



Global glory

Actor Sanya Malhotra, who won Best Actress at NYIFF for *Mrs.*, feels deeply connected to her role and looks forward to exploring diverse genres

LEISURE | P2



EU Parl polls

Voters in 21 EU countries including France and Germany cast their ballots in an election for the European Parliament

INTERNATIONAL | P10



FPIs dump equities

Foreign investors withdraw nearly ₹14,800 crore from domestic stocks in the first week of this month

BUSINESS | P11



Tomar creates history

Puja Tomar creates history by becoming the first Indian to win a UFC bout defeating Brazil's Rayanne

SPORTS | P12



SWORN-IN: President Droupadi Murmu administers the oath of office to Narendra Modi as Prime Minister at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

State's 1st BJP govt to take oath June 12

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, June 9: The swearing-in ceremony for the first BJP government in state has been rescheduled from June 10 to June 12, party leaders Jatin Mohanty and Vijaypal Singh Tomar confirmed here Sunday.

In an explanation for postponement, Mohanty said that the move was due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitments.

Modi will be busy with his own swearing-in ceremony Sunday and meeting party MPs the following day. Additionally, the first legislature party meeting of the newly elected members is now set for June 11.

During the election campaign, Modi had said Odisha's first BJP government would be sworn in June 10. BJP state president Manmohan Samal had also confirmed this Saturday. However, the decision to change the date was taken Sunday party sources said.

Meanwhile, suspense still remains over the new chief minister. Senior BJP leader and newly elected MLA Suresh Pujari rushed to New Delhi, trigger-

Singh, Yadav observers for electing Odisha CM

New Delhi: The BJP Sunday appointed senior party leaders Rajnath Singh and Bhubender Yadav as its central observers to oversee the election of the leader of its MLAs in the Odisha Assembly, who will take oath as the state's next Chief Minister. The party said in a statement that its parliamentary board picked Singh and Yadav, who was actively involved in the state Assembly polls, for overseeing the meeting. The MLAs are likely to meet Monday.

ing speculation that he may be among the main contenders for the top post, sources said.

Pujari, who was elected to the Lok Sabha from Bargarh in the 2019 polls, won the recent election from Brajarajnagar Assembly constituency. His supporters believe he was called to New Delhi for discussions with central leaders.

While the BJP central leadership is yet to zero in on any leader for the CM post, Odisha party unit president Manmohan Samal Saturday told reporters to wait for two more days for a clear picture to emerge.

9 killed as terrorists open fire at tourist bus in J&K; 33 hurt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, June 9: Terrorists opened fire at a bus carrying pilgrims in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district Sunday evening, killing nine people and injuring 33, police said.

The 53-seater bus, enroute from Shiv Khori temple to Katra, veered off the road following the gunfire and fell into a deep gorge. The incident took place around 6.15pm near Teryath village in Poni area.

Nine pilgrims were killed and 33 injured, Senior Superintendent of Police, Reasi, Mohita Sharma told reporters.

The attack marks a significant escalation in violence in the region. Reasi district has been relatively untouched by terrorist activities compared to neighbouring areas such as Rajouri and Poonch.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday took stock of the situation. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said the PM directed him to constantly monitor the situation and ensure all possible help to the affected families.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Don't ask me about past promises. I've taken a fresh oath

NDA coalition takes charge

MODI SWORN IN AS PM FOR 3RD CONSECUTIVE TERM; 5 ALLIES GET ONE CABINET BERTH EACH

■ *Modi's third term, which appeared inevitable, did not come with the massive mandate he and his party had been claiming, as the Congress and its allies in the INDIA bloc fought a doozy rearguard battle to shock the BJP in its strongholds such as Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. However, BJP's tally of 240 seats is being seen as a disappointment by the party's ardent supporters and projected as a moral defeat by the Congress. With the country returning to coalition politics, Modi's third stint, in a first, will see him heeding to coalition compulsions*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 9: Narendra Modi was sworn-in as Prime Minister Sunday for a record-equalling third term, heading a Cabinet that emphasised continuity and experience while also rewarding partners in the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance government.

Along with Modi, senior BJP leaders including Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari, Nirmala Sitharaman and S Jaishankar, all ministers in Modi 2.0 Cabinet, took oath as Cabinet ministers at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath of secrecy and office to Modi and 30 Cabinet ministers.

Dressed in a white kurta and churidar with a blue chequered jacket, Modi, 73, took the oath in the name of God. Modi became

only the second prime minister after Jawaharlal Nehru to secure a third consecutive term.

In the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections, the BJP failed to win a simple majority, making it dependent on allies whose MPs also took the oath of office as Cabinet ministers -- JD(S) leader HD Kumaraswamy, HAM (Secular) chief Jitan Ram Manjhi, JD(U) leader Rajiv Ranjan Singh 'Lalan', TDP's K Ram Mohan Naidu and LJP-RV leader Chirag Paswan. Each of these five allies got one Cabinet berth each. Kumaraswamy and Manjhi are former chief ministers of Karnataka and Bihar respectively.

BJP Party president JP Nadda returned to the cabinet after five years, while former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and ex-Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar were the fresh faces in the Modi Cabinet.

Congress president and Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge was present, even as several opposition leaders skipped the ceremony.

Ahead of the oath taking ceremony, Modi had a pep talk with the minister-designates, saying people have huge expectations and everyone will have to deliver, sources said.

Be humble as common people love those who are humble and never compromise on probity and transparency, he told the minister-designates.

Those present on the occasion included Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, TDP president Chandrababu Naidu and JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar.

Bollywood actors Shahrukh Khan and Rajinikanth, and industrialists Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani were among those who attended the swearing-in ceremony.

Top leaders from India's neighbourhood and the Indian Ocean region -- Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu, Bangladesh Premier Sheikh Hasina, Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe, Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth,

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

CABINET MINISTERS		
Rajnath Singh	Annappurna Devi	SP Singh Baghel
Amit Shah	Kiren Rijju	Shobha Karandlaje
Nitin Gadkari	Hardeep Singh Puri	Kirithi Vardhan Singh
JP Nadda	Mansukh Mandaviya	BL Varma
Shivraj Singh Chouhan	G Kishan Reddy	Shantanu Thakur
Nirmala Sitharaman	Chirag Paswan LJP (RV)	Suresh Gopi
S Jaishankar	CR Paatil	L Murugan
ML Khattar	MINISTERS OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)	Ajay Tamta
HD Kumaraswamy, JD(S)	Rao Inderjit Singh	Bandi Sanjay Kumar
Piyush Goyal	Jitendra Singh	Kamlesh Paswan
Dharmendra Pradhan	Arjun Ram Meghwal	Bhagirath Choudhary
Jitan Ram Manjhi, HAM	Prataprao Jadhav	Satish Dubey
Rajiv Ranjan 'Lalan' Singh, JD(U)	Jayant Chaudhary, RLD	Sanjay Seth
Sarbananda Sonowal	MINISTERS OF STATE	Ravneet Singh Bittu
Virendra Kumar	Jitin Prasada	Durga Das Uikey
K Ram Mohan Naidu, TDP	Shripad Naik	Raksha Khadse
Pralhad Joshi	Pankaj Chaudhary	Sukanta Majumdar
Jual Oram	Krishan Pal Gurjar	Naviti Thakur
Giriraj Singh	Ramdas Athawale, RPI(A)	Tokhan Sahu
Ashwini Vaishnav	Ram Nath Thakur	Rajbhushan Chaudhary
Jyotiraditya Scindia	Nityanand Rai	Bupathi Raju Srinivas Varma
Bhupender Yadav	Anupriya Patel	Harsh Malhotra
Gajendra Singh Shekhawat	V Sommana	Nimuben Bhamaria
	Pemmasani Chandrasekhar, TDP	Murlihar Mohol
		George Kurian
		Pabitra Margherita

Bhutanese PM Tshering Tobgay and Vice-President of Seychelles Ahmed Afif -- were special guests at the function.

SHORT TAKES

Rahul: I will be your voice in Parliament

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi hit out at Prime Minister-designate Narendra Modi Sunday over the NEET-UG medical entrance row, saying the alleged irregularities in the examination have de-

NEET ROW

astated more than 24 lakh students even before he takes oath for a new term in office. Gandhi assured students in the country that he will become their voice in Parliament and strongly raise the issues related to their future. Amid allegations of inflation of marks in the NEET-UG medical entrance exam, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced Saturday that the education ministry has set up a four-member panel to review the grace marks awarded to more than 1,500 candidates.

Defeat forces Pandian to quit active politics

Bhubaneswar: Exactly six months and 13 days after joining politics, former bureaucrat VK Pandian Sunday announced his withdrawal from active politics and said he would keep Odisha in the core of his heart and 'Guru Naveen Babu' in his breath. In a video message, Pandian said his only intention to join politics was to assist Naveen Patnaik, which is why he did not contest in the 2024 elections. "My intent in joining politics was only to assist Naveen Babu, and now I consciously decide to withdraw from active politics. I am sorry if I have hurt anyone on this journey. I am sorry if this campaign narrative against me played a part in BJD's loss," Pandian said.

China's tallest waterfall gets a little help from a pipe

'The one about how I went through all the hardship to the source of Yuntai Waterfall only to see a pipe,' reads the caption of a viral video posted by user 'Farisvov' on Douyin, who unmasked the park authorities' misadventure



The video, which has been shared over 45,000 times, unleashed a torrent of social media comments, forcing park officials to release a letter that blamed seasonal factors and admitting to a small enhancement during the

dry season. The park later commented on behalf of the waterfall, stating, "I didn't expect to meet everyone this way." "As a seasonal scenery, I can't guarantee that I will be in my most beautiful form every

time you come to see me," it says adding, "I made a small enhancement during the dry season only so I would look my best to meet my friends."

The move was meant to enrich the visiting experience and make the trip worthwhile for those who have travelled a long way, operators wrote on their Weibo social media account.

Chinese netizens jumped on the pipe disclosure.

"The main thing is that the water pipe is so crudely installed, others at least disguise it in a superior way," wrote a user on Weibo, China's popular social media platform.

The move does not respect the laws of nature nor the visitors, wrote another netizen.

The waterfall is described by

the scenic park officials as the highest in Asia with a 314-metre vertical drop.

In 2023, the Yuntai mountain scenic area attracted over 7 million visits, according to local tourism authorities.

Some took a more conciliatory view on the use of the pipe, with one user saying that it is better than seeing no water at all, and another musing, it is a good faith effort for the scenic area to maintain the landscape during dry periods.

Many internet users questioned how it could be referred to as the number one waterfall anymore.

This is not the first time that artificial means have been utilised to 'help' renowned waterfalls in China.

leisure



EWAN MITCHELL ADMITS TO NOT HAVING WATCHED GOT

Actor Ewan Mitchell, who plays Aemond Targaryen in *House of the Dragon*, the prequel to *Game of Thrones*, has never seen the original show as he wanted to bring something fresh. "I haven't seen the original *Game of Thrones*. I've never seen it, and I didn't want to watch it go into the role," Mitchell said.

MCKELLEN ON REPRISING HIS ROLE AS GANDALF

Veteran Hollywood actor Ian McKellen, known for his portrayal of Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* trilogies, has spoken about reprising his role of the wizard in the upcoming film *The Lord of the Rings: The Hunt for Gollum*, reports [deadline.com](#).



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will achieve things today, not by the sleight of your hand but by your communication skills, says Ganesh. Your eloquence shall win many hearts. The stars suggest monetary benefits, but you need to guard against injury and minor ailments.

TAURUS
You are likely to confront a turning point in relationships today, foresees Ganesh. Because you are in need of some compassion and support, you will feel the need to spend time with friends and relatives. Your beloved or better half may bring a change in mood by helping you shed your negative frame of mind, says Ganesh.

GEMINI
Your desire for a clean house will reach the level of obsession, predicts Ganesh. You may plan to wash your car, clean your yard and arrange your wardrobe. And you don't trust the housemaid with any of the chores, because no one can clean the house better than you. Personal hygiene will also get your full attention, feels Ganesh.

CANCER
Today is a crucial and fascinating day for you, predicts Ganesh. You will learn and gain from your bosses and elders. Peers and siblings may extend their full support to you. Your chances of winning legal battles are remote, so an out-of-court settlement may be your best bet.

LEO
If it's a fresh start that you have been looking for, then this day promises to give you just that, predicts Ganesh. If you have already chalked out any plans for your future, today is the day to initiate the implementation. Remember Lions, though, that rushing blindly into anything is not the solution.

VIRGO
Today finds you ambitious and meticulous. Actions will not speak - they'll roar! Your planning and scruples will set the pace at work. Expect pats on the back from your bosses and a round of cheers from your peers.

LIBRA
Of late, you have been very concerned about the health of one of your close friends. Take this day to lay your fears to rest by spending time with that friend. Work can wait, as today you must prove to yourself, if not to others, that 'a friend in need is a friend indeed'. Ganesh wishes you the very best.

SCORPIO
Your mind shall take over the proceedings today. And it shall, in all likelihood, draw you to the work bench and keep your nose to the grindstone. But your heart will flutter like a butterfly, and if you manage to strike the right balance, you may win over your special one and your boss too, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
The way you keep your interests alive will keep your mind occupied. Leisure activities and by-lines will by-pass the mundane routine today, foretells Ganesh. Pamper yourself by doing what you like, be it gardening, cooking or even plain old reading.

CAPRICORN
Today, you will remain unruffled by the commotion around you, says Ganesh. However, the emotions locked up inside you will probably cloud your power of reasoning and may leave you feeling a little lost. But this will only be a passing phase, and you will come out of the bewilderment in no time.

AQUARIUS
Today, you will experience the harmonious balance between logic and emotion. You will consequently know how to mix business with pleasure. Money wise, you are content, but trivial issues may bother you today, says Ganesh.

PISCES
An action-packed day awaits you, busy as you will be corresponding with old contacts, telephonic interviews, organising meetings and scheduling tasks, says Ganesh. Do not forget to breathe!

Sanya basks in global glory

Mumbai: Actress Sanya Malhotra is super elated and grateful, as she recently bagged the Best Actress award for her role in the film *Mrs.* at the New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF). The award was presented at the Film Festival, June 4.

"I had just woken up when I saw the message from my producer and director, so I slept through it. It was a great start to the morning. I immediately shared it with my team and family at 7 in the morning," quipped the actress.

"When I look back, I feel very appreciated for the character I played. It is very close to my heart. I fell in love with the story. I love playing such characters on screen where there are no boundaries, and when I was shooting for this one, I could see that. I was completely living the life of my character and experiencing what she was going through," she recounted.

"I feel very lucky that I have always gotten different kinds of roles and opportunities that excite me as an actor. I want to try everything that is out there. I have never done an out and out physical comedy, like going all out. I also want to do a dance film, which I have never done," concluded Malhotra.

AGENCIES

When Ash was dropped from five SRK movies

Mumbai: Actress Aishwarya Rai once faced the harsh realities of the film industry early in her career. Despite her rising popularity, she experienced significant setbacks, one of which involved being unexpectedly dropped from multiple films featuring Shah Rukh Khan.

In an old interview on *Rendezvous with Simi Garewal*, Aishwarya opened up about this challenging phase. When questioned about why she was abruptly removed from several films, including notable projects like *Veer Zaara*, the actress, with visible discomfort, admitted that she had no clear answer. She explained that there were discussions about collaborating on several films, but they suddenly fell through without any explanation. This left her confused and hurt, as she was not provided with any reasons for her removal.

During the conversation, Simi informed Ash that Shah Rukh had conveyed his regret during an interview, acknowledging his mistake of delving into her personal affairs, a boundary he admitted he shouldn't have crossed. "I don't have the answer to that," the Devdas actress had reacted, adding that it was not her choice to exit these films.

In a 2003 interview with the media, SRK admitted his fault in the matter, expressing that it was difficult to replace Aishwarya and that it was a sad decision since she was a good friend. He acknowledged that, from a producer's perspective, it made sense at the time, but he felt personally wrong about it and had apologised to her.

AGENCIES



Ahsaas on social media validation

New Delhi: Actress Ahsaas Channa opened up about social media validation and the industry trends that she likes and dislikes.

The actress told *IANS*: "For me, in today's time, social media validation is important. I'm really glad and lucky that my followers love everything I do on social media because I try to be as real and honest as possible, and if they still follow me for that, I'm extremely happy."

"Also, social media profiles have become bio-data for every actor. Every director and casting director checks your Instagram profile to understand how you look and present yourself. Social media is a huge part of my life, and I'm proud of it," shared the actress.

Regarding industry trends she likes or dislikes, she said: "I am too young to have strong opinions about disliking any trend in the industry. I guess it's called a cliché for a reason."

"I also believe that there is no such thing as right and wrong. Cinema is art, and art cannot be defined as right or wrong. What might be cringeworthy to one might be art to another. There might be trends in the industry that I might not resonate with, but I try to keep an open mind," concluded Ahsaas.

IANS



'Have been fortunate to explore multiple genres'

Mumbai: Actor Arjun Kapoor's trajectory serves as a testament to perseverance and passion. Since his debut in 2012 with *Ishaqzaade*, Kapoor has navigated the industry with a blend of talent and dedication, earning acclaim for his diverse portrayals.

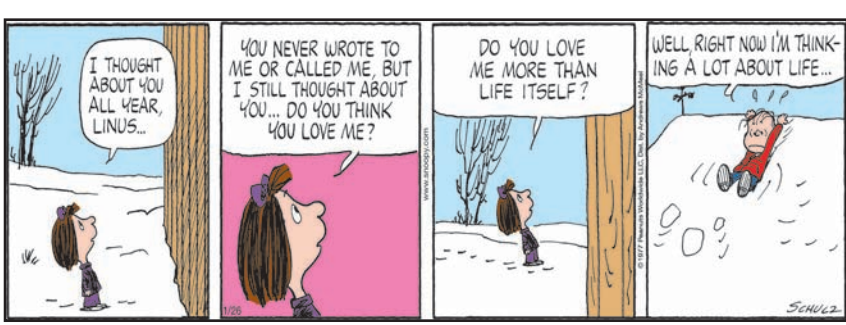
Building on this success, Kapoor ventured into roles that challenged him as an actor; showcasing his versatility in films like *Gunday* and *2 States* before moving on to movies like *Finding Fanny*, *Ki and Ka*, *Ek Villain Returns*, and others.

Reflecting on his journey, Kapoor remarked, "Over the past 12 years, I've been fortunate to explore so many different characters and genres. Parma Chauhan from *Ishaqzaade* was very different from who I am personally. He was violent, volatile, unpredictable, and had an attitude where he didn't give a damn for anyone or anything that came in his way."

