

WORLD 5

ERDOGAN TAKES OATH OF OFFICE FOR 3RD TERM

MONEY 6

'RBI-MPC MAY LOWER INFLATION FORECAST marginally'

SPORT 7

NADAL UNDERGOES HIP SURGERY

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Crash toll 288 & counting...

803 hurt in India's worst trains pile-up in Balasore

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The death toll from the triple train accident at Bahanaga Bazar in Balasore, Odisha, on Friday has now risen to 288. Preliminary investigations suggest that a signal was initially given for the Coromandel Express to enter the main line but was later taken off, causing the train to enter the loop line where it collided with a parked goods train.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, efforts to remove the mangled coaches and repair the tracks at the site have begun in full swing, according to a railway official. The accident involved three trains: The 12841 Shalimar-Chennai Central Coromandel Express, the 12864 Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express, and a goods train. It stands as one of the worst railway disasters in the country's history.

As per reports available until late Saturday afternoon, the accident claimed the lives of 288 people, while 803 individuals sustained injuries, including 56 with severe injuries. The two express trains were carrying over 2,200 passengers with reserved tickets, along with many others traveling in unreserved coaches.

The railways revealed that



Passengers wait at the site where Coromandel Express, Bengaluru-Howrah Express and a goods train derailed, in Balasore district on Saturday

PTI

the Coromandel Express, while passing through the up main line, collided with a stationary goods train in the loop line at Bahanaga Bazar station, located approximately 280 kilometres from Howrah and 171 kilometres from Bhubaneswar.

A loop line is a railway track connected at both ends to a main line, allowing trains to be diverted to accommodate passing trains.

The impact of the collision caused 21 coaches of the Coromandel Express to derail, with three coaches falling onto a neighbouring track where the Bengaluru-Howrah Express was simultaneously passing in the opposite direction.

Consequently, the Bengaluru-Howrah train collided with the fallen coaches, causing its rear two coaches to derail. The number of pas-

sengers with reserved tickets on the Coromandel Express was around 1,257, while the Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express had 1,039 passengers with reservations.

The railways has announced an ex-gratia relief of ₹10 lakh to the next of kin of those who died, ₹2 lakh to the seriously injured, and ₹50,000 for passengers with minor injuries.

Investigations are currently underway to determine any human error, signal failure, or other potential causes behind the tragic accident.

A preliminary inquiry report has been submitted, and a high-level probe, led by the commissioner of railway safety, South Eastern Circle, has been initiated by the national transporter.

Kavach could have saved lives, anti-collision system missing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

PTI

tance of 380 metres during rear-end collision testing.

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

dent prevention and mitigation.

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

Guilty won't be spared: Modi at accident site

PNS ■ BALASORE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday expressed his deep anguish over the train crash in Odisha that claimed the lives of 288 people and assured that strong action would be taken against those responsible.

Speaking to reporters after visiting the accident site and meeting the injured at a hospital in Balasore district, Modi conveyed his heartfelt sorrow and emphasized that the government is taking the incident very seriously.

"The government is deeply saddened by the incident. We will not spare anyone found guilty, and they will face strong consequences for this tragedy," he stated. He further assured that instructions have been issued to ensure a thorough and swift investigation into the mishap.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with rescuers as he takes stock of the situation at the site of the accident involving Coromandel Express, Bengaluru-Howrah Express and a goods train, in Balasore district on Saturday

PTI

Modi acknowledged that while it is impossible to bring back the lives lost, the Government stands firmly with the affected families,

offering unwavering support. "We will leave no stone unturned in providing all necessary medical assistance to the injured," he added.

300 NDRF rescuers on job with cutters, canine squads

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Director General of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Atul Karwal, said on Saturday that over 300 NDRF rescuers equipped with large metal cutters, canine squads, and heavy-lift equipment are working at the train accident site in Odisha.

Karwal stated that the NDRF is expected to conclude the search operation by Saturday evening.

Since the first NDRF team arrived at the accident site around 8.30 pm on Friday, the force has rescued 44 survivors and recovered 71 bodies from the wrecked railway coaches in Balasore district.

The NDRF is a federal contingency force operating under the Union Home Ministry.

"We have more than 300



NDRF personnel carry out rescue work after an accident involving Coromandel Express, Bengaluru-Howrah Express and a goods train, in Balasore district on Saturday

PTI

rescuers divided into nine teams working at the accident site. Our goal is to complete the search operation by this evening," Karwal said at the NDRF headquarters in New Delhi.

The initial NDRF team reached the site from its

regional response center in Balasore approximately one hour and fifteen minutes after the accident, which occurred around 7-7.10 pm on Friday. The remaining NDRF teams were deployed from Mundali in Cuttack district and Kolkata, according to Karwal.

Screams of help still ring in survivors' ears

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

Initially, in a series of

tweets, Das described how he thought the accident unfolded.

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

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

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

CAPSULE

'INDIA INFRA ALONG LAC MATCHES UP WITH CHINA'

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

GOVT BANS 14 FIXED DOSE COMBO DRUGS

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

PUNJAB: OVER 14 KG HEROIN SEIZED, 2 HELD

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

India lost 1 tiger every alternate day this year

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



fringes or outside the tiger reserves.

