





GUEST COLUMN

Human tampering and climate imbalance increasing challenges on Earth



Manindra Mohan

Deteriorating ecosystems and human induced climate imbalance are posing new challenges on the Earth. Rising temperature of the atmosphere, melting and breaking of glaciers, decrease in monsoon rainfall and snowfall, sudden devastating floods, unseasonal snowfall, increase in seismic activities, change in crops cycle, fall in groundwater level and decline in seed germination rate are some vivid examples of this. Carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels, vehicles and industrial plants play a major role in global warming and climate change. Apart from this, greenhouse gases also play a major role in climate change. Greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, sulfur dioxide and halocarbons are becoming main factors in climate change, due to which the heat in the atmosphere is increasing. The role of greenhouse gases and climate change is about 45 per cent in the deteriorating condition of the environment. China is the largest emitter of carbon dioxide in Asia while India is second. The average per capita carbon footprint in India is about 0.56 tonnes

per annum. Consequently with the rapidly increasing carbon footprint, the Earth and its components like water, forest and land are not able to absorb more carbon dioxide as required, which causes environmental temperature rise. We are safe on the Earth only as long as the planet and its main components are safe and protected. The condition of air, water and soil is becoming serious very rapidly due to anthropogenic activities. Published facts show that 80 per cent of the

2031, it is expected to decrease to 1,367 cubic metres. Statistics also show that every year 1.2 million newborns die in India due to the air pollution. Nowadays, the hilly areas are more troubled by over-exploitation, tourism, unplanned and uncontrolled works, due to which the frequency of landslides and its consequences are increasing. The streams of mountain rivers and small water sources are shrinking and the mountain biodiversity is being directly harmed.

problem on Earth. Today society is completely dependent on plastic and its products and has gotten away from traditional practices. Due to the non-biodegradable nature of plastic, it travels long distances and thus it is being seen everywhere in the environment. The main components of the environment - water, air and soil are being polluted rapidly by plastic. The increasing dependence on plastic and its products, its fine particles-nanoplastics and mi-

croplastics respectively. Recently researchers have reported the presence of plastic particles in human breast milk, liver, blood, cow's milk, drinking water sources and marine animals in the Antarctica continent. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), more than 400 million tonnes of plastic is produced every year worldwide, half of which is designed to be used only once and of that less than 10 per cent is recycled. An estimated 19-23 million tonnes end up in lakes, rivers and seas annually.

Scientists hypothesise that microplastics cause allergies and damage to cells in humans. Microplastics present in the environment help harmful bacteria and viruses to enter the human body, thereby increasing the risk of fatal diseases. Therefore, to overcome the increasing difficulties and restoration of the deteriorating ecosystem on the earth, human-centered and environment friendly works will have to be adopted and promoted on priority. Apart from this, plastic and electronic waste will have to be prevented from entering into the soil, water and air. Also natural heritage such as rivers, mountains, water, forest, land and biodiversity will have to be kept away from plastic. Only then will we be successful to some extent in protecting the Earth in the true sense.

(The author is a scientist in Uttarakhand Council for Biotechnology, Pantnagar. Views expressed are personal)



surface water in the country is polluted and the per capita availability of water is continuously decreasing. In the year 2001, the per capita water availability in the country was 1,816 cubic metres and by the year

This year the United Nations has set solutions to plastic pollution as the theme of World Environment Day to be observed on June 5. Presently, the excessive use of plastics is emerging as a new big

problem on Earth. Today society is completely dependent on plastic and its products and has gotten away from traditional practices. Due to the non-biodegradable nature of plastic, it travels long distances and thus it is being seen everywhere in the environment. The main components of the environment - water, air and soil are being polluted rapidly by plastic. The increasing dependence on plastic and its products, its fine particles-nanoplastics and mi-

Government needs to intensify anti-tobacco efforts near educational institutions

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Consumption of tobacco in various forms is increasing at an alarming rate in the State. The government organises awareness and other programmes mainly on occasions like the World No-Tobacco Day observed recently on May 31. However, experts opine that instead of organising awareness events mainly on such formal occasions, the authorities should enforce the rules especially near colleges and other educational institutions to check the proclivity among the youths to use tobacco. Every year during World No- Tobacco Day the government organises awareness programmes but later on the authorities do not bother to check the results of such awareness programmes, said clinical psychologist Mukul Sharma. He said that the

graph of tobacco consumption among the youths has increased. Sharma said, "Despite the awareness programmes organized by the state government, the rate of consumption of tobacco among young adults has increased with the passing years. It has been observed that the demand for tobacco which includes cigarettes and pan masala has increased among young adults. The tobacco consumption rate among youths has increased about 17-18 per cent annually. Tobacco is the first step which encourages and shifts the youth towards alcohol and even drug consumption."

He further stated that the State government is claiming that Uttarakhand will be made drug-free by 2025 which is a

good initiative but it requires considerable hard work. He said that as per the rules, tobacco products cannot be sold within a certain area near schools and colleges but this is not the case in the State. There are shops selling various tobacco products near educational institutions which tempt the college students to use such products. Instead of simply conducting awareness programmes, the authorities should prevent the sale of tobacco products near educational institutions and take strict action to enforce this rule. The State government must provide the guideline and issue warning letters to the management of educational institutions also regarding the sale of tobacco products near colleges and schools, added Sharma.

Continuing Medical Education programme on hepatitis and HIV held in Doon

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The department of microbiology and immunology, Shri Mahant Indresh Hospital and Shri Guru Ram Rai Institute of Medical and Health Sciences organised a one-day Continuing Medical Education (CME) programme on the topic, 'Challenges in Viral Markers and Diagnosis' on Saturday. The organisers claimed that over 150 subject experts participated in this district level CME programme on 'Viral Markers'. They also claimed that clinical symptoms, investigations, management and related challenges in the context of Hepatitis B, C and HIV were highlighted. The experts stressed that appropriate viral marker tests



can help in timely diagnosis and management of HIV and Hepatitis cases.

Senior Microbiologist, Max Hospital, Saket, New Delhi, Dr Bansidhar Tarai explained in detail the diagnostic strategies on HIV. He also explained the present modalities and modern/upcoming modalities

in a comparative manner. He said that apart from the traditional testing methods for HIV diagnosis, there are some other diagnostic tests like Viral Load, P-24 antigen testing in which HIV positivity can be detected easily and at the earliest. A panel discussion was also held in which senior faculty members of Shri Guru Ram Rai Institute of Medical and Health Sciences participated. The panellists explained the tests and the treatment of Hepatitis and HIV. Plus, they answered the queries the participants asked.