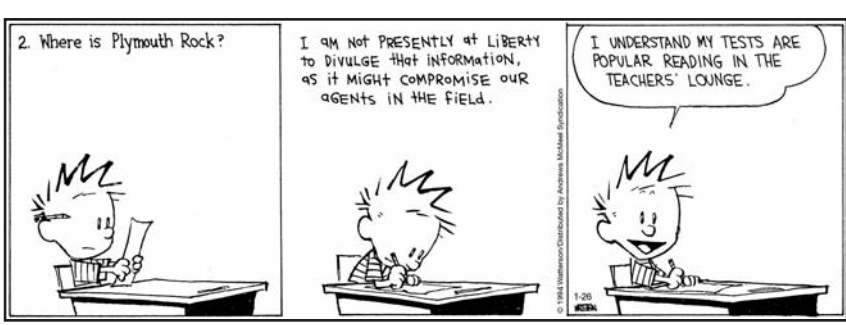
He concluded, "For me, it was an amazing and unique experience to start my journey playing this kind of character with these grey shades. Now, with *Singham Again*, I'm excited that I'm playing an out and out villain. It feels like a continuation of where I began, but still a new phase of my career by playing an antagonist. I look forward to seeing how the world reacts to the performance, especially since everyone was intrigued by the first look."

AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

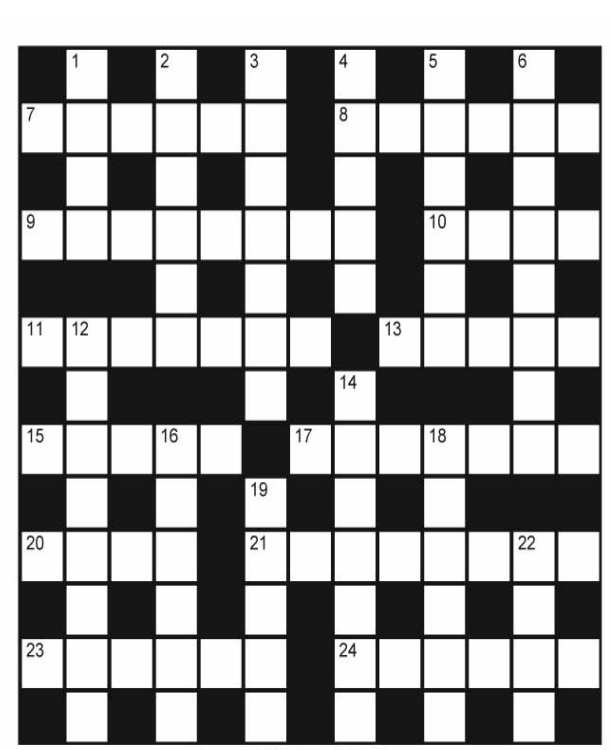


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Duel member
 - 8 Lassitude
 - 9 Restaurant type
 - 10 Bowling green
 - 11 Spectacular ceremony
 - 13 After bar or step
 - 15 Lyrical poem
 - 17 Husbandry
 - 20 Nose-in-the-air type
 - 21 Wedding jitters, maybe (4,4)
 - 23 Ladybug
 - 24 Scale reading
 - Down**
 - 1 Food shop
 - 2 Showerhead
 - 3 Worshipful
 - 4 Shipping lane
 - 5 Concert dance
 - 6 Face-off
 - 12 Tacked on
 - 14 Old West execution site
 - 16 Argue
 - 18 Quick bread
 - 19 Santa's reindeer, e.g.
 - 22 Reverberate

SUDOKU

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

	6		4					5	3
					5			8	7
8							9		
	2		8					6	
9					2			3	
	7	3	9	6					
2		7							
						3	1	4	5
5									9

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

M	R	A	U	P	U
R	E	N	O	W	N
L	U	L	L	A	U
L	U	L	L	T	R
I	O	L	L	D	T
T	S	U	N	A	M
C	R	O	S	S	I
C	R	O	S	S	I
V	T	W	G	E	S
D	E	M	O	L	I
Y	N	O	D	T	M
M	O	D	E	S	T
R	O	S	T	E	R
M	O	S	H	R	E

SUDOKU

2	5	9	8	4	1	3	6	7
4	8	3	6	7	2	9	1	5
1	7	6	5	3	9	8	4	2
7	1	4	9	5	3	6	2	8
3	6	8	2	1	7	4	5	9
5	9	2	4	8	6	1	7	3
9	4	7	3	6	5	2	8	1
8	3	1	7	2	4	5	9	6
6	2	5	1	9	8	7	3	4

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

SHOW IN SILVER CITY

A play, Sambodhan, was staged during the second evening of 7th Star Cultural Festival organised by Nikhila Utkal Kala Niketan at Annapurna Theatre in Cuttack, Sunday



Remembering the only woman CM of Odisha



Dignitaries including former Union minister Srikant Jena, BJD MLA Ananta Narayan Jena, Bhubaneswar Mayor Sulochana Das, Bhubaneswar-Central MLA Ananta Narayan Jena, BJD leader Sashi Bhusan Behera, Dharitri and Orissa POST Editor Tathagata Satpathy the newspapers' Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy, among others, pay tributes to former Chief Minister of Odisha Nandini Satpathy at her statue in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



Bhubaneswar-Ekamra MLA Babu Singh and others pay floral tributes at the statue of only woman CM of Odisha Nandini Satpathy in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



93rd birth anniversary celebration of former Chief Minister of Odisha late Nandini Satpathy at Bhagabat Kalyan Mandap in Bhadrak, Sunday



Members of Thinkers Forum garland the statue of Nandini Satpathy in Dhenkanal Stadium, Sunday



Student volunteers are being given away awards for undertaking cleanliness drives at a function held at Naganarayan Government Higher Secondary School at Dangamal under Rajnagar block in Kendrapara district, Sunday

Three Cabinet berths for Odisha in Modi 3.0 govt

Three state BJP MPs - Jual Oram, Dharmendra Pradhan and Ashwini Vaishnaw - were inducted into the Modi 3.0 Cabinet, Sunday. Though the new government is yet to announce portfolios for the ministers, it is assumed that two of them, Pradhan and Vaishnaw, will retain their earlier posts, or be given key ministries in the government, with the saffron party sweeping the polls in the state and contributing majorly to its national tally

Jual Oram: State's tribal face

Veteran BJP leader Jual Oram, who stands as a beacon of tribal leadership in Odisha, was inducted into the Narendra Modi 3.0 government Sunday as a Cabinet minister. The 63-year-old leader, hailing from Sundargarh district, holds the distinction of being the country's first tribal affairs minister, following the establishment of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs under the leadership of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He has a long political experience both as an MLA and an MP. His electoral triumphs include successive wins from the tribal-dominated Bonai Assembly constituency in 1990 and 1995. The tribal leader was elected to the Lok Sabha for six terms from Sundargarh. Additionally, he became president of the BJP's Odisha unit on three occasions. Despite his defeat in the 2009 Lok Sabha elections to former Congress chief minister Hemananda Biswal, Oram demonstrated resilience in 2014 when the BJP lost 20 of the 21 Parliamentary seats in Odisha. Oram emerged victorious from Sundargarh, defeating BJD's nominee and Indian Hockey player Dilip Tirkey. He earned a ministerial berth in the Narendra Modi cabinet. The BJP leader, who defeated BJD's Sunita Biswal from Sundargarh in 2019, did not get any ministerial berth. During the campaign this time when he was again pitted against Tirkey, Oram said, "He was the captain in Hockey, but I am a seasoned player in politics." Oram defeated Tirkey by a margin of 1,38,808 votes. Pradhan returns to LS after decade



About a fortnight shy of his 56th birthday, Dharmendra Pradhan, the towering figure of Odisha BJP, staged a triumphant return to the Union Cabinet, Sunday. His re-entry into the hallowed halls of power under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's aegis is not merely a routine reshuffle but a spectacle of political theatre as he became the lone warrior from Odisha to take oath as an Union minister for the third time. Son of a doctor and former Union minister Debendra Pradhan, Dharmendra was born June 26, 1969 and gained the fame of being known as the 'Ujjwala Man' across the country. During his tenure as a Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister, Pradhan was instru-

mental in making Modi's PM Ujjwala Yojana successful under which the poor women were given free of cost cooking gas cylinders. Dharmendra Pradhan has created a history for being the longest serving Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas in the history of independent India. He joined as the Minister of State (In-charge) in 2014, he was later promoted to the Cabinet rank in 2017. On May 31, 2019, Pradhan began his second consecutive tenure at the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. During his stint as an oil minister, Pradhan has led some key decisions in the hydrocarbon sector. He had brought in a new Hydrocarbon Exploration & Licensing Policy, which through its uniform licensing for explorations and production of all

forms of hydrocarbon, open acreage policy and marketing and pricing freedom will enhance domestic oil & gas production with substantial investment in the sector in India and generate sizable employment. Pradhan too has reasons to smile for becoming a Union minister for the third time in the Centre and his party forming for the first time forming a government in Odisha. He was elected to Lok Sabha from Sambalpur seat after defeating the BJD stalwart and party's organizational secretary Pranab Prakash Das. He successfully entered the Lok Sabha as a member after almost a decade. He was last elected to the Lok Sabha from Deogarh in 2004, when there was an alliance between the BJD and the BJP in the state. He lost the 2009 general elections from Parlahara and remained out of direct electoral battles. However, he was elected to the Rajya Sabha twice, from Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. He was an ABVP cadre and a member of the Sangh Parivar following in the footsteps of his father, Debendra Pradhan, who was a minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Cabinet. Vaishnaw in Cabinet again Bureaucrat-turned-politician Ashwini Vaishnaw, who was known for his efforts for the railway sector reforms and establishment of the public-private partnership model in infrastructure projects, was inducted into the Union Cabinet again, Sunday. The 53-year-old Rajya Sabha member from Odisha was ap-

pointed as deputy secretary in the office of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2002 when the BJP had an alliance with the BJD. In July 2021, his induction to the Narendra Modi cabinet 2.0 was a surprise to many, and Vaishnaw, an alumnus of IIT Kanpur, was entrusted with the responsibility for important portfolios like railways, communications and electronics and information technology. He earned praise not only from the prime minister but also from his cabinet colleagues on many occasions. During his tenure as an IAS officer, Vaishnaw served the people of Sundargarh, Balasore and Cuttack, and was lauded for his proactive measures during the 'super cyclone' that hit the eastern state in October-November in 1999. During his brief stint in the PMO in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government, his efforts to push for the public-private partnership model in infrastructure projects were appreciated. Later, Vaishnaw, a native of Rajasthan, was appointed as Vajpayee's private secretary after the BJP-led NDA lost the elections in 2004. The BJP leader, an alumnus of Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, was first elected to the Rajya Sabha from Odisha in 2019 and re-nominated unopposed to the Upper House of Parliament in February this year with active support from Naveen Patnaik-led Biju Janata Dal (BJD). After quitting the government jobs, he joined the private sector and worked in Gujarat during which he is believed to have drawn the attention of Modi, who was then the chief minister of the western state.

Naveen greets Naidu

Bhubaneswar, June 9: Outgoing Chief Minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik Sunday congratulated TDP leader N Chandrababu Naidu for his party's success in the recently concluded elections. Taking to X, Patnaik said, "Spoke with Shri N Chandrababu Naidu Ji (@ncbn) and congratulated him on his stupendous success in the just concluded elections. I have been associated with him for a very long time during my political journey. Wish #AndhraPradesh reach new heights of development under your leadership." Naidu's Telugu Desam Party (TDP) secured 135 seats in the 175-member Andhra Pradesh Assembly followed by Jansena Party (21), YSRCP (11) and BJP (eight). In the parliamentary elections, TDP won 16 out of the 25 Lok Sabha seats in the state, followed by YSRCP (four), BJP (three) and JNP (two).

2 bike-lifters held; 5 motorcycles seized

Bhubaneswar: Capital police claimed to have seized five stolen motorcycles and arrested two bike lifters in this connection, Sunday. Assistant commissioner of police (ACP) Zone-1 Subhanarayan Muduli said the accused were identified as Ansari Saha alias Gudu, 24, a resident of Jatni area and SK Manjir Hussain, 25, a native of West Bengal. After decamping with the motorcycles from the parking lot of Capital Hospital, Ansari disposed them off at SK Hussain's scrap facility. The remaining two-wheelers were planned to be sold to prospective buyers at below market prices, he added. ACP Muduli said the cops traced the scrap parts of two stolen bikes from Hussain's godown in Sundarpada area. While cops have seized five bikes from Ansari's house, the three have already been sold to buyers. The cops are probing further to ascertain these buyers and return the bikes to original owners. Sources said Capital police station started an investigation into the matter after complainant Manas Mishra lodged a case, June 6.

Sorry, says Pandian as he quits politics

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 9: In a dramatic turn of events, former bureaucrat and ex-CM Naveen Patnaik's close aide VK Pandian Sunday announced his withdrawal from active politics following Biju Janata Dal's drubbing in recently held Assembly and Lok Sabha polls, exactly six months and 13 days after he joined politics.

In a video message, Pandian said his only intention to join politics was to assist Naveen Patnaik, which is why he did not contest in the 2024 elections.

He also apologised to the people and BJD leaders and workers if they held him responsible for the electoral loss.

"My intent in joining politics was only to assist Naveen Babu, and now I consciously decide to withdraw from active politics. I am sorry if I have hurt anyone on this journey. I am sorry if this campaign narrative against me played a part in BJD's loss," Pandian said.

During the campaign, Pandian had asserted that he would quit politics if party president Patnaik did not become the CM of Odisha for the sixth consecutive time after the Assembly elections.

Announcing his decision, Pandian expressed his apologies to the entire Biju Parivar, including all the workers, and conveyed his heartfelt gratitude to the lakhs of BJD members with whom he was associated.

"I will always keep Odisha in the core of my heart and my Guru Naveen Babu in my breath and pray to Lord Jagannath for their well-being and prosperity," Pandian said.

Reflecting on his background, Pandian mentioned that he came from a humble family and a small village, and his childhood dream was to join the IAS and serve the people, which Lord Jagannath made possible.



He also explained that he came to Odisha because his wife is from Kendrapara. "From the day I set foot on the soil of Odisha, I have received immense love and affection from the people... from Dharamgarh to Rourkela to Mayurbhanj to Ganjam. I have tried to work very hard for the people," he recalled.

Speaking about his entry into the power corridor, Pandian noted that 12 years ago, he joined the chief minister's office (CMO). "It was an honour to work for Naveen Patnaik. The experience and learning I had from him are for a lifetime. His grace, leadership, ethics, and above all, his love for the people of Odisha always inspired me," the former IAS officer said.

Pandian mentioned that Patnaik's expectations from him were to implement his vision for Odisha, which led to successes in health, education, poverty reduction, sports, investment, women empowerment, infrastructure, and temple and heritage projects.

"Working for the youth, school, and college children gave me

great satisfaction," Pandian said, adding that his own childhood memories of studying in a government school helped him implement the CM's vision for school transformation under 5T. Recalling his efforts during the Covid pandemic, Pandian mentioned how he traveled to almost 30 districts to ensure that the health infrastructure was ready to serve the people.

"During this time, we faced two cyclones, and we worked very hard to save every precious life," he said.

"I left the IAS, taking voluntary retirement, and joined the BJD to assist my mentor, Naveen Patnaik. My only intent was to help him, as anyone would do for their mentor or family. I would like to set straight certain perceptions and narratives," he stated.

Pandian admitted that it might have been his shortcomings that he was not able to effectively counter some of the political narratives at the right time.

He also emphasised, "Till today, the only property I have is what I inherited from my grandparents. I or my immediate family has no other property anywhere in the world. My property statement when I joined the Indian Administrative Service remains the same as it is today after 24 years."

Expressing satisfaction, he concluded by saying that the biggest earning in his lifetime has been the love, affection, and goodwill of Odisha.

The BJP stormed into power in Odisha, ending the 24-year rule of BJD, by winning 78 seats in the 147-member Assembly. The Patnaik-led party, on the other hand, bagged 51 seats, while Congress won 14 constituencies, the CPI (M) one. The BJD failed to win any of the Lok Sabha seats in the state, with the BJP bagging 20 and the Congress one.



AT LORD'S SERVICE: Maharana servitors busy constructing chariots at Rath Yard in Puri, Sunday

PIC: YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

Children narrate stories at Bakul fest

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 9: Eleven storytellers in the age group of 9 to 14 engaged the audience with their creativity and narrating skills at the first ever children's edition of the Bakul Storytelling Festival organised by Bakul Foundation here, Sunday.

This is probably the first ever storytelling festival in the country where the children narrates the stories, said Sujit Mohapatra, founder of Bakul Foundation.

"This attempt is a sequel to the Bakul Storytelling Festival that was held last weekend in the city where some of the well known storytellers Prachi Tara and Meera Das performed," Sujit said.

The Bakul Foundation is

In partnership with Bhubaneswar Development Authority, Bakul Foundation has co-organised BhuFeSto in 2023 and 2024



known for hosting some of the interesting storytelling festivals

here and made the revival of oral storytelling in the Capital

city possible.

Sharanya Pati and Aniket Mishra from Mother's Public School, Krishnanjali Sahoo of BJEM and Jayesh Kumar Nayak of Unit 8 DAV performed on the occasion.

A 'Storyteller Hunt' was organised before the event, inviting children to record and send their storytelling videos.

The selected ones got a chance to perform at the occasion.

Bakul Foundation curated the first ever oral storytelling event in the state, Bhubaneswar Festival of Storytelling or BhuFeSto in 2018 during the Hockey World Cup.

Bakul Foundation, in partnership with Bhubaneswar Development Authority, organised BhuFeSto in 2023 and 2024.

Samanta quits active politics



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 9: Former Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP from Kandhamal, Achyuta Samanta, has quit politics following his defeat in the recently held Lok Sabha elections.

According to sources, Samanta took the decision after meeting the party president Naveen Patnaik at Naveen Niwas, Saturday.

Samanta thanked Patnaik for giving him chances both in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha. He stated that his commitment to social service for the last 32 years will continue till his last breath.

Samanta thanked all the members of BJD and the people of Kandhamal parliamentary constituency for their love and support.

Jagadev discharged from SCB

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, June 9: The newly-elected Khurda MLA Prasanta Jagadev was discharged from SCB Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH) here Sunday morning.

Jagadev was arrested May 25 for allegedly damaging an electronic voting machine (EVM) and manhandling two polling personnel at a booth under Begunia Assembly constituency in Khurda district. Later, he was produced before the magistrate and sent to Khurda jail. He was admitted to ICU May 29 at the department of Medicines in SCBMCH due to high blood sugar.

"After noticeable development



in his health conditions, Jagadev was discharged from the hospi-

tal," head of department of Medicine, Prof Jayant Kumar Panda said.

"The doctors perform a series of checkups Sunday morning. All reports came positive. He has been advised for medication and for health checkup after a month," Panda informed.

Jagadev was granted three-day interim bail for taking part in the oath-taking ceremony of the maiden BJP government in the state scheduled to be held in Bhubaneswar June 12, with a condition that he will not indulge in any criminal activity during this period.

He has been granted bail for three days — June 9, 10, 11 — and asked to surrender before the court June 12.

ICAR-CIFA inks pact with Himachal govt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 9: Two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed between ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA) and the department of Fisheries, Government of Himachal Pradesh, for a collaborative effort towards establishing units for 'Jayanti Rohu' and 'Improved Catla breed', as well as introducing CIFAB-ROOD, a specialised broodstock diet for carp fish.