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

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

SOCIETY WILL EVOLVE AS MORE AND MORE LIVE A SPIRITUAL LIFE: SWAMI CHIDANANDA GIRI

Swami Chidananda Giri, president and spiritual head of Yogoda Satsanga Society of India/Self-Realization Fellowship (YSS/SRF), recently visited India and gave inspirational talks on the Kriya Yoga teachings of Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda (author of the Autobiography of a Yogi and founder-Guru of YSS/SRF). During his stay in India, Swami Chidanandaji was interviewed on matters of import affecting different strata of society and the world. Here are some excerpts:

Q: "The simplest way to know God is the way of love," says Yoganandaji. How is the path of meditation "the way of love?" Can yoga lead us to the experience of and expression

of this "unconditional" love?

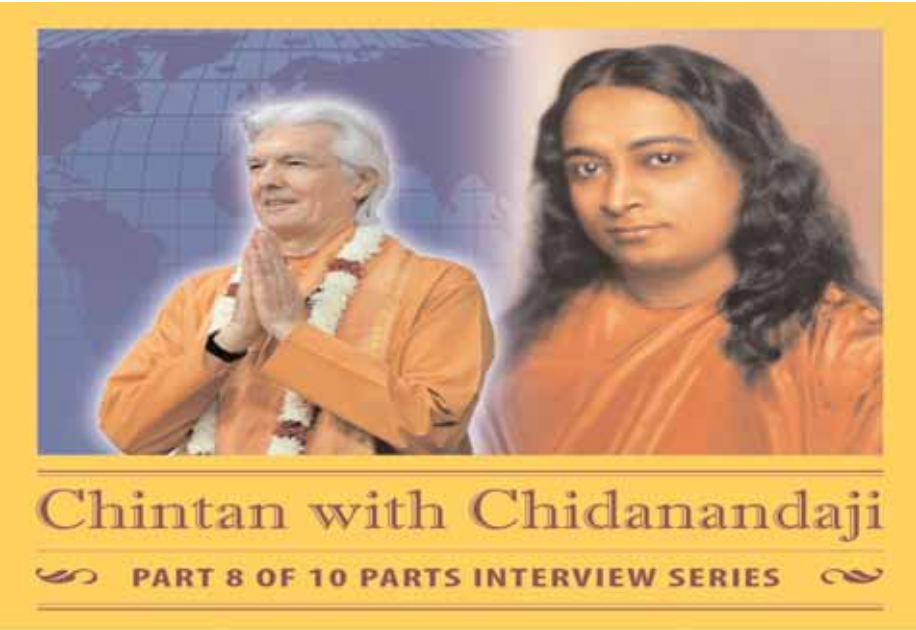
Swami Chidanandaji: "Yes! Yes! and Yes! Meditation makes us ultimately of all beings, because we feel the presence of God in ourselves, and then as that consciousness expands, we also become aware, first on a subconscious or subtle level and later on a more overt and conscious level, of that presence of God in other people. God is the most lovable being in the universe. If only everybody knew what God was... God is beauty, and joy, and happiness, and service-fullness, and all of those wonderful qualities that automatically command our respect and affection. So, the key to experiencing that love in oneself is to go to the source of love as Daya Mataji said over and over again. That was her whole life theme.

said, "I wanted love, I wanted to experience the love that was not flawed by human imperfections." She said, "I made up my mind early on that I was going to go to God to find that love." And how does one go to God? By meditation! Her whole book, Only Love, is about this.

Q: Swamiji, how can we counter sectarian violence and hatred?

Swami Chidanandaji: "Well, number one is to model and exemplify the kind of universality and understanding, and respect for other religious traditions that we find in our Guru's (Yoganandaji's) traditions and in our Guru's teachings.

"It is a little bit of an ambitious project for individual devotees to feel that they're going to all of a sud-



den stop sectarian violence on their own. This is an evolutionary thing. But each of us can contribute to that by - number one, modeling the type of respect and understanding and sharing with as many people as possible the different writings or books of our Guru that really focus on the underlying commonality among religions. For example, Gururji's book: Science of Religion, certain chapters in Man's Eternal Quest or other books like that so that more and more of these ideas filter out into society. And then, of course, when one finds himself or herself in a situation where somebody is speaking in a degrading or derogatory way about followers of another path, and if there is an opportunity to respectful-

ly and gently pushback, then just say that there's enough hate in this world, and if it is really going to help to add even more to it. It is not like we have to become correctors and or disciplinarians of other people, but you can push back when somebody is behaving in that way around you. But most of all, the answer to that question is really a matter of more and more devotees living the life and living the universal outlook that we learn in the YSS Lessons. And you know, over time there'll be an evolutionary change in society. But I wouldn't encourage individual devotees to feel like they have to go out and directly confront sectarian violence, unless they have the means to do. Further info.: yssfindia.org

In-house development of Anti Collision Detection System for RMHP



R SHARMA : BOKARO

Anti Collision Detection System for RMHP Stacker was inaugurated by B K Tiwari, Head & ED (Works), BSL. Stacker machines are used at RMHP to create material bed, but due to uneven material dumping the top layer of the bed becomes uneven due to which the boom of the stacker needs to be steered carefully to avoid hitting the pile of raw material. Sometimes inadvertently

due to failure of boom adjustment, the stacker structure collides with the pile of raw material causing the stacker boom to break and get damaged.