Three-day annual fest begins at Sherwood College

PNS ■ NAINITAL

The three-day annual festival of Sherwood College began here on Saturday. The first day of the fest saw the students organising an exhibition on various subjects. Former student of the school and principal chief conservator of



forests, Andhra Pradesh, Anand Kumar Jha inaugurated the exhibition as the chief guest on the occasion. The students also gave a performance to a popular Kumaoni folk song. Addressing the students on the occasion, Jha appreciated the presentations made by the students. He said that considerable changes had taken place in the facilities available in the school, adding that improvement in the facilities will ensure further development of the students. He also recalled some interesting incidents from his days in the school. Earlier, the school principal Amandeep Sandhu informed about the progress made by the school. He also spoke about the programmes to be held as part of the three-day annual festival. As part of the exhibition, historical cities in India and other nations were depicted in the history-based exhibit, while various aspects of science were depicted in the science-based exhibit. Various

mayor Jogendra Singh Rautela and other invited guests were also present on the occasion.

UTTARAKHAND GRAMIN BANK

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NOTICE U/S 13(2) OF THIS SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002

It is hereby informed that due to non-payment of installment/interest/principal debt, the below mentioned accounts have been classified as Non-Performing Asset as per Reserve Bank of India guidelines. We had demanded the entire outstanding together with interest and other charges due under the below mentioned facilities under section 13(2) of the securitization and reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 through registered post on their last available addresses but notices were either returned undelivered or their acknowledgements were not received and as such they are hereby informed about the same by way of public notice. We hereby call upon the following Borrowers/Guarantors/Mortgagors to pay the amounts as mentioned below with further interest at the contracted rate until payment in full, within 60 days (Sixty days) from the date of this publication . In default, besides exercising others rights of the bank as available under Law, the bank is intending to exercise any or all of the powers as provided under section 13(4) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security interest act 2002. The details of the secured assets/s intended to be enforced by the bank. in the event of non-payment of secured debt also mentioned below.

Account No. Branch Name	Description of Immovable Property	Outstanding Amount
<b>Branch: Rajpur Road, Dehradun</b> <b>A/C No. 76001070891</b>	<b>1.</b> All that plot of land bearing( Khasra No. 361/1 area 1.10 Acre and Khasra no. 362 area 0.30 Acre) total area 1.40 Acre new Khasra no. 235 Cha situated at Mauza Kuanwala Dehradun bounded and butted as under:- East- Property of M/s Searsole Chemicals and M/s Searsole Containers Ltd - Forest Gram Samaj, Road North- M/s Searsole Electrochem Ltd thereafter M/s Searsole Chemicals South - Khalla	Notice dated 20.05.2023 of 19,33,358/- + Intt.w.e.f. 20.05.2023
<b>Borrower:</b> Sh. Harish Mehra S/o Sh. D.P. Mehra R/o 39, Old Dalanwala, Dehradun	<b>2.</b> All that plot of land bearing (Khasra no. 361/1 area 0.28 Acre and Mehra R/o 39, Old Dalanwala, Khasra no. 361/2 area 0.02 Acre total area 0.30 Acre new Khasra no. 235 Cha situated in Mauza Kuanwala , Dehradun along with TIN shed having a covered area of 287.30 SQ. Mts. bounded and butted as under:- East-Land of M/S Searsole Chemicals ltd. West- Forest/ Gram Samaj Road and land of mortgagor (Smt. Darshan Mehra) North - Land of M/S Searsole Chemicals, South- Land of mortgagor (Smt. DarshanMehra)	
<b>Borrower/Mortgagor:</b> Smt Darshan Mehra W/o Sh. D.P. Mehra R/o 39, Old Dalanwala, Dehradun		
<b>Borrower:</b> Smt. Rajni Mehra W/o Sh. Harish Mehra R/o 39, Old Dalanwala, Dehradun		
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Date : 03.06.2023

Place :Dehradun

Authorized Officer: Uttarakhand Gramin Bank

Rain & thunderstorm likely in 5 districts, dry weather in remaining parts

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The provisional State capital Dehradun and other areas in the plains are expected to witness a clear day today though rainfall and thunderstorms are likely in five mountainous districts. The State meteorological centre has forecast that very light to light rain/thunderstorms are likely to occur at isolated places in Uttarkashi, Rudraprayag, Chamoli, Bageshwar and Pithoragarh districts on Sunday. Apart from this, dry weather is likely to prevail in

the remaining districts of the State.

The meteorological centre has further forecast that Dehradun is likely to witness mainly clear skies. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be about 35 degrees Celsius and 20 degrees Celsius respectively on Sunday.

The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in various parts of the State on Saturday were

33.8 degrees Celsius and 19.2 degrees Celsius respectively in Dehradun, 35.2 degrees Celsius and 18.2 degrees Celsius in Pantnagar, 22.1 degrees Celsius and 12 degrees Celsius in Mukteshwar and 24.6 degrees Celsius and 12.8 degrees Celsius respectively in New Tehri. Very light to light rain was experienced in some parts of the State on Saturday with 1.5 millimetres in Karnprayag and 2.5 millimetres each in Tapovan and Kausani.

Governor visits various shrines with family in Almora

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The governor lieutenant general (retd) Gurmit Singh along with his family paid obeisance at the Chitai Golju temple, Jageshwar temple and Kasar Devi temple in Almora district on Saturday. He prayed for the happiness and prosperity of the people of Uttarakhand. The governor said that the ancient and important temples in the Ku-

maon which will be enhanced under the Manaskhand Mandir Mala mission will be visited by a greater number of people from India and abroad. This will develop a different identity of the region for religious tourism. Referring to spiritual faith, natural and adventure tourism, Singh said that considering these aspects the government is developing

basic infrastructure and road networks to enhance tourism. Roads, tunnels and ropeways are being constructed considering the tourism potential of the State, he said. Earlier, the governor met the district magistrate, senior superintendent of police and other senior officials to discuss development of the district and various development works.