On the occasion, ICAR-CIFA organised a workshop on "Importance of improved fish varieties and carp broodstock diet in aquaculture" in Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh, recently.

Around 40 participants, including officials from the state



and different stakeholders attended the workshop which aimed to disseminate crucial information and foster collaborations in advancing aquaculture practices.

Additional director of Fisheries, Himachal Pradesh, Vikram Mahajan greeted the delegates and participants. Director of ICAR-CIFA PK Sahoo and director-cum-warden of Fisheries, Himachal Pradesh, Vivek Chandel shared perspectives on the significance of the workshop and the future trajectory of

aquaculture initiatives.

ICAR-CIFA principal scientists K Murmu elucidated on genetically improved carp fish breeds for enhanced productivity and income generation and S Nandi provided insights into carp broodstock diet, underscoring its importance in aquaculture.

The workshop included an interactive session between farmers and scientists, aimed at fostering practical exchanges and knowledge-sharing between the two.

Deeper understanding of brain could improve decision-making

A new study has shed light on how the brain imagines future outcomes to guide decisions and researchers says a deeper understanding of these brain mechanisms could ultimately improve the treatment of disorders affecting decision-making abilities.

Researchers said that interplay between the prefrontal cortex, important for planning and decision-making, and hippocampus, which helps form and store memories, allows us to imagine outcomes to help guide our decisions - similar to how a chess player envisions sequences of moves before committing to one.

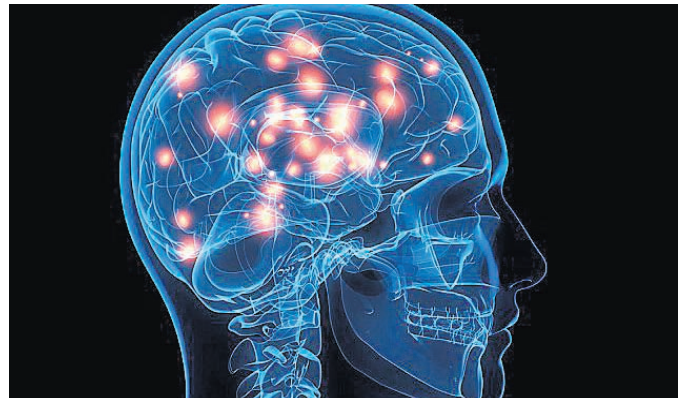
"The prefrontal cortex acts as a 'simulator', mentally testing out possible actions using a cognitive map stored in the hip-

pocampus," study author Marcelo Mattar, an assistant professor in New York University's Department of Psychology, said.

"This research sheds light on the neural and cognitive mechanisms of planning - a core component of both human and animal intelligence. A deeper understanding of these brain mechanisms could ultimately improve the treatment of disorders affecting decision-making abilities," Mattar said.

The findings are published in the journal Nature Neuroscience.

For the study, the researchers developed a model predicting brain activity during planning, which was corroborated using data from humans and laboratory rats. The model was based on an artificial neural



network, a type of artificial intelligence (AI) algorithm that learns complex patterns based on given data.

The model "imagined the potential futures" by imitating interactions between the prefrontal cortex and hippocampus. The

researchers explained that these neural processes help us adapt rapidly to changing environments, such as taking a detour after finding that a road is blocked.

To check how well this model is able to predict human behav-

Interplay between the prefrontal cortex, important for planning and decision-making, and hippocampus, which helps form and store memories, allows us to imagine outcomes to help guide our decisions

our, the team assessed them while navigating an online maze, including the time they took to think before each step.

This behavioural data, taken from humans, were compared with neural recordings of rats navigating a physical maze (resembling the online one), which helped the researchers under-

stand the role of the hippocampus - the memory house - in planning. The team found that these results were in line with those coming from the AI-based model. They found that in the experiments with humans, the participants' brain activity revealed that more time was spent thinking before acting while navigating the maze. This was corroborated by results from the experiments with laboratory rats, where the animals' neural responses in moving through the maze resembled the model's simulations.

"Overall, this work provides foundational knowledge on how these brain circuits enable us to think before we act in order to make better decisions," said Mattar.

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Uncertainty over port project in Kendrapara

CHANGE OF REGIME MAY LEAD TO SHELIVING OF PLANS, SAY LOCALS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, June 9: A change in the regime in Odisha has pushed the state's first riverine port project into uncertainty. More than five years have elapsed since the project was announced, but now it appears that it may not take off at all with a new government coming into power in Odisha, sources stated here Sunday.

Outgoing Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had announced the project December 8, 2018. He had stated that the riverine port project will come up on the Mahanadi near Akhadasali village under Mahakalapada block in this district. He had stated that the port will be constructed by the Paradip Port Authority in public-private partnership mode. Once established it would generate employment opportunities for more than 15,000 people, officials had stated.

Later, officials of the Odisha government held a discussion with ArcelorMittal for signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in March, 2019. The then 5T secretary Kartik Pandian had also visited Akhadasali in December 2020. However, now the fate of the port is clouded in uncertainty with the BJP coming to power in Odisha.



Initial estimates for construction of the port were done. Officials stated that approximately ₹2,110 crore will be needed for the first phase of construction. Once operational, the port will handle 18.43 million tonne of cargo annually, they said.

Local intelligentsia Chittaranjan Sahu, advocate Ramani Ranjan Routray, social activists Gayadhar Dhal, Pratap Kumar Tripathy and Sushil Kumar Rout pointed out that as a district Kendrapara has always been neglected by the Odisha government. They pointed out this district lies in 26th place in rankings based on economic development in the state. They added that the state government always makes tall promises, but fails to implement those.

The state government had promised to construct a port at Barunei, a remote area in the district in 2009. Similarly, plans to develop and modernise this town and construction of a power plant at Alailo under Marshaghai block were announced before the 2014 Assembly elections. However, both projects have fizzled out, informed the locals.

There was a buzz after the 2019 elections that Paradip Port will soon start construction at Akhadasali and ArcelorMittal will set up a steel plant. Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan visited the district and promised that the port will be established. However, the twin projects have failed to make any headway since then. People now are of the opinion that the projects have been shelved and nothing concrete will happen.

Elderly man's body found on tracks

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, June 9: The Government Railway Police (GRP) here recovered the body of an elderly man from the railway tracks near Khodasingi in the city, in Ganjam district, Sunday.

The deceased has been identified as Bhimsen Muli, 62, a resident of 5th lane at Nigam Nagar in Ankuli. The family members of the Bhimsen said that he had gone to Ankuli to watch opera, but did not return. It is believed that he could have died after coming under a running train while crossing the tracks. On being informed about the body of a man lying on the tracks, the police reached the spot and sent it for post-mortem. A case of unnatural death has been registered in this regard.

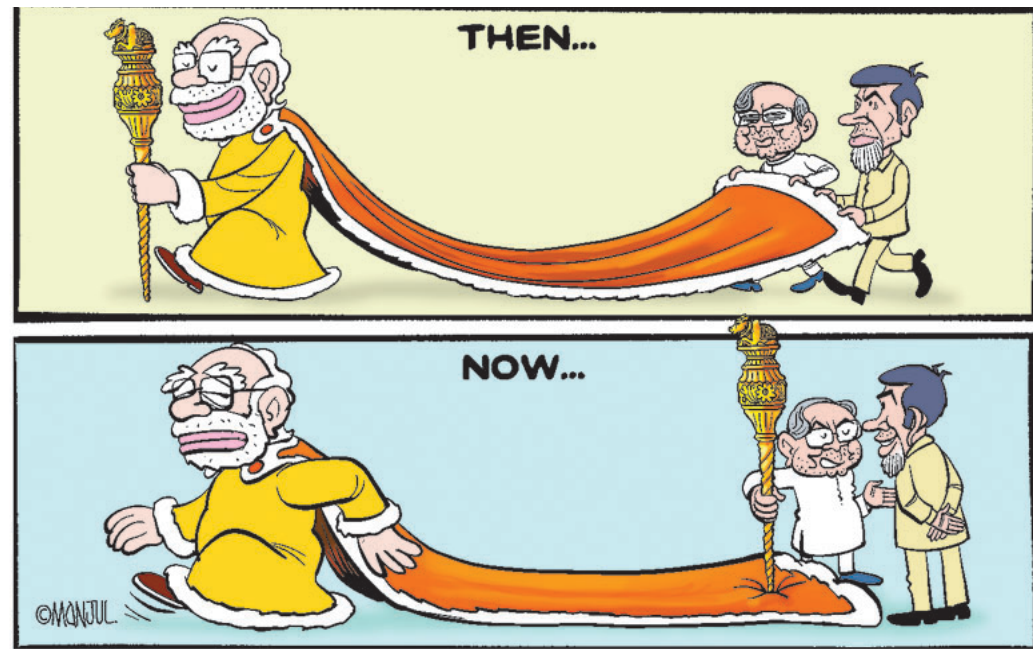
Man dies of electrocution

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, June 9: A 25-year old man died of electrocution while working at an under-construction house in Omm Nagar area, under Badabazar police limits, of Ganjam district Sunday.

The deceased has been identified as Pabitra Bisoi, a resident of Balipada. According to reports, the mishap occurred when Pabitra came in contact with a live wire while connecting the plug of a water motor at the under-construction house. He was rescued in a critical condition and rushed to the MKCG Medical College and Hospital at Berhampur, where the doctors pronounced him dead before arrival.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



RMC loses ODF++ status



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, June 9: The Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC) had in the past received the open defecation free certification (ODF). However, sources informed here Friday that MC has lost its ODF++ status.

In 2018 RMC got the ODF++ and two years later the ODF++ certification. Due to the joint efforts of the RMC and Rourkela Smart City Limited (RSCL) 65 public and community toilets were set up near bus stands, local markets, slums and other places. However, currently most of these are non-functional if one takes stock of situation.

During a sudden visit to Wards No 3, 6, 11 and 13, this correspondent could clearly observe why the ODF++ certification has been cancelled. These wards have a number of slums and the majority of the residents are daily wagers. The only way for them to attend to Nature's call is

in the open as most of the public toilets do not function properly.

Initially a number of self-help groups (SHGs) were entrusted with the responsibility to maintain the newly-constructed toilets. However, they have failed to do so. The toilets are not cleaned in a proper and regular manner. Most of the water taps in the toilets have disappeared and some of the toilets do not even have electricity. Hence the slum dwellers have no option but to defecate in the open.

Attempts to reach ADM Rourkela, who is also the Commissioner of RMC Ashutosh Kulkarni, failed as he did not receive calls and also did not respond to text messages.

This town has already slipped in the 'Swachh Survekshan' survey in 2023. Currently this city is the fifth cleanest city in Odisha. Unless proper steps are taken soon, the city may slip further down the 'cleanliness' ladder.

Beach cleaning drive by Fakir Mohan University



POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, June 9: Students and teachers of Fakir Mohan University participated in a beach cleaning drive, Saturday. On the occasion of World Ocean Day, beach cleaning campaigns were organized at 23 beaches in India.

The campaign has been organised by the Department of Geology, National Service Scheme of the university and Centre for Marine Bio-resources and Bio-management at sea

beach of Chandipur on the occasion of World Ocean Day.

The campaign led by the vice-chancellor Prof. Santosh Kumar Tripathy was launched from the university's new campus.

As many as 60 student volunteers, 20 teachers and many non-teaching staff participated in the beach cleaning drive in which 1.20 tonne of wastes containing plastic and other wastes were collected from the beach and disposed off safely.

The programme was coordinated under an all India programme sponsored by the Ocean Society of India and Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India.

National coordinator of the programme Prof. K.V Jayachandran, local coordinator Dr. Smruti Rekha Sahu and president of alumni association Choudhuri Satyabrata Nanda were present during the beach cleaning drive.

Vice-Chancellor Prof. Santosh Kumar Tripathy hoped that such programmes will increase public awareness and protect the



DIVINE MARRIAGE: Devotees taking the idol of Sakhi Gopinath on a tour of Sambalpur town, Sunday to participate as a witness in the divine marriage of Shiva and Parvati for the Sital Sasthi festival

OP PHOTO

Delay mars completion of Sundargarh projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, June 9: Three projects for which funds were allotted by the district mineral fund (DMF) and Western Odisha Development Council (WODC) in Sundargarh district are facing inordinate delays in completion. The three projects are beautification of Bijulibandha, construction of the Bhojpur bridge and the renovation of the Civic Centre. Funds came from DMF as well as WODC for the projects.

Beautification of Bijulibandha started in 2019. The initial cost of the project was fixed at ₹28 crore. The work was to end by mid-2020, but even now it remains incomplete.

Construction of the Bhojpur bridge would have benefited the residents of in Tangarpalli, Sabdega and Balishankara blocks. Residents of those areas would have reached the district headquarters easily and cheaply. Work began in 2022 and it was expected that the bridge would be ready for the public by December 2023. Now sources informed that the construction company has stopped work.

Sundargarh was in need of a good public auditorium and initially one was constructed with funds from MCL. It was handed over to the Sundargarh

Municipality for maintenance and management. The charge per day for any event was fixed at ₹3,000. Currently however, no one wants to use the building due to lack of maintenance. The building, called as 'Madri Kalo Bhawan' wears a dilapidated look now.

Before the last municipal elections ₹3.50 crore, rupees three crore from the DMF and ₹50 lakh from WODC, were given to the municipality for complete renovation of the building. The collector decided to float separate tenders for the renovation work. However, nothing progressed after that.

A BJP-led council was elected to the Sundargarh Municipality. The new chairman cancelled all previous tenders and handed over the renovation job to the Roads and Building department. Order for renovation work was issued July 16, 2023 and the completion of the project was expected by March 2024. Even though work has started, no one knows when it will be over.

With a new government set to take oath in two days, all eyes are on the future of the projects. "We are waiting to see what the new government is going to do about the new projects as it has come to power promising, development," said a resident of Sundargarh.

Keonjhar tribals solve water woes with unique innovation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, June 9: Tribal villagers of Khuntadihi Mudasahi hamlet in remote Luhakala village under Talakadakala panchayat of Banspal block in this district have adopted an innovative technique to address the water crisis and have been successful in ending their woes. The hamlet located at a distance of seven kilometres away from the panchayat headquarters is home to 13 Munda tribal families. They earn their livelihood mainly by selling forest produce and working as daily wagers. Till they solved the crisis in their own way, their only source of water was the 'Khuntadihi' steam originating from Debtaghara hills located a kilometre away from the village.

However, while doing so, they faced a number of problems. The first being that water from the stream was used by both human beings and animals. With animals depending on the same stream, the water frequently got polluted and turned muddy and dirty. Also during summer, the stream dried up leading to acute shortage of water. Polluted water collected from the stream, was causing health issues for the villagers. The residents of Khuntadihi



Mudasahi hamlet appealed to the block administration to provide them with drinking water facilities but in vain. When they failed to get any relief from the local administration despite multiple appeals, they decided to solve the problem on their own.

Community leaders Sana Munda, Manga Munda and Birsu Munda were the leaders in the innovative method to procure water and they launched the project in 2021. The three shared their idea with other residents of the hamlet and bought a 500-metre long pipe. All the families in the hamlet contributed money to buy the pipe. The villagers then constructed

a boat-shaped wooden plank and also acquired a large dry bottle gourd. They took these to the origin of the stream and diverted the water from there through the plank and the bottle gourd and connected those to the pipe. Now there is no water shortage in the village. They use the water for drinking and other domestic purposes, residents pointed out.

Social activist Duskar Barik who works for the upliftment of the tribals expressed surprise over the innovative idea and praised the villagers. He also criticised officials of the district administration here for their failure in solving the problems of the tribals.

Another newborn stolen from Balasore hospital

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, June 9: A newborn boy was allegedly stolen by an unidentified woman from the Mother and Child Health Centre of the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) in Balasore, Sunday.

With this, two newborns have been stolen from the hospital in the last two months which has triggered outrage among locals.

Locals said that Anita Dandapata, wife of Purnachandra Dandapata, of Kulachada village under Baliapal police limits was admitted to the DHH in Balasore late Saturday night. She was accompanied by her mother-in-law and local ASHA worker Sandhyarani Jena at the time of her admission to the hospital. She delivered a baby boy at the hospital around midnight.

According to reports, an unidentified woman walked up to Anita's bed in the wee hours of Sunday and took the newborn in her arms. She also spoke to the ASHA worker. Later, when the ASHA worker and Anita's mother-in-law went out for some work, the unidentified woman allegedly told the mother that she was taking the baby boy to the doctor. However, as soon as Anita handed over the baby to her, the



woman fled the scene. Later, Anita's family members launched a frantic search to trace the woman and the newborn, but in vain. Later, they lodged a complaint with the Medical outpost. Police scanned the CCTV footage and came across the video grab of the unidentified woman. They have detained the ASHA worker and the on-duty security guard for questioning in this connection.

Earlier, a newborn boy of Tikili Barik, wife of Susant Barik, of Athabatia village under Baliapal police limits had been stolen from the hospital when the newborn was admitted for treatment of his jaundice, April 4. It was alleged that someone replaced the baby boy with a baby girl and fled the scene.

The police rescued the baby boy 24 hours of the kidnapping and handed him over to the family members.

FOCUS POLITICS

KINGMAKER IS BACK



This time, Andhra has switched back to its pragmatic development icon Naidu who now holds a job he has long mastered: building the state and maintaining his position in Delhi at the epicentre of a new ruling coalition

Swings in fortune have seen him in and out of power over the last four decades. From getting close to the prime minister's post to slipping to the sidelines of Andhra Pradesh, Chandrababu Naidu has returned now in his most powerful avatar yet. He holds the key to the survival of Modi 3.0. Naidu's Telugu Desam Party swept the polls with 16 out of 25 MPs and simultaneous Assembly elections with 135 out of 175 MLAs. This resounding victory and his new role in supporting the NDA has made him the focus of the country's attention with speculation about what Naidu wants in return and what he will do next. His key role in shaping and supporting the governments of HD Deve Gowda, Inder Kumar Gujral and Atal Behari Vajpayee, has given Naidu a sound track record in helping build coalition governments.

Naidu has supped with both sides. He has been with the BJP, he has been with the party's opponents. He has glued together uncertain coalitions while keeping a firm hold on his home state, helming it thrice.

To understand the man of the moment, and a history of switching sides, one must go back to his early days. As a young MLA from the districts, in the early 1980s Naidu used to share a room in the hostel set up in Hyderabad for legislators. His room-mate was YS Rajasekhara Reddy who like Naidu later became the chief minister of Andhra. A photo of leading film star Jaya Prada used to hang on the wall of their room. At that time Reddy and Naidu were friends but later became political foes. In this election, Naidu beat Jagan Mohan Reddy (son of the now deceased Rajasekhara Reddy) to come to power. Incidentally, when they shared a room in the MLA hostel, Naidu was an ardent Congressman but switched sides later as he joined the TDP. The TDP was founded by leading Telugu cine star NT Rama Rao

(NTR) who was seeking to create waves in politics. With his inimitable style NTR convinced the electorate that the Congress party in Delhi was treating Andhra like a feudal outpost and his party was an alternative to this raj.