It is noteworthy that Anticipating and preventing collisions between moving plant objects, such as stackers and material stacks, is a difficult task. Concomitant collisions can result in damage to equipment as well as production. Conventional methods of collision detection are based

on either linear transducers or infrared/radar distance detection systems. Linear transducers are prone to 'slip' and the maintenance of these systems is also high. For proper operation the infrared/radar system needs to be kept spotlessly clean at all times which is very difficult to ensure in yards with fine powder materials like sinter, dolomite, iron ore, etc. The team from EL&TC and RMHP departments took up the challenge of preventing the collision between the boom and the raw material stack. The team designed the anti-collision system based on laser technology in-house and installed it on Stacker 4.

A successful live demonstration of the system was shown at the end of the programme. BK Tiwari congratulated the team for the in-house design of this system. Notably this is the first Anti Collision Detection System based on laser technology which has been implemented at SAIL-Bokaro Steel Plant.

Steel City adorns a new look with artistic street art, murals & sculptures



PNS : BOKARO

The sylvan industrial township of SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) is adorning a new look with artistic street art, murals and sculptures giving pleasant and memorable experience to the visitors as well as Rourkelites. They are well complemented with artistic illumination and fountains. All the important road intersections, public places and strategic junctions along the Ring Road have got artistic

transformation with the new makeover campaign to give the city a unique look initiated by the Town Engineering Department under the guidance of Atanu Bhowmick, Director In-Charge, RSP. The sculptures splendidly placed on platforms portray the rich tribal heritage of the region and the biodiversity to spread the message of sustainability. Similarly the beautifully painted murals display the cultural richness of the state and the country.

Chas Municipal to organize 'Swanidhi Se Samridhi' awareness camp from June 5-10

PNS : BOKARO

Additional Municipal Commissioner Anil Kumar Singh in the office of Chas Municipal Corporation on Thursday held a review meeting on Prime Minister SVANidhi scheme. In the same context decision taken in the meeting of the monitoring committee constituted at the district level to organize a camp from June 05, 2023 to June 10, 2023 pertaining to the programme "Swanidhi se Samridhi" under the PM SVANidhi scheme at two locations from 11:00 AM to 04:00 PM at Durga Mandir opposite V2 Mall located at Check Post vegetable market and at Ramrudra CM School of Excellence Chas, Bokaro.

Additional Municipal Commissioner Anil Kumar Singh gave information about the above awareness camp. AMC further said that registration under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana,



Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Building and other construction workers scheme, Pradhan Mantri Shram Maandhan Yojana, One Nation One Ration Card, Janani Suraksha Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana will be done and taking step ahead Street vendors will be linked to the

scheme. At the same time, AMC further requested the residents of the city to participate in the said camp in maximum numbers and take advantage of the above schemes and also inform all their friends and well-wishers so that they too can participate and take advantage of this scheme.

NIT advocates for Eco-Friendly Transportation

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

On the occasion of World Cycle Day declared by the United Nations General Assembly, students, teachers and staff join hands to pedal for a cause. On the occasion of World Bicycle Day, a large number of employees of the institute gathered in front of the administrative building of the institute with their bicycles at six in the morning. The cycle rally was inaugurated by Dr. Goutam Sutradhar, director of the institute by showing green flag and while addressing on the occasion said that we all



should use cycle in our daily activities. Appealing to spread awareness about the benefits of using cycles to health and environment, he said that not only do we keep ourselves fit and healthy by cycling, but also you partici-

pate in nation building. Dr. Sutradhar said that every year we use crores of dollars of petrol and diesel in our vehicles, if we use cycles in our daily work, then the country can save crores of dollars from the use of diesel

petrol and that rupee The use can be spent on the country's infrastructure and other development works, as well as diesel and petrol wells and can protect the environment, trees, plants and human health by reducing carbon

emissions. Underlining the importance of using a bicycle, he said that after an age there is a problem of knee pain, so cycling strengthens the knee and the possibility of pain can be avoided to a great extent.

In the program, Colonel (Dr.) Nishith Kumar Rai, the registrar of the institute, also boosted everyone's morale and told that by cycling daily, your body's immune system is good and your mind is more active, so everyone should ride a bicycle for at least 30 minutes daily. He said that cycling is not only the best exercise but also

helps in saving money. The participants of the cycle rally cycled from the front of the administrative building of the institute to all the hostels, residential premises and the main gate with great enthusiasm and came back in front of the administrative building and concluded the cycle rally. On this occasion, Dr. Jainendra Kumar, the coordinator of the program, welcomed all the participants by giving them face masks and cold drinks. Public relations officer of the institute, Sunil Kumar Bhagat was present on the occasion.