DGP launches SRCC's Project Uttara for financial literacy

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Vitthala, the financial literacy cell of Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi inaugurated its outstation project, Project Uttara Phase IV in the presence of Uttarakhand's director general of police Ashok Kumar here on Saturday. With a dedicated team of 14 members under the guidance of two teachers, the target areas of Vitthala under this project this year are Naugaon and Badkot in Uttarkashi district.

Inaugurating the financial literacy project, the DGP said that financial security is also important along with financial literacy. He stressed on the need for additional vigilance during financial transactions which take place digitally. He appealed to the students to also raise awareness among the public on important as-



pects of cyber security while working on financial literacy. The students asked him various questions related to cyber security responding to which Kumar gave them useful tips.

Earlier, project leader Ayush Dwivedi informed that the SRCC Delhi undertakes financial literacy programmes in various districts of Uttarakhand every year. Members of the general public are provided information about

budgeting, saving and taxation during this project. In the current phase, the team will raise financial awareness in Naugaon and Badkot areas of Uttarkashi districts through means like street plays and personal interaction with the locals. SRCC associate professor Ashwini Kumar and assistant professor Shefali were also present on the occasion.

THE PIONEER

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# Balasore accident

## Dhami expresses grief, cancels Champawat roadshow

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The major loss of lives in the tragic train accident in Balasore in Odisha on Friday evening has also shocked the people of Uttarakhand. The chief minister Pushkar Singh

in the accident.

The CM was scheduled to hold a road show in Champawat on Saturday. The programme was organised to

Dharm Inter College in Dehradun during the programme which was being organised to celebrate nine years of the Narendra Modi government at the centre.

The planned tour of Union minister Piyush Goyal to Mana village on June 4-5 has also been cancelled following the mishap.

The former CM Trivendra Singh Rawat has also expressed shock at the Balasore train accident. The former CM was in Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh on the day where he along with BJP workers observed two minutes of silence to pay homage to the accident victims.

Meanwhile the accident has put up a question mark over the passenger safety in the Indian Railways. Veteran journalist Jay Singh Rawat opined that it appears as if the focus of the government is on increasing the speed of the trains. He said that the authorities should ensure that the passenger safety is not compromised in the quest for increasing the speed of the trains.

mark one year of his victory in the Champawat Assembly by election which facilitated his entry in the State Assembly. It is pertinent to mention here that Dhami had lost from his traditional Khatima Assembly seat in the Assembly election of 2022 but the BJP leadership reposed faith on him as CM of the State.

Apart from cancelling the road show and cultural programme in Champawat the CM also gave orders for cancelling the cultural programme organised at Sanatan

Dhami cancelled his engagements as a mark of respect to the people who lost their lives in the tragic accident.

The CM expressed deep anguish and grief on the death of passengers in the tragic rail accident. In a sympathetic gesture Dhami cancelled the road show and the cultural programmes slated to be organised on the occasion of completion of one year of his historic victory in the Champawat by election. Expressing grief, the CM wished for peace to the souls of those who died

# Dhami marks one year as Champawat MLA

## by launching works worth Rs 50.54 crore

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

To mark one year as the MLA of Champawat, chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami launched development works worth Rs 50.54 crore in Champawat on Saturday. Reiterating the government's commitment

State government has laid a strong foundation for the integrated development of Uttarakhand and making Champawat an ideal district. The completion of the various departmental schemes launched will take

ister's camp office has also been established in Champawat to ensure swift redressal of the issues of the locals, the CM said. "During this one year we faced various hurdles but the State government overcame these



for development of Champawat and the State, he also made 14 announcements in public interest on the occasion. The development works he launched on the occasion include three schemes worth Rs 9.82 crore for Champawat constituency which he inaugurated and 28 schemes worth Rs 23.45 crore for which he unveiled the foundation stones. The schemes also include 10 schemes worth Rs 16.81 crore for Lohaghat constituency for which the foundation stones were unveiled and one scheme worth Rs 45 lakh which was inaugurated. A two-minute silence was observed to pay homage to victims of the Odisha railway mishap and on Dhami's instructions, all cultural programmes and the road show slated to be held on the occasion were cancelled.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, he thanked the people of Champawat for electing him as their representative. He said that the

the area into a new era, he said. Dhami said that the last Vidhan Sabha election was historic in many ways because it was the first time when the people had re-elected a political party to office for a second consecutive term in Uttarakhand. He said that his victory in the Champawat bypoll was not his but a victory of the State's people and the dreams of development they had seen. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the State government is working diligently to ensure that Champawat district moves ahead in education, health, horticulture, agriculture, tourism and other sectors by the time Uttarakhand marks the 25th anniversary of its creation. Efforts are being undertaken to facilitate road to every village, health, education and communication facilities across the district for which various schemes are being prepared according to the geographical conditions and being implemented on the ground. The chief min-

hurdles and will continue to work in the interests of the State and its people. In the past few years, the Central government has approved various important projects for Uttarakhand and some of these are also nearing completion. Our attempt is to include the thoughts and requirements of the whole society and all its sections while drafting a policy because we have to develop the best model which the other Himalayan States also adopt in the future," Dhami said.

The CM also talked about his commitment to developing a new work culture and establishing good governance in the State. The government is moving ahead with the mantra of 'resolve without alternative' to make Uttarakhand one of the best India States, he said. Various public representatives and locals were present on the occasion. Earlier, the CM paid obeisance at the Goljru Devta temple and prayed for the welfare of the State.

# BJP defers all party events on Saturday after Balasore mishap

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Following the Balasore tragedy, the Bharatiya Janata Party postponed all its programmes scheduled to be held on Saturday as part of its Maha Sampark Abhiyan across the State. The decision was taken on the directions of the BJP State president Mahendra Bhatt. The party's State president expressed grief at the train mishap in Odisha. Paying tributes on behalf of

in the mishap.

Meanwhile, the party's State media in-charge Manveer Singh Chauhan said that gatherings will be held by the party in all district headquarters to pay homage to the victims of the train mishap. All the planned events of the party to be held at the Lok Sabha level in all the districts as part of the Maha Sampark Abhiyan on



the party to all those who had died in the mishap, he also prayed for strength to the bereaved family members. The BJP State president also wished a swift recovery to all those who have been injured

Saturday were postponed. The Press conferences to be held by party leaders Nitin Patel in Tehri and Ashwini Tyagi in Almora along with MPs were also deferred, added Chauhan.