Meanwhile, NTR was also looking for a suitable groom for his daughter Bhuvaneshwari and zeroed in on Chandrababu who came from a modest rural background but was seen to be very bright. At the time when the alliance was fixed in 1981 Naidu was still a Congressman and in fact a minister in the Congress ruled state government. After NTR romped home and became the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh in 1983, Naidu left the Congress and joined hands with TDP. The fact that he lost the assembly election may have also prompted the switch over.

For his first decade with the TDP, Naidu was with the organisation building the party but had no ministerial position. However, he had tremendous power within the party and this was recognised. Then in 1990, the TDP lost power in the state to the Congress. Around that time NTR, a widower, married again. His new bride much younger than him soon began wielding tremendous influence in the

party. This was not taken too kindly by NTR's children and certainly not by his son-in-law Naidu. In 1995, Naidu launched a coup to oust NTR in a leading hotel where he collected TDP MLAs. Most MLAs sided with Naidu so NTR was deposed and his son-in-law took control of the TDP and soon the government. As the new CM Naidu allied with the BJP at the Centre and when the NDA formed government he became a favourite of PM Vajpayee who used to reportedly often consult Naidu.

When he came to power, Hyderabad was a backward city with dusty roads. Naidu had his own vision of development. Taking a cue from Bangalore, Naidu began promoting hi-tech industries and software skills in Hyderabad. He established Cyberabad and to express his seriousness travelled to Seattle and waited outside the office of Bill Gates of Microsoft for an hour to get an audience with him. Soon Microsoft set up a development centre in Hyderabad. This was followed by other companies and soon Hyderabad was seen as a hi-tech city. The real estate business got a boost and many institutions came up. The entire image of Hyderabad changed and even

municipal services got upgraded sprucing the city.

But all this did not help win the elections and in 2004 Naidu's party was ousted from power. So was the Vajpayee government which reportedly advanced the elections on Naidu's advice. Naidu had been apprehensive about the 2002 Gujarat riots and its effects.

After 2004, chastened by the Telangana movement that led to the bifurcation of Andhra and creation of the new state of Telangana, a powerless Naidu now found himself in the new state of Andhra which did not have Hyderabad (that went to Telangana). Naidu was elected to power in the new state which did not have a capital - so he decided to create Amaravati, a greenfield capital on the banks of river Krishna. Naidu had a grand plan: in his first term he had got investments from the West: US and Europe. In the second term he wanted to build his new state with investments from the East: Japan, Singapore, etc.

But in the 2019 elections Naidu lost and was out of power. Before that in 2018 he had exited an old alliance with BJP. He apparently wanted a special status for Andhra from the Union government that would bring more funds. But this was not forthcoming. In the 2019 elections Jagan Reddy won Andhra and the BJP won the Centre. Jagan wanted to shift the capital to Vishakhapatnam, a port city, causing a lot of discomfiture. He increased the number of districts in Andhra and was free with handouts straining the finances of the State. This time, Andhra has switched back to its pragmatic development icon Naidu who now holds a job he has long mastered: building the state and maintaining his position in Delhi at the epicentre of a new ruling coalition.

The writer is a senior journalist and author based in Hyderabad.

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Kingshuk Nag

FROM GETTING CLOSE TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S POST TO SLIPPING TO THE SIDELINES OF ANDHRA PRADESH, CHANDRABABU NAIDU HAS NOW RETURNED IN HIS MOST POWERFUL AVATAR YET

SPECTRUM PUBLIC HEALTH

Preparing now for the next Disease X

On 12 December, 2019, a group of patients in Wuhan, China, started showing symptoms of an atypical pneumonia-like illness that did not respond well to standard treatments. Ninety days later, with more than 118,000 cases reported in 114 countries and 4,291 deaths, the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic.

While COVID-19 lockdowns and travel restrictions brought the world to a standstill, decision-makers' response to the evolving crisis, including in high-income countries, betrayed serious information gaps and institutional shortcomings that prevented them from taking decisive action. Thousands, if not millions, of deaths, and much economic devastation, could have been averted. As early as 2007, researchers at the University of Hong Kong discovered that "horse shoe bats are the natural reservoir for SARS-CoV-like virus" and that "civets are the amplification host." The authors warned that human-wildlife interactions in farms and wet markets could act as sources and amplification centers for emerging pathogens.

And yet public-health systems were caught unprepared by COVID-19, which brutally ex-

posed the inadequacy of existing pandemic-response capabilities. The crisis overwhelmed supply chains and procurement mechanisms for essential medicines and supplies, straining many national health systems beyond their limits. Meanwhile, many richer industrialised countries embraced vaccine nationalism and hoarding, leaving many regions without access to life-saving treatments and calling into question established principles like global solidarity and multilateral cooperation. By challenging long-held assumptions regarding localised viral epidemics such as Ebola and yellow fever, especially in Africa, COVID-19 also underscored the need for a nuanced understanding of pandemics' potential impact on different regions.

To address these challenges, governments must adopt a more thoughtful and proactive approach to pandemic preparedness. In 2018, the WHO warned that an unknown pathogen ("Disease X") could trigger a global pandemic, urging global policymakers to invest in vaccine research and development. While COVID-19 marked the world's first encounter with a "Disease X" scenario, the ac-

celerating pace of climate change and human encroachment on wildlife habitats significantly increase the risk of exposure to more deadly pathogens.

That is why leading experts, believing that it is only a matter of time before the world faces another pandemic, emphasise the importance of strategic planning and decisive action. But how can health systems in resource-constrained countries and regions prepare for and respond to a potential "Disease X" scenario?

Strengthening disease-surveillance systems is crucial to detecting and responding effectively to emerging epidemics. Given that human interactions and movements facilitate the rapid spread of viruses, governments must establish agile and integrated tracing systems capable of processing numerous data streams and offering actionable insights.

Policymakers can take several steps to improve disease surveillance. First, they could bolster predictive models by harnessing emerging technologies such as machine-learning algorithms and artificial intelligence for data capture and analysis. Second, investing in training programmes that develop ana-

lytical, communication, and advocacy skills could help increase capacity. Third, governments could facilitate integration of surveillance systems covering areas like veterinary health, weather forecasts, and border control. Lastly, establishing robust and resilient response systems requires well-defined public-health contingency plans and dedicated resources.

Fortunately, policymakers do not have to reinvent the wheel. They can leverage the WHO's Building Blocks framework to monitor and assess their national health systems. The data they collect could then be used, particularly in developing countries, to design and implement necessary reforms.

Throughout history, humanity has grappled with numerous pandemics, from the Antonine Plague of 165-180 BC to COVID-19. The WHO should be commended for sounding the alarm and urging the international community to prepare for a "Disease X" scenario. Policymakers must heed this warning and act now or pay a much higher price later.

The writer is a former Sloan fellow at MIT.

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The flame of the aspiration must be so straight and so ardent that no obstacle can dissolve it.

THE MOTHER



Good Times (Achche Din)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed charge for the third consecutive time in a row but not equalling the record of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, as many would like us to believe. Nehru's Congress could form the government on its own in all the three terms. But, Modi's party, the BJP, has failed to muster the magic number this time, falling short by over 30 seats. That has completely changed the scenario and mutilated bloated egos. Modi will have to reinvent himself as third-time PM since for every decision he makes he will have to depend on his two crucial allies - the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) led by N Chandrababu Naidu and Janata Dal (United) (JD-U) headed by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, both very wily and cunning. This is something he has never experienced and so it will be a huge challenge for him. During the first two terms he had untrammelled powers to take any decision with his party having the majority. On paper it was a coalition government of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), but in reality it was a BJP government and the allies were mere cipher. This enabled the government to implement the BJP's main political and economic agenda driven by bias and tailor-made to benefit the super rich without any check. Now brakes will be applied as the two allies, on which the survival of the government depends, will not hopefully allow any rabid policies to be implemented.

The first signs of such resistance could be seen even before the swearing-in ceremony of the new government began 9 June. Chandrababu Naidu's son N Lokesh Naidu said the TDP would ensure that decisions on contentious issues such as delimitation and the Uniform Civil Code are not taken unilaterally, nor would the reservation of any community be taken away.

Speaking a day before the new government was sworn-in, with TDP as the NDA's second largest constituent with 16 MPs, Lokesh, sought to allay the fears of the minority Moslem population about their 4 per cent reservation in his state. He made it clear that TDP has always been and will remain a secular party. No one's quota would be taken away as long as the TDP is there in the government. He even said the BJP's stance that it would remove religion-based quota would have been valid had the party come to power on its own. The TDP, he asserted, will not withdraw the quota of any community and explained that party supremo Chandrababu Naidu has always maintained that socially and economically backward communities, irrespective of religion or caste, should get benefits in order to tackle poverty, and that will continue.

On the ticklish issue of legislative constituencies delimitation that the BJP had planned to carry out by 2026, Lokesh said that the TDP will ensure decisions are not taken unilaterally. The interests and representation of not only Andhra Pradesh but other states, too, will have to be kept in mind. The TDP's line will be that all the NDA partners will sit together and try to arrive at a consensus.

At the moment the NDA appears to be having a smooth sailing in the formation of the government. However, the swearing-in has taken place with the air thick with suspicion and fear that either of the two crucial allies will soon pull the rug from under the BJP's feet. This is only natural considering the history of Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar changing color whenever it suited their interests. There is not much love lost between PM Modi and the Bihar Chief Minister.

It is clear from the utterances of Opposition leaders and spokespersons of the two NDA allies that something is cooking up. The INDIA bloc has already stated it would take appropriate action at the appropriate time meaning it is only biding its time to engineer collapse of the government.

All the same the results this time around re-establish a form of balance between the government and the Opposition, harassed by government agencies hot on its trail. This is likely to put the brakes on the deterioration of democracy and the drift towards an authoritarian regime that respects neither the separation of powers nor the independence of the judiciary and checks and balances such as the Press. Along with these, Modi had also trashed federalism.

In a sense this fractured mandate means that India is entering a new period of coalition governments that many are labelling as instability. Coalitions undoubtedly will be fragile, leaving governments vulnerable but that is the best political scenario for a diverse nation like India. The tasks before the government, whichever group runs it - NDA or INDIA -, are considerable - mass unemployment, peasant distress, under-industrialization and environmental degradation. Modi said nothing about them during the campaign. The new era of coalition government may force him to concentrate more on them than on the BJP's divisive polarisation agenda.

Good times (Achche Din) may have actually arrived.

WISDOM CORNER

One doesn't recognize the really important moments in one's life until it's too late.

AGATHA CHRISTIE

In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on.

ROBERT FROST

The soul should always stand ajar, ready to welcome the ecstatic experience.

EMILY DICKINSON

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1692: First "witch" hanged in Salem Village. Being found guilty of "certain Detestable Arts called Witchcraft and Sorceries," Bridget Bishop on this day in 1692 became the first person to be hanged during the Salem witch trials in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

1772: Rhode Islanders in the American colonies boarded and sank the British revenue cutter Gaspee in Narragansett Bay.

1868: Serbian Prince Michael III was assassinated, derailing the Balkan League's plans for a coordinated rebellion against the Ottomans and destroying the league.

1907: Autochrome Lumière color photography is introduced. The process was invented by the legendary Lumière brothers in 1903. It was the first practical and commercially successful technology for the production of color photos.

1940: Italy, under the rule of Benito Mussolini, declared war against France and Great Britain, entering World War II.

LOL

WATERMELONS

A farmer in the country has a watermelon patch and upon inspection he discovers that some of the local kids have been helping themselves to a feast. The farmer thinks of ways to discourage this profit-eating situation. So he puts up a sign that reads: "WARNING! ONE OF THESE



WATERMELONS CONTAINS CYANIDE!" He smiled smugly as he watched the kids run off the next night without eating any of his melons. The farmer returns to the watermelon patch a week later to discover that none of the watermelons have been eaten, but finds another sign that reads: "NOW THERE ARE TWO!"



Tom Achoki

POLICYMAKERS MUST HEED THIS WARNING AND ACT NOW OR PAY A MUCH HIGHER PRICE LATER

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

A depressant

Sir, This refers to "Alcohol could worsen mood swings: Study," Orissa POST, June 9. The cumulative adverse effects of alcohol consumption can seriously damage both physical and mental health in an individual. It is a depressant that can cause drastic shifts in mood and behaviour. While it can be used to enhance or even create enjoyable experiences, alcohol addiction can lead to depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders. What alcohol does, though, is depress the body's central nervous system - the system that lets our brain tell our body what to do. That means that alcohol makes us less co-ordinated, more accident-prone, and less aware of danger. The hangover after a heavy drinking session can be a thoroughly miserable experience. A combination of dehydration, low blood sugar, and various by-products of alcohol can leave an individual struggling to move or think. Since it can increase the body's production of dopamine and serotonin, two of the body's "happy hormones," it can temporarily make one feel less anxious. Long term drinking, however, can lower levels of both these hormones as well as lowering blood sugar and increasing dehydration, leading to worse anxiety. Besides, the addiction also leads to the socioeconomic and family problems, especially among unprivileged sections of the society.

N Sathasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Vector alert

Sir, The threat of vector borne diseases (VBDs) like malaria, dengue, filariasis and chikungunya loom large in the coming days. VBDs contribute to 17 per cent of all infectious diseases in the world. Environmental milieu, social changes, improper urban planning and climate change all have contributed. Awareness and education are the key factors in prevention, early diagnosis and treatment. Symptoms like high fever, headache, and joint pain need special focus, while avoiding "self medication." Since mosquito is the most common vector, breeding sites of mosquito need to be addressed. Governments elsewhere can take cue from the Delhi government's initiative to deploy the "Domestic Breeding Checkers," who visit homes to personally check the mosquito breeding sites, to control VBDs. Fogging and spraying should be undertaken on a large scale by the authorities.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Liquor policy row to dominate session

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, June 9: The 28-day Kerala Legislative Assembly session, set to commence Monday, is expected to be stormy as the opposition Congress-led UDF is likely to target the Left government in the state over a host of issues ranging from the recent liquor policy row to its humiliating defeat in the Lok Sabha polls.

The House is being convened for the first time after the announcement of the results of the April 26 Lok Sabha polls, in which the UDF won 18 seats and the ruling LDF and the BJP one each.

While the UDF MLAs would attend the session with regained confidence and strength following their historic success in the general elections, the legislators of the CPI (M)-led LDF would struggle to find political narratives to defend their mass drubbing.

Armed with the poll victory, the UDF MLAs will look to sharpen their attack in the Assembly against the Marxist party, especially against Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who had criticised Congress leader Rahul Gandhi throughout the election campaign.

The LDF legislators would seek to defend the failure, saying they had won just one seat in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls but come back with a bang in the local body election and Assembly polls held in the state during the later years.

The House is also expected to witness an intense blame game between the two traditional fronts over the BJP opening its maiden account in Kerala by winning the Thrissur Lok Sabha seat

KERALA ASSEMBLY



The controversy over LDF government's liquor policy is also likely to find an echo in the state Assembly

While the Congress-led UDF recently accused the state government of taking bribes to 'favour' bar owners, the Left claimed that it has not yet held any deliberations over its liquor policy

with a massive majority.

While the Congress would accuse the CPI (M) over BJP's actor-turned politician Suresh Gopi's victory in Thrissur, the latter is likely to turn the table on the grand old party for the blooming of lotus.

The raging controversy over the LDF government's liquor policy is also likely to find an echo in the state Assembly.

While the Congress-led UDF recently accused the state government of taking bribes to 'favour' bar owners, the Left claimed that it has not yet held any deliberations over its liquor policy.

The opposition has already alleged that Tourism Ministers P A Mohammed Riyas and Excise Minister M B Rajesh had a role in the scam.

Chief Minister Vijayan's family tour abroad soon after the LS polls, central agency probe

and fresh allegations against his daughter's now-defunct IT company, the irregular disbursement of social welfare pensions, the state's poor financial positions, and so on are also likely to make the upcoming Assembly session stormy.

Speaker A N Shamseer Saturday had said that the 11th session of the 15th Kerala Legislative Assembly would commence June 10 and conclude July 25.

He said the 28-day-long session was being convened to discuss in detail and pass the budget requests for the financial year 2024-25.

Of the 28 days of the session, 13 days -- from June 11 to July 8 -- have been reserved for discussing and passing the money requests; five days have been allocated for non-official business and eight for government business.

HEAVY RAINS LASH MUMBAI

THE SOUTHWEST MONSOON REACHED MUMBAI SUNDAY, TWO DAYS EARLIER THAN USUAL AFTER MAKING AN EARLY ONSET OVER KERALA AND NORTHEASTERN REGION MAY 30

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 9: Mumbai and its neighbouring areas received heavy rains in the last 24 hours, bringing down the mercury and providing relief to residents from the hot and humid weather, officials said Sunday.

Due to the heavy showers, a part of the road in neighbouring Palghar district of Maharashtra caved-in, affecting traffic movement on the busy Mumbai-Ahmedabad highway for more than four hours Sunday morning, they said.

Repair works, including of a pipeline, were in progress when a portion of the road in Maljpada area of Palghar caved-in due to heavy rains, an official from the police control room said.

Traffic came to a standstill and movement on both sides of the road was disrupted, he said.



Some people held up in the traffic jam since 5.30 am Sunday claimed no agency was attending to the problem.

Various other districts of Maharashtra, including Thane, Nashik, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Ahmednagar, Satara and Jalgaon, also received good showers in the last one day.

In the 24-hour period ending

at 8.30 am Sunday, Mumbai received more than 60 mm of rainfall.

The Colaba observatory, situated in south Mumbai where most of the state government's administrative offices are located, recorded 67 mm rainfall, while the Santacruz observatory, near the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport,

recorded 64 mm downpour in the same period, as per the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The Colaba observatory recorded a maximum temperature of 34.8 degrees Celsius, 1.1 degrees higher than normal, while the minimum temperature was 24.3 degrees Celsius, 2.9 degrees lower than normal, it said.

A drop in the minimum temperature indicates nights getting cooler.

Thane and Palghar districts also witnessed heavy rains overnight, leading to water-logging in some areas, officials said Sunday.

There were reports of tree branches falling in some areas of Thane city, they said.

In the 24-hour period ending at 8.30 am Sunday, Thane city received 37.06 mm rainfall.

Kerala boosts teacher-training, eases mid-day meal pressure



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, June 9: The Kerala government Sunday said it was taking steps to provide excellent training for school teachers and also ensure that they are not burdened with the cost of running the mid-day meal scheme.

State General Education Minister V Sivankutti said that teachers will be given excellent training in accordance with the

requirements of modern times.

In a statement issued by his office, the minister urged teachers to cooperate with the training process as opting out of it would amount to cruelty towards their students. The minister said that there are 220 days in the academic calendar according to the provisions of the Kerala Education Rules (KER) and the law laid down by the Kerala High Court.

He urged teachers to cooperate with this rule to improve the learning outcomes of children.

In connection with the mid-day meal scheme, the minister said that the rates under it have been increased considering the demand of the teachers.

Kochi hosts camp for school girls from five countries



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, June 9: Kochi hosted a seven-day WiSci (Women in Science) camp which brought together 100 schoolgirls from India, Bangladesh, Maldives, Sri Lanka, and the United States.

