

## WORLD 5

ERDOGAN TAKES OATH OF  
OFFICE FOR 3RD TERM

## MONEY 6

'RBI-MPC MAY LOWER INFLATION  
FORECAST marginally'

## SPORT 7

NADAL UNDERGOES  
HIP SURGERY

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## Baleswar train tragedy toll goes up to 288

Kavach could have saved lives,  
anti-collision system missing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The tragic collision of three trains in Balasore on Friday night, resulting in the loss of over 288 lives and injuring 803 people, has raised questions about the absence of the Kavach system developed by the Indian Railways to prevent such accidents caused by driver error or other factors.

According to Indian Railways spokesperson Amitabh Sharma, the rescue operation has been completed, and restoration work is now commencing.

However, he acknowledged that the Kavach system was not available on the tracks in Balasore where the collision occurred.

Kavach is an automatic train protection (ATP) system developed by the Research Design and Standards Organisation in collaboration with three Indian firms.

Its purpose is to assist locomotive drivers in avoiding missing danger signals and controlling speeding, ensuring safe train operations even in low-visibility conditions.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw personally tested the "Kavach" system and had previously expressed its success.

In a tweet from March last year, he mentioned the system's ability to automatically stop a locomotive before reaching another locomotive at a dis-



Rescue work underway after an accident involving Coromandel Express, Bengaluru-Howrah Express and a goods train, in Balasore district on Saturday PTI

tance of 380 metres during rear-end collision testing.

Kavach functions by controlling train speed and automatically applying the brakes if the driver fails to do so in a timely manner. However, the absence of this crucial safety system on the tracks in Balasore raises concerns about the potential impact on acci-

dent prevention and mitigation.

As investigations into the tragic incident continue, the Indian Railways and relevant authorities will likely examine the reasons behind the unavailability of the Kavach system in Balasore and take necessary measures to ensure the safety of train operations in the future.



Photo : Aurabinda Mahapatra

Rescue operation  
completed  
Vaishnaw,  
Naveen visit  
accident site

PNS ■ BALESWAR

The death toll in the train tragedy in Baleswar district further increased, making it the most disastrous railway accident in Odisha.

While as many as 288 passengers were killed, around 1,000 others were injured in the mishap. The rescue operation was completed at the derailment site and restoration work commenced on Saturday, informed official sources.

All injured and trapped passengers were rescued. The injured passengers were shifted to hospitals at Soro, Baleswar, Bhadrak and Cuttack for treatment. The Government is

providing free treatment at both Government and private hospitals, the SER said in a bulletin.

As per the bulletin, nine NDRF teams, five ODRF units and 24 Fire Service and Emergency units were engaged in the rescue operation. More than 100 medical teams along with medicines were mobilised to the accident site for treatment and over 200 ambulances engaged in shift-

ing the injured passengers to hospitals.

The tragedy had occurred at 7 pm on Friday near the Bahanaga Bazar station, where the Shalimar-Chennai Coromandel Express collided with two derailed coaches of the Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express and hit wagons of a goods train on another track.

On receiving information, senior railway officials rushed to the spot to rescue passen-

gers trapped inside the trains.

On Saturday morning, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw reached the site to review the situation. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik also visited the accident spot and consoled the bereaved families of the dead passengers.

Many other political leaders, including Congress Odisha in-charge A Chella Kumar and PCC president Sarat Patnaik, visited the accident site.

Train tragedy  
State Mourning  
observed on June 3

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

While death toll in the Baleswar train tragedy has risen to 261 besides over 1,000 being injured, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik ordered for a State Mourning for a day on Saturday. Hence, no State celebration took place on the day.

The CM reviewed the passenger rescue operation at the SRC Control Room here and instructed to provide free medical treatment to all the injured victims in the BSKY-facility hospitals and other private hospitals. Cost of medical expenses shall be borne by the State Government.

Chief Secretary Pradeep Jena said that around 550 persons were carried to different nearby local hospitals of Soro, Baleswar and Bhadrak. The SCB Medical College Hospital, Cuttack has been kept in readiness for exigencies. Jena informed that more than 200 ambulances were rushed to service for shifting of accident victims to nearby hospitals.

## Train tragedy: PM wants stern action against guilty

Visits accident spot,  
lauds State Govt  
response

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said stern action would be taken against the persons found guilty in connection with the tragic railway mishap in Odisha that killed 261 passengers and injured over 1,000 others.

The PM said this immediate after meeting the injured passengers at the Baleswar District Headquarters Hospital (DHH). Railway Minister Aswini Vaishnaw and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan accompanied the PM to the hospital.

"I am saddened by the horrendous railway accident in Odisha. We have directed for a proper inquiry into the incident. We will not spare the guilty," added the PM.

Modi thanked the Odisha Gov-



Photo : Aurabinda Mahapatra

ernment and the Indian Railways for their prompt action to rescue the injured passengers.

"I am grateful to the locals of

Balasore who came forward to assist in the rescue operation and donate blood for the injured passengers," he said.

The PM further said the railway authorities would review the passenger safety system in Indian trains and take appropriate steps to avoid any similar incident in future.

Earlier in the day, Modi visited the accident site near the Bahanaga railway station and enquired about the mishap from senior officials. He also inspected the damaged coaches.

The PM had landed at the Kalaikunda Air Force Station in West Bengal in a special plane from New Delhi and then reached the accident site in an IAF chopper at 3.40 pm.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, his West Bengal counterpart Mamata Banerjee, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and many other leaders had earlier visited the spot and inspected the rescue operation.

Screams of  
help still ring in  
survivors' ears

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Train passengers, who survived the triple train crash on Friday, recounted horror. Recalling the incident, Anubhav Das, a passenger of the Coromandel Express which rammed into a goods train in Odisha's Balasore, said there was the sound of screeching brakes and then a loud crashing of metal.

Though he came out of the accident unhurt, the screams of help of those stuck in derailed mangled coaches still ring in his ears. "It was a horrific sight. There were people injured, some crawling from under the train's debris," he posted on Twitter. Later, he said, he came to know that not just his train but another express train was involved in the accident.

Initially, in a series of

tweets, Das described how he thought the accident unfolded.

Later, speaking with PTI, Das recalled in shock how he stepped out of his coach unaware that he had survived an accident involving three trains. At least 288 people were killed and more than 1,100 injured in the accident.

"I was at the very end of my train. Around 6.30 pm, we heard a very long thud and then jerks which seemed like the emergency brakes. At that moment, we realised some accident had occurred and we had to disembark from the coach to be safe.

So when we were about to disembark from our coach and opened the doors, we saw that there were three other coaches that had derailed opposite our train on the other line," he said.

## CAPSULE

'INDIA INFRA ALONG LAC  
MATCHES UP WITH CHINA'

**Pahalagam:** India is matching up its infrastructure to China's projects at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and there is no need for concern, Border Roads Organisation (BRO) chief Lieutenant General Rajiv Chaudhry said on Saturday.

GOVT BANS 14 FIXED  
DOSE COMBO DRUGS

**New Delhi:** The Government has banned 14 fixed dose combination drugs including Nimesulide and Paracetamol dispersible tablets and Chlorpheniramine Maleate and Codeine syrup.

PUNJAB: OVER 14 KG  
HEROIN SEIZED, 2 HELD

**Chandigarh:** Security forces on Saturday recovered more than 14 kilograms of heroin in two separate operations in Amritsar and Fazilka districts of Punjab.

SC stays HC order  
to decide if rape  
victim is 'manglik'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court intervened on Saturday, issuing a stay order on a peculiar ruling by the Allahabad High Court which had instructed the head of the astrology department at Lucknow University to determine whether an alleged rape victim woman was 'manglik' (an astrological condition) or not.

Conducting a special session on Saturday, the apex court took suo motu cognisance of the matter and expressed its confusion



regarding the need for an "astrology report" during a bail application hearing.

The order by the High Court was issued on May 23 while considering the bail plea of the accused individual, who was alleged to have raped the woman after falsely promising to marry her.

59 MPs write to German envoy  
for early return of baby Ariha

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fifty-nine Members of Parliament from nineteen political parties have collectively written a letter to the German Ambassador, urging the early repatriation of baby Ariha Shah, who has been placed in forced foster care in Germany for over twenty months.

The German authorities took custody of Ariha Shah on September 23, 2021, when she was just seven months old, citing alleged harassment by her parents. Among the signatories of the letter are MPs Jaya Bachchan (SP), Hema Malini (BJP), Shashi Tharoor (Congress), Mahua Moitra (TMC), Dr. Farooq Abdullah (NC), Priyanka Chaturvedi (SS-Udhav), and others.

The letter, addressed to the German Ambassador Dr Phillip Ackerman, emphasises that while they respect German laws, as no criminal cases have

been filed against the parents, the child should be repatriated to India.

"Baby Ariha was taken away from her parents in September 2021 when she was seven months old. The German Child Services took custody of the baby after she had suffered an accident and was hospitalised," the letter states.

"An initial investigation was conducted into allegations of child sexual abuse, but it was found to be baseless, and no charges were filed against the parents. Following this, the child was placed in special child care and then moved to foster care.

"As Members of Parliament, we have a special responsibility for the welfare of our citizens. We request you to take all necessary steps to bring the child back to India," the letter, signed by Rajya Sabha MP Dr John Brittas on behalf of the other 58 MPs, asserts.

India lost 1 tiger every  
alternate day this year

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

On an average, every alternate day one big cat has died in the country since January till May end. In the first five months, India has already lost 76 tigers against 56 last year during the same period.

These included 11 cubs and 25 female big cats. Besides natural deaths and territorial fights between the felines, officials in the Union Environment Ministry have attributed some mortalities to the harsh heat waves as well that the country is witnessing this time, stating that some felines could not cope with the dehydration.

An analysis of the data available from the website of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) shows that almost half of the deaths of the total tigers occurred inside the tiger habitat with as many being reported from the



fringes or outside the tiger reserves.

Madhya Pradesh which is presently grappling with the death of imported Cheetahs and their cubs at the Kuno Palpur Sanctuary has topped the list of tiger mortalities at 22 big cats in the last five months.

Maharashtra reported 16 deaths while Uttarakhand has witnessed ten tiger deaths. Karnataka reported five deaths.



# Train mishap: Youths volunteer to donate blood

UBACHAK MOHANTY  
■ BALESWAR

Large numbers of youths queued up in hospitals to donate blood for the injured passengers of the train accident in Baleswar district. They lined up throughout the night at the Baleswar and Bhadrak District Headquarters Hospitals.

In the Baleswar DHH, within six hours or so, more than 1,000 units of blood of different groups were collected from the volunteers.

A youth said he along with others came to the Baleswar hospital to donate blood voluntarily. Their little effort could save distressed people's lives, he said.

On Saturday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik visited the



Baleswar DHH and interacted with the injured passengers. He thanked local people and the

district administration for working overnight and saving the lives of many passengers.

Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena said in a tweet, "500 units of blood collected

## Railways issues helpline numbers

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Ministry of Railways has issued helpline numbers for civilians for inquiry about the Baleswar train accident on Friday.

The numbers are: Howrah: 03326382217, Kharagpur: 8972073925, 9332392339, Baleswar: 8249591559, 7978418322, Shalimar: 9903370746, Santragachi: 8109289460 & 8340649469, Bhadrak: 7894099579 and 9337116373

Jajpur: Keonjhar Road: 9676974398, Cuttack: 8455889917, Bhubaneswar: 06742534027, Khordha Road: 6370108046 and 06742492245, Brahmapur: 89173887241, Balugaon: 9937732169, Palasa: 8978881006.

Besides, the control room (Telephone No: 0674-2534177) is functioning round the clock in the office of Special Relief Commissioner at Rajiv Bhawan in Bhubaneswar.

overnight at Balasore. 900 units in stock at present. This will help in treating the accident victims. I'm

personally indebted & grateful to all the volunteers who've donated blood for a noble cause."

## Train accident PM, Railways announces ex-gratia

### TN Ministers meet victims

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Saturday reached the train tragedy spot at Bahanaga in Baleswar district and supervised the rescue operation.

He announced Rs 10 lakh as ex-gratia for the family of each deceased person and Rs 2 lakh each for the passengers who have sustained grievous injuries.

Besides, the Indian Railway will provide Rs 50,000 as compensation to the people who have sustained minor injuries.

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced an ex-gratia from

the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) for the victims of train mishap.

The Prime Minister's Office tweeted: "An ex-gratia of Rs. 2 lakh from PMNRF would be given to the next of kin of each deceased in the train mishap in Odisha. The injured would be given Rs. 50,000: PM"

Meanwhile, three Ministers of Tamil Nadu left for Baleswar district to meet victims of the train tragedy.

Media reports said that Tamil Nadu Youth Welfare and Sports Development Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin, Tamil Nadu Transport Minister S.S.Sivasankar, and Tamil Nadu School Education Minister Anbil Mahesh Poyyamoazhi reached the Chennai airport to travel to visit Odisha.

## Govt can face any challenge: Guv

PNS ■ BALESWAR

Governor Prof Ganeshi Lal on Saturday visited the injured in the accident involving three trains on Friday at Bahanaga in Baleswar district of the State.

Lal met with the injured admitted to the Community Health Centre in Soro in the district and directed doctors to ensure proper treatment for

them. "With the support of the Centre, the Odisha Government can face any challenge."

"We are a State which has faced cyclone Fani and other challenges and earned a name in the world and we have accepted this challenge and will fight it successfully with the help of Prime Minister and our Chief Minister," the Governor told reporters here.

## 'Don't sell profit-making B'garh sugar mill'

### AAP submits memo

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

The Aam Admi Party (APP) demanded before the State Government not to sell the profit-making sugar mill of Bargarh district. In this regard, the AAP submitted a memorandum to the Collector, Bargarh.

Notably, the Government has floated a sale notice of the mill with last date of application as June 9. "Since this is a profit-making mill and provides direct income to farmers, its sale will be detrimental to the interest of the farmers. At the same time, it has got the capacity to crush more than 1 lakh MT in a season that directly benefits the farmers. Hence, its sale is nothing but an anti-farmer

move," alleged Bhawani Prasad Sahu of AAP.

The present cost of the sugar mill will be more than Rs 300 crore. At the same time, there is a distillery plant attached to it. But the Government wants to sell it at a throwaway price that is sure to bring a huge loss to the State exchequer, the AAP said.

Earlier, the Industry Minister and Secretary, in meetings at different points of time, had decided to renovate the mill and popularize sugarcane cultivation over traditional paddy as it consumes comparatively less water. But what made them think of its sale is a mystery now, the AAP said.

The party members further demanded to activate it like before and pay all the pending dues of the employees.

### Ambulance suffers flat tyre

# NHRC moved for aid to kin as patient dies

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Human rights activist of Brahmapur Rabindra Mishra has moved the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) over a patient dying as a 108 Ambulance carrying him suffered a flat tyre in Kalahandi district on Thursday.

The news had appeared in The Pioneer.

Mishra in his petition stated that it is a clear violation of human rights, right to health and right to life under Article 21 of the

### Pioneer impact

Constitution. He urged the NHRC to consider the case and direct the administration to provide Rs 50-lakh compensation to the victim's

family and take necessary action.