# Health department braces up for 'dengue season' challenge

## Season starts from June 15 and continues till onset of winters

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State Health department is bracing itself to meet the challenge of dreaded vector borne disease dengue. Though no case of the disease has so far been reported in the State, the 'dengue season' is about to start in Uttarakhand. The season starts in the State from June 15 and remains extended till the onset of winters.

In view of the upcoming dengue season the Health minister Dhan Singh Rawat has directed all the chief medical officers to remain in an alert mode. On the orders of the minister the director general of State health services Dr Vinita Shah has asked the officers of the department to undertake a massive awareness drive in the State. She has directed the CMOs to ensure that the facilities for the Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) test are available in all government hospitals. In addition to this isolation wards have been made in the government hospitals. The private hospitals have been directed to inform the health department about the suspected patients of the disease.

The district vector borne diseases officer of Dehradun, Subhash Joshi

said that the month long anti dengue campaign is currently underway in the district. He added that the



department with the help of Asha workers has undertaken source reduction activity on a large scale in the city. Joshi said that the anti dengue activities are being done in coordination with Asha workers. Joshi said that last year a total of 1,434 patients of dengue were reported in Dehradun district. He said that the breeding places of mosquitoes inside the homes and vicinity should be destroyed. Joshi said that Aedes mosquitoes - the vector of dengue - are capable of laying their eggs in one spoonful of water so the pots, vases, water bottles and coolers should be decanted. The officer added

# Fix the responsibility for Balasore accident: Congress

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State vice president of Congress Suryakant Dhasmana has blamed the Union government for the Balasore train accident in Odisha. He said that though he wants to refrain from any political bickering over the biggest train accident of the century, Prime Minister Narendra Modi should tell the people as to who is responsible for such a major loss of human lives. The Congress leader said the government and Railways did nothing on the rail safety measures and only increased the train fares in the last nine years.

Dhasmana said that most of the people believe that PM Modi is the railways minister because all the new trains and railway stations in the last nine years were inaugurated by him. He opined that in the last nine years the focus was only on external glitter and show off and the safety of rail transport was ignored. Taking a dig at the Modi government Dhasmana said that the forefathers who made the arrangement for a separate rail budget were not fools. He said that the habit of doing something different made PM Modi



merge the rail budget with the general budget and the people of the country are paying the price for this experiment.

He said that the Railway ministry should explain the failure of the much hyped 'Kawach' security system.

# PCC President Mahara expresses grief at mishap

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Karan Mahara has said that train accidents are a scourge for the society and efforts should be made to prevent them. In a statement on Saturday he said that the accident at Balasore in Odisha involving three trains is one of

the most tragic accidents in history. He expressed grief at the loss of human lives in the accident and said that the Congress party is standing firmly with the grief stricken families. The PCC president wished a speedy recovery to those who got injured in the accident.

# 7.69 lakh patients treated under Ayushman scheme in Uttarakhand

# Rs 1,424 crore spent on scheme in State since its launch

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Uttarakhand government has spent a sum of Rs 1,424 crore on the Ayushman scheme in the State ever since it was launched. The chief executive officer of the State Health Authority (SHA), Arunendra Singh Chauhan said that health cards of more than 50.81 lakh people in the State have been made so far. Under the scheme a total of 7.69 lakh patients have so far availed the benefit of scheme and received treatment in the listed private and government hospitals. The SHA has so far made 2,57,069 health cards in Almora, 1,11,402 in Bageshwar, 1,95,759 in Chamoli, 1,13,558 in Champawat, 10,63,105 in Dehradun, 8,55,429 in Haridwar, 4,78,332 in Nainital, 3,70,032 in Pauri,

2,01,979 in Pithoragarh, 1,20,422 in Rudrapur, 3,11,888 in Tehri, 8,24,446 in Udhampur Singh Nagar and 1,78,413 in Uttarkashi district. Chauhan said that awareness campaigns are being undertaken in the State to ensure that the benefit of the Ayushman scheme reaches out to every resident of the State. He said that officers have been directed to connect 100 per cent of the population with the scheme. The CEO of the SHA said that the general public is also understanding the benefit of the scheme. The Ayushman scheme was launched on September 23, 2018 in the State. Under the scheme a health insurance cover of Rs five lakh is provided to every family.



# HC registrar general issues notification for special sanitation drive on June 18

PNS ■ NAINITAL

As part of the initiative undertaken by the judiciary, a special sanitation campaign will be conducted across the State on June 18.

The notification states that the special sanitation campaign will be undertaken by the High Court and district courts for four hours

ity, Uttarakhand Bar Council, High Court Bar Association and other officials who have offices in the High Court premises.



Those who participate in this campaign will also be administered a pledge for maintaining cleanliness of the environment. A notification regarding the special campaign was issued on Saturday by the Uttarakhand High Court registrar general Anul Sanghal.

from 8 AM on Sunday, June 18. The chief justice Vipin Sanghi will lead the campaign along with other justices of the High Court.

All officials of the High Court will also participate in this drive along with the State Legal Services Author-

Tourist spots, pilgrimage centres and sites prone to littering will be identified for cleaning under this drive. It is pertinent to mention here that the State government has already assured the Uttarakhand High Court that it will also participate actively in this special campaign for sanitation.

It will be recalled that while hearing on a public interest litigation on the ban on plastic and disposal of plastic waste in the State on May 19, the High Court division bench of Chief justice Vipin Sanghi and justice Manoj Kumar Tiwari had decided that a special sanitation campaign will be undertaken across the State on June 18.

# Investors summit plan waste of public money: AAP

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Uttarakhand unit of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has criticised the plans of the State government to hold a global in-

vestors summit when Trivendra Singh Rawat was the CM of the State. He said that a huge sum of money was spent by the



vestors summit in the State. The media in-charge (Garhwal) of the party Ravindra Singh Anand said that the chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami is talking about holding an investors summit in the State. Anand said that a similar summit

State government to organise the summit but not even a single paisa of investment was made in the State. The AAP leader said that it appears that Dhami is finding it tough to continue on the post of the CM of the State and is now desperate to polish his image. He claimed that the investor summit is nothing but an image building exercise of the CM at the cost of State exchequer.



**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 incident 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 sedition, 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 sedition 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 + Chlopheniramine + 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 Türkiye 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 Türkiye 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 Türkiye's longest-serving leader.

He has solidified his rule through constitutional changes that transformed Türkiye'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

unique circumstances.”

