving peace, while also advocating effective deterrence. Albanese, who has been expanding Australia's military power in response to China's growing military assertiveness in the South China Sea, the South Pacific and the East China Sea, said he has also been working to stabilise the country's diplomatic relations with China. "We recognise there are fundamental differences in our two nations' systems of government, our values and our world views," he said in his keynote address to the annual Shangri-La dialogue.

"But we begin from the principle that whatever the issue, whether we agree or disagree, it is always better and it is always more effective if we deal direct." Both US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and China's new defense minister, Gen. Li Shangfu, were in the



A police officer guards near the entrance of the Shangri-La Hotel, the venue for the 20th International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Shangri-La Dialogue, Asia's annual defense and security forum, in Singapore on Friday. AP/PTI

audience as Albanese spoke.

Ahead of the conference, Li rejected a request from Austin to meet on the sidelines, but the two shook hands before sitting down at opposite sides of the same table just before Albanese's address. Both the US and China have been intensifying efforts to win influence in the region, and the weekend dialogue, hosted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies think tank, provides an opportunity for one-on-one discussions with their regional counterparts, diplomats and leaders. Austin opens the dialogue on Saturday with a speech, and Li will follow on Sunday. Australia is a stal-

wart American ally in the region, and Albanese stressed that while China's "extraordinary economic transformation" has been a benefit to the entire region, China has also benefited from "a regional architecture that facilitates free trade, encourages the sharing of knowledge, spurs innovation and builds people-to-people connections."

"American leadership has been an indispensable part of this," he said. He also said there was a need for "guardrails" to ensure that no "one nation imagines itself too big for the rules," which he said is part of the reason he has found it necessary to boost.

Australia's defense capabilities. Beijing has strongly criticised Australia's participation in the so-called AUKUS partnership, which links it with the United States and Britain to create an Australian fleet of eight nuclear-powered submarines. "Australia's goal is not to prepare for war, but to prevent it through deterrence and reassurance and building resilience in the region, doing our part to fulfill the shared responsibility," he said.

## Jens Stoltenberg heading to Turkiye in fresh push on Swedish membership

**Brussels (AP):** NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg will hold talks with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and other senior Turkish officials this weekend as pressure mounts on Turkiye to lift its objections to Sweden joining the military organisation.

In a statement on Friday, NATO headquarters said Stoltenberg would attend Erdogan's inauguration, after the long-term Turkish leader won an election runoff last weekend.

The former Norwegian prime minister will also take part in meetings in Turkiye on Sunday. No details were provided.

NATO wants to bring Sweden into the fold by the time allied leaders meet in Lithuania on July 11-12, but Turkiye and Hungary have yet to endorse the move. All 31 member countries must ratify a candidate's accession protocol for it to join.

## Biden falls from stage, says he got 'sandbagged'

**Colorado (AP):** President Joe Biden quipped that he got "sandbagged" on Thursday after he tripped and fell — but was uninjured — while onstage at the US Air Force Academy graduation.

Biden had been greeting the graduates in Colorado Springs, Colorado, at the front of the stage with salutes and handshakes, and turned to jog back toward his seat when he fell. He was helped up by an Air Force officer as well as two members of his US Secret Service detail. Onlookers, including some members of the official delegation onstage, watched in concern before Biden, who at age 80 is the oldest president in US history, returned to his seat to view the end of the ceremony.

"I got sandbagged," the president told reporters with a smile when he arrived back at the White House on Thursday evening before pretending to jog into the residence. Two small black sandbags had been

onstage supporting the teleprompter used by Biden and other speakers at the graduation.

"He's fine," White House communications director Ben LaBolt tweeted after the incident. "There was a sandbag on stage while he was shaking hands."

Biden has been dogged by questions about his age and his fitness to serve, and his missteps have become fodder for political rivals as he campaigns for a second term in 2024. He has stumbled before going up the stairs and onto Air Force One and he once got caught up in his bike pedals while stopping to talk to reporters near his home in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware.

Biden's personal doctor said after the president's most recent physical exam in February that Biden "remains a healthy, vigorous 80-year-old male, who is fit to successfully execute the duties of the Presidency."

## Prachanda may visit China next month

**Kathmandu (PTI):** Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" is likely to visit China next month or in early August, a leader of the ruling party said on Friday, in what could be the senior Maoist leader's second bilateral visit abroad since assuming office in December 2022. Prachanda on Wednesday left for India on an official visit for talks with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi and other leaders to further bolster the age-old, multifaceted and cordial ties between the two countries.

Prachanda is currently leading a high-level delegation of more than 100 members to India. This is the 68-year-old Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-Maoist) leader's first bilateral visit abroad since assuming office last year.

Following his visit to India, he is likely to visit China next month.

## Elahi re-arrested

**Lahore (PTI):** The President of Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party Parvez Elahi was on Friday arrested again minutes after a judicial magistrate here ordered his release in an embezzlement case.

Elahi, a close aide to former prime minister Khan, was a day earlier arrested outside his residence in Punjab province in the Rs 70 million corruption case related to the embezzlement of development funds allocated for the Gujrat district. The former chief minister of Punjab province was re-arrested by officials of the Anti-Corruption Establishment Punjab in a corruption case registered against him in Gujranwala, Geo News reported. Judicial Magistrate Ghulam Murtaza Virk issued Elahi's release order while announcing the verdict he had reserved on a plea seeking the PTI leader's physical remand. "Parvez Elahi should be released if he is not wanted in any other case," the verdict said. Murtaza had reserved the verdict after hearing the former

Punjab chief minister's case, where ACE Punjab requested the court for his 14-day physical remand. Elahi's counsel Advocate Rana Intizar informed the court that all documents related to the projects were available. "Anti-corruption watchdog is introducing its own law under which the judge hearing the cases will be of their choice," the council said, adding that on January 17 a payment worth Rs 360 million was made when Naqvi was the chief minister. Earlier on Friday, the 77-year-old leader claimed innocence and said that he was a "supporter" of the Pakistan Army, urging party supporters to stay strong. Speaking to reporters before his appearance in the court, Elahi said: "I am innocent and a supporter of the Pakistan Army." While speaking to Geo News, Elahi without naming anybody took a jibe at the former party leaders who announced their decision to part ways with PTI chief Imran Khan, saying that he won't hold any press conference.

## Anti-terror court extends Imran bail till June 13

PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan on Friday appeared before an anti-terrorism court here and secured an extension to his pre-arrest bail till June 13 in three cases, including an attack on a top military commander's residence in Lahore, a court official said. Khan, 70, who appeared before the ATC Lahore amid high security, reiterated that he faces "serious threats" to his life. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party chairman also appeared before the Lahore High Court to seek an extension to his bail in the murder case of PTI worker Zille Shah. The Lahore High Court has extended his bail in the case till June 6.

The ATC, Judge Ijaz Ahmad Buttar questioned why he (Khan) is not joining the investigation in the case related to the attack on Lahore Corps Commander House known as Jinnah House. Khan

## Usman Buzdar to quit politics

PTI ■ LAHORE

Usman Buzdar, the former chief minister of Pakistan's Punjab province, on Friday, became the latest leader of ex-prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party to quit politics in the aftermath of the May 9 violence.

Several PTI leaders, including former human rights minister and ousted prime minister Imran Khan's close aide Shireen Mazari, have quit the party following the "Black Day" violence triggered by the arrest of the cricketer-turned-politician in the Al-Qadir case. "First of all, I condemn the May 9 incidents. The military installations which were targeted were properties of the state of Pakistan and I believe we should avoid such incidents,"



declined. The judge however directed him to join the investigation and extended his bail till Jun 13," the official said.

Violence erupted across Pakistan on May 9 when crick-

Buzdar told journalists during a press conference here. Buzdar, whose term as chief minister was cut short in March 2022, said he had always stood with the armed forces of Pakistan and would continue to do so, Geo News reported. "I have always committed to politics of nobility [...] but due to the current circumstances, I have decided to quit politics," the former chief minister, once considered close to Khan, the PTI chairman, said.

The former chief minister called on all stakeholders to reach a consensus and asked the authorities to release all those who were innocent from jail.

eter-turned-politician Khan was arrested by the National Accountability Board (NAB) from the premises of Islamabad High Court in a corruption case. Khan was released on bail two days later.

## Centrist parties alarmed over support for German far-right

**Berlin (AP):** Prominent members of German mainstream parties have expressed alarm at a new poll that shows support for the far-right Alternative for Germany at a record high.

The DeutschlandTrend survey, conducted monthly by infratest dimap for public broadcaster ARD, that was released on Thursday puts voter support for Alternative for Germany at 18 per cent, on a par with Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats.

In the 2021 election, Scholz's party received 25.7 per cent of the vote, while Alternative for Germany, or AfD, got 10.3 per cent.

"This (...) is a disaster and should be understood as an alarm signal for all parties of the center," said Norbert Roettgen, a senior lawmaker for the main opposition Christian Democrats, whose support stood at 29 per cent in the poll of 1,302 voters conducted from May 30-31. The margin of error was up to three percentage points.

Roettgen said his own centre-right party should ask itself why it hasn't profited as much from voters' unhappiness at the government.

His party colleague Serap Guler said the strong support for AfD should alarm all democratic parties.

"We bear responsibility for changing this again quickly," she said late on Thursday.

AfD previously hit 18 per cent in the DeutschlandTrend survey in September 2018 amid discord in then Chancellor Angela Merkel's coalition government.

Scholz's three-party coalition with the environmentalist Greens and the libertarian Free Democrats has faced strong headwind recently over high immigration and a plan to replace millions of home heating systems in the country.

**Office of the Superintending Engineer**  
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Letter No. : 2281(I)/Nivida-01/2023-24 Dated : 02/06/2023

**NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING (E-Tendering)**  
**Short Term E-TENDER NOTICE**

The superintending Engineer, 1<sup>st</sup> Circle, Public Works Department, Almora invites tender through **E-Tendering (Two Bid System)** on behalf of Honourable Governor of Uttarakhand for following works. All other information will be available from dated 06/06/2023 & onwards on website <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Cost of work (Rupee in lakh)	Cost of Tender Form	Earnest Money (Rupee in lakh)	Validity of Tender	Time of Completion	Contractor's Category of Registration for tendering
1	<b>Construction Division PWD Almora</b> Construction of motor road from Km. 1.800 of Nirai Motor Road to Oliya gaon Lachampur and Supakot under State Sector in Someshwar Constituency, District Almora (Phase-II Stage-II)	₹ 168.98 Lakh with GST	₹ 5000.00 + 18% GST	₹ 2.86 Lakh	60 Days	12 Months (including Raining /Winter Season)	Class "B" & Higher in Road work in Central Govt./ Any state Govt./ Any Govt. Undertaking

## Dev Shah crowned Spelling Bee champ

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Dev Shah, a 14-year-old eighth-grader from Florida, who correctly spelled the word "psammophile" has won the 2023 Scripps National Spelling Bee, a prestigious contest where children of Indian origin have ruled the roost.