The petitioner pointed out that the ambulance was carrying one Tikemani Naik of Deobhog area in Chhattisgarh district from Dharmagarh to the Kalahandi District Headquarters Hospital. However, the vehicle suffered a flat tyre on the Hati river bridge near Junagarh.

When the driver of the ambulance took out a spare tyre for replacement, it was also found defective. He then contacted the concerned authorities for another ambulance, which arrived at the spot after around 30 minutes.

Though the patient was rushed to the hospital in the ambulance, he was declared dead by doctors, Mishra stated.

# Prof Roul gets Pranakrushna Award



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Prominent agriculturist and Vice Chancellor of Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) Prof Pavat Kumar Roul received the prestigious 'Pranakrushna Parija Award' for the year 2022-23.

Prof Roul was honored on

the occasion of internationally renowned scientist Padma Bhushan Professor Pranakrishna Parija's death anniversary organized by Prof Parija Memorial Society at Cuttack on Friday.

Prof Roul earlier has served as a Professor and Dean Extension Education in OUAT. Along with this, he also

worked as the Managing Director, APICOL. He has authored 24 books related to agricultural science and supervised nine PhD students.

In the ceremony, Agriculture and Farmers Empowerment Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain attended as the chief guest, while Regional Medical

Research Centre, Bhubaneswar, Director Dr Sanghamitra Pati attended as the guest of honour. Similarly, ICAR, National Rice Research Institute, Cuttack Director Dr Amaresh Kumar Nayak, Parija Memorial Society president Prof. Prabhakar Swain and members of various institutions and awardees participated.

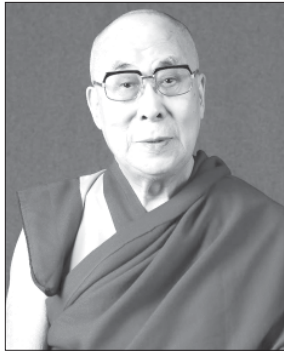
## Train tragedy Dalai Lama mourns loss of lives

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Tibetan monk Dalai Lama on Saturday expressed grief over the train accident in Baleswar district on Friday in which more than 261 passengers lost their lives. .

In a letter to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, he stated, "I offer my condolences to the families of those who have lost their loved ones and pray for all those who have been injured and others affected by this tragedy."

"I very much appreciate that the State Government and other agencies, including those of the Central Government, are doing their level best to provide medical treatment and support to the injured and other people affected by this



tragic accident.

"As a mark of solidarity with the people of Odisha, the Dalai Lama Trust (DLT) is making a donation towards medical treatment, as well as relief and rescue efforts. As you know, I have had the opportunity to visit Odisha many times and also had the honour to meet you, as we did in 2017."

## In Jajpur 2 girls missing in boat capsized

PNS ■ JAJPUR

Two minor girls were missing when the boat by which they were travelling sank at Tanti Ghai Naal near Sangua Gadipur in Bari block of Jajpur district on Saturday.

Four other persons managed to swim to safety.

The missing girls were identified as daughters of one

Indramani Pote of Sangua.

The six persons were crossing the river in the country boat when it sank mid-river. Getting information, Fire Service personnel rushed to the spot and carried out a search operation. Police and tehsil officials were at the spot and investigating into the incident.

### Stress on skilling, employability

# Future of higher education in Odisha

Considering skill-based training and learning as a new norm for students, the Higher Education Department, Odisha has collaborated with the National Association of Software and Services Company (Nasscom).

As many as eight lakh students have been set as targeted stakeholders. The programme has been designed in a larger canvas by allying Infosys as implementing agency. Future skills prime scheme by Infosys will calibrate the digital skills and empower the students from underprivileged sections. The Department of Higher Education is on the verge of creating an equal digitally inclusive society.

Further, a digital ecosystem will be created with a closer trainer and learner by nurturing the students. The vision of Higher Education Principal Secretary, Bishnupada Sethy to create a future ready workforce with industry -market ready content and its augmented curriculum will sure make Odisha as a hub of digital talent.

A current NAAC team visited the



ABASH PARIDA

Utkal University and showed a deep concern on employability, industrial association and outcome based education. Perhaps, these concerns will be addressed by such initiative. Quality of education and institution's performance are the primary concern for admission in engineering programme as clamoured by many colleges.

Quality of education is very difficult to measure and often very vague to define. The Annual Employability Survey 2019 discloses that 80 per cent of Indian engineers are not fit for any job in the

competitive global knowledge economy. In the Paradoxes and Contradictions in the Growth of Engineering Education in India-Challenges and Prospects, a working paper from Council For Social Development, reveals that the employability projections of Indian engineering graduates have deteriorated in the past one-and-a-half decade. It says that a majority of them are not qualified enough for employment in engineering sector or in any sector.

It is to remember here that there is a correlation between governance utilising resources and skill based training. Odisha is placed at the 13th rank in 18 large States in Public Affair Index-21 as compared to its 16th rank in 2020. Odisha shows a vertical move. It shows that governance in Odisha is keen to utilise its resources. These resources include human, physical and economic resources. Further, it is also observed that Odisha is improving in capacity building, enhancing skill training and reducing unemployment.

Similarly, growth of informal economy and non-farm employment has helped to improve Odisha ranking in growth based performance in governance. Further to this, the Government of Odisha constituted a Task Force on Higher Education in October 2009 to find out the challenges faced by the sector in Odisha. Many key challenges were identified such as shortage of faculty and staff, dilution of focus on higher education and research, burden of rapidly increasing affiliated colleges and lack of innovation, research and capacity building of teachers. In order to address such challenges, a major solution has been proposed i.e introduction of Odisha State Council of Higher Education. In addition to this, the key recommendations of the Task Force are in three major areas: Restoration, Expansion and Consolidation, covering the periods of 2010-12, 2012-17 and 2017-22.

In rapid expansion recommendation, the Higher Education Department has taken the initiative to set up new affiliating

universities as well as unitary universities. For instance, the AISHE -20 report says that there is an increase of four new universities in the year 2019-20. In the national level there has been an increase of 50 new universities and the number of universities in India is 1,043 as per AISHE- 20. If we compare the statistics of last five years from 2015-16 to 2019-20, it is also found that there has been a growth of 52% in the number of new universities in Odisha. The total universities in Odisha in 2019-20 are 32 against 28 in 2018-19 and 21 universities in 2015-16.

Additionally, Odisha shows a marginal improvement by establishing new 25 colleges in the year 2019-20. The number of colleges is 1,087 in 2019-20 as compared to 1,062 in 2018-19. If we analyse the number of colleges district wise, it is reported that as many as 14 districts have 20 to 49 colleges, five districts have 50 to 99 colleges and only one district has 100 to 199 colleges in its territory. Overall there are 1,505 AISHE

registered institutions but only 1,490 institutions have responded to AISHE- 20 report in Odisha including universities, colleges and stand-alone institutions. A new private Unitary University in the name of Jagat Guru Kripalu University has been established by the Odisha Government this year.

Similarly, the Government of Odisha and Department of Higher Education encourage Public Private Partnership for higher learning. This PPP mode has been introduced by keeping the stakeholder interest and career opportunity in view.

Recently, a survey on future of self financing course with job prospects has been done by a few freelance researchers. It is found that colleges are still offering conventional subjects, whereas, STEM based education is on rise. Colleges in backward districts of Odisha should be roped in PPP mode. The introduction of NEP-2020 is a major breakthrough in transformation reform in higher education. If we want to bring a governance reform then it can be

achieved only through structural changes in our traditional education system.

Assimilating female students and students from SC/ST background in higher education will be a major concern for the Higher Education Department. For example, in Odisha, the total or overall Gender Parity Index (GPI) for 2019-20 is 0.88 as compared to 0.82 in 2018-19. Among the SCs and STs of Odisha it is reported that GPI for SCs in 2019-20 is 0.80 against 0.76 in 2018-19 and for STs GPI for 2019-20 is 0.85 as compared to 0.78 in 2018-19 in the State level. So in the State like Odisha the GPI in Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe including others is improving. Still it will be a major challenge for the Odisha Government along with Higher Education Department to be more proactive to provide an equitable access to higher education to the minorities and underprivileged sections, in particular.

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# Major train mishaps India witnessed in last 15 yrs

## Spotlight once again on track safety after Baleswar accident

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Here is a list of some major train accidents that has taken place in last 15 years.

1. 2010, Jnaneswari Express: At least 148 passengers of the Mumbai bound express train died after a few coaches got derailed between Khemashuli and Sardhia stations of South Eastern Railway after midnight May 28, 2010, and toppled on the adjacent tracks. A goods train coming from the opposite direction within a few minutes ploughed through the coaches. More than 200 passengers were injured.

It was alleged that Maoists had damaged the tracks which led to the tragedy in West Bengal.

2. 2010, Uttar Banga Express and Vananchal Express: On July 19, 2010 the Uttar Banga Express and the Vananchal Express rammed into each other in West Bengal's Sainthia leaving about 63 dead and injuring over 165 people.

3. 2011, Chhapra-Mathura Express: On July 7, 2011, Chhapra-Mathura Express collided with a bus near Etah district in Uttar Pradesh.

In the accident, 69 people died and many were severely injured. The accident took place at around 1:55 a.m. at an unmanned level crossing. The train was running at high speed and the bus was dragged for about half a kilometre.

4. 2012, Hubli-Banglore Hampi Express: On May 23, 2012, the Hubli Bangalore Hampi Express collided with a goods train near Andhra Pradesh. Following the mishap, four coaches derailed, and one of them caught fire, killing about 25 passengers and charring several others. 43 people were left injured in the accident.

5. 2012, Tamil Nadu Express: On July 30, 2012, a coach of Delhi Chennai Tamil Nadu Express caught fire near Nellore, leaving more than 30 people dead.

6. 2014, Gorakhdham Express: On May 26, 2014, the Sant Kabir Nagar area of Uttar Pradesh, the Gorakhdham Express heading towards Gorakhpur collided with a halted goods train near Khalilabad station, leaving 25

dead and more than 50 injured.

7. 2015, Janata Express accident: A major accident took place in the Janata Express travelling from Dehradun to Varanasi on March 20, 2015. Over 30 people were killed and around 150 others injured when the engine and two adjoining coaches of the train derailed near Bachrawan Railway Station in Rae Bareli in Uttar Pradesh.

8. 2016, Patna-Indore Express: 19321 Indore-Patna Express derailed near Pukhrayan, Kanpur, on November 20, 2016, killing at least 150 people and injuring more than 150 others.

9. 2017 Kalinga-Utkal Express accident: On August 19, 2017, the Kalinga Utkal Express running between Haridwar and Puri met with an accident near Khatauli in

Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh. 14 coaches of the train derailed killing 21 passengers while 97 were left injured.

10. 2017, Kaifiyat Express: On August 23, 2017 nine train coaches of the Delhi-bound Kaifiyat Express derailed near Auraiya, Uttar Pradesh, causing at least 70 injuries. None of the passengers died in this train accident.

11. 2022, Bikaner-Guwahati Express: On January 13, 2022, at least 12 coaches of the Bikaner-Guwahati Express derailed in West Bengal's Alipurdar, in which 9 people died and 36 were injured.

Even one of Indian Railways premium train Rajdhani Express met one of its worst fate in 2002.

The 2301 Howrah-New

Delhi Rajdhani Express derailed near Rafiganj station between Gaya and Dehri-on-Sone stations in Bihar at 10.40 p.m. killing over 140 people after 14 coaches plunged into the Dhawa river on the night of September 10, 2002.

The Railways has been focusing on the safety of train passengers in last few years and has upgraded the railway tracks and also installed a device named 'kavach' to save trains from head on collision. The Railways also removed all the unmanned level crossings on its broad gauge network.

However, Friday's accident in Baleswar district involving the Coromandel Express and the SMVP-Howrah Superfast Express trains has put the spotlight once again on track safety despite several efforts by the Indian Railways.

## Baleswar accident 13 trains cancelled, 3 diverted

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

As many as 13 trains were cancelled and three were diverted on Saturday due to massive train accident near Bahanaga in Baleswar district on Friday evening.

The cancelled trains were: The Villupuram-Purulia from Villupuram , the Trivendrum-Kolkata Shalimar Express from Trivendrum , the Bengaluru-Kamakhyia Express from Bengaluru , the Bengaluru-Howrah Express from Bengaluru , the Bengaluru-Bhagalpur Anga Express from Bengaluru , the Puri-Howrah Express from Puri, Khurda Road-Kharagpur Express from Khurda Road, the Hyderabad-Shalimar Express from Hyderabad, Secunderabad-Howrah Falaknuma Express from Secunderabad , the Jaleswar-Puri Special from Jaleswar on Sunday, the Bhubaneswar-Baleswar Special from



Bhubaneswar and Baleswar Bhubaneswar Special from Baleswar on Sunday.

The diverted trains were: The Jayanagar-Puri Express from Jayanagar would run via Joychandi Pahar-Chandil Junction-Bansapani-Jaroli-Jakhpura, theSilghat Town-Tambaram Express from Silghat Town would run via Asansol-Chandil-Rourkela-Jharsuguda-Titlagarh-Vizianagaram and the Patna-Ernakulam Express from Patna would run via Adra-Chandil-Chakradharpur-Rourkela-Jharsuguda-Titlagarh-Vizianagaram.

## Bicycle Day takes cue from Bhadrak activist

PNS ■ BHADRAK

Since 2018, the United Nations has been observing June 3 as World Bicycle Day. Looking at the contribution of bicycles in keeping the environment pollution free, the day is given a lot of importance.

Bicycles are also helpful for physical fitness and protect the unnecessary wastage of natural resources. Notably, an awareness drive on bicycles was initiated by rights activist and environmentalist Radhakanta Tripathy in Bhadrak in December, 2009.

Tripathy along with his followers started a noble mission by undertaking a bicycle rally in Bhadrak town spreading the message through slogans, distribution



of leaflets and organising public meetings in different parts of the town. The noble initiatives and propagation got accolades not only in the district but also in different parts of the country. Tripathy also filed petitions in the

National Human Rights Commission for providing safety and security to the cyclists by framing suitable laws.

Tripathy expressed his thankfulness to The Pioneer for coverage of the incidents.

## Harms of tobacco use explained at B'swar meet

PNS ■ BALESWAR

In a bid to curb tobacco consumption aiming to improve public health, the People's Cultural Centre (PECUC) in cooperation with the Coalition for Tobacco Free Odisha organised a sensitisation workshop for youths on tobacco control at Baleswar.

The objective of the programme was to create awareness among the youths regarding the health harms of tobacco consumption.

On this occasion, epidemiologist Dr Arup mentioned the ill consequences of tobacco use,



especially among youths.

In the long run, tobacco consumption could lead to several health issues including respiratory, decreased physical fitness, impaired lungs growth, and addiction to nicotine etc. Further, tobacco use could lead

to other risky behaviors such as alcohol and drug use etc., he maintained.

Actions that can be taken include education, restricting access to tobacco products, increasing taxes on tobacco, providing cessation

programmes, creating social norm campaigns, and supporting smoke-free environments, the speakers stressed.