Science for Society takes out cycle rally on World Cycle Day



VINOD PRASAD : LOHARDAGA

On the occasion of World Cycle Day, courtesy of Science for Society Lohardaga and Aggarwal Cycle, the rally from MLA Mahila Mahavidyalaya Barwatoli on Saturday was organized jointly by Lohardaga DTO Manish Kumar, Society and Indian Medical Association President Dr. Ganesh Prasad and Society's advisory member Sanjay Burman. It passed through New Road, Subhash Chowk, Somwar Bazar, Thana Chowk, Shastri Chowk and ended at Gujri Bazar. In the rally, environment and cycle lovers were appealing to people to ride and adopt cycles by shouting slogans and slogans on the placards. If you want to save the environment, then you have to ride a bicycle. If you want to get rid of jam, then you have to ride a bicycle. If you want to be healthy then you have to ride a bicycle. If you want to save fuel then ride a bicycle. If you want to drive away pollution, then you have to ride a bicycle and adopt a bicycle. On the occasion, IMA President Dr. Ganesh Prasad said that cycling has many benefits at once. In which there is protection of the environment, at the same time you remain healthy and there is no cost in this.

In the rally, District Transport Officer Manish Kumar, Sanjay Burman, Women's College Principal Sneha Kumar, Red Cross Society Secretary Arun Ram, Science for Society Secretary Rahul Kumar, Advocate Vivek Kumar, Aggarwal Cycle Proprietor Kamal Aggarwal, Jagatpal Kesari, Manish Aggarwal, Praveen Kumar, Dharmendra Soni, Praveen Patel, Rajesh Sahu, Pawan Agar, Alok Kumar, Sandeep Sahu, Shankar Sahu, Shambhu Agar, Avinash Agar, Basant Mahto, Mohammad Kalim Khan, Pintu Mahto, Anil Kumar, Krish Raj Mittal, Harshit Raj, Nandan Agar, Ujjwal Agarwal, Manish Gupta, Nilesh Kanskar, Rajesh Soni, Vijay Das, Ashish Agarwal, Aryan, Divyanshu etc participated.

DDC, ASP inspect MMCH at night looking for 'patient lifters'

M F AHMAD : DALTONGANJ

The Medinirai medical college hospital premise in Daltonganj is the bed of marijuana smokers, drug peddlers and patients lifters. Sources said it is the patient lifters that are most dangerous. The patients are lured to move to some private clinics or nursing homes. Engaged in this organised racket are drivers of the private ambulances, ward boys and hospital's trolley men. Without the connivance of the hospital personnel, patients can't move out said sources. As night advances these dark faced middlemen including drivers of the private ambulances tempt and lure poor patients to leave this hospital to private clinics or nursing homes. They get commission for such ferrying of patients from the government hospital to private clinics or nursing homes.

On Friday night DDC Palamu Ravi Anand and assistant superintendent of police and SDPO Rishabh Garg visited the hospital.

DDC Ravi Anand said "We were complained about drivers of the private ambulances



An entry to emergency service in the MMCH Daltonganj. PNS

parked there indulging in such activities luring patients to move on to private clinics or nursing homes where it is everybody's knowledge the cost of treatment is exorbitantly high." Parking of private ambulances on the premises of the Medinirai medical college hospital in Daltonganj is not allowed but it is flouted more than followed. Rishabh Garg said four drivers of the private ambulances were quizzed by the police and were let off only after furnishing bonds. He said the bonds furnished by them would make them

accountable and liable to law if they are found breaching it anymore. The Special Branch of Jharkhand had alerted the civil and police administration about how middlemen are tempting poor patients to some private clinics or nursing homes for their ulterior gains.

Medical superintendent of the Medinirai medical college hospital in Daltonganj Dr Dilip Kumar Singh said the hospital has always been asking the drivers of the private ambulances not to park private ambulances in the premise of the hospital but they are

hardly bothering for it. Dr Singh said these lot of drivers even build pressure on the hospital management.

Hospital manager Sunit Srivastav said the premise of our hospital is dotted at night by dubious people and despite all efforts these dubious people run their writ.

DDC Palamu Ravi Anand said our last night exercise is a warning for all such people who play with the poor patients, misguide them by frightful tales of our hospital's negative things all to ferry them from the hospital to private clinics or nursing homes. Garg said any resident of Palamu must have complained about the penetration of the middlemen in the hospital here to the state Special Branch as a result taking cognisance of it the Special Branch sent us communication. Sources said the last night visit of the DDC and ASP here in the Medinirai medical college hospital in Daltonganj has sent strong signals but past experiences prove such pre midnight or post midnight exercise by senior officials be not just once a blue moon exercise but it ought to be a periodic exercise.

Two arrested while trying to break HDFC ATM

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

In a daring incident, two individuals were apprehended by the local police while attempting to break into an HDFC ATM in Adityapur.

A patrolling party nabbed two of the three criminals while the latter were trying to break into an ATM along the Adityapur-Kandra four-lane under Adityapur police station area in the wee hours on Saturday. The ATM belonged to HDFC Bank and was housed at the Shivranganjani residential complex.

According to police, while patrolling the four-lane, the police sensed doubt at the HDFC Bank ATM located in the Shivranganjani residential complex. Soon after, the patrolling party rushed to the ATM where three criminals were busy dismantling it.

At the sight of the police, one of the criminals managed to escape, but two others were caught. Those arrested were identified as Ranjit Jha and Paramjeet Singh.