The in-person WiSci South Asia STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and design, and mathematics) camp was held here from June 2-8.

The WiSci Girls' STEAM camp is a US government collaborative effort to advance gender equality and promote STEAM education worldwide, the US Consulate General Chennai said here in a release Sunday.

The camp availed unique opportunities for leadership development, skills-building, mentorship, and networking in various STEAM fields, it said.

Girl Up, a global leadership development initiative founded by the United Nations Foundation, organised the camp in partnership with the US.

Department of State's Office of Global Partnerships, the US Consulate General Chennai, and Rajagiri Business School in Kochi, alongside Caterpillar Foundation, Google, TE Connectivity Foundation, and United Airlines.

By providing adolescent girls with transferable leadership tools and training, these camps strive for participants to realise their full potential in becoming leaders in their communities not just in STEAM but in all disciplines, it said.

We believe investing in girls' education and leadership de-

velopment is key to unlocking their full potential and driving economic empowerment in communities globally, said Dorothy McAuliffe, US State Department Special Representative for Global Partnerships, at the closing ceremony.

We are proud to partner with Girl Up to support this impactful initiative, she added.

US Consul General Chennai Chris Hodges inaugurated the camp here June 2.

We are working with partners to create this empowering space for girl students to excel as future expert champions in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics career fields. These girls, the next generation of STEAMers, will succeed, Chris Hodges said.

Through interactive workshops, hands-on activities, and engaging discussions with industry experts and peers who share their passion for social change, the young campers gained valuable insights and inspiration into the world of STEAM. The science camp curriculum covered a range of STEAM topics, including climate science, women's representation in aviation, artificial intelligence, critical and emerging technology, and more.

Since 2015, more than 1,100 girls and youth allies from 34 countries have been successfully trained at WiSci STEAM Camps around the world, channeling their week-long experiences into creating lifelong positive impact in the world, the statement added.

Centre should provide quotas for Marathas, Dhangars, Muslim: Cong

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, June 9: With the Maratha quotas starting to boil again, the Maharashtra Congress Saturday reiterated its demand for giving reservations to Muslims and Dhangars as well as immediately conducting a nation-wide caste census.

State Congress Working President M Arif Naseem Khan said that the quota demands of the Marathas, Muslims and Dhangars has been languishing for many years and the MahaYuti government in the state has done nothing about it.

"A new NDA government is taking office in the country tomorrow under the leadership of Prime Minister-elect Narendra Modi. Its ally Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has declared that it is committed to giving reservations to the Muslims in his state. If the TDP can give quotas to Muslims in Andhra Pradesh then why can't Maharashtra follow suit and concede the same demands here?" questioned Khan.

Simultaneously, he said that the Centre should also amend the reservation laws on priority to ensure that not only the Marathas but also Muslims and Dhangars plus other groups are entitled to quotas as per their 'backwardness'.

Supporting Shivba Sanghatana

“If quotas can be given in Andhra Pradesh, the same can be done in Maharashtra as well”

M ARIF NASEEM KHAN | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

chief Manoj Jarange-Patil's fifth hunger strike which started in Jalna June 8, Khan said that his demand for Maratha quotas is genuine, and the same should be applied to Muslims and Dhangars.

"Since there is a Bharatiya Janata Party-led government at the Centre, and it's a constituent in Maharashtra, there should be no problems to provide reservations to the three communities. The former Congress government in the state had already given the quotas to Marathas and Muslims in 2014," he said.

Khan added that Congress MP Rahul Gandhi has already made it clear that the 50 per cent ceiling on quotas must be scrapped, and a Caste Census should be carried out to decide on reservation for Marathas, Muslims, Dhangars and any other eligible communities determined by their social-economic 'backwardness' across the country.



Fishing boats are anchored during the annual trawling ban at Puthiyappa, in Kozhikode district, Sunday

PTI/PHOTO

NGO fights menstrual stigma to reduce school dropouts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 9: An initiative by a non-profit organisation in Maharashtra aims to remove social and cultural stigma associated with menstruation, one of the factors contributing to the high school drop-out rate among adolescent girls.

Under 'Ujaas', an initiative launched in collaboration with the state government, awareness sessions are conducted at government schools.

As many as 20 percent of girls drop out of school on reaching puberty due to lack of menstrual hygiene facilities, which also contributes to school absenteeism, said Ujaas founder Advaitesha Birla.

According to reports, it is estimated that 23 million girls drop out of school annually due to menstruation-related issues. We

feel that increasing awareness, accessibility and affordability will help reduce the drop-out rates, especially in rural areas, she told PTI earlier this week.

The initiative has been launched by the Aditya Birla Education Trust.

Lack of awareness on menstrual hygiene leads to infections and reproductive health issues, menstrual disorders, psychological distress, pregnancy complications among others, Birla stated.

Many girls don't even know what menstruation is until their first period, which we found early on to be a significant gap in knowledge. We aim to create a supportive and positive ecosystem involving girls, parents, community members, teachers, and boys. We address affordability and accessibility by distributing sanitary napkins for



free, ensuring girls have the resources they need once they are aware, she said.

We have permissions from the SCERT (State Council of Educational Research and Training) and are working towards getting approvals for more schools. This shows the gov-

ernment's interest in supporting this initiative, Birla added.

In many cases, schools and local communities are initially not willing to allow awareness sessions to be held due to the stigma associated with menstruation, she noted.

People are reluctant to have

these sessions, often citing previous efforts or other priorities like exams. Social and cultural hurdles make girls very shy to talk on this subject. Once we overcome the initial resistance, we see significant progress. Both principals and teachers often acknowledge the positive impact of our sessions, Birla added.

In collaboration with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Ujaas has also started a production unit for reusable sanitary napkins at Jalna in central Maharashtra.

We have begun training women and now have a fully functioning production unit with 25 self-help group women in Jalna. We are planning to expand this model to other parts of the country once we establish and see how this unit is working, Birla said.

national

of the day quote

The results of the Lok Sabha elections have forever made communalism insignificant. The will of the people has won against the will of the BJP. Now we have to prepare for the 2027 assembly elections

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

The prime minister has given me the opportunity to serve the country by including me in his team for the third consecutive time. We will work as a team under the leadership of the prime minister and fulfil all the promises and live up to the expectations and aspirations of the country

GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT | BJP LEADER

You (journalists), me and everybody can meditate. No issue. It is good for one's body, mind and soul. But please don't make it a media spectacle, don't sit for meditation in full glare of camera

ABHISHEK BANERJEE | TMC NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARY

SHORT TAKES

Fire breaks out in game arcade

New Delhi: A fire broke out at a theme-based adventure games area in the Connaught Place here, officials of the Delhi Fire Services said. "We rushed five fire tenders to the spot. So far, no injuries were reported," DFS chief Atul Garg said. He said that a call was received at 3.22 pm from a game arcade Mystry Rooms located in Block M, in the outer circle area of Connaught Place reporting that a fire had broken out in the games area.

Speeding Audi kills one

New Delhi: One person died while another sustained serious injuries after an Audi Q3 car driven by a lawyer lost control and rammed into two persons sitting on a bench near the Ramjas College main gate in Delhi on Sunday, the police said. The deceased has been identified as Govind (45), while the injured has been identified as Ashok, both rickshaw-pullers by profession. According to the police, a PCR call was received at 1:16 p.m. Sunday at the Maurice Nagar police station informing about an accident near the main gate of Ramjas College, following which a team was rushed to the spot.

Man held for raping teen

Thane: A man was arrested in Kalyan in Thane district for allegedly raping a teenaged girl, a police official said Sunday. One more person is wanted in the case and efforts are on to nab him, the MFC police station official said. The arrested accused was identified as Anish Pandey whereas the man on the run is Abhishek Dere, the official said.

CBI arrests senior official

New Delhi: The CBI has arrested NHAI general manager Purushottam Lal Choudhary, posted in Madhya Pradesh's Chattarpur, in a ₹10 lakh bribery case, officials said on Sunday. Six other other accused including an NHAI Consultant and his Resident Engineer, four employees of the private company, were also arrested Saturday. The accused were receiving bribes for the final handing over as well as the issuance of a no objection certificate and processing of the final bill of the Jhansi-Khajuraho Project awarded to the said private company by the National Highway Association of India.



Prime Minister Modi has taken charge for the third consecutive term because of the blessings of the people. People have put faith in Modi because of his humility, sincerity, dedication and farsightedness

SARBANANDA SONOWAL | UNION MINISTER

NEW INITIATIVE

The Haryana government Sunday launched a new initiative to resolve the public grievances and organise "Samadhan Shivirs" in each district and sub-divisional headquarter. Chief Secretary T V S N Prasad said here that the state government has established a "Samadhan Prakoshth" in the Chief Secretary's Office



Bihar Chief Minister and JDU Chief Nitish Kumar at the swearing-in ceremony of the new Union government



BJP MPs Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari and others during the swearing-in ceremony of the new Union government



Dignitaries at the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister-designate Narendra Modi, at Rashtrapati Bhavan

Modi equals record feat of 3rd straight term

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 9: Prime Minister Narendra Modi scripted history Sunday as he took the oath of office for a third straight term, becoming the first non-Congress leader and second after Jawaharlal Nehru to achieve the feat that few thought possible for a BJP leader until he shook up national politics in 2014.

His third term, which always appeared inevitable, did not come with the massive mandate he and his party had been claiming with their typical bravado, as the Congress and its allies in the INDIA bloc fought a doozy rearguard battle to shock the BJP in its strongholds like Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. It is, however, a tribute to his towering political presence that



A combo of photos shows PM-designate Narendra Modi taking oath as Prime Minister in (L-R) 2014, 2019 and 2024

the BJP's third-best tally of 240 seats is being seen as a disappointment by the party's ardent supporters and projected as a "moral defeat" by the Congress whose own tally of 99 seats, its third worst, is being hailed by the

opposition party. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance has won 293 seats, which Modi has noted is the biggest success for any pre-poll alliance when a single party did not get a majority.

Despite the challenges thrown by the polls, Modi, 73, remains the fulcrum around which Indian politics is bound to revolve in the coming years, while he himself will have to negotiate the sharp bends and blind turns of coalition politics for the first time since he entered the electoral politics as Gujarat Chief Minister in 2001.

Since leading the BJP for the first time in the Gujarat assembly polls in 2002, held in the shadow of the riots in the state following the Godhra train burning incident, Modi has never looked back, remaking the substance and sentiments of politics like few before him. He has been since leading his party to victory and power in 2002, 2007 and 2012 in Gujarat, and then in 2014 and 2019 at the Centre. It is though differ-

ent this time as the BJP has lost majority on its own.

The prime minister is facing the strongest opposition since he first took office in 2014. Critics have also questioned his ability to set the political agenda on his terms after the opposition dented the BJP in several states, not the least in the saffron citadel of Uttar Pradesh where the SP-Congress alliance trumped the BJP-led combine.

That the BJP has scored an almost clean sweep of Lok Sabha polls in Odisha and won a majority in its Assembly for the first time besides doubling its tally of MPs in Telangana and opening its account for the first time in Kerala, underscores the durability and wide resonance of his appeal, BJP leaders have pointed out.

Delhi HC directs medical evaluation of Amit Katyal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 9: The Delhi High Court has directed the constitution of a medical board to evaluate the medical condition of RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav's close aide Amit Katyal, who sought interim bail on medical grounds in a money laundering case linked to the alleged land-for-jobs scam in the Indian Railways.

The High Court observed that even though the report from the jail did not indicate any "underlying medical condition", the accused recently had a bariatric surgery and, therefore, asked the AIIMS director to immediately constitute the team of doctors from minimum three different specialties to ascertain the nature of ailments he is suffering from.

NIJJAR CASE Canada intel chief visited India twice this year

The ties between India and Canada came under severe strain following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in September last year of the "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Nijjar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 9: Canada's intelligence agency chief David Vigneault paid two under-the-wraps visits to India in February and March to apprise Indian officials of the case relating to the killing of Khalistani extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, people familiar with the matter said. Vigneault, the director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), is learnt to have shared information that emerged during Ottawa's investigation into the killing.

The ties between India and Canada came under severe strain following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in September last year of the "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Nijjar. New Delhi rejected Trudeau's charges as "absurd". Vigneault's visits to India came weeks before Canada ar-



rested three Indian nationals -- Karanpreet Singh (28), Kamalpreet Singh (22) and Karan Brar (22) -- on charges of alleged involvement in Nijjar's killing.

Subsequently, a fourth Indian, Amandeep Singh, was arrested by the Canadian authorities. Nijjar, who was declared a terrorist by India, was shot dead outside a gurdwara in British Columbia in Surrey June 18 last year. The murder is being probed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). A government of Canada official said: "We can confirm that the Director of CSIS, David Vigneault, has travelled to India but we do not comment on the nature or substance of closed-door meetings."

"With that said, since Canada became aware of the credible allegations, we have consistently provided all the information we can to India on the Nijjar case, through multiple channels," he said. "This has also been noted by Prime Minister Trudeau and Canada's minister for public safety on the public record," he

added. The official said, "Canada's priorities from the start have been to ensure truth and accountability. This is in both our countries' interest. In this regard, Canada continues to underscore the importance of the ongoing, independent investigation led by the RCMP."

"Given the ongoing police investigation by the RCMP's Integrated Homicide Investigation Team, we refer you to the RCMP for questions on evidence regarding the Hardeep Singh Nijjar case," he said.

There was no comment from the Indian side when asked about Vigneault's visits.

The people cited above said besides Vigneault, some other Canadian officials also visited India this year apparently to discuss various aspects of the case related to Nijjar's murder.

India has officially been maintaining that it has not received any specific information relating to the case from Canada. New Delhi has been maintaining that the main issue has been that of Canada giving space to pro-Khalistani elements operating from Canadian soil with impunity.

In the last few months, India has been expressing concern over the security of its diplomats in Canada and calling on Ottawa to ensure that they can carry out their responsibilities without fear.

Karnataka gets five ministers in new NDA govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Jun 9: Five Parliamentarians from Karnataka including JD(S) leader and former Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy, BJP leaders Nirmala Sitharaman and Pralhad Joshi, who were part of the previous Cabinet, Sunday took oath in the new NDA Council of Ministers headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Union Minister of State in the previous Modi government, Shobha Karandlaje, and former minister in the state government V Somanna -- both from BJP -- were also sworn in. They were administered the oath of office and secrecy by President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. While Sitharaman, Kumaraswamy and Joshi were given Cabinet rank, Karandlaje and Somanna were made Ministers of State.

Sitharaman represents Karnataka in the Rajya Sabha, while the other four were elected to Lok Sabha in the recently concluded polls. Kumaraswamy represents Mandya, Joshi is elected from Dharwad, Karandlaje -- Bangalore North, and Somanna -- Tumkur. Of the ministers, Kumaraswamy, who has been given a minister post from NDA partner JD(S) quota, is from the dominant Vokkaliga community. From the BJP's quota, while Sitharaman and Joshi are Brahmins, Karandlaje is a Vokkaliga, and Somanna is from Lingayat, another dominant community in the state.

Cong condemns terror attack on bus in Reasi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 9: The Congress Sunday condemned the gruesome terror attack on a bus carrying pilgrims that resulted in the loss of nine lives and said the incident reflects the true picture of the worrying security situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

Terrorists opened fire at a bus carrying pilgrims in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district Sunday evening, killing nine people and injuring 33.

The 53-seater bus, enroute from Shiv Khori temple to Katra, veered off the road following the gunfire and fell into a deep gorge. The incident took place around 6.15 pm near Teryath village in Poni area.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "Even while PM, Shri Narendra Modi and his NDA Government get sworn in and heads of several countries are in the country, a dastardly terrorist attack on a bus carrying pilgrims has resulted in loss of lives of at least 10 Indians."

"We unequivocally condemn this gruesome terror attack on our people and deliberate affront to our National Security," he said in a post on X.

The Congress president said just three weeks ago, tourists were fired upon in Pahalgam, and several terror incidents in Jammu and Kashmir are continuing unabated.

"All the chest-thumping propaganda of bringing peace and normalcy by the Modi (now NDA) Government rings hollow. India



stands united against terrorism," Kharge said.

"Our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims wish and pray for the speedy recovery of the injured. The Government and authorities should provide immediate assistance and compensation to the victims," he said.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said the cowardly terrorist attack on a bus carrying pilgrims from Shivkhodi temple in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district is extremely saddening.

"This shameful incident is the true picture of the worrying security situation in Jammu and Kashmir," Gandhi said in a post on X.

"I express my deepest condolences to all the bereaved families and hope for the speedy recovery of the injured. The entire country stands united against terrorism," the former Congress chief said.

Look forward to bolder reforms: India Inc

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 9: Congratulating Prime Minister Narendra Modi for taking oath for the third time Sunday, India Inc said it looks forward to "bolder reforms" and measures to foster economic development and lay the foundation for 'Viksit Bharat'.

Narendra Modi was sworn in as Prime Minister at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here, be-

coming only the second PM after Jawaharlal Nehru to secure a third consecutive term.

"Congratulations to Narendra Modi ji for becoming the Prime Minister for the third time. Hope the new term will prove to be important for the development and prosperity of India," Mahindra Group Chairman Anand Mahindra said in a post on X.

FICCI President Anish Shah said the third consecutive term



for the NDA paves the way for continuity in the reform agenda. "We look forward to progressive policies and measures that will foster economic and social development and build a strong foundation for 'Viksit Bharat,'" Shah said.

"With your taking oath as the Prime Minister for the third term India Inc is feeling confident that leadership of the country will be steered to greater heights, maintaining

the fastest pace of growth amongst the major economies of the world," ASSOCHAM Secretary General Deepak Sood said in his congratulatory message to PM Modi.

He said the Indian industry and global investors are feeling reassured of fast and bolder reforms well beyond the economy, touching upon wider governance, quality and ease of living and leveraging upon the aspirational young population.

national



I pay my respect to freedom fighter Birsa Munda on his death anniversary. His fearless patriotism, mental strength to stand against injustice is our inspiration

B'DESH MP MURDER: WB CID QUIZZES KEY SUSPECT

The West Bengal CID on Sunday recovered parts of human bones near a canal in South 24 Parganas district, during a search operation in connection with its probe into the murder of Bangladesh MP Anwarul Azim Anar, a senior official said



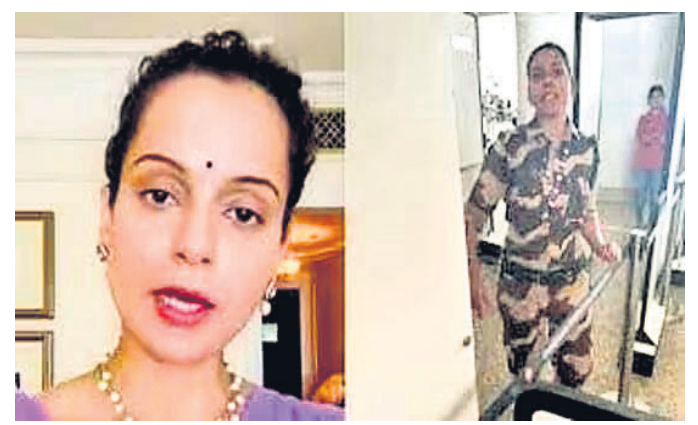
of the day quote

Under Narendra Modi's leadership a decision has been made, after discussion with BJP national President (JP Nadda), Home Minister (Amit Shah) and Defence Minister (Rajnath Singh). They have identified me and given me an opportunity. The entire credit for this has to go to people of Kannada Naadu in my opinion

People have given some opinion in his (PM Modi) favour... But it is not like Nehru ji (who) had the verdict behind him

In a coalition government, a formula has to be drawn, which cannot be broken for one party. I can confidently say whenever cabinet expansion takes place, the (Union) government will consider the NCP. We did try to include NCP right now, but they insisted on cabinet portfolio

Kangana slap row: 3-member SIT formed



Chandigarh, June 9: A three-member special investigation team has been formed in connection with the incident in which BJP MP-elect Kangana Ranaut was allegedly slapped by a CISF woman constable, a senior police officer said Sunday.