Assistant Manager NCD(Non communicable diseases) Mousumi Samal and ADPHCO(Additional district public health communication officer) Ramanikant Bhanj spoke on the provisions under the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Product Act (COTPA).

All participants pledged to work for a tobacco- free environment while coordinator of PECUC Satyavisa Rath coordinated the workshop.

## Counselling on tech edu for G'pati orphans held

PNS ■ PARALAKHEMUNDI

Under the chairmanship of Additional District Magistrate (Revenue) Birendra Kumar Das, a vocational education counselling programme was held in the collectorate for the orphan students who passed the Matric examination this year. More than 40 children from Child Care Centres were present.

The objective of the programme was to inculcate interest in technical education among the students who have passed 10th standard. On the request of the district

Collector, the Child Protection Unit has been taking various programmes to create interest in technical education among the orphans who have passed out the Matric examination this year.

Teachers from various technical education institutes in the district participated and discussed in detail on the benefits of technical education. District Employment Officer Saubhagya Smriti Ranjan Tripathi and Gumma ITI chairman Rabindra Kumar Mishra among others were present.

## INBRIEF

### INTUC DEMANDS JUDICIAL PROBE INTO TRAIN MISHAP

Bhubaneswar: The Indian National Trade union Congress (INTUC) Odisha State branch has demanded a probe by an Orissa High Court judge into the train accident in Baleswar district and compensation of Rs 25 lakh to the family of the deceased victims. Besides, Rs 5 lakh should be paid to the injured. Never before so many people were killed and injured in any train mishap in the country. This mishap is highly unfortunate, said INTUC national vice-president and State president Rama Chandra Khuntia.

### STUDENT CONG COLLECTS BLOOD FOR TRAIN MISHAP INJURED

Bhubaneswar: The Pradesh Student Congress on Saturday held a blood donation camp at the Red Cross Bhawan here for



those injured in the train mishap in Baleswar district. Similar blood donation camps were held in Baleswar and Bhadrak by the Student Congress. Pradesh Student Congress Committee president Yasir Nawaj and national in-charge of Student Congress Anulekha Bose were present.

### TRAIN MISHAP: JARAKA ROTARY CLUB COLLECTS BLOOD

Jajpur: More than 900 passengers injured in the train mishap at Bahanga in Baleswar district are being treated at various hospitals. Keeping in view the need of blood for critical patients, the Jaraka Rotary Club of Jajpur district collected blood on Saturday. People voluntarily donated blood on the travel lane under the Jaraka flyover. Blood was collected with the help of experienced doctors of the Cuttack Red Cross Blood Bank. Around 100 units of blood were collected.



### EX-JSPUR ADM SAHOO FELICITATED

Jagatsinghpur: Additional District Magistrate Satchidananda Sahoo, who retired on May 31 after working for five years and seven months in Jagatsinghpur district, was felicitated by the district administration on Thursday. Collector Parul Patwari chaired the event and described Sahoo as an efficient administrator and an asset during any crisis. The district would remember him for his services.



### AMALAS ON STRIKE IN PALLAHARA

Pallaharara: On the direction of the district Amala Association, Pallahara Amalas are on strike since three days. Under the leadership of Chibak Raman Das, the Amalas have taken leave and are on a dharna in front of the block office. The 3rd level Government workers have joined the strike demanding Level 4 with 4200 grade pay. Senior Clerks Tarunakanta Pradhan and Kusadhwaj Dehuri told the Press that the strike would continue till the demand is fulfilled. The general public of the block are suffering due to the Amalas' stike.



### NEW TPNODL CUSTOMER CARE CENTER IN BHADRAK

Baleswar: The TP Northern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPNODL) inaugurated a new Customer Care Centre at Dhamnagar in Bhadrak district on Friday. This centre was inaugurated by TPNODL CEO Bhaskar Sarkar.

### SUNDARGARH: MAN HELD FOR KILLING FATHER

Rourkela: The Kutra police in Sundargarh district arrested a 28-year-old man on Saturday for allegedly killing his father. The arrested was identified as Amardip Kujur (28). Amardip, who works in Surat of Gujarat, had come home on Friday. When he saw his wife limping, he asked her the reason for it. She said her father-in-law was beating her regularly. Amardip lost his cool and hit his father with a stick on the head, due to which the latter died on the spot.



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik holds discussions with Tamil Nadu Sports Minister Udayanidhi Stalin and Transport Minister SS Shivsankar at the Naveen Niwas in Bhubaneswar on Saturday.

Pioneer photo

## Summer Theatre Fest at Paradip from today

PNS ■ PARADIP

The National School of Drama (NSD) of Delhi in collaboration with the Paradip Port Authority (PPA) and India's leading theatre organisation, CANMASS will be organising a three-day inaugural 'Summer Theatre Festival' which will be held here from June 4 to 5.

The original inaugural day was June 3. However, due to tragic rail accident at Bahanaga, Baleswar on June 2, the State Government has declared a

one- day State mourning on June 3 for which the festival was postponed to June 4.

Three dramas in Hindi language will be staged on the occasion. On the inauguration day, drama "Andha Yug" will be staged. On the same day evening, "Maee Re Main Ka Se Kahun" and on the concluding day evening "Taj Mahal Ka Tender" drama will be staged. There is no entry fee for the theatre festival as informed by CANMASS.

The National School of

Drama Repertory Company, New Delhi will organise the summer theatre festival programme for 14 days in Odisha at different places, Paradip, Puri and Rourkela, as informed by the coordinator of National School of Drama (NSD) Pradip Kumar Mohanty, NSD's Director, Lucknow Rakesh Kumar Singh, advisor of CANMASS, Capt. Alekh Charan Sahoo and secretary of CANMASS, Shriman Narayan Mishra in a Press conference here on Friday.

### Puri festive season begins

## Snana Yatra, Gajanan Besha of Lords

UMA SHANKAR PRASAD

The annual cycle of festivals of Lord Jagannath begins with the SnanaYatra (the bathing ceremony) which takes place on the full-moon day of Jyestha (this year on June 4). This festival is known as Devasnana Purnima. There is a general belief that the devotee washes away all his sins if he gets a darshan of the Lord on this day; therefore, it attracts thousands of pilgrims from all over the world.

According to Skandpuran when King Indradyumna installed the wooden deities he arranged this bathing ceremony. On the previous day of Snana Yatra, the images of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra along with Sudarshana are ceremonially brought out from the inner sanctum of the main temple in a procession called 'Pahandi'. This bathing platform is situated to the north-east of Anand Bazar and beside the outer wall of the temple called



'Meghanada Pacheri.' The length of the bathing platform is 76 feet. Due to its height, visitors standing outside the temple also get a clear view of the deities.

On the auspicious day, the Jagannath Sebakas called Suaras and Mahasuaras go in a ceremonial procession to fetch 108 pots of water from the

"Golden Well." During the entire process, all the Suaras cover their mouths. All the pots filled with water are preserved in the Bhoga Mandap. Then the priests purify the water with turmeric, Java, Sandal, flowers and perfumes. The ritual is also called "Jalabhisek." Poet Gadadhar Rajguru depicted in his "Kalasar" Granth the name

of Dwadas Yatra.

After the Snana Yatra, the deities in the evening are dressed up like Gajanan which is locally known as 'Hati Besha'. Since it is a general practice among Hindus that Lord Ganesh is worshipped at the beginning of every religious rite, Lord Shree Jagannath is decorated as Ganesh during

His first annual yatra. It is also stated that He is dressed as Ganesh to satisfy the followers of Ganapatya sect.

According to 'Darhyata Bhakti', one Ganapati Bhatta, a devotee of Ganesh, who had come from Karnataka, was disappointed not to see the Ganapati image on the bathing platform. To satisfy the religious sentiment of the devotee, Lord Jagannath appeared with the mask of a pachyderm. Since that day, the Gajanan or Hati Besha of the deities has been held on the day of Jyestha Purnima. This Besha is chiefly conducted by the Palia Puspalak, Khuntia, Mekap and Daitapatis on the day. Lord Shree Jagannath and Lord Balabhadra assume Gajanan Besha, while Goddess Subhadra takes a lotus flower vasha. The Raghav Das Mutt and Gopalirtha Mutt respectively supply the above Besha materials as per a prolonged tradition.

(The writer is based at Khorda; Ph. 63706 75562)



**ODISHA TRIPLE TRAIN CRASH**

# Express entered loop line, hit goods train: Probe

## Signal goof-up

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Preliminary investigations have revealed that the Coromandel Express train involved in a horrific rail tragedy in Odisha on Friday entered the loop line and crashed into a goods train parked there instead of the main line just ahead of the BAHANAGAR Bazar station, a source said.

The coaches of Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express capsized after crashing into the coaches of Coromandel Express that had scattered on the adjacent track.

While Coromandel Express was at a speed of 128 kmph, Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express was running at a speed of 116 kmph. The report has been submitted to the Railway Board, sources said.

The loop lines of the Indian Railways are constructed in a station area -- in this case, the BAHANAGAR Bazar station -- to accommodate more trains to ease out the operations. The loop lines are generally 750 metres in length to accommodate full-length goods train with multiple engines.

The two trains were carrying around 2,000 passengers. At least 288 people have been killed in the accident and near-



ly 1,000 injured.

An eyewitness to the incident, Anubhav Das, also told PTI that local authorities and railway officials had initially indicated that the train he was travelling on -- Coromandel Express -- had rammed into the goods train.

However, none of these accounts was officially confirmed by the railways.

While a thorough probe is underway, none of the authorities has so far talked about any possibility of a sabotage.

The national transporter has initiated a high-level probe into the train crash in Odisha's Balasore, which will be headed by the commissioner of railway safety, South Eastern Circle, officials said.

The commissioner of rail-

way safety works under the Ministry of Civil Aviation and investigates all such accidents.

"A M Chowdhary, CRS, SE Circle, will inquire into the accident," a spokesperson of the Indian Railways said.

The national transporter has also said anti-train collision system "Kavach" was not available on the route.

The crash involved Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express, Shalimar-Chennai Central Coromandel Express and a goods train.

"The rescue operation has been completed. Now, we are starting the restoration work. Kavach was not available on this route," Indian Railways Spokesperson Amitabh Sharma said.

The railways is in the

process of installing "Kavach", an anti-train collision system, across its network.

Kavach alerts when a loco pilot jumps a signal (Signal Passed at Danger -- SPAD), which is the leading cause of train collisions. The system can alert the loco pilot, take control of the brakes and bring the train to a halt automatically when it notices another train on the same line within a prescribed distance.

While sources had earlier said a signalling failure could be the reason behind the crash, railway officials said it is not yet clear if Coromandel Express entered the loop line and hit the stationary goods train or it first derailed and then hit the parked train after entering the loop line.

# Survivors recount tales of horror

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Returning home to their families after several months of working in south India, passengers aboard the 12864 Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express suddenly heard a loud thud, following which they fell off their berths and lights went off. They were just five hours away from their destination in Howrah when the train they were travelling got involved in a triple train accident at BAHANAGA Bazar station in Odisha's Balasore district.

The train, which was running a little over three hours late from its schedule, was moving towards its next stop Balasore, some 20 km away, when the accident took place around 7 pm on Friday.

Mizan Ul Haq, a resident of Bardhaman, was in one of the coaches at the rear of the train. "The train was running at a high speed. Around 7 pm, a loud sound was heard and everything started moving in all directions and I fell down on the floor from the upper berth as the lights went off inside the compartment," Haq, who was returning home from work in



Karnataka on a holiday, said.

He said that somehow, he managed to come out of the damaged coach and then to safety.

"It was ghastly, many people with grave injuries were lying around beside mangled coaches," Haq, who was lucky to have escaped with minor injuries, told PTI at Howrah station, where medical aid, food and other assistance were provided by the railway authorities to the surviving passengers.

The unaffected 17 coaches of the 12864 Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express reached Howrah at 1 pm on Saturday with 635 passengers, of whom 40 to 50 people were administered medical treatment on arrival, North Howrah

Deputy Commissioner of Police Anupam Singh said.

He said that five of them were sent to hospital for further treatment, while others left for their destinations.

Rekha, a Bengaluru resident coming to Kolkata for a visit, said that she was in a coach ahead of the wagons that got derailed.

"It was total chaos initially. We got off our compartment out of fear and sat in the nearby fields in the darkness till our train finally started for Howrah in the wee hours," she said.

Another Bardhaman resident, a carpenter who works in Bengaluru, said he was injured in the chest, feet and head when the coach in which he was travelling turned turtle.

## Efforts on to identify victims says TN Govt



PTI ■ CHENNAI

Three survivors of the train accident in Balasore in Odisha have returned to Chennai, even as the Tamil Nadu government is engaged in efforts to identify victims of the mishap but no official report on the injuries or toll pertaining to the state has been received from the Odisha government, Additional chief secretary of the revenue department Kumar Jayant said on Saturday.

Chief Minister M K Stalin reviewed the state of preparedness of the official machinery, especially the medical team, in coping with the situation in providing treatment to the injured when they arrive on June 4.

"About 250 people have moved from Bhadrak towards the south, particularly Chennai, through a special train today. So anybody who is able to travel has moved. We have not got any report on the death of passengers from Tamil Nadu," Jayant said.

## Envoys of several countries offer condolences

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Envoys and missions of several countries condoled the loss of lives in the tragic train accident in Odisha and expressed solidarity with India. The accident involving three trains in Odisha's Balasore district killed at least 288 people and injured 803, in one of the worst railway tragedies in the country.

In a tweet, US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti said, "On behalf of the US Mission in India, I extend our deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the tragic train accident in Balasore."

"We stand with India and the people of Odisha in this time of grief," he said.

## Many questions to ask of PM, Railway Minister, says Cong

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday said the "horrendous" train accident in Odisha reinforces why safety should always be the foremost priority and asserted that there are many questions to ask of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw but "those can wait" as the immediate task is of rescue and relief.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge has deputised the party's leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and AICC Odisha in-charge A Chella Kumar to immediately visit the accident site to take stock of the situation and oversee the relief efforts being undertaken by its workers and frontal organisations, AICC general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal



said.

In a statement, Kharge said, "At this moment of grave national tragedy on account of the terrible train disaster in Odisha, I have instructed the entire Congress party organisation to extend all possible help."

A number of Congress leaders from different states have either already reached or will soon reach Balasore, he said, and extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. "We have many questions to ask of the prime minister and the railway min-

ister but those can wait since the immediate task is of rescue and relief," Kharge said.

In a video statement, Kharge said it was the time to stay united and pointed out that several state governments have come forward to help out with the rescue efforts in Odisha, including the Siddaramaiah-led Karnataka government.

"I want to ask the PM and the Railway Minister that it should be found out how did this happen and who is responsible. We always talk about safety but still such an accident happened which had not happened in the history of railways. But all this can be discussed later as now it is the time to be united and support the central government and for all leaders to come together to help the people and share their grief," he said.

## Saw my brother lying in pool of blood, mother shielding him from mob: Manipur violence survivor



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Soon after ethnic clashes broke out in Manipur last month, 20-year-old Jamngaihkim Gangte and six of her family members left their home in Imphal to get to a nearby CRPF relief camp. However, only four of them made it after hours of dodging murderous mobs and being cooped up in a car boot.