According to eyewitnesses, the two suspects were seen trying to force their way into the ATM using tools and equipment commonly used in such criminal activities. Their attempts to tamper with the ATM's security systems were foiled due to the prompt response of the security guard and the subsequent arrival of law enforcement authorities.

Upon their arrest, the police found the suspects in possession of burglary tools and other incriminating materials. The authorities suspect that the duo may be involved in similar crimes in the area, and investigations are underway to determine their involvement in any previous ATM break-ins.

An official stated, "We acted swiftly upon receiving the alert and were able to apprehend the suspects before they could carry out their illegal activities. We are now working to gather more evidence and establish their connection, if any, to other ATM burglaries in the region.

RU VC assumes charge as interim VC of VBU

SHAILESH SHARMA : HAZARIBAG

Dr. Ajit Kumar Sinha, Vice Chancellor of Ranchi University has assumed charge as interim vice chancellor of Vinoba Bhave University, Hazaribag. He was welcomed and received by the officials and other senior teachers at the gate of the Administrative building. He first went to the statue of Vinoba Bhave and garlanded the statue. After joining the duty he said to the journalists that the education activities and research will be my first priority. After COVID the educational activities in the maximum institutions were on a halt. Now this is the basic duty of the teachers and officers of the university to speed up education activities under the present atmosphere of National Education Policy. He further said that on the ratio of students and teachers, the appointment of the teachers will be done after having the permission of the Human Resource Department and Raj Bhavan. He said that with the help of teachers we will try our best to increase the research work in the post graduate departments of different subjects.

On this occasion the registrar of the university Kaushlendra Kumar, proctor Mithlesh Kumar Singh, Birendra Kumar Gupta, former registrar, PRO Pramod Kumar, Principal Bimal Mishra and teachers were present.



ODISHA TRAIN TRAGEDY

Helpdesk comes up at Tatanagar, rescue train rushes to the spot

Team of Doctors to fly to Balasore today, helpline numbers issued by Ranchi Division

PNS
JAMSHEDPUR/RANCHI

In the wake of a tragic train mishap in Odisha, a dedicated help desk has been set up at Tatanagar railway station, while helpline numbers were issued by the Ranchi Division to assist passengers and provide necessary support. The incident occurred last evening at Balasore. The derailment resulted in multiple injuries and several casualties, leaving the affected passengers in a state of shock.

The Tatanagar railway authorities swiftly took action and established a well-equipped help desk at the station to address the needs of the stranded passengers. A team of railway personnel, including officials from vari-

ous departments, has been deployed to manage the situation efficiently. The help desk aims to provide immediate assistance, information, and comfort to the affected individuals and their families.

Around 9 labourers who were on way to Chennai from Chakulia and Bahragora who survived the accident were immediately taken to hospitals for medical treatment. The injured are receiving prompt medical attention, and the local authorities are coordinating with hospitals to ensure they receive the best possible care. Meanwhile, the families of those who lost their lives in the tragic incident are being offered grief counseling and necessary support during this difficult time. A rescue has been rushed to the spot.



"The help desk at Tatanagar railway station is equipped with dedicated helpline numbers, manned by trained professionals, to address queries and concerns of passengers and their families. It is providing information on the status of trains, alternative travel arrangements, and assisting with accommodation for those stranded in the area. The railway authorities are working tirelessly to restore normalcy and ensure the safety and well-being of the affected passengers," said an official. Authorities have initiated a thorough investigation into

the train derailment to determine the cause of the incident. The safety and maintenance protocols of the rail infrastructure are being scrutinized to prevent any such mishaps in the future. The government has assured full cooperation and support to the investigating team to bring forth the necessary changes and hold accountable anyone found responsible for the unfortunate incident.

Passengers and their families are advised to stay connected with the helpline numbers provided by the help desk for regular updates and assistance. The railway authorities are committed to resolving the situation swiftly and minimizing the inconvenience caused to the passengers. He said that as the investigation progresses, fur-

ther updates will be provided to the public. The authorities, along with local law enforcement agencies, are working diligently to ensure the safety and well-being of the affected passengers and to restore normalcy in the region.

Meanwhile, in Ranchi division, fewer trains were either cancelled or diverted. Officials said that there was not much impact on the operation of trains from Ranchi and Hatia stations going to westward or northward directions.

Chief Minister Hemant Soren tweeted in the evening that a team of doctors and medics will fly to Balasore on Sunday to help and treat the train accident victims. The team will also meet victims from Jharkhand and provide them every possible help, he said.