In a statement to The Associated Press as the talks wrapped up, he said that circularity — or reusing plastics — was “at the forefront of the negotiations as a means to tackle pollution and be more sustainable in producing and consuming plastics. We agree that's the best path.”

Humanity produces more than 430 million tons of plastic annually, two-thirds of which are short-lived products that soon become waste, filling the ocean and, often, working their way into the human food chain, the UN.

Environment Program said in an April report. Plastic waste produced globally is set to almost triple by 2060, with about half ending up in landfill and under a fifth recycled, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Over 2,000 participants from nearly 200 countries, including governments and observers, took part in this week's talks.

Waste pickers and some advocacy groups said they were initially denied access to the talks.

# 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.

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

PTI ■ LONDON

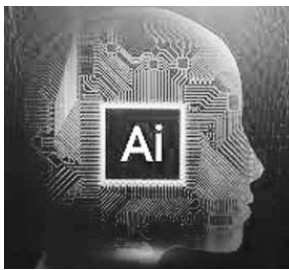
British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is considering a London-based global artificial intelligence (AI) watchdog to oversee any threats posed by the fast-growing technology, according to a UK media report on Saturday. Sunak will discuss ways to cooperate on monitoring AI when he meets US President Joe Biden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

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**B.ED COMMON ENTRANCE TEST AND CENTRALISED COUNSELLING-2023 (STATE OF PUNJAB)**

Joint B.Ed. Admissions - 2023 for Colleges of Education (Government, Government Aided, Private Self-Financed Colleges) affiliated to Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab University, Chandigarh and Punjabi University, Patiala and situated in the State of Punjab will be done through Common Entrance Test to be conducted by Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. Those who aspire to take admission in these colleges may apply/ register online w.e.f **9th June, 2023** at <https://punjabbedadmissions.gndu.ac.in>. Registration on the admission portal is mandatory for all the students including Management Quota Seats. The Notification in this regard has been issued by the Department of Higher Education, Government of Punjab which is uploaded on the website. The Colleges of Education which are notified by the Government are requested to submit duly filled and signed Mandatory proforma as pdf on email: [pbbedadmissions2023gndu.ac.in](mailto:pbbedadmissions2023gndu.ac.in) and hard copy signed by Dean, College Development Council of the affiliating university to the Coordinator, B.Ed. Common Entrance Test & Centralized Counselling (2023-24), Room No. 1, Department of Education (Near UIT Building), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar latest by **19th June, 2023**. The students are requested to visit the admission portal regularly for updates on Prospectus, Subject Combinations availability in colleges, Counselling schedule etc.

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

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



# Indian girls jump on global coding bandwagon in ChatGPT era

■ 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

■ 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

■ 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

■ 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

■ 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.

Beauty and Personal Care: Enhance your beauty routine with Myntra's wide range of beauty and personal care products available on Myntra. From luxurious multinational brands like Prada, Ralph Lauren, Diesel, and Sebastian Professional to local favourites like Perfora and Hammer, discover your favourite products are up for grabs at min 50 per cent off on MRP.

Sports Footwear: Step up your game with top-notch sports

footwear, Myntra brings you renowned brands like Nike, Salomon, Pret-e-tuer, and more, offering attractive deals between 50-80 per cent off on MRP to fuel your active lifestyle. Whether you're into trekking, cycling, jogging, or any adventure activity, find your perfect pair and enjoy unprecedented offers.

Watches and Wearables: Embrace the fusion of fashion and technology with stylish watches and smart wearables and create a style statement.



# 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-Khie 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 from a tough opening set 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, 17th, 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.

India began attacking the Uzbekistan citadel from the onset and took an early lead when as Vaishnavi (3rd) converted a penalty corner.

Mumtaz doubled India's lead three minutes later with a field strike.

Annu added to the team's tally by netting a goal as the opening quarter ended with India enjoying a 3-0 lead.

The second quarter was no different as India continued to dominate the proceedings and scored goals at will through Sunelita, Manju, Deepika and Anu, thus enjoying a commanding 10-0 lead at the half-time.

The script was the same after the change of ends as Deepika netted one through penalty corner while Annu struck two more to help India take 13-0 lead.

# 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 at the BBD University grounds in Lucknow, to pick up the gold for Chaudhary Bansil 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.

As many as 131 of the 203 universities who finally participated, medalled at the Games, where at least 11 new records were created over 12 competition days.

# 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 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 was the lone Indian finalist in the event and finished fourth to miss out on a medal. Italian Luca Arrighi won gold in the event.

Among other Indians in the fray, Urva Chaudhary finished 26th in women's air pistol with a qualification round score of 560. Sainyam had qualified third with 571 while Suruchi was fifth in qualifying with 571.

In men's pistol, Abhinav Chaudhary came close to the top eights with a qualification round score of 570, placing him ninth. Shubham Bisla, the third Indian contender, was 13th having shot a score of 568.

The junior men's and women's skeet qualification rounds also began on Saturday. Ritu Raj Bundela, Abhay Singh Sekhon and Muneek Battula are in contention in men's skeet while Raiza Dhillon, Mufaddal Zara Deesawala and Sanjan Sood are carrying Indian hopes in women's skeet.

# Cannot speak about Asian Cup target before Dec: Stimac

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

At 38, Sunil Chhetri remains a prized asset in the final third and among the fittest in the Indian football team, but his much younger colleagues in defence "dancing around balls" is a cause for concern for head coach, Igor Stimac.

Alongside brain, Stimac indicated he would do with a slice of brawn in his defenders. Four weeks of preparation time was on Saturday described as ideal by Stimac

for the Asian Cup, for which the Croat said he will not be able to set a realistic target before December.

The continental showpiece is scheduled to be held in January-February next year in Qatar, where India has been clubbed alongside heavyweights Australia, Syria and Uzbekistan.

"There is no realistic target. It's more about real chances for us. We can speak in December when we find out how much time we're going to get for the operation, then I

can be more realistic from this point of view.

"I cannot tell you about stages... For the Asian Cup, India never was placed better than the bottom of the group. So whatever we achieved, that we will be achievement, I would say," Stimac said during a virtual press conference.

India were knocked out in the group stage in their last two appearances in the tournament in 2011 and 2019 respectively.

When discussions turned to his veteran striker and captain Sunil Chhetri, Stimac said he



remains one of the fittest players in his squad after nearly two decades of top-flight football.