Meanwhile, several farmer outfits, including the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, took out a march in Mohali in support of CISF woman constable Kulwinder Kaur. Farmer leaders demanded that a fair investigation should be conducted into the matter while asserting that there should not be any injustice with the woman constable.

Mohali Superintendent of Police Harbir Singh Atwal said that a three-member SIT has been formed under his leadership. "There will be an impartial probe into the matter and the report will be submitted to the SSP Mohali," Atwal told reporters.

A woman police officer will also be part of the SIT, police said. Adequate security personnel were deployed in the wake of the farmers' march, which began from Gurdwara Amb Sahib in Mohali. Farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher as-

Major accident averted at Mumbai airport

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 9: A serious aviation disaster was averted at the Mumbai airport as an Air India plane took off while an IndiGo aircraft landed on the same runway within a minute.

The incident Saturday morning is being investigated by aviation watchdog DGCA, as well as IndiGo and Air India. The two A320 aircraft together had around 300 passengers on board, sources said.

At the airport, the IndiGo flight landed on the same runway 27 from which an Air India flight was taking off, almost simultaneously.

In their statements, IndiGo and Air India said they were cleared for landing and take-off, respectively, by the Air Traffic Control (ATC).

"IndiGo flight June 8 6E 6053 from Indore was given landing clearance by ATC at Mumbai Airport. The pilot in command continued the approach and landing and followed ATC instructions," IndiGo said in a statement.

"At IndiGo, passenger safety is paramount to us, and we have reported the incident as per procedure," it said. Air India, said its aircraft was cleared by the ATC to enter the runway and subsequently cleared for take-off.

The watchdog has derostered the Air Traffic Controller (ATC) who was on duty at the time of



the incident Saturday, while IndiGo has initiated a probe into the matter, officials added. A purported video of one plane landing and another taking off from the same runway has been shared on social media.

"We are conducting a probe and have already de-rostered the ATCO involved in the incident," the DGCA official said.

Mumbai airport is a single-runway operation with two crossing runways' 09/27 and 14/32 that handles over 850 flights per day. On a single runway RW27 at the Mumbai airport, there are around 46 arrivals and departures per hour.

Air Traffic Controllers' (ATC) Guild in a statement said there was "no air prox" situation in the incident. It also alleged that the ATCs are under "significant pressure" when there is high density traffic at the airport. According to an Airports

Authority of India (AAI) source, as a rule, departing aircraft have to cross the end of the runway or take a turn, only after which the ATC can issue the landing clearance for arriving aircraft.

"However, in this case, this was allegedly not followed," the source said. "Air India flight AI657 from Mumbai to Trivandrum was on take-off roll June 8. The Air India aircraft was cleared by Air Traffic Control to enter the runway and subsequently cleared for take-off," Air India said in the statement.

The airline also said its aircraft continued with the take-off roll in accordance with laid down procedures. "An investigation has been initiated by the authorities to find out more on the clearance given to the airlines. Air India always accords top priority to the safety of its passengers and crew," the Tata Group airline said in the state-

ment. The Adani Group-AAI promoted Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport had earlier this year announced it will handle 8 per cent more air traffic movement at 6,657 ATMs per week (951 per day) during the summer schedule, which started from March 29, against the year-ago period. "In this particular case... the visibility was good and there was no air prox situation with respect to the landing IndiGo flight and the taking off Air India flight," the Guild stated.

"The tower controller is allowed to reduce separation minima between two aircraft if reasonable assurance has been established by visualising both aircraft," as per ATC Guild. According to the Guild, Mumbai airport is one of the high-density airports, which means that the number of flight movements is high. "On a single runway RW27 at the airport, there are around 46 arrivals and departures per hour," it said.

Had there been a safety risk, the pilot himself would have initiated a go around, the ATC Guild said.

ATCs are allowed to clear up to two arrivals and two departures within three minutes as per standard operating procedures, subject to certain conditions.

The separation minima between two aircraft can be reduced if the visibility is good, it said.

JEE-Advanced results announced

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 9: Ved Lahoti from the Delhi zone has topped the IIT entrance exam JEE-Advanced securing 355 out of 360 marks, the highest ever, officials said Sunday.

The previous highest was 352 in 2022. According to IIT Madras, which conducted the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE)-Advanced this year, Dwija Dharmeshkumar Patel from IIT Bombay zone is the topper among female candidates with 332 marks. Her all-India rank is seven.

Four of the top 10 rank-holders are from IIT Madras. The second rank has been bagged by Aditya (Delhi zone) followed by Bhogalpalli Sandesh (Madras zone) at the third position.

Rhythm Kedia (IIT Roorkee zone), Putti Kushal Kumar (IIT Madras), Rajdeep Mishra (IIT Bombay zone), Koduri Tejeswar (IIT Madras zone), Dhruvi Hemant Doshi (IIT Bombay zone) and Alladabona SSDB Sidhvik Suhas (IIT Madras zone), have bagged the subsequent ranks in that order.

The maximum number of candidates have qualified from the IIT Madras zone, followed by the IIT Delhi Zone and the IIT Bombay zone. Among the top 500 candidates, 145 are from the IIT Madras zone, followed by 136 from the IIT Bombay zone and 122 from the IIT Delhi zone.

A total of seven foreign candidates have passed the exam while 179 Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) have also cleared it.

POST OF THE DAY

#WeThePeopleDemand #VotersWillMustPrevail Democratic rights must be restored. Draconian laws must be repealed. Detained activists must be released. The government must stop using bulldozers, suppressing protests, arresting activists, and misusing the ED law. #WeThePeopleDemand #VotersWillMustPrevail @SHABNAMHASHMI

SHORT TAKES

Saxena to meet Atishi today

New Delhi: Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena will meet with Water Minister Atishi Monday over the "inadequate" amount of water being released by Haryana through the Munak Canal, one of the national capital's primary sources of potable water, Raj Niwas officials said. Atishi had sought time from Saxena for an emergency meeting over the issue. In a post on 'X' earlier, the minister said Delhi is supposed to receive 1,050 cusecs of water from the canal but it has reduced to only 840 cusecs.

Security forces recover IEDs in J&K

Srinagar: The security forces recovered two Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) from a field in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district Sunday, officials said. The IEDs -- buried underground in two plastic containers -- were recovered by the security forces from Nehama area of Pulwama district, they said.

Bangladeshi smuggler killed

Agartala: A Bangladeshi smuggler was killed when BSF troopers opened fire after being surrounded by a gang along the India-Bangladesh border in Tripura's Sepahijala district Sunday, officials said. BSF officials said that during routine patrolling at Kalamchera along the India-Bangladesh border, the Indian border guards challenged a group of men, who were trying to smuggle goods from the Indian side, but did not pay any heed and instead, got aggressive and tried to encircle a BSF personnel with an intent to assault him and snatch his personal weapon.

Plea in SC on June 4 stock market crash

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 9: A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court, seeking directions to the Centre and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to submit a detailed report into the stock market crash on the day of election results June 4, when investors lost billions of rupees.

The plea, filed by advocate Vishal Tiwari, also sought direction to the government and the SEBI to submit a status report on the orders given January 3 for considering the suggestion of the expert committee, headed



by Justice A M Sapre, made in its report on the PIL in Adani-Hindenburg matter. The top court had said the Centre and the SEBI should constructively consider the suggestions of the expert committee

and take any further action necessary to strengthen the regulatory framework, protect investors and ensure the orderly functioning of the securities market.

"Stock market volatility again emerged. As per news reports, the loss was ₹20 lakh crore. This again has raised question mark on the regulatory mechanism... despite this court's direction, nothing has changed," the petition said. Following the exit poll prediction of a resounding BJP victory, BSE benchmark Sensex shot up Monday by 2,507 points or 3.4 percent to settle at a new closing peak of 76,469.

Situation under control in Jiribam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, June 9: The situation in Manipur's Jiribam district remained "tense" but "under control" Sunday, after suspected militants torched two police outposts and at least 70 houses in a fresh bout of violence in the state, police said.

Additional security forces have been deployed in the affected areas following the incident Saturday, they said.

"The situation is tense but under control in the wake of violent disturbances that broke out in Jiribam district in which

miscreants torched two police pickets, a forest beat office... and several houses belonging to both Meitei and Kuki communities," the Manipur Police said in a statement.

More than 70 houses were set on fire in Lamtai Khunou, Dibong Khunou, Nunkhal and Begra villages, a senior police officer said. "Police is also actively monitoring social media updates, which may incite communal feelings amongst the communities and requests general public to refrain from spreading unfounded/unverified information," it said.

Young, women more likely to suffer from multiple sclerosis: Experts

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS (MS) IS A COMPLEX, CHRONIC, AUTOIMMUNE, AND NEUROLOGICAL DISEASE THAT PRIMARILY AFFECTS THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM, LEADING TO A RANGE OF SYMPTOMS AND HEALTH ISSUES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 9: Young adults and women are more likely to suffer from multiple sclerosis, said experts.

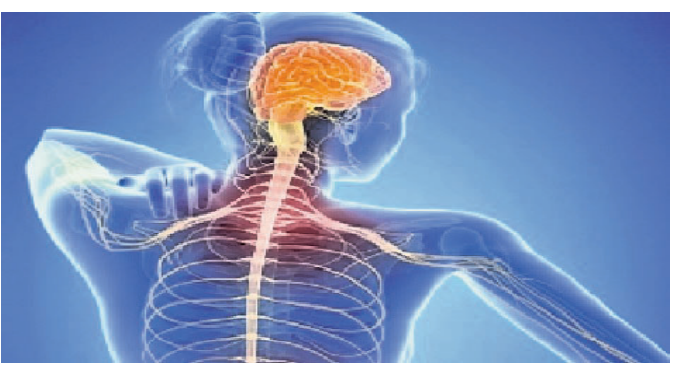
Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a complex, chronic, autoimmune, and neurological disease that primarily affects the central nervous system, leading to a range of symptoms and health issues.

"MS can strike anyone at any age, however, persons between the ages of 20 and 40 are the ones who are diagnosed with it most frequently. Women are disproportionately affected since they are two to three times more likely than men to have the condition," Dr. Himanshu Champaneri Senior Consultant-

The prevalence of MS in India ranges from 7 to 30 per 100,000 people, according to various studies

Department of Neurosciences and Neurosurgery, Marengo Asia Hospitals, Gurugram, told IANS. Common symptoms include numbness or sensory loss, paraesthesia in limbs or face, vision loss, weakness in one or more limbs, double vision, imbalance while walking, and bladder problems such as difficulty holding or passing urine.

In addition, some patients experience a current-like sensation running down the spine with neck movements. These symptoms typically develop over a few days to weeks,



differentiating them from stroke symptoms, which have a rapid onset within seconds to minutes.

Dr Neeraj Balaini, Consultant - Neurology, Aster RV Hospital, told IANS that the exact cause of MS is not fully understood.

"Risk factors for MS include genetic predisposition, certain viral infections (such as Epstein-Barr virus and Human herpes virus-6), smoking, and vitamin D deficiency," he said.

The doctor further explained that in MS, there is a loss of

myelin -- the insulating covering around nerves in the brain and spinal cord.

This demyelination disrupts the electrical signals in the nerves, leading to the various symptoms of MS. "Severe myelin damage can also result in the loss of nerve fibres themselves," Dr. Neeraj said.

"MS is treatable but not curable. Without treatment, patients may accumulate disabilities from repeated attacks or enter a progressive phase where disability increases gradually without new attacks.

"Clinical depression is more frequent in people with MS due to both the psychological impact of the disease and potential neuroendocrine changes caused by MS," he noted. Along with

medications, the experts stressed a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle to manage MS.

Eating a healthy and nutritious diet, managing weight, avoiding alcohol and tobacco, maintaining a balanced diet, ensuring good sleep hygiene, and managing hypertension and diabetes, can help preserve healthy neurons and support overall health.

Physical exercise is also important in managing MS and improving quality of life. In addition, "taking preventative measures to avoid infections may be helpful as some viral infections are known to trigger MS and genetic counselling may be helpful for those with a family history of the disease," Dr. Himanshu said.

international



I encourage the international community to act urgently, with all means, to come to the aid of the people of Gaza, worn out by the war. Humanitarian aid must be allowed to reach those in need, and no one can impede it
POPE FRANCIS | HEAD OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

NO CONFIRMATION

The White House declined to say Sunday whether President Joe Biden will meet Benjamin Netanyahu when the Israeli Prime Minister visits Washington next month to address the US Congress



of the day quote

Putin is not going to stop at Ukraine. All of Europe will be threatened, we are not going to let that happen. The United States is standing strong with Ukraine. We will not, I say it again, walk away
JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT, US

The PML-N party did not tell us anything related to the budget nor took us into confidence. We don't know what they are doing about privatisation policy, taxes, developmental programme
SYED KHURSHID AHMED SHAH | LEADER OF PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY

How can one negotiate when he is not serious. I travelled to Bani Gala (Imran Khan's house) myself. Our sincerity is considered our weakness. I am not the person who takes political revenge
NAWAZ SHARIF | FORMER PM, PAKISTAN

EU Parl tilting towards right

A BLOC OF 450 MILLION CITIZENS CAST BALLOTS TO ELECT 720 MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

REUTERS

Brussels, June 9: Voters in 21 EU countries including France and Germany were casting their ballots Sunday in an election for the European Parliament that is expected to shift the assembly to the right and boost the numbers of eurosceptic nationalists.

The election will shape how the European Union, a bloc of 450 million citizens, confronts challenges including a hostile Russia, increased industrial rivalry from China and the United States, climate change and immigration.

Voting began Thursday in the Netherlands and in other countries Friday and Saturday, but the bulk of EU votes will be cast Sunday, with France, Germany, Poland and Spain opening the polls and Italy holding a second day of voting.

Casting her ballot, the leading candidate for Spain's conservative People's Party Dolores Montserrat, said the election would "decide the future of Spain and the future of Europe".

The centre-right European People's Party (EPP) is set to remain the European Parliament's



Surveys suggest that mainstream and pro-European parties will retain their majority in parliament, but they will lose seats to hard right parties like those led by Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, Hungarian leader Viktor Orban, Geert Wilders in the Netherlands and Marine Le Pen in France

largest group, putting its candidate to head the European Commission, incumbent Ursula von der Leyen of Germany, in pole position for a second term.

However, she may need support from some right-wing nationalists, such as Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy, to secure a parliamentary majority, giving Meloni and allies more leverage.

Parliament as a whole will also vote and often amend a slew of legislation expected in the

four seats to get 136. European Greens, facing a backlash from hard-pressed households, farmers and industry over costly EU policies limiting CO2 emissions, look set to be among the big losers with the poll Sunday giving them only 56 deputies, a loss of 16.

Forecasts for the liberal group Renew Europe are also grim, given the expectation that Marine Le Pen's far-right Rassemblement National will trounce French President Emmanuel Macron's centrist Renaissance in France.

The Sunday poll put the Renew group's losses at 13 seats, forecasting it will end up with 89. In contrast, the poll said the national-conservative ECR was likely to get five more deputies for a total of 73 and the far-right ID group could get eight more seats for a total of 67.

More deputies could join the right and far-right groups from among the so far non-affiliated deputies of whom there would be 79, the poll said.

At a polling station in northern Paris, 18-year-old student Elisa Dubois said she was concerned about the rise of the far right across Europe.

"So if we also do it in France, they can unite and it is quite dangerous," she said.

LATEST POLLS
A projection by Europe Elects pollster Sunday showed the EPP could gain five seats compared to the last parliament to win a total of 183. The Socialists, who include German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's party, are seen losing

through new EU laws or increase European integration. Many voters have been hit by the cost of living, have concerns about migration and the cost of the green transition and are disturbed by geopolitical tensions, including war in Ukraine.

Hard and far-right parties have seized on this and offered the electorate an alternative. "Whoever believes that we need a change of course and that things can be done much better in Brussels has only one alternative, which is Vox," the leading candidate for the far-right Spanish party, Jorge Buxade, said after voting in Madrid.

In the Netherlands, exit polls Thursday showed nationalist Geert Wilders' anti-immigration party was set to win seven of the 29 Dutch seats in the EU assembly, from zero in 2019, after his large win in last year's national election.

His Freedom Party will be just one short of the combined seats of a Socialist Democrat-Greens alliance.

In Belgium, voters also elect federal and regional chambers Sunday and are forecast to back far-right Flemish separatist party Vlaams Belang in record numbers, although it could still be kept from office by other parties.

The government of Prime Minister Alexander De Croo will likely stay in office in a caretaker capacity for many months until a new multi-party coalition is formed.

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UK TV presenter found dead on Greek island



REUTERS

Athens, June 9: British TV presenter and healthy living advocate Michael Mosley has been found dead in a rocky area on the Greek island of Symi, just metres away from his destination, local mayors told Reuters Sunday.

Mosley, 67, had been missing since Wednesday after he went for a walk alone along a coastal path in searing heat.

"It is certainly him," said deputy mayor Nikitas Grillis, pending formal identification.

Police spokeswoman Constantina Dimoglidou earlier said that the body of a person believed to be Mosley had been found in the area of Agia Marina, north of the village of Pedi and opposite the northeast beach of Agios Nikolaos where Mosley set out for his walk.

Another police official said his body had been found on rocky terrain, close to the sea.

Symi Mayor Lefteris Papakaloudoukas said the discovery was made after he and others, including state ERT TV journalists, were filming the area from a vessel. "He was found 10 metres away from the sea, 10-15 metres from his destination, the beach of Agia Marina, between a fence and a path."

State TV ERT reported that he was found lying face up with his head on a rock.

SHORT TAKES

Migrant arrests dip

Washington: The number of migrants caught illegally crossing the US-Mexico border dropped Friday, a senior US border official told Reuters, saying it signaled a restrictive new Biden administration policy was deterring some illegal immigration. US Border Patrol arrested around 3,100 people crossing illegally, down roughly 20% from the days before, the official said, requesting anonymity to discuss preliminary figure. "It's still too early to say this is a definitive trend," the official said. "But I think it is indicative of some possible early success."