Shah correctly spelled the word to win the 95th national bee and the USD 50,000 prize on Thursday. "It's surreal," Shah said onstage after the confetti fell on his head and he lifted the trophy high above.

"I don't know if it's settled in. My legs are still shaking," he said at the competition in National Harbor, Maryland.

"I made a lot of sacrifices these last three months and I'm glad I made them," Shah said. "I'm glad to now get back what I sacrificed." After much anticipation about a possible spell-



off, a smiling Shah won by correctly spelling "psammophile", a plant or animal that thrives in sandy areas, the Washington Post newspaper reported.

"Psammo meaning sand, Greek?" he asked. "Phile, meaning love, Greek?"

Shah instantly identified

the roots of his word, but asked for all the information just to be safe, while smiling slightly in a way that suggested he was pretty sure he had it, the New York Times newspaper reported.

Shah cut back on his extracurricular activities to dedicate more time to the dictionary. Some days he would not even go to school, since exams were over. He'd be better off studying, Shah figured. That end-of-year field trip his classmates at Morgan Fitzgerald Middle School went on? No thanks.

"I knew I had to study," Shah said. "It paid off."

Other words that Shah correctly spelled during the competition include: bathypitotmeter, tolsester, rommack, aeagagrus, schistorrhachis, poliorcetics, Perioeci, exhortation, cocomat and ardoise.



# ‘Stop sending weapons to the battlefield’

## China’s Ukraine envoy urges govts

AP ■ BEIJING

China's Ukraine envoy called on other governments on Friday to "stop sending weapons to the battlefield" and appealed for peace talks at a time when Washington and its European allies are ramping up supplies of missiles and tanks to Ukrainian forces trying to recapture Russian-occupied territory.

Li Hui said Russian and Ukrainian officials were open to peace negotiations, but he gave no indication they were any closer to happening.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping's government says it is neutral and wants to serve as a mediator but has supported Moscow politically. Foreign analysts saw little chance of progress from Li's visits to the countries because neither side is ready to stop fighting, but sending an envoy gave Beijing a opportunity to expand its global diplomatic role.

"China believes that if we really want to put an end to war, to save lives and realize peace, it is important for us to stop sending weapons to the battlefield, or else the tensions will only spiral up," Li told reporters.

China is the only major government that has good relations with both Russia and Ukraine and has leverage as one of the biggest export markets for both. Xi's decision to send an envoy was welcomed by the Ukrainian government but prompted questions about China's motives after Beijing declared it had a "no limits" friendship with the Kremlin ahead of the February 2022 invasion.

Beijing released a proposed peace plan in February, but Ukraine's allies insisted President Vladimir Putin must first withdraw Russian forces.



Ukraine's Defense Minister Oleksiy Reznikov, second left, arrives at the Shangri-La Hotel for the 20th International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Shangri-La Dialogue, Asia's annual defense and security forum, in Singapore on Friday. AP/PTI

Germany and the European Union headquarters, said Beijing was ready to send a second delegation to discuss a possible "political settlement" but gave no indication what China's next move might be.

Li referred several times to outsiders "adding fuel to the fire" and making comments that "exacerbate the situation."

He didn't name any party but used language Chinese officials invoke when criticising US dominance in global affairs. "Who is the real troublemaker in the world and the real security threat in the world? The global community has a keen understanding of that," Li said.

Li defended Beijing's "strategic partnership of coordination" with Russia as more beneficial to the world than other governments he didn't name.

"Compared with some countries' actions, clinging to Cold War mentality, ganging up with other countries, creating small circles for bloc confrontation and carrying out hegemonic bullying actions, these are completely different practices," he said.

Li criticised a report by The Wall Street Journal, citing unidentified officials, that he had proposed a cease-fire that would leave Russia in control of Ukrainian territory. He rejected that as "not in line with the facts" and suggested whoever spread that story might want to sabotage peace efforts.

"It is a move to sow discord between China and Ukraine," Li said.

Li also called for steps to protect the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, adding to appeals by the International Atomic Energy Agency this week for both sides to commit to preventing any attack on the facility to avoid a "catastrophic incident."

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Ukraine's Defense Minister Oleksiy Reznikov, second left, arrives at the Shangri-La Hotel for the 20th International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Shangri-La Dialogue, Asia's annual defense and security forum, in Singapore on Friday. AP/PTI

# US: Tanks, F-16 jets part of long-term strategy for Ukraine

AP ■ PARIS

Training for Ukrainian forces on advanced US Abrams tanks has begun, and while those systems will not be ready in time for the imminent counteroffensive, those weapons will be critical in the longer-term to Ukraine ultimately pushing Russia out of its occupied territories, Joint Chiefs chairman Gen. Mark Milley said.

Tank training began as the US and allies began to work out agreements to train Ukrainians on F-16 fighter jets — another long-wished-for advanced capability. Ultimately, while the tanks are needed to expel Russian forces from Ukrainian territory, the F-16s would be part of a longer-term security plan to deter future attacks, Milley said Thursday.

"Everyone recognises Ukraine needs a modernised Air Force," Milley said.

"It's going to take a considerable amount of time," Milley said detailed planning on class sizes, the types of

flying tactics and locations for training was underway now between the US and allies such as the Netherlands and the UK that have already pledged to provide F-16s.

The US has not said yet whether or not it will provide jets, but President Joe Biden has said the US will support F-16 training.

As those details get worked out, Abrams tank training moved ahead.

About 200 Ukrainian soldiers began an approximately 12-week training course in Germany on the US tanks over the weekend to teach them how to maneuver, fire and conduct combined arms operations with the advanced armoured system.

Another 200 troops are getting trained on tank fuelling and fuel truck maintenance.

The US training schedule is timed to get the troops up to speed on the systems before 31 of the 70-tonne Abrams tanks the US has promised to Ukraine are scheduled arrive by this fall.

# ‘No truce sans peace deal that includes Russia withdrawal’

Kyiv (AP): US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Friday that there can be no cease-fire in the war in Ukraine unless it is part of a "just and lasting" peace deal that includes Russia's military withdrawal.

Blinken said that "a cease-fire that simply freezes current lines in place - and enables Putin to consolidate control over the territory he has seized, and rest, rearm, and reattack - that is not a just and lasting peace."

Russia must also pay a share of Ukraine's reconstruction and be held accountable for launching its full-scale invasion of its neighbour in February 2022, Blinken said in a speech during a visit to Finland, which recently joined NATO and shares a long border with Russia.

Allowing Moscow to keep the one-fifth of Ukraine territory it has occupied would send the wrong message to Russia and to "other would-be aggressors around the world," according to Blinken.

Washington is ready to support peace efforts by other countries, including recent overtures from China and Brazil, he said. But any peace agreement must uphold the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. The United States is a leading Western ally and supplier of arms to Kyiv to help it push back against the Kremlin's forces. China, which says it is neutral and wants to serve as a mediator but has supported Moscow politically, on Friday urged countries to stop sending weapons to Ukraine.

In Ukraine, air defences shot down more than 30 Russian cruise missiles and drones Friday in Moscow's sixth air attack in six days on Kyiv, local officials said.

The Ukrainian capital was simultaneously attacked from different directions by Iranian-made Shahed drones and cruise missiles from the Caspian region, senior Kyiv official Serhii Popko wrote on Telegram.

# Kyiv thwarts 6th air assault in 6 days

Kyiv (AP) Ukrainian air defences shot down more than 30 Russian cruise missiles and drones in Moscow's sixth air attack in six days on Kyiv, local officials said on Friday.

The Ukrainian capital was simultaneously attacked from different directions by Iranian-made Shahed drones and cruise missiles from the Caspian region, senior Kyiv official Serhii Popko wrote on Telegram.

A 68-year-old man and an 11-year-old child were wounded in the attack, with private houses, outbuildings and cars sustaining damage from falling debris, according to Ukraine's Prosecutor General's Office.

A recent spate of attacks on the capital has put strain on residents and tested the strength of Ukraine's air defences while Kyiv officials plot what they say is an upcoming counteroffensive to push back the Kremlin's forces 15 months after their full-scale invasion.

Kyiv was the target of drone and missile attacks on 17 days last month, including daylight attacks.

Moscow's strategy could backfire, however, according to the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank.

The air campaign aims to "degrade Ukrainian counteroffensive capabilities, but ... the Russian prioritisation of Kyiv is likely further limiting the campaign's ability to meaningfully constrain potential Ukrainian counteroffensive actions," it said in an assessment late Thursday.

Ukrainian air defences intercepted all 15 cruise missiles and 21 attack drones, Ukraine's chief of staff, Valerii Zaluzhnyi, said.

Meanwhile, border regions of Russia once again came under fire from Ukraine. Recent cross-border raids have also rattled those regions of Russia and put the Kremlin on guard.

That could be a Ukrainian strategy to disperse Russian

# WH wants to engage Russia on nukes control in post-treaty world

Washington (AP): The Biden administration is ready to talk to Russia without conditions about a future nuclear arms control framework even while taking countermeasures in response to the Kremlin's decision to suspend the last nuclear arms control treaty between the two countries, White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said on Friday, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced in February he was suspending Russia's cooperation with the New START Treaty's provisions for nuclear warhead and missile inspections, a move that came as tensions worsened after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. Russia did say it would respect the treaty's caps on nuclear weapons.

Sullivan said at the Arms Control Association's annual meeting said that the United States is committed to adhering to the treaty if Russia also does, and that Washington wants to open a dialogue on a new framework for managing nuclear risks once the treaty expires in February 2026. "It is in neither of our countries' interest to embark on opening the competition in the strategic nuclear forces," Sullivan said. "And rather than waiting to resolve all of our bilateral differences, the United States is ready to engage Russia now to manage nuclear risks and develop a post 2026" pact.

forces before a counteroffensive begins.

"Russian commanders now face an acute dilemma of whether to (strengthen) defences in Russia's border regions or reinforce their lines in occupied Ukraine," the UK ministry of defence said on Friday.

# Boris offers unredacted WA messages to UK COVID inquiry

London (PTI): Boris Johnson, who was the British prime minister during the height of COVID, on Friday offered to hand over all his unredacted WhatsApp messages to the public inquiry set up to investigate the government's handling of the pandemic.

The latest move further complicates matters as it bypasses the Rishi Sunak-led government's decision to seek a judicial review into inquiry chair Baroness Heather Hallett's order for all such messages to be handed over.

After missing a deadline on Thursday for the handover of the documents which include Johnson's messages, the UK Cabinet Office said in a statement that government officials should not be required to provide material that is "irrelevant".