"Sunil has always been a role model and a leader in every sense for the boys and girls. But he's not only talking, he's showing that with his test results once again.

"In this camp, he was in top-five positions in all the tests we executed. So that's the best way of leading the team and showing them how much it can be done. Never mind the age, never mind the month or the year, so let alone what he speaks what he

does on the pitch and how he works. That's what is the most important thing."

There are still eight months left for the Asian Cup and Stimac said in this period the team is looking to improve its finishing, passing, pattern in the final third, and also the build-up.

"Before the Asian Cup, India will pay some tournaments -- Merdeka Cup, Intercontinental Cup.

"There is the U-23, then there is the Merdeka Cup in October, then we are starting the World Cup qualifiers. Asian

Cup prospects will depend on December preparations because things are changing on a daily basis. It depends on who are in form, who are in best position in December, they (players) are coming after a long domestic season behind. They need to stay in form and enter the Asian Cup on a positive note."

India are set to play Mongolia (June 9), Vanuatu (June 12), and Lebanon (June 15) in the Intercontinental Cup in Bhubaneswar, with the final slated to take place on June 18.



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

PTI ■ ARUNDEL

Back 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 see-

ing 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."

"Thanks to BCCI and selectors and when I went back to domestic cricket, the goal was to play for India — be it Ranji Trophy and Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy or practice session, for me, every day that I was waking up, it was all about thinking that I can play for India again.

"What made my comeback possible was enjoying each and every moment, be it success or failure, and having no regrets. Learning from every individual in Mumbai Ranji team. You have to grow as a cricketer every single day, learning process should not stop," he said.

Playing in England is challenging, feels Rahane, who had scored a match-winning hundred in a Test match at Lord's back in 2014.

"It's all about mindset and reading the situation well, staying in (the) moment and playing it session by session. In England, you just don't look at the pitch but also keep an eye on the weather. In England, you never feel that you are in even if you are batting on 70," he said.

## Team India using multi-coloured balls in fielding drills

PTI ■ PORTSMOUTH

The Indian team's training sessions over the years have had their share of innovations and it is now using multi-coloured rubber balls for catching practice in order to adjust to last-minute deviations which could cost the side dear.

One of the Indian team's fielding drills at the Arundel ground here saw rising star Shubman Gill taking catches with the colour of the ball being green.

There were also yellow coloured balls but not the lawn tennis balls one usually gets to see when keepers and close-in fielders take powerfully hit reflex catches.

"These are specially made rubber balls, not the ones we are used to seeing in gully cricket. This is made for fielding drills. These balls are named 'reaction balls' and it is used for fielding drills only in some specific countries, mainly England or New Zealand where breeze and colder conditions become a factor," a renowned fielding coach, who has worked at NCA and at national camps, told PTI.

Asked if there was any significance for the green coloured balls that was used to give catching practice to Gill,

he said: "I don't think there is any specific scientific or crick-eting reason for any specific colour. But certainly there is a reason for using that kind of rubber balls for catching practice — especially for slip fielders and keepers."

"In England, due to underlying moisture and the lush green outer area (beyond 22 yards) means that the ball will wobble a lot more than usual.

"England is the only country and to some extent in New Zealand, you will find that deliveries that beat the batter's outside edge is deviating wickedly, making it difficult to gather or catch the ball. The Dukes in England in fact wobbles even more," the coach added.

He then explained why these rubber "reaction balls" are being used for training.

"These balls are lighter in weight and hence it would wobble and also swing or deviate more. The idea is to get adjusted to this changing trajectory or line of the ball.

"Now coming to the colour the various colours are used because it is a human tendency to lose the sight of ball at last second. Various colours help you to judge the line of deviation till the last moment while catching the ball," he added.

## Warner is looking good for WTC final: Khawaja

PTI ■ LONDON

Australian batting stalwart Usman Khawaja believes fellow opener David Warner is probably at his best as he prepares for the tough English summer, which includes the World Test Championship final against India and the Ashes.

Warner, 36, had endured a difficult tour of India earlier this year, and even though the Delhi Capitals skipper showed attacking intent while amassing 516 runs from 14 matches in the IPL, he will have his task cut out in the seaming English conditions.

However, Warner, likely on his final tour of England, received a big endorsement from Khawaja, who said the stalwart was "looking good" for the challenges ahead.

"I have seen him (Warner) bat in the last couple of days and, I don't want to jinx him, but he is looking good," Khawaja was quoted as saying by ICC.

While Warner was included in Australia's squad for the WTC final and the first two Ashes Tests, the selectors have also picked Marcus Harris and Matt Renshaw as options, but Khawaja believes if the veteran cricketer is in the playing XI, he will give it his best shot.

"This is probably the best I have seen him look in the nets for a while. That doesn't always correlate to runs, but if we are any chance of Davey Warner scoring runs this could be it. He always plays his best when his back is against the wall too," added Khawaja.



## Warner aims to end Test career on a high

PTI ■ BECKENHAM

Star Australian opener David Warner on Saturday revealed his desire to end his red-ball career with a swansong Test at his home ground at the SCG against Pakistan in January.

Talking ahead of Australia's training session here, Warner, who is preparing for next week's World Test Championship (WTC) final against India, said he hopes the Sydney Test against Pakistan would be his last.

However, given his recent struggle in the longest format of the game, the southpaw isn't guaranteed a spot in the Australian Test side and he is well aware of it.

"You've got to score runs. I've always said the (2024) T20

World Cup would probably be my final game," Warner said.

"I probably owe it to myself and my family - if I can score runs here and continue to play back in Australia - I can definitely say I won't be playing that West Indies series.

"If I can get through this (WTC final and ensuing Ashes campaign) and make the Pakistan series I will definitely finish up then," he added.

After the WTC final, Australia are scheduled to play a five-match Ashes series against England.

Warner is a part of Australia's squad for the WTC final as well as the first two Ashes Tests. But the selectors have also picked Marcus Harris and Matt Renshaw as options.

Warner, apart from a magnificent double hundred against South Africa last December, has struggled for runs in recent assignments, managing a mere 26 runs in three Test innings in the recent tour of India before returning home injured.

He had also endured a forgettable campaign during the last Ashes, returning with an average of 9.50, the worst ever by an opener playing in 10 innings with England quick Broad dominating the 36-year-old.