While two of them were killed by a mob, one of them was separated from the family and found days later.

The family managed to reach Delhi and is among more than 60 living in two relief camps set up in Dwaraka for those affected by the Manipur violence, which claimed at least 98 lives.

As violence broke out in Manipur on May 3, Gangte and her family moved to a relative's house in Imphal and returned home the next morning.

"When we returned home, we found out that there was a CRPF relief camp nearby. So,

we packed some essentials and important documents and decided to go there," Gangte told PTI.

She and her family members -- her mother, brother, sister-in-law, cousin and aunt with her one-year-old baby -- left in a car. Some of her cousins were travelling in another car.

"We left around 10 am and the roads were empty for some time. Around half-a-kilometre from the camp, our car was surrounded by a mob. Some people opened the doors and pulled us out of the car. They poured kerosene on the car and set it on fire," Gangte said. "The mob started beating my brother and we were trying to protect him. Then a man made us sit on a bench and started questioning us about our ethnicity. We told them that we were Mizo and they almost let us go but some of them doubted us and stopped us," she said.

Gangte's relatives who were travelling in the other car managed to flee.

## Brij Bhushan seems to be quite valuable to BJP: Moily

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader M Veerappa Moily took a dig at the government over the alleged "inaction" against Wrestling Federation of India chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, saying he seems to be quite valuable in the BJP's scheme of things.

The former Union minister said it is quite disturbing to note that the wrestlers are protesting and losing patience after having put up a fight for justice for a long time.

The criminal investigation particularly on the chief of the WFI is "brazenly partisan and biased," Moily said.

"The law of the land is quite clear that there should be zero tolerance on sexual harassment. As the author of the world's best and ideal law of POCSO, after the Nirbhaya tragedy, I do not understand how the accused, including BJP MP Brij Bhushan Singh, were not arrested even after registration of a second FIR," he said in a statement.

"The president of the WFI seems to be quite valuable in the BJP's scheme of things. While it is proved that no one can be punished without due process of investigation and trial but the question involved is of probity which should have the highest standard," he said.

## PC slams law commission backing seditious law

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With the law commission backing the seditious law, senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Saturday said the panel's recommendation is a case of the "doctor prescribing a cure that is worse than the disease".

The former home minister said a draconian law in the statute book is an invitation to the rulers to misuse it and this hypothesis has been proved many times over.

Chidambaram's assertion comes after the law commission backed the penal provision for the offence of seditious, saying repealing it altogether can have serious adverse ramifications for the country's security and integrity.

The commission has recommended enhancing the jail term in seditious cases from a minimum of three years to seven years, contending that it would allow the courts greater room to award punishment in accordance with the scale and gravity of the act committed.

In a tweet, Chidambaram said the recommendation of the Law Commission that examined the validity and relevance of section 124A (sedition) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) is a "case of the doctor prescribing a cure that is worse than the disease".

## Conference on connectivity investments to NE States held



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A two-day conference to explore connectivity investments and identify concrete projects in north-eastern states was held in Meghalaya from Thursday. The meet included the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the European Union (EU) Delegation to India.

Giving details here on Saturday, the MEA said the conference also explored possibilities for projects with India's neighbours (Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh), for implementation under the India -- EU Connectivity Partnership, which was launched during the India -- EU Leaders Meet in May 2021. The Conference was inaugurated by Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma and Minister of State for External Affairs Rajkumar Ranjan Singh.

He stressed the importance placed by the central government on Connectivity initiatives, both within the country, and as part of India's Development Partnership abroad. He also highlighted the tremendous opportunities for India -- EU Triangular Development Cooperation in South Asia and the Indo --

Pacific.

Chief Minister Sangma emphasized the importance of interstate and cross border connectivity for the North East region as a whole, and for Meghalaya in particular. In that regard, Sangma referred to India's 'Act East' Policy, within which Meghalaya has an 'Act South' Policy focussing on the need to improve connectivity between Meghalaya and Bangladesh. He suggested a 'Zonal Approach' to connectivity, involving neighbouring states that caters to the needs of each state.

The second day of the Conference saw technical sessions on the themes; Digital Connectivity, Energy Connectivity, Transport Connectivity and Connectivity and Beyond focusing on projects linking the Northeast with India's neighbourhood, as part of the 'Act East' and 'Neighbourhood First' policies. The sessions saw participation from senior officials of the central government, the EU Commission, Government(s) of the North Eastern States of India, North Eastern Council, stakeholders from Nepal, Bangladesh and executives from private sector with presence in the region.

## 14 common FDC drugs banned

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Commonly available over-the-counter (OTC) drugs Nimesulide, Chlopheniramine Maleate and Codeine syrup besides Paracetamol used for treatment of common infections, cough, and fever are among the 14 fixed dose combination (FDC) drugs that have been banned by the Government. It said that there is "no therapeutic justification" for these medicines and that they may involve "risk" to individuals. The Union Health Ministry issued a notification in this regard recently.

The banned drugs included those used for treating common infections, cough and fever -- combinations such as Nimesulide + Paracetamol dispersible tablets, Chlopheniramine Maleate + Codeine Syrup, Pholcodine + Promethazine, Amoxicillin + Bromhexine and Bromhexine + Dextromethorphan + Ammonium Chloride + Menthol, Paracetamol + Bromhexine + Phenylephrine + Chlorpheniramine + Guaiphenesin and Salbutamol + Bromhexine.

The move comes following recommendations by an expert committee.

The expert committee said that there is "no therapeutic justification for this FDC (fixed dose combination) and the FDC may involve risk to human beings. Hence, in the



larger public interest, it is necessary to prohibit the manufacture, sale or distribution of this FDC under section 26 A of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. In view of the above, any kind of regulation or restriction to allow for any use in patients is not justifiable."

"And whereas, on the basis of the recommendations of the Expert Committee and the Drugs Technical Advisory Board, the Central Government is satisfied that it is necessary and expedient in public interest to regulate by way of prohibition the manufacture for sale, sale and distribution for human use of the said drug in the country," the notification stated.

FDC drugs are those which contain a combination of two or more active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) in a fixed ratio.

In 2016, the government had announced the ban on the manufacture, sale and distribution of 344 drug combinations after an expert panel, set up at the behest of the Supreme Court had stated they were being sold to patients without scientific data and the order was challenged by the manufacturers in court.

# Turkiye’s Erdogan takes oath of office, ushering in his third term

AP ■ ANKARA

Turkiye's longtime leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, took the oath of office on Saturday, ushering in his third presidential term that followed three stints as prime minister. Erdogan, 69, won a new five-year term in a runoff presidential race last week that could stretch his 20-year rule in the key NATO country that straddles Europe and Asia into a quarter-century.

The country of 85 million controls NATO's second-largest army, hosts millions of refugees and played a crucial role in brokering a deal that allowed the shipment of Ukraine grain, averting a global food crisis.

Erdogan was sworn in during a session in parliament before an inauguration ceremony at his sprawling palace complex. Supporters waited outside parliament despite the heavy rain, covering his car with red carnations as he arrived.

All eyes are on the announcement of his new Cabinet later on Saturday. Its lineup should indicate whether there will be a continuation of unorthodox economic policies

or a return to more conventional ones amid a cost-of-living crisis. Dozens of foreign dignitaries are travelling to attend the ceremony, including NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and Carl Bildt, a high-profile former Swedish prime minister. They are expected to press Erdogan to lift his country's objections to Sweden's membership in the military alliance — which requires unanimous approval by all allies.

Turkiye accuses Sweden of being too soft on Kurdish militants and other groups that Turkiye considers to be terrorists.

NATO wants to bring Sweden into the alliance by the time allied leaders meet in Lithuania on July 11-12, but Turkiye and Hungary have yet to endorse the bid. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban will also be attending the ceremony.

According to state-run Anadolu Agency, other leaders in attendance include Azerbaijan's Ilham Aliyev, Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro, South Africa's Cyril Ramaphosa, Armenia's Nikol



Pashinyan, Pakistan's Shahbaz Sharif, and Libya's Abdul Hamid Dbeibah.

Erdogan was sworn in amid a host of domestic challenges ahead, including a battered economy, pressure for the repatriation of millions of Syrian refugees and the need to rebuild after a devastating earthquake in February that killed 50,000 and levelled entire cities in the south of the country.

Turkiye is grappling with a cost-of-living crisis fuelled by inflation that peaked at a staggering 85 per cent in October before easing to 44 per cent last month. The Turkish currency has lost more than 10 per cent

of its value against the dollar since the start of the year.

Critics blame the turmoil on Erdogan's policy of lowering interest rates to promote growth, which runs contrary to conventional economic thinking that calls for raising rates to combat inflation.

Unconfirmed media reports say Erdogan plans to reappoint Mehmet Simsek, a respected former finance minister and deputy prime minister, to the helm of the economy. The move would signify a return by the country — which is the world's 19th largest economy according to the World Bank — to more orthodox economic policies.

In power as prime minister and then as president since 2003, Erdogan is already Turkiye's longest-serving leader.

He has solidified his rule through constitutional changes that transformed Turkiye's presidency from a largely ceremonial role to a powerful office. Critics say his second decade in office was marred by sharp democratic backsliding including the erosion of institutions such as the media and judiciary and the jailing of opponents and critics.

# Key step toward landmark treaty to end plastic waste

AP ■ PARIS

Global negotiators have agreed to craft an initial draft treaty to end plastic pollution, a preliminary but crucial step toward tackling one of the most lasting sources of human waste.

Environmental advocates cautiously welcomed the outcome of five days of UN talks in Paris on plastic pollution, but expressed concern that the petroleum industry and some governments would water down the eventual treaty. Most plastic is made from fossil fuels.

Delegates at the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for Plastics agreed on Friday evening to produce an initial draft before their next meeting in Kenya in November, participants said.

The committee is charged with developing the first international, legally binding treaty on plastic pollution, on land and at sea.

A coalition of “high-ambition” governments led by Norway and Rwanda, along with environmental groups, want to end plastic pollution altogether by 2040 by slashing



production and limiting some chemicals used in making plastics.

“Projections suggest that a child born today will see plastic production double by the time they turn 18, but we know that the consequences of increasing plastic production will be disastrous for our health, the planet, and the climate,” said Dr Tadesse Amera, who led the International Pollutants Elimination Network's delegation at the talks.

“The stakes are high, but

we are optimistic by the growing awareness among delegates of the need for global controls.”

Countries with big petroleum industries like the US, China and Saudi Arabia are focusing instead on plastic recycling, and want country-by-country rules instead of across-the-board limits.

Stew Harris, senior director for global plastics policy at the American Chemistry Council, argued for allowing each government to “use the right tools based on their

# Debt deal frustrates many Democrats

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Democrats are deeply conflicted about the food aid requirements that President Joe Biden negotiated as part of the debt ceiling deal, fearing damage has been done to safety net programmes that will be difficult to unravel in the years ahead as Republicans demand further cuts.

Bargaining over toughening work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programme, commonly known as food stamps, made the focal point for the White House and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., up until the end.

Negotiators from both sides made clear, publicly and privately, that it was the biggest area of disagreement and almost led to the talks breaking down several times.

In the end, Democrats warily accepted new requirements for some able-bodied recipients in exchange for food aid.

Republicans agreed to drop some work requirements for veterans, homeless people and

others.

The result of the tense back-and-forth was a deal that played to both sides, but one that many Democrats agonised over as they weighed whether to vote for the package this past week.

Many struggled to square cutting access to food for marginalised communities with an outcome that allowed the United States to avoid defaulting on its debt.

“In order for this country to not default on its bills, we then turned and made our most vulnerable communities default,” said Rep. Cori Bush, D-Mo. Years before she came to Congress, Bush lived in a car with her then-husband and two young children after the family had been evicted from their rental home.

The federal aid programme provides monthly funds — sometimes as little as \$6 a day — to allow low-income individuals and families to buy groceries.

It is the largest programme in the country focused on fighting hunger, with 41 million

people using benefits last year alone to purchase food, according to the Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service, which administers the program.

By 2025, new requirements will apply to able-bodied adults from age 49 to 54 without dependents — an increase of five years. Those individuals will be required to work or attend training programs for at least 80 hours a month if they want to receive more than three months of SNAP benefits within a three-year period.

Republicans have tried for decades to expand work requirements for these government assistance programmes, arguing they result in more people returning to the workforce, despite several studies that have found they have little impact on employment.

“We’re going to return these programs to being a life vest, not a lifestyle. A hand up, not a handout and that has always been the American way,” Rep. Mike Johnson of Louisiana, the vice chair of the

House Republican conference, told reporters.

The White House countered that Republican proposition by getting GOP lawmakers to waive the work requirements for new groups — veterans, individuals who are homeless or facing housing instability and youth aging out of foster care — to balance out the number of people who would now be facing these new restrictions.

The end result could be more people receiving SNAP benefits overall. An estimate from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office released Tuesday said that the changes in the debt ceiling package would add almost 80,000 people to the rolls of SNAP in an average month.

But the trade-off of seemingly helping some groups while hurting others still left the left flank of the Democratic Party — lawmakers who have supported Biden and helped pass his agenda for the first two years of his term — frustrated by the outcome.

That was especially the

case as advocates, including the nonpartisan National Alliance to End Homelessness, warned of a disturbing trend across the country of an increase in the number of older adults who are becoming homeless, some for the first time.

“What we should not be playing is oppression Olympics,” Bush said. “Like which one gets to hurt today? Which one gets to get to that finish line to hurt today? That's not where we should be as a society.”

Bush, a member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, voted “no” on the debt limit deal on Wednesday night after she spent days hearing from advocate groups and constituents on the issue.

“I think it's important that (Biden) understands that it's good for us to have a strong, no vote because this isn't a deal that he would have made if we hadn't been held hostage,” Democratic Rep. Pramila Jayapal of Washington state, chair of the Progressive Caucus, told The Associated Press this past week.

## 2 injured in shootout on Israel-Egypt border

PTI ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli troops were engaged in a shootout in southern Israel along the Egyptian border, the military said Saturday.

It gave few details in a short statement, but said two people were wounded. Israel and Egypt signed a peace agreement in 1979 and maintain close security ties. Fighting along their shared border is rare.

The exchange of fire reportedly took place around the Nitzana border crossing between Israel and Egypt. The crossing is located about 40 kilometres (25 miles) southeast of the point where Israel's border with Egypt and the Gaza Strip converge.

## Lanka Prez urges party unity to handle economic crisis

PTI ■ COLOMBO

President Ranil Wickremesinghe has called for joint action by all parties for Sri Lanka to emerge from the unprecedented economic crisis.

Wickremesinghe, who made the remarks while addressing a legal conference held at the Central Resort of Nuwara Eliya on Friday, said that none of the political parties in Parliament currently possess a 50 per cent voter base.

The economic challenges faced by the country ten months ago as an “unprecedented situation in history,” Wickremesinghe, also the debt-ridden island nation's finance minister said.

“It has been 10-11 months since our country faced a state of failure. However, we have

managed to establish law and order, political stability, and economic stability in our nation. Yet, we are aware that this stability is only temporary, and we still have a long road ahead to overcome the challenges we face,” the president stressed.