Pak's polio plight

Islamabad: Pakistan has confirmed the fifth polio case of the year, more than a fortnight after the victim's death, jolting the country's efforts to eradicate the crippling disease. The victim, a two-year-old child from Balochistan's Quetta, died May 22 before the confirmation of the poliovirus, the Dawn newspaper reported. The Prime Minister's coordinator on National Health Services, Dr Malik Mukhtar Bharat, said the case served as a reminder that until Pakistan achieved polio eradication, no child would be completely safe from the crippling disease.

Sixth snap poll

Sofia: Bulgarians head to the polls Sunday for their sixth parliamentary election in three years, but analysts say the vote is unlikely to yield a stable government that can end prolonged political instability and unblock economic reforms. Bulgaria, the poorest member of the European Union, has been plagued by revolving-door governments since anti-corruption protests in 2020, with a series of elections producing shaky coalitions that swiftly crumbled. The latest opinion polls suggest no party will win a majority, setting the stage for a new round of coalition talks once the votes are in.

Iran Prez runners

Dubai: Iran's Guardian Council Sunday approved the country's hard-line speaker of parliament and five others to run in the country's June 28 presidential election following a helicopter crash that killed President Ebrahim Raisi and seven others. The council again barred former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a firebrand populist known for the crackdown that followed his disputed 2009 re-election, from running.

Pak to send 1,000 students to China for agri training

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, June 9: Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has announced sending as many as 1,000 students of the country to China for advanced training in the agriculture sector as it strives to increase output, according to a media report Sunday.

The premier, who concluded his five-day official visit to China, made the announcement during a visit to Yangling Agricultural Demonstration Base in Xi'an city Saturday, Radio Pakistan reported.

The 72-year-old also invited China's North West Agriculture and Forestry University to open a campus in Pakistan. He directed the Pakistan ambassador to China and relevant authorities to finalise the matters with the Chinese authorities in this regard, Geo News reported.

The Prime Minister toured various parts of the facility and was shown Pakistani products at the Pakistan Pavilion, the report said. Sharif also visited the modern plant production factory where he oversaw a demonstration of the vertical method of agriculture, it said.

Palestinian death toll rises to 274



REUTERS

Cairo, June 9: Israeli forces pounded central Gaza anew Sunday, a day after killing 274 Palestinians during a hostage rescue raid, and tanks advanced into further areas of Rafah in a bid to seal off part of the southern city, residents and Hamas media said.

Palestinians remained in shock over Saturday's death toll, the worst over a 24-hour period of the Gaza war for months and including many women and children, Palestinian medics said.

In an update Sunday, Gaza's health ministry said 274 Palestinians were killed - up from 210 it reported Saturday - and 698 were injured when Israeli

special force commandos stormed into the densely populated Al-Nuseirat camp to rescue four hostages held since October by Hamas militants.

Israel's military said a special forces officer was killed in exchanges of fire with militants emerging from cover in residential blocks, and that it knew of "under 100" Palestinians killed, though not how many of them were militants or civilians.

The Israeli military said in a statement its forces were continuing operations east of Bureij and the city of Deir al-Balah in the centre of the coastal enclave, killing several Palestinian gunmen and destroying militant infrastructure.

Israel sent forces into Rafah in May in it called a mission to wipe out Hamas' last intact combat units after eight months of war in which Israeli forces have bombed much of the rest of Gaza to rubble while advancing against fierce resistance.

Israel tank forces have since seized Gaza's entire border strip with Egypt running through Rafah to the Mediterranean coast and invaded several districts of the city, prompting around one million displaced people who had been sheltering in Rafah to flee elsewhere.

In a first, Ukraine downs Russia's top jet

UKRAINE'S FIRST KNOWN SUCCESSFUL STRIKE ON A SU-57 FIGHTER PLANE, A TWIN-ENGINE STEALTH FIGHTER LAUDED AS MOSCOW'S MOST ADVANCED MILITARY AIRCRAFT

REUTERS

Kyiv, June 9: Ukrainian forces have for the first time hit a latest-generation Russian Sukhoi Su-57 fighter jet at an air base inside Russia, Kyiv's GUR defence intelligence agency said Sunday, showing satellite pictures which it said confirmed the strike.

In a Telegram post, the GUR did not specify how the Su-57 was hit or by which unit of the Ukrainian military.

A popular Russian pro-war military blogger who calls himself Fighterbomber and focuses on aviation said the report of the strike on the Su-57 was correct and that it had been hit by a drone.



was parked at the Akhtubinsk airfield, which it said was 589 km from front lines in Ukraine between Ukrainian and Russian invasion forces. "The pictures show that June 7, the Su-57 was standing intact, and (June 8th), there were craters from the explosion and characteristic spots of fire caused by fire damage near it," the GUR said, with the images posted alongside the message.

Ukraine has been fighting a full-scale Russian invasion since February 2022. Both sides conduct regular strikes hundreds of kilometres into enemy territory with missiles and drones. Ukraine, which lacks the vast

The development follows western allies' nod to Kyiv to use their weapons for limited strikes inside Russia

RETALIATION TO TRASH BALLOONS

SK restarts anti-NK broadcasts

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, June 9: South Korea announced Sunday resumed anti-North Korean propaganda loudspeaker broadcasts in border areas in retaliation to the North sending over 1000 balloons filled with trash and manure over the last couple of weeks.

The move is certain to anger Pyongyang and potentially prompt it to take retaliatory military steps, and adds to tensions between the war-divided rivals amid a diplomatic stalemate over the North's nuclear ambitions.

Following an emergency security meeting led by South Korean national security director Chang Ho-jin Sunday, officials decided to install and begin the loudspeaker broadcasts, Seoul's presidential office said in a statement.

Chang and other South Korean security officials berated Pyongyang for attempting to cause "anxiety and disruption" in South Korea and stressed that North Korea would be "solely responsible" for any future escalation of tensions between the Koreas.

The North said its campaign



REUTERS

came after South Korean activists sent over balloons filled with anti-North Korean leaflets, as well as USB sticks filled with popular South Korean songs and dramas which Pyongyang is extremely sensitive to as it fears it could demoralise front-line troops and residents and eventually weaken leader Kim Jong Un's grip on power, analysts say.

With the loudspeakers, South Korea may blare anti-Pyongyang broadcasts, K-pop songs and outside news across the rivals' heavily armed border.

In 2015, when South Korea restarted loudspeaker broadcasts for the first time in 11 years, North Korea fired artillery rounds across the border; prompt-

ing South Korea to return fire, according to South Korean officials. No casualties were reported.

Last week, as tensions spiked over the trash-carrying balloons, South Korea also suspended a 2018 tension-easing agreement with North Korea, allowing it to resume propaganda campaigns and possibly restart live-fire military exercises in border areas.

South Korean Defence Minister Shin Won-sik in a meeting with top military commanders called for thorough preparation against the possibility that the North responds to the loudspeaker broadcasts with direct military action, the South Korean Defence Ministry said in a statement.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said it detected the North launching around 330 balloons toward the South since Saturday night and about 80 were found in South Korean territory as of Sunday morning.

The North's vice defence minister, Kim Kang Il, later said his country would stop the balloon campaign but threatened to resume it if South Korean activists sent leaflets again.

US provoking arms race in moves into SCS: China



REUTERS

Beijing, June 9: The US poses the largest security challenge in the South China Sea as its military deployment there is turning it into "the whirlpool of an arms race", Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong said in remarks published Sunday.

Recent maritime run-ins between China and the Philippines, a US treaty ally, have made the highly strategic South China Sea a potential flashpoint between Washington and Beijing. "At present, the biggest security challenge in the South China Sea comes from outside the region," Sun said in comments published by his ministry, after

The move by the US to deploy medium-range missile systems in the area is dragging the region into the whirlpool of an arms race, placing the entire Asia Pacific region under the shadow of geopolitical conflicts

SUN WEIDONG | VICE FOREIGN MINISTER, CHINA

attending a high-level meeting on East Asian cooperation in Laos.

Sun said US-led forces were "promoting military deployment and actions in the South China Sea, inciting and intensifying maritime disputes and contradictions, and damaging the legitimate rights and interests of coastal countries".

China claims almost the entire South China Sea, a conduit for more than \$3 trillion in annual ship commerce, and has deployed hundreds of coast guard vessels as far as 1,000 km off its mainland to police what it says is its jurisdiction.

business

of the day quote

India's PC penetration per household is around 10 to 11 per cent. Which means around 90 per cent of Indian households still do not have a PC, which means it is a very good opportunity for us

ARNOLD SU | VP, ASUS INDIA

The outlook for the market will be guided by major domestic and global economic data. India WPI inflation, China CPI inflation, UK GDP data, US CPI data, and the US Fed interest decision will guide the market this week

ARVINDER SINGH NANDA | SENIOR VP, MASTER CAPITAL SERVICES

We are planning to build India as our Global hub, therefore, we are transferring technology and knowledge and investing in our new research and development centre in Chennai

PARITOSH PRAJAPATI | CEO, GX GROUP

SHORT TAKES

Instant flour mixes to attract 18% GST

New Delhi: Instant mixes, including idli, dosa and khaman flour, cannot be classified as chhatua or sattu and 18 per cent GST should be levied on them, the Gujarat Appellate Authority for Advance Ruling (GAAAR) has ruled. Gujarat-based Kitchen Express Overseas Ltd had approached the AAAR against the ruling by the GST advance authority, saying that its seven 'instant flour mixes' are not 'ready to eat' but are required to undergo certain cooking procedures and can be termed 'ready to cook'. The company sells flour mixes of gota, khaman, dalwada, dahi-wada, dhokla, idli and dosa in powder form and pleaded that it is akin to Sattu and should attract Goods and Services Tax (GST) of 5 per cent.

Insolvency against Himalayan Mineral

New Delhi: The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has directed initiating insolvency proceedings against Himalayan Mineral Waters, allowing Jammu & Kashmir Bank's plea for default of a corporate guarantee given for Leel Electricals. The Allahabad bench of NCLT has also appointed Bhoopesh Gupta as the interim resolution professional (IRP) for this Dehradun-based firm's Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP). Jammu & Kashmir Bank had claimed a default of Rs 50 crore against Himalayan Mineral Waters, engaged in the business of manufacturing of beverages, being the corporate guarantor for the credit facilities availed by the Leel Electricals.

448 infra projects hit by cost overrun

New Delhi: As many as 448 infrastructure projects, each entailing an investment of Rs 150 crore or above, were hit by a cost overrun of more than Rs 5.55 lakh crore in April 2024, according to an official report. According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), which monitors infrastructure projects worth Rs 150 crore and above, out of 1,838 projects, 448 reported cost overruns and 792 projects were delayed. The total original cost of implementation of the 1,838 projects was Rs 27,64,246.50 crore, and their anticipated completion cost is likely to be Rs 33,19,601.84 crore, which reflects an overall cost overrun of over Rs 5,55,355.34 (20.09 per cent of original cost), the ministry's latest report for April 2024 showed.

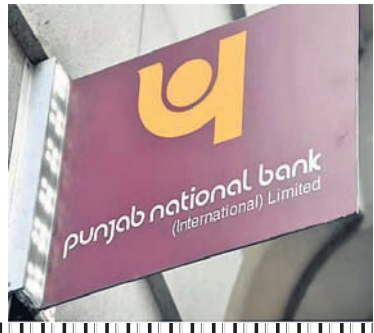


The alliance is to bring the partners together to provide a unique value proposition. It is all about more choices, options and for a market size of India that is the very best thing

THEO PANAGIOTOULAS | CEO, STAR ALLIANCE

PNB EXPANDS GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

State-owned Punjab National Bank plans to open a representative office in Dubai, as part of its plan to expand its global footprint. As March 31, 2024, PNB had presence in six countries by way of two subsidiaries (London-UK and Bhutan), one joint venture (Nepal), two representative offices (Myanmar and Bangladesh)



Selling by FPIs continues

Foreign investors dump Indian shares in June on poll results, attractive Chinese stock valuations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 9: Foreign investors withdrew nearly Rs 14,800 crore from domestic stocks in the first week of this month, influenced by India's Lok Sabha election results and attractive valuations of Chinese stocks.

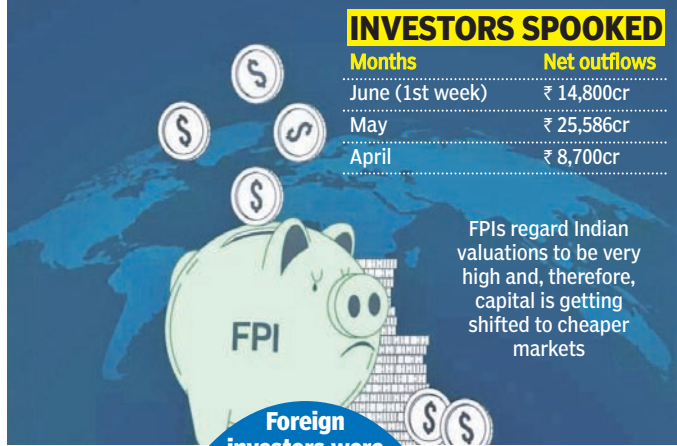
The outflow came following a net outflow of Rs 25,586 crore in May on poll jitters and more than Rs 8,700 crore in April on concerns over a tweak in India's tax treaty with Mauritius and a sustained rise in US bond yields.

Before that, FPIs made a net investment of Rs 35,098 crore in March and Rs 1,539 crore in February, while they took out Rs 25,743 crore in January, data with the depositories showed.

From a medium to long-term perspective, the direction of interest rates will remain a key driver for foreign investment flows into the Indian equity markets.

According to the data, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) made a net withdrawal of Rs 14,794 crore this month (till June 7).

The general election results in India significantly influenced foreign investor flows in Indian equity markets in June.



Foreign investors were also seemingly concerned by the fact that no party could get a clear majority in this parliamentary election, which would have prompted them to adopt a wait and watch approach

HIMANSHU SRIVASTAVA | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR (MANAGER RESEARCH), MORNINGSTAR INVESTMENT RESEARCH

Last week began optimistically as exit polls indicated a decisive victory for the BJP and the NDA government, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said. However, the actual results diverged considerably from these expectations, leading to a re-

versal in market sentiment, thereby triggering a massive outflow by foreign investors. Foreign investors were also seemingly concerned by the fact that no party could get a clear majority in this parliamentary election, which would have prompted them to adopt a wait and watch approach, he added. FPIs regard Indian valuations to be very high and, therefore, capital is getting shifted to cheaper markets.

Open access solar addition doubles to 1.8GW in 1st qtr

Rajasthan led solar open access capacity additions, accounting for almost 28% followed by Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra with 21% and 12%, respectively during Jan to March

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 9: Open access solar installations rose two-fold in India to 1.8 gigawatts during January-March this year supported by several factors, including reduced module cost, US-based Mercom Capital has said.

Solar power through open access is an arrangement where a power producer establishes a solar power plant to supply green energy to consumers. India added over 1.8 gigawatts (GW) of solar open access capacity in the first quarter of the calendar year of 2024, posting a two-fold increase from 909.3 megawatts (MW) in Q4 2023, the report titled 'Mercom India Solar Open Access Market' said.

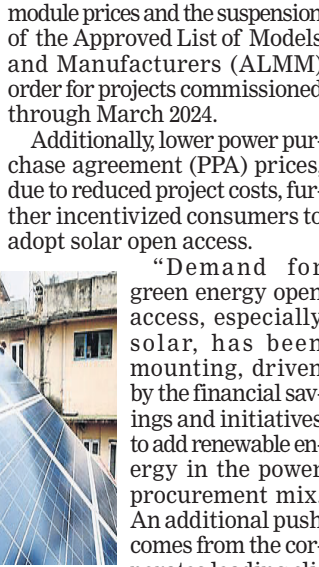
As of March 2024, the cumulative installed solar open access capacity stood at 14.3 GW. Solar open access developers benefited from lower Chinese

module prices and the suspension of the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) order for projects commissioned through March 2024.

Additionally, lower power purchase agreement (PPA) prices, due to reduced project costs, further incentivized consumers to adopt solar open access.

"Demand for green energy open access, especially solar, has been mounting, driven by the financial savings and initiatives to add renewable energy in the power procurement mix. An additional push comes from the corporates leading climate change mitigation strategies. If not for the regulatory restrictions, green energy open access could be the driving force that helps India meet its non-fossil fuel targets," said Priya Sanjay, Managing Director at Mercom India.

The pipeline of solar open access projects under development and in the pre-construction phase was over 18 GW as of March 2024. Almost 74 per cent of pipeline projects were in Karnataka, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh.



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India's end-use energy consumption to grow 90% by 2050: Rosneft head

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 9: India's end-use energy consumption is set to grow by 90 per cent by 2050 -- one of the fastest growth rates in the world, Russian oil giant Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin said.

Sechin, Chief Executive Officer of Rosneft, Russia's biggest oil producer, addressed key global business and political leaders at the Energy Panel of the 27th St Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF), according to a statement by the company.

In his keynote speech titled "Energy transition and phantom barrels", he provided a comprehensive analysis of the current state of the energy market and highlighted key challenges facing the industry.

"Over the next five years, India is projected to continue its strong economic momentum and become one of the top three largest economies in the world with a GDP of \$5 trillion, and by 2050 will overtake the US in terms of the size of the economy," he said.

He added that India's end-use energy consumption is set to grow 90 per cent by 2050, registering one of the fastest growth rates in the world.

Taking about the global prepa-



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RUSSIAN OIL GIANT ROSNEFT CEO IGOR SECHIN

ration on energy transition, Rosneft CEO criticised the prioritisation of the anthropogenic factor in climate change discourse and argues against the effectiveness of energy transition initiatives in addressing environmental concerns.

Sechin highlighted the in-

sights of renowned physicist Pyotr Leonidovich Kapitsa, who predicted energy production challenges due to the inefficiency of alternative energy sources. Despite considering hydrogen as a promising clean fuel, he pointed out current limitations in production technology, logistics, and market readiness.

He highlighted that while renewable energy accounts for less than 5 per cent of global energy production and electric vehicles only make up approximately 3 per cent, consumption of oil, gas, and coal has continued to rise.

Sechin underlined that the energy transition should be well-balanced and focused on addressing the interests of the majority that will ensure the growth of energy consumption in the coming years, i.e. developing countries.

He also noted that to achieve energy security, it is necessary to ensure the sufficiency, affordability, and reliability of energy sources.

Aggressive promotion of the "green agenda" actually means declaring an energy war on the majority of the world's population, and overcoming energy inequality is impossible without reliable supplies of oil and gas, said Rosneft CEO.

PV exports rise by 2.68L units

LAST FOUR YEARS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 9: Passenger vehicle exports from India rose by 2.68 lakh units in the last four financial years with Maruti Suzuki India accounting for nearly 70 per cent of the incremental shipments during the period.

As per the industry data, passenger vehicle exports in the 2020-21 fiscal stood at 4,04,397 units. It rose to 5,77,875 units in the 2021-22 fiscal year and to 6,62,703 units in 2022-23 financial year.

Last fiscal, exports stood at 6,72,105 units, a rise of 2,67,708 units since 2020-21. In the last three fiscal years, Maruti Suzuki has accounted for 70 per cent of the incremental 2,67,708 units across the industry which were shipped to overseas markets.