Youngsters take part in a Cyclothon organised by the Department of Forest Environment and climate change of Jharkhand on World Bicycle Day, in Ranchi on Saturday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

BICYCLOTHON organised by Forest Dept under Mission LiFE

PNS : RANCHI

Taking forward the programme going on for the last one month under Mission LiFE, a cycle rally was organized today by the Department of Forest and Climate Change from Babu Vatika of Morhabadi to Van Bhawan Auditorium in Doranda locality of the Capital City. On the occasion of World Cycle Day, through 'Cycle Rally -- BICYCLOTHON', the department emphasized on adopting environment friendly lifestyle. The cycle rally under the leadership of L. Khyangate, Additional Chief Secretary, Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department, and Dr. Sanjay Srivastava, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest and Forest Force Chief, covered a distance of about 12 km from Babu Vatika in Morhabadi Maidan to Van Bhawan. The cycle rally went through Ratu Road, Harmu Road, Birsia Chowk and reached the auditorium located at Van Bhawan Complex. School and college students, members of voluntary organizations, representatives of corporate companies, offi-



Youngsters and city residents take part in a Cyclothon organised by the Department of Forest Environment and climate change of Jharkhand on World Bicycle Day, in Ranchi on Saturday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

cers/employees of forest department, police and officers and jawans of paramilitary forces, along with about 1500 male and female students etc. participated in this cycle rally. The main objective of this rally is to make the general public aware of the environment and keep the environment balanced by adopting an eco-friendly lifestyle. The main theme of Mission LiFE is to contribute by paying atten-

tion to small things in life by planting trees and plants etc., energy conservation, water conservation, boycott of plastic. At the end of this rally, a sapling was presented as a gift to the participants in the Palash Auditorium by Dr. Sanjay Srivastava, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests of Indian Forest Service and Chief of Forest Force, Jharkhand. Meanwhile, in a similar event, Shankar

Nagachari, Director (Tech./Engineering Services) inaugurated flag-off the Cyclothon cum Walkathon at CMPDI (HQ), Ranchi on Saturday organised as part of Mission LiFE and prelude to World Environment Day, 2023 to raise awareness regarding environmental issues and to motivate people to adopt Sustainable Lifestyle. Nagachari in his address encouraged the participants with his insights and anecdotes to adopt practices to beat plastic pollution. A Painting Competition was organized for the wards of employees at CMPDI (HQ), Ranchi on the theme, 'Environment Pollution' for Class I to Class-V children and on the theme, 'Water Conservation' for Class VI to Class XII children to highlight the importance of Environmental Conservation. More than 80 children participated in this event. Rupali Gupta, President, Kasturi Mahila Sabha; Neerja Gomasta; Priti Nagachari and other members of Kasturi Mahila Sabha were present. Rupali Gupta motivated the participants with her insights.



BJP State President-cum MP Rajya Sabha Deepak Prakash alongwith newly married couples pose for a photo during a mass marriage, organised by President of Adivasi Sarna Vikas Samiti Megha Oraon, at Dhurva in Ranchi on Saturday. Pix by Ratan Lal

DIC RSP, Atanu Bhowmick, assumes additional charge of of Bokaro Steel Plant

PNS : BOKARO

Atanu Bhowmick, Director In-Charge, SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has assumed the additional charge of Director In-

charge of SAIL, Bokaro Steel Plant on 2nd June, 2023. Before taking over the reins of RSP as Director In-charge on 11th February 2022, Atanu Bhowmick was holding the

post of Executive Director (Works) at Bokaro Steel Plant and notably under his tenure Bokaro Steel Plant reached maximum height in terms of production parameters.



Tribals far from light of development: Bandhu



PNS : RANCHI

Former minister, member of coordination committee of Jharkhand government and working president of Jharkhand Pradesh Congress Committee, Bandhu Tirkey has said that the tribal society for which Jharkhand was specially formed has gone far away from the light of development. It is necessary that the government, while showing its sensitivity, should concentrate on the development of the tribal tribal society in the field of overall political, economic, social, educational and employment. Tirkey emphasized that the responsibility of implementing important schemes related to tribals at the ground level should be entrusted to such officials who have emotional attachment with the tribal society and really want the upliftment of tribals. Tirkey expressed anger over the fact that since the formation of Jharkhand,

many officers and leaders, giving top priority to their personal interests, have taken many such decisions which harm the tribals of Jharkhand as well as the entire Jharkhand people and this state. He said that Jharkhand has specific needs, ignoring which is suicidal for all.

The senior Congress leader said that the tribal community in Jharkhand, which gives the highest place to water, forest and land, is not only emotionally and deeply attached to these, but it is also shy and many leaders including officials have taken full advantage of this fact. But no society can be kept in darkness for an unlimited time. He said that Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (CNT) and Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act (SNPT) are especially applicable in Jharkhand to protect the land interests of the tribals, but they are being constantly neglected by unwanted elements and in Jharkhand's perspective it is very unfortunate that the tribals for whom Jharkhand was formed, have not only been marginalized in the definition of development, but now their cultural-social identity is also in danger.

Tirkey said that, especially in Jharkhand, the implementation of the fifth schedule in an effective form is very important for all those who talk about tribal interest and tribalism day and night.

Tirkey said that in order to improve the quality of life of tribals, it is necessary that the government should work in operational mode by assigning important and sensitive officers the responsibility related to it.

Monsoon likely to arrive late in Jharkhand



Pedestrians use umbrellas during rains in Ranchi. File photo

PNS : RANCHI

This time monsoon can knock late in Jharkhand. However, there are indications of the onset of Southwest Monsoon in the Country. This time, the monsoon is expected to reach Kerala with a delay of 4 days. Monsoon usually reaches Kerala by June 1 but this time it may enter by June 4. Its

effect will also be in Jharkhand.