“Therefore the need is for unity among the parties, not solely for the purpose of elections, but to steer the country towards recovery from the ongoing economic crisis,” he said.

Wickremesinghe stressed that while the re-establishment of law and order and political and economic stability is crucial, it does not imply that Sri Lanka has wholly overcome the crisis.

Sri Lanka was hit by an unprecedented financial crisis

in 2022, the worst since its independence from Britain in 1948, due to a severe paucity of foreign exchange reserves, sparking a major political and humanitarian crisis in the island nation.

The debt-ridden country was marred with protests leading to the ouster of the powerful Rajapaksa family from politics. Wickremesinghe took charge as the country's president following the resignation of Gotabaya Rajapaksa on July 9 last year.

Wickremesinghe has spearheaded the economic recovery since then obtaining an IMF bailout while implementing strict reforms.

His repeated calls for cross-party support to handle the crisis came to be rejected by opposition parties.

## Dar: Pak not to default on sovereign commitments

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Debt-ridden Pakistan's Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Saturday said that his country would not default on any sovereign commitments and overcome the current economic problems through long-term reforms.

Speaking to a delegation of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), which called on him here ahead of the finalisation of budget 2023-24, Dar also said that there is not a single day's delay in Pakistan's sovereign commitments.

“Pakistan would not default and overcome the current economic problems through long-term reforms. The government's top priority was to ensure that there is not a single day's delay in Pakistan's sovereign commitments,” said the minister.

Dar warned people against speaking ill of the nation's economy.

“Some people like to give dates that Pakistan will default on so and so date. They should be ashamed. They should be well-wishers and be loyal to their soil,” he said.

Dar said that Pakistan was a sovereign country with assets worth trillions of dollars while its external debts were USD 100 billion, adding that only one asset relating to gas infrastructure was about 50 per cent of the total debt.

The minister assured that the country would come out of the current challenges and would also create a sovereign wealth fund.

## Pak govt hints at holding general elections this year

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led Pakistan's coalition government has decided to throw open its coffers for massive public spending during the next financial year, finally giving the strongest signal to hold the general elections on time this year, according to a media report on Saturday.

The evidence has been gleaned from the 31 per cent hike in the next fiscal year's federal development budget to Rs 950 billion, reported the Express Tribune newspaper.

The decision to increase the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) from the

earlier proposed Rs 700 billion to Rs 950 billion was taken by Prime Minister Sharif, minutes before the scheduled meeting of the Annual Plan Coordination Committee (APCC) on Friday.

The paper reported that the confusion was apparent as the Ministry of Planning had distributed the APCC working paper among all stakeholders based on the Rs 700 billion PSDP size. But Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal told the media that the size of the PSDP will be Rs 950 billion.

The budget 2023-24 is expected to be presented before the parliament on June 9 and after a discussion, it would be voted upon before the end of

June.

The current parliament will complete its term by mid-August, elections are expected by early October.

It is rumoured that as provided in the Constitution, the parliament under extraordinary circumstances may increase its term by one year, but the size of the PSDP shows that the government is entering into election mode, the report added.

The ousted prime minister and the chief of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, Imran Khan, has been demanding early elections in the cash-strapped country. The Sharif-led government has rejected Khan's demand.

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**Prof. (Dr.) Amit Kauts**  
**Head Coordinator**  
**Department of Education**  
**Guru Nanak Dev University**  
**Amritsar**

NA/12/16829/2023/24678 Dated CHD :- 6/2/2023

# Rishi Sunak planning London-based global AI watchdog: Report

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is considering a London-based global artificial intelligence (AI) watchdog to oversee any threats posed by the fast-growing technology, according to a UK media report on Saturday. Sunak will discuss ways to cooperate on monitoring AI when he meets US President Joe Biden at the White House next week, according to 'The Times'.

Among the ideas under consideration in Downing Street is setting up a global AI

authority in London, modelled on the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The IAEA, founded in 1957 with 176 countries including India as members, monitors the use of nuclear energy, promotes safe standards, and checks that it is not used for military purposes.

A British minister told the newspaper that the UK would be “the best place” in the world for any new body because many leading companies already have a strong presence here. Though plans are at an



early stage, if Sunak pushes ahead, the UK government could seek to recruit rapidly to get the authority up and running. “The Prime Minister is very alive to the need for international alignment on the

approach to AI as the technology evolves to ensure we can benefit from the opportunities but manage the risks,” a government source was quoted as saying by 'The Times'.

The possibility of Sunak creating a regulator comes as the European Union (EU) is refining its Artificial Intelligence Act, which is expected to take a hard line on oversight of the sector.

The US is also considering how to regulate but is expected to be less severe, as the world grapples with concerns about the safety of AI technology.



# Indian girls jump on global coding bandwagon in ChatGPT era

IAN S ■ MUMBAI

For Aradhya Awasthi, a class 6th student in Delhi-NCR, coding is being creative, having fun and learning to be innovative. For Tanmit Kaur, who is in class 9th, learning coding helps open new career avenues and create solutions to solve real-life problems.

As the demand for skilled coders and software developers skyrocket in a post-pandemic era, especially in the age of generative AI (aka ChatGPT) and other next-gen technologies, Indian girls are not far behind and are now learning the ropes to become world-class coders.

I am fascinated by algorithm-based careers like in the world of finance. Coding has not only instilled confidence in me but has also given me a fresh career option which I may explore later in life to build innovative solutions to solve real-life problems,' Kaur, a student at Noida-based Indraprastha Global School, told IANS.

Amid widespread tech layoffs, developers have emerged as the most sought-after role in India, especially those who can design, develop and maintain the front-end and back-end of a



web application, according to job portal Indeed.

Developers today make up five of the top 10 job roles. The job roles that have seen the highest growth since pre-pandemic are data engineer (353 per cent), site reliability engineer (260 per cent), assistant engineer (254 per cent), application developer (235 per cent) and cloud engineer (220 per cent).

There are 45,000 Artificial Intelligence (AI) job openings in India, with data scientists and Machine Learning (ML) engineers being among the

most sought-after careers, according to a latest report by TeamLease Digital, a tech staffing firm.

Parul Malhotra, a senior software development engineer with global leading web and mobile app development company GeekyAnts became a developer as she loved the idea of solving real-world issues through programming.

'I have built a few world-class web apps in the last three years and worked with people from across the globe. Coding has provided me a way to solve

problems, contribute to technological advances and communicate with people from different countries and backgrounds,' she told IANS.

According to Apple CEO Tim Cook, coding is the only global language and he wishes that more Indian students, including girls, learn coding early in school days so that they can create world-class products and solve real-life problems as they grow up.

Coding is the only global language. It is a way to express yourself and arguably, we need

more of that in the world and bring the world closer,' Cook, who has always emphasised that coding should be taught as early as elementary school, had told IANS in April during his India visit.

Indore's Asmi Jain, 20, has been selected among the winners of Apple's 'WWDC23 Swift Student Challenge,' who created original apps using the Swift coding language.

At Medi-Caps University in Indore, she found out her friend's uncle had to undergo brain surgery. As a result, he was left with eye misalignment and facial paralysis.

Jain sprung into action, designing her winning playground to track a user's eye movements as they try to follow a ball moving around the screen.

'It was important for me to create an app playground that could positively impact the lives of people like him,' said Jain.

According to her, coding lets her create things that help her friends and the community. 'It gives me a sense of independence that is very empowering,' she added.

According to Mohit Thukral, an alumnus of

Stanford University and Director, Indraprastha Global School, technology is going to be the mathematics of the 21st century.

'Every student is going to have to know a certain minimum level of knowledge of technology, coding, and others. Technology is an enabler and introduction of skill-based courses such as design thinking, robotics, coding and AI at our school is just the beginning,' he told IANS.

Nikita Tomar Mann, the principal at the school, said that it is a fallacy that coding is a skill only required by those who choose the career of a coder or software programmer.

'For the future citizens of the new world order, Coding will be a vital 'Life Skill'. Creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving are touted as some of the skills of the 21st century, and one of the best ways to master these skills is to learn coding right from early schooling years,' she emphasised.

According to Parul, coding should be a part of the curriculum for students as it can equip them with logical and algorithmic thinking skills.



## RBI-MPC may lower inflation forecast marginally: Bank of Baroda Chief Economist

IAN S ■ CHENNAI

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) may lower the inflation forecast marginally and will not change the repo rate at the upcoming meeting owing to inflation being down and increased liquidity, said a top economist in Bank of Baroda.

'The MPC will not change the repo rate. The inflation is less than five per cent and will be in the coming months,' Chief Economist

Madan Sabnavis, Bank of Baroda told IANS.

The consumer price index (CPI) inflation moderated in April-23 to 4.70 per cent year-on-year (YoY) and remained within the RBI's target range (2-6 per cent) for the second consecutive month.

Adding further Sabnavis said the liquidity has increased and so the RBI-MPC's stance will also not change.

According to Sabnavis, the MPC may lower inflation forecast marginally.

## Indian American Ajay Banga takes over as World Bank President

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Indian American Ajay Banga on Friday took over as the President of the World Bank, making him the first person of colour to head either of the two global financial institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

On May 3, the Executive Directors of the World Bank selected Banga, 63, as the 14th President of the World Bank for a five-year term.

In February, President Joe Biden announced that the US would nominate Banga to lead the World Bank.

'Join us in welcoming Ajay Banga as the new President of the World Bank Group. We are committed to creating a world free from poverty on a livable planet,' the World Bank said in a tweet with a picture of Banga entering the bank headquarters here on Friday.

'I wish Ajay Banga all the best as he takes up his new role as President of the World Bank today. I look forward to continuing the deep partnership between our institutions to do good and help those most in need,' IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva said in a tweet.

Banga has become the first-ever Indian-American to head the World Bank. He replaces David Malpass, who announced his decision to step down in February.

Banga most recently served as Vice Chairman at General Atlantic. Previously, he was President and CEO of Mastercard, a global organization with nearly 24,000 employees.

Under his leadership, MasterCard launched the Center for Inclusive Growth, which advances equitable and sustainable economic growth and financial inclusion around the world. He was the Honorary Chairman of the International Chamber of Commerce, serving as Chairman from 2020-2022.

He became an advisor to General Atlantic's climate-focused fund, BeyondNetZero, at its inception in 2021. Banga served as Co-Chair of the Partnership for Central America, a coalition of private organizations that works to advance economic opportunity across underserved populations in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. He was previously on the Boards of the American Red Cross, Kraft Foods, and Dow Inc.

Banga is a co-founder of The Cyber Readiness Institute and was Vice Chair of the Economic Club of New York. He was awarded the Foreign Policy Association Medal in 2012, the Padma Shri Award by the President of India in 2016, the Ellis Island Medal of Honor and other awards.

# Not merger but only transfer of policyholder related assets, liabilities of Sahara Life: SBI Life

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

SBI Life, a subsidiary of country's biggest lender State Bank of India (SBI), has said it is not a merger between the two companies but only a transfer of the policyholder related assets and liabilities of Sahara Life Insurance.

On Friday regulator Irdai directed SBI Life Insurance to takeover the policy liabilities of around two lakh policies along with assets of stressed Sahara India Life Insurance Co Ltd (SILIC).

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.

Following the Irdai order, SBI Life assured two lakh policyholders of 'high levels' of service and commitment as is accorded to our customers.

'We have started and we are expeditiously working on the process of integrating all these policyholders in our systems. While the full integration may take some time, we request these policyholders to reach out to us on our helpline number 1800 267 9090 or email us at saharalife@sbilife.Co.In,' it said

SBI Life will shortly reach out to these policyholders and intimate them about various



touch points and manner of servicing for a smooth transition, it said.

Sahara Life Insurance was also not allowed to underwrite new business. Thereafter, further

## Share of flex space in corporates' real estate portfolio rises to 10-12% from 5-8% pre-Covid: Colliers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian corporates are fast embracing flexible workspace which now accounts for 10-12 per cent of their real estate portfolio compared to 5-8 per cent pre-COVID pandemic, according to Colliers.

Real estate consultant Colliers has recently released a report 'Global Occupier Outlook 2023' that revealed that many corporates in Asia Pacific are deferring decisions on taking office space on lease as they are grappling with the complexities of the hybrid work model.

'The lack of clarity and macroeconomic uncertainty are posing challenges for businesses in projecting their space requirements,' it added.

According to Colliers' experts, companies are facing the dilemma of striking a balance between providing employees with desired flexibility and realigning their portfolios for the next evolution of the workplace.

However, Colliers said that Indian office space occupiers have been quick to adopt flex spaces, attracted by the flexi-



bility, agility, and cost-effectiveness.

'Flex spaces are becoming an integral part of occupiers' portfolio, with its share in occupiers' total portfolio rising to 10-12 per cent in 2023, from 5-8 per cent before the pandemic in 2019, as per interactions with industry experts,' the consultant said.

Going forward, Colliers said that flex spaces will continue to see strong growth.

Flexible workspace continue to support occupiers in realigning their portfolios and space considerations to suit a hybrid working style.

Peush Jain, Managing Director, Office Services, India, said, 'Flex spaces have emerged as a core strategy for occupiers to adopt a decentralised workspace model, serving as a promising alternative to the traditional paradigm.'

As compared to shorter lease tenures of 1-2 years pre-pandemic, occupiers are now going for longer commitments of 3-5 years with flex space operators as they look to integrate flex space as a long-term solution.

During 2022, leasing of office space by flex space operators touched record 7 million square feet across top 6 cities.

Across the APAC region, Colliers said that occupiers are keen on realigning their office portfolios to meet business needs while providing the flexibility employees desire.

The right real estate portfolio is key to keeping culture intact, attracting and retaining best talent, and controlling operational costs, it added.

## FPIs invest ₹ 43,838 crore in India in May

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) invested Rs 43,838 crore in the Indian stock markets in May. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said the FPIs were aggressive buyers in the market in May having invested Rs 43,838 crore through the stock market and primary market put together.

A survey among foreign portfolio investors showed that India is now the consensus overweight among all emerging markets. In May, India attracted the largest investment among all emerging markets, and FPIs were sellers in China, he added.

FPIs are likely to continue their investment in India in June too since the latest GDP data and high frequency indicators reflect a robust economy gaining further strength.

Financials, automobiles, telecom and construction are attracting big investments, he said.

Nifty racing to the all-time high of 18887 and breaking the record are highly possible in the next few trading days.

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 had said.

Further, the policy data of SILIC reveals that the company's portfolio is showing run-off trend. The financial position has been deteriorating with rising losses and higher percentage of claims to total premium.

If the trend is allowed to continue, the situation will wors-

en and lead to erosion of capital and SILIC may not be able to discharge its liabilities towards policyholders, thereby endangering the interest of its policyholders,' Irdai had said.

It said the action against SILIC has been taken after due consideration of all the facts and circumstances.

The authority added in its meeting held on June 2, 2023 that the action was warranted to protect the interest of the policyholders of SILIC.

Further, Irdai said it will continue to monitor the situation and also issue necessary directions as required in the interest of the policyholders of SILIC.



## All new Model 3 cars qualify for \$7,500 EV tax credit in US: Tesla

IAN S ■ SAN FRANCISCO

Electric car-maker Tesla has announced that every new Model 3 vehicle now qualifies for \$7,500 EV tax credit in the US.