"While I understand the government's position, I am not willing to let my material become a test case for others when I am perfectly content for the inquiry to see it," said Johnson in a letter addressed to Baroness Hallett.

The 58-year-old former prime minister said he was handing over "all unredacted WhatsApps" he provided to the Cabinet Office and said he has asked it to hand over his notebooks, which he no longer has access to.

# Mawar threatens floods and mudslides in some regions

AP ■ NAHA

Heavy rains intensified by Tropical Storm Mawar fell on Japan's main archipelago on Friday, halting trains and transit and threatening floods and mudslides in central and western regions, while residents were urged to use caution.

Warnings were issued in parts of western and central Japan, with up to 25 centimeters (10 inches) of rain forecast through Saturday evening.

Residents in vulnerable areas, including those in Mie, Wakayama, Aichi and Shizuoka prefectures in central Japan, were warned of the potential for flooding and mudslides and advised to go to evacuation centers if possible. Television footage showed swollen rivers in residential areas in Wakayama city, including one where brown water rose as high as the bottom of a bridge over it.

In Tokyo, the few pedestrians on the rainy streets clutched umbrellas as winds blew tree branches around.

Afternoon classes were also cancelled at some schools. Ferry operations in the Tokyo Bay were cancelled for the rest of Friday.

Heavy rain and mudslide warnings were also issued in the nearby city of Yokohama, where a number of



evacuation centers were opened. Shinkansen super-express trains were suspended between Tokyo and Shin Osaka in western Japan due to heavy rain, according to the Central Japan Railway Co. Flights and ferries in southern Japan also were canceled due to continuing strong winds.

More than 17,500 homes in seven of the nine prefectures serviced by the Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings lost power.

Mawar remained well offshore in the Pacific Ocean, but its winds were strong enough as it passed Okinawa to cause injuries.

# Japan birth rate record low amid concerns over shrinking and aging population

AP ■ TOKYO

Japan's birth rate declined for a seventh consecutive year in 2022 to a record low of 1.26, the Health Ministry said Friday, adding to a sense of urgency in a country where the government is seen as too slow to take measures to address its rapidly shrinking and aging population.

The average number of children a woman gives birth to in her lifetime fell to 1.26 in 2022 from 1.30 a year earlier, tying the record low from 2005, according to the annual population statistics.

The fertility rate is far below the rate of 2.06 - 2.07 considered to be needed to maintain a population.

Japan's population of more than 125 million has been declining for 16 years and is projected to fall to 87 million by 2070.

A shrinking and aging pop-



ulation has huge implications for the economy and for national security as Japan fortifies its military to counter China's increasingly assertive territorial ambitions.

The number of newborns in Japan also fell 5% to 77,747 babies last year, another new low, the Health Ministry said. The number of deaths jumped 9% to 1.57 million, as the population shrank by

798,214, continuing a 16-year streak of declines.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has set tackling the declining births as one of his top policy goals and pledged to introduce further drastic measures.

"A last chance for us to reverse the declining births is before the young population is expected to decline drastically in 2030," Kishida told a panel of

experts commissioned to compile a package of measures at a meeting Thursday.

The government plans to secure annual funding of about 3.5 trillion yen (\$25.2 billion) over the next three years for a new child care package, which includes child birth and rearing allowances as well as increased subsidies for higher education. Kishida's government said it would come up with specific measures and secure funding by the end of the year.

Experts say the proposed measures are mostly additional funding for existing ones and don't address underlying problems. Many younger Japanese have balked at marrying or having families, discouraged by bleak job prospects, corporate cultures that are incompatible with both parents — but especially women — working, and a lack of public tolerance for small children.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

General public is hereby informed that Mr. Haaji Sahid was the owner of the land area measuring 400 Sq. Yards, out of Kharsa No. 2726, situated at Khushi Park Village- Loni, Bargarh & Tahsil- Loni, Dist- Ghazabad, U.P. by virtue of Sale Deed dated 16.12.2009, regd. at doc. No. 28299, who died. The above-said property is to be financed & mortgaged with my client i.e. Piramal Capital and Housing Finance Ltd and the only surviving heirs of Late Mr. Haaji Sahid are Mrs. Zaida, Mr. Danish Malik, Mr. Imran Malik, Md. Aarif & Mrs. Shahida. If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim in this property, then contact the undersigned within 7 days from date of this notice on below address, failing which, it will be assumed that there are no claims or issues in respect of the aforesaid property.

Raghav Tiwari, Advocate  
Ch. 850, Patiala House Courts,  
New Delhi - 110001 Mob.: +91-9078186326

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

General public is hereby informed that Mrs. Astha Jain was the owner of the Property Bearing No.C-15/33, area measuring 50 Sq. Yds. i.e., 41.80 Sq. Meters, out of Kharsa No. 725/486/65, situated at Village- Moujpur, in the abadi of Gali No.4, Arjun Mohalla, Illaga Shandara, Delhi-110053, by virtue of Sale Deed dated 08.01.2007, regd. at doc. No. 20, who died. The above-said property is to be financed & mortgaged with my client i.e. Piramal Capital and Housing Finance Ltd and the only surviving heirs of Late Mrs. Astha Jain are Mrs. Honey Jain & Mr. Gaurav Jain. If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim in this property, then contact the undersigned within 7 days from date of this notice on below address, failing which, it will be assumed that there are no claims or issues in respect of the aforesaid property.

Raghav Tiwari, Advocate  
Ch. 850, Patiala House Courts,  
New Delhi - 110001 Mob.: +91-9078186326

**Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot**

Admission Notice for BPT, BMLT & B.Sc Medical (APB) Courses, session 2023

Online applications through University website alongwith requisite registration fee are invited upto 15.06.2023 from eligible candidates for admission to Bachelor of Physiotherapy, Bachelor in Medical Laboratory Technology & B.Sc Medical (Anatomy, Physiology & Biochemistry) Courses, session 2023. The Last date for Submission of Online Fee through payment gateway is 16.06.2023. For Eligibility/Prospectus/Schedule / Details/Updates visit the University website i.e. [www.bfuhs.ac.in](http://www.bfuhs.ac.in).

REGISTRAR

nil/12/107/2023/24651 Dated CHD - 6/2/2023

**GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR**

Department of Education

Centralized Entrance Test and Counselling for Admission to M.Ed. course and B.Ed. M.Ed. three years integrated course (2023-24).

Admission to M.Ed. course in the Department of Education and all the Affiliated Colleges of Education of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar shall be through Common Entrance Test and Centralized Counselling; admission to B.Ed. M.Ed. three years integrated course through centralized counselling for affiliated colleges on the basis of merit of marks obtained in the qualifying examination. Admission is also open to other programmes of the Department of Education namely ITEP courses (B.A./B.Sc./ B.Com. B.Ed.), B.Ed. Special Education (MD), B.Sc./Advanced Diploma course in Early Childhood Care and Education, M.A. Education (Educational Management & Leadership) and M.A. Education courses. For online registrations the last date of applications is 11-07-2023. All the interested applicants must register on the admission portal of the university <http://www.gnuadmissions.org>. For further details concern above mentioned admission portal. For any enquiry contact cet.m.ed2018@gmail.com

Sd/- Coordinator

NA/12/16818/2023/24684 Dated CHD - 6/2/2023

**APPENDIX IV A**

[See proviso to Rule 8(6)]

**Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property**

E-Auction sale notice for sale of immovable assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PL136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 06.07.2023 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 11,73,057/- (Rupees Eleven Lakh Seventy Three Thousand Fifty Seven only) pending towards Loan Account No. SHVLDPC00400304, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 22.05.2023 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 23.05.2023 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from RAHUL, HARI DASS, SANDEEP, LOVE KUMAR SETHI and KRISHNA SETHI.

The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 10,00,000/- (Rupees Ten Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 1,00,000/- (Rupees One Lakh only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

FLAT NO. UGF-3, UPPER GROUND FLOOR (REAR RIGHT SIDE- SOUTHERN EASTERN PORTION), PLOT NO. B-12/18, DLF ANKUR VIHAR, LONI, HADBAST VILLAGE, SADULLAHABAD, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH- 201002.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. [www.indiabullshomeloans.com](http://www.indiabullshomeloans.com). For bidding, log on to [www.auctionfocus.in](http://www.auctionfocus.in)

**Date : 29.05.2023**

**Place : GHAZIABAD**

Sd/ Authorized Officer  
INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LTD.

**G20** **NORTHERN RAILWAY** **75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**

**CORRIGENDUM**

Ref: i) Tender Notice No. 94/2022-23 dated 17.03.2023.

ii)-Tender No. 15225019 due on 14.06.2023.

In reference to above tender, the due date has been extended from 14.06.2023 to 14.07.2023. All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

The corrigendum has been published on website [www.irps.gov.in](http://www.irps.gov.in). 1695/2023

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

**Baba Farid University of Health Sciences**

Sadiq Road, Faridkot-151203

Ph: 01639-256232,256236

**ADMISSION NOTICE -B.Sc PARA MEDICAL COURSES, SESSION 2023**

Online applications are invited w.e.f 03.06.2023 to 15.06.2023 through University website alongwith requisite fee from eligible candidates for applying admission to B.Sc Para Medical Courses, session 2023 i.e. B.Sc. Anesthesia Technology, B.Sc. Intensive Care Unit Techniques, B.Sc. Operation Theatre Technology, B.Sc. Medical Radiography & Imaging Technology, B.Sc. Radiotherapy Technology, B.Sc. Optometry, B.Sc. Dialysis Techniques, B.Sc. Orthopedic Assistant & Plaster Techniques, B.Sc. Emergency Responder, B.Sc Cardiac Technology, Bachelor of Audiology and Speech Language Pathology. Note: For Schedule/Eligibility/detail/Fee/Prospectus visit University website i.e. [www.bfuhs.ac.in](http://www.bfuhs.ac.in)