The auto major's export shipment increased by 1,85,774 units between FY21 and FY24.

When contacted, Maruti Suzuki India Executive Officer Corporate Affairs Rahul Bhatti said that factors like addition of more models, adherence to global production standards and



tie-up with Toyota have helped in ramping up the exports' volume. He noted that the company is currently exporting models to around 100 nations across the globe. Top overseas markets for the company currently are South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Chile and Mexico.

Other major markets include the Philippines, Indonesia and Ivory Coast.

MSI exports models like Baleno, Dzire, Swift, S-Presso, Grand Vitara, Jimny, Celerio and Vertigo.

MSI exported 2,80,712 units last fiscal, an increase of 10 per cent over 2,55,439 units in FY23. Rival Hyundai shipped 1,63,155 units in FY24 as compared with 1,53,019 units in FY23, an increase of 7 per cent.

Mcap of 8 of top-10 valued firms jumps ₹3.28 lakh crore



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 9: Eight of the 10 most valued domestic firms together added Rs 3.28 lakh crore to their market valuation last week, with blue-chips Tata Consultancy Services, Hindustan Unilever and Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest winners.

In an eventful week, the BSE benchmark jumped 2,732.05 points or 3.69 per cent.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,720.8 points or 2.29 per cent to hit a new record peak of 76,795.31 in intra-day trade Friday. The benchmark ended at a record high of 76,693.36, up 1,618.85 points or 2.16 per cent.

From the top-10 pack, Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever (HUL) and ITC were the gainers. These companies added a total of Rs 3,28,116.58 crore to their market valuations.

State Bank of India and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) were the laggards from the top-10 pack.

The market valuation of TCS zoomed Rs 80,828.08 crore to Rs 14,08,485.29 crore, emerging as the biggest gainer from the pack.

Hindustan Unilever added Rs 58,258.11 crore taking its market capitalisation (mcap) to Rs 6,05,407.43 crore.

The valuation of Reliance Industries jumped Rs 54,024.35 crore to Rs 19,88,741.47 crore and that of Infosys rallied by Rs 52,770.59 crore to Rs 6,36,630.87 crore.

The mcap of HDFC Bank soared Rs 32,241.67 crore to Rs 11,96,325.52 crore and that of Bharti Airtel climbed Rs 32,080.61 crore to Rs 8,10,416.01 crore.

ITC's valuation surged Rs 16,167.71 crore to Rs 5,48,204.12 crore and that of ICICI Bank went up by Rs 1,745.46 crore to Rs 7,88,975.17 crore.

However, the mcap of LIC declined by Rs 12,080.75 crore to Rs 6,28,451.77 crore and that of State Bank of India went lower by Rs 178.5 crore to Rs 7,40,653.54 crore.

In the ranking of the most valued firms, Reliance Industries retained the title of number one company followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, LIC, Hindustan Unilever and ITC.

OUTPUT PLUNGES

ONGC seeks foreign partners for Mumbai High oilfield

THE MUMBAI HIGH FIELD -- INDIA'S MOST PROLIFIC OIL FIELD -- LIES SOME 160-KILOMETER IN THE ARABIAN SEA OFF THE MUMBAI COAST. IT WAS DISCOVERED IN FEB 1974 AND STARTED PRODUCTION MAY 21, 1976

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 9: State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is seeking foreign partners to reverse declining output at its flagship Mumbai High fields, offering a share of revenue from incremental production plus a fixed fee but not any equity stake.

ONGC June 1 floated international tender seeking global technical services providers (TSP) with annual revenue of at least \$75 billion, according to the tender document.

The TSP would have to do a comprehensive review of the field performance and identify improvements as well as implement suitable technological interventions and practices for improving production and recovery, it said.

Bidders have been asked to quote quarterly incremental production they can enable over the 10-year contract period as well as the percentage share of



the revenue they want from the sale of oil and gas produced over and above the baseline production.

Bids are due by September 15, 2024. The TSP, who would be selected on the basis of one offering the highest incremental production and the lowest revenue share, will also be paid a fixed service fee for its efforts, the document said.

The Mumbai High field (previously Bombay High field) -- India's most prolific oil field -- lies some 160-kilometer in the

Arabian Sea off the Mumbai coast. It was discovered in February 1974 and started production May 21, 1976.

The field hit a peak of 4,76,000 barrels of oil per day and 28 billion cubic meters of gas in 1989 and has since seen a gradual decline in output.

It is currently producing 1,34,000 bpd of oil and 13 bcm (less than 10 million standard cubic meters per day) of gas -- accounting for almost 38 per cent of India's production and 14 per cent of consumption.

ONGC believes the field still has a balance reserve of 80 million tonnes (610 million barrels) of oil and over 40 bcm of gas and hence needs partners who can help tap them.

With the field seeing a steady decline in output, a stake sale had been considered on at least two occasions in recent years.

A high-level committee headed by the then Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar in late 2018 considered "transferring" western offshore oil and gas fields of Mumbai High as also some fields in Mumbai offshore, Assam, Rajasthan, and Gujarat to private/foreign companies.

But that plan met with strong opposition from ONGC and some quarters within the government, three sources with knowledge of the matter said.

While ONGC opposed giving away on a platter to private/foreign sector what it discovered after years of toil and spending billions of dollars over last four decades, some in government

Bowlers script thrilling win



FIERY SPELL: Jasprit Bumrah celebrates after dismissing Pakistan captain Babar Azam during the game Sunday. PTI PHOTOS

NEW YORK, June 9: Pakistan's jinx against India in the World Cup continued as they lost the vital game here Sunday at the Nassau County Stadium by six runs. The Indian bowlers rose to the occasion splendidly to defend a small total of 119 runs. On a double-paced track, the Indian bowlers led by Jasprit Bumrah (3/14) came to the party in brilliant fashion to restrict the opposition and script yet another victory for India. Earlier, India suffered a mid-innings collapse on a two-paced track to post an underwhelming 119 against arch-rivals Pakistan despite a gutsy effort from Rishabh Pant (42, 31b, 6x4) in the T20 World Cup here Sunday.

India's new No.3 Pant rode his luck during his innings, but other batters in the star-studded line-up could not apply themselves on a challenging surface. Pakistan dismissed India with an over to spare courtesy an all-round bowling effort with Naseem Shah (3/21) and Haris Rauf (3/21) sharing six wickets between themselves. India lost seven wickets for just 28 runs as they looked in control at 89 for three in the 12th over. Intermittent rain delayed the toss and subsequently the start of the game by 50 minutes. Amid overcast skies, Babar Azam expectedly put the opposition India in to bat. After the opening over from Shaheen Afridi, in which Rohit played a sublime pick up shot for six over deep square-leg, rain re-

turned to halt the game gain by roughly 30 minutes. Virat Kohli (4) hit a glorious cover drive off Shah on the first ball of his innings post the resumption before getting caught at point off a wide and short ball two balls later. The drop-in pitch, which made headlines for the wrong reasons prior to the game, had enough for pacers as well as the spinners but there was not as much uneven bounce as seen in the previous games. With India feeling the heat at 19 for two, India decided to promote Axar Patel (20) at No. 4 to shield Suryakumar Yadav, a surprising move as the team has able batters till No. 8. However, to Axar's credit, the southpaw did play some bold strokes, including a six over



Rishabh Pant top scored for India

third man off Shaheen Shah Afridi (1/29) in his brief stay. Axar and Pant put on 39 runs for the third wicket, the highest during the Indian innings. Pant, who got two streaky fours off Mohammad Amir (2/23) at the start of his innings, rode his luck to play a pivotal knock. The gutsy left-hander was also dropped on eight before he gained in confidence to come up with a series of fearless fours. Three came in the opening over from Rauf before he unleashed the reverse hit off spinner Imad Wasim.

BRIEF SCORES
India 119 in 19 overs (Rishabh Pant 42, Naseem Shah 3/21, Haris Rauf 3/21) beat Pakistan 113 for 7 (Jasprit Bumrah 3/14) by 6 runs.

Alcaraz is new clay court king

Zverev's Grand Slam jinx continues as he loses a five-set thriller to the Spaniard

AGENCIES

Paris, June 9: Spaniard Carlos Alcaraz took the first step to emerge as countryman Rafa Nadal's successor by winning the French Open men's singles title for the first at the Roland Garros here Sunday. This was his third Grand Slam title, the other two coming at the US Open (2022) and Wimbledon (2023). Nadal had won 14 titles on the clay courts of Roland Garros, a feat that will probably remain unmatched in the next decade or so. However, Alcaraz showed Sunday that the time has come to carry on the baton passed over by Nadal. The Grand Slam jinx on the other hand continued for Alcaraz's opponent in the final, Alexander Zverev. At 27, he is the only one among the new brigade who is yet to win a Grand Slam title. Zverev gave it his best shot, he led by two sets to one against

the Spaniard. However, in the end Alcaraz triumphed 6-3, 2-6, 5-7, 6-1, 6-2. It was clear during the four hour and 20 minutes match that Zverev's energy in the fourth and fifth sets had gone missing. He surrendered to the relentless barrage of shots from the Spaniard. Zverev had knocked out Nadal in the first round, but then in the final another Spaniard turned out to be his nemesis. Zverev had also led 2-0 during the 2020 US Open final, but then had lost the match. Alcaraz is a 21-year-old from Spain who grew up watching Nadal win trophy after trophy at Roland Garros and now has eclipsed the latter to become the youngest man to collect major championships on three surfaces. Nadal was about 1 1/2 years older when he did it. The match could have gone either way. However, it was Alcaraz's desire to chase down

every ball that turned the dice in his favour. He played a mixture of brute force and finesse that even surprised Zverev at times. It was tennis bliss to watch Alcaraz in action as he played some tremendous forehand winners, finding angles that probably a Roger Federer could have done only. In windy conditions, the Spaniard showcased his fearless brand of tennis in front of a lively Parisian crowd. Having saved multiple break points to maintain the lead in the deciding set, he went a double break ahead before serving out for the victory, sinking to the floor and punching his fists in delight. The journey has started only for Alcaraz. Nadal can rest well-assured that the baton is in the right hands. Many more Grand Slam trophies will surely find a place in Alcaraz's trophy cabinet as at 21 he is just beginning.



FEELING ECSTATIC: Carlos Alcaraz is all pumped up after winning the final of the French Open, Sunday. PHOTO X

SHORT TAKES

Chennaiyin sign striker Chima

Chennai: Chennaiyin FC (CFC) have added a powerful weapon to their offensive arsenal with the signing of prolific Nigerian striker Daniel Chima Chukwu ahead of the 2024-25 season. The 33-year-old experienced centre-forward is a popular name among Indian football fans, having previously played for Indian Super League (ISL) outfits East Bengal and Jamshedpur. CFC have signed a two-year contract with Chima which will keep him at the club till 2026. He becomes the club's fourth signing of the 2024-25 season. Chima has scored 20 goals in the 60 matches that he has played in the IPL.

Good day for Indian athletes

Portland (USA): Asian Championships bronze medallist runner Sanjivani Jadhav has won the gruelling women's 10,000m race at the Portland Track Festival High-Performance Meet, clocking a personal best time of 32:22.77 seconds here. Portland has turned out to be a happy hunting ground for the 27-year-old long-distance runner, who had finished second in the event last year, registering 32:46.88 seconds, her first sub-33 seconds mark. Another Indian in the fray, Seema finished fifth clocking 32:55.91. Commonwealth and Asian Games medallist, Avinash Sable clocked 8:21.85 seconds in men's 3000m steeplechase to finish second, though he was a good 10 seconds adrift of his national record of 8:11.20, set at the 2022 CWG where he had won the silver medal.

Suárez to play his 5th Copa America

Montevideo (Uruguay): Luis Suárez, Uruguay's all-time leading scorer, will play in his fifth Copa América. The 37-year-old Suárez, who plays for Inter Miami, was in the 26-man squad named Saturday by national coach Marcelo Bielsa. Suárez said on social media he was "very happy and proud" to be picked. Uruguay face host United States, Bolivia and Panama in Group C. "Let's go Uruguay, let's go," Suárez wrote. He won the Copa America in 2011 and was the player of the tournament. He was picked for 2016 but injury kept him on the bench, and played in 2019 and 2021 when they reached the quarterfinals.

Puja 1st Indian to win UFC bout



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

My MMA journey was not easy, this win is for my mother as she has fought with the world for me
PUJA TOMAR

are not losers," Tomar told 'Sony Sports Network' after her win. The 30-year-old, known as 'Cyclone', signed a contract with the UFC last year in October to become the first woman from India to compete in the biggest Mixed Martial Arts promotion. Anshul Jubli and Bharat Kandare have represented India on the world stage in the UFC, as has Canada-based Arjan Singh Bhullar. "I feel great. I had come from home thinking that I will win. I have worked really hard that's why I am here and the crowd is cheering me. I was very strong and motivated so that's why I won," Tomar stated. Born in Budhana village of Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar, Tomar is a five-time national Wushu champion and also has a background in karate and taekwondo.

Kentucky, June 9: India's Puja Tomar scripted history Saturday as she became the first mixed martial arts fighter from the country to win a bout at the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) in UFC Louisville here. Debutant Tomar eked out a 30-27, 27-30, 29-28 split-decision win over Brazil's Rayanne dos Santos in the straw-weight (52kg) bout. "This win is not my win. This is for all Indian fans and all Indian fighters. Before everyone thought that Indian fighters did not stand anywhere. I only thought I have to win and show the world that Indian fighters

Hockey teams falter in Pro League

BOTH WOMEN'S AND MEN'S TEAM LOSE THEIR RESPECTIVE GAMES BY NARROW MARGINS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, June 9: The Indian women's hockey team went down fighting 2-3 to Great Britain in their FIH Pro League match here Sunday, extending their run of losses to eight matches. However, the eves were unlucky to lose Sunday as they had led 2-1 till the 55th minute. But two quick goals from Grace Baldson (56th and 58th) ensured victory for the hosts. With the score reading 2-2 and the final hooter approaching, Badlson struck the winner - a powerful drag-flick hitting the bottom corner. She was the same person, who scored against India to snatch bronze for England at the Tokyo Olympics. Lalremsemi scored a field goal for India in the 14th minute after Watson Charlotte put Britain in lead with her third minute strike. Navneet Kaur again gave India the lead with a strike in the 23rd minute. It was a much-improved performance by the Indian side but not enough to beat their run of defeats. "These are not the results what we want. We are upset about



Harmanpreet Singh got a consolation goal for India against Germany

today's result. We came back from a goal down, we needed to be calm in the end. When we came here, we had to play attacking hockey. The four matches in Belgium, we were defensive. We did that in London, but of course our defence needs to do better," said goalkeeper Savita Punia. Earlier in a game played late Saturday night, the men's team lost to Germany 2-3 in another match of the Pro League. For India, skipper Harmanpreet Singh (19th) and Sukhjeet Singh (48th) scored the goals, while

Germany's goal getters were Gonzalo Peillat (2nd, 33rd) and Christopher Ruhr (10th) in the contest played at the Lee Valley Hockey Stadium. Germany were quick to get off the blocks and put India on the back-foot. The reigning World Champions earned a penalty corner early in the first quarter which was converted by Peillat to put his side in lead. They doubled their lead as Ruhr found the back of the net in the 10th minute. The first quarter ended with Germany leading 2-0.

Russell on pole at Canadian GP

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Montreal, June 9: George Russell edged Formula 1 (F1) points leader Max Verstappen on a tie-breaker for the pole position in the Canadian Grand Prix here Saturday. Russell and Verstappen had identical laps of 1 minute 12.000 seconds at Circuit Gilles Villeneuve, with the Mercedes driver getting the top spot Sunday by setting the time first. It's the second time F1 qualifying has ended in a tie since the start of three-decimal timing. Now Russell faces the challenge of keeping Red Bull star Verstappen behind him in the race. "Why not? Of course. Let's go for it," Russell said. "The car has been feeling amazing. Since we brought some upgrades to Monaco, we've sort of really been in that fight now. We're going for it Sunday," he added. The 26-year-old Russell claimed his second career pole. "It's been a while since we've experienced this feeling," Russell said. "So much hard work going on behind the scenes... we've almost felt like all of that hard work hasn't been paying off. But now it has," he added.

Age no barrier for modern-day footballers

AT 40 YEARS CRISTIANO RONALDO AND 38-YEAR-OLD LUKA MODRIC READY TO CHALLENGE THE BEST

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, June 9: Aged 39 and about to play in a record-extending sixth European Championships, Cristiano Ronaldo's longevity at soccer's highest levels almost defies belief. Luka Modric is 38, still performing for Real Madrid and will be expected to provide the 'X' factor for Croatia at the Euros in Germany. The tournament starts June 14. The best players are extending their careers for longer despite the increased pace and intensity of the modern game. Higher levels of fitness and stamina are being demanded of athletes, but that is being matched by ever-improving expertise in how to maximize performance. "Sports science has had an impact on how we prepare the modern-day player in terms of diet, nutrition, lifestyle, (and) training programmes. We've



Cristiano Ronaldo and Luka Modric during their playing days in Real Madrid

moved out of the 80s and 90s with the increased level of professionalism," Tony Strudwick, a sports scientist with more than three decades of experience in soccer, told this agency. Strudwick has held promi-

nent roles at Manchester United, Arsenal and England and is currently director of medical at West Bromwich Albion. He worked with Ronaldo at United when the Portugal forward first established himself as one of

the best players in the world. "He (Ronaldo) just set himself up for success," Strudwick said. "I said four or five years ago, knowing how professional Ronaldo was, he could play up to the age of 40. That was no problem," he added. With his 40th birthday in sight, Ronaldo shows no signs of quitting. And, with the advancement of sports science, the longevity that the likes of Ronaldo and Modric are achieving could become the norm. "It's not so much that athletes have changed physically over the years - rather it has been a shift in mentality. "We have seen a kind of evolution in professionalism as opposed to an evolution in genetics," Strudwick said. "It wasn't that players were unprofessional (in the past). There's a lot more scrutiny on players in terms of accountability," added Strudwick.

Gurpreet named skipper of Indian football team

MUST-WIN GAME FOR BLUE TIGERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Doha, June 9: India's first-choice goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu was named Sunday the captain of the team for the must-win 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifying match against Qatar here. India will play hosts Qatar in the return fixture at Jassim bin Hamad Stadium here Tuesday. Head coach Igor Stimac had named a 23-member squad for the fixture. Apart from Sunil Chhetri, who retired after his last game for the country against Kuwait played Thursday, defenders Amey Ranawade, Lalchungnunga and Subhasish Bose did not travel to Qatar. Bose was released on his request because of personal reasons. About Ranawade and Lalchungnunga, Stimac said, "I was happy to have both of them



with us. We worked on various aspects of their game for the future. We had a nice talk before we released them and they know which parts of their game they need to grow for the upcoming season." The coach added, "I hope both of them will use the time ahead to improve and back stronger." As far as the captain's armband is concerned, Stimac mentioned that it was a no-brainer to hand it to Gurpreet. With 71 caps, the 32-year-old is the most experienced and longest-serving player in the national team after Chhetri.