With this, the starting price of a Tesla Model 3 -- after federal tax credits -- may once again be below the \$35,000 mark.

Tesla's website claimed every new Model 3 is eligible for the full \$7,500 federal tax credit in the US.

The EV tax credits were mandated by the US Congress last year as part of the Inflation Reduction Act. The aims to cut dependency on China for batteries.

Tesla CEO Elon Musk retweeted a screenshot of the website that displays the tax

credits available for each vehicle. Tesla delivered a record 4,22,875 electric vehicles in the first quarter of 2023, beating the Wall Street estimates.

In the first quarter, the electric car-maker produced over 4,40,000 vehicles.

'We continued to transition towards a more even regional mix of vehicle builds, including Model S/X vehicles in transit to EMEA and APAC,' it said in a statement.

In the fourth quarter of 2022, Tesla delivered 4,05,278 and produced 4,39,701 units.

According to reports, a large percentage of deliveries came from vehicles produced in Shanghai gigafactory.

Tesla has adjusted the pricing for its electric vehicle in the US several times in the recent past.



## Lanka President urges party unity to handle economic crisis

PTI ■ COLOMBO

President Ranil Wickremesinghe has called for joint action by all parties for Sri Lanka to emerge from the unprecedented economic crisis. Wickremesinghe, who made the remarks while addressing a legal conference held at the Central Resort of Nuwara Eliya on Friday, said that none of the political parties in Parliament currently possess a 50 per cent voter base.

The economic challenges faced by the country ten months ago as an 'unprecedented situation in history,' Wickremesinghe, also the debt-ridden island nation's finance minister said.

'It has been 10-11 months since our country faced a state of failure. However, we have managed to establish law and order, political stability, and economic stability in our nation. Yet, we are aware that this stability is only temporary, and we still have a long road ahead to overcome the challenges we face,' the president stressed.

'Therefore the need is for unity among the parties, not solely for the purpose of elections, but to steer the country towards recovery from the ongoing economic crisis,' he said. Wickremesinghe stressed that while the re-establishment of law and order and political and economic stability is crucial, it does not imply that Sri Lanka has wholly overcome the crisis.

Sri Lanka was hit by an unprecedented financial crisis in 2022, the worst since its independence from Britain in 1948, due to a severe paucity of foreign exchange reserves, sparking a major political and humanitarian crisis in the island nation.

OnePlus, known for its cutting-edge innovations, offers the OnePlus 2R model a special price of just Rs 8,999. Don't miss this opportunity to sport a trendy and functional accessory, at unmatched offers.

This year's EORS holds a lot of promise, with a wide range of products and exciting offers. Keep an eye out for Myntra-specials and EORS-specific product lines, ensuring you find something special for yourself, your family, or your friends.

With deals across every product category, Myntra's EORS-18 is your one-stop shop for unforgettable shopping experiences. Get ready to embark on a shopping extravaganza like no other! Happy shopping!

## Myntra's 18th edition of EORS live: Grab irresistible offers by top brands across 20L products

including the likes of NEXT, LC Waikiki Man, Terranova, Urban Revivo, Bravesoul, DKNY, and many more.

'This EORS, enjoy offers on some of the leading international brands, ranging from 25 per cent on MRP to a whopping 40 per cent off on MRP, making it the perfect opportunity to upgrade your wardrobe with global fashion trends,' according to the company.

Casual, Ethnic, and Western Wear with up to 50 per cent off on MRP: From



comfy t-shirts and shorts to saris, kurtas, stylish jackets among others, Myntra has you covered. To cater to the heightened demand across casual,

ethnic and western wear categories, brands like FCUK, Kalki Fashion and others are offering A up to 50 per cent off on MRP, ensuring you find

your perfect ensemble for any occasion.

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# Ruud rallies to beat Zhang

AP ■ PARIS

Last year’s finalist Casper Ruud rallied to beat Zhang Zhizhen in the third round of the French Open on Saturday, ending a strong run by the Chinese player.

The fourth-seeded Ruud, who lost to Rafael Nadal in last year’s final, won 4-6, 6-4, 6-1, 6-4.

Zhang was the first Chinese man to reach the third round at Roland Garros since Kho Sin-Whie in 1937. Kho also reached the fourth round in 1936 but that proved a step too far for Zhang, despite a lightning start on Court Suzanne Lenglen.

Meanwhile, American Coco Gauff rallied to beat Mirra Andreeva of Russia in an all-teen showdown in the third round.

Experience eventually told as the 19-year-old Gauff, who was the runner-up at Roland Garros last year, prevailed 6-7(5), 6-1, 6-1, sealing the result with a cross-court backhand winner.

That ended an impressive Grand Slam debut for the 16-year-old Andreeva, who earlier this week became the youngest player to win a match in the women’s main draw at the French Open since 2005.

Zhang broke Ruud in the opening game and went on to take the set as the Norwegian



player grew more and more frustrated.

Matters grew worse for Ruud as he found himself 0-40 down on his serve early in the second set but he collected his emotions and — after a topsy-turvy set — went on to level the match at his first opportunity.

Ruud then improved in the last two sets and sealed the match with a forehand down

the line on the first of two match points.

The match will be followed by an intriguing third-round encounter involving two teenagers: American Coco Gauff, who is 19, and Russian Mirra Andreeva, who is 16.

However, reigning Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina pulled out of the French Open before her third-

round match on Saturday because she is sick.

## RYBAKINA PULLS OUT

Reigning Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina pulled out of the French Open before her third-round match on Saturday because she is sick.

“I just wanted to give 100%, and obviously I’m far from being 100%,” Rybakina said. “If

I cannot breathe, there is no chance I can even run and try to compete.”

The No 4-seeded Rybakina was supposed to face 132nd-ranked Sara Sorribes Tormo in the day’s opening contest on Court Philippe Chatrier.

They were scheduled to begin playing at 11:45 a.m. local time, but instead, at that very moment, Rybakina sat down

behind the microphone at a news conference to explain why she was withdrawing from the year’s second Grand Slam tournament.

Sounding stuffed up, Rybakina explained that she has been running a fever, didn’t sleep well the past two nights and had difficulty breathing during a warmup session Saturday ahead of her match. She said a doctor told her there is a virus going around “here in Paris.”

Rybakina, who won each of her first two matches this week in straight sets, was considered among the top contenders for the championship at Roland Garros. She has won her past 10 matches, including a tuneup title on red clay at the Italian Open last month.

She plays a power-built game based in part on one of the best serves on the WTA Tour, which she leads in aces this season.

Last July, Rybakina won her first major trophy, defeating Ons Jabeur in the final at Wimbledon.

Rybakina is a 23-year-old who was born in Moscow and has represented Kazakhstan since 2018, when that country offered her funding to support her tennis career. The switch was a topic of conversation during Wimbledon, because the All England Club barred athletes who represent Russia or Belarus from entering the tournament in 2022 due to the war in Ukraine.



# Djokovic laments fans for booing

AP ■ PARIS

Novak Djokovic makes no secret of the way he loves to feed off negativity during a tennis match. Doesn’t really matter whether he’s ahead or behind on the scoreboard. The guy simply finds motivation and inspiration from all manner of slights, real and perceived.

Maybe it’s how a chair umpire is officiating that particular day ... or the way Djokovic’s entourage is sitting in place in the stands instead of rising to encourage him ... or the criticism he receives for wading into a political issue — all of which already have happened during this French Open.

Or maybe it’s how he’s treated by the spectators who, as they did on Friday during Djokovic’s 7-6 (4), 7-6 (5), 6-2 victory over 29th-seeded Alejandro Davidovich Fokina in the third round at Roland Garros, get on his case and jeer

him for seemingly no good reason at all.

Which is what happened at Court Philippe Chatrier during the longest three-set Grand Slam match of the 22-time major champion Djokovic’s long and distinguished career, clocking in at 3 hours, 36 minutes. He wasn’t thrilled at how difficult things had been in the match, didn’t love double-faulting three times in a single game, and really didn’t like the feed-back coming from a portion of the fans.

“A majority of the people comes to enjoy tennis or support one or the other player. But they are individuals. There are people — there are groups or whatever — that love to boo every single thing you do. That’s something that I find disrespectful and I frankly don’t understand that,” Djokovic said later at his news conference. “But it’s their right. They paid the ticket. They can do whatever they want.”

# Nadal undergoes hip surgery

AP ■ PARIS

Rafael Nadal had arthroscopic surgery on Friday night for the injured left hip flexor that forced him to sit out the French Open for the first time since he won the first of his record 14 titles there in his 2005 tournament debut.

Nadal’s spokesman, Benito Perez-Barbadillo, said three doctors were involved in the procedure, which was taking place in Barcelona.

Perez-Barbadillo said he expected to be able to pass along information about the operation on Saturday, which is Nadal’s 37th birthday.

The Spaniard hasn’t competed anywhere since he lost to Mackenzie McDonald in the second round of the Australian Open on Jan. 18. Nadal’s movement clearly was restricted for much of that match and he ended up with his earliest exit at any Grand Slam tournament since 2016.

An MRI exam the next day revealed the extent of the injury, and Perez-Barbadillo said at the time that Nadal was expected



to need up to two months to fully recover. He initially aimed to enter the Monte Carlo Masters in March on his beloved red clay, but he wasn’t able to play there, then subsequently sat out tournament after tournament, decreasing the likelihood that he would be ready for the French Open.

Nadal announced during a news conference at his tennis academy in Manacor, Spain, on May 18 that he would need to miss this year’s trip to compete in Paris. He said he would need to take an indefinite break from tennis — no matches and not even any practices.

And he added that he was not sure when — or, truly, if — he’ll be able to return to the tour, but figures that next season will be his last before retirement.

# Indian pole vaulters’ participation in doubt as poles stuck at airport

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The participation of two Indian pole vaulters in the Asian U-20 Athletics Championship in Yecheon, South Korea, beginning on Sunday was rendered doubtful after their equipment was not permitted in a South Korean as well as an Air India aircraft due to “technical issues” related to length of the poles.

Dev Kumar Meena (men’s pole vault) and Sunil Kumar (decathlon, of which pole vault is one of the 10 events) were to compete in their respective events on Sunday but they left for Seoul in a South Korean flight on Friday, which is in alliance with Air India, without their poles.

Even Air India refused to carry the poles in its 12:05am flight on Friday, according to an official of the Athletics Federation of India.

The AFI official said that Air India refused to carry three poles measuring 5m each to be used by the two athletes, on the ground of some “technical issues” concerning prescribed length of the items.

“The two athletes have already reached South Korea but their poles are stuck here in Delhi airport. Air India said they cannot allow the 5m-long poles under the current rules. It is strange that our athletes had gone to Busan (South Korea) with the same kind of poles only last year,” the AFI official told PTI.

“We have been running here and there since yesterday afternoon but Air India is not relenting. We are now trying, through our travel agent, to send the poles to Korea by FedEx Express Cargo flight later today. Let’s see,” the official said.

In fact, all the 55-member Indian contingent was to leave for South Korea from the Indira Gandhi International Airport here at 6:30pm Friday on Seoul-based Asiana Airlines flight, but the Indian coaches were told that they would not be allowed to take the three poles as well as the javelins.

The AFI had booked the tickets through Air India with the help of a travel agency.

“All the paperwork relating to bookings and luggage were done by Air India as they have



a tie-up with Asiana Airlines. On May 26, a mail was sent to Air India informing about the number of poles and javelins we will be taking to Korea, along with their size specification.

“But when the contingent reached IGI yesterday to board the flight, Asiana Airlines said Air India has not informed them about it and so the poles and javelins could not be allowed inside the aircraft,” the AFI official said.

All the members of the contingent save for two coaches left for South Korea boarding the Asiana Airlines. The two coaches were held back to accompany the poles and javelins in an Air India flight to Seoul at 12:05am Friday.

“What was surprising was that Air India itself refused to carry the poles because of its length and some technical issues. We even went to the Air India

cargo office at the IGI to let in the poles and javelins as cargo, but to no avail.

“The javelins were finally allowed and the two coaches, initially held back, also boarded the Air India flight,” the AFI official said.

“The two athletes had brought the poles in a domestic flight from Bengaluru and there was no problem then, don’t know why it is different in this case.”

Even if the three poles do not reach South Korea on time, the two athletes may still compete on Sunday by using equipment of other competitors or those provided by the organisers but that will affect their performance.

“They may still participate even if the poles do not reach on time. But normally the length of the pole depends on the height of the pole vaulter, so they may compete if they get poles of their size, otherwise they may not do their best.”

The 55-member Indian contingent for the June 4-7 championships has 45 athletes, including 19 women, and 10 coaches.


# India maul Uzbekistan in women’s junior Asia

PTI ■ KAKAMIGHARA

Annu slammed a double hat-trick as India started their campaign in the women’s Junior Asia Cup on an emphatic note with a 22-0 thrashing of a lowly Uzbekistan, here on Saturday.

Annu (13th, 29th, 30th,

38th, 43th, 51st) was the star performer for India, while Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke (3rd, 56th); Mumtaz Khan (6th, 44th, 47th, 60th); Sunelita Toppo (17th, 17th); Manju Chorsiya (26th), Deepika Soreng (18th, 25th), Deepika (32nd, 44th, 46th, 57th), and Neelam (47th) were the others on target.



**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**  
**NATIONAL HIGHWAY DIVISION, BHERHAMPUR**  
Email id- [eenbham@gmail.com](mailto:eenbham@gmail.com)  
**b-8**

**INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB) (e-Procurement)**  
Bid Identification No. **EE-NH-BAM/03/2023-24**  
**No.1498**  
Dated: 29.05.2023

1) The EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, N.H.DIVISION, BHERHAMPUR on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in Single cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for construction of Road/Building work as detailed in the table below.

2) Nature of Work : Road.

3) No of Work : 1 No.

4) Tender Cost : Rs 6000 /-.

5) Class of Contractor : B' Class and C' Class.

6) Availability of Bid document in portal : 03.06.2023 to 05.00PM of 09.06.2023.

7) Date of Opening of Bid : 12.06.2023 at 11 A.M.

8) The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>

9) Any Corrigendum/Addendum/Cancellation of will be displayed in the e-tender website only.

Executive Engineer,  
N.H.Division, Bherhampur.

OIPR-34082/11/0003/2324

# Panjab regain KIUG champions crown

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Panjab University, Chandigarh (PUC), regained their overall champions crown after a gap of one edition as despite a clean sweep in fencing, Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU), Amritsar, fell short on the final day of competitions at the Khelo Indian University Games (KIUG).

National Games champion Yash Ghangas was the other star attraction on the final day, thrilling all in the BBD University grounds in Lucknow, to pick up the gold for Chaudhary Bansi Lal University (CBLU) in the men’s 100+kg category in judo.

The other four golds on the final day went to Mumbai University (judo women’s 78+kg), Savitribai Phule Pune



University (SPPU) who won the men’s group traditional yogasana gold at the SAC hall of the Indian Institute of Technology-Banaras Hindu University (IIT-BHU) campus in Varanasi and Chandigarh University (CU) and Maharshi Dayanand University (MDU), Rohtak, who picked up the two golds in weightlifting at the

G.B. University in Greater Noida.