"We saw when he scored a double century in his 100th game when everyone was writing him off and telling him he was done and it was his last game and he went out and gets 200. "You never write off a great player, so I am expecting runs," said Khawaja.

Warner indicated he would likely stick to his task during the Tests than get involved in any pre-Ashes banter with England cricketers, especially Broad who restricted the Australian to just 95 runs at an average less than 10 during the last Ashes in England.

"It (banter) just sells papers and clickbait, so I won't be getting involved in any of that stuff. I will leave it to themselves," said Warner of the Ashes series which will commence in Edgbaston on June 16. "Today, there is no real banter in the field. It is just about playing quality cricket and trying to get the upper edge on each other. It is a lot more connected these days than before which I think is great for the game," he added.

## Long county stint will help me in WTC final: Labuschagne

PTI ■ LONDON

Leading Australian Test batter Marnus Labuschagne feels his long stint with English county side Glamorgan has helped him get fully prepared for the challenges in the run-up to the World Test Championship final against India, starting June 7.

Even as leading Australian cricketers, who are a part of the squad for the two assignments, including Ashes, were busy playing in the Indian Premier League, Labuschagne, the No.1-ranked Test batter in the world, was gearing up for the WTC final and the Ashes for the last to months playing county cricket.

The 28-year-old scored two centuries and a total of 504 runs in eight innings, and is confident of a good showing in the one-off game for Test supremacy against India, scheduled to begin at The Oval on June 7.

"I have been coming back (to country cricket) for five years now," Labuschagne was quoted as saying by ICC. "It is just part of



my normal routine of coming here. I love coming here, I love playing county cricket, I love the team at Glamorgan, I enjoy it so much otherwise I wouldn't be coming back," said Labuschagne.

The No.3 batter's decision to spend more than two months in England could have been driven by the fact that he scored only one half-century during the recent Border-Gavaskar Trophy, which India won 2-1 at home.

"It just helps that this year is a Test Championship Final and Ashes year so it is

very helpful for leading into the series," he said.

Labuschagne added that batting at No.3 brought with it the responsibility of giving solidity to the innings by playing responsible innings.

"Naturally, anyone that is batting No.3 for Australia is going to have responsibility," Labuschagne said.

"Even in 2019 (the last time in England for Ashes) it was my responsibility, it was my job to score runs and if I didn't score runs they (Australia team management) would find someone else to do my job and I don't think that changes," he said.

"It is about finding ways to score runs and contribute to the side in as many games as I can."

During the 2019 Ashes series, a lot of focus was on Labuschagne as David Warner, Steve Smith and Cameron Bancroft were returning for their first Test tour since the ban imposed on them following the 2018 'Sandpaper-gate' scandal in Cape Town.

## PCB refuses to play ODI series in Lanka

PTI ■ KARACHI

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is upset at Sri Lanka board expressing its desire to host the entire Asia Cup and has declined the latter's offer to play an ODI bilateral series in the island nation.

According to sources in the PCB, relations between the PCB and Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) have turned sour after its offer of hosting the entire Asia Cup

instead of four games being held in Pakistan as per the 'Hybrid Model' proposed by Najam Sethi.

"An example of the increasingly strained relations between the two boards emerged after the PCB turned down a proposal by the Lankans to play a few One-Day International matches next month in Sri Lanka," PCB source stated.

Pakistan is scheduled to visit Sri Lanka in July to play two

Tests of the next ICC World Test Championship cycle and apparently the SLC had suggested that Pakistan also play a few ODIs as they are optimistic their team will book a spot from the World Cup qualifiers in Zimbabwe and would need more exposure before the main event in October.

But a reliable source confirmed that the PCB after initially saying they would consider the proposal had turned it down

now.

"It is a clear indication that the PCB is not happy with the Sri Lankan board stepping in to offer to host the Asia Cup in September when it is Pakistan's turn to host the regional event at home," the source said.

He said in fact PCB chairman Sethi is also not happy with the response of the Bangladesh and Afghanistan boards over the Asia Cup issue.

## Athletes left heartbroken by deadly train mishap

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India captain Virat Kohli and Olympic gold medalist Abhinav Bindra, among several other sportspersons, expressed their anguish over the devastating train accident in Odisha's Balasore district, that has killed at least 238 people and injured more than 900.

The train crash on Friday, involving the Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express, the Shalimar-Chennai Central Coromandel Express and a goods train, is one of the deadliest such accidents since independence.

Officials in Bhubaneswar said 200 ambulances, 50 buses and 45 mobile health units were working at the accident site, besides 1,200 personnel. The bodies were being taken to the hospitals in all kinds of vehicles, including tractors.

Kohli, who is in England with the India team for the World Test Championship final against Australia at The Oval from June 7, wished for the speedy recovery of the injured.

"Saddened to hear about the tragic train accident in Odisha. My thoughts and prayers go out to the families who lost their loved ones and wishing a speedy recovery to the injured," tweeted Kohli.

India's first individual Olympic gold medalist, rifle shooter Abhinav Bindra, he had been left heartbroken by the news of the accident.

"Heartbreaking news from Odisha about the devastating train accident. My heart goes out to all those affected and their loved ones during this incredibly difficult time. Please, let's all extend our support and prayers to them. May the injured recover swiftly," tweeted Bindra, the 2008 Beijing Olympics gold medalist in 10m air rifle.

The train crash, the fourth deadliest in India according to available records, happened near the Bahanaga Baazar station in Balasore district, about 250km south of Kolkata and 170km north of Bhubaneswar, around 7 pm on Friday, prompting the Railway Ministry to order a probe.

## Pandya best allrounder in world cricket: Klusener

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Rating Hardik Pandya as one of the best fast-bowling all-rounders, former South African great Lance Klusener on Saturday believes the Indian possibly gave up on Test cricket a bit too easily to manage his workload.

Plagued by injuries, Pandya, who last played Tests for India in September 2018, has limited himself to only playing white-ball cricket and ruled himself out of the upcoming World Test Championship final against Australia.

"He (Pandya) is a fantastic cricketer, and if he can stay fit and continues to bowl 135+ kmph, he will always be challenging... as one of the best all-rounders in the world," Klusener told reporters in a media interaction at the Calcutta Sports Journalists' Club.

Pandya had ruled himself out saying it would not be "ethical" to take someone's place without even contributing one per cent in India's journey to the WTC final.