Ranchi Indian Meteorological Center (IMC) informed that the monsoon enters Jharkhand by June 15 but this time it is likely to enter the State by June 20. "Rainfall is less than normal when the monsoon arrives late. The monsoon had entered Jharkhand on June 18. Climate change is believed

to be the major reason for the delay this time. However, there may be pre-monsoon rains in the second week of June," he added.

If there is less rain than normal this year, it will directly affect the game. In fact, 1022.9 mm of monsoon rainfall is considered normal in the state. If you look at the data of the Meteorological Center for the last 9 years, the monsoon has arrived here seven years late, while except for 2016 and 2021, every time there has been less rain than normal.

In 2018, the monsoon reached Jharkhand on June 25 and it received the lowest rainfall of 784.4 mm. This time also there is a possibility of delayed arrival of monsoon. In such a situation, the problems of the farmers will increase, whether the sowing will be done on time or not, the farmers are worried.

CPI (Maoist) Area Commander, Lazim Ansari killed in encounter

PNS : RANCHI

Area Commander of the CPI Maoist organization, Lazim Ansari was killed in an encounter with security forces on Friday evening in the forest of Raidih police station area of Gumla.

Ansari had a reward of Rs two lakh rupees on his head. He was a resident of Panso village under Sadar police station area of Gumla district and was accused of being involved in the murder of four policemen in Latehar's Chandwa. The NIA had also declared a reward of Rs One lakh on him.

Ansari, along with his squad, was stuck in the Raidih forest area. On receiving information about this, the police launched a search operation. Meanwhile, suddenly on seeing the police, the Maoists started firing. In retaliation, the police also fired, in which Ansari, carrying a reward of



Rs Two lakhs, was killed. However, the rest of the squad managed to escape by taking advantage of the thick jungle.

Notably, in an encounter between police and Naxalites on Thursday afternoon, Naxalite Rajesh Oraon, a Naxalite with a reward of Rs Three lakhs of CPI Maoist organization, was killed. The encounter took place on the way to Anjandham in Sadar police station area of Gumla. Jharkhand Police had kept a reward of two lakh and NIA

one lakh on Rajesh. On the second day of his killing, Lajim Ansari was also killed in an encounter by the police. In such a situation, the police have got second consecutive success in two days.

Meanwhile, in a major breakthrough against extremism, The Khunti district police have arrested four militants of militant organization PLFI group near Tuyu forest of Karra police station area. names are Ajay Dhan,

One Time Settlement Chariot launched by Ranchi DC

PNS : RANCHI

A One Time Settlement (OTS) chariot was flagged off under the Electricity Bill Interest Waiver Scheme 2023 of Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ranchi, Rahul Kumar Sinha, General Manager (GM) JBVNL, PK Srivastava and SE, DK Singh jointly flagged off the OTS chariot.

During this, Executive Engineer Himmashu Kumar, Rajesh Mandal, CM Sharma and other concerned officers and personnel were present. Addressing the gathering on the occasion Sinha said that through OTS Rath the scheme will be publicized in urban and rural areas of the district. He told that under the Electricity Bill Interest Waiver Scheme, the benefit of interest waiver will be available in the bills till December 31, 2022. Electricity bill interest waiver will be in easy installments. Consumers of up to 05 kW in the domestic (urban and rural) category and agriculture and irrigation (IAS-1) private sector consumers will be able to get its benefits, he added. The DC said that along with this, domestic consumers from urban and rural areas will also be able to get the benefit of this scheme, dues severed, legal notice and certificate case.

On the occasion Srivastava also informed about the other benefits available under One



Deputy Commissioner, Ranchi Rahul Kumar Sinha flagged off the Rath under the Electricity Bill Interest Waiver Scheme 2023 regarding the One Time Settlement scheme, at Collectorate premises in Ranchi on Saturday. PNS

Time Settlement Scheme Interest Waiver Scheme. He said one can avail benefits available under One Time Settlement Scheme Interest Waiver Scheme are one to five easy installments, exemption on DPS amount and on spot certificate, online payment facility also available, rural and urban domestic and agricultural consumer will get benefit and OTC Card for Installments and on spot billing and load declaration facility.

MAOISTS CAUTION VILLAGERS AGAINST GOING INTO FORESTS

PNS : RANCHI

The southern zonal committee of CPI Maoist organization has alerted the villagers in West Singhbhum by issuing posters. In the released pamphlet, it has been said that in order to resist the barbaric police repression campaign in the Kolhan forest area, in the road going to the police, on the forest-mountains, on the road leading to the forest, on the footpaths (walking paths)

and everywhere in the bushes uncontrolled mine (bomb) or booby trap is laid. Therefore, it is appealed to the villagers, woodcutters, kendu leaf pluckers and shepherds not to go to the forest and mountains and follow this order. Violating this order, if they go to the jungle-mountain, they can die in a moment or get badly injured by coming in the grip of a booby trap. The second pamphlet states that since May 27, villagers in

Tumbahaka and Maradiri villages have been captured by the police, while the police are already surrounded by booby traps and spike holes. To save themselves, police are making the villagers their shield and making them a victim of booby traps and spike holes. The Maoists have appealed to the villagers not to become victims of booby traps and spike holes by becoming human shields of the police.