Sd/- REGISTRAR

nil/12/108/2023/24654 Dated CHD - 6/2/2023

UNITED TEXTILES LIMITED									
Regd. Off:- 7th K.M. Stone, Barwala Road, Hisar									
CIN: L17115HR1993PLC032092									
STATEMENT OF AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS									
FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED 31MARCH, 2023									
(Rs. in Lakhs, except per share data)									
	Particulars	Quarter Ended				Year Ended			
		31.03.2023 Audited	31.12.2022 Unaudited	31.03.2022 Audited	31.03.2022 Audited	31.03.2023 Audited	31.03.2022 Audited		
I	Revenue from operations	350.64	357.51	444.38	1652.88	1767.61			
II	Other Income	(5.41)	9.33	2.92	5.85	6.51			
III	Total Revenue (I+II)	345.23	366.84	447.30	1658.73	1774.12			
IV	Expenses								
	(a) Cost of materials consumed	254.52	137.38	252.33	953.50	1177.82			
	(b) Purchases of stock-in-trade	22.10	22.97		67.52				
	(c) Changes in inventories of finished goods work-in-progress and stock-in-trade	(17.54)	61.64	0.33	(37.33)	(5.87)			
	(d) Employee benefits expense	16.22	22.67	15.63	59.81	46.56			
	(e) Finance costs	(5.76)	16.50	7.33	40.44	34.64			
	(f) Depreciation and amortization expenses	24.80	31.60	22.23	112.13	68.35			
	(g) Other expenses	49.71	73.68	149.29	458.57	448.80			
	Total expenses (IV)	344.05	366.43	447.14	1654.63	1770.30			
V	Profit/(Loss)before exceptional items and tax (III-IV)	1.18	0.41	0.16	4.10	3.82			
VI	Exceptional items								
VII	Profit/(Loss)after exceptional items but before tax (V+VI)	1.18	0.41	0.16	4.10	3.82			
VIII	Tax expense:								
	(i) Current tax	(3.39)	1.43	2.00		2.54			
	(ii) Deferred tax	3.72	(1.42)	(1.30)	1.07	(0.91)			
	Total tax expense	0.33	0.01	0.70	1.07	1.63			
IX	Profit/ (Loss) for the period From continuing operations (VII-VIII)	0.85	0.40	(0.54)	3.03	2.19			
X	Other comprehensive income (OCI):								
	A. Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss								
	(i) Re-measurement gain (losses) On defined benefit pension	2.00	-	0.04	2.00	0.42			
	Income tax effect on above	(0.50)	-	(0.01)	(0.50)	(0.11)			
	(ii) Equity instrument through Other Comprehensive Income (Gain on Fair Valuation of Long Term Investment)								
	Income tax effect on above								
	Total Other Comprehensive Income (X)	1.50	-	0.03	1.50	0.31			
XI	Total Comprehensive Income (Comprising Profit/(Loss) and Other comprehensive income For the period) (IX+X)	2.35	0.40	(0.51)	4.53	2.50			
	(Comprising Profit (Loss) and OCI for the year)								
XII	Paid-up equity share capital (Rs. 10 Per share)	300.00	300.00	300.00	300.00	300.00			
XIII	Reserve/Other equity share	-	-	-	745.88	741.32			
	Earnings per equity share								
	(i) Basic	0.63	0.01	(0.02)	0.10	0.07			
	(ii) Diluted	0.62	0.01	(0.02)	0.10	0.07			
Note:									
1. The aforesaid results were placed before and reviewed by the Audit Committee at its meeting held on 30th May,2023 and approved by the Board of Directors at its meeting held on the same date. The Statutory auditors have carried out limited review of these financial results.									
2. There are no separate reportable segments as per the Indian Accounting Standard (Ind AS-108) on segment reporting.									
3. The Figures have been regrouped/rearranged wherever considered necessary to facilitate comparison.									
For United Textiles Limited Vivek Aggarwal (Whole Time Director) DIN No. 07072920									
Place : Hisar Date : 30th May, 2023									



# Sensex, Nifty rise on gains in metal, auto stocks

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**  
Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty closed higher on Friday after two days of fall, helped by buying in metal, telecom and auto stocks amid a firm trend in global markets.

Automakers led by Maruti Suzuki India, Hyundai, Mahindra & Mahindra reporting robust wholesales of passenger vehicles and GST collections crossing Rs 1.50 lakh crore for the third straight month in May also added to the optimism.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 118.57 points or 0.19 per cent to settle at 62,547.11. During the day, it jumped 291.3 points or 0.46 per cent to 62,719.84.

The NSE Nifty advanced 46.35 points or 0.25 per cent to finish at 18,534.10.

On a weekly basis, the BSE benchmark gained 45.42 points

or 0.07 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 34.75 points or 0.18 per cent.

“This week, the Indian market was volatile. However, it was able to regain momentum led by a positive domestic outlook accompanied by global cues. Auto stocks garnered attention as sales numbers for May came in strong, with a sequential recovery boosting sentiment across the sector.

“The hope that the Fed will refrain from a rate hike has provided comfort to the global equity market,” Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Tata Steel was the biggest gainer in the Sensex pack, rising nearly 2 per cent, followed by Maruti, Mahindra & Mahindra, Sun Pharma, Larsen & Toubro, Titan, Bharti Airtel, Power Grid, ITC, State Bank of India and Nestle.

In contrast, Infosys, Wipro,



HCL Technologies, Tata Consultancy Services, IndusInd Bank, Tech Mahindra, Reliance Industries and Bajaj Finance were among the laggards.

“Auto stocks were in focus after reporting better-than-expected sales numbers for May. Also, with the monsoon

arrival expected early next week, the rural and agri-related stock would also be in focus,” Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed



0.60 per cent and smallcap index jumped 0.57 per cent.

Among the indices, metal climbed 1.71 per cent, realty jumped 1.33 per cent, telecommunication (1.06 per cent), auto (0.98 per cent), industrials (0.85 per cent), consumer discretionary (0.83 per cent), com-

modities (0.73 per cent), health-care (0.72 per cent) and consumer durables (0.67 per cent). IT, tech, utilities, energy and oil & gas were the laggards.

Global stocks rose on Friday as sentiment was lifted by signs the US Fed will skip a rate hike at its next meeting and

the approval of US debt ceiling legislation, Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities, said.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the green.

Equity markets in Europe were trading in positive territory. The US markets ended higher on Thursday.

GST collections recorded a 12 per cent rise in May at over Rs 1.57 lakh crore, according to official data released on Thursday.

Manufacturing activities in India advanced further and touched a 31-month high in May, supported by a stronger increase in new orders and favourable market conditions, which in turn generated more employment opportunities, a monthly survey said on Thursday.

Automakers led by Maruti Suzuki India, Hyundai,

Mahindra & Mahindra, and Toyota Kirloskar Motor on Thursday reported robust wholesales of passenger vehicles in the domestic market for May riding on strong demand for SUVs.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 1.74 per cent to USD 75.57 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 71.07 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

The rupee appreciated by 9 paise to 82.31 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday.

“With markets on the ten-tenths ahead of the debt ceiling vote in the US Senate and OPEC+ meeting over the weekend, Monday’s trading session could witness heightened volatility,” Riches Vanara, Technical And Derivatives Analyst, stoxbox, said.

## Irdai: SBI Life to takeover liabilities of 2 L policies, assets of SILIC

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Regulator Irdai on Friday directed SBI Life Insurance Company to takeover the policy liabilities of around two lakh policies along with assets of Sahara India Life Insurance Co Ltd (SILIC) with immediate effect.

The decision was taken at the meeting of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) in view of deteriorating financial health of the SILIC.

“The Authority has identified SBI Life Insurance Company Limited (SBI Life), which is one of the largest life insurers in the country with satisfactory financials, as the acquirer insurer of the life insurance business of SILIC.

“SBI Life shall take over the policy liabilities of around two lakh policies of SILIC, backed by the policyholders’ assets, with immediate effect,” Irdai said in its order.

In a statement, the Irdai said it has also taken necessary steps to ensure the smooth transition for all policyholders of SILIC.

A committee comprising of Member (Actuary), Member (Life), and Member (F&I) has been constituted for implementation of the order in a time-bound manner.

“SBI Life has been directed to take adequate steps to reach out to the policyholders of SILIC, with regard to servicing of policies, including setting up of a dedicated cell to address the queries of the policyholders of SILIC, and also publish necessary details on their website,” it said.

Sahara India Life Insurance was granted a Certificate of Registration in 2004 to transact the business of life insurance. In view of the certain serious issues on the financial propriety and governance aspects of the insurer, the authority had appointed an administrator to manage the business of the insurer in 2017, Irdai said.

The insurer was also not allowed to underwrite new business. Thereafter, further directions were issued to the insurer to meet the regulatory requirements.

“Despite being provided ample opportunities and sufficient time to ensure compliances, SILIC has failed to comply with directions of the authority and take any affirmative steps to protect the interests of its policyholders,” the regulator said.

Further, the policy data of SILIC reveals that the company’s portfolio is showing run-off trend.

## Govt asks industry to cut edible oils MRP by ₹8-12 per litre as global prices drop

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

The Centre on Friday directed edible oil associations to further reduce the maximum retail price (MRP) of major edible oils by Rs 8-12 per litre with immediate effect, in line with the global market.

“Some companies which have not reduced their prices and their MRP is higher than other brands have also been advised to reduce their prices,” the food ministry said after a meeting, chaired by food secretary Sanjeev Chopra, with the industry representatives.

Price to distributors by the manufacturers and refiners also



needs to be reduced with immediate effect so that the price drop is not diluted in any way, it said.

It was also impressed upon that whenever a reduction in price to distributors is made by the manufacturers/refiners, the benefit should be passed on to

the consumers by the industry and the ministry may be kept informed on a regular basis, it added.

With the edible oil prices continuing to show a downward trend and set to witness further reduction by the edible oil

industry, the ministry said, “the Indian consumers can expect to pay less for their edible oils. The falling edible oil prices will help in further cooling inflation fears if any.”

Industry representatives including Solvent Extraction Association of India and Indian Vegetable Oil Producers’ Association were present in the second meeting convened within a month to discuss further reduction in retail prices of edible oils amidst a continued fall in the global prices.

In the meeting, the ministry said the international prices of imported edible oils are continuing on a downward trend

and therefore, the edible oil industry needs to ensure that the prices in the domestic market also drop commensurately.

The industry was told to ensure the price drop in the global market is passed on expeditiously to the end consumers and not in a delayed manner as is observed now.

“The leading edible oil associations were advised to take up the issue with their members immediately and ensure that the maximum retail price (MRP) of major edible oils to be reduced further by Rs 8-12 per litre with immediate effect,” the ministry said in a statement released after the meeting.

## RBI proposes norms on cyber resilience, digital payment security controls for PSOs

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

The Reserve Bank on Friday proposed to establish robust governance mechanisms for authorised non-bank payment system operators (PSOs) to effectively address emerging cybersecurity risks.

Towards this goal, the central bank has issued a ‘Draft Master Directions on Cyber Resilience and Digital Payment Security Controls for Payment System Operators’.

The draft directions cover governance mechanisms for the identification, assessment, monitoring and management of cybersecurity risks, including information security risks and vulnerabilities. They also specify baseline security measures to ensure safe and secure digital



payment transactions.

The central bank said existing instructions concerning security and risk mitigation for card payments, prepaid payment instruments (PPIs) and mobile banking will remain in effect. “To effectively identify, monitor, control and manage cyber and technology related risks arising out of linkages of PSOs with

unregulated entities, who are part of their digital payments ecosystem, PSOs shall ensure adherence to these Directions by such unregulated entities as well, subject to a mutual agreement,” the draft directions said.