Asked if Pandya gave up on Test cricket a bit too easily, Klusener said, "Yes, possibly. Test cricket (is) always the pinnacle



of testing where you are as a cricketer, and testing yourselves. "Test cricket hasn't really changed much from way back but I also understand that times have moved on as well."

Klusener further said a fast-bowling allrounder is not a "dibbly-dobbler" but someone who can clock 135kph consistently. "Fast bowling allrounders need to be bowling 135+. I don't think there would be some dibbly-dobblers that we used to see in England, I don't think all that (is) effective anymore.

"I honestly believe that a guy like Ben Stokes who bowls 135+, those people are still gold in any form of the game," said Klusener, a member of the 1999 ODI World Cup team that had a heartbreak loss to Australia in the semi-final. But managing the

three formats in today's era has contributed to the decline of fast-bowling allrounder. However, Klusener believes their time will come again.

"I always think it goes in cycles. When I played, there were a lot of fast-bowling allrounders... then we kind of saw the allrounders bowling spin.

"Certainly at this point in time, I don't see as many fast-bowling allrounders, I just think it's a cycle. We might just see in the next five years those kinds of cricketers coming through again. If we manage the workloads correctly there is a lot of cricket, there's still a place for them in any team."

Klusener believes India are well equipped to field a pace or spin-heavy lineup and it will be horses for courses for them in

the WTC final against Australia beginning at The Oval from June 7.

"Spin has been India's strength traditionally. They have the attack that can play on any surface," he said, when asked whether India should go for two spinners or one pace-bowling allrounder in Shardul Thakur.

"The way the Indian seamers have developed in the last couple of years - a reason why they play in successive WTC finals, that's why they are one of the best Test sides in the world. "Teams in the past would prepare green tops so India won't be able to compete, but that's not the case anymore. I think they are now well equipped, whatever the conditions, they will be able to pick the team that will be competitive."

Asked about his favourite team to win the WTC final, he said, "It's a tough call. The battle will be between Australia's bowlers and India's batters, the team that wins that battle will come out on top," he said.

Klusener was also all praise for countryman Faf du Plessis, who had another fruitful IPL season finishing second on the run-getters' list behind Shubman Gill.

## Rohit, Surya among probables for Mumbai's off-season camp

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The newly-formed Mumbai selection committee, led by former India cricketer Raju Kulkarni, on Friday named 35 probable players, including big names like Rohit Sharma and Suryakumar Yadav for an off-season training camp scheduled to be held here next week.

Besides, India captain Rohit and Suryakumar, the list also includes Ajinkya Rahane and Shardul Thakur.

But their participation in the camp is unlikely as they are currently in England for the World Test Championship final against Australia starting June 7 at The Oval.

Shreyas Iyer, who missed the entire IPL due to a lower back injury and is currently recovering after undergoing a surgery in mid April, has also been named for the camp.

The BCCI had informed in a release that Iyer, who will also miss the WTC final, was slated to report to the National Cricket Academy for rehabilitation in

two weeks' time post his surgery.

The list released by the Mumbai selection committee include senior fast bowler Dhawal Kulkarni, all-rounder Shivan Dube, who had a terrific IPL for champions Chennai Super Kings, batting mainstay Sarfaraz Khan and Prithvi Shaw.

Right-arm fast bowler Siddharth Raut, who played a couple of matches for the 41-time champions in the Ranji Trophy last season, has been dropped.

The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) president Amol Kale, vice-president Sanjay Naik, secretary Ajinkya Naik, joint-secretary Deepak Patil and members of the apex council on Thursday night hosted the advisory for cricketing matters, which was also attended by former player Milind Rege, Cricket Improvement Committee (CIC) chairman Lalchand Rajput among others at the Wankhede Stadium.

The upcoming cricket season was discussed during the gathering here.



# the pioneer agenda

"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)*





**Lucky number** 14  
**Lucky colour** Parrot Green  
**Lucky day** Saturday

**Lucky number** 12  
**Lucky colour** Grey  
**Lucky day** Wednesday

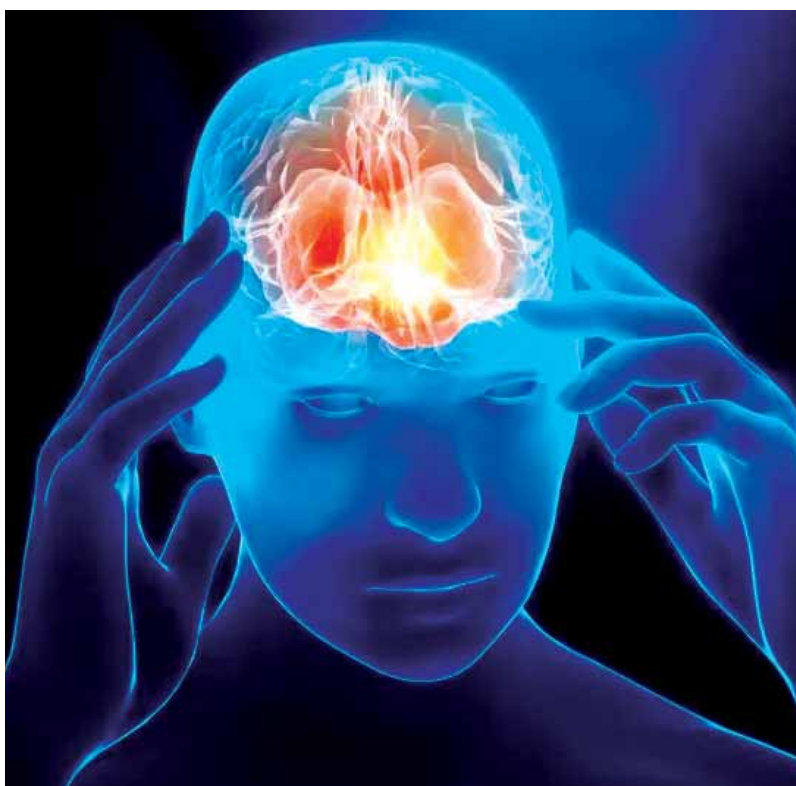
**Lucky number** 22  
**Lucky colour** Yellow  
**Lucky day** Thursday

**Lucky number** 10  
**Lucky colour** Indigo  
**Lucky day** Wednesday

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# Each mind is unique



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.

Mind engaged in its likes and dislikes, prejudices and obsessions, wanton desires and temptations of life, pleasures and pains, continuously keep breeding

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