PUC therefore finished with an overall tally of 69 medals including 26 gold, 17 silver and 26 bronze medals. GNDU amassed 24 gold, 27 silver and 17 bronze medals to finish second and in the top three for the first time.

Jain University, Karnataka, last time’s champions, were third with 16 gold, 10 silver and six bronze medals.

Jain, however, will have the solace of having the most successful male and female athletes of the KIUG 2022 UP. Both of them belong to swimming where Siva Sridhar topped the men’s section with a total of 11 medals including eight golds while Shrungi Bandekar won nine medals in the women’s section including five golds.

while the bronze went to Chinese Taipei’s Liu Heng Yu, who bowed after the 22nd shot of the 24-shot final, with a score of 216.9, 0.2 behind the Korean at that stage.

In other results, India’s Suruchi Inder Singh also reached the women’s pistol final, finishing sixth with a score of 154.1.


Amit Sharma in the junior men’s 10m air pistol

# Sainyam gives India golden start

PTI ■ SUHL

Chandigarh youngster Sainyam gave India a golden start to the ISSF Junior World Cup Junior here on Saturday by finishing atop the podium in the women’s 10m air pistol competition.

Sainyam shot 238 in the final to leave Korean Kim Minseo behind in second place. The Korean shot 236.0 for silver



**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, PANIKOILI (R&B) DIVISION, PANIKOILI**  
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)  
Email ID- [eeppwd.pki@rediffmail.com](mailto:eeppwd.pki@rediffmail.com)  
1<sup>st</sup> Corrigendum to e-procurement  
Notice No. SE PKL (R&B) 10/2023-24  
Letter No. **4310 dt. 30.05.2023**

The last date of availability of tender and receipt online extended to 5:00 P.M of dt.12.06.2023 and date of opening shifted to dt.13.06.2023 at 11:30 A.M due to unavoidable circumstances.  
All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

Superintending Engineer,  
Panikoli (R&B) Division

OIPR-34067/11/0012/2324



**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, BOUDH (R&B) DIVISION, BOUDH**  
E-mail - [eeboudhrb@gmail.com](mailto:eeboudhrb@gmail.com)  
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)  
"e" procurement Notice

Latter No. 2833 dt. 29.05.2023  
Bid Identification No. SE (R & B)-BDH 08/2023-24

1) Name of the work : 05 (Five) Nos. of Civil work (Single cover)

2) Estimated Cost : 12.50 lakhs

3) Period of Completion : 2 (Two) Calendar months.

4) Date & Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal : From 07.06.2023, 10.00 AM to 22.06.2023, 5.00 PM

5) Last date/time for seeking of Tender Clarification : 22.06.2023 up to 1.00 P.M

6) Last date / time for receipt of bids in the portal : up to 5.00 P.M. of dated 22.06.2023


7) Date & time of opening of tender / Bid : 23.06.2023 at 11.30 A.M

8) Name and address of the O.I.T. : Superintending Engineer, Boudh (R&B) Division, Boudh

Further details corrigendum (s) if any issued can be seen from the website <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>

Sd/- Superintending Engineer,  
Boudh (R&B) Division, Boudh

OIPR : 34134/11/0003/2324



**OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, BASUDEVPUR**  
At/Po: Basudevnpur, Dist: Bhadrak Email: [ori-basudevnpur@nic.in](mailto:ori-basudevnpur@nic.in)  
**Letter No: 2735 / Date: 31.05.2023**  
**Tender Call Notice-03/2023**

1. Name of the project :- "Construction of Conference Hall at Block Head Quarter"

2. Total No of Project :- 01 no

3. Class of Contractor :- "B & C" Class

4. Period of Completion :- 6 Calendar Months

5. Other details :- As per DTCN


SI No	Bid Identification No	Available Tender On-line for bidding	Last date of receipt of Bids	Date & time of opening of Bid
		From	To	
1	2	3	4	5
1	Block Development Officer, Basudevnpur	01.06.2023	16.06.2023	16.06.2023 1.00 PM

6. Further details can be seen from the website portal "[https:// www.bhadrak.nic.in](https://www.bhadrak.nic.in)

7. Any other changes/Corrigendum/Addendum may be seen only in website [www.bhadrak.nic.in](https://tendersorissa.gov.in)

Sd/-Block Development Officer Basudevnpur

OIPR: 19306/11/0004/2324



**obcc**  
**ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସେବୁ ଓ ନିର୍ମାଣ ନିଗମ ଲିଃ**  
**(ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାରଙ୍କ ପୂର୍ବ ବିଭାଗ ଅଧିକର ଏକ ଉଦ୍ୟୋଗ)**  
**ODISHA BRIDGE & CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION LIMITED**  
(A Government of Odisha Undertaking under Works Department)

No. 4931 Date : 03.06.2023  
File : SMT - 1905

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

1. Name of Work : Infrastructure Development Work for the Odia University at Satyabadi, Puri, Phase-II, in Turnkey Basis.

2. Bid Identification No. of the Tender Document : 22/Tender/OBCC/2023-24

3. Date of availability in e-procurement portal : from 09.06.2023

4. Last Date & time of receipt of online bid : 01.07.2023 till 4:00 P.M.

5. Period of completion : 18 months

6. Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>.

7. OBCC has the right to accept or reject the Notice/ RFP/Proposal without assigning any reasons thereof.

Provision of Furniture, Smart Classroom & Digital Library at Odia University, Puri.

23/Tender/OBCC/2023-24

from 09.06.2023

29.06.2023 till 4:00 P.M.

6 months

OIPR: 34161/11/0025/2324

Sd/- Sr. Chief General Manager- I



## I want to bat with same intent that I showed in IPL and Ranji Trophy: Rahane

PTI ■ ARUNDEL

**B**ack in India colours after nearly 18 months, senior batter Ajinkya Rahane doesn't want to have any "regrets" for the time lost and would like to bat in the upcoming World Test Championship final against Australia with the

same “intent” like he did in the just-concluded IPL.

"Coming back after 18-19 months, whatever has happened, good or bad, I don't want to think about my past. I just want to start afresh and keep doing whatever I have been doing," Rahane told BCCI.TV on the sidelines of

India's training session.

"Personally enjoyed playing for CSK as I have been batting well throughout the season, even before IPL. I had a very good domestic season and I felt good. So this comeback was a bit emotional for me."

Rahane, who was a part of

CSK's fifth IPL title-winning side, has already received a lot of praise for his attacking batting and improved strike-rate in T20 cricket, and especially the 27-ball 61 against Mumbai Indians showed a shift in his intent.

"I want to bat with the same mindset and show same

intent that I showed before coming here in IPL and Ranji Trophy. I would not like to think about format whether it is T20 or Tests. The way I am batting now, I don't want to complicate things and the more I keep it simple, better it is for me," the veteran of 82 Tests and 4,931 runs said. The man, who

led India to the most talked-about series triumph in Australia, back in 2021, also praised Rohit Sharma for leading the team admirably for the better part of this WTC cycle.

"I thought culture in team now is really good. Rohit is handling the team really well and I am sure Rahul bhai is also

handling the team really well. That helps as well and atmosphere is really good. Whatever I am seeing right now is that everyone is enjoying each other's company," he said. Rahane thanked his family and friends for the support he got during his time away from the national team.

"It was (an) emotional moment for me. When I got dropped, the support I got from my family was massive and dream was to play for India and that was massive. Playing for India matters a lot for me and I worked hard on my fitness and went back to domestic cricket."

## BHUBANESWAR PIONEER@18

The Pioneer Bhubaneswar edition completes 18 years of its publication on June 4, 2023. The edition marches ahead with the support and good wishes of its readers and advertisers. It is really heartening that many readers and columnists regularly share their feedbacks with us.

Among the English newspapers published from Odisha, The Pioneer Bhubaneswar edition has the distinction of carrying the maximum number of articles on various subjects contributed by eminent writers.

As the edition enters its 19th year, we in The Pioneer will strive to enrich the paper further with better presentation of news and features.

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"I love having every right to be as outspoken as I am, as any man would be"  
— Chrissy Teigen



# THE WORLD AT HER FEET

Sheetal, born without hands, is being feted as the world’s first para female archer who shoots using her feet. She has been labelled as a perfect role model for youngsters as she displayed raw courage and faced all her challenges in life with a determined resolve to succeed, writes MOHIT KANDHARI

At first sight it is very difficult to spot Sheetal Devi in a gathering of fellow players assembled at an archery range for regular practice sessions. A girl with less than five feet, Sheetal may come across as a small town girl, but in reality, she is not an ordinary athlete.

Hailing from a remote village of Lohi Dhar in Mughal Maidan area of Kishtwar district in Jammu & Kashmir, this 16-year-old girl has come a long way and is already making waves in the sporting world. At present she is being looked upon as India’s next big medal hope in the upcoming para-archery world championships and 2024 Paralympics in Paris.

Born without hands (phocomelia), a condition where both her hands were underdeveloped, Sheetal is being feted as the world’s first para female archer who shoots using her feet. Before winning her place of honour in the world of sports, Sheetal had left everyone spell bound with her ace performances and firm resolve to succeed.

Last week, when I visited the Archery range located in the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine board sports complex in Katra, several players greeted me with a big cheer.

While I acknowledged their greetings one by one, I shook hands with one of the seniors and paralympian Rakesh Kumar. Before meeting others, I asked him whether Sheetal was also around. It was then she also greeted me from an adjacent bench in a feeble voice.

After registering her presence, I too heaved a sigh of relief as I had travelled all the way from Jammu to meet her. I congratulated her for winning three medals --- one Gold, Silver and Bronze in the Para Archery World Ranking Tournament held in the Czech Republic between May 13 and May 21. She acknowledged with her sparkling eyes and mesmerising smile.

The Indian team secured nine medals out of which five medals were contributed by the archers from the Shrine board training academy.

Rakesh, a paralympian, and Sheetal won gold in Compound open mixed team and Compound men open doubles. Besides, Sheetal and Jyoti clinched silver in compound women open and bronze in compound women doubles. The Shrine archers contributed five medals for India in the total tally by which the country secured 2nd position in the event.

Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, who is also the Chairman of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, congratulated both the sports persons for their performances. He tweeted that “the entire nation is proud of their achievement and their feat will inspire millions of our youth.”

Chief Executive Officer of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Anshul Garg said the archers being trained at the Shrine Board’s Sports Complex will also

win medals in the forthcoming events of the archery at the international levels, thereby bringing laurels to the country, the UT of Jammu & Kashmir and the Shrine Board.

**TRAINING HARD FOR 2024 PARA-OLYMPICS BERTH**

A day after returning from the Czech Republic, Sheetal was back in the training academy without taking a single day break. Speaking to The Sunday Pioneer, Sheetal said, “I feel very happy after winning three medals in a recent event. I am upbeat and very optimistic. My josh is very high. My coaching and hardwork is showing positive results and now I am determined to secure my berth in the 2024 Paralympics and win a medal for my country.”

Referring to her training schedule, Sheetal said, “Each day we come to the academy and practice for about four hours between 8 and 12 pm before breaking for a two hour lunch break.”

During the training session Sheetal is assisted by her fellow players as and when required. The players also crack jokes and play mischief with each other. The second session starts at 2pm and the players call it a day after attending an hour long physical training session between 5pm and 6 pm.”

Her coach Kuldeep Vedwan told The Sunday Pioneer we have already started training for the next big event lined up in the month of July and September 2023.

Sheetal, along with other players, are focusing her energies on World Archery Para Championship scheduled in Pilsen, Czech Republic in the month of July and Para Asian Games in China between September 23 and October 8 to reserve their berth for the 2024 Paralympics scheduled to take place in Paris.

Talking about Sheetal’s journey, Kuldeep Vedwan told The Sunday Pioneer, “11 months ago Sheetal first arrived here at the Archery range. She was introduced to me by one of the volunteers working for a famous NGO. Before inducting her in the academy I interacted with her and tried my best to motivate her over a ZOOM meeting. Initially, I spent two long months carefully trying to understand her needs and how I could make her play archery and hit a bull’s eye. Before starting her training schedule, I again counselled her. Since then, she has not looked back.” Vedwan said, feeling elated over her recent performance.

Vedwan said it’s amazing that in such a short span of time she has really proved her mettle. By winning three medals in the recently concluded Para Archery World Ranking Tournament she has already secured her place in the upcoming Para Archery world championship scheduled to be organised in Pilsen, Czech Republic and para Asian Games. I am hopeful Sheetal will secure her berth in the Paralympics and win us a medal in the 2024 Paralympics in Paris.



“**RAKESH, A PARALYMPIAN, AND SHEETAL WON GOLD IN COMPOUND OPEN MIXED TEAM AND COMPOUND MEN OPEN DOUBLES. BESIDES, SHEETAL AND JYOTI CLINCHED SILVER IN COMPOUND WOMEN OPEN AND BRONZE IN COMPOUND WOMEN DOUBLES**”

### SHEETAL’S JOURNEY

A native of Lohi Dhar village of Mughal Maidan area in Kishtwar, Sheetal’s initial phase of life was full of struggle. She was born without hands and it is with great difficulty that her parents, Man Singh, a farmer by profession and mother Shakti Devi, a home maker looked after her basic needs.

Tucked in the hills she received no other medical help in her formative years. As she grew up, she started using her feet to feed herself. As Sheetal was keen on pursuing her normal school studies so she gradually started using her feet for writing as well. She has passed her class 10th examination and is studying in class XI.

No one in the family discouraged her. Remembering her school days, Sheetal said, “I used to attend regular classes with other children in my village. I was never discouraged by any one. My teachers and my friends helped me a lot and supported me. I used to play with them like a normal child.”

Life took a sudden turn when she was spotted by a senior army officer at a local fair in Kishtwar district. The local army authorities approached her family and volunteered to support her. At that time Sheetal was nurturing her childhood dream of becoming a school teacher.

Fulfilling her desire Sheetal has been adopted by the Indian Army for her education since September 2019. Later with the help of reputed NGOs, the Indian Army had facilitated her travel and arranged other

logistics to explore the possibility of providing her with a prosthetic arm.

Sheetal’s parents accompanied her to Bangalore where she was first treated and later provided with the prosthetic arm. At present she is not using the same while undergoing training. After she won three medals she received lots of good wishes and blessings from netizens who rallied behind her and wished her luck for all her future championships.

She was labeled as a perfect role model for youngsters as she displayed raw courage and faced all her challenges in life with a determined resolve to succeed.

**A BIG MOTIVATION**

Practicing in the company of other players Sheetal feels motivated. To attend her regular practice sessions Sheetal reaches archery academy, wearing sleepers. During her day long training she prefers staying barefoot in the archery range in order to hit a bull’s eye.

On an average she is spending 6-7 hours under the guidance of her coach Kuldeep Vedwan at the archery range.

Before focusing on her target, she gently picks an arrow and adjusts it on the bow string. Using her feet, she adjusts the arrow against her shoulder and then triggers the shot with jaw and back muscles before hitting a bullseye.

“During training we interact with each other and discuss our performances. Fellow players in the academy are very helpful. They walk with me in the archery range and pull out the arrows after checking my score.”