The RBI has invited stakeholders to provide comments and feedback on the draft by June 30. “The Board of Directors (Board) of the PSO shall be responsible for ensuring adequate oversight over information security risks, including cyber risk and cyber resilience,” the draft said.

Additionally, as per the draft, PSOs will be required to develop an approved Cyber Crisis Management Plan (CCMP) to detect, contain, respond to, and recover from cyber threats and attacks.

## Forex kitty drops \$4.34 billion to \$ 589.14 billion

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

Falling for the second consecutive week, India’s forex reserves dropped by USD 4.339 billion to USD 589.138 billion for the week ended May 26, the Reserve Bank said on Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the reserves had declined by USD 6.052 billion to USD 593.477 billion.

It can be noted that in October 2021, the country’s forex kitty had reached an all-time high of USD 645 billion. The reserves have been declining as the central bank deploys the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments.

For the week ended May 26, the foreign currency assets, a major component of the

reserves, declined by USD 4.014 billion to USD 520.931 billion, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by the RBI on Friday.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves dropped by USD 225 million to USD 44.902 billion, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down by USD 84 million to USD 18.192 billion, the apex bank said.

The country’s reserve position with the IMF was down by USD 17 million to USD 5.113 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.

## Goldman sees RBI pausing again on June 8 review

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

Forecasting a steeper fall in inflation to the tune of 50 bps lower than previously projected, a Wall Street brokerage sees the central bank leaving the policy rates unchanged at 6.5 per cent in the forthcoming review on June 8.

Analysts at Goldman Sachs India in a report on Friday said the headline inflation will average 5.3 per cent this year, which is within the RBI target of 2 per cent plus or minus 4 per cent, even though they expect some risk to food inflation stemming from crop damages due to unseasonal rains.

It can be noted that retail

inflation has declined to an 18-month low of 4.7 per cent in April from 5.7 per cent in March. Moreover, core inflation has also fallen to 5.2 per cent in April.

Going forward, we see average headline inflation at 5.3 per cent in 2023, which is within the RBI target of 2-6 per cent. This means that in Q2 of 2023 (Q1 of FY24) headline inflation is likely to be around 50 bps below the most recent RBI forecast. This will have the RBI keeping the policy repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent in the June 8 policy meeting and expect the central bank to remain on hold till the end of the year, the agency said in the report.

## Rupee rises 9 paise to close at 82.31 against US dollar

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

The rupee appreciated by 9 paise to 82.31 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, supported by broad dollar weakness and a positive trend in domestic equities.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened on a positive note against the US dollar and settled at 82.31 (provisional), up 9 paise over its previous close.

During the day, the domestic unit witnessed an intra-day high of 82.27 and a low of 82.38 in the day trade.

On Thursday, the rupee

closed at 82.40 against the US currency.

“The Indian rupee strengthened for the second consecutive day on positive domestic markets and a weak US dollar. However, a rebound in crude oil prices capped sharp gains,” said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback’s strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.12 per cent to 103.43.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures advanced 1.28 per cent to USD 75.23 per



barrel. “We expect rupee to trade with a slight positive bias in the near term on risk-on sentiments in the global mar-

kets amid debt-ceiling bill being passed and rising odds of a pause in rate hike by the US Federal Reserve in June,” Choudhary said.

Choudhary further added that concerns over global economic slowdown and recovery in crude oil prices may prevent sharp upside.

“Traders may remain cautious ahead of US non-farm payrolls and unemployment rate data. We expect USDINR spot to trade in between 81.80 to 82.80 in the near-term,” Choudhary said.

Besides, positive macro-economic data supported the local unit, traders said.



## Sebi takes steps to boost liquidity in RFQ platform

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Friday came out with guidelines for transactions in corporate bonds through Request for Quote (RFQ) platform by stock brokers in order to increase liquidity on the platform.

For all the trades in proprietary capacity, stock brokers will have to undertake at least 10 per cent of their total secondary market trades by value in corporate bonds in that month by placing quotes through one-to-one or one-to-many mode on the RFQ platform of stock exchanges from July 1, and further, the percentage will increase to 25 per cent from April next year, Sebi said in a circular.

Stock brokers will have to consider the trades executed by value through one-to-one (OTO) or one-to-many (OTM) mode of RFQ with respect to the total secondary market trades in corporate bonds, during the current month and immediately preceding two months on a rolling basis.

Further, only trades pertaining to proprietary capaci-

ty of stock brokers will be considered for the purpose of such calculations.

The RFQ or Request for Quote platform is a system or interface for inviting and/or giving quotes on an electronic platform. The platform was introduced as a ‘participant-based’ model, wherein all regulated entities, listed corporate bodies, institutional investors and all Indian financial institutions were eligible to register, access and transact.

In October 2022, Sebi allowed stock brokers to place bids on the RFQ platform on behalf of their clients to facilitate wider participation in the corporate bond market. This was in addition to the existing option of placing bids in a proprietary capacity.

Quotes on RFQ platforms can be placed to an identified counterparty -- one-to-one’ mode -- or to all the participants -- one-to-many’ mode.

Moreover, stock brokers have been encouraged to place bids in proprietary capacity or for clients on RFQ platform through OTM mode, as the same would contribute towards achieving better price discovery.

## Centre imposes stock limits on pulses till Oct to prevent hoarding

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

To prevent hoarding and check price rise, the Centre on Friday imposed stock limits on all pulses, except moong, held by wholesalers, retailers, importers and millers till October. The stock limits are imposed with immediate effect. An order in this regard has been issued by the Union Food and Consumer Affairs Ministry. Retail prices of pulses rose by more than 20 per cent during the January-June period of this year, according to the ministry’s data.

According to the ministry, the stock limit of 200 tonnes has been imposed on wholesalers provided they do not hold more than 200 tonnes of one variety of pulses. For retailers, the stock limit will be 5 tonnes.

In the case of millets, the stock limit will be the last three months of production or 25 per cent of annual installed capacity, whichever is higher. Lastly, for importers, the stock limit will be the same as that of wholesalers for stocks held/imported prior to May 15, 2021.

And for pulses imported after May 15, the stock limit applicable on wholesalers will apply after 45 days from the date of customs clearance, the order said.

## ONGC to maintain financial flexibility as earnings steady: S&P

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

State-owned ONGC’s operating cash flows will rise over the next 12-24 months due to higher production volumes, stable earnings from domestic gas production, and the removal of a windfall tax on crude oil, S&P Global Ratings said on Friday.

“This should help the company maintain its good credit quality, despite its investment plans and healthy shareholder distributions,” the rating agency said in a statement.

ONGC is India’s largest oil

and gas producer.

We estimate that ONGC’s domestic production volumes will rise by 8-10 per cent for fiscal 2024 (year ending March 31). The increase is attributable to the start of oil production from its block in the Krishna Godavari basin later this year,” S&P said.

At the same time, production at the Sakhalin-1 project of ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) should also recover to fiscal 2022 levels, after a period of disruptions because of geopolitical issues.

Oil and Natural Gas

Corporation produced a total of 42.8 million tonne of oil equivalent (mmtoe) in fiscal 2023 compared with 43.4 mmtoe in fiscal 2022. OVL produced a total of 10.2 mmtoe in fiscal 2023, down from 12.3 mmtoe in fiscal 2022.

“Growth in production volumes will outstrip the impact of moderating oil prices on ONGC’s earnings, in our view. We estimate the company’s EBITDA at Rs 1-1.1 lakh crore over fiscals 2024 and 2025, compared with about Rs 98,700 crore in fiscal 2023,” it said.

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Future Lifestyle Fashions Ltd has received a total claim of Rs 2,155.53 crore from 12 financial creditors in the corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) initiated against this Future group company recently.

The resolution professional of the company has provisionally admitted claims of Rs 2,117.03 crore and claims worth Rs 38.5 crore are “under verification,” said the latest data shared by Future Lifestyle

Fashions Ltd (FLFL) on the exchanges.

As per the provision of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code, a Committee of Creditors (CoC) of FLFL has been formed and it will have its first meeting next week.

“We wish to inform you that the first meeting of CoC of Future Lifestyle Fashions Limited (under CIRP) will be held on Tuesday, June 6, 2023,” it said.

On May 4, the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) had

directed to initiate CIRP against FLFL, admitting a petition from Bank of India. This is the third company of the Kishore Biyani-led Future Group to be dragged into CIRP by its creditors for defaulting on loans.

Its flagship firm Future Retail Ltd and logistics and infra arm Future Enterprises are already facing insolvency proceedings.

FLFL was considering asset monetisation to pare its debts, however, it did not materialise. It had entered into a One Time Restructuring (OTR) Plan with

lenders also.

The company has in-house retail chains Central and Brand Factory, exclusive brand outlets (EBOs) and other multi-brand outlets (MBOs) of nearly a dozen apparel labels, including Lee Copper, Champion, aLL, Indigo Nation, Giovanni, John Miller, Scullers, Converse and Urbana in its portfolio.

According to the regulatory filing, State Bank of India leads the CoC of FLFL with 22.51 per cent voting share. It had an admitted loan of Rs 476.59 crore.



# 3rd SEED JESSICA PEGULA STUNNED

AP ■ PARIS

Jessica Pegula quickly gathered her belongings and marched out of Court Philippe Chatrier after a 6-1, 6-3 loss to Elise Mertens in the third round on Friday at the French Open, a far earlier exit than the No. 3-seeded American has been used to at Grand Slam tournaments lately.

Pegula was a quarterfinalist at four of the five most recent majors, including a year ago at Roland Garros.

She's never gone further than that stage at a Slam and never really got into this match against the 28th-seeded Mertens on a day with a breeze at about 10 mph (15 kph) and a chill in the low 60s Fahrenheit (low teens Celsius).

"I feel like I was still playing good points. Elise was just

being really tough, not making a lot of errors and making me play every single ball. And with the windy conditions, I felt like it definitely played into her game," said Pegula, whose parents own the NFL's Buffalo Bills and NHL's Buffalo Sabres.

"She returned well and I thought that she used the wind on both sides to her advantage," Pegula said. "She was playing aggressive on the side with the wind and then, against the wind, I think she was playing some really good defense."

Mertens is a 27-year-old Belgian who was a semifinalist at the 2018 Australian Open and twice has reached the US Open quarterfinals.

But she still has not made it beyond the fourth round on the red clay in Paris. She will attempt to do that when she



plays Sunday against 2021 French Open runner-up Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, who beat No. 24 Anastasia Potapova 4-6, 6-3, 6-0.

With Pegula joining No. 5 Caroline Garcia, No. 8 Maria Sakkari and No. 10 Petra Kvitova on the sideline, four of the top 10 women's seeds already are gone. That's part of a pattern this year at Roland Garros: Only 12 seeds made it through two rounds, the fewest in Paris since the field expanded to 32 seeds in 2002.