Chandan Horo, Jatru Herring and Mani Munda. A country-made carbine, a rifle and a .315 bore gun, three mobile phones and nine rounds of live bullets were recovered from them. The police team took this

action on the basis of secret information received by the Khunti Superintendent of Police (SP), Aman Kumar. Kumar had received information that some members of banned extremist organization PLFI are roam-

ing near Tuyu forest of Karra police station area. They are trying to execute some untoward incident. Taking action, the police team formed on the instructions of the SP arrested all the militants.

ODISHA TRIPLE TRAIN CRASH

Express entered loop line, hit goods train: Probe

Signal goof-up

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



ly 1,000 injured.

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

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

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

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

The commissioner of rail-

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

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

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

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

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

The railways is in the

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

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

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

Survivors recount tales of horror

PTI ■ KOLKATA

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

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

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



Karnataka on a holiday, said.

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

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

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

Deputy Commissioner of Police Anupam Singh said.

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

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

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

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

Efforts on to identify victims says TN Govt



PTI ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

Envoys of several countries offer condolences

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



said.

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

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

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

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

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

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



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Brij Bhushan seems to be quite valuable to BJP: Moily

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

PC slams law commission backing sediton law

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With the law commission backing the sediton 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 sediton, 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 sediton 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 (sediton) 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 Turkiye considers to be terrorists.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Key step toward landmark treaty to end plastic waste

AP ■ PARIS

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

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

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

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

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



production and limiting some chemicals used in making plastics.

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

“The stakes are high, but

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

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

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

Debt deal frustrates many Democrats

AP ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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

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

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

others.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

House Republican conference, told reporters.

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

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

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

That was especially the

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

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

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

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

2 injured in shootout on Israel-Egypt border

PTI ■ JERUSALEM

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

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

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

Lanka Prez urges party unity to handle economic crisis

PTI ■ COLOMBO

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sri Lanka was hit by an unprecedented financial crisis

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

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

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

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

Dar: Pak not to default on sovereign commitments

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pak govt hints at holding general elections this year

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

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

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

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

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

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

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

June.

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

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

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

Rishi Sunak planning London-based global AI watchdog: Report

PTI ■ LONDON

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Indian girls jump on global coding bandwagon in ChatGPT era

IAN S ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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



web application, according to job portal Indeed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

According to Mohit Thukral, an alumnus of

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

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

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

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

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



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

IAN S ■ CHENNAI

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

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

Madan Sabnavis, Bank of Baroda told IANS.

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

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

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

Indian American Ajay Banga takes over as World Bank President

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

The decision was taken at the meeting of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) in

view of deteriorating financial health of the SILIC.

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

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

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



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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



bility, agility, and cost-effectiveness.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FPIs invest ₹ 43,838 crore in India in May

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

IAN S ■ SAN FRANCISCO

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

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

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

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

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

credits available for each vehicle.

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

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

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

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

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

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



Lanka President urges party unity to handle economic crisis

PTI ■ COLOMBO

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

your perfect ensemble for any occasion.

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 for 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, 47th, 60th); Sunelita Toppo (17th, 17th); Manju Chorsiya (26th), Deepika Soreng (18th, 25th), Deepika (32nd, 44th, 46th, 57th), and Neelam (47th) were the others on target.

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 under-lying 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 sports persons, 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

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.

AFFIDAVIT
I Vidushi D/o Anunay Mantri, R/O Flat no-301, Ridhiman apartment, Vasant Vihar, Kanke Road, Ranchi, Jharkhand - 834008 will be known as Vidushi Mantri in all documents for all purpose by affadavit number- 87, dated -2 June 2023.

सेन्ट्रल कोलफील्ड्स लिमिटेड
एक निगमित कंपनी
(कोल इंडिया लिमिटेड की एक सहायक कंपनी)
सूचना
सामग्री, कार्यों एवं सेवाओं के खरीद हेतु सीआइएल एवं इसकी अनुषंगी कंपनियों द्वारा जारी सभी निविदाएँ कोल इण्डिया लिमिटेड की वेबसाइट www.coalindia.in/संबंधित अनुषंगी कंपनी (सीसीएल, www.centralcoalfields.in), सीआईएल ई-प्रोक्योरमेंट पोर्टल <https://coalindia.tenders.nic.in> एवं सेन्ट्रल पब्लिक प्रोक्योरमेंट पोर्टल <https://eprocure.gov.in> पर उपलब्ध हैं। इसके अतिरिक्त जीईएम पोर्टल <https://gem.gov.in> के माध्यम से भी खरीद की जाती है।

"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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BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Each mind is unique

The next higher level is one-pointed state, which again is gained through

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.

Next in line comes individual-specific limitations of mind. They exemplify uniqueness of each being characterised by their varying mental-traits. It may not be out of place to mention here that Energy-Trinity – Sata, Rajasa, and Tamasa – the primal forces driving our lives – give rise to three types of attributes in psychological terms, with one or the other prominently displayed in each being. What particular element plays heavy in our mind defines our individual character, and that is reflection of our Karmic carryover from the past. This sets the premise for individualised

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