



Glorious feat

Ayushi Lingaraj Panda wins Miss Odisha India grand finale to become the first finalist of Femina Miss India 2025

LEISURE | P2



Bhutto threatens India

Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari says Pakistan will go to war if India denies Islamabad its fair share of Indus water

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Rate cut impact

The immediate incremental impact of an additional 25bps rate cut may be relatively limited, external member Saugata Bhattacharya says

BUSINESS | P11



Lalit retires

Veteran Indian hockey forward Lalit Upadhyay calls time on his illustrious international career, drawing curtains on over a decade-long journey

SPORTS | P12

SHORT TAKES

Women from Delhi molested in Jajpur

Jajpur: Two women who came from Delhi to Jajpur district allegedly faced misbehaviour by two local youths, police said Monday. According to a complaint lodged with the police, the accused passed lewd comments and touched them inappropriately besides assaulting the brothers of one of the two women, who is a local and studies in Delhi. The police started investigating the incident that happened at a village under Dasrathpur police station late Sunday evening. None was arrested till the filing of the report. P5

Girl dies in Bengal bomb explosion

Kolkata: A nine-year-old girl was killed in a bomb explosion in Kaliganj of West Bengal's Nadia district Monday, police said. According to a police officer, the girl was wounded after being allegedly hit by a bomb that exploded at Barochandgar under Kaliganj police station limits. Counting for the Kaliganj Assembly bypolls was going on when the incident occurred. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said police will take strict legal action against the culprits. "I am shocked and deeply saddened by the death of a young girl in an explosion at Barochandgar. My prayers and thoughts are with the family in their hour of grief," Banerjee posted on X. P8

AAP retains 2 seats; UDF wins Nilambur

New Delhi: AAP's Gopal Italia Monday won Gujarat's Visavadar Assembly seat and his party also retained Punjab's Ludhiana West segment while Congress-led UDF wrested Nilambur from the ruling LDF in Kerala, according to results of Assembly bypolls in four states. The ruling BJP in Gujarat retained the Kadi seat, while Trinamool Congress maintained its hold on Kaliganj Assembly seat in West Bengal's Nadia district. The bypolls in the five constituencies were held June 19. P8

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Sir, forget ATMs...open police outposts in these VVIP trains to save us from the VVIPs

Iran hits US airbase

Unconfirmed sources claim Ain al-Assad base housing US troops in Iraq was also targeted

AGENCIES

Dubai, June 23: Iran launched missile attacks Monday on US military bases in Qatar and Iraq, retaliating for the American bombing of its nuclear sites and escalating tensions in the volatile region.

Qatar condemned the attack on Al Udeid Air Base attack, but said it successfully intercepted the missiles and no casualties were reported. It said its airspace was now safe.

Iran said the attack in Qatar matched the number of bombs dropped by the United States on its nuclear sites this weekend, signalling its likely desire to de-escalate. Iran also said it targeted the base because it was outside of populated areas.

Iran announced the attack on state television as martial music played. A caption on screen called it "a mighty and successful response" to "America's aggression".

The US confirmed the airbase in Qatar was targeted by a missile attack from Iran and said no casualties were reported.

Shortly after the attack, the Gulf nation of Bahrain that is home to the US 5th Fleet headquarters temporarily suspended



Traces are seen in the sky after Iran's armed forces say they targeted Al Udeid Air Base in a missile attack as seen from Doha, Qatar

flights in its airspace, which is similar to what Qatar did shortly before it was hit.

The Ain al-Assad base housing US troops in western Iraq was also targeted, an Iraqi security official who was not authorised to comment publicly told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

It wasn't immediately clear if there was damage to the Iraq base or any injuries.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry said the attack by Iran's Revolutionary Guards was "a flagrant violation of Qatar's sovereignty, its airspace, and international law."

Al Udeid is also home to the Combined Air Operations Cen-

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Iran says the attack in Qatar matches the number of bombs dropped by US on its nuclear sites
- The US confirms the airbase in Qatar targeted by a missile attack from Iran
- Qatar's Foreign Ministry says the attack by Iran's Revolutionary Guards was flagrant violation of Qatar's sovereignty, its airspace, and international law

ter, which provides command and control of air power across the region as well as the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing, the largest expeditionary wing in the world. The retaliation came a day after the US launched a surprise attack Sunday morning on three of Iran's nuclear sites.

Just before the explosions, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian wrote on the social platform X: "We neither initiated the war nor seeking it. But we will not leave invasion to the great Iran without answer."

Meanwhile, reports by Reuters, quoting a US official, said there was no Iranian attack detected at any US military base other than in Qatar.

Oil hits 6-month high

Amidst speculation of Iran closing the Strait of Hormuz, oil prices spiked Monday at their highest since January. But they have not yet shot up to crisis levels, indicating that traders see a path out of the conflict that avoids serious disruption. Brent crude futures were down 0.5% to \$76.64 a barrel as of 0830 GMT, after briefly jumping above \$80 at the opening. Iran's parliament has approved a move to close the strait that leads into the Gulf, which would require approval from the Supreme National Security Council, a body led by an appointee of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

According to the US military official, "There was no impact on the US Al Udeid airbase in Qatar." Military sources said that air defense systems were activated in the US Ain al-Asad airbase in Iraq for fear of a potential attack.

Meanwhile, airports across the Gulf are warning of cancelled, delayed and redirected flights, as planes are turning around from the Gulf, according to flight data.

Planes are redirecting from the United Arab Emirates based on flight paths and air traffic control audio, according to a post on X from Flightradar24, which tracks real-time air traffic.

GOPALPUR SHAME

NHRC seeks report from state govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 23: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Monday said it has issued a notice to the Odisha government and the state's police chief in connection with the alleged gangrape of a 20-year-old college student at Gopalpur sea beach in Ganjam district earlier this month.

Reportedly, the victim had gone to the beach along with a male friend to celebrate a festival. The perpetrators after overpowering her friend sexually assaulted her, the apex rights body said in a statement. The NHRC said it has taken "suo motu cognisance of a media report that a 20-year-old female college student was allegedly subjected to gangrape by around 10 men on the Gopalpur sea beach in Ganjam district in Odisha on 15th June".

The Commission has observed that the content of the media report, if true, raises a serious issue of violation of human rights. Therefore, it has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police (DGP) of the state, calling for a detailed report on the matter within two weeks, the statement said.

"The report is expected to include the status of the investigation in the case, the victim's health and compensation/counseling, if any, provided to her by the state authorities," it added.



EPOCH-MAKING INNING: A flamboyant Rishabh Pant seen hitting a ball as he becomes the second wicketkeeper in cricket's history to score two hundreds in each innings of a Test match during the series opener against England at Leeds (Report P12)

CM: ₹17L-cr investment to create 13L jobs in state

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 23: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Monday said that 13 lakh employment opportunities will be created when an investment of ₹17 lakh crore is grounded in the state.

He said this while highlighting the rapid industrialisation goals the state has evinced following the investment intents that have come through the Make in Odisha Conclave.

"The state government has not wasted a single moment to implement the proposals," the Chief Minister said while addressing the state-level 'Yuva Shakti Samabesh' (Youth Power Congregation) at Aska where he laid the foundation stone for various development projects valued at Rs 550 crore for Ganjam district.

Majhi said that his government during one year, has already provided government jobs to 28,346 youths and committed to give jobs to 1.5 lakh youths in five years.

The Chief Minister said the state has set a goal of becoming a 500 billion USD economy by



2036 and a 1.5 trillion USD economy by 2047.

"Therefore, the youths will have a key role in achieving this goal of Odisha," he said.

On this occasion, Majhi laid the foundation stone for various development projects which include those for irrigation and road widening.

He asked officials to prepare a revised detailed project report for the development of Maa Taratreni Temple. The CM said that the state will provide for a world-class industrial training institute in Polara.

Attacking the previous BJD regime, the Chief Minister said that the BJP government within one year has already provided 11.25 reservations for the students belonging to the SEBC category.

Revisit Trump nomination for Nobel: Pak politicians

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, June 23: Several Pakistani politicians and notable figures have asked the government to reconsider its decision to recommend President Donald Trump for the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize after the US bombed Iran's three nuclear sites.

The government, in a surprise move Friday, announced that it would nominate Trump for the prestigious award due to his self-proclaimed peacemaking efforts during the recent India-Pakistan conflict.

A letter of recommendation, signed by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, has already been sent to

'Ultimate' captures 1st images of distant galaxies

AGENCIES

Santiago, June 23: Spectacular images of distant galaxies, vast dust clouds, and fast-moving asteroids have been captured by the Vera C Rubin Observatory in Chile, marking the start of an ambitious 10-year survey of the cosmos. The \$810 million (£595 million) telescope, located on Cerro Pachón in the Chilean Andes, is set to transform astronomy by compiling the most detailed, dynamic view of the universe to date, according to a report by 'The Guardian'.

During just 10 hours of observations, the observatory detected 2,104 previously unknown asteroids in the solar system, including seven near-Earth objects—none posing a threat.

These images are the first from what astronomers believe will be a game-changing tool for cosmic discovery.

"I'm absolutely blown away. Just look, it's teeming with gorgeous glittering galaxies!" said Catherine Heymans, astrophysicist at the University of Edinburgh and Scotland's astronomer royal. "I'm so delighted that they chose Virgo for the 'first look' as it celebrates a key moment in humanity's dark matter story. It was 1930s observations of the Virgo and Coma clusters that prompted Fritz Zwicky to conclude there must be extra invisible dark matter out there."

At the heart of the observatory is a 3,200-megapixel camera—the largest ever built. It's so powerful that a single image



would require 400 ultra-high definition TVs to display at full resolution. The telescope will scan the entire southern sky every three to four days and repeat the cycle for a decade. The result: the largest "astronomical

moves, everything that changes in brightness," Heymans said.

Rubin is a US facility, but international collaboration is central, with the UK operating one of three global data centres. The observatory will generate about 1.5 million images covering roughly 10 billion stars and galaxies. Over the decade, it will log trillions of measurements and map an estimated 20 billion previously unknown galaxies. The final dataset could reach 500 petabytes in size.

"The power of this observatory is about being able to see so much of the cosmos," said Aaron Roodman, Rubin's deputy construction director. "We can almost look anywhere and get an incredible treasure trove of information," he added.

leisure



ALLISON WANTS GIRLS REUNION

American actress Allison Williams would love to be part of a *Girls* reunion or spin-off show. The 37-year-old shot to fame playing Marnie in the HBO series, which ran for six seasons until 2017, and she has backed former co-star Zosia Mamet's calls for a spin-off series.

ANISTON TALKS ABOUT WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Actress Jennifer Aniston is getting candid about her work-life balance. The actress, 56, said that she often struggles with carving time out for herself amid her hectic and demanding career. She said that focusing on crafting a better work-life balance for herself is of the utmost importance, reports *People* magazine.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com
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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
Today you will land up in a tricky or hazardous situation. You will feel compelled to wade against the tide, which may not be such a productive thing, says Ganesha. Nothing seems to be going your way. Take some time off for yourself to relieve the stress.

TAURUS
A short trip could be in the offing today, says Ganesha. Before proceeding, you may, however, be compelled to make changes in your itinerary. If you are not too happy with the new schedules and decide to stick to your original plans, you are likely to feel disturbed, uneasy at the end of the day.

GEMINI
You will feel out of sorts today. This could result in distances between you and your loved ones. You may fall into the wrong sorts of debates on account of your ill-temper. You need to keep a curb on your emotions to perform better, says Ganesha.

CANCER
You are likely to be at your inventive best today, feels Ganesha. You are likely to taste success, much to the delight of your colleagues at work and loved ones back home. However, experience counts, and if you are a beginner at something, you may face problems in your new venture.

LEO
You will pay more attention to matters at home. You may take up home renovation projects. You may end up replacing the entire furniture at your place even. You will spend the day enjoying with your family members and friends, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Open the mind gates and let your imagination flow, says Ganesha. At your creative best, you will pursue innovation and creativity today. Luck will be on your side and even those things that you took a risk on may lean your way. You energy levels will be unusually high and you will feel passionate about all that you undertake.

LIBRA
Ganesha says that you will be busy in your work field today and will be able to attain your goals in your work field today. Your level of enthusiasm will be at its peak. Today you may be able to meet with a person from the opposite sex who will be your future partner. Ganesha showers you with his blessings always.

SCORPIO
You are a visionary and today you work towards building a successful future. But, expecting an instant result would be unfair. You need to have patience to bring in those dynamic changes in your life. Wait and watch, the patience would reap sweet fruits!

SAGITTARIUS
Be ready to receive advice – unasked and unwarranted. Don't overlook it either, as these suggestions can be worthy of consideration. But let the last word rest in your hands and look deep inside for the right verdict.

CAPRICORN
God helps those who help themselves, likewise, your sincere efforts will be paid off well, today. If you're dealing with shares and stocks, it may be your day, today. Your life partner will prove to be lucky for your success, so give him/her the credit he/she deserves, suggests Ganesha.

AQUARIUS
There are no short-cuts to success. You know this very well and work you socks off to get what you want. Colleagues, friends and family – all of them will acknowledge and appreciate your efforts and achievements.

PISCES
Interactions with those of the opposite sex will mark your day. It is also a good day to strike up friendship with those of the opposite sex. For those in love, today is a good day to spend time with your partner. For those looking for love, now is the best time to pop the question to that special someone you've secretly admired for long, says Ganesha.

PARIS FASHION WEEK

Nora set to slay again

Mumbai: Actress Nora Fatehi is unable to contain her excitement as she gears up to return to the Paris Fashion Week. She will be a part of the Louis Vuitton Mens Spring-Summer 2026 collection by Pharrell Williams.

Hinting about her return to the Paris Fashion Week, Fatehi took to her Instagram stories and dropped a video saying, "We are on our way for fittings and LV and we are going to kill it this time just like last year, we are going to do an ASMR of our fittings. Are you ready??"

Refreshing your memory, Fatehi made a lot of heads turn with her last year's appearance at the event in a white body-con dress, complimented with a statement trench coat.

In addition to this, she made headlines for her appearance at the American Music Awards in a custom Tom Ford look, along with jaw-dropping appearances in an Oscar de la Renta at the Vanity Fair Oscar After Party.

Along with ruling the international stage as a fashionista, Fatehi is also continuously making her mark with her projects - one of them being her collaboration with Jason Derulo for *Snake*. The album has already crossed 130 million views.



Ayushi Panda crowned Miss Odisha India 2025

Bhubaneswar: Ayushi Lingaraj Panda won Miss Odisha India 2025 grand finale, held at a City hotel here Sunday night, becoming the first official finalist of Femina Miss India 2025. With this remarkable win, she moves one step closer to representing the country at the 74th Miss World pageant.

Affiliated with the Miss India Organization, Times Group, the event marked a significant moment in state's beauty and fashion landscape.

Twelve outstanding finalists competed across multiple rounds, highlighting their charm, intelligence, and individuality. After weeks of intensive grooming, sub-contests, and audience engagement, the finale unveiled Odisha's top three titleholders.

Bhaswati Pati and Navya Sharma securing the positions of first and second runners-up respectively, after impressing both the audience and an esteemed panel of judges.

This year's eminent jury panel featured Nikita Porwal – Femina Miss India World 2024, Natasha Grover – Brand & Operations Head, Miss India Organization, Times Group, Bhoomika Dash – Brand Ambassador, Miss Odisha India 2025 and Soma Mohanty – Director, SNM Group.

Beyond the glitz, the event underscored a deeper mission – to empower women as changemakers. It served as a launch pad for young women who aim to inspire, lead, and redefine success.

The glamorous evening was hosted by Enigma and impeccably organised by Addiction Fashion Management, delivering a night to remember for all.

PNN

A teen's letter to her Jaga....



I am counting days before I get to see you after a hiatus. Why do you have to splash so much in water (108 dunks precisely) alongside your siblings every summer and take ill (like clockwork) for a fortnight? While you are being nursed back to health in solitude, I, and crores like me are under the same gloomy sky, missing the sight of you - our friend, and guiding beacon. So much so that I turn up regularly and sit on the temple steps at *Bada Danda*, reminiscing my conversations with you and *aah!* what peace it offered me. I hop on to the nearby Alarnath shrine, to make friends with the one I heard is a close reflection of you. I find some consolation and delicious kheer there!

As peace evades me, I rant to you. While you are away hibernating, the *sky seems to have fallen* on us. While a segment of humanity was plunging down on a flight of doom, another segment was thriving to be doctors and serve humanity when fatal fate struck from above. *Cruel destiny* some say! And we, the current living and breathing segment are destined to be stuck on a few numbers forever....dreading numbers (B-

787), mourning numbers (270) and sighing at certain others (11-A). He *Mahaprabhu!* there is a lot else *falling out of the sky*. More folks go to war, making others' destiny not a matter of chance, but a matter of their military choices. Missiles, drones are daily staples now; an *haute-cuisine* 'bunker buster bomb' has made it to the table. Oddly, there was Nobel peace prize recommendation for the one pleasantly in the thick of war. Doice-cream and chilli sauce make for a *combo*?

I had hoped we would go *beyond the skies* and reach International Space station but forget *cloud nine* for now, as destiny alongside a leaky rocket play spoilsport and foil ambitious plans for the 6th attempt to launch India's first Gaganyatri to ISS.

But is not there a silver lining to every dark cloud! When, YOU, the one that transcends all time and space, 'Lord of the universe' in your beautiful black form with captivating *Chaka-Dola*, come out, riding the grand chariot to meet me in a few days' time, it is then that my anguished heart shall know peace.

Jai Jagannath!

DR RACHNA RATH

Jonita's survival tale

Mumbai: Playback singer Jonita Gandhi, who has released her latest single *Beparwai*, has shared how she has managed to survive as an artiste in the fast paced music industry.

The singer recently spoke with this agency, and shared how she keeps the child inside her alive to deliver the best.

Speaking with IANS, she said, "I think there's a lot of things. It's not really a choice. I think I am, by nature, a little childlike. There's definitely things that I've learned with time and experience that make me less naive, but I think

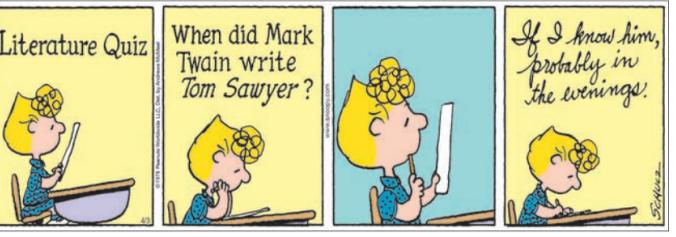
that's a good thing." She further mentioned, "As long as we can channel the inner child into creating something or trying to express a message that feels very raw, then I think it's fine. I'm very blessed and I think it's a very good thing that I have experiences that have made me less naive. It's how I've survived as an artiste here".

The live performances come with their own set of challenges, the singer has to keep a tap on choreography, they have to look a certain way, and have to factor in the stage production.

IANS



PEANUTS



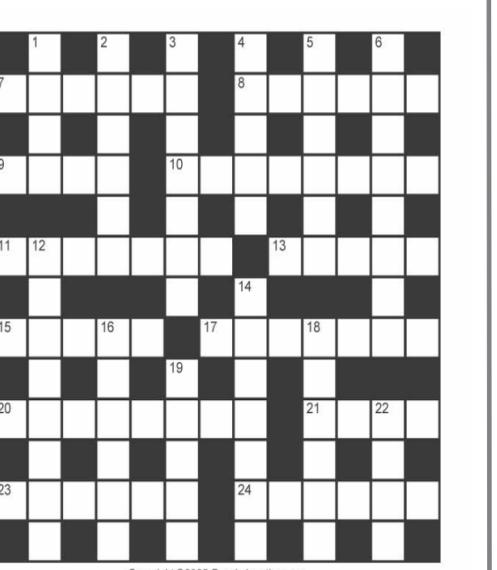
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



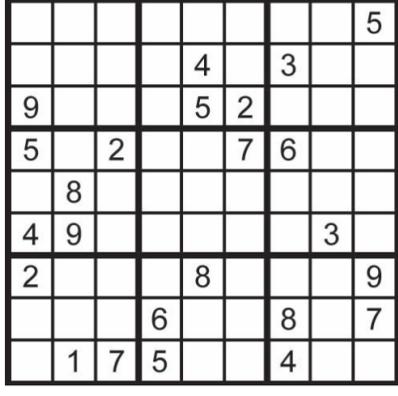
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Regal fur
 - 8 Ticked pink
 - 9 Card game
 - 10 Conniptions
 - 11 Sporting dogs
 - 13 Grassy plain
 - 15 Outriggers
 - 17 Sweet Italian wine
 - 20 Kind of kit (5,3)
 - 21 Fencing sword
 - 23 Entebbe locale
 - 24 Withstand
 - Down**
 - 1 Test choice
 - 2 Shoat
 - 3 Vex
 - 4 Flowerless plants
 - 5 Cask
 - 6 Battery part
 - 12 Net income
 - 14 Equestrian gear
 - 16 Missing in action?
 - 18 Shells out
 - 19 Panama, for one
 - 22 Emerald Isle

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

A bike rally was taken out from the BMC headquarters to Vani Vihar Square in Bhubaneswar to mark 'Zero Accident Day' Monday. Over 300 bikers participated in the rally jointly organised by BMC and Commerce & Transport department



downtown

Guv flags poor enrolment in welfare schemes

Bhubaneswar: Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati Monday expressed concern over low enrolment of citizens in government's social welfare schemes. He launched a special drive to enrol Raj Bhavan officials and staff in such schemes. Addressing an awareness programme on Social Security schemes on Raj Bhavan premises here, the Governor said the Centre has launched several people-centric welfare schemes since Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office. Many of these schemes are aimed at extending financial protection and welfare benefits to the poor, vulnerable, and marginalised, while some are designed for the general population, he said. "Unfortunately, in Odisha, a large number of eligible people are not availing the benefits due to lack of awareness. Even among the educated and elite sections, many remain un-enrolled despite having knowledge of the schemes," Kambhampati said. To set an example and encourage enhanced public participation, he announced that all officials and staffers of Raj Bhavan would be enrolled in the eligible social welfare schemes. "This initiative is a step towards motivating people across the state to avail the benefits they are entitled to," he said. The Governor highlighted several flagship schemes, urging people to make use of these programmes for their financial security and well-being.

Students can pick sports as a career option: CM



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 23: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Monday said that students and youths can now think of making sports a career apart from getting employment in industries by availing various skill training imparted by the state government.

Majhi said this while addressing the state-level 'Yuva Shakti Samabesh' (Youth Power Congregation) at Aska where he laid the foundation stone for various development projects valued at Rs 550 crore for Ganjam district.

Describing Odisha as a state having endless possibilities,

- Construction of stadiums in all 314 blocks of state is on
- For that, Rs 4,124 crore earmarked to be spent in 4 yrs
- Apart from cricket, hockey and football, the state is also promoting Kabadi and other games

Majhi said his government has been giving much importance to sports and therefore spending a lot for developing sports infrastructure across the state.

The state has been constructing stadiums in all 314 blocks of Odisha and for the purpose, Rs 4,124 crore has been earmarked to be spent

in four years, he said.

With facilities available in blocks and gram panchayat levels, the Chief Minister said the village youths can also get opportunities and exhibit their talent in sports.

"They can easily make sports as a career, earn name, fame along with money," Majhi said adding that apart from cricket, hockey and football, the state is also promoting Kabadi and other games.

Encouraging the youth, Majhi said that one should know his or her own talent and work for its development.

Stating that of the 4.5 crore population of Odisha, around 1.70 crore people are in the age group of 15-35 years, the Chief Minister said, "When more than one and a half crore youth become successful, then Odisha will become the growth engine of India, developed as the best state in the country," he said.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister also took a dig at the previous BJD government and said the BJP government within one year has already provided 11.25 reservations for the students belonging to the Socially and Economically Backward Class (SEBC) category.

Steel and Mines Minister Bibhuti Bhushan Jena, Sports and Youth Services Minister Suryavansi Suraj and others attended the programme.

State's plans to ease forest, wildlife curbs for tourism boost 'dangerous'



Legal and conservation experts say the move will undermine forest, wildlife and biodiversity laws and tribal rights

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 23: The Odisha government is seeking to ease environmental restrictions to promote tourism inside and around some of its most ecologically sensitive regions, including national parks, tiger reserves, coastal zones and Ramsar wetlands, according to government records.

Legal and conservation experts said this move will undermine forest, wildlife and biodiversity laws and tribal rights.

According to minutes of a high-level meeting chaired by the Odisha Chief Secretary May 30, the state plans to revisit and amend Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) notifications to remove clauses prohibiting construction and commercial activities.

It also plans to request the Centre to allow forest land to be used for non-site-specific purposes such as hospitality infrastructure and to re-examine Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) classifications to accommodate more tourism projects along the coast.

ESZs are buffer areas created around protected forests, wildlife sanctuaries and national parks to protect wildlife and biodiversity from harmful human activities such as mining, construction and polluting industries. Activities like farming, eco-tourism and the use of renewable energy are usually al-

lowed with restrictions.

These buffer areas between wildlife habitats and human-dominated regions act as 'shock absorbers', said BK Singh, a retired Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer.

"The move is definitely not in the interest of conservation and will lead to a rise in human-wildlife conflict, as seen in the case of Dhenkanal, where human-elephant conflict has increased over the years," he said.

Retd IFS officer and ESZ guidelines author Prakriti Srivastava said the guidelines were designed to limit human impact, reduce human-wildlife conflict and maintain wildlife corridors. In a state like Odisha, where 149 people died in elephant encounters in 2023-24, the push to restrict ESZs and promote commercial activity reflects 'double standards and endangers both people and wildlife', she said.

The minutes of meeting (MoM) note that the current 'no commercial/no construction' clause in ESZ notifications 'does not accurately reflect the enabling spirit' of the 2011 guidelines issued by the Centre.

"ESZs notified/to be notified should be discussed with the Department of Tourism (DoT) and the tourism master plan should be taken into consideration," the MoM read.

The Odisha Coastal Zone Management Authority has been asked to re-examine CRZ classifications to support tourism in areas having 'extremely high potential'.

The state has also decided to set up an empowered committee under the chairpersonship of the Additional Chief Secretary, Forest and Environment department, to discuss issues relating to tourism projects vis-a-vis forest clearance and ESZs.

However, independent ecologists,

The buffer areas between wildlife habitats and human-dominated regions act as 'shock absorbers', says BK Singh, a retired Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer

wildlife scientists or tribal representatives are absent from the panel.

Experts say Odisha's move could allow economic interests to shape regulatory frameworks meant for ecological protection and mark a dangerous departure from India's legal and ecological commitments.

"The State is the constitutional trustee of forests and wildlife, with a mandate to safeguard these natural assets," Debadebityo Sinha, Lead - Climate & Ecosystems at the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, said.

"A directive that requires states to merely 'take into consideration' the tourism master plan while notifying ESZs raises serious concerns. It implies that economic interests may override ecological imperatives," he said.

The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, prohibits commercial construction inside national parks and sanctuaries unless it directly supports conservation or is part of approved low-impact tourism.

Forest land diversion for non-site-specific purposes such as resorts would require forest clearance under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, and the consent of local Gram Sabhas under the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

The state's proposal to remove ESZ construction restrictions is also at odds with the June 2022 directions of the Supreme Court mandating a minimum one-kilometre buffer around all protected areas to safeguard wildlife habitats, according to Srivastava.

Sinha said the state's plan also contradicts the National Forest Policy, 1988, which clearly states that the derivation of direct economic benefit must be subordinate to environmental stability and the maintenance of ecological balance.

Such vague and arbitrary administrative directions not only violate statutory mandates under forest and wildlife laws, but also risk setting a dangerous precedent. They jeopardise Odisha's rich biodiversity and undermine both national and international obligations, he added.

7,529 students in 2nd PG merit list

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 23: A total of 7,529 students have been shortlisted for admission at 121 higher educational institutions (HEIs) across the state as the Higher Education department Monday released the Phase-I second selection merit list for postgraduate (PG) courses for 2025-26 academic session.

While the first round saw the selection of 22,226 students, out of 63,321 applicants, only 7,874 took admission. Another 8,224 opted to slide and float, leaving a large number of seats still unfilled across various institutions.

Of the newly selected candidates in second round, 2,356 are male, 5,173 are female students, according to the list.

Students who go for the 'Freeze' option are required to report at their selected HEIs from June 24 to 26 - between 10am and 5pm - to complete the admission formalities.

Students, who choose slide and float option, will have to wait for the third round selection process. Also, the students who opted for slide and float option at first round and have not been allotted seats are advised to wait for third round selection process.

The admission process will continue with subsequent phases for remaining seats. Authorities have urged all selected candidates to follow official instructions carefully and complete their reporting on time to secure admission, the Higher Education department stated.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Arrest of Afghan national: NIA begins probe

INDO ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, June 23: Following the recent arrest of an Afghan national here for illegally overstaying in Odisha, officials of multiple Central agencies, including the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and Intelligence Bureau (IBB), launched a probe into the matter Monday.

A two-member team from the NIA Monday visited the Airport police station here and collected details regarding the case related to the arrest of an Afghan national from Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA), Bhubaneswar Friday.

Meanwhile, sources also claimed that another team of IB Monday visited Peyton Sahi in

Buxi Bazar area of Cuttack city where the accused Afghan national, Mohammad Yousaf alias Yaha Khan, has been staying illegally for the last more than six years.

The IB team visited the rental accommodation of Khan and questioned the landlord to ascertain more details in the case. The Commissionerate Police are also reportedly planning to soon request the court to bring Khan on remand for further investigation into the matter.

As per reports, based on the written report of the complainant, Samapika Pattnaik, DSP, Immigration, BPIA, a case was registered and Khan was arrested Friday. The accused Friday arrived at the Bhubaneswar Airport from Dubai of UAE by

Flight No. 6E-1488 and presented a forged Indian passport (No. U 1380251) in the name of Yaha Khan hailing from Cuttack.

During immigration clearance, on suspicion, the complainant Pattnaik and staff conducted detailed verification and found that a Discreet Look Out Circular (LOC) was issued from Kolkata Airport against the accused Khan. Preliminary investigation revealed Yousaf had illegally entered India in 2017 on an Afghan passport to Kolkata.

But, Yousuf was overstaying in India after the expiry of the visa period since January 2018. The Immigration authorities have been searching for Khan who was staying in Cuttack concealing his true identity.

US Level-2 advisory standard protocol, says Odia diaspora

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 23: Members of the Odia diaspora in America preferred to play down the recent Level-2 travel advisory issued by the US state department for India, suggesting its citizens to 'exercise increased caution' due to rising concerns over crime and terrorism, by calling it a 'standard protocol' which 'should not be interpreted as signals of a serious threat'.

Significantly, the advisory specifically mentions several states, including Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, and Meghalaya as the areas of concern in view of Naxal activities and violence against women.

Speaking to **Orissa POST**, Texas-based Jayanta Rout said the Level-2 travel advisory issued by the US for India, including Odisha, should be viewed as a standard precaution, not a cause for alarm. "Odisha remains a peaceful and culturally vibrant region, with no immediate threats warranting elevated concern. While it is important to stay informed,

it's equally vital to maintain perspective and avoid letting generalised warnings fuel unnecessary fear," he said.

Sadyasnata Pattanaik from Chicago echoed similar sentiments. "Level-2 is fairly routine and nothing out of the ordinary. In fact, countries like France, Belgium, and Italy are currently under the same advisory. If you check the official website, you'll find dozens of countries listed at Level 2. A complex country like India can understandably be challenging for someone who's never traveled outside the US, so the advisory seems reasonable in that context."

Ohio resident Satya Pattanaik said the advisory will likely to have minimal impact on Odisha. "The region continues to function normally," Pattanaik added. Meanwhile, back in Odisha, the US move has sparked criticism from Opposition parties which are using the advisory to question the state's law and order situation. The recent gangrape of a college student at Gopalpur beach has added fuel to the controversy, with political leaders blaming the state government for failing to ensure public safety.

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ECoR honours three railway employees

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 23: In recognition of their outstanding dedication and alertness on duty, East Coast Railway (ECoR) general manager Parmeshwar Funkwal felicitated three railway employees for exemplary service and vigilance.

The railway employees—Uttam Kumar, station manager at Lakshimpur, Podilapu Gowri Sankar, senior goods train manager at Simhachalam North and Manoj Kumar Hansdah Track Maintainer-III at Rahama—were applauded for their quick thinking and proactive actions that ensured the smooth and safe operation of trains under their watch.

Their alert response during routine duties not only prevented potential operational disruptions but also reinforced the high standards of safety, Funkwal said.

While presenting the awards, Funkwal praised the dedication and vital contributions of railway personnel working on the ground. “Our frontline staff—including track maintainers, loco pilots, technicians, and station managers—are the backbone of our daily operations. Their vigilance and commitment ensure our network runs safely and

ECoR continues to promote a culture of safety and operational excellence by recognising individuals who go above and beyond in their service to the public.

Rath Yatra: Addl 378 health professionals, 265 hosp beds

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 23: The state government has made elaborate arrangements, including setting up of 265 additional hospital beds and deployment of 378 more healthcare professionals in Puri, to ensure the safety and well-being of devotees visiting the Holy City during the Rath Yatra, official sources said, Monday.

Briefing media, Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) Minister Mukesh Mahaling said arrangements are in place to handle medical emergencies during the world-famous festival, which draws lakhs of devotees each year.

He said the health infrastructure has been significantly strengthened with 265 additional hospital beds in the Pilgrim City this year.

“This enhanced capacity includes 100 additional beds at Government ANMTC and 15 ICU beds at TB&IDH in Puri. The district headquarters hospital (DHH) has reserved 68 beds—50 general beds, eight burn ward beds and 10 ICU beds. Similarly, 200 units of blood have been reserved at the DHH blood bank and two minor operation theatres, along with specialised dressing rooms, have been established to handle any medical emergencies,” he said.

A specialised 10-bed air-con-



ditioned heatstroke centre has also been established at Talabania to address weather-related health issues, he added.

Mahaling added that in addition to 378 doctors and paramedical staff, 69 first-aid centres and 74 ambulances will be kept ready for any emergencies. Each first-aid centre will be staffed with qualified MBBS/AYUSH doctors, pharmacists, and support staff, operating round-the-clock during Rath Yatra, Bahuda Yatra, and Suna Besha.

A special team of doctors will be stationed at the medical centres by AIIMS-Bhubaneswar for the first-time to provide additional support during the festivities, he said.

“I hope that the Rath Yatra will be conducted smoothly with the blessings of Lord Jagannath,” Mahaling said.

“Rigorous health monitoring and disease prevention measures are in place to maintain public health standards

throughout the Rath Yatra period,” the H&FW department said.

All 108 emergency ambulances will remain on high alert and operate along designated corridors with the support of NGO volunteers.

To prevent disease outbreaks, eight food safety officers and three mobile surveillance teams have been deployed. So far, 494 kg of unhygienic food has been destroyed after 249 inspections of food establishments, it said.

The administration has also collected 84 food samples, 22 water samples, and conducted 10 stool culture tests and 82 water analyses.

An extensive information, education and communication campaign will be undertaken to promote public health awareness covering food safety, safe drinking water practices, hand washing and hygiene protocols, ORS usage, health programmes, Covid-19 prevention measures, and Ayushman Bharat programme awareness, it added.

A dedicated Rath Yatra control room will operate round-the-clock throughout the festival period to coordinate all health-related activities and respond to emergencies. The control room can be reached at +91 6370560247 and 06752-222175 for any medical assistance or information, it further said.

Parida launches ‘Aamari Sishu’

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 23: Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida Monday launched ‘Aamari Sishu’ web portal that aims to enhance coordination and efficiency in child care, protection, and rehabilitation across Odisha.

Launching the web portal at the State Women and Child Institution here, Parida, who also holds the Women and Child Development (W&CD) portfolio, emphasised the importance of digital tools in improving service delivery.

“This portal will ensure smooth coordination between various stakeholders, including District Child Protection Units (DCPUs), Child Welfare Committees (CWCs), Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) and Child Care Institutions (CCIs), involved in child protection,” Parida said.

‘Aamari Sishu’ will provide updated and real-time data to monitor children’s health, nutrition, and overall well-being. It integrates key services like the nutrition tracker and the child helpline number 1098, ensuring that critical support reaches children in need more quickly and efficiently.

Parida also noted that the portal will serve as a hub for disseminating information on Central and state-sponsored schemes such as Mission Vatsalya, Yashoda, and Ashirbad, enabling better outreach and awareness among the public.

‘Labour force key to nation’s prosperity’

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 23: The country’s prosperity is impossible without the contributions of its labour force, Labour and Employees’ State Insurance Minister and Board Chairman Ganesh Ram Singkhuntia said Monday.

He shared these views while chairing the third meeting of the Odisha Labour Welfare Board at the department’s conference hall in Kharavela Bhawan.

Emphasising the vital role of workers in nation-building, the minister called for stronger welfare measures to support the state’s workforce.

“Workers are not merely participants in the economy—they are its foundation and the true nation builders,” said Singkhuntia. The state must ensure their dignity, justice, and social security,” he said.

The minister urged departmental officials to address the concerns of lakhs of workers across Odisha with sensitivity and commitment.

Key proposals discussed during the meeting included a range of financial assistance and scholarship schemes aimed at the children of contributing employees. The proposed schemes include a one-time scholarship of ₹1 lakh for meritorious students admitted to premier institutes like IITs,



IIMs, AIIMS, IISc, IISER, NISER, and government MBBS, BDS courses. Students securing seats in other reputed national institutions through common entrance exams will receive ₹50,000.

Additionally, ₹10,000 or more will be provided to disabled workers’ children pursuing higher education and to students scoring 90 per cent or above in Class X or XII. The Board also proposed ₹50,000 compensation for natural deaths and ₹1 lakh for accidental deaths of contributing workers.

The meeting also reviewed the performance of the “Pashram Portal” (pashram-labour.odisha.gov.in), an integrated digital platform launched after the second board meeting.

Developed by the Directorate of Labour and Directorate of Factories and Boilers, the portal offers several automated services under various labour laws, such as Code Allotment/Unique ID registration (Form-A), and notification of changes (Form-B), closure notification (Form-C).

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Executive Magistrate, Bhuban, dated - 19.06.2025.

I, Santosh Kumar Swain, resident of 27, Deogan School Sahi, Badasahi, Budhamba, P.S. - Kabisuryanagar, Dist. : Ganjam, Odisha, PIN - 761105, declare that I have changed my name from Swain Santoshbhai Kartik to Santosh Kumar Swain. Henceforth I shall be known as Santosh Kumar Swain for all purposes. Santosh Kumar Swain

I, Ranjan Sena, S/o. Rohit Kumar Sena had appeared 10th ICSE Board Examination in the year 2025 with Unique ID No.-8622031 and Index No. (Roll No.)-1256159/111. My Father’s actual and correct name is Rohit Kumar Sena which is wrongly mentioned as Rohit Ku. Sena, in my birth certificate due to which is also mentioned in my 10th ICSE Board certificate. So, I have corrected my birth certificate and I want to apply for correction of my father’s name from Rohit Ku. Sena to Rohit Kumar Sena in my 10th ICSE board certificate. By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Sambalpur, Affidavit No.1915 on date 20.06.2025, that both the name Rohit Ku. Sena and Rohit Kumar Sena are belong to one and same person.

BJD calls statewide student strike June 25

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 23: The Opposition BJD Monday called for an ‘All Odisha Students’ Strike’ June 25 to protest the alleged gang rape of a college student at Gopalpur sea beach in Ganjam district.

At a press conference here, BJD leader Debi Ranjan Tripathy appealed to the students’ community to come together and strongly protest the Gopalpur incident where a college girl was gang raped.

“We have appealed to students of all colleges across the state to wear black badges, boycott classes and protest openly in order to protect girl students from sexual exploitation and assault,” Tripathy said.

Another BJD leader Byamokesh Ray alleged that the law and order situation has completely collapsed.

“Girls and women are scared of going out of their homes due to the incidents of college girls being raped and school girls becoming pregnant in hostels,” Ray said.

Claiming that over 15 rape cases are reported in Odisha every day, Ray said Gopalpur gang rape incident has brought shame to the entire state.

The BJD leaders said that a 20-year-old college student was raped by 10 people June 15 evening at Gopalpur sea beach when she had been to the place along with her male friend on the occasion of Raja festival.

“While the BJP government was celebrating the first anniversary of completing one year in office, an innocent girl was gang raped,” Ray said.

Digital evidence found in gangrape case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, June 23: The Odisha Crime Branch, which is investigating the alleged gang rape of a college student at Gopalpur sea beach, have seized pieces of digital evidence against the 10 accused people, a senior officer said Monday.

The pieces of evidence such as CCTV footage and mobile phone communication were sent to the State Forensic Science Laboratory (SFSL), after getting its report, the chargesheet will be filed in the case, he said.

Ten people, including four minors, were accused of raping a 20-year-old college student and assaulting her male friend on the beach in Ganjam district on June 15 evening.



The police arrested all the accused and the investigation into the case was later handed over to the CID Crime Branch. Of them, the adults are now in judicial custody while the minors are lodged in juvenile homes.

Crime Branch DGP Vinaytosh Mishra told reporters that the investigators have seized mobile phones of all 10 accused persons and CCTV footage re-

lated to the crime.

DNA profiling of the accused persons has already been done, he said. “We are collecting both direct and circumstantial evidence. Nowadays digital evidence has become crucial to convict the accused persons,” Mishra said.

The digital evidence has been sent to the State Forensic Laboratory (SFSL) and after getting its report, the chargesheet will be filed, he said.

If needed, the police would bring the accused persons again on remand, he said. About the rape survivor, Mishra said, “We are providing psychological support to the victim. She will also be provided compensation as per norms.” Earlier in the day, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the DGP, seeking a detailed report on the case within two weeks. Earlier, the National Commission for Women directed the Odisha DGP for a swift and time-bound investigation into the case, provide free medical and psychological support to the victim and pay compensation to her.

IIM-Sambalpur drives Odisha’s net-zero vision

Leading state’s green transformation through innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, June 23: Strengthening its commitment to sustainability, environmental responsibility, and cultural preservation, IIM-Sambalpur—in collaboration with the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) and the University of Maryland—has taken a leading role in Odisha’s economic transformation journey. Through the Economic Transition Coalition Odisha (ETCO), IIM-Sambalpur is helping craft a strategic roadmap that integrates jobs, growth, and sustainability across the state.

The white paper published by ETCO draws on the deep local expertise of IIM-Sambalpur, along with insights from Odisha’s industry and academic leaders, and the Council on Energy, Environment and Water’s (CEEW) experience with energy transitions in India and beyond. Titled “A New Economic Transition Framework for Jobs, Growth, and Sustainability in Odisha,” the paper outlines a bold vision for the state to evolve into a high-in-



clusive, and net-zero economy by 2050.

This partnership puts forth a five-pronged strategy centered on achieving high and equitable incomes, building sustainable food systems, enhancing climate resilience, preventing biodiversity loss, and attaining net-zero greenhouse gas emissions.

IIM-Sambalpur director Mahadeo Jaiswal said, “Sustainability at IIM-Sambalpur is not confined to infrastructure or rankings. Odisha is on the cusp of a historic moment to lead India’s global sustainable

development narrative. Our role as a partner in this coalition is a perfect example of how academia can impact policy and can create profound change across industry.”

“As a leading partner in ETCO, IIM-Sambalpur has played a key role in identifying policy actions and strategic frameworks to position Odisha as a hub for green manufacturing, renewable energy, and inclusive development. This includes transition strategies for workers in the mining and thermal power sectors, and the promotion of green technologies such

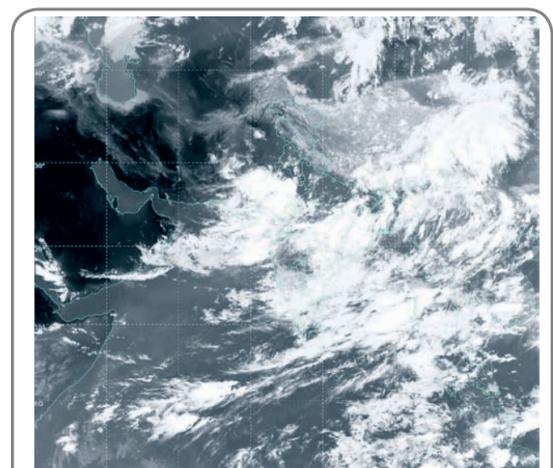
as green steel, carbon capture, and hydrogen-based energy systems,” he said.

“The establishment of climate-resilient infrastructure—given Odisha’s vulnerability to natural disasters—along with a strong focus on biodiversity conservation, reducing human-animal conflict, and creating artificial habitats and eco-corridors, are key priorities. Equally crucial are sustainable food systems that support equitable farmer incomes, promote agroforestry, and enhance soil carbon rejuvenation,” he further said.

Aligned with India’s net-zero goals and NEP 2020’s emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration, IIM-Sambalpur is redefining the role of a 21st-century business school—not just creating managers but empowering sustainable nation builders,” Jaiswal added.

Additionally, the framework proposes leveraging Odisha’s mineral-rich landscape and extensive coastline to develop into a global green manufacturing and export hub, while prioritising environmental safeguards and active community participation.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	86.78 ↑ 0.12	SENSEX	818996.79 ↓ 511.38	GOLD	₹99,606 ↓ ₹497
EURO	99.51 ↓ 0.34	NIFTY	24971.90 ↓ 140.50	SILVER	₹106.971 ↑ ₹747



WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	30.7°	31.2°	Generally cloudy sky with possibility of rain or thunderstorm
Min Temp	25.4°	23.2°	
Humidity	92%	95%	
Rainfall	3.2mm	35.6mm	

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AICC inquiry team meets kin of gangraped, murdered tribal girl

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, June 23: A high-level All India Congress Committee (AICC) inquiry team, led by senior Congress leader Deepa Dasmunsi, met the family of a tribal minor girl who was allegedly gangraped and murdered in Keonjhar district recently. The team conducted an investigation into the incident.

Accompanying Dasmunsi were MPs Ranjit Ranjan, Praniti Shinde, S Jothimani, and Shobha Oza. The team spoke with the victim's family and villagers to gather facts, condemned the crime, and demanded strict action against the perpetrators.

The team highlighted a sharp rise in violence against women, particularly in tribal communities, and vowed to raise the issue nationally. "The Congress party will submit a detailed field inquiry report to party leadership and make this a major issue in the Parliament," team members told reporters.

According to sources, the minor girl from the Pandapada police station area under Harichandanpur block was gangraped and murdered. Her body was allegedly hanged



The team highlighted a sharp rise in violence against women, particularly in tribal communities, and vowed to raise the issue nationally

from a tree to stage the death as a suicide.

Following the incident, Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Bhakta Charan Das and former OPCC chief Niranjan Patnaik directed a District Congress Committee team to visit the victim's village and meet her family. A second

team, led by former OPCC President Jaydev Jena, also visited, demanding immediate punishment for the culprits, a Crime Branch investigation, and at least 25 lakh rupees as ex-gratia from the state government.

District Congress president Yashwant Singh Laguri, former PCC secretary Manoj Jena, state Tribal Congress president Yashwant Singh Laguri, former PCC secretary Sangram Das, PCC coordinator Sudhanshu Shekhar Deo, former MP Shankuntala Laguri, former MLA Subarna Naik, and former Mahila Congress vice president Sangita Singh were among those present.

Liquor shop worker shot at by miscreants during robbery bid

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada/Kuliana, June 23: Unidentified miscreants opened fire on a liquor shop employee during a failed robbery attempt near Jagannathpur on NH-18 under Kuliana police limits in Mayurbhanj district Monday.

The victim identified as Shibnanda Barik, 30, of Kamata village was critically injured as he sustained bullet injuries to the head and thigh. He was admitted to PRM Medical College and Hospital in Baripada.

Shibnanda was travelling by motorcycle to Baripada carrying ₹8 lakh in cash when four bike-borne assailants began following him. As he approached Jagannathpur, the miscreants intercepted him and opened fire.

After halting his vehicle in fear, two of the attackers reportedly held a gun to his head and attempted to snatch his cash-filled bag. When he resisted, the assailants fired five rounds, with one bullet grazing his head and another striking his thigh.

The gunfire alerted locals, who rushed to the spot, forcing the criminals to flee the scene empty-handed. Kuliana police reached the scene, recovered a spent bullet shell, and launched an investigation. As of now, the attackers remain unidentified. Witnesses claimed the attackers were speaking in Bengali.



NO MONKEY BUSINESS: A youth helps a monkey sip tea at a roadside stall in Rasgovindpur market in Mayurbhanj district, Monday

Women from Delhi molested in Jajpur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jajpur, June 23: Two women who came from Delhi to Jajpur district were allegedly molested by two local youths, police said Monday.

According to a complaint lodged with the police, the accused passed lewd comments and touched them inappropriately besides assaulting the brothers of one of the two women, who is a local and studies in Delhi.

The police started investigating the incident that happened at a village under Dasrathpur police station limits late Sunday evening. None was arrested till the filing of the report.

The 25-year-old female student from Delhi had come to her classmate's house at a village in Jajpur district. They visited Maa Biraja temple, a Shakti Peeth, and the incident happened when they were returning to the Odia woman's residence.

The women alleged that two local youths passed lewd comments, misbehaved with them, touched them inappropriately and pulled their T-shirts.

"They also beat up the brothers of the local woman when they protested. The miscreants could have been under the influence of alcohol," the Delhi woman told reporters here.

She alleged that though they filed a complaint at police station Sunday night by naming the accused persons, no action was taken till Monday evening. "Had this happened in Delhi, the accused would have been arrested immediately," she claimed.

Based on the complaint, the police have registered a case and started an investigation into the matter by forming a team headed by Jajpur SDPO.

Dalits tortured by cow vigilantes; 9 detained

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dharakote, June 23: A day after a kangaroo court forced two persons from the Dalit community to crawl on their knees accusing them of cattle smuggling at Kharigumma village under this police limits in Ganjam district, police Monday detained nine persons in this connection.

The accused have been detained and are being questioned in this connection. Dharakote IIC Chandrika Swain said.

According to police, several

villagers at Kharigumma village Sunday stopped the two Dalits as they were walking with three cows from Haripur to their village, Singipur, to handover the cattle as dowry to their daughter. The mob accused them of smuggling cattle and tried to extort money from them.

When the victims refused to pay, they were taken to a salon where their heads were half tonsured. Later, the victims were paraded on the road for nearly 2 km from Kharigumma to Jahada village and forced to



crawl on their knees along the Jahada village road. Both men were reportedly compelled to drink drain water, beaten and made to eat grass.

The victims were taken for medical treatment before of-

Sambalpur Zilla School to be developed as heritage institute, partner with IIM



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, June 23: Efforts will be made to preserve the 150-year-old Chandrasekhar Behera Zilla School here as a heritage institution and explore partnerships with IIM, Sambalpur, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari said Monday during a visit to the school.

Pujari also reviewed the teaching and learning process of the students during his visit. He spent a considerable amount of time with the Class X students and observed the teaching by the science teacher while sitting among the students on a bench. Later, he discussed the implementation of the National Education Policy, 2020 with the teacher. Pujari also quizzed students on topics in science and history to test their grasp on the lessons.

Later, the minister joined students during their mid-day meal and spoke to the media about his own years at the school, where he studied for two years in Classes VIII and IX. Many of Odisha's freedom fighters were once students at the district school, he noted, emphasising the need for students to appreciate the school's rich history and draw inspiration.

Pujari paid tribute to late Bajju Narayan Murty, the headmaster during his time at the school, whom he remembered as an exemplary educator.

Teachers must observe and learn from the advanced teaching methods being practiced at IIM Sambalpur, Pujari said.

Pujari praised the use of smart classrooms at the school, calling the system a model for others. "If a school is a machine for creating capable humans, then teachers are its operators," he said.

He noted that the school's students are full of talent, and proper guidance will help them thrive and prosper.

The minister also held discussions with school headmaster Lokita Das and District Education Officer (DEO) Lakshman Bhoi about transforming the school into a heritage institution. Pujari added that he will take up the matter with the state's education secretary and director.

Later, the minister visited Brajamohan Patnaik School in Pattanayakpada to observe its teaching process and shared midday meal with students.

DEO Lakshman Bhoi and other education officials were present on the occasion.

GROOM TAKES BOAT RIDE AS VILLAGE GETS FLOODED

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, June 23: A unique scene from Neda village under Saraskana block in Mayurbhanj district has gone viral on social media, where a groom was ferried on a boat across floodwaters to reach the bride's house.

Due to continuous rainfall in the upper catchment areas, a flashflood in the Subarnarekha River inundated the village. With roads submerged under 4-5 feet deep water, the groom, Deepak Kumar Bera, 28, had to be ferried on a small country boat from his home to the point where the decorated wedding vehicle waited for him on the other side.

Though the village was surrounded by floodwaters, the family decided not to postpone the marriage. Despite the challenges, they carried on with the preparations, determined to fulfil the planned ceremony.

After being ferried through the flood, Deepak travelled to Tata Nagar in neighbouring Jharkhand, where the wedding took place at the bride's residence. The event brought



relief and joy to both the families and villagers, who were glad that the marriage could happen as per schedule despite the natural adversity.

Now, the video of the groom on the boat is doing rounds on social media, leaving netizens abuzz.

When contacted, BDO Preet-iranjan Rath stated that during the winter months, the block administration had received ₹70,000 from Duluri Pine Forest operations, as part of a shared revenue model with the SHGs. He emphasised that had ticketing continued, revenue would have been much higher.

District Collector Amrit Rutaraj, when approached for a response, said the responsibility for the site would be officially handed over to the Saanjasaru Development Trust from June 1. He mentioned he had already discussed the matter with the BDO.

Despite the Collector's assurance, nearly a month has passed and the Duluri Pine Forest remains neglected with no headway in this regard. This has sparked renewed demands from various quarters for the immediate transfer of responsibility to the trust to prevent further damage and revenue loss.

Several organisations have urged the Kandhamal District Collector to hand over the maintenance of the Duluri Pine Forest to the same public-private trust currently managing the Hill View Park.

Daringbadi's pine jewel withers sans upkeep

POST NEWS NETWORK

Daringbadi, June 23: Hundreds of tourists thronged every day to Daringbadi in Kandhamal district braving the summer heat for a retreat in nature. Popular tourist spots in the block, such as Hill View Park, Nature Park, Coffee Garden, Midubanda waterfall, Kisubadi waterfall and Lovers' Point, saw large crowds, especially with students and families making the most of the summer holidays.

One such attraction, the Duluri Pine Forest, known for its scenic charm and picnic spots, has now been left neglected. While entry tickets were collected during the winter tourism season from October to January, the main gate to the forest remained open thereafter, allowing unrestricted access to people. This has led to a surge in anti-social activities with the area getting littered with empty liquor bottles, plas-



tic waste, polythene bags and other leftovers.

During the winter season, the local administration had entrusted women from self-help groups (SHGs) with both ticket collection and upkeep of the forest. In partnership with the administration, SHG members managed the main gate,

maintained cleanliness and ensured order within the pine forest, generating significant revenue while also preserving the natural beauty of the site.

However, the open access ever since has reportedly resulted in substantial revenue loss. Hill View Park alone generated around ₹90,000 from ticket sales

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Date and Venue:
Wednesday, 25th June 2025; 6:00 p.m.
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Bhubaneswar - 751 001, Odisha.

For registration, please contact: Shagun Sahni, Mobile: 87639 83099.
Registration is compulsory. The registration time will be from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
No walk-ins will be allowed.

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To love is not to possess,
but to give oneself.

THE MOTHER

Talking Shop

Normally, negatives do not make headlines. But, at times they do. The recently concluded G7 summit in Alberta, Canada, turned out to be one such event when what did not happen mattered more than what did. The most crucial thing that did not take place was that the summit could not issue a joint communiqué that starkly illustrates the deepening policy divisions among leaders of the world's most powerful economies. There is already a raging debate on what the G7 can accomplish amid growing US-European tensions. But, after the failure to prepare a joint communiqué a more fundamental question has emerged: Is the G7 itself equipped to address today's complex geopolitical landscape?

The summit exposed significant rifts between G7 members and the US on critical international issues. Trump's assertion that ejecting Russia from the former Group of Eight (G8) was a strategic mistake exacerbated tensions over Russia's war in Ukraine. The G7 did endorse a statement for "de-escalation of hostilities, including a ceasefire in Gaza," but watered-down statements like this reveal the challenges in achieving consensus. These parallel conflicts show not only internal G7 divisions but also the growing disconnect between G7 positions and broader global sentiment, especially when it comes to Israel and Gaza.

The lead-up to the Kananaskis summit threw up another critical question whether the G7 can remain relevant while excluding major global players. It is not difficult to surmise that pressure from some quarters ultimately compelled Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, however unwilling, to extend an invitation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, despite ongoing diplomatic tensions over last year's killing of Nijjar, a suspected Khalistani supporter in British Columbia. This last-minute inclusion brings out the reality that India's absence from G7 discussions would barely, if at all, impact any outcome, even though it is one of the world's largest consumer economies.

But, more troubling development is the weakening of the shared democratic values that supposedly bind the G7 together. The transatlantic relationship faces unprecedented strain as the Republican Party, under the leadership of Trump and Vice President JD Vance, increasingly views liberal European societies as divergent from American values and interests. This ideological drift threatens the very foundation upon which the G7 was built.

Trouble was brewing even before Trump's early departure from the leaders' summit and the final absence of a communiqué. Trump's trade policy had already effectively led to the formation of a coalesced European, Canadian, and Japanese front against the US. But the fracture in the G7 has only become more evident during the summit itself. When the group had come into being 50 years ago, its avowed aim was to become a channel for economic coordination between the world's largest economies. In recent years, the conflict between Ukraine and Russia injected more energy into the G7, which had functioned as a pivot for sanctions coordination and strategizing on supporting Ukraine. But, the development angered Trump so much that he went to the extent of asserting that Russia should be brought back into the G8 fold, further exposing the lack of alignment between him and the other leaders.

Of course there were agreements to combat what the leaders called non-market policies that could block access to critical minerals and also limit the downsides of artificial intelligence on jobs and the environment without shutting eyes to technological revolution. But, these gains are far outweighed by the failure to project the G7 as a cohesive, united forum.

It seems the G7 is now in the midst of a geopolitical crisis, as the Israel-Iran conflict plays out and the US' strained relationship with the rest of the group shows the deep fissures within. Even as France is set to take on the presidency in 2026, its relevance will largely depend on how much value Washington sees in collaborating with its closest allies on economic issues.

A forum designed for the world's democratic economic powerhouses now struggles to find significant meeting grounds. The G7 is virtually turning out to be an increasingly irrelevant talking shop unable to address many of the defining challenges of the twenty-first century. In the midst of all this turmoil, India, whose democratic credentials are being questioned worldwide, seems rudderless in its foreign policy and global outlook.

WISDOM CORNER

