



Khushi's humility
Actor Khushi Kapoor says she's not only blessed for the love she gets, but is also thankful to her critics

LEISURE | P2



Lebanon war looms
Israeli PM says the current phase of fighting against Hamas in Gaza is winding down as he targets Lebanon next

INTERNATIONAL | P10



CAD narrows
For FY24, current account deficit narrows to USD 23.2 billion or 0.7% of GDP against USD 67 billion or 2% of GDP in FY23

BUSINESS | P11



Rohit bludgeons Oz
Riding on a brilliant knock from skipper Rohit Sharma, India defeat Australia by 24 runs to enter the semis of the T20 World Cup

SPORTS | P12

'Ratna Bhandar opening soon'

Bhubaneswar: The date and modalities for opening of the Ratna Bhandar (treasure trove) of the Shree Jagannath Temple will be announced very soon, Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan informed here Monday. "The government is in the process of deciding on the opening of Ratna Bhandar. We will give a clear picture of the date and modalities very soon and announce accordingly. But definitely, the Ratna Bhandar will be opened and an inventory of its contents made," said Harichandan. There has not been any audit of the inner chamber of the Ratna Bhandar since 1978.

Police seize remains of married minor girl

Digapahandi: Days after in-laws of a married minor cremated her body without informing the police or her family, cops seized Monday the remains from the cremation ground at Bhismagiri village under this block in Ganjam district. Police took the action after the father of the deceased, Shibaram Sahu lodged a murder complaint at the Digapahandi police station. The girl died under mysterious circumstances, Saturday. Police have also arrested the husband of the deceased, Jitendra Bisoyi and her father-in-law Ramesh Bisoyi.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Why should we read and follow something that belongs to INDI alliance?



PROTESTS INTENSIFY: NSUI members raise slogans and try to break barricades protesting against the alleged irregularities in NEET-UG and cancellation of UGC-NET exams, in New Delhi, Monday

2 dead, 10 hurt in steel plant mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK
Dhenkanal, June 24: Two workers were killed while 10 others suffered injuries Monday morning as a mechanical structure collapsed on them during work at a private steel plant at Jhadabandh village under Balimi police limits and Hindol block in this district. The condition of two of the injured are stated to be critical. The mishap occurred when the workers were at the factory site owned by Rungata Mines Ltd. The deceased were identified as Bishnu Majhi, 42, of Howrah district and Bibekananda Sahu, 37, a resident of Medinipur district, both in West Bengal. The critically injured workers, Naba Kumar Samanta, 40 and Amal Bera, 35 have been admitted to a private hospital in Cuttack, officials said. Police registered a case after the company's DGM (Security) Tarun Kumar Dubey lodged a complaint against the contractor implementing the project at the site. The incident sparked tension in the area after some BJP leaders staged a sit-in opposite the plant premises alleging negligence towards safety of the workers. Senior officials reached the site and diffused the situation by agreeing to pay ₹20 lakh to the family of the two deceased. Protests were then called off.

Cold storages in all blocks

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 24: Minister of Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare department, Krushna Chandra Patra said Monday that the Odisha government is planning to construct cold storage facilities in every block of the state. He pointed out that once the facilities come up, it will help in controlling the price hike of vegetables. However, he pointed out that the job is monumental and it will take some time before each block has a cold storage facility. "We have plans to open cold storage facilities in every block of Odisha," Patra told reporters here. "Once they are set up, the hike in vegetable prices can be controlled," Patra stated. The minister also explained as to why the price of onions is on the rise. "Onions are brought from Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh at ₹2,953 per quintal. Hence it boils down to ₹29.53 per kilogram. Then transportation costs and profits of wholesalers and retailers are added, making the final selling price of onions at ₹40/45 per kilogram," the minister stated. Patra also said that the gov-



Minister of Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare department, Krushna Chandra Patra during a review meeting Monday

ernment is closely monitoring the situation to prevent unauthorised hoarding and storing of vegetables. "We will take strict action against anyone who tries to trouble the consumers by hoarding vegetables," Patra asserted. Patra said that the Odisha government has nothing to do in the hike in rates of potatoes. "Potato price rise is due

to the hike in rates in West Bengal and Assam, two states that majorly supply the vegetable to us," Patra stated. Patra pointed out that by only developing cold storage facilities, the hike in rates of all vegetables can be controlled. "It is a time consuming process, but we are committed about the project and we will certainly do it. We have already started planning

on the same lines," Patra stated. On being asked about the rising price of tomatoes and other veggies in the state, the minister said, "The government doesn't have control over the prices of many products. We have to bring these from other states. When prices of these produces vary in other states it has an effect on the markets in Odisha also," Patra pointed out.

Bid to kill me during BJD regime: Majhi

PNN & AGENCIES

Keonjhar, June 24: Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi alleged Monday there was an attempt to assassinate him during the regime of the previous BJD government by hurling bombs. Majhi, a senior BJP leader, made the remark while addressing a public meeting at Jhumpura locality in his home district of Keonjhar. "There was an attempt to kill me in a bomb blast in Mandua locality. However, I was saved due to God's blessings and the love of people," Majhi stated. "I have nothing to fear when Maa Tarini, Maa Durga, Lord Baladev and Lord Jagannath are with me," the chief minister added. Majhi, on the second day of his visit to his home district, held a roadshow before attending the rally where he was felicitated. He also visited the Maa Tarini, Baladev Jew and Lord Jagannath temples. "I am the people's chief minister and I have no problem in meeting anyone. Come to Bhubaneswar if required. I will meet people directly," Majhi



asserted. "We have got an opportunity today to be happy and we should celebrate," he said, recalling his childhood days when he used to visit the weekly market at Jhumpura with his mother. The chief minister said as promised in the BJD manifesto, his priority is to provide Rs 3,100 per quintal of paddy as MSP from the Kharif season. He also said Rs 50,000 will be paid to every eligible woman under the 'Subhadra Yojana'. Majhi pointed out that Keonjhar district is rich in natural resources. He said his dream is to build a 'sunehra (golden) Kanojhar'. "We can build a developed Keonjhar if we have the determination to do so," he added.

DSP demoted to constable over affair

WIFE OF THE COP FOUND HIM AND A WOMAN CONSTABLE IN A HOTEL IN KANPUR AND LODGED A COMPLAINT

AGENCIES

Lucknow, June 24: A DSP, who was found in a hotel with a woman constable three years back, has been demoted to the rank of a constable in Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) in Gorakhpur, officials said Monday. This was however not the first time that the errant cop was found wandering. Earlier also another lady cop had lodged a complaint against him, but later withdrew it. Kripa Shankar Kannaujiya, 59, was demoted to his original rank of constable Saturday, cancelling all his promotions in a move considered rare, officials stated. Kannaujiya, who was Circle



Officer in Unnao in 2021, took leave from work citing family engagements but did not go home. He was instead found with a woman constable in a hotel near Kanpur. The two were in a

room when Kannaujiya's wife arrived at the hotel and created a huge scene. She alleged that the two had been in an affair for quite some time and took frequent trips out of Unnao. Police arrived at the hotel and initially detained Kannaujiya and the woman constable. The two were allowed to go after their identities were revealed. However, senior officials launched an investigation into the matter. And after three years, Kannaujiya was convicted of trying to persuade the lady constable utilising his superior position. The action against Kannaujiya was taken under the UP Government Servant (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1999, which allow reversions to the first post

as a penalty, a senior officer said. The action is said to be rarest of rare and was sent as a strong message against those involved in such acts, the officer said. The officer added that during his tenure he had not seen such a case of demotion. Kannaujiya has a year left before retirement and he has to perform the duties of a constable till his time is up, the official stated. He added that retirement benefits for Kannaujiya would be based on his last position. Hence Kannaujiya will not be getting benefits that a DSP is entitled to, but that of a constable. "A moment of madness will haunt Kannaujiya for the rest of his life," the official stated.

18th LS: Protests mar opening day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 24: In a show of strength, the opposition INDIA bloc members Monday waved copies of the Constitution in Parliament as Prime Minister Narendra Modi took oath as a member of the 18th Lok Sabha. Home Minister Amit Shah was also greeted in a similar manner. Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan took oath as a Lok Sabha member amid chants of NEET-NET by the opposition members. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Kalyan Banerjee and Samajwadi Party (SP) leaders Akhilesh Yadav and Awadhesh Prasad were seated in the first row in the opposition benches. Congress member Kodikunnil Suresh, DMK's TR Bалу and TMC



member Sudip Bandyopadhyay walked out of the House when the oath-taking began as a mark of protest over the appointment of Bhartruhari Mahtab as pro-tem Speaker. The three opposition members were named on the panel of

chairpersons to assist the pro-tem Speaker. The panel of chairpersons was administered oath immediately after Modi. With Suresh, Bалу and Bandyopadhyay choosing to remain absent, the other two members named on the panel - BJP's Radha Mohan Singh and Faggan Singh Kulaste were administered oath after the PM. The opposition members were heard raising the slogan 'violation of Constitution' when the panel was sworn in.

MAHTAB APPOINTED PRO-TEM SPEAKER

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu administered Monday oath to BJP member Bhartruhari Mahtab as 'Speaker pro-tem' of the newly-constituted 18th Lok Sabha. A seven-time MP, Mahtab, along with a panel of chairpersons is tasked with running the proceedings of the Lok Sabha both Monday and Tuesday when winning candidates will take oath as members of the 18th Lok Sabha. He will preside over the House when a new Speaker will be elected Wednesday.

leisure



SHANIA TWAIN WISHED SHE WASN'T A WOMAN

Superstar singer Shania Twain has admitted she spent many years wishing she wasn't a woman and she missed out on the joy of being a female because she had to set boundaries and guards very young.

MARGOT ROBBIE AND TOM ACKERLEY SPEND '24 HOURS A DAY TOGETHER'

Margot Robbie's husband Tom Ackerley has revealed the couple spend '24 hours a day together' declaring their marriage is 'seamless'. The film producer revealed, "Our relationship is totally seamless and we don't spend a moment apart as we run a movie production company together."



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
One more hectic day! Today you will be busy trying to figure out solutions to your problems, both at home and office. Your superiors give you some leeway and it will be quite a consolation, says Ganesha. Experienced people will give you highly esteemed advice.

TAURUS
This is a great day for showcasing your administrative and organizing abilities, says Ganesha. Go all out and put in all you have, at your workplace or in your business. You can be sure of impressing your colleagues and superiors, partners and competitors and gaining their admiration and support. Just one thing.

GEMINI
You need to guard against hurting anyone's feelings because of your ill-temper or harsh language. You need to help others in their troubles. You ought to reflect on the toll that the troubles that have visited you have taken on you, and accordingly empathise with others, says Ganesha.

CANCER
Intimate friends will be impressed with your attitude. You will try to make them happy and spend a happy evening with them. Affection and cordial ties will linger for long and prove fruitful.

LEO
Your mind will be filled with conflicting emotions, says Ganesha. You will feel extreme happiness one moment, and then will be depressed the next. You need to guard against mood swings and find a balance to achieve success in your work today. Financial gains are indicated.

VIRGO
The remarkable manner in which you function at work will earn for you a lot of accolades and supporters. Your seniors will appreciate your dedication to work. There will be fun and entertainment in the evening. Ganesha says you can look forward to relaxing with some soft music.

LIBRA
Ganesha says governmental work will be beneficial today. Those of you who are officials in the government will be having a positive and good day ahead. Your family members will show their support for you and this is something that you will need from them. Children will progress in life. This is a good time to take important decisions.

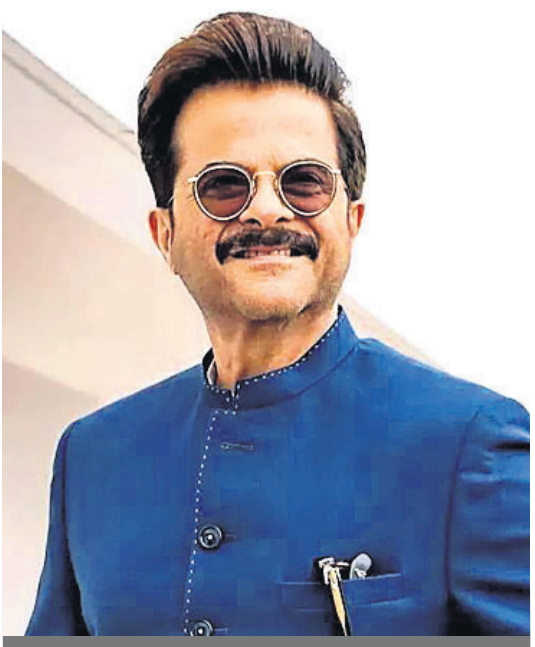
SCORPIO
The stars are aligned in a way that they produce a constructively favourable day for you today, predicts Ganesha. You know the importance of a team and treat everyone - seniors & juniors as equals. This will make the work environment harmonious.

SAGITTARIUS
Your imagination knows no boundaries. Your kind heart is ready to forget and forgive the evil. As Ganesha puts it, this attitude will take you a long way! Charity and donation, too are on your mind today. You enjoy a benevolent time today.

CAPRICORN
Aren't you tired of doing the same thing again and again? Ganesha advises you to come out of your shell and breathe in some fresh air. Moving to a bigger and better house is on the cards for you, foretells Ganesha. It will take a major chunk out of your savings, but you are not complaining. You are not a spendthrift. You understand that money can't buy you everything, but it can certainly add to your comforts.

AQUARIUS
You are loaded with work, but you will be able to complete the pending assignments. It is, however, necessary that you keep on marching ahead otherwise your growth may become stagnant, advises Ganesha.

PISCES
You will have no idea how time flies by today, while you struggle to complete an unceasing flow of tasks. You might end up missing out on the smaller details owing to your work load. Hence you need to concentrate on your daily routine.



ANIL KAPOOR BATS FOR WOMEN-LED MOVIES

Mumbai: Actor Anil Kapoor, who currently serves as the host of the reality series *Bigg Boss OTT 3*, shared his voice about his support for women-led movies.

When asked what the success of a women-led film like *Crew* means to him as a producer, Anil told this agency: "I'm so happy that *Crew* was such a big success not only in the theatres but even on Netflix. It had fantastic numbers. One shouldn't be afraid to make women-led films, fearing their fate at the box office."

The actor-producer went on to add, "This is the reason why it is important to continue working so that we can do these things, which other people are afraid to do. If we have the opportunity to make these films, some will work, some won't, but at least we should try to make them."

The 67-year-old, who produced movies like *Aisha* and *Veere Di Wedding*, credited the films' co-producer and his daughter, Rhea Kapoor, for not shying away from presenting women as leading men in her movies.

"Rhea has made films with girls and presented them like leading men. More than 95 percent of the work that she has done has been successful. She is understated; she doesn't do publicity. There are certain people who are creative and do a lot of innovative things but keep quiet about it. Rhea is one of those people," he said.

Srinagar: Three legendary Divas of yore, Asha Parekh, Waheeda Rehman and Helen are presently holidaying in Kashmir to relive their glorious past.

Every wave of the famous Dal Lake on which the three took a 'Shikara' ride together in a single boat Sunday reminded them of the glorious past and the



mesmerising, never-ending attachment they have with Kashmir. For Asha

Sharvari humbly accepts 'surprise factor' tag

Mumbai: Actress Sharvari Wagh, who stars opposite debutante Junaid Khan in the recently released *Maharaj*, said she will happily accept being a "surprise factor."

The actress, who has a guest appearance in the film, said: "I'm really thrilled to read that people are calling me a big 'surprise factor' of *Maharaj*."

"As an actor, I want to make an impact in every role and in every film that I work on. So, I will happily and humbly accept all the compliments for being a 'surprise factor' in a film," she said.

The actress added: "It means my performance created a major impactful moment. I strive to give it my best always because I treat every film as a stepping stone for something bigger and better in my next choices."

Sharvari is elated with the month she's had professionally, with *Munhya* and *Maharaj* releasing back-to-back.

"It has been an awesome month for me professionally. To have a huge blockbuster to my credit in the second film of my career, *Munhya*, is an absolutely amazing feeling. Interestingly, people again thought I was the 'surprise factor' of the film, and it meant the world to me," she said.

Sharvari's next titled *Vedaa*, is directed by the maverick filmmaker Nikkhil Advani, in which she plays the titular role.

Khushi thankful to critics

Mumbai: It was just last year, in 2023 when Khushi Kapoor stepped into the world of Hindi cinema and instantly became a sensation on social media. However, the actress doesn't see herself as a rage and is thankful for the criticism coming her way.

Asked how it feels to become a rage with just one project, Khushi told this agency: "I wouldn't call myself a rage, but I'm really blessed and grateful for the love I'm getting. And I'm thankful for the criticism too. I'm really just taking the time to learn, grow, and focus on myself and my work."

"It's nice to finally be out there in the industry, and I'm happy to be starting to find my way," she said.

However, *The Archies* is not Khushi's first time in front of the camera. She made her student acting debut in 2016 with the YouTube short film *Bhasm Ho: Pyaar Ka Takraar*. Then in 2020, she starred in a student short film *Speak Up*.

On the work front, Khushi will be seen in *Naadaniyaan* with Ibrahim Ali Khan and also has a movie with Junaid Khan, whose latest release is *Maharaj*.



Yesteryear divas relive their part in Kashmir

Parekh, this Lake in addition to the hill stations of Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sonamarg come with a resounding reminder of 'Light, Camera and action'.

Her most superhit movies including the first in the long list of her great successes *Dil Deke Dekho* was shot in Kashmir in 1959.

In fact her widely believed romantic relationship with the director of *Dil Deke Dekho*, Nasir Hussain owed itself to their long association with Kashmir.

This movie was followed by her second superior movie, *Phir Wohi Dil Laya Hoon* again shot in Kashmir in 1963 and directed

tall and mighty over the years.

Thus, for Asha this visit has been 'a pilgrimage into her past'.

Yash Chopra's *Kabhi Kabhi* shot in the Valley in 1976 became a landmark love story and Waheeda Rehman stayed in the same 5-star hotel The Lalit Grand Palace in 1976 where she is staying these days in Srinagar.

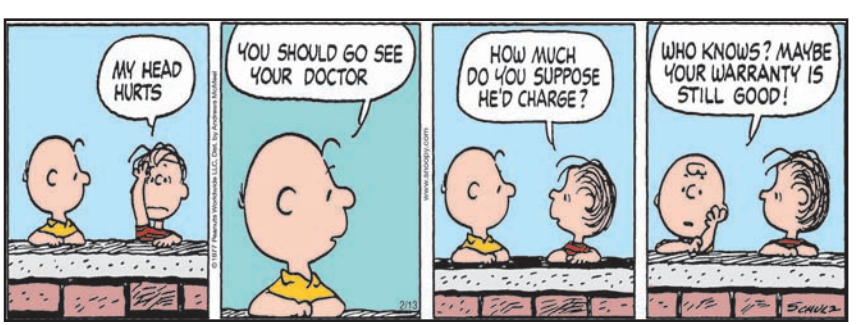
For Helen, who featured as a supporting actress in more than 1000 movies, *Jungle* (1961), *Dus Lakh* (1966), *Caravan* and another dozen such movies were shot in the picturesque locales of the Valley.

By having breakfast on the sprawling lawns of The Lalita Grand Palace hotel that overlooks the Dal Lake in Srinagar, the three great artists of Indian cinema are reliving their past.

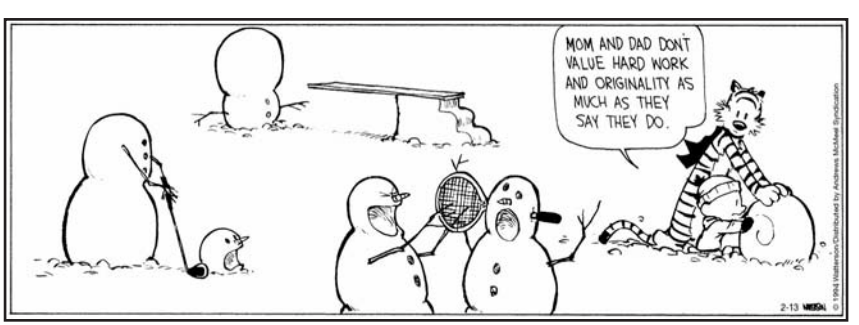
The days that went by took away the years of glory and fame like the wind sweeping the sands of a desert.

FUN post

PEANUTS



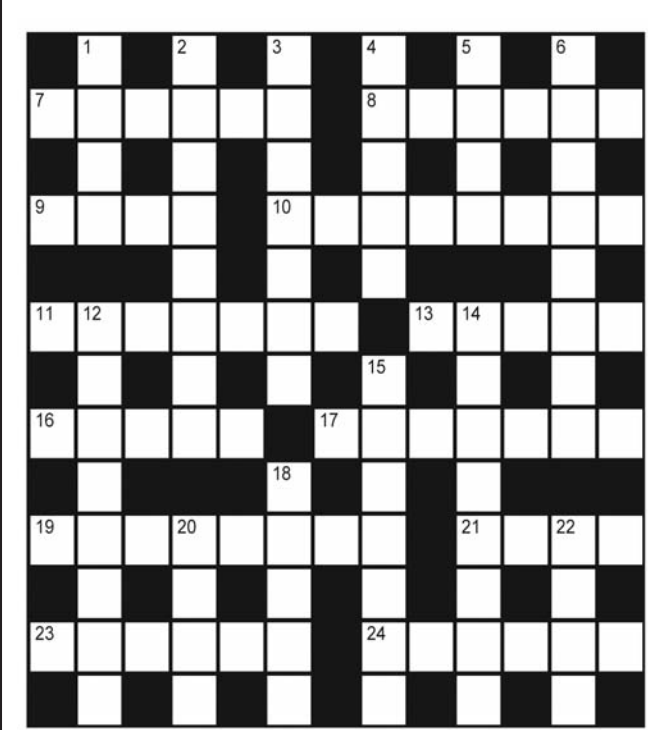
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



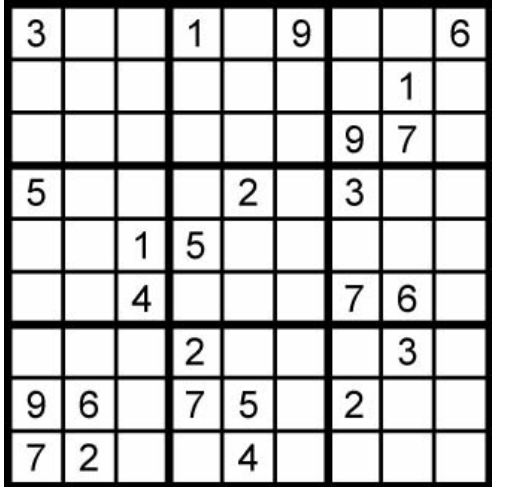
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Type of route
 - 8 Hardy's partner
 - 9 Wild hog
 - 10 Legal ambiguity
 - 11 Sea captain
 - 13 East Indian pheasant
 - 16 Links figure
 - 17 Slumber (4-3)
 - 19 Aquarius, e.g. (4,4)
 - 21 "Piece of cake!"
 - 23 Tornado cloud
 - 24 Whirlpools
 - 5 Verdant
 - 6 Green-eyed monster
 - 12 Capital of Sudan
 - 14 Cheap tyres
 - 15 Sea lane, possibly
 - 18 Move furtively
 - 20 Litter member
 - 22 Percolate
- Down**
- 1 Reverberate
 - 2 Fearless
 - 3 Surgical implement
 - 4 Single-master

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.



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

NEW POSTING IN CMO

Debi Prasad Mishra, Deputy Secretary in Housing and Urban Development department, has been posted as Deputy Secretary to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, as per a government order issued Monday.



BJD rejects Majhi's claims on ministerial berth offer

CM SHOULD MAINTAIN THE DIGNITY OF THE POSITION HE HOLDS, SAYS SENIOR BJD LEADER PRATAP KESHARI DEB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

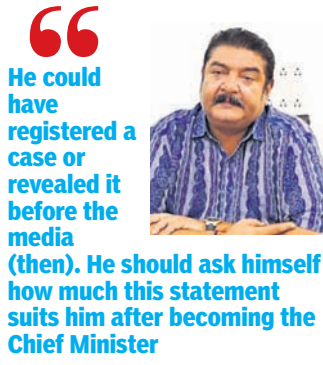
Bhubaneswar, June 24: The Opposition BJD Monday rejected Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi's claim that he was lured with a ministerial berth and a mineral block by the previous Naveen Patnaik government.

The BJD's remark came a day after Majhi, at a public meeting in his home district of Keonjhar, alleged that some senior BJD leaders had approached him and offered him a Cabinet berth and a mineral block if he joined their party.

Majhi claimed that the offer was made when he was opposing the irregularities in the mining sector.

The CM has also announced that he would send all the people involved in the mining scam to jail as the BJP government was now installed in the state.

Senior BJD leader and former minister Pratap Keshari Deb Monday said Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi's state-



He could have registered a case or revealed it before the media (then). He should ask himself how much this statement suits him after becoming the Chief Minister

PRATAP KESHARI DEB | BJD LEADER & FORMER MINISTER

ment was 'unfortunate' and he should maintain the dignity of the position he was holding.

"The Chief Minister's remark against the BJD is highly unfortunate and not acceptable at all. He should realise that he is not in the Opposition now and become the Chief Minister of the state," Deb told reporters here.

The BJD leader wondered why Majhi remained silent till now. "He could have registered a

case or revealed it before the media (then). He should ask himself how much this statement suits him after becoming the Chief Minister," Deb said.

Deb pointed out that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had on the floor of Parliament lauded Odisha for being at the forefront of implementing the reforms in the mining sector.

The PM had also asked other states to learn cooperative federalism from Odisha, the BJD legislator said.

"Perhaps Majhi has forgotten about the statement of his top leader. Majhi should maintain the dignity of his position," Deb said.

Deb also said that the BJD is fully prepared to face any situation and to reply to such statements, he added.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ousted the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in the recently-held Assembly elections in the state. It led to the end of Naveen Patnaik's 24-year stint as CM.



IN FULL SWING: A Chitrakar servitor gives finishing touches to a figurine for the upcoming Rath Yatra in Puri, Monday

PIC: SJTA

Ratna Bhandar reopening soon

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 24: Srimandir Ratna Bhandar (treasury) will be reopened soon, Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan said, Monday.

Addressing media here, Harichandan said necessary measures were being taken by the government to reopen the treasury of the 12th century shrine.

"The modalities are being worked out to decide when and how the Ratna Bhandar will be reopened, and accordingly necessary preparations are underway," he said. The BJP, in its election manifesto, had announced that if voted to power in the state, it would reopen the 'Bhitar Ratna Bhandar' (inner treasury) of Srimandir and make public the commission report on the missing keys of the temple treasury.

The minister said, "Once the Ratna Bhandar is reopened, all steps would be taken to examine its wall and structure and prepare the inventory of the precious jewellery in it."

The ASI, which looks after the conservation of the 12th century shrine, will examine the interior of inner Ratna Bhandar which was found in bad shape.

The ASI, after examining the outer Ratna Bhandar for a long time, had been suggesting the state government and the temple administration to reopen it in order to facilitate the repairs.

The ASI had conducted laser scanning of the walls of the Ratna Bhandar from the outside and found that it was in bad shape requiring urgent repairs.

Govt asks authorities to step up fever surveillance

JAUNDICE, DIPHTHERIA & JE OUTBREAK IN 3 DIST

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 24: The government Monday directed authorities at state and district levels to remain vigilant and enhance fever surveillance in view of the outbreak of jaundice, diphtheria and Japanese encephalitis in Sambalpur, Rayagada and Angul districts, respectively.

During a meeting to review the situation in the three districts over virtual mode, Minister of Health and Family Welfare Mukesh Mahaling directed the

attending senior officers of H&FW department, Directorate of Public Health, Directorate of Health Services, and officials from the three districts to ensure potable water supply to the affected areas.

As many as 82 jaundice cases have been identified in Sambalpur district by Monday, which is an increase of 10 cases reported till Sunday.

Consumption of street food such as guchup, dahibara and chuski is believed to be the reason behind the outbreak of the disease at an alarming rate in the western Odisha district.

The Health department has reportedly intensified awareness campaigns in the district and started conducting door-to-door surveys. Health officials



are collecting water samples from the affected areas as part of its measures to prevent the disease from spreading.

Kumbharpada, Saliabagicha, Pensionpada, Dhobapada and Hirakud Colony in the district have been the most affected by the outbreak of the disease, sources said.

Meanwhile, Angul district has been placed on high alert following the death of a child due

to Japanese encephalitis (JE).

About a week ago, two girls, aged six and nine, from the Banarpal and Kosala areas developed high fever and other complications. They were admitted to the Angul district headquarters hospital (DHH) for treatment. As their fever persisted, blood samples were sent to SCB Medical College in Cuttack for testing.

One of the two children succumbed to the illness, while the other was discharged after recovering. Local residents have been advised to avoid contact with mosquitoes, pigs, and other animals to prevent further spread of the virus. Similarly, surveillance and containment measures have been intensified after diphtheria cases were recorded in Rayagada and Koraput districts.

In a letter, Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) commissioner-cum-secretary Shalini Pandit directed Rayagada Collector Manoj Satyawan Mahajan to take appropriate steps for containment of diphtheria outbreak in the district.

"Daily surveillance, activity for early detection of fever with sore throat cases is to be continued in Manushpur village as well as neighbouring villages and blocks. Any clinically suspected case is to be referred to DHH, Rayagada for early initiation of treatment. Daily surveillance activity is to be continued for about 20 days after the detection of the last case (i.e., double the incubation period) in the block," Pandit said in the letter.

CHARIOT PULLING TO BEGIN AT 5PM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, June 24: The pulling of the chariots of the sibling deities on Rath Yatra (July 7) will start at 5pm, according to the schedule fixed at the Niti sub-committee and Chhattisha Niyog meeting here, Monday.

It was decided during the meeting that the rituals of this year's Rath Yatra will be carried out as per the 1971 car festival schedule.

The schedule has been fixed keeping in mind that the Rath Yatra, Nabajouban Darshan and Netrostav are falling on the same day this year.

As per the schedule decided in the Chhattisha Niyog meeting, Mangalalati will be held at 2am, Dasabata Thakura Bahuda Bije at 2:40am, Anasara Tati Phita at 3am, Daitapati Sarbanga at 3:40am, Netrostav Bandapana at 4am and Dwarapala Puja will be held at 5:25am. Similarly, Sakala Dhupa and Gopal Ballav rituals will be held between 6am and 7am, Senapata Lagi between 7:30am and noon, Rath Pratistha at 11am, Mangalparan at 1pm, and Dhadi Pahandi between 1:30pm and 2:30pm. Chherapanhara ritual will take place at 4pm and Chari Phita and Ghoda-Sarathi attachment to the chariots at 4:30pm, before the starting of chariot pulling at 5pm.

The Bahuda festival will be held July 15 and Suna Besha July 17. The schedule fixed by the Chhattisha Niyog will be approved during the Srimandir managing committee meeting, Tuesday, said SJTA chief administrator VV Yadav.

BJD won't support BJP in RS

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 24: BJD president Naveen Patnaik held a meeting with his party's nine Rajya Sabha MPs at the Naveen Niwas here Monday and asked them to emerge as a 'vibrant and strong' opposition in the Upper House of Parliament during its upcoming session which begins June 27. At the meeting, Patnaik also asked the lawmakers to raise issues concerning the state's interests in a befitting manner.

"The BJD MPs this time will not be confined to speaking on issues only, but are determined

to agitate if the BJP-led government at the Centre ignores Odisha's interest," BJD's leader in the Rajya Sabha Sasmit Patra told mediapersons after the meeting.

Besides raising the demand for special status to Odisha, the BJD MPs will raise the issues of poor mobile connectivity and low density of bank branches in the state, stated Patra.

"Odisha's demand for revision of coal royalty has been ignored by the Centre for the last 10 years. This is causing great loss

to the people of the state who are deprived of their rightful share," Patra pointed out.

Maintaining that the nine MPs in Rajya Sabha will act as a strong Opposition, Patra said Patnaik has given clear instructions to fight for the rights of the state's people in the Parliament.

Patra was asked whether BJD would maintain its earlier stance of giving issue-based support to the BJP-led government. "No more support to BJP, only opposition. We may go to any extent to protect the interests of Odisha," Patra asserted.



Odia among languages new members take oath in LS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 24: The Lok Sabha witnessed a display of linguistic diversity Monday, with the newly-elected MPs taking their oaths in English and Indian languages, including Sanskrit, Hindi, Dogri, Bengali, Assamese and Odia.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi took his oath in Hindi amid slogans of "Jai Shri Ram" from the treasury benches.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, Women and Child Development Minister Annapurna Devi, Telecom Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and Urban Development Minister ML Khattar were among those who took oath in Hindi. Education Minister

Dharmendra Pradhan, the MP from Sambalpur, took oath in Odia.

Suresh Gopi, the first BJP MP to be elected from Kerala, also took oath as a member of the 18th Lok Sabha. Before taking his oath in Malayalam, the actor-politician invoked the gods, saying "Krishna, Guruvayurappa". Gopi is the Minister of State (MoS) for Tourism and Petroleum. He represents Kerala's Thrissur constituency.

Shripad Yesso Naik, the MoS for Power and Renewable Energy, took his oath in Sanskrit. MoS for Education and Development of North Eastern Region Sukanta Majumdar took his oath in Bengali. Pune MP Muralidhar Mohol, the MoS for Aviation, took his oath in Marathi. Union Minister Jitender Singh, the MP from Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur, took his oath in Dogri.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR WOMEN IN DIPLOMACY

113 countries have no female heads of state, govt

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

United Nations, June 24: A staggering 113 countries worldwide have never had a woman serve as head of state or government, and only 26 countries are led by women as of Monday, according to UN Women's global data on Women Political Leaders 2024.

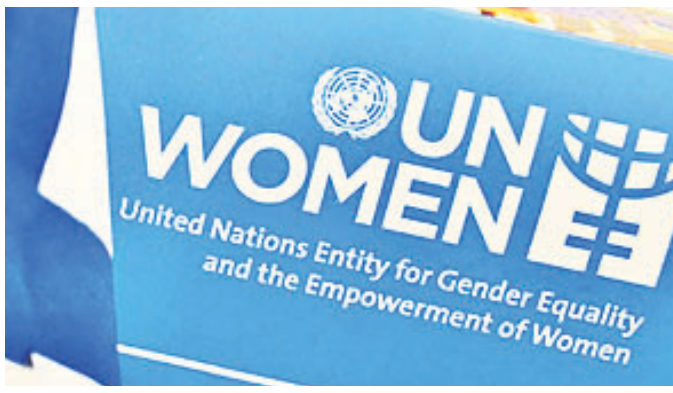
Despite progress, women are still "largely excluded" from positions of power and diplomacy, with the highest levels of influence and decision-making predominantly occupied by men, UN Women said in a press release about the data.

Globally, women's underrepresentation in decision-making remains "a stark reality," according to the release. UN Women's new data on gen-

der parity across leadership positions is published as the world commemorates the International Day for Women in Diplomacy, June 24, created to recognise and celebrate how women are breaking barriers and making a difference in diplomacy.

As of January 1, 2024, only 23 per cent of ministerial positions are held by women and in 141 countries women make up less than a third of cabinet ministers. Seven countries have no women represented in their cabinets at all. Male dominance in diplomacy and foreign affairs extends to the permanent missions to the UN, where women remain underrepresented as permanent representatives, reports Xinhua news agency.

As of May 2024, women held 25 per cent of permanent rep-



resentative posts in New York, 35 per cent in Geneva, and 33.5 per cent in Vienna.

"Our work is guided by the belief that when women lead, the world is better for all people and the planet. As many countries head to the polls this year,

we all must put women first, at the pinnacle of power, where and when it matters the most. Women's equal participation in governance and leadership is key to improving lives for all," said UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous.

Electing and appointing women in leadership positions "signals strong political will for gender equality" and demonstrates a collective commitment to tackling the challenges the world faces today, said the release.

"As we prepare to mark 30 years since the passage of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the world's most progressive blueprint for advancing women's rights, UN Women continues to work to ensure women lead and thrive in shaping and driving positive change, including through occupying the most senior positions of power," it added.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

Patra recommends facelift of planetarium



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 24: Minister of Science and Technology Krushna Chandra Patra has suggested officials that the Pathani Samanta Planetarium here be renovated into a world-class standard institution with new features in galleries.

During a visit to the department to review its activities, Patra also suggested to give more priority on promotion of Biotechnology, research and development. Suggesting to promote schemes on green energy in coastal farming system, the minister said that the department should explore solar wind hybrid system (SWHS) to save the environment and costs. During the review meeting, Chithra Arumugam, Principal Secretary of the department made a presentation of the various schemes and programmes of the department, and organisations under its administrative control.

Minister was briefed on the activities of Odisha State Council on Science and Technology, Odisha Bigyan Academy, Institute of Mathematics and Applications, Odisha Space Applications Centre and the Pathani Samanta Planetarium. Arumugam described the activities of various agencies that include grants of financial assistance for studies, research and fellowship, UNESCO-KALINGA Science Award, quality training for Mathematics and Science teachers, various publications of Odisha Bigyan Academy and felicitation of state awards. She also highlighted the activities of Institute of Mathematics and Applications as a Centre of fundamental research in mathematics. The minister was also apprised of the planetariums, science centres and museum in the state. Special mention was made on the new Biotechnology Policy 2024 and Biotechnology Cell in the department. The Principal Secretary said the department envisages creating Odisha Marine Biotechnology and Innovation Corridor, establishing science city with world-class state-of-the-art science museum and transforming the Institute of Mathematics and Application.



IN MEMORIAM: Guests paying tributes to former chief minister Nabakrushna Choudhury on his 40th death anniversary at Lohia Academy in Bhubaneswar, Monday. OP PHOTO

Event on leadership held at IIM Sambalpur

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Sambalpur, June 24: Aligned with the National Educational Policy, IIM Sambalpur recently conducted 'Nurturing Future Leadership Programme' (NFLP) under the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme (MMTTP). The five-day residential programme was designed to equip faculty members from various universities with technical, managerial, and interpersonal dexterities for effective leadership in both administrative and academic roles within higher education institutions (HEIs). It also aims to cultivate a comprehensive understanding of effective leadership, identify challenges, encourage strategic thinking for managing organisations, and enhance cross-functional coordination, conflict resolution and consensus-building skills.



Addressing the inaugural ceremony, IIM Sambalpur director Mahadeo Jaiswal gave example of renowned business theorist Michael Porter while emphasising the importance of strategy in business. He said, "Many successful companies, particularly in China and Japan, focus on operational efficiency rather than strategic innovation. For Indian higher education, adopting a strategic approach is crucial for global competitiveness." "The emphasis is on improving quality and international ranking through enhanced research, innovation, and attracting global talent," he said.

The introductory session was on 'Strategic Leadership for Academic Governance and 21st Century Learning'. The programme witnessed the participation from IIT, Jodhpur; Banaras Hindu University, Banaras; Magadh University, Bodh Gaya; Visvesvaraya Technical University, Belgaum; Ravenshaw University, Cuttack; Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology, Burla; Rajendra University, Bolangir; Ramadevi Women's University, Bhubaneswar and Central Sanskrit University, Puri.

Railways okays flyover at Khurda Road station



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 24: In order to enhance the efficiency and capacity of train movements at Khurda Road station, the Ministry of Railways, under the leadership of Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, has sanctioned the construction of a flyover, East Coast Railways (ECoR) officials said Monday. The move will facilitate smoother train operations in the Howrah-Chennai Main Line and Khurda Road-Puri Branch Line, they said. The flyover, to be constructed at an estimated cost of ₹191.87 crore, will be in an area spanning 7.41km. This will facilitate smooth movement of passenger carrying trains in Bhubaneswar direction which originates from Puri, ECoR officials informed.

IMD predicts heavy rainfall from June 26

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 24: Intense spell of rain with thundershower is likely to occur across the state from June 26 due to active monsoon, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Monday. The state government has put all district Collectors and Municipal Commissioners on alert in view of the IMD prediction. Director of Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre Manorama Mohanty said that heavy to very heavy rain is likely over several parts of the state from June 26 to 28. Similarly, rainfall of varied intensity will take place in most parts of the state in the next five days, she said. A cyclonic circulation is likely to form in the region around June 26 and the intensity of rain may increase under its impact, she added. Light to moderate rain/thundershower may occur at a few places over the districts in the next 24 hours.



The weather agency issued yellow warning of thunderstorm with lightning accompanied by gusty surface windspeed reaching 30-40 kmph in some places of Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Boudh, Nuapada, Bolangir, and Subarnapur in next 24 hours.

Special buses for women in WB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, June 24: In a move to ensure the safety and comfort of women during office hours, the West Bengal Transport Department is set to introduce two exclusive ladies' special buses in Kolkata starting June 25, a senior state official said Monday. The buses will depart from Howrah Station towards Ballygunge, covering parts of central and south Kolkata, the official added. This service is designed to assist commuters from the districts along the Howrah-Bandel line, providing a convenient connection from the terminal station to their workplaces along the route during the morning rush hours, an official statement said. The non-AC buses, which will leave Howrah at 9:30am and 10am, will have women conductors. Passenger boarding will be regulated at the gates to prevent jostling and ensure that only women commuters board the buses at each stop, the official said.

ICC to organise Job Mela in City July 27

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 24: The Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the leading and only National Chamber of Commerce headquartered in Kolkata, will organise ICC Job Mela 2024 here from July 27 to July 28. ICC Odisha State Council chairman JB Pany said the event aims to bridge the gap between job seekers and top employers across various sectors, including hospitals, banks, hospitality, IT, education, mining, automobile and HR consultancy. "The purpose of the event is to provide significant opportunity for economic growth and workforce development in the region. Through this platform, youngsters can easily seek jobs as per their requirements. This will provide direct interaction and engagement between job seekers and employers," Convenor Sikata Das said. The Mela will be a crucial platform for direct interaction and engagement between job seekers and employers. By bringing together a diverse range of companies and job seekers, the event will facilitate



By bringing together a diverse range of companies and job seekers, the event will facilitate real-time assessments of candidates' skills and qualifications

ate real-time assessments of candidates' skills and qualifications, streamlining the recruitment process and fostering meaningful connections. With an anticipated attendance of 4,000 to 5,000 participants over two days, the Mela will attract a diverse audience of potential employees and industry professionals. The event is a significant opportunity to support economic growth and workforce development in the region. Founded in 1925 by a group of pioneering industrialists led by GD Birla, the ICC has been at the forefront of promoting indigenous Indian industry. Known for its proactive and forward-looking approach, ICC continues to anticipate future needs, respond to challenges, and prepare stakeholders to benefit from emerging opportunities.

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Junk food causing piles, fistula, fissures among Indian adults

Regular junk food consumption and inactive lifestyles are fuelling cases of painful piles, fistula and fissures in young adults aged between 18 and 25 years, said doctors Monday. People with piles and fissures – common disorders concerning the anal region – suffer from symptoms like passing bloody stools or having trouble passing stools, itchy and irritable anal cavity, inflammation, rectal bleeding, and discomfort when sitting for a long time, among others. A fistula is an unusual opening near the anus that connects to the inside of the anal canal in the colon. It typically arises due to factors like injury, surgery, infection, or inflammation of anal glands. Pain, swelling in the anal area, boils, skin irritation around

the anus, bleeding, and discomfort during bowel movements are the major symptoms. "Haemorrhoids or piles happen when veins inside and outside the anus become swollen and enlarged. This condition is now seen in adults between age group 25 and 55 due to obesity, pregnancy, a diet low in fibre, constipation, diarrhoea, lifting heavy objects, and straining during bowel movements," Lakin Vira, General Surgeon, Apollo Spectra Mumbai, told IANS. "An anal fissure is a result of a tear in the lining of the anus or anal canal. This problem occurs because of constipation, straining during bowel movements, and ulcerative colitis," he added. Lakin said that in the past 2-3 months, approximately 50 patients have visited with complaints of piles and fistula, and



for fissures, the number is higher than 80. About 60 per cent of males and 40 per cent of females suffer from fistula and piles whereas, 70 per cent of females and 30 per cent of males tend to have fissures.

"There is overall 10 per cent increase in these conditions when compared to previous years. The incidence of these conditions is recently seen in age groups of 18-25 due to junk food consumption," the doctor noted.

PEOPLE WITH PILES AND FISSURES SUFFER FROM SYMPTOMS LIKE PASSING BLOODY STOOLS, ITCHY AND IRRITABLE ANAL CAVITY, INFLAMMATION, RECTAL BLEEDING, AND DISCOMFORT WHEN SITTING FOR A LONG TIME, AMONG OTHERS

ACCORDING TO HEALTH EXPERTS, EATING A BALANCED DIET, EXERCISING DAILY, MAINTAINING PROPER HYDRATION BY DRINKING SUFFICIENT WATER, QUITTING SMOKING AND ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION, AND AVOIDING STRAINING DURING BOWEL MOVEMENTS CAN HELP EASE THE CONDITION

Hemant Patel, Laparoscopic and General Surgeon, Zynova Shalby Hospital told IANS, "Cases of piles, fistula and fissures are increasing in younger age groups mostly in males. There has been a significant rise in these patients in the past few years." He noted seeing 5-6 patients with such conditions daily. According to health experts, eating a balanced diet, exercising daily preventing constipation by incorporating fibre-rich foods into meals, maintaining proper hydration by drinking sufficient water, quitting smoking and alcohol consumption, and avoiding straining during bowel movements can help ease the condition. Other ways to manage the condition include medications, creams, and a sitz bath. "If the conditions get severe then one will have to undergo a minimally invasive laparoscopic surgery," Lakin said.

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FOCUS SOCIETY

CASE FOR IDENTITY POLITICS



Many people, especially young people, have less reason to identify themselves with their occupation, and more reasons to seek an identity and purpose beyond

today's advanced economies, services far outstrip manufacturing as a source of employment, discretionary consumer spending drives GDP growth, and profits sit idly in corporate coffers because they are not needed for investment in fixed capital that would increase productivity and output in goods production.

As a result, the social salience and cultural significance of the class position produced by the capital-labour relation has receded. Many people, especially young people, have less reason to identify themselves with their occupation, and more reasons to seek an identity and purpose beyond, or in addition to, what the workplace affords them.

Meanwhile, the natural sciences have opened up medical means of embracing subject positions that are unbound by sexual origins. With the first such scientific breakthrough – the birth control pill – imagining female identities untethered from motherhood became routine, rather than a radical departure from social convention.

And so the ontological priority of class in the political thinking of both the left and the right can be justified only by insisting on the definition of human nature specific to the Marxist tradition and the Protestant Ethic, which posit labour as the “essence of Man.” In any case, like the other assumptions that inform the critique of identity politics, this one is not workable in imagining the future, for the simple reason that it ignores the past.

One might object that “subject positions” are merely symbolic goods which corporations and policymakers can peddle in place of substantive, distributive justice. But the legitimization of subject positions once deemed “unnatural” – a process carried out mainly by civil-rights movements and statutes – has had measurable, material effects. Here, too, how we imagine the future must not ignore the past.

The writer is Professor Emeritus of History at Rutgers University.

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Critics of identity politics argue that close attention to matters of race, gender, and sexuality distracts from “real” politics, by which they typically mean the struggle between labour and capital over the distribution of material resources. But that view of politics assumes that class identity is an objective fact – a sociological datum or index to be read off a chart. In fact, class identity can be known only through its embodiment in words and deeds. It is just as subjective or “performative” as, say, gender has come to be understood in queer theory.

Allow me, then, to defend identity politics by challenging the three assumptions that its critics make. First, they take for granted that any departure from the universalism of the Enlightenment is a threat to the idea of equality and to human rights as well. Second, they believe that identity politics are essentialist: social roles are assigned according to social origins, foreclosing the achievement of a chosen individuality.

Lastly, they assume that class position comes first, because, at least under capitalism, it includes and describes a greater proportion of social life. This enables people to make common cause across lines of race, ethnicity, gender, and nationality.

I make no argument on behalf of the linguistic protocols now shaping the cultures of companies, universities, and schools in the United States and elsewhere. To my mind, the policing of language, “cancel culture,” and similar pathologies are vestigial extremes of the kind that flourish when new ideas about individuality and new ways of conducting politics are being invented.

Both the individual and his relation to the state were redefined by the advent of market societies. Toward the end of that transition, in the late eighteenth century, the Enlightenment’s “man of reason” was no longer understood as a product of virtuous citizenship, or of religion. That

person, instead, was the product of natural rights that he embodied as a human being, and which, in theory, he could assert in civil society apart from and even against the state.

I use the male pronoun advisedly. The “man of reason” who emerged from the Enlightenment as the standard of individuality and the representative of humanity was not a woman, and he was not from Africa (or indigenous to any other continent colonised by European states between 1400 and 1800).

These “natural” exclusions held until the twentieth century, when movements for socialism, women’s suffrage, civil rights, and decolonisation broadened the scope of equality and extended the reach of liberty. The more inclusive concept of humanity (and thus democracy) that these movements embodied had to overcome the opposition of liberals (with their defense of modern possessive individualism as epitomised by the self-made man) and reactionaries alike.

So much for the Enlightenment’s universalism. As leaders of African-American and Pan-African movements in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries understood, their constituencies weren’t interested in conforming to the norms of white European culture.



James Livingston

BOTH THE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS RELATION TO THE STATE WERE REDEFINED BY THE ADVENT OF MARKET SOCIETIES

Polarised France

The great are strongest when they stand alone, A God-given might of being is their force.

SRI AUROBINDO



It is an ominous sign of the times that religious affiliations of the electorate are being used by political parties to lure voters and capture power. Not only in India, this is frighteningly and obnoxiously becoming a global phenomenon. But, its manifestation in the most outrageous form in a liberal country such as France, which will hold its parliamentary election in two rounds on 30 June and 7 July, has caused shockwaves. What is more concerning is that both the Far Right outfit Rassemblement National (RN) and Left parties are being charged with fanning anti-Semitic hatred to reap electoral gains. Economic issues that directly concern the French population have been put in the backburner and the Israel-Hamas conflict, triggered by the 7 October 2023 attacks on Israel by Hamas, is dictating the electoral agenda. The Far Right is seeking to cash in on anti-Semitism that forms the core of the pro-Nazi outfit’s political agenda, masking it behind its pseudo-nationalism. The Left is trying to garner votes by espousing the cause of Palestinians. France has a large Jewish and Moslem population. In recent times the narrative has shifted fast, with pro-Palestine and the Moslem population gaining massive sympathy in the wake of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

In this backdrop, the alleged gang-rape of a 12-year-old Jewish girl in northern France has triggered outcry over surging anti-Semitism in the country, a key issue in the parliamentary elections. Politicians from all sides have condemned the alleged attack, with President Emmanuel Macron calling the “scourge of anti-Semitism” festering in French schools. Far Right leaders are holding the Left responsible for the incident for the latter’s ‘failure’ to take anti-Semitism seriously enough. The Nanterre prosecutor’s office has begun an inquiry into the alleged aggravated rape of a minor, after receiving “reports from a 12-year-old girl” of the incident recently. Three boys, aged 12 and 13, have been taken into custody. Whether the girl was targeted for her religion is part of the probe. Two of the boys are being investigated for aggravated gang-rape of a minor, group violence against a minor for reasons of religion, death threats and insult for reasons of religion, according to the prosecutor’s statement. The attack took place as the girl tried to return home after meeting a friend. Two boys approached her and attempted to block her path outside her house. After a third boy arrived, the group began to physically attack the girl, hurling anti-Semitic insults at her. The girl received several death threats and one of the boys reportedly called her a “dirty Jew.”

Anti-Semitic incidents have increased by 284 per cent in France between 2022 and 2023, according to data from the French Interior Ministry. In 2023, anti-Semitic acts constituted 60 per cent of all anti-religious acts, compared to 26 per cent in 2022, French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said.

The incident has sparked an intense political debate on what politicians have described as a spiraling anti-Semitism problem in France linked to Israel’s war in Gaza. With just a week to go before the elections in which the Far Right is expected to emerge victorious for the first time in its history, poll campaign has degenerated into controversies on anti-Semitism.

The leadership of the RN is euphoric after its recent victory in the European elections that forced the French President to dissolve the parliament and hold fresh elections. It is the new avatar of the Front National, co-founded by a former member of the Nazi party and Jean-Marie Le Pen, a convicted anti-Semite who had the gumption to deny the Holocaust’s gas chambers. Its current leader Marine Le Pen, who is to be its presidential candidate, said the recent surge in the wake of the Israel-Hamas war reveals a worrying stigmatization of Jewish people which everyone should be fully aware of while casting their votes. French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal also got involved in the blame game and accused his Left-wing political opponent, Jean-Luc Melenchon, of downplaying the severity of anti-Semitism in France by terming it a residual issue. Melenchon, of course, said he was horrified by this rape, which has put under the spotlight “the conditioning of criminal male behavior from a young age and anti-Semitic racism.”

The poll results will soon show both the extent of the rise of the Far Right in France and also how acute are the religious sentiments going to influence the voters for choosing their future political administrators.

WISDOM CORNER

- “Sunshine is delicious, rain is refreshing, wind braces us up, snow is exhilarating; there is really no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather.”
JOHN RUSKIN
- “A happy life must be to a great extent a quiet life, for it is only in an atmosphere of quiet that true joy dare live.”
BERTRAND RUSSELL
- “Two roads diverged in a wood and I - I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.”
ROBERT FROST

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- **1910:** The Firebird by Igor Stravinsky and Michel Fokine premiered at the Paris Opéra. The work was performed by Sergei Diaghilev’s legendary ballet company “Ballets Russes”. It was a huge success, catapulting Stravinsky to stardom.
- **1947:** Anne Frank’s The Diary of a Young Girl was first published, appearing in the Netherlands under the title Het Achterhuis (“The Secret Annex”); it became a classic of war literature. The Jewish girl’s account of her life in hiding from the Nazis has become a well-known work of world literature and made Anne one of the most prominent victims of the Nazi regime. She died at age 15 in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.
- **1950:** Korean War begins. On this day in 1950, North Korea unleashed an attack southward across the 38th parallel, after which the UN Security Council (minus the Soviet delegate) passed a resolution calling on UN members to assist South Korea. The war soon evolved into an international conflict and a proxy war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, leading to fears of a new World War. It was ended by an armistice in 1953.
- **1967:** The world’s first live global satellite TV program is aired. The BBC program “Our World” featured artists from 19 countries. The Beatles premiered their song “All You Need Is Love” on the show. Some 400 million viewers tuned in.
- **1978:** The first version of the rainbow flag, which represents LGBTQ pride, was flown during the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day parade.

LOL

DRIVING JUGGLER

Juggler, driving to his next performance, was stopped by the police. “What are those knives doing in your car?” asked the officer. “I juggle them in my act.” “Oh yeah?” says the cop. “Let’s see you do it.” So the juggler starts



tossing and juggling the knives. A guy driving by sees this and says, “Wow, am I glad I quit drinking. Look at the test they’re making you do now!”

SPECTRUM EDUCATION

Say no to ‘one nation, one test’



Shivaji Sarkar

ONE WONDERS WHY PRIVATE COLLEGES WHICH HAVE DEVIOUS FEE STRUCTURE BACKED BY SEVERE CAPITATION FEES ARE INCLUDED UNDER NEET

The country needs to go back to the drawing board on centralising entrance tests as the big ones – JEE, NEET, CUET and UGC-NET – are having far too many glitches. The NEET scam and NET cancellation have shocked the youth and raised questions on the credibility of the testing agency NTA. Should not the country rethink on ‘one nation, one test’? Few have idea of the cost of one NEET, previously called Pre-Medical Exam. It costs over ₹400 crore borne by parents of 2,40,6079 candidates registered for 2024 exam at the rate of ₹1700 per applicant. The system does not say how much is the profit for NTA. It is common knowledge that no entrance fee is fully spent. Should it not be considered as a tax on unemployed knowledge seekers!

There are approximately 108,915 MBBS seats available across 706 medical colleges for NEET 2024. Around 55,000 of these seats are in government medical colleges; the rest are in private colleges. One wonders

why private colleges which have devious fee structure backed by severe capitation fees are included under NEET. The quality of faculty is also questionable.

Add the cost of coaching, travelling, and other expenses, together to cost quite a few hundred crores more, a big drain on the economy plus parental and societal stress. The Kota coaching system has an estimated business of ₹600 crore. There are reports that the UGC-NET having nine lakh aspirants was cancelled as there was a paper leak. Each question paper was sold for ₹5,000 for transfer to the students’ Telegram app.

For NEET ₹30-35 lakh per student was charged as alleged by a student witness, who got the paper with its answers a day before. It is possibly one of the biggest scams that spanned from Vadodara and Godhra to Patna and where not! This has sparked countrywide protests. Add to this the various recruitments stalled for scams, 13 in Uttar Pradesh, many in West Bengal and the worst known VYAPAM

in Madhya Pradesh. Irregularities are thriving with the highest jobless numbers.

The reality is the NTA does not have competence to hold the examinations as many professional autonomous institutions have been doing for decades. The NTA appears to be a loosely controlled organisation. The tests are gateway to careers and future professional excellence. If they are mired with malpractices and money power, the future of the nation is at stake. The NTA does not conduct the tests on its own. Implementers are largely burgeoning private sector ‘service providers’, IT companies and emerging outsourcing infra organisations. The competence of NTA for ensuring cyber-security at thousands of centres is doubtful.

Even investigators and other staff are hired casually leaving the system vulnerable to attacks, pilferage and compromise. The suspicion over the countrywide coaching organisations calls for rethink on the composition of the tests. Are

they giving instructions, or has it emerged as the most corrupt money-minting machines? Should not the country do away with this organised malpractice? The examinations need to be tailored in a way that students do not need any coaching.

The NTA needs structural reforms. Conducting professional examinations is a challenge. The entire university system cribs over CUET – Central University Entrance Test. It forces students to take a test even for subjects which are not in demand. The huge numbers have put off academic calendars for the past few years. Let universities conduct their own admissions as before to rid the system of over centralisation, delays and trauma to students and their families.

Academics must put their heads together to have least of central admission examinations and more decentralised process not only to keep the process sanitised but also put India on the world map for its education, that such compromised systems sully

INF

Rail safety

Sir, The devastating train accidents in Balasore district of Odisha in June last year and the recent one involving Kanchanjunga Express and a goods train in West Bengal’s Darjeeling district reiterate the need to have mechanisms in place that ensure railway safety. Painfully, the most important home-grown anti-collision technology ‘Kavach’ is yet to be implemented in several long-running trains. Besides the ‘Kavach’ put in place, regular track inspection is essential for identifying potential hazards. The Automatic Track Inspection (ATI) technology, such as laser and camera-equipped track geometry cars can quickly assess the condition of tracks by identifying faults, anomalies, and any discrepancies. Also effective communication and dialogue between train operators, control centres, and maintenance personnel are crucial for accident prevention. Modern communication systems equipped with wireless data networks and real time reporting tools facilitate the rapid transmission of information. In emergency situations, coordinated and immediate responses between teams can help avert accidents.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Global scourge

Sir, The global drug problem is a pressing issue affecting millions through substance abuse and drug-related crime. According to the UNODC’s 2023 World Drug Report, global drug use surged to 296 million in 2021, a 23% increase over the past decade. Drug-use disorders also rose by 45%, impacting 39.5 million people, yet only one in five received treatment. The rise of synthetic drugs, especially fentanyl, has intensified illicit markets, leading to nearly 90,000 opioid-related deaths in North America alone in 2021. On 26 June, the world will observe the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking 2024. This day promotes healthier lives by abandoning drugs, raising awareness about drug abuse’s harmful effects, and advocating for accessible recovery centers. Global events engage all age groups, especially youth. Raising awareness on the profound societal impact of illicit drugs is crucial. Addressing this complex challenge requires a scientific, evidence-based approach focused on prevention and treatment. Prevention should target at-risk groups and support vulnerable individuals early on. Accessible and affordable treatment and rehab services are essential.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

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

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INDUS WATER TREATY

India, Pak delegations in Kishtwar to inspect hydro power projects

This is the first visit by a Pakistani delegation to J&K in more than five years under the dispute settlement mechanism of the 1960 treaty



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, June 24: Delegations from India and Pakistan Monday flew to Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district with neutral experts and began inspection of two power projects under the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), officials said.

About 40 people reached Jammu Sunday evening and flew to Kishtwar this morning for inspection of various under-construction power projects in the Chenab valley region, the officials said.

This is the first visit by a Pakistani delegation to Jammu and Kashmir in more than five years under the dispute settlement mechanism of the 1960 treaty. India and Pakistan signed the IWT after nine years of negotiations, with the World Bank being a signatory of the pact which sets out a mechanism for cooperation and information exchange between the two sides on the use of waters of a number of cross-border rivers.

A three-member Pakistan delegation inspected the Pakal Dul

and Lower Kalnai hydroelectric power projects under the provisions of the IWT for the last time in January 2019, before the ties between the two countries froze following the revocation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

Immediately after landing at an army camp, the delegation visited the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) headquarters, the officials said, adding, they left for the 85 MW Ratle hydroelectric power project site at Drabshalla for dam inspection.

They will also visit the 1,000 MW Pakal Dul hydroelectric project on river Marusudar, a tributary of river Chenab, and other power projects during their stay in Kishtwar, the officials said.

Pakistan had in a request to the World Bank in 2016 objected to the design features of the two hydroelectric power projects and sought a settlement through a 'Neutral Expert'.

The country, however, later withdrew the request and sought adjudication through a Court of

Arbitration. India, on the other hand, insisted that the issue should be resolved solely through 'Neutral Expert' proceedings.

After failed negotiations, the World Bank appointed a Neutral Expert and the chair of the Court of Arbitration in October 2022. Issuing a notice for the modification in the Treaty, India warned that "such parallel consideration of the same issues is not covered under any provision of the IWT".

In July 2023, the Court of Arbitration ruled that it was "competent to consider and determine the disputes set forth by Pakistan's request for arbitration".

Pakistan filed its first Memorial, which listed out its legal case with documents, under this process in March this year.

A month later, the court undertook a week-long visit to the Neelum-Jhelum Hydro-Electric Plant in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir "to familiarise the court with general aspects of the design and operation of run-of-river hydro-electric plants along the Indus system of rivers".

While India refused to take part in the Court of Arbitration, it submitted a Memorial to the Neutral Expert in August 2023.

Pakistan joined the second meeting of the parties held by Neutral Expert in Vienna in September last year which discussed matters related to the organisation of the site visit.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has appointed 25 'liaison officers' to coordinate the visit of Neutral Experts along with delegations from India and Pakistan.



Commuters during rains in Thiruvananthapuram, Monday

PTI PHOTO

Srinagar recognised as 'World Craft City'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, June 24: Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, has been officially recognised as a 'World Craft City' by the World Crafts Council, an official spokesman said here.

The recognition will boost the handloom and handicraft sector; which will benefit tourism and infrastructure development, the spokesman said.

"This prestigious honour underscores the city's rich heritage and the exceptional skills of its artisans whose dedication and artistry have earned global acclaim," the spokesman said Sunday evening.

J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said the recognition is a testament to the hard work and exceptional talent of artisans and it highlights the cultural richness of Srinagar.

"We are committed to supporting our artisans and en-



“We are committed to supporting our artisans and ensuring that this accolade translates into tangible benefits for the community”
MANOJ SINHA
J&K LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

suring that this accolade translates into tangible benefits for the community," he said.

Sinha said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has shown steadfast support for Jammu and Kashmir's handicraft and handloom sector.

The recognition as a 'World Craft City' will have a transformative impact on handloom and handicraft sector, fostering

growth, sustainability, and innovation.

With increased global recognition, Srinagar's crafts will gain enhanced visibility on the international stage, opening up new markets and opportunities for artisans, the spokesman said.

The sector is likely to attract greater investment and funding, aiding in infrastructure development and introducing mod-

ern techniques while preserving traditional methods, he said.

"Artisans will have access to advanced training programmes and workshops, further honing their skills and fostering innovation in their craft. The increase in demand for Srinagar's unique crafts is expected to boost production, leading to job creation and improved livelihoods for artisans and their families," he said.

Tourism in Srinagar is also set to benefit significantly from this recognition. The city is expected to draw more tourists interested in cultural and craft heritage, providing them with immersive experiences of the vibrant artisan communities, the spokesman said.

He said the city's cultural and craft heritage will attract tourists seeking authentic experiences, including visits to artisan workshops and cultural events showcasing Srinagar's vibrant crafts.

House passes resolution seeking to rename Kerala

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, June 24: The Kerala Assembly Monday unanimously adopted a resolution urging the Centre to officially change the state's name to 'Keralam'.

The Assembly passed the resolution for the second time because the Union Home Ministry, which reviewed the first resolution, suggested some technical changes.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who moved the resolution, wanted the Union government

to change the southern state's name from 'Kerala' to 'Keralam' in all languages included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of the country.

Moving the resolution, the CM said the state was called 'Keralam' in Malayalam and that the demand to form a united Kerala for the Malayalam-speaking communities had strongly emerged since the time of the national freedom struggle.

"But the name of our state is written as Kerala in the First Schedule of the Constitution. This Assembly requests the Centre to take immediate steps

to amend it as 'Keralam' under Article 3 of the Constitution and have it renamed as 'Keralam' in all the languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution," Vijayan said.

It was the second time that the state Assembly passed a resolution demanding a change in the name of the state.

The House had passed a similar unanimous resolution in August last year and submitted it to the Centre, but the Union Home Ministry suggested some technical changes in it, Assembly Secretariat sources here said.

After the presentation, the CM also said further examinations demanded some changes in the earlier resolution.

The resolution was accepted by both the members of the ruling LDF and the Opposition Congress-led UDF.

UDF legislator N Shamsudeen suggested some amendments to modify the structure of the resolution, which were rejected by the government later.

Subsequently, it was declared unanimously adopted by the Assembly by Speaker AN Shamseer.

Factionalism raises its head in Kerala CPI-M as pressure mounts on Vijayan

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, June 24: After two decades when factionalism raised its head in the Kerala unit of the CPI-M, and the then state party secretary Pinarayi Vijayan put it to rest by successfully sidelining the more acceptable and popular VS Achuthanandan, now things appear not that rosy for the former.

Vijayan has been having a hugely successful quarter of a century at the helm of affairs, first at the party and then in the government but his position now appears shaky.

Generally, it's the state secretary and the party that has an iron grip over the government whenever the CPI-M runs the government, but ever since Vijayan took over as Chief Minister, he has been the final word in both the party and the government.

But murmurs began ever since Vijayan's second term was mired by massive allegations against his daughter - Veena's deals which her IT company Exalogic was indulging in and now it has turned into a full-blown controversy after numerous national agencies scrutinising its dubious deals.



When the agencies were on the prowl and all attempts by the party, government and Veena to douse the allegations that surfaced came to nought, the massive drubbing Vijayan suffered in the Lok Sabha polls turned a nightmare for him.

As the district committees like Pathanamthitta, Kollam, Ernakulam and Kannur of the ruling party, after taking stock of the poll debacle pointed fingers at the manner in which Vijayan was running the show, things are getting tough for Vijayan.

After the recent five-day party meetings concluded that the

style of Vijayan has to change, came the news of veteran party leader P Jayarajan, who openly stated that the fielding of its sitting legislator and former Health Minister KK Shailaja from the Vadakara Lok Sabha seat had other meanings too, pointing fingers at Vijayan.

Already there was talk that she was the ideal choice when 79-year-old Vijayan who has health issues decides to reduce his burden.

This talk has now gained traction that Vijayan who has given huge importance to his young son-in-law -- State Tourism Minister PA Mohammed Riyas,

purposely fielded Shailaja from Vadakara and now that she has lost the polls, Riyas can be given more responsibilities.

What has now bothered Vijayan is the manner in which Kodyeri Balakrishnan at the peak of his political career when he was the state secretary a few years back, decided to take leave from the post after two of his son's dubious business deals became big news.

The talk in the party circles now is, since Kodyeri to bring credence went on leave after allegations surfaced, Vijayan also can emulate Kodyeri, taking into account the larger interest of the CPI-M.

Already fissures have developed in the ruling Left, when the allies -- the CPI and the RJD have openly called for a change in the style of Vijayan and now with four district CPI-M committees expressing displeasure, all eyes are on the upcoming central committee and politburo meetings which are set to begin June 28.

General Secretary Sitaram Yechuri has already pointed out that all aspects will be discussed, as the party at this juncture just cannot afford any sort of factionalism to raise its head.

Omar demands Rashid's release



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, June 24: Former J&K Chief Minister and Vice President of National Conference (NC) Omar Abdullah Monday demanded the release of detained Lok Sabha member elect Engineer Rashid.

Engineer Rashid defeated Omar Abdullah from north Kashmir Baramulla constituency by over 2 lakh votes in the Lok Sabha elections.

Engineer Rashid has been lodged in Delhi's Tihar Jail since 2019 when he was arrested by the NIA in a terror funding case.

"Congratulate all the Members of Parliament who are taking their oaths today, including those representing the people of Jammu and Kashmir. This is a momentous occasion for our democracy," Omar wrote on X.

He said that it is important to acknowledge that the people of North Kashmir have elected Engineer Rashid and he should be given the opportunity to take his oath and represent his constituents.

"It is equally important to recognise the injustice faced by those imprisoned, who are unable or unwilling to participate in elections," the former CM said.

He said that NC Members of Parliament will vociferously demand justice for all prisoners, including Engineer Rashid.

"We will also demand the immediate transfer of these prisoners held in jails outside J&K back to jails in Kashmir, pending their release. One of our main demands will be a broader amnesty for all individuals detained after August 5, 2019," the former CM said.

The NC has two Lok Sabha members, Mian Altaf Ahmad from Anantnag-Rajouri and Syed Ruhullah Mehdi from Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency in the 18th Lok Sabha.

Kozhikode officially declared India's first UNESCO 'City of Literature'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kozhikode, June 24: Kozhikode in north Kerala, known for its rich cultural heritage, has been officially declared as India's first UNESCO 'City of Literature'.

In October 2023, Kozhikode had earned a place in the 'Literature' category of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN).

State Local Self Government Department (LSGD) Minister, MB Rajesh, Sunday in an official event here announced the achievement of Kozhikode which earned the place in the 'Literature' category of the

UCCN.

Rajesh described Kozhikode as a city with a soul, characterised by humanity, harmony, a strong sense of justice and freedom of expression.

These core values have given birth to the vibrant art of Kozhikode, Rajesh said.

The minister said the efficient functioning of the Kozhikode city corporation played a major role in bagging the 'City of Literature' tag from UNESCO after beating cities with rich cultural history like Kolkata.

The state government also announced that from coming year, June 23 will be celebrated as the



'City of Literature' Day of Kozhikode, a place known for literary greats like late SK Pottakkad and Vaikom Muhammed Basheer.

On this day, special awards will be announced in six categories, a statement issued by the LSGD said.

As part of the event, Tourism



Minister PA Mohammed Riyas unveiled the logo of the 'City of Literature' by UNESCO.

Rajesh visited the house of Jnanpith awardee MT Vasudevan Nair and handed over the Diamond Jubilee award instituted by the Kozhikode city corporation.

Known as the city of Zamorins

once, Kozhikode, also known as Calicut during British rule, served as the gateway to the coast for many foreigners, such as Persians, Arabs, Chinese, and eventually Europeans, centuries ago.

The cradle of the freedom movement in Kerala, Kozhikode has also been an important destination for book festivals for many decades.

Kozhikode is a city where there are over 500 libraries functioning, and has been the base of literary activities of legendary Malayalam writer MT Vasudevan Nair for several decades.

Gwalior and Kozhikode from

India are among the 55 new cities which have joined the UCCN. The new list was published on its website on the World Cities Day, which falls October 31.

These new cities were acknowledged for their strong commitment to harnessing culture and creativity as part of their development strategies and displaying innovative practices in human-centred urban planning, the UN agency had said in a statement.

While Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh made it to the coveted list in the 'Music' category, Kozhikode earned the place in the 'Literature' category.

of the day quote

Kerala has been reeling under an acute financial crisis due to the anti-federal stand adopted by the Centre

KN BALAGOPAL | STATE FINANCE MINISTER

Just as one can't stop the wind, the DMK can't prevent the AIADMK members nor the turbulence in people's minds over the hooch tragedy

EDAPPADI K PALANISWAMI | AIADMK GENERAL SECRETARY

Ensuring timely completion and maintenance of our infrastructure projects is crucial for the benefit of our citizens and the state's development

PEMA KHANDU | CM, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

SHORT TAKES

INDIA bloc wins Benaulim zilla

Panaji: Opposition INDIA alliance candidate Joseph Pimenta Monday won the Benaulim zilla panchayat seat bypoll in Goa, defeating his nearest rival by 3,049 votes, an election official said. The bypoll was necessitated after Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Hanzel Fernandes was disqualified over false caste certificate. The constituency is reserved for OBC candidates. AAP leader Pimenta was pitted against three independent candidates - Congress rebel Roylea Fernandes, Greygyfern Fernandes and Frank Fernandes. Benaulim zilla panchayat seat is part of the South Goa Lok Sabha constituency.

1,500 families evicted

Morigaon (Assam): Around 1,500 families who had settled illegally on Forest and Railway land have been asked to clear the area in Assam's Morigaon district, an official said Monday. The families, comprising around 10,000 people, had settled on government land in Silbhanga village in Jagiroad, District Commissioner Devashish Sarma told reporters here. "A notice was served to the people of the area June 12 asking them to clear the land within ten days, and most of them have complied," he said.

Boy dies in toy train accident

Chandigarh: A 10-year-old boy died after the compartment of a toy train in which he was taking a joy ride overturned at a mall here, police said Monday. The incident took place Saturday night at Elante Mall, where the boy and his family from Balachaur in Nawanshahr, Punjab, were enjoying an outing, they said. A purported CCTV footage of the incident has surfaced on social media. According to the police, Shahbaz was sitting in the last compartment, which overturned as the toy train made a turn, leaving the boy with severe head injuries. Shahbaz was rushed to the government medical college and hospital in Sector 32, where he died, a senior police official said.

Hoax bomb threat

Kalaburagi (Karnataka): The Kalaburagi airport received a bomb threat via email Monday which turned out to be a hoax after a thorough search operation, police said. Bomb disposal and dog squads were immediately pressed into action on the airport premises, they said. Kalaburagi Police Commissioner Chethan R told PTI that the Airport Director Chilaka Mahesh received an email from an anonymous ID this morning claiming that explosives have been planted inside the airport premises.



“We have faced several defections of MLAs in the past in 2004-06 when Congress was in Government. Telangana responded strongly by stepping up the people's agitation & eventually Congress had to bow its head. History shall repeat itself”

KT RAMA RAO | BRS LEADER

1.65CR PASSPORTS RENDERED IN 2023

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) rendered 1.65 crore passport-related services to citizens in 2023, registering an annual growth of nearly 15 per cent. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said this while commending the personnel for efficient passport-related service delivery. The MEA commemorated the 12th Passport Seva Divas Monday to mark the enactment of the Passports Act June 24, 1967



RISING PRICES

Govt imposes stock limits on wheat to check hoarding

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 24: In a move to check wheat price rise and hoarding, the Centre Monday imposed stock holding limits on traders, wholesalers, retailers and processors with immediate effect.

The restrictions will remain in force until March 31, 2025, across all states and Union Territories.

Single retailers, big-chain retailers, processors and wholesalers will disclose wheat stocks every Friday, said Union Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra in a press briefing here.

Under the new rules, retail outlets and individual stores of big chain retailers are allowed to stock up to 10 tonne of wheat, an official statement said.

Traders, wholesalers, and large depots of big chain retailers face a cap of 3,000 tonne each.

For processors, the limit is set at 70 per cent of their monthly installed capacity (MIC) multiplied by the remaining months of the 2024-25 fiscal.

The government has mandated all entities to declare their stock position and regularly update it on the Department of Food and Public Distribution's portal (<https://evegoils.nic.in/wsp/login>). Those holding stocks exceeding the prescribed limits have been given a 30-day window to comply with the new norms.

"I want to dispel the shortage of wheat in the country," Chopra stressed. He also noted that there is a ban on wheat exports as of now, and there is no proposal to review a ban on the export of sugar.

The decision comes after a high-level meeting, chaired by Home Affairs and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah, held last week, where officials were directed to monitor wheat prices closely.

18TH LOK SABHA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and members of his Council of Ministers, including Rajnath Singh and Amit Shah, took the oath as members of the 18th Lok Sabha as its first session began Monday.

Modi returned to power for his third consecutive term in office earlier this month. He and his Council of Ministers were sworn in June 9.

This is also his third term as a member of the Lok Sabha. In the recently held Lok Sabha election, Modi retained his Varanasi seat, which he has been winning since 2014. As the leader of the House, he was the first one to be sworn in.

Modi took the oath in Hindi amid slogans of Jai Shri Ram raised by members of the treasury benches.

While he was taking the oath, Opposition members rose to their feet, holding copies of the Constitution. When Shah came to take the oath, they again held up the copies of the Constitution but remained seated.

Among the Council of Ministers, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman are members of the Rajya Sabha, while ministers of state George Kurian and Ravneet Singh are not members of either House. Besides Rajnath Singh and Shah, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari also took the oath as members of the 18th Lok Sabha.

While Rajnath Singh was re-elected from the Lucknow seat in Uttar Pradesh, Shah returned from Gandhinagar in Gujarat and Gadkari from Nagpur in Maharashtra. All three took the oath in Hindi.

Before them, senior members Radha Mohan Singh and Faggan Singh Kulaste (both from the BJP), who will assist the pro-



tem speaker in administering the oath to the newly elected MPs, were sworn in as members of the new House.

They will help pro-tem speaker B Mahtab run the House when the members take the oath Monday and Tuesday.

Congress members K Suresh (Congress), T R Baalu (DMK) and Sudip Bandyopadhyay (TMC), who were called to take oath as they were also appointed as panel of chairpersons like Singh and Kulaste, did not turn up.

The Congress has taken objection to Mahtab's appointment, contending that the claim of eight-term member Suresh, a Dalit leader, was overlooked. The INDIA bloc has said Opposition leaders Suresh, Baalu and Bandyopadhyay would not join the panel of chairpersons as a mark of protest.

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Power Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Jitan Ram Manjhi and Minister for Fisheries and Animal Husbandry Rajiv Ranjan (Lalan) Singh also took the oath as members of the new Lok Sabha.

Manjhi and Rajiv Ranjan (Lalan) Singh belong to NDA partners Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) and JD-U re-

MODI RETURNED TO POWER FOR HIS THIRD CONSECUTIVE TERM IN OFFICE EARLIER THIS MONTH. HE AND HIS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WERE SWORN IN JUNE 9

HE TOOK THE OATH IN HINDI AMID SLOGANS OF JAI SHRI RAM RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE TREASURY BENCHES

spectively.

Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries H D Kumaraswamy took the oath in Kannada, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in Odia, Ports and Shipping Minister Sarbananda Sonowal in

Assamese, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu and Coal and Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy in Telugu and Consumer Affairs Pralhad Joshi in Kannada.

Kumaraswamy is from the JD-S and Naidu is from the Telugu Desam Party.

Union Minister of State for Power and New and Renewable Energy Shripad Y Naik took the oath in Sanskrit.

Earlier in the day, B Mahtab took the oath as a member of the new Lok Sabha as well as that of its pro-tem speaker at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Before the proceedings started, all members observed silence for a few seconds to mark the solemn occasion of the first sitting of the new House.

After the oath of the members of the Union Council of Ministers who won the Lok Sabha election, newly-elected members from various states were sworn in, starting from Bishnu Pada Ray, who represents the Andaman & Nicobar Islands constituency.

'Undeclared emergency' existed under BJP's rule

Prime Minister Modi took a swipe at the Congress over the imposition of Emergency in 1975, calling it a "black spot" on democracy when the Constitution was "discarded"

Opposition leaders hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his "Emergency" remark Monday, calling the 10 years of his government an "undeclared emergency".

Slamming Modi over his remarks, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the prime minister delivered a longer-than-usual customary address but clearly, even after the moral and political defeat, the arrogance remains.

He said the country was hoping that Modi would say something on important issues.

"Narendra Modiji, you are giving advice to the Opposition. You are reminding us of the 50-year-old Emergency, but have forgotten the last 10 years of undeclared emergency, which was ended by the people," Kharge said in a post on X.

"People have given their mandate against Modiji. Despite this, if he has become the Prime Minister, then he should work," he added.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the prime minister has shown no evidence that he has understood the true meaning of the people's verdict, which saw him eking out only a narrow and dubious win in Varanasi.

"The non-biological PM who suffered a resounding personal,

political and moral defeat in the Lok Sabha elections has just given his usual 'desh ke naam sandesh' outside the Parliament as the 18th Lok Sabha prepares to commence its tenure. He has said nothing new and as usual, resorted to diversion," Ramesh said on X.

"Let him be under no doubt: the INDIA Janbandhan will hold him to account for every minute. He stands brutally exposed," the Congress leader added.

Asked about Modi's remarks on Emergency, Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav evaded a direct reply and said, "I thank the wise people of India, who voted to protect the Constitution. The people got tired waiting for achhe din (good days). I hope the people will have happy days in the future."

Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Mahua Moitra said the ruling BJP fell short of a majority in the recently-held Lok Sabha polls as the people of the country have realised that it is against the Constitution.

In his customary remarks ahead of the commencement of the 18th Lok Sabha, Modi said the country needs a responsible Opposition as people want substance, not slogans. He said people want debate, diligence and not disturbance in Parliament.



6 months maternity leave in case of surrogacy: Govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 24: Women government employees can take 180 days of maternity leave in case they have children through surrogacy after amendments were announced to a 50-year-old rule by the Centre.

It has also allowed the "commissioning mother" (the intending mother of the child born through surrogacy) with child care leave besides paternity leave of 15 days to the "commissioning father", according to the changes made in the Central Civil Services (Leave) Rules, 1972.

"In case of surrogacy, the surrogate, as well as the commis-

sioning mother with less than two surviving children, may be granted maternity leave of 180 days, in case either or both of them are government servants," read the amended rules notified by the Personnel Ministry.

Till now, there were no rules to grant maternity leaves to women government employees in case a child was born through surrogacy.

"In case of a child begotten through surrogacy, the commissioning father who is a male government servant with less than two surviving children may be granted paternity leave of 15 days within the period of 6 months from the date of delivery of the child," the new rules said.

WATER CRISIS

Delhi Cabinet ministers write to PM

THE MINISTERS URGE MODI TO SOLVE WATER CRISIS ON PRIORITY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 24: Delhi cabinet ministers have written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and urged him to resolve the water crisis in the national capital on priority, Environment minister Gopal Rai said Monday.

Addressing a press conference, Delhi ministers Gopal Rai, Saurabh Bharadwaj, Kailash Gahlot and Imran Hussain said Atishi's indefinite fast has entered the fourth day and her health is deteriorating.

The ministers decided to write a letter to the prime minister on the water crisis during a meeting at the site of Atishi's



hunger strike at Jangpura's Bhogal. In the letter, the ministers said that despite the heat-wave conditions, Delhi was not getting its "rightful share" of

water from Haryana. "The total water supply in Delhi is 1,005 MGD. Out of this, a huge chunk of 613 MGD comes from Haryana. For the last many weeks,

there has been a decline in water coming from Haryana," the letter read. The Delhi ministers said that Delhi was getting 100 MGD less for many days now.

"One MGD of water fulfils the needs of 28,500 people in Delhi in one day. This means that due to the decline of 100 MGD of water, 28 lakh people are not getting water. On one hand, we need additional water and on the other hand, 28 lakh people are not getting water," read the letter signed by Rai, Gahlot, Hussain and Bharadwaj.

The ministers also cited Atishi's indefinite hunger strike to request the prime minister to find a solution to the water crisis on priority.

UPSC moots AI-based CCTV surveillance to prevent cheating

The development by the UPSC assumes significance as the Central government faces heat over the alleged irregularities in the conduct of UGC-NET, which determines the eligibility of Indian nationals for Assistant Professor and Junior Research Fellowship and in the NEET-UG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 24: Amid the raging controversies involving alleged irregularities in NEET, NET exams, the country's premier recruitment body UPSC has decided to use facial recognition and Artificial Intelligence-based CCTV surveillance system to prevent cheating and impersonation in its various tests.

It has recently floated a tender to invite bids from experienced public sector undertakings to devise two tech solutions - "Aadhaar based fingerprint authentication (else digital fingerprint capturing) & facial recognition of candidates and QR code scanning of e-admit cards" and "Live AI-based CCTV surveillance service" - to be used during the examination process.

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), a Constitutional body, conducts 14 major exams - including the prestigious civil services examination to select officers of Indian Administrative Service

(IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS), and Indian Police Service (IPS) - besides a number of recruitment tests, interviews every year for induction to Group 'A' and Group 'B' posts of the central government.

An estimated 26 lakh candidates are expected to appear in such recruitment, conducted at a maximum of 80 centres in Leh, Kargil, Srinagar, Imphal, Agartala, Aizawl and Gangtok, among other major cities.

"The UPSC attaches great importance to the conduct of its examinations in a free, fair and impartial manner. In its endeavor to fulfill these objectives, the Commission intends to make use of the latest digital technology to match and cross-check the biometric details of the candidates and to monitor various activities of the candidates during the examination to prevent cheating, fraud, unfair means and impersonation," read the tender document dated June 3, 2024.

The move is aimed at strengthening the examination process



and eliminating the possibility of malpractices by the candidates.

The selected service provider will use the data provided by the UPSC for Aadhaar-based fingerprint authentication of candidates and facial recognition during the exam, according to the scope of work mentioned in the tender document.

"Provision should be made for a real-time attendance monitoring system through secured web server. System should have

line registration and the other captured on the day of the exam.

The UPSC said that it has decided to implement CCTV/video surveillance with recording and live broadcast systems to monitor various activities of the candidates and other persons deployed to conduct the Commission's examinations at the various centres/venues across the country under a secure environment.

"The service provider has to install adequate number of CCTV colour cameras in every classroom (minimum 1 CCTV camera for 24 candidates), entry/exit gate and control room (where pre-examination sensitive material will be kept and opened and post-examination sensitive material will be packed) of every examination venue," the document said.

"In case of the exam hall/room having more than 24 candidates, one CCTV camera for every 24

candidates shall be installed ensuring that the CCTV camera to candidate ratio is not less than 1:24 and that there are zero blind spots," it added.

The AI-based video system need to be capable of generation of alerts "if any movement is detected at entry/exit gates during examination," and "if the furniture inside the classrooms is not properly arranged."

It will also alert the authorities "if the cameras are offline or are tampered (sic) by masking or black screen," "if there is any movement in classrooms 1 hour before or after the exam" and "if invigilator is not moving even after the specified time/inactivity is detected in invigilator's movement," the tender document said.

The AI should raise red flags at incidents which would indicate cheating, unfair means, absence of invigilators etc, it added.

The date of closure of the bid document is July 7, 1 pm. The bid will be opened on the same day at 1.30 pm.

The move is aimed at strengthening the examination process and eliminating the possibility of malpractices by the candidates



Kharge ji, as you know Karunapuram is largely populated by the Scheduled Castes, who face several challenges due to poverty and discrimination in Tamil Nadu. In light of this, I was shocked that when such a huge disaster has taken place, the Congress party led by you, has maintained a stoic silence on this

EXTRA MARKS POLICY: SC JUNKS HARYANA'S PLEA The Supreme Court Monday upheld a Punjab and Haryana High Court order quashing the Haryana government's policy of granting additional marks to its residents in recruitment exams. Terming the Haryana government's policy a "populist measure", a vacation bench of Justice Abhay S Oka and Justice Rajesh Bindal refused to interfere with the high court order



of the day quote

The Maratha community is now in trouble while I am left alone. But I will fight back and ensure that the Maratha community gets reservation under the Other Backward Classes category

Greetings to JP Nadra ji on his being nominated as the Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha. As Venkaiah Naidu garu might have said -- if the Leader of the House can accommodate, the Opposition can cooperate

To encourage the hotel industry, we need to make changes in our building byelaws

KEJRIWAL BAIL ISSUE 'Unusual' for HC to reserve verdict: SC

EXCISE POLICY 'SCAM': TOP COURT FIXES JUNE 26 FOR HEARING KEJRIWAL'S PLEA AGAINST HC'S STAY ORDER ON BAIL



Bail order 'perverse', Kejriwal neck deep in money laundering: ED to HC The Enforcement Directorate Monday told the Delhi High Court that the trial court order granting bail to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was based on "perverse" findings as it did not consider the material demonstrating his "neck deep involvement" in the offence of money laundering linked to the alleged excise scam.

21, at the mentioning stage itself, in my presence, the judge stays the order and then the judge proceeds to hear us for some time on that day at length. Then reserves order," he said. Contending that there are two or three legal points involved, Singhvi said, first, the procedure of staying a bail on the first attempt, on the first day and first challenge is "unprecedented" and, secondly the balance of convenience is totally in Kejriwal's favour.

Ayodhya temple's roof leaking after heavy rains



Ayodhya (UP), June 24: Water was leaking from the roof of the sanctum sanctorum at the Ram temple here after the first heavy showers since it was opened to the public, its chief priest Acharya Satyendra Das said Monday. Alleging negligence in the construction of the temple, Das claimed that there was also no arrangement for the drainage of rainwater from the temple premises after the showers Saturday midnight and urged the temple authorities to take necessary corrective measures.

India's first lithium block sold to Maiki South Mining

New Delhi, June 24: Maiki South Mining Pvt Ltd has bagged the country's first lithium block in Chhattisgarh that was put up for sale, the government said Monday. Meanwhile, the government cancelled the auction of 14 critical minerals that were on offer in the second round of auction. The Katghora lithium and rare earth elements (REE) block in Chhattisgarh was awarded to the company at an auction premium of 76.05 per cent.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 24: The Supreme Court Monday termed as "unusual" the Delhi High Court's decision of reserving the order while granting interim stay on the operation of the trial court's order granting bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in a money laundering case linked to the alleged excise scam. A vacation bench of Justices Manoj Misra and SVN Bhatti, which fixed June 26 for hearing Kejriwal's plea against the interim stay granted by the high court at the time of reserving its verdict on ED's plea said, "Normally, on stay applications, orders are not reserved. They are passed at the hearing itself, on

"We will be pre-judging the issue, if we pass any order at this stage. It is not some other court but the high court," the bench told Singhvi. It noted that the high court had June 21 asked the parties to file written submissions on the interim relief of stay of the bail. "The parties were directed to file short submissions not running more than two-three pages by June 24. Therefore it is expected that the order will be pronounced shortly, maybe in a day or two," the bench said. Singhvi said the order was reserved on the interim relief sought by the ED, while the main matter is still pending, and if the bail order is reversed, Kejriwal will go back to jail like he did June 2.

POST OF THE DAY

While attacking the opposition is the prerogative of the Hon PM & we wouldn't expect BJP being humbled in the recent polls to change that, it would have been in the fitness of things for the Hon PM to spare a few words for the young men & women for whom the #NEET scandal is the only issue that matters. Exam pe charcha isn't a one off but a long term commitment to the interests & concerns of students

SHORT TAKES

Anti-paper leak law: Govt notifies rules

New Delhi: The Centre Monday made public the rules under the recently-notified anti-paper leak law, mandating the National Recruitment Agency (NRA) to prepare norms, standards and guidelines for the computer-based tests among others. The rules were notified within days of operationalising The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 -- the first-ever national law against the use of unfair means to rig recruitment exams conducted by various public bodies. The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024 was passed by Rajya Sabha February 9 and Lok Sabha passed it February 6.

22 fishermen held

Chennai: As many as 22 Tamil Nadu fishermen were arrested and their three boats were seized by Sri Lanka, Chief Minister MK Stalin conveyed to the Centre Monday and sought immediate steps to secure the release of all the fishers arrested so far and their boats. Writing to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Stalin referred to continuing loss of livelihood for fishermen due to 'incidents of arrest and intimidation' by Sri Lanka and said that June 22, twenty-two fishermen from Rameswaram fishing harbour were apprehended by the island nation along with their three mechanised fishing boats.

Income limit hiked

Chandigarh: Maintaining that it will provide "significant benefits" in employment for the OBC category, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini Sunday announced an increase in annual income limit for creamy layer from ₹6 lakh to ₹8 lakh.

the spot. So, it is a bit unusual." The bench said it would like to wait for the pronouncement of the high court order before taking a call on the AAP national convenor's appeal. During the brief hearing, senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Kejriwal, sought vacation of the interim stay on the bail order, contending it was contrary to the well-established norm that a bail granted is very different from a bail reversed or cancelled. Giving the sequence of events that unfolded in the high court on June 21, Singhvi said, after the bail was granted June 20, Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the ED, made a mention before a vacation bench. "This is important. On June

CBI takes over 5 cases of malpractices in NEET-UG

The alleged cases under probe are from Bihar, Gujarat and Rajasthan PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi, June 24: The CBI has taken over the investigation of five new cases of alleged malpractices in the medical entrance exam NEET-UG that were being probed by police in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Bihar, officials said Monday. They said the central agency has re-registered one case each from Gujarat and Bihar and three cases from Rajasthan as its own FIR, while it is also likely to take up another case from Maharashtra's Latur. Barring the case from Bihar, the other four appear to be isolated incidents of impersonation and cheating by local officials, investigators and candidates, the officials said. The CBI has already registered its own FIR in connection with the case on a reference from the Union education ministry to conduct a comprehensive probe, they said. After taking over these new cases, the CBI is now probing a total of six cases pertaining to alleged irregularities in NEET-UG, the officials said. NEET-UG is conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions across the country. The examination was conducted May 5 at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including 14 abroad. Over 23 lakh candidates appeared for the test.



Police use water cannon to disperse Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) activists during their protest march to the Kerala State Council For Child Welfare, in Thiruvananthapuram

74% Indians support taxing super-rich to address global inequality

THE PROPOSAL FOR A LEVY ON THE SUPER-RICH HAS BEEN UNDER DISCUSSION SINCE AT LEAST 2013 WITH INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT ON THE ISSUE GROWING OVER THE YEARS

international support on the issue growing over the years. Brazil, the current president of the G20, aims to build consensus on the taxation of wealth and is likely to push for a joint declaration at a meeting of G20 finance ministers in July. Gabriel Zucman, a French economist and a key influencer behind Brazil's G20 proposal for progressive international taxation to promote tax justice, will release a report Tuesday, outlining how "a global minimum tax on the ultra-rich" could work and how much it could raise. According to Zucman, the



super-rich pay significantly less tax than the ordinary people. The proposal aims to establish a new international standard: billionaires in every country would be required to pay at least

Indians want a giant leap on climate and nature -- 68 per cent demand dramatic reforms across all economic sectors within the next decade. This is a strong mandate for planetary stewardship that cannot be ignored

Seventy-one per cent of Indians endorse universal basic income, 74 per cent support policies that encourage healthy diets to cut emissions, and 76 per cent seek a better work-life balance. Sixty-eight per cent of Indians believe the world needs to take dramatic action in the next decade across all sectors of the economy -- electricity generation, transport, buildings, industry, and food. Eighty-one per cent of the Indians surveyed support a shift to "wellbeing economies" that have a stronger focus on health and the environment than a narrow focus on economic growth.

international

of the day quote

I want to stress, democracy is not a crime, it's autocracy that is the real evil. China has absolutely no right to sanction Taiwan's people just because of the positions they hold

LAI CHING TE | PRESIDENT, TAIWAN

I am trying to maintain friendly relations with China, Poland has always had decent relations with China and I would like that to be continued

ANDRZEJ DUDA | PRESIDENT, POLAND

President Putin has said that work is under way to bring the nuclear doctrine into line with current realities

DMITRY PESKOV | KREMLIN SPOKESMAN, RUSSIA

SHORT TAKES

PIO shot dead in US during theft

Houston: In a tragic incident, a 32-year-old Indian man, who came to the US less than a year ago, was fatally shot during a robbery at a convenience store in the US state of Texas. Dasari Gopikrishna sustained critical injuries during a robbery incident at a gas station convenience store in Pleasant Grove, Dallas, June 21. He hailed from the Yajali village of the Bapatla district in Andhra Pradesh and came to the US only eight months ago.

Pak boy kills man over blasphemy

Lahore: A 14-year-old seminary student stabbed a man belonging to the Shia minority Muslim community to death for allegedly speaking against the companions of Prophet Muhammad in Pakistan's Punjab province, police said Monday, the second blasphemy-related killing in the country in four days. The incident occurred Sunday in Kunjrah, Gujrat, approximately 170 km from Lahore. A senior police officer told PTI that the minor seminary student stabbed 55-year-old Nazir Hussain Shah to death after being incited by his father and uncle's remarks.

Jaishankar in UAE

Dubai: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held "productive and deep" conversations with his United Arab Emirates counterpart Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan on India and UAE's "ever-growing" comprehensive strategic ties and discussed regional and global issues. Jaishankar, who was in the UAE Sunday, visited the iconic BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi and participated in the 10th International Yoga Day celebrations before meeting Al Nahyan. "Very pleased to meet UAE FM @ABZayed today in Abu Dhabi," he said in a post on X after meeting his UAE counterpart. "Productive and deep conversations on our ever-growing Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Appreciated the discussion and his insights on regional and global issues," he said.

77 migrants saved

Athens: A group of 77 migrants were rescued off a crippled sailing yacht after a large overnight operation in the southern Aegean Sea, Greek authorities said Monday. Nobody was reported missing or injured following the rescue between the islands of Amorogos and Astypalaea, Greece's coast guard said. Three coast guard vessels, four merchant ships in the area and two smaller private boats took part in the rescue after passengers on the yacht phoned emergency services for assistance.



I can say for my part and for the view of Germany that nationalism has never been the solution to problems. This is a lesson from European history that cannot be neglected

BORIS PISTORIUS | DEFENCE MINISTER, GERMANY

IRAN, BAHRAIN MAY RESUME TIES

Iran and Bahrain have agreed to talk about how they might resume bilateral relations after nearly eight years. Iran's acting foreign minister Ali Bagheri Kani and his Bahraini counterpart Abdullatif bin Rashid al-Zayani spoke on the sidelines of the ongoing Asian Cooperation Dialogue in Tehran



'Next war could be in Lebanon'

ISRAEL PM SAYS THAT THE COUNTRY IS WINDING DOWN ITS GAZA OPERATIONS BUT WARNS OF A LEBANON WAR NEXT

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jerusalem, June 24: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday that the current phase of fighting against Hamas in Gaza is winding down, setting the stage for Israel to send more troops to its northern border to confront the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. The comments threatened to further heighten the tensions between Israel and Hezbollah at a time when they appear to be moving closer to war. The Israeli leader said in a lengthy TV interview that while the army is close to completing its current ground offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, that would not mean the war against Hamas is over. But he said fewer troops would be needed in Gaza, freeing up forces to bat-



tle Hezbollah. "We will have the possibility of transferring some of our forces north, and we will do that," he told Israel's Channel 14, a pro-Netanyahu TV channel, in an interview that was frequently interrupted by applause from the studio audience. "First and foremost, for defence," he added, but also to allow tens of thousands of displaced Israelis to return home. The Iranian-backed Hezbollah began striking Israel almost immediately after Hamas' October 7 cross-border attack that triggered the Gaza war. Hezbollah is much stronger than Hamas, and opening a new front would raise the risk of a larger, region-wide war involving other Iranian proxies and perhaps Iran itself that could cause heavy damage and mass casualties on both sides of the border. White House envoy Amos Hochstein was in the region last week meeting with officials in Israel and Lebanon in an effort to lower tensions. But the fight-

Gunmen kill 20 in Russia, mostly cops

Russia declares two days of mourning with flags lowered to half-mast and all entertainment events cancelled

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moscow, June 24: Russia's southern region of Dagestan held the first of three days of mourning Monday following a rampage by Islamic militants who authorities say killed 20 people, most of them police, and attacked houses of worship in apparently coordinated assaults in two cities. Sunday's violence in Dagestan's regional capital of Makhachkala and nearby Derbent was the latest that officials blamed on Islamic extremists in the predominantly Muslim region in the North Caucasus, as well as the deadliest in Russia since March, when gunmen opened fire at a concert in suburban Moscow, killing 145 people. The affiliate of the Islamic State group in Afghanistan that claimed responsibility for March's raid quickly praised the attack in Dagestan, saying it was conducted



This is a day of tragedy for Dagestan and the whole country. This is an attempt to cleave apart our unity

SERGEI MELIKOV | DAGESTAN GOVERNOR

by "brothers in the Caucasus who showed that they are still strong." The Washington-based Institute for the Study of War argued that the Islamic State group's North Caucasus branch, Vilayat Kavkaz, likely was behind the attack, describing it as "complex and coordinated." Dagestan Governor Sergey Melikov blamed members of Islamic "sleepers cells" directed from abroad, but didn't give any other details. He said in a video statement that the assailants aimed at "sowing panic and fear," and attempted to link the attack to Moscow's military action in Ukraine, but also provided no evidence.

India slams Canada for 'glorifying terrorism'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ottawa, June 24: Terming the frequent acts glorifying militancy in Canada as deplorable, India has emphasised that no government in the world should overlook the threat of terrorism emanating from its territories for political gains. In a statement on the 39th anniversary of the 1985 Kanishka bombing, in which 329 persons, most of them Canadians of Indian descent, on board an Air India flight lost their lives, the Indian High Commission here said that terrorism knows no borders, nationality, or race. The Montreal-New Delhi Air India 'Kanishka' Flight 182 exploded 45 minutes before it was to have landed at London's Heathrow Airport June 23, 1985, killing all 329 people on board, including 86 children. The bombing was blamed on Sikh militants in retaliation to 'Operation Bluestar' to flush out militants from the Golden Temple in 1984. The Indian High Commission in Ottawa and the consulates of India in Toronto and Vancouver organised memorial services Sunday and solemnly remembered the victims of the dastardly act of terror in 1985. Addressing the gathering, High Commissioner Sanjay Kumar Verma said, "No government in the world should overlook the threat of terrorism emanating from its territories for political gains." "Human lives are much more important than the transitory political interests. All terrorist activities should be met with

exemplary legal and social actions before they start harming the larger humanity," he said. "Governments, security agencies, and international organisations must work in concert to dismantle terrorist networks, disrupt their financing, and counter their twisted ideologies," he added. "While thirty-nine years have passed since the cowardly act, terrorism has unfortunately assumed proportions of an existential threat to international peace and security today", the Indian high commission's statement said. "Any act of glorifying terrorism, including the bombing of Al-182 in 1985, is deplorable and should be condemned by all peace-loving countries and people", it said. "It is unfortunate that such actions are allowed to be routine on many occasions in Canada", it added. "It is unfortunate that such actions are allowed to be routine on many occasions in Canada", it added.



Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama being welcomed by members of the Tibetan community upon his arrival in New York

UK Oppn 'ready to go' on FTA with India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, June 24: The UK's Opposition Labour Party Monday criticised the governing Conservatives of having "over-promised and under delivered" on relations with India and declared that it is "ready to go" on striking a free trade agreement (FTA) if it wins the July 4 general election. Addressing the India Global Forum (IGF) in the final full week of the election campaign, the party's shadow foreign secretary David Lammy laid out his ambitions of the FTA being "a floor not a ceiling" of the partnership he aspires to with his "friend" external affairs minister Dr S Jaishankar.



India and the UK have completed 13 rounds of FTA negotiations to enhance the estimated GBP 38.1 billion a year trading relationship, with talks currently stalled amid the election cycles in both countries. "Many Diwalis have come and gone without a trade deal and too many businesses have been left waiting," said Lammy referring to the missed Diwali 2022 deadline set by former Prime Minister Boris Johnson for the FTA.

"My message to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Trade Minister Piyush Goyal is that Labour is ready to go. Let's finally get our free trade deal done and move on," he said, adding he will be in Delhi before the end of July if elected to government July 4. Describing India as a "priority" for the party and an economic, technological and cultural "superpower", Lammy sought to set the tone for his future tenure in a Labour-led Cabinet - hopeful of taking charge as the country's foreign secretary. From a wider foreign policy perspective, Lammy stressed on a "free and open Indo-Pacific" working in partnership with India.

Chinese hackers intensify cyberattacks on Taiwan

Earlier this year, the US and Britain accused China of a sweeping cyber espionage campaign that allegedly hit millions of people

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hong Kong, June 24: A suspected Chinese state-sponsored hacking group has stepped up its targeting of Taiwanese organisations, particularly those in sectors such as government, education, technology and diplomacy, according to cyber security intelligence company Recorded Future. In recent years, relations between China and Taiwan, a self-governed island across the Taiwan Strait that Beijing claims as its territory, have deteriorated.



The cyberattacks by the group known as RedJuliett were observed between November 2023 and April 2024, during the lead up to Taiwan's presidential election in January and the subsequent change in administration. RedJuliett has targeted Taiwanese organisations in the past, but this is the first time that activity was seen at such a

scale, a Recorded Future analyst said, speaking on condition of anonymity out of safety concerns. The report said RedJuliett attacked 24 organisations, including government agencies in places like Laos, Kenya and Rwanda, as well as Taiwan. It also hacked into websites of religious organisations in Hong Kong and South Korea, a US university and a Djiboutian university. The report did not identify the organisations. Recorded Future said RedJuliett accessed the servers of those places via vulnerability in their SoftEther enterprise virtual private network (VPN) software, an open-source VPN that allows remote connections to an organisation's networks. RedJuliett has been observed attempting to break into systems of more than 70 Taiwanese organisations including three universities, an optoelectronics company and a facial recognition company that has contracts with the government. It was unclear if RedJuliett managed to break into those organisations. Recorded Future only said it observed the attempts to identify vulnerabilities in their networks. RedJuliett's hacking patterns match those of Chinese state-sponsored groups, according to

Recorded Future. It said that based on the geolocations of IP addresses, RedJuliett is likely based out of the city of Fuzhou, in China's southern Fujian province, whose coast faces Taiwan. "Given the close geographical proximity between Fuzhou and Taiwan, Chinese intelligence services operating in Fuzhou are likely tasked with intelligence collection against Taiwanese targets," the report said. "RedJuliett is likely targeting Taiwan to collect intelligence and support Beijing's policy-making on cross-strait relations," the Recorded Future report said. Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not immediately comment. Beijing has consistently denied engaging in any form of state-sponsored hacking, instead saying that China itself is a major target of cyberattacks.

Schoolboy in England gets world's 1st epilepsy device fitted in skull

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, June 24: A schoolboy from south-west England has made medical history as the first in the world with severe epilepsy to trial a new device fitted in his skull to control seizures, it was reported Monday. The neurostimulator, which sends electrical signals deep into his brain, has reduced Oran Knowlson's daytime seizures by 80 per cent. Oran has Lennox-Gastaut syndrome, a treatment-resistant form of epilepsy which he developed at the age of three. Since then he has suffered several daily seizures ranging from two dozen to hundreds, the BBC reported. The surgery, which lasted around eight hours, took place in October 2023. It was part of a trial at Great Ormond Street Hospital here when Oran, who is now 13, was 12. The surgery was part of a trial in partnership with University College London, King's College Hospital and the University of Oxford.

of the day quote

The India RAC (residential air conditioner) market has already passed the inflexion point and is now come to the explosion stage. At the same time, prices have also come down and energy efficiency is also going up

KANWALJEET JAWA | DAIKIN AIRCONDITIONING INDIA CMD

In the 90s when we started MapmyIndia, it was initially in the business of data analytics but the navigation part picked up well. We are now setting up an AI-driven data analytics and consulting company ClarityX which is independent of MapmyIndia, and will provide to all enterprises, including MapmyIndia as a partner

RAKESH VERMA | MAPMYINDIA CO-FOUNDER AND CMD

Digital transformation is integral to our growth strategy, and Project DigiForce will bring in a transformational shift in the way we work and compete in the market

PRASAN FIRODIA | MD AT FORCE MOTORS LIMITED

SHORT TAKES

Sun Pharma, Taro merger complete

New Delhi: Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Monday said it has completed the merger of Taro Pharmaceutical Industries with itself in a deal valued at USD 347.73 million. As part of the merger, Sun Pharma has acquired all outstanding ordinary shares of Taro other than the shares already held by it or its affiliates, the Mumbai-based drug major said in a statement. After the merger, Taro is now a private company and wholly-owned by Sun Pharma, it added. Sun Pharma has been the majority shareholder of Taro since 2010. "This milestone marks a significant step forward for both organisations, allowing us to effectively leverage each other's strengths and capabilities," Sun Pharma Chairman and Managing Director Dilip Shanghvi said.

Ireda sanctions ₹37k-cr loan in FY24

New Delhi: State-owned Ireda sanctioned ₹37,354 crore loan and disbursed ₹25,089 crore in FY24, the company's CMD PK Das said Monday. In the company's annual general meeting, the CMD also said that the net worth stood at ₹8,559 crore at the end of the March quarter, a company statement said. "Ireda achieved its highest-ever sanction of ₹37,354 crore and disbursement of ₹25,089 crore in FY24," Das said. Ireda, under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, is a non-banking financial institution engaged in promoting, developing and extending financial assistance for setting up projects related to new and renewable sources of energy and power efficiency/conservation.

SAT relief for former PTC India CMD

New Delhi: The Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) has stayed a Sebi order that restrained former PTC India chairman and managing director Rajib Kumar Mishra from being a director in a listed entity for six months in a matter pertaining to corporate governance lapses. Following the order passed by markets regulator Sebi June 12, Mishra ceased to be the chairman and non-executive director of PTC India Financial Services Ltd (PFS) and CMD of PTC India Ltd. PFS, promoted by PTC India Ltd, is a non-deposit-taking NBFC classified as an infrastructure finance company.

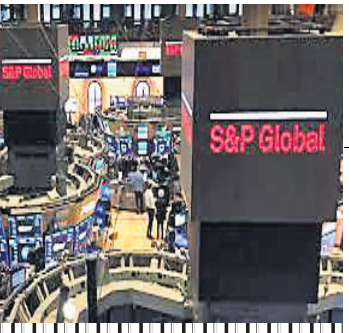


We are now the force for stability, cooperation and progress in a complex world. And it is India's macroeconomic stability and ambitious growth plans that inspire our confidence

GAUTAM ADANI | CHAIRMAN ADANI GROUP

S&P RETAINS INDIA'S GDP GROWTH ESTIMATE AT 6.8%

S&P Global Ratings Monday retained India's GDP growth forecast for the current financial year at 6.8 per cent and said high interest rates and lower fiscal spur would temper demand. In its economic outlook for Asia Pacific, S&P Global Ratings said India's economic growth continues to surprise on the upside with the economy growing 8.2 per cent in fiscal year 2023-24



CAD narrows to 0.7% of GDP

INDIA RECORDS 0.6 PC CURRENT ACCOUNT SURPLUS IN MARCH QUARTER ON HIGHER SERVICE EXPORTS, REMITTANCES

Mumbai, June 24: India recorded a current account surplus of USD 5.7 billion or 0.6 per cent of GDP in the March quarter, the Reserve Bank of India said Monday.

In the year-ago period, the current account deficit stood at USD 1.3 billion or 0.2 per cent of GDP, and the same was USD 8.7 billion or 1 per cent of GDP in the preceding quarter ending December 2023.

For FY24, the current account deficit narrowed to USD 23.2 billion or 0.7 per cent of GDP against USD 67 billion or 2 per cent of GDP in FY23, the RBI said in a release on the



Developments in India's Balance of Payments.

In January-March 2024, the merchandise trade deficit stood at USD 50.9 billion, lower than the USD 52.6 billion a year ago.

Net services receipts at USD 42.7 billion were higher than the USD 39.1 billion on the back of a 4.1 per cent growth in the seg-

ment, the central bank said, adding that this helped in swinging the current account into the surplus territory.

Net outgo on the primary income account, mainly reflecting payments of investment income, increased to USD 14.8 billion from USD 12.6 billion a year ago, the data released by

the RBI said.

Private transfer receipts, which mainly represent remittances by Indians employed overseas, grew 11.9 per cent to USD 32 billion in the March quarter.

The non-resident deposits also surged to USD 5.4 billion in January-March compared to USD 3.6 billion in the year-ago period.

Net foreign direct investment flows were USD 2 billion in Q4 FY24 against USD 6.4 billion a year ago.

Foreign portfolio investment recorded a net inflow of USD 11.4 billion during the quarter compared to a net outflow of USD 1.7 billion a year ago.

Net inflows under external commercial borrowings to India were USD 2.6 billion against USD 1.7 billion.

In FY24, the portfolio investment recorded a net inflow of USD 44.1 billion against an outflow of USD 5.2 billion a year ago, while net FDI plummeted to USD 9.8 billion from USD 28 billion in FY23, the RBI said.

10th spectrum auction set to begin June 25

New Delhi, June 24: Spectrum worth over ₹96,000 crore will be on the block as auctions across eight bands will begin Tuesday, with telecom operators Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea vying for radio waves crucial for 5G mobile services.

The last spectrum auction was held in August 2022, which, for the first time, included radio waves for 5G services.

The government will auction eight spectrum bands for mobile phone services at a base price of about ₹96,317 crore.

All the available spectrum in the 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1,800 MHz, 2,100 MHz, 2,300 MHz, 2,500 MHz, 3,300 MHz, and 26 GHz bands are part of the 10th auction.

"We welcome the government move to auction radio frequencies across the 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1,800 MHz, 2,100 MHz, 2,300 MHz, 2,500 MHz, 3,300 MHz and 26 GHz bands. However, spectrum in 600 MHz and 1400 MHz should also

be auctioned at an early date, as these bands are very important for the mobile industry," ITU-APT Foundation of India President Bharat Bhatia said.

Reliance Jio has deposited the highest earnest money of ₹3,000 crore for the spectrum auction, which provides the company with the potential to bid for maximum radio waves.

According to pre-qualified bidder details released by the Department of Telecommunications, Bharti Airtel has submitted the earnest money deposit (EMD) of ₹1,050 crore and Vodafone Idea (VIL) of ₹300 crore.

According to telecom expert Parag Kar, Reliance Jio can bid for 37.36 per cent of the total spectrum value based on EMD, Bharti 13.07 per cent and Vodafone Idea 3.73 per cent.

As per Kar's analysis, Jio may be keen on bidding for 800 MHz band only, which may lead to an estimated cash flow of ₹18,000 crore.

Shift focus from inflation to growth: MPC member

New Delhi, June 24: With retail inflation nearing the RBI's target of 4 per cent, the monetary policy needs to shift focus on promoting growth, RBI MPC member Jayanth R Varma said Monday.

Varma further said CPI inflation in 2024-25 is projected to be only about 0.5 percentage point above target, and core inflation is extremely benign.

"The protracted period of intolerably high inflation is coming to an end... over the next few quarters, we will see further disinflation and inflation will reach the target of 4 per cent on a sustained basis," he told PTI.

Varma, a professor at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM, Ahmedabad) noted that the fight against inflation has understandably come at a cost to growth.

Economic growth in 2024-25 is estimated to be 0.75-1 percentage points lower than the 8.2 per cent growth in 2023-24, he said adding India's potential growth is about 8 per cent.

Earlier this month, the Reserve Bank of India pegged the GDP growth rate for FY25 at 7.2 per cent.

"Against this backdrop, monetary policy has to shift from a single-minded focus on inflation to balancing inflation against growth. We need a less restrictive monetary policy that maintains a steady pace of disinflation while supporting growth," the MPC member said.



According to Varma, what is alarming is that the forecasts from the RBI survey of professional forecasters and elsewhere is that growth in 2025-26 will be roughly similar to the forecast for 2024-25.

In other words, he said the growth sacrifice of 0.75-1 percentage points will last not for one year, but for two.

He said that during the last few years, the government has taken several policy measures including digitalisation, tax reforms, and higher infrastructure investment to boost the economic growth rate to its potential of 8 per cent.

Earlier this month, the Reserve Bank left its key interest rate (repo rate) unchanged for the eighth time in a row at 6.5 per cent.

The RBI has projected Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based retail inflation at 4.5 per cent for FY25 with 4.9 per cent in Q1 (April-June), 3.8 per cent in Q2, 4.6 per cent in Q3, and 4.5 per cent in Q4. Retail inflation was 4.75 per cent in May.

The RBI, which has been mandated to ensure inflation remains at 4 per cent (with margin of 2 per cent on either side), mainly factors in CPI while arriving at its monetary policy.

Sensex, Nifty log gains amid volatile trade

Mumbai, June 24: Equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty closed higher Monday as buying in power, auto and industrial stocks helped the indices rebound from early lows amid a bearish trend in global equity markets.

However, volatility in markets ahead of the week's monthly expiry and selling pressure on metal and oil & gas counters kept investors on the back foot, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 131.18 points, or 0.17 per cent, higher at 77,341.08. In early trade, the benchmark had declined 463.96 points, or 0.60 per cent, to 76,745.94.

Later, it bounced back 213.12 points, or 0.27 per cent, to 77,423.02 during the day.

The Nifty rose 36.75 points, or 0.16 per cent, to settle at 23,537.85.

"Markets stayed volatile ahead of this week's monthly expiry as key benchmark indices ended with modest gains after a sharp fall in early trades amid selective buying in auto, power and capital goods shares while selling in IT, metal and oil & gas pared gains. Stocks may see sharp gyrating during the week investors would resort to value buying in select counters," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

Among the 30 Sensex companies, Mahindra & Mahindra, Power Grid, Sun Pharma, Nestle, UltraTech Cement, NTPC, ITC, ICICI Bank, Titan, Bajaj Finserv, Bharti Airtel, and HDFC Bank were among the biggest gain-



TOP GAINERS

2.69	M&M
2.23	Power Grid
1.93	Sun Pharma
1.35	Nestle India
1.14	UltraTechCement

TOP LOSERS

-2.37	IndusInd Bank
-1.72	Adani Ports
-1.08	Tata Steel
-0.82	Reliance
-0.64	Axis Bank

ers. IndusInd Bank, Adani Ports, Tata Steel, Reliance Industries, Axis Bank and Bajaj Finance were among the laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.37 per cent, and the smallcap index rose 0.27 per cent.

Among the sectoral indices, auto rallied 1.33 per cent, power (1.28 per cent), industrials (1 per cent), utilities (0.88 per cent) and consumer discretionary (0.87 per cent).

On the other hand, commodities, IT, metal and services were the laggards.

"Despite the market being on a consolidative path, sectoral churning is visible in FMCG and consumer durables in anticipation of the budget expect-

tations. Better tax collection and dividends from the RBI will encourage GoI on rural spending and tax benefits. In mid- and small caps, though the margin of safety in terms of valuation remains lacking, investors are keener on the growth story in capital goods, infra, auto, etc.," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

S&P Global Ratings on Monday retained India's GDP growth forecast for the current financial year at 6.8 per cent and said high interest rates and lower fiscal spur would temper demand.

In its economic outlook for Asia Pacific, S&P Global Ratings said India's economic growth continues to surprise on the upside, with the economy grow-

ing 8.2 per cent in the 2023-24 fiscal.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Shanghai, and Hong Kong settled lower, while Tokyo ended in positive territory.

European markets were trading with gains. US markets ended mostly lower Friday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,790.19 crore Friday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.41 per cent to USD 85.59 a barrel.

Snapping its six-day rally, the BSE benchmark declined 269.03 points, or 0.35 per cent, to settle at 77,209.90 Friday. The NSE Nifty slipped 65.90 points, or 0.28 per cent, to end at 23,501.10.

Meta AI rolls out in India

New Delhi, June 24: Meta Monday announced the availability of its AI assistant 'Meta AI' in India on WhatsApp, Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, and meta.ai portal.

With this, people can use Meta AI in feeds and chats across its apps to get things done, create content, and deep dive into topics, without having to leave the app they are using, according to a statement by the social media giant.

"Meta AI, one of the world's leading AI assistants, now arrives in India on WhatsApp, Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, and meta.ai. And it's built with Meta Llama 3, our most advanced LLM to date," Meta said announcing the rollout in India in English.

Meta first announced Meta AI at last year's Connect, and since April, it has been bringing the latest version of Meta AI built with Llama 3 to users across the world.

"With our most powerful Large Language Model (LLM) under the hood, Meta AI is better than ever. We're excited to share our next-generation assistant with even



more people and can't wait to see how it enhances people's lives," it said.

From asking Meta AI in WhatsApp group chat for recommendations on restaurants, to seeking ideas on places to stop on a road trip, or even asking Meta AI on the web to create a multiple choice test, Meta AI works in multiple ways for users.

"Moving into your first apartment? Ask Meta AI to 'imagine' the aesthetic you want so that you can create a mood board of AI-generated images for inspiration on your furniture shop-

ping," the Meta announcement said citing examples.

Users can also access Meta AI when scrolling through Facebook feeds. "Come across a post you're interested in? You can ask Meta AI for more info right from the post. So if you see a photo of the northern lights in Iceland, you can ask Meta AI what time of year is best to check out the aurora borealis," it said.

On the Meta AI's imagine feature, it said, using the word imagine while interacting with Meta AI directly or in a group chat, can help users create and share images.

India buys record amount of sunoil as war dips price

Mumbai, June 24: Indians bought a record 500,000 metric tons of sunflower oil for June delivery, as competition between leading suppliers Russia and Ukraine made it cheaper than soyoil and palm oil, two leading buyers and a customs official told Reuters.

Higher sunflower oil purchases by the world's biggest importer of vegetable oils will help to reduce sunflower oil inventories in the Black Sea region and lift sunoil prices.

A leading buyer who declined to be named said sunoil was trading at a discount to soyoil and even palm oil, which was tempting Indian buyers especially given robust demand in southern states.

A few weeks ago, crude sunoil was available at \$940 a metric ton, including cost, insurance and freight (CIF), in India for June delivery, while soyoil and palm oil were offered around \$1,015 and \$950 a ton, respectively, dealers said.



Sunoil usually holds a premium of more than \$100 per ton over soyoil and palm oil, Rajesh Patel, managing partner at edible oil trader and broker GGN Research, said.

Russia and Ukraine, as well as another big supplier Argentina, were aggressively competing and offered sunoil at a lower price than other oils, another buyer based in Hyderabad said. He has reduced palm oil and soyoil purchases to make space for sunoil.

The currencies of Russia and Ukraine have depreciated since the war started in February 2022,

allowing them to offer sunflower oil at competitive prices in dollar terms, the buyer said.

Russia and Ukraine account for more than 70% global shipments of sunoil.

Around 320,000 metric tons of sunflower oil have been discharged at various Indian ports so far this month, said a customs official, who also declined to be identified as he was not allowed to speak to media.

India on an average bought 250,000 tons of sunflower oil every year in the last marketing year, mostly from Black Sea region.

The industry will need time to refine and distribute the 500,000 tons of sunflower oil imported in June, which will reduce imports in July, the Hyderabad based buyer said.

In January 2023, India had imported a record 461,458 tons of sunflower oil.

India buys palm oil mainly from Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, while it imports soyoil from Argentina, Brazil, and United States.

Rohit show sinks Aussies

India enter T20 WC semifinals with 24-run win over Australia

REUTERS

Gros Islet (Saint Lucia), June 24: India marched into the T20 World Cup semi-finals Monday after skipper Rohit Sharma's blistering 92 set up their 24-run victory over Australia, who are now on the brink of elimination.

Rohit clobbered eight sixes in his 41-ball blitz to lay the foundation for India's imposing 205-5, their highest total in the tournament, in Gros Islet, St Lucia.

Travis Head led Australia's chase with a belligerent 76 but India managed to restrict them to 181-7 to remain unbeaten in the tournament.

The Super Eight clash between two former champion teams had assumed greater importance after Afghanistan stunned Australia on Saturday to throw Group 1 wide open.

Josh Hazlewood drew first blood as he bounced out Virat Kohli for a duck after Australia elected to field.

Rohit has not been in the best of form but the India captain threw Starc out of the attack by hitting the fast bowler for four sixes in a 29-run over.

Pat Cummins,



Batting first, Rohit fired on all cylinders and struck as many as eight sixes and seven fours during his sparkling knock, which powered India to an imposing 205 for five

denied Rohit what could have been the first hundred by a batter in this tournament.

Suryakumar Yadav (31) and Shivam Dube (28) produced breezy cameos and Hardik Pandya made 27 not out to propel India to their first 200-plus total of the tournament.

Arshdeep Singh rattled Australia by removing David

Warner in the first over in what could be the opener's last game in an Australia shirt.

Mitchell Marsh (37) joined Head and they counter-attacked to put Australia's chase back on track.

Axar Patel leapt to take a stunning one-handed catch at deep square leg to dismiss Marsh but Head raced to a 24-ball fifty.

Kuldeep Yadav castled the dangerous Glenn Maxwell (20) and Jasprit Bumrah effectively sealed India's victory when he dismissed Head with a clever change of pace.

Proteas enter semis

North Sound (Antigua): South Africa's golden generation of white-ball cricketers took a big step towards erasing the "eternal chokers" tag by keeping their composure to enter the semi-finals of the T20 World Cup, beating a formidable West Indies by three wickets in a thrilling rain-truncated Super 8s game here. After part-time magician and full-time wrist spinner Tabraiz Shamsi (3/27), along with his slow bowling colleagues Keshav Maharaj (1/24) and skipper Aiden Markram (1/28), restricted West Indies to a manageable 135 for 8, South Africa achieved the revised target of 123 with five balls to spare. The Proteas were 15/2 in two overs when rain disrupted proceedings. With this win, South Africa topped Group 1 followed by defending champions England as the second semifinalist from it.

BRIEF SCORES

India: 205/5 (Rohit Sharma 92; Josh Hazlewood 1/14) beat **Australia:** 181/7 (Travis Head 76; Kuldeep Yadav 2/24, Arshdeep Singh 3/37)

YOUNG INDIA FOR ZIMBABWE TOUR



Gill to lead, Riyan Parag first from NE to get India call-up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 24: Dashing Assam batter Riyan Parag Monday became the first north-eastern cricketer to get an India call-up as a new-look T20 squad led by Shubman Gill was unveiled for next month's five-match series in Zimbabwe which will not feature any of the senior stars.

The series starting July 6 will be held entirely in Harare.

The national selection committee didn't pick any of the first team players, who are currently playing the T20 World Cup in the West Indies.

All the seniors like Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah, Suryakumar Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja have been rested after a gruelling three-half months, including the hectic IPL.

Even the likes of Shivam Dube, Arshdeep Singh, and Kuldeep Yadav have been given a break. It is believed that the selectors want to broaden the pool of players looking at the 2026 T20 World

Cup in India.

The announced squad marks a landmark for 21-year-old Parag, who had a stellar IPL season for the Rajasthan Royals with 573 runs which put him in the reckoning.

He became the first player from his state and region to get a call-up in a senior national team. Joining him from the RR camp were his franchise captain Sanju Samson and Dhruv Jurel as the two wicket-keepers in the side.

Punjab skipper Abhishek Sharma, who had a mind-blowing IPL opening with Travis Head for the Sunrisers Hyderabad and his franchise teammate Nitish Reddy from Andhra Pradesh are among the three rookies in the squad of 15 where only Mukesh Kumar is on the wrong side of 30s.

The average age of the squad is roughly around 25.

Squad: Shubman Gill (Captain), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Abhishek Sharma, Rinku Singh, Sanju Samson (WK), Dhruv Jurel (WK), Nitish Reddy, Riyan Parag, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Avesh Khan, Khaleel Ahmed, Mukesh Kumar, Tushar Deshpande.

SHORT TAKES

No 1 Sinner wins first grass court final

Halle: Top-ranked Jannik Sinner won his first title on grass by beating Hubert Hurkacz in the Halle Open final. The 22-year-old Italian needed two tiebreakers to beat his Polish opponent 7-6 (8), 7-6 (2). "I knew I had to serve really well and you play only a couple of really important points throughout the whole set," Sinner said. "I'm very happy about this tournament because (winning) the first time on grass court, it's a good feeling." The Australian Open champion improved his record to 38-3 this year. The Italian reached the Wimbledon semifinals last year, losing in straight sets to Novak Djokovic.



Germany get late goal to draw 1-1 with Switzerland



The team finish top of Euro 2024 group

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Frankfurt (Germany), June 24: They all jumped for the ball in a frantic late push for the goal that would save Germany from its first loss at the European Championship, against an impressive Switzerland team.

Defender Nico Schlotterbeck leaped up, next to the even more imposing center-back Antonio Rudiger, who reached highest of all. In front of them both was substitute Niclas Fullkrug.

The German trio was circled by three Swiss opponents trying to protect a 1-0 lead two minutes into stoppage time. Six pairs of feet off the ground in unison, straining to be the one to head the ball.

It was Fullkrug who won the contest, guiding the ball crossed from another substitute David Raum back across Switzerland

goalkeeper Yann Sommer into the top corner of the net. The match ended 1-1.

"We risked a lot in this phase because we could have conceded a second goal," Germany coach Julian Nagelesmann said about throwing his defenders into attack. "Who doesn't dare to risk, doesn't get to draw."

Germany had already advanced to the round of 16 before kickoff Sunday, but a draw felt like a win in the circumstances and kept the momentum of impressive wins against Scotland and Hungary.

"When you see how the Germans celebrated their goal that says everything," said Switzerland captain Granit Xhaka, named player of the match.

Switzerland impressed while protecting a 28th-minute goal from Dan Ndoye's clever volleyed shot, and chasing a bigger lead. A second goal was denied by a marginal offside ruling against Ruben Vargas.

PARIS OLYMPICS

India bag team quotas in archery

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 24: India secured men's and women's team quotas in archery for this year's Paris Olympics based on the updated world rankings Monday.

India topped the rankings among the non-qualified nations in both men's and women's section to seal their team quotas.

India will, thus, be eligible to compete in all the five medal events in Paris - men's and women's team, individual and mixed categories.

In the men's section, India and China made the cut, while in the women's section Indonesia were the second nation to secure the team Olympic quota.

The team events will have 12 sides in each section, while five teams will compete in the mixed competitions. For the first time, team quotas are offered to the top two nations after the three-leg Olympic qualifiers.

The first Olympic Qualifier was held during the World Archery Championships in Berlin last year from where South Korea, Turkey and Japan qualified in men's category; while Germany and Mexico secured their spots in women's division.

The second leg was a continental qualifier.

Kazakhstan and South Korea took the men's and women's team quotas respectively from the Asian leg, while Colombia and



the United States made the cut from Pan-America.

From the European leg, Italy (men) and the Netherlands (women) secured quotas.

The final Olympic Qualifier was held in Antalya last week.

Mexico, Chinese Taipei, Great Britain in men's section; China, Malaysia, Great Britain and Chinese Taipei from the women's section secured quotas from the Final Qualifier.

Forty-year-old Army veteran Tarundeep Rai, who made his Olympic debut at Athens 2004, will make his fourth Games appearance. The same is for former

world No 1 Deepika Kumari who will compete in her fourth Olympics on the trot, having made her maiden Games appearance in London 2012.

Dhiraj Bommadevara, Ankita Bhakat and Bhajan Kaur will make their Olympic debuts, while for Pravin Jadhav it will be his second successive Games after Tokyo.

"The archery contingent will leave on July 9 for acclimatisation in Paris. We have good memories of Paris, hopefully we can do it this time," Indian high performance director Sanjeeva Singh told PTI.

Ashok, Dagar qualify via world rankings

Indian golfing stars Aditi Ashok and Diksha Dagar Monday secured qualification to the upcoming Paris Olympics via the world rankings. The two women join Shubhankar Sharma and Gaganjeet Bhullar (men's section) to form a four-member Indian team for the showpiece, which will be held from July 26 to August 11. While it will be a third appearance for Aditi at the Olympics which is also the most for an Indian, Diksha will be competing for the second time. For Sharma and Bhullar, it would be their maiden appearance at the Olympics.

Messi at 37: Staggering feats of Argentina legend

AGENCIES

Washington, June 24: The legendary Argentine footballer Lionel Messi, often called the 'greatest footballer of all time', celebrates his 37th birthday Monday.

Messi born in Rosario, Argentina, in 1987, recently won his eighth Ballon d'Or, setting a new record. The next player is the Portuguese icon Cristiano Ronaldo, who has won five Ballon 'Or awards.

At the age of 13, Messi's family along with him shifted to Barcelona where the club assisted him in treating his growth hormone deficiency. The Argentinean began his career with FC Barcelona's U14 squad. He moved up the ranks fast, leaving an impression on everyone with his extraordinary talent and skills.

He made his club debut as a senior at the age of 17 against Espanyol, and the Blaugranas (another name for FC Barcelona) relied heavily on him. The 37-year-old became the team's youngest star to appear in the competition at the time.

Messi played for the Spanish club for 17 years, during which time he won 10 La Liga titles, 4 Champions League crowns, and 7 Copa del Rey medals. He has scored an astounding 474 goals in La Liga, making him the league's all-time top scorer.

He stunned the whole world when he emulated Diego Maradona's goal of the century in 2007. In a match against Getafe at Camp Nou during the first leg of the Copa del Rey semifinal, the footballer dribbled past six Getafe's defenders to score the goal.

In 2009, Messi won his maiden



UEFA Champions League title. Barcelona defeated Manchester United in the final with a scoreline of 2-0. In the final, the Argentina national football team

skipper scored a goal in this match through a header.

In a 3-0 victory for Barcelona over Real Valladolid in 2020, Lionel Messi scored his 644th

goal. Messi broke the record for most goals scored for a single club by doing this. Pele, a legendary Brazilian who scored 643 goals for Santos FC, owned the previous record.

The Argentinean national player joined the French 1 League club Paris Saint-Germain and played for the club from 2021-2023. He played a total of 58 games where he managed to score 22 goals for the side.

In 2023, Messi joined the David Beckham-owned Inter Miami. So far he has played 18 matches where he has gone on to score 13 goals.

August 2005 was Messi's first international appearance. He replaced an injured player against Hungary. However, his tragic international debut was short-lived as he was sent off minutes after hitting Vilmos Vanczak.

During the Beijing Olympics in 2008, Messi's team, Argentina, took home the gold medal. To help La Albiceleste (another name for Argentina) win their second consecutive Olympic gold, Messi set up the game-winning goal. In the final, they defeated Nigeria 1-0.

In the 2021 Copa America final, Argentina defeated Brazil 1-0 while playing at the Maracana Stadium. With this win, Messi's lengthy quest for his first significant international championship came to a conclusion.

The FIFA World Cup trophy that Lionel Messi won in Qatar in 2022 was the highlight of his career. In the championship match, Messi scored twice against France. After a 36-year break, Argentina became the world champions via penalty shootout.

Treesa-Gayatri to spearhead Indian challenge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Fort Worth (USA), June 24: Commonwealth Games bronze medal-winning pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand will carry India's medal hopes in the absence of Paris Olympics-bound shuttlers in the US Open BWF World Tour, beginning here Tuesday.

The world No 24 Indian pair, who finished runner-up in Singapore Open Super 750 in May-June, is seeded second in the women's doubles draw of the Super 300 tournament.

Treesa and Gayatri have got a bye into round of 16 where they will face unseeded pair of Hseih Pei Shan and Hung En-Tzu of Chinese Taipei.

At the other end of the draw would be world No 10 Japanese pair of Rin Iwanaga and Kie Nakanishi, who are the top seeds.

Fresh from their triumph in the Malaysia Masters in May, Rin and Kie are expected to go all the way for a potential summit clash against the Indian duo.

With less than a month to go for the Olympics, Paris-bound Indian shuttlers - PV Sindhu, HS Prannoy, Lakshya Sen, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy/Chirag Shetty and Ashwini Ponnappa/Tanisha Crasto - have skipped the tournament.

In the men's singles, Priyanshu Rajawat, eighth seed, is the top Indian in the draw and will open his campaign against Jan Louda of Czech Republic.

Ayush Shetty and S Sankar Muthuswamy Subramanian are the two other Indians in the men's singles.

Shetty will face Jia Heng Jason Teh of Singapore while Muthuswamy will open his campaign against a qualifier.

Seeded seventh, Malvika Bansod is the top Indian in women's singles draw and will begin her campaign against Kristin Kuuba of Estonia.

Unseeded Tanya Hemant is the other Indian in the fray in the women's singles and she will be up against fifth seeded Wen Chi Hsu of Chinese Taipei.

In the men's doubles, Krishna Prasad Garaga and Sai Pratheek K are seeded sixth and will face unseeded pair of Scott Guilden and Paul Reynolds of Ireland in their opening round clash.

Rohan Kapoor and Ruthvika Shivani Gadde are the only Indian in the draw in the mixed doubles.

They will face Alexander Dunn and Julie Macpherson in their opening round contest.