“Our coach sir also evaluates our performance and wherever we need his guidance he chips in and does course correction.”

In Katra, Sheetal is staying with her mother and younger sister Shivani. Her mother Shakti sometimes visits the academy and spends time with her. Sheetal says, “When she was home her sister Shivani used to look after her basic needs. She is my dear friend.”

Commenting on the quality of training facilities Sheetal said we have been provided with excellent training facilities by

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board authorities to ensure better performance in the field.

Apart from routine training sessions we attend physical training modules, perform yoga and meditation to maintain our calm and enhance our abilities to focus on our goals.

A former Olympian from Katra Rakesh Kumar, who participated in the Tokyo Olympics, said Sheetal is a very promising athlete and is training hard in the academy to realise her goal of winning a gold medal in the world championships and paralympics.

Rakesh Kumar is the senior most player in the academy. He is also working hard and setting high benchmarks for younger players to achieve their goals.

Rakesh told The Sunday Pioneer, “I started my journey six years ago after coming in contact with the coach Kuldeep Vedwan in 2017. He said, I met with a deadly accident in 2009. I was in a very bad condition but then I decided to keep myself busy and opened a mobile recharge shop in Katra. In 2017 I met my coach Kuldeep Vedwan.”

“When I met Rakesh, I motivated him and asked him to try archery at the academy.” He made a sincere effort and went on to become a para-Olympian

Kuldeep Vedwan also highlighted the role of Sports Authority of India, and the Archery Association of India for their support, and stressed the importance of psychologists and dietitians in sports.

Para Archer Rakesh said, “Archery is a mind-game. When we are participating in a championship we are bound to feel pressure. Our training gives us an edge. So, just like the coach is essential for us, psychologists are equally important.”

Highlighting another important aspect Rakesh said para-athletes face difficulties while moving from one place to another. “They spend maximum time in a wheelchair, we may not eat much, but digestion becomes a problem and so a good dietitian is very important.”

At present over two dozen budding archers from Tamil Nadu, Haryana, New Delhi and from different districts of Jammu & Kashmir are receiving training at the academy.

Manisha Bhadana, from Faridabad in Haryana has recently joined the training academy and is witnessing improvement in her game. She told The Sunday Pioneer that the atmosphere at the academy is very very competitive. “I feel motivated while receiving training in the presence of International players such as Para-Olympian Rakesh Kumar and young archer Sheetal.”

Pravin, an upcoming archer from Tamil Nadu said, he is training at the academy for more than six years and aiming to perform better in the coming championships. Amit Thakur from Reasi said, “We are focusing on Khelo India games and National Championships to perform better and earn medals.”

(The writer is Senior Correspondent of The Pioneer)







# China creating another Xinjiang

President Xi Jinping is all out to prevent the Islamic radicals across China. The first was the western-most province of Xinjiang wherein he has been undertaking full-scale measures to shield the Uyghur Muslims to stay away from Muslim extremists. Even global governance institutions like the UN had complained against the Xi regime that the ethnic Uyghurs and other minorities are being targeted simply in the name of preventing Islamic terror in the country.

A report published by the UN accused China of serious violations of human rights against the Uyghur Muslims that may be termed as “crime against humanity”. The reality is that as per various international media sources and leaked videos from Uyghur detainees, Beijing is creating large concentration camps in the guise of training camps. And Chinese authorities are calling these camps as “Re-education Camps” or “vocational training centres”. The Human Rights Watch and other global rights agencies say that China is committing genocide in Xinjiang which the Communists completely deny.

Currently, the Hui Muslims in Yunnan are under threat from Beijing. To them, China is trying to create “Another Xinjiang” in Yunnan which they say they won’t allow it to happen. It’s a province that borders Burma, Laos and Vietnam. It’s again clamping down on religious freedoms of the Muslims and demolition of the mosques in these areas by the local authorities.

This month, thousands of ethnic Muslims came out in this Southwestern Province defying public orders to stop police from removing its dome and minarets. It took place in Najaiyang Village of the province where the locals fought with the authorities in a last-ditch attempt to save their sanctum sanctorum.

It is widely believed that all these measures are an integral part of what President Xi calls as an attempt to “sinicize” religion.

The Huis have a rich historical background. History says they are distant descendants of Arab and Persian traders who had come to Imperial China in the past. They are a group of nearly 11 million strong Muslim com-



munity living in scattered pockets from northwest to coastal belts of China. But Ningxia is an officially designated Autonomous Region for the Hui ethnic minority where they live.

Unlike the other ethnic minorities in China, they are widely assimilated with the majority Han community and their rich cultural traditions. Most of them speak Mandarin and live side by side with the powerful Hans. In recent years, they also have acquired more freedoms to practise their religious ceremonies than any other ethnic groups in China.

This is not the first time Beijing is trying to restrict Huis in Yunnan. Five years back, in 2018, the Hui community engaged in a tense standoff with the authorities when the latter came to demolish a newly constructed mosque. Thousands of Huis came out to stop government officials to safeguard the mosque in Ningxia, in the northwest part of the country.

But later, the Government

had replaced the domes and minarets of the mosque with indigenous Chinese style pagodas. So, the Hui Muslims are now quite familiar with the evil designs of the Communists of Beijing who have been making sustained efforts to pushing their long held religious and cultural traditions and symbols all these years.

Interestingly, a court order in 2020 ruled that recent additions to the mosque that includes a domed roof and minaret are not legal. So these could be removed or demolished as per law. It is believed that the administration is rightly acting under the directions of the court. Last week, the local security agencies warned the protesters to maintain law and order.

Sadly, the mosque that the local officials wanted to dismantle belonged to 14th century. It’s an ancient place of worship and largely revered by the Hui Muslims. Indeed, the town of Nagu wherein the incident sparked violence this week is considered as a historic

home and a rich cultural hub of the Hui people in Yunnan Province.

The “sinicization policy” aims to purge external or foreign religious beliefs. It strongly urges the ethnic minorities to align more closely with Chinese culture and more specifically with the standard codes of the official and the most powerful Communist Party of China (CPC), which follows an atheist line of thinking. So, the problem originates from here itself for the largely devoted and faithful Hui Muslims in this part of China.

Now, how have the Chinese people and officials reacted to this saga of violence against the ethnic Hui Muslims? Normally, officials stay tight-lipped in China. Whereas China has a huge social media called Weibo like the Twitter through which people express their views and at times criticise the Government and even the most powerful CPC. But this time, the government quickly removed all the anti-govern-

ment comments and views in regard to the mosque demolition in Nagu.

And in fact, one message supporting the Govt said national policy to handle such unrest is fine. The State should not allow any “wolfish extremists” to impact the law-and-order situation in the country.

It’s loud and clear that the majority of the Chinese people are either forced to live under the diktats of the Communists, especially under its authoritarian rule and rulers or they long for stability rather than unrest of any kind.

Xi’s new China is typically what he wants to be. The President forever is highly ambitious. With the falling western liberal order and rising global clout of China, Xi is fast mobilising the CPC, the Army, diplomacy, economy and finally his people into one central point that China will rise and rise. Xi is a combination of both power and paranoia. His is a regime conspiring to create imbalance in global governance, as many believe. For Xi,

he is working hard and fast to spread the message to his people, making China strong demands uniting under the Party.

And joining the Party is precisely a gateway into the vanguard of the Chinese elite forever. For him, the Party is the only future. And thus, once he echoed: “The Party-Government, the Armed Forces, society and academia; east, west, south, north and centre; the Party leads everything.” If this is what he foresees and expects compatriots to do, he will not allow Hui Muslims to preserve their age-old traditions and unique lifestyle strongly imbued with religiosity.

Today, Islamophobia in the West is abetting, but in China it is on the rise. But punching down the ethnic Huis and Uyghurs will not offer any readymade solution to the Communists. When the country is aspiring to be rich, resourceful and powerful in the global stage, it needs to be patient with cultural, regional,

ethnic and especially, religious differences.

The Party must accept assimilation of various cultural and religious strands as the world is fast encircled by multiple waves of globalisation and post-globalisation. But then continued atrocities and persecution of Hui and Uyghurs will certainly damage China’s reputation on the global stage. Xi is completely an anti-thesis of Mao as the latter desired for continuous revolution. Whereas Xi called for peaceful China meaning total stability? And for managing this stability, he will not mind “re-educating” the Hui’s the same way he and the Chinese statecraft has been doing for the Uyghurs so far in Xinjiang.

Finally, the liberal democracies and their leaders must be serious about China’s massive “sinicisation” of Uyghurs and now a fresh attempt at Hui Muslims. Truly, this “sinicisation” is nothing but the curtailment of one of the edifices of basic freedoms that is the right to freedom of religion available in most of the modern nations.

Innocuous as it may seem, but this is the beginning of a new trend of religious persecution of minorities with Chinese characteristics under the leadership of President Xi.

It must be stopped, and the world leaders should voice their concerns in global governance institutions. China must behave responsibly and like a law-abiding nation. Before venturing out to capture the global stage and records, Beijing must set its own house in order. Huis and Uyghurs have the same basic rights the way it is enjoyed by the majority Hans in China.

By targeting the ethnic Muslims, China is simply inviting the wrath of the global jihadists. It would be prudent on China’s part to stop atrocities on the Hui Muslims. Making Yunnan another Xinjiang would be fatal for China’s stability in the long run.

Denying the freedom to practice and enjoy ethnic religious rights goes against all basic universal tenets of human rights. It’s completely unfair to keep the Hui Muslims under a state of constant fear.

*(The writer is currently the Head of the School of Humanities & Social Sciences, Geeta University, Panipat)*

**Beijing must set its own house in order. Huis and Uyghurs have the same basic rights as those enjoyed by the majority Hans in China. By targeting the ethnic Muslims, China is simply inviting the wrath of the global jihadists. It would be prudent on China’s part to stop atrocities on the Hui Muslims. Making Yunnan another Xinjiang would be fatal for China’s stability in the long run**



MAKHAN SAIKIA

## PERSPECTIVE

# Climate change not a myth

**The saddest part of the climate menace is that the poorest countries and island communities are the worst sufferers of climate change. Whereas they have not played any role in altering the environment**



CHITRANGADA

Climate change is real. Not a myth. Anthropogenic elements are central to environmental disturbances. The fear is that humanity is in great danger. The situation today is escalating. We are advancing towards a catastrophe.

Climate change is one of the most emerging problems and we humans are the main predators to such things. Now the question arises: how are we going to stop it? We may have many motives and initiatives in our mind but are we able to implement them in a useful way? We can’t just see that we are the ones who have brought such destruction for the past 200 years. Fossil fuels and greenhouse gases are the uprising problems. The most astonishing part is that the earth is a system where everything is connected. If an area is affected, then the change is seen everywhere.

In 2021, the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres unveiled the UN Report on Climate Change called ‘State of the Global Climate 2020’. It is a report prepared by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), a key agency of the UN. The State of the Global Climate 2022 released by the

WMO indicates the continued rise of greenhouse gas emissions in the last year. It focuses on primary climate indicators like greenhouse gases, temperatures, sea level rise, ocean heat and acidification, sea ice and glaciers. The report seriously highlights climate change and extreme weather conditions. The Report states that drought, floods, and heat-waves are major parts of the globe, and the costs are rising for all. It is also reported that global mean temperature for the last 8 years has been recorded as the highest. Further, sea levels and ocean heat are at their record high. It is predicted that this trend will continue for centuries. The Report also says that sea ice in Antarctica falls to the lowest level. The continent of Europe has witnessed the breaking of glacier melts.

The Climate Change Synthesis Report 2023 released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlights the state of the knowledge of climate change, its widespread impact, and risks. It says that human activities principally through emission of greenhouse gases, have unequivocally caused global warming, with global surface



temperature reaching 1.1 degree Celsius above 1850-1900 in 2011-2020. It’s alarming.

Another UN Report in the year 2021 highlighted that time is running out to tackle the climate crisis now. It was clearly said that even the deadly Covid-19 has failed to put a brake on relentless environmental change. Again, this WMO Report mentioned that because of the severe Covid-19 restrictions, the rich and advanced nations barely could help in assisting the climate-affected nations of the world. This pandemic has seriously delayed the delivery of climate finance and other protective

measures to extremely vulnerable nations, especially the small island developing countries like Tuvalu, Madagascar, Seychelles, Maldives, Fiji, Haiti, etc. The UN stressed that the year 2021 is the year of action for the protection of the people from the disastrous effects of climate disasters.

Besides other negative impacts of climate change, it is also preventing people from enjoying basic rights or human rights in many parts of the world. Last year, a group of young people filed a petition at the European Court of Human Rights. They complained to the Court that climate inaction is

a human rights violation. They all highlight a 1990s era treaty named ‘Energy Charter Treaty’ according to which governments are required to compensate energy companies and investors if public policies cut into their profits. And this refers to public policies that are made to fight environmental change.

We all must know that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 2021 for the first time tried to connect human rights and climate change to the table of the Conference of the Parties (COP). The aim of this move was to promote rights-based

climate actions and the integration of human rights in the historic Paris Agreement. Since then, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has expanded its work on human rights and climate change all around the globe.

Under the existing international human rights law and the UN Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948, all the states have the responsibility to protect its people from any foreseeable danger. These laws and conventions have the mandate to protect, respect and create conditions for fulfilling our human rights. The dangers heralded by climate disasters are ever present in our life today. It’s largely hampering us from enjoying the basic rights of the people. Under the existing international human rights law, the states and the world bodies have the responsibility to take immediate steps to mitigate the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions. And it must ensure that all of us have the necessary means to adapt to rapid climate changes.

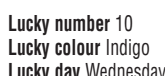
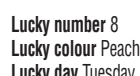
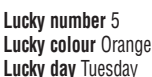
The saddest part of the climate menace is that the poorest countries and island communities are the worst sufferers of climate change. Whereas

they have not played any role in altering the environment. But it is also true that these countries are directly or indirectly enjoying the benefits of the massive industrialization and post industrialization era. The products of all polluting and extractive industries produced by advanced nations are used by all of us including the poor and vulnerable nations. In that way, we all are part of the damages done to the Planet Earth today. So we need to refrain from all such practices that may harm or destroy this planet not only today but also in future also.

I, being a youngster, am still confused about what will happen to Planet Earth. Like me, millions are in a state of shock. But no one has the right to steal our future. No one has the divine will to bring back our planet to the pre-industrial level. What we can do is to prevent further disasters. We can plan for active mitigation efforts. It’s our home. Let’s preserve it together. But do remember that ‘Climate Abyss’ is one of the starkest realities of the 21st century.

*(The writer is a young climate thinker based in Delhi-NCR)*





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Beyond the one-pointed state is the 'concentrated mind'. This is a stage when mind literally becomes free from unwanted thoughts. One is then in full control of mind, whereby one is able to use it as an instrument to one's asking rather than being carried away by its habit tendencies. Having arrived at this state of mind, one comes out with one's optimum best, as it gets tuned up well to the all-powerful and all-knowing, all-pervading consciousness element – the cosmic mind.

Now you can write to us at [agendapioneer@gmail.com](mailto:agendapioneer@gmail.com)