With the losses by Pegula and Potapova, only 10 remain.

Another woman from the United States joined Pegula on the way out early on Friday: Peyton Stearns, the 2022 NCAA champion for the University of Texas, was eliminated by No. 9 Daria Kasatkina 6-0, 6-1 in 55 minutes.

In other early results Friday, No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka, the Australian Open champion in January, won, as did men's No. 11 seed Karen Khachanov.

Stearns, a big hitter who defeated 2017 French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko in the second round, simply could not find her targets. More than half of Kasatkina's 59 points came via the 30 unforced errors by Stearns. Pegula had similar issues, making 28 unforced errors to only 13 by Mertens.

It was a rough start for Pegula. When she dumped a forehand into the net, Pegula chucked her racket off the ground, already down 4-0. The deficit was 5-0 after fewer than 20 minutes. There was more of the same in the second set. Mertens used drop shots effectively, and Pegula couldn't get going.

## Fritz shushes booing crowd

AP ■ PARIS

The French Open crowd was not happy with American player Taylor Fritz after he beat one of their own — indeed, their last man in the bracket — so they booed and whistle relentlessly. Fritz's response? He told them to shush. Over and over again.

Fritz, a 25-year-old from California who is seeded No. 9 at Roland Garros, got into a back-and-forth with the fans at Court Suzanne Lenglen after his 2-6 6-4 6-3 6-4 comeback victory over 78th-ranked Arthur Rinderknech in the second round on Thursday night.

Rinderknech attempted a lob that landed long on the

last point, and Fritz, who had been running toward the baseline to chase the ball, immediately looked up into the stands and pressed his right index finger to his lips to say, essentially, "Hush!"

He held that pose for a bit as he headed back toward the net for a postmatch handshake, then spread his arms wide, wind-milled them a bit as if to egg on the rowdiness, and yelled: "Come on! I want to hear it!" During the customary winner's on-court interview that followed, more jeers rained down on Fritz, and 2013 Wimbledon champion Marion Bartoli kept pausing her attempts to ask a question into her microphone.



## Parul targets Asian Games medal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Two months of high-altitude training at Colorado Springs in the USA has done wonders for Indian long-distance runner Parul Chaudhary, who is aiming for a medal in the upcoming Asian Games in China as well as breaking Lalita Babar's 3000m steeplechase national record.

The 28-year-old Chaudhary has been training at Colorado Springs — which is at an altitude of 1800m above sea level — along with star men's 3000m steeplechase Avinash Sable since March 20.

She set a national record of 15:10.35s in the 5000m race at the Track Festival in Walnut, California, on May 6 before clocking her personal best of 9:29.51s in her pet event of 3000m steeplechase at the USATF Los Angeles Grand Prix on May 26.

"I have benefitted immensely from the high-altitude training at Colorado Springs. Last year, I was here (Colorado Springs) for just 25 days, but this time, it has been two months now here, doing high-altitude training," Chaudhary told PTI from her training base at Colorado Springs.

"The continuous training for two months is showing in my timing. The season has been great for me so far. I am currently in training-cum-competition mode, and once the main international competitions of the season start, I hope to achieve my goals."

Chaudhary, the daughter of a farmer from Bahrala village in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut district, is currently training under foreign coach Scott Simmons and Indian coach Jaiveer Singh.

Target is Asian Games medal and breaking Lalita Babar's national record

In the senior circuit for nearly 10 years without much international success, Chaudhary is hoping this season to be a defining one as she aims for medals in the Hangzhou Asian Games in September-October.

In the 2018 Asian Games, the 5000m gold-medal winner had clocked 15:08.08s while the silver winner ran 15:30.57s, which is much more than the national record set by Chaudhary last month.

## Europa League final referee harassed by Roma fans at airport

AP ■ ROME

Europa League final referee Anthony Taylor and his family had to be escorted away by security at Budapest airport after outraged Roma fans directed insults at him and threw a chair in his direction, a video published on the Gazzetta dello Sport website showed.

Roma has largely blamed Taylor for its penalty shootout loss to Sevilla in the final on Wednesday. Roma coach Jose Mourinho lashed out at the referee in his post-match news conference and then was seen

insulting Taylor with a series of expletives in the garage of the Puskas Arena in Budapest, Hungary, as his team prepared to depart the stadium.

The English top-tier soccer's referees association said in a statement that it "is aware of videos circulating on social media showing Anthony Taylor and his family being harassed and abused at Budapest Airport."

"We are appalled at the unjustified and abhorrent abuse directed at Anthony and his family as he tries to make his way home from refereeing the UEFA Europa League final.

We will continue to provide our full support to Anthony and his family," the referees association added.

UEFA is still awaiting the referee's report from the match.

Roma general manager Tiago Pinto continued the attack on Taylor in a statement to Italian news agency ANSA on Thursday.

"We at AS Roma don't want to raise doubts about Sevilla's merits. We believe that with our opponents we put on a great final and honored the stage offered to us by UEFA in the best way," Pinto said.

## Lakshya enters Thailand semis

PTI ■ BANGKOK

Star Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen stormed into the semifinals of Thailand Open Super 500 tournament with a straight game demolition of Malaysia's Leong Jun Hao in men's singles here on Friday.

The 21-year-old from Almor punched the air after unleashing a jump smash which sealed his 21-19 21-11 win over the qualifier from Malaysia in the quarterfinals.

The win helped him to enter the last four for the first time this season, having come close in Indonesia Masters, where he exited in the quarterfinals.

The Indian, whose ranking has slipped to world number 23 from a career-high of six fol-

lowing below-par performances this season, will take on either fifth seed Lu Guang Zu of China or Thailand's second seed Kunlavut Vitidsarn in the semifinals.

Kiran George's giant run, however, came to an end after he went down 16-21 17-21 against Toma Junior Popov of France in another men's singles match.

It was an exciting contest as Lakshya and Leong kept pushing each other from the start. But after a 10-11 deficit at the interval, the Indian fell behind as the Malaysian managed to hold a 16-10 lead.

But Lakshya then changed gears, stepping up the pace in the rallies to restore parity at 17-17 before pocketing the opening game as Leong looked tired.

## Szymon to remain referee for CL final after apology: UEFA

AP ■ GENEVA

Polish soccer referee Szymon Marciniak apologised on Friday for speaking at a business event tied to a far-right politician and was confirmed by UEFA to officiate next week's Champions League final.

Marciniak's appointment for the game between Manchester City and Inter Milan on June 10, months after he refereed the World Cup final in Qatar, was at risk on Thursday after a Warsaw-based anti-racism group alerted UEFA to his conference appearance this week.

UEFA said on Friday it accepted Marciniak's "profound apologies and clarification" and that anti-racism group Never Again had also then asked for the referee to be retained.

## Casemiro's winning mentality key for Man Utd in final



AP ■ LONDON

A few concerns were raised when Brazil midfielder Casemiro completed his move to Manchester United in August. Would he still have enough motivation after nine trophy-filled years at Real Madrid? Could he adapt quickly enough to the English game? Was a 30-year-old defensive midfielder really worth USD 60 million and a reported weekly wage of USD 435,000?

The answers, without doubt, have been yes, yes and absolutely yes.

Take away Erling Haaland and the signing that had the biggest impact in English soccer this season is surely Casemiro, who — in the words of his coach — has exceeded expectations "by far."

"He keeps surprising you," United manager Erik ten Hag said.

"He's such a brilliant football player."

If there's one player Ten Hag would want to have available for the FA Cup final against

Manchester City on Saturday, it's Casemiro.

Quite simply, the difference with and without him is huge.

Casemiro started 24 of United's 38 league games this season, and was a substitute in four others. According to statistics compiled by the Who Scored website, United conceded an average of less than a goal a game when Casemiro was in the team and 1.5 goals when he wasn't.

He made 3.2 tackles per game in the Premier League, the third highest behind Fulham's Joao Palhinha and Leeds' Tyler Adams.

United conceded 57 goals in the league last season. With Casemiro stationed in front of the defense, that number was down to 43 this season as United secured a return to the Champions League and all the riches that brings.

So, yes, Casemiro really was worth it.

Ten Hag noted upon arriving at United at the end of last season that a leader in central midfield was the

biggest thing missing in a team which had been getting by with an oft-maligned "McFred" (Scott McTominay and Fred) axis.

"We studied this and we searched for this — it was not easy because there aren't many in the profile who fits to the standard of Manchester United," Ten Hag said, before listing what Casemiro brings.

"We know him as very good with organization, anticipation, winning duels, fighting and keeping the team together. But in possession, his passing distribution and finishing is very important."

More than that, his winning mentality — fostered at Madrid, where he won five Champions League titles and the Spanish league three times — is something United had been missing in the post-Alex Ferguson era.

It has that now and it's mostly because of the arrival of Casemiro and another former Madrid player, Raphael Varane.

"The pressure is something we are used to playing with. And we need the pressure — it's not that kind of pressure that limits you," Varane said.

"Sometimes quality is not enough — you need the motivation, character, passion on the pitch, because in the top level in the Premier League, there are good players in any team. But to play in this kind of clubs you need something else ... something different, that character to fight, to assume the responsibility, to never hide on the pitch, to be ready to face every challenge you can."



## Raducanu parts ways with coach

AP ■ LONDON

Emma Raducanu, the 2021 US Open champion, will no longer work with Sebastian Sachs, who had been her fifth coach in the past two years.

Raducanu announced the split via a Twitter post on Thursday.

"I have really enjoyed Seb's coaching and working with him, it's unfortunate that circumstances made it unfeasible for both of us to continue right now and we have decided to part ways," her post said.

"I wish Seb all the best moving forwards."

Raducanu hasn't played since April and announced last month she would miss the French Open and Wimbledon because she needed what she called "minor" procedures on both hands and an ankle. She said then she expected to be sidelined for a few months.

Her record during an injury-plagued 2023 is 5-5.

Raducanu became one of the stars of tennis two years ago, when she made a surprising run to the fourth round at Wimbledon while ranked outside the top 300, then, soon after, won the US Open at age 18 to become the first qualifier to claim a Grand Slam singles title.

## Kerala Blasters' appeal against fine refected

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The All India Football Federation on Friday rejected Kerala Blasters FC's appeal against the Rs 4 crore fine imposed on them for misconduct and abandonment of their ISL playoff match against Bengaluru FC.

The committee also rejected KBFC's head coach Ivan Vukumanovic's appeal against the fine of Rs 5 lakh and a 10-game ban imposed on him.

In both cases, the Appeal Committee upheld the earlier decisions of the Disciplinary Committee and were asked to "pay the respective fines within two weeks".

Their ISL playoff on March 3 sparked controversy as Kerala Blasters walked off the field claiming that Sunil Chhetri's winning strike from an extra time freekick was not "legitimate".



They claimed that referee Crystal John did not blow the whistle before Chhetri took the kick and the players were not ready.

By virtue of their extra-time lead Bengaluru FC were declared 1-0 winners and advanced into the ISL semifinals.

"The appeal of the appellant team is denied and that Kerala Blasters FC is instructed to pay the fine of Rs 4 crore imposed by the Disciplinary Committee,"

the Appeal Committee stated in its decision.

On the appeal made by Ivan Vukumanovic, the Appeal Committee said: "This Committee holds that the appeal of the Appellant Coach is denied and that Ivan Vukumanovic is instructed to pay the fine of Rs 5 lakh and serve the suspension for 10 matches and the ban from being a part of the team dressing room and team bench, irrespective of the team he is contracted with.

## Steady start for Manu Gandas

PTI ■ HAMBURG

Indian golfer Manu Gandas carded an even par 72 that placed him Tied-26th at the Porsche European Open here.

Gandas came into the DP World Tour because of the strategic alliance with the India's domestic PGTI Tour, where he topped the rankings last year.

Gandas, the lone Indian in the field as Shubhankar Sharma took time off this week to practice for the Open next month, had three birdies against three bogeys.

Gandas started from the first with a birdie but he bogeyed second, fourth and eighth and turned in 2-over. Birdies on 14th and 15th saved the day for him as he turned in a card of even par.

Germany's Max Kieffer carded a four under par 69 to share the first-round lead as he staked an early claim to become the first German winner on home soil for 15 years.

## Stuttgart beat Hamburg in Bundesliga playoff

AP ■ STUTTGART

Hamburger SV's five-year wait to rejoin the Bundesliga looks set to continue.

Serhou Guirassy helped to put Stuttgart in a commanding position to keep its place in Germany's top division with a 3-0 win over Hamburg on Thursday in the first leg of their playoff.

Guirassy had failed to make the most of a one-on-one chance and had a penalty saved in the first half, but the Guinea forward grabbed Stuttgart's third goal early in the second half.

Hamburg's task was further complicated in the 69th minute when substitute Anssi Suhonen was sent off minutes after coming on for a studs-up lunge at Joshua Vagnoman's thigh.

The win puts Stuttgart,



which finished third from bottom in the Bundesliga, on course to stay in the first division before the second leg of the playoff in Hamburg on Monday. Hamburg finished third in the second division.

There was a minute's silence before Thursday's game in tribute to the 15-year-old player who died after a post-match brawl at an interna-

tional youth tournament in Frankfurt last weekend.

Stuttgart got off to a great start with Konstantinos Mavropanos heading the opener inside the first minute.

The visitors had Daniel Heuer Fernandes to thank for keeping the score down. The Hamburg goalkeeper saved from Chris Führich, then got the better of Guirassy in a one-on-one, and also saved Guirassy's penalty in the 27th. Two minutes later he produced another save to deflect Führich's effort away.

Führich effectively created the second goal in the 51st when he eluded two Hamburg defenders and played a perfectly weighted pass for Enzo Millot, who crossed for the unmarked Vagnoman to score.

Guirassy finally scored with a header to a corner three minutes later.

# Shields fighting for gender equality for women boxers

AP ■ DETROIT

Claressa Shields is perhaps in the prime of her career, establishing a big enough name as a two-time Olympic gold medalist and world champion in three weight classes to headline the first boxing card in the six-year history of Little Caesars Arena in the Motor City.

The undisputed middleweight champion became

the first woman to earn a seven-figure payday in her last two fights and is expected to make another \$1 million Saturday night when she faces top-ranked contender Maricela Cornejo in the home of the Detroit Red Wings and Pistons. Shields grew up poor in Flint, Michigan, and has earned enough money to become rich at 28.

Still, she laments the gender inequities in boxing.

TV and streaming deals are 10 to 20 times more lucrative for men than women, according to Shields' promoter, Dmitriy Salita. Typically, male boxers make about \$3 million per fight while female fighters just recently started getting seven figures for a night in the ring, while some earn more and many make much less.

"We don't get the equal TV time, the equal promotion, equal

pay," Shields said earlier this week in an interview with The Associated Press. "That's what I've been trying to do with my platform, make sure I get all of that."

Shields is boxing in a marquee event in part because sports-streaming service DAZN stepped up enough financially to help facilitate the fight.

Women in boxing have shown they can sell out big are-

nas, as Katie Taylor and Amanda Serrano did 13 months ago at New York's Madison Square Garden, but they're not compensated as well as men in the same sport.

"It's like any other profession where the women still haven't caught up," said Jackie Kallen, a 77-year-old former boxing publicist and manager, who was commissioner of the International Female Boxing

Association when it was founded in 1997. "It's got a ways to go."

"They take a beating just like the men. They bleed just like the men, but they don't get paid just like the men."

Boxing Hall of Famer Christy Martin, whose bloody nose in the ring 27 years ago landed her on the cover of Sports Illustrated, said she would've never imagined women in the sport headlining

cards in big-time arenas as they do now.

Martin, though, said the lack of a deep talent pool limits opportunities.

"If you look back at the real old-timers in the sport, they would fight every other week," the 54-year-old Martin said in a telephone interview from Texas. "Now, we're lucky to see champions once a year."

Shields (13-0, 2 knockouts)

turned pro in 2016 after becoming the first US boxer — female, or male — to win consecutive Olympic gold medals and is averaging two fights a year. Cornejo (16-5, 6 KOs) replaced Hanna Gabriels (21-2-1, 12 KOs) last week in the 160-pound division title fight after the Costa Rican was removed from the card due to results from a Voluntary Anti-Doping Association test in May.



# India shouldn't pick WTC XI with pre-determined mindset: Prasad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India should not pick the playing XI for the World Test Championship final with a pre-determined mindset like they did two years ago, says former chief selector MSK Prasad, who feels it would be very tough to fill the injured Rishabh Pant's shoes as his overseas feats are unparalleled.

India's move to pick two spinners — Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja — in the 2021 WTC final against New Zealand backfired as pacers dominated the game in over-cast conditions at Southampton.

Spin could play a role in the final against Australia at The Oval in London from June 7 but Prasad advised the team to take the final call depending on the conditions at that time.

"We went with two spinners and three fast bowlers in the mind but subsequently there was rain, we should have changed our plans, somehow we stuck to the same playing eleven. But that is in the past.

"It all depends on conditions at The Oval. The is the actual story of the movie, the pitch and conditions. We don't know how they will be over five days, so we should not pre fix our mind and understand the conditions and back your instincts," the former India wicketkeeper told PTI.

Pant, who has scored centuries in England, Australia and South Africa, won't be available



to counter attack if the top-order fails. Prasad feels KS Bharat is the automatic choice in Pant's absence but the latter's ability as a batter is rare.

"It is a pretty straightforward call to pick Bharat (over Ishan Kishan). It is really tough to fill the shoes of Rishabh especially in an away series. In the history of entire India cricket, no other wicketkeeper batter has hundreds in England, South Africa and Australia, so it's very difficult to replace him.

"You need to have a wicketkeeper who is fit and fine for

100 overs. This is a Test match and we need to think from that aspect. "But if you are thinking you can have Ishan Kishan, Bharat has been tried and tested and has played India A in England, so they might end up going with him," said Prasad, who was the chief selector between 2016 and 2020.

India's star studded top four comprising Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara and Virat Kohli are expected to deliver against the likes of Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins.

Ajinkya Rahane at five also adds to the experience of the batting unit.

"That is going to decide the fate of the game. How our top order is going to face their fast bowling. "With Gill in the form of his life, Rohit already has a hundred in England, Kohli has been in great form and Pujara has got lot of runs in county cricket and Ajinkya with his experience, it is the best we can have, they have to fight and win the game," Prasad said.

Gill has recorded centuries across formats in the last six

months and was the standout batter in the IPL.

"It is all about the mindset and Gill has adapted to different formats now. In IPL he did say about technical changes he made in his batting to improve strike rate. So, if a player can change his mindset as per format he is going to do well in any format.

"That is what he has done across formats. I hope he will replicate that form in England," said the 48-year-old who played six Tests and 17 ODIs between 1998-99.

If India does go with four pacers, then choosing between Ashwin and Jadeja becomes very difficult considering what they bring to the table, said Prasad.

"Jadeja has been so good of late that he can play as a special-ist batter. It is a tricky call considering what both can bring to the table, it is hard to ignore. Ashwin with his 400 plus wickets and he is someone who is who can bowl on any surface. If it comes to that, it will be a very tough call," he said.

Another tough call will be to choose between Umesh Yadav and all-rounder Shardul Thakur.

"That is the trickiest part. If you see the statistics, Umesh is more successful in home conditions compared to away conditions, so picking Shardul gives you that batting advantage. You need to have long batting depth also against a quality attack like Australia," Prasad added.



## Australia unsure about India's bowling line-up

PTI ■ LONDON

Australia are expecting Ravindra Jadeja to feature in India's playing XI in the World Test Championship final but are unsure about Ravichandran Ashwin's participation in the marquee contest to be played at The Oval starting June 7.

India utilised three spinners during the recent Border-Gavaskar Trophy series with both Ashwin (25 wickets) and Jadeja (22) shining bright to help their side claim a 2-1 series win.

Talking to local media prior to Australia's training session at the Kent County Cricket Ground in Beckenham on Thursday, assistant coach Daniel Vettori said the team management had a lot of discussion about India's probable bowling attack.

"We have been debating that," Vettori said. "I think Jadeja will play because of the batting he brings to the table and how successful he has been at that No.6 position. "Then the question will be around that fourth seamer and the all-rounder in (Shardul) Thakur and Ashwin, but they are (both) pretty good choices."

Vettori, however, feels Ashwin might just lose out on a spot in the playing XI because of team combination despite enjoying a decent record in England.

The experienced off-spinner has a total of 18 wickets at an average of 28.11 from seven matches in England but has played just one Test at The Oval.

"Ashwin is an incredible bowler and he will be first choice in most teams, and just with their combinations it may lead to that (him missing selection)," Vettori said.

"We expect The Oval to behave how it always behaves. "It is a good wicket, but it can offer a lot to the spinners as the game goes on."

Vettori also expects Cameron Green to play a big part in the WTC final, especially after his superb showing in the just-concluded IPL.

"Any cricket is preparation now. He is doing work in the background to make sure his bowling loads are up and he is actually ready for Test cricket," Vettori said of Green.

"We look at it like if you are involved in high-intensity, high-class cricket, we are happy with that as it means you are playing cricket."

"The hardest thing for guys is coming out of nothing and that might be a challenge for a couple of guys who have had an extended break and how they get up to speed as quickly as possible," he said.

## Sehrawat to lead India 'A' in Emerging Women's Asia Cup



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Batting all-rounder Shweta Sehrawat will lead a 14-member Indian 'A' squad in the upcoming ACC Emerging Women's Asia Cup beginning in Hong Kong on June 12. India 'A' will begin their campaign on June 13 against hosts Hong Kong at the Tin Kwong Road Recreation Ground.

"The All India Women's Selection Committee on Friday announced the India 'A' (Emerging) squad for the upcoming ACC Emerging Women's Asia Cup 2023," BCCI said in a release. The tournament will feature eight teams which are divided into two groups.

India 'A' (Emerging) is a part of Group A which also features hosts Hong Kong, Thailand 'A' and Pakistan 'A', while Bangladesh 'A', Sri Lanka 'A', Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates are in Group B.

The final will be played on June 21.

**SQUAD:** Shweta Sehrawat (Captain), Soumya Tiwari (vice-captain), Trisha Gongadi, Muskan Malik, Shreyanka Patil, Kanika Ahuja, Uma Chetry (wicketkeeper), Mamatha Madiwala (wicketkeeper), Titas Sadhu, Yashasri S, Kashvee Gautam, Parshavi Chopra, Mannat Kashyap, B Anusha.

**Head Coach:** Nooshin Al Khadeer  
**SCHEDULE:** June 13 - India 'A' vs Hong Kong; June 15 - India 'A' vs Thailand 'A'; June 17 - India 'A' vs Pakistan 'A'



## Afghanistan beat SL in 1st ODI

AP ■ HAMBANTOTA

Sri Lanka has several head-saches ahead of its World Cup qualifiers in two weeks' time after suffering a heavy six-wickets defeat against Afghanistan on Friday.

Set a target of 269, Afghanistan got there with 19 deliveries to spare to take the opener of the three-match one-day international series.

Ibrahim Zadran was the hero for the visitors, top scoring with 98 runs. The opening batter took the Sri Lankan quicks to task during the Power Play as he raced to his half-century in just 35 balls.

Zadran, a 21-year-old right-handed batter, settled down after the field restrictions as he added 146 runs with Rahmat Shah for the second wicket as the Afghans proved Sri Lanka's total of 268 was way below par.

Kasun Rajitha broke the stand when he had Zadran caught at deep mid-wicket, just two runs short of his fourth ODI hundred. Zadran's 98 runs came off 98 balls with 11 hits to the ropes and two over it.

Sri Lanka also dismissed Rahmat Shah for 55 when Matheesha Pathirana claimed his first ODI wicket. But Hashmathullah Shahidi's 38 sealed the game for his side.

The Afghan captain shared 42 runs for the fourth wicket with Mohammad Nabi, who remained 27 not out.

Sri Lanka brought in the experienced Dimuth Karunaratne and Angelo Mathews to the ODI squad to address the team's batting woes.

But it was back to square one as they slumped to 84-4 with Mathews (12) and Karunaratne (4) not able to make big contributions.

Charith Asalanka held the Sri Lankan innings together with his seventh half-century and went on to score 91 off 95 balls with 12 fours. He was well backed up by Dhananjaya de Silva (51) as they shared a 99-run partnership for the fifth wicket. But Sri Lanka needed much more than that.

Asalanka's knock was some consolation for the Sri Lankans, but the former world champions needed the senior players to put their hands up as there were too many soft dismissals.

Afghanistan, which has already qualified for the World Cup in India later this year, was without star bowler Rashid Khan, who sat out with a lower back strain. But their bowlers responded well keeping Sri Lanka to a below-par total cutting down the work of the batters.

## Medal-less second day for India in Bishkek

PTI ■ BISHKEK

Sajan Bhanwal made a spirited comeback after trailing 0-7 but lost steam in the second period of his bronze medal play-off after three Indian women wrestlers made early exit as India endured a medal-less day at the UWW Ranking Series event here on Friday.

Bhanwal, who was passive initially, lost points in a jiffy from 'par terre' position against China's Rui Liu but logged five straight points to reduce the deficit. The Chinese wrestler was tired but Bhanwal too did not have much left in the tank and shook hands for a 5-7 defeat in the 77kg bout.

Vikas lost the 72kg bronze play-off to Georgia's Otar Abuladze. The Indian Greco-Roman team thus will return with just one medal — a bronze — that came through Manjeet in the 55kg category.

"We could have won at least 4-5 medals in this tournament. The competition was not much high, mostly the Asian wrestlers were competing.

It was much tougher in the Croatian Ranking Series event. Sajan could have won today but since there was no national camp, our Greco-Roman wrestlers were not well-prepared," national coach Har Gobind Singh told PTI.

"Usually they have better stamina but not having good practice has affected their fitness," he added.

The national camps for senior wrestlers were put on hold due to the ongoing agitation of top grapplers and the Indian Olympic Association's ad-hoc committee taking charge of the functioning of the Wrestling Federation of India.

In the women's competition, young Sonam Malik, who is returning from an elbow injury, and Nisha Dahiya suffered first-round defeats while Priya lost her quarterfinal bout.

Sonam, the silver medallist at the 2022 junior world championships, lost 3-5 to China's Jia Long in the qualification round.

The Asian championship silver medallist Nisha had a disappointing result in the 68kg competition as she lost by technical superiority to Uzbekistan's Firuza Esenbaeva.

The Uzbeki later lost her quarterfinal to Turkey's Nesir Bas, thus closing the repechage door on Nisha.

In the 76kg, Priya began with a 6-0 win over Ukraine's Anastasia Osniach but lost the quarterfinal 1-10 to China's Qiandegenchagan.

## It's a grand final for us: Lyon

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Off-spinner Nathan Lyon doesn't believe Australia's preparations for the World Test Championship final will be affected by the talk around the Ashes, terming the upcoming contest against India as "grand final".

India and Australia will square off in the WTC final at The Oval from June 7.

The five-Test Ashes against England beginning June 16 has dominated the headlines over the past few months as Australia seek to win the marquee series away from home for the first time in 22 years.

"Yes, we are playing the Ashes but we've got a big game that we're up for. This (WTC final) is our grand final, and then our season basically starts again," Lyon was quoted as saying by Australian Associated Press.

"That's probably where we're quite happy with where we're at with our planning. We are able to understand what we've got around the corner, and be OK. It's exciting to be part of the final and the fanfare and stuff around it, it's bloody special.



"I know every Australian fan is looking forward to the Ashes, and so they should be. But they should also be excited about this match," he added. Australia will head into the

Ashes without any warm-up game with the WTC final being the lone match before the contest against England.

Lyon believes the 1-2 loss Test series in India earlier this


year won't have any bearing on the upcoming contest.

"You can wipe off anything that happened in India," Lyon said.

"Both teams are really well rounded in their squads. It is going to be a really good challenge."

"India obviously have some class batters but they have some class fast bowlers as well. It's going to be a good challenge. Both squads going at it and competing for one game, it's going to be a really good challenge," he said.

"It's a fresh start. I'm looking forward to it."



**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER**  
**RURAL WORKS DIVISION-I, MALKANGIRI**  
**NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement**  
**Identification No. Online Tender 02/RWD-I, MKG/2023-24 dt. 30.05.2023**

**O-184**  
**01.Name of the work:- Building works (New construction work Detailed in Annexure) 02. Total Number of Works:- 6 (Six) Numbers. 03.Estimated Cost:- Rs. 37.79 Lakhs to 38.20 lakhs 04. Class of Contractor:- "C" & "B" Class 05. Period of Completion:- (As Per Detailed in Annexure), 6. Other Details**

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	No of Works	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date and time of opening of tender (Single Cover)
			From	To		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division-I, Malkangiri	Online Tender - 02/ RWD-I, MKG /2023-24	6 (Six) Nos	08.06.2023 from 11.00 AM	22.06.2023 up to 5.00 PM	21.06.2023 up to 5.00 P.M.	Bid opening:- 23.06.2023 at 11.00 AM

Further details can be seen from the website [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in)

**OIPR-25058/11/0002/2324**

Sd/- Sujit Behera  
Superintending Engineer  
R.W. Division-I, Malkangiri

**OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI**  
**RAJGANGPUR**  
**DISTRICT : SUNDARGARH**  
**Phone : 06624-226312, E-mail : ori-rajgangpur@gramas.nic.in**

**I-153**  
**Tender Call Notice No - 01/2023-24**  
**Sealed Tenders are invited from the interested bidder for the civil work under BDO, Rajgangpur of Sundargarh district. The detail of works, eligibility, estimated cost and cost of tender paper has been uploaded in the district website [www.sundergarh.nic.in](http://www.sundergarh.nic.in). The bidder should be B class contractor. They have to submit the bid document to the undersign in the address of office of the the B.D.O., Rajgangpur, At./P.O. Rajgangpur, Pin-770017, Dist- Sundargarh (Odisha) through Registered Post / Speed Post only on or before 22/06/2023, 5:30 PM. The sale of tender paper will be from dated 05/06/2023 to dated 19/06/2023 in the district website [www.sundergarh.nic.in](http://www.sundergarh.nic.in). The authority reserves the right to cancel or reject the entire process without assigning any reason thereof. The tender will be opened on dated 23.06.2023 at 11.00 AM in the office of the undersigned in the presence of the bidders or his/her representatives.**  
**Your faithfully**  
**OIPR-19332/11/0002/2324**  
**Block Development Officer, Rajgangpur**

## Banarse reaches surfing final

PTI ■ MANGALORE

Sugar Banarse, the 17-year-old from Goa, came up with an impressive performance in the Women's Open category to reach the final of the 4th Indian Open of Surfing here on Friday.

Banarse, who collected the highest number of points (10.17), will look to defend her title on Saturday against tough competitors like Tamil Nadu's Kamali Moorthy (8.50) and Shrishti Selvam (4.74) and Karnataka's Sinchana Gowda (5.17).

In the Men's Open category, Sanjaikumar S, Srikanth D, Raghu Paneriselvam, Sathish Sarvanan, Manikandan M, Kishore Kumar, Sanshosh M and Surya P advanced to the semifinals, scheduled to be



held on Saturday.

Srikanth D, who scored the highest number of points, said, "The waves were comparatively smaller than the previous day but I am happy to do well today. I want to continue with the tempo and win the title."

The Grooms Boys (U16) category semifinals saw Tamil boys dominate as three out of four surfers from the state made it to the final. Teenage

surfer Kishore Kumar emerged as the highest scorer in the category for the second consecutive day (11.67) as he stunned everyone with his stellar performance.

Tayin Arun, with 9.17 points, and Harish P, with 6.33, were other boys from Tamil Nadu to book final berths. Karnataka's only hope Pradeep Pujar earned 4.30 points to reach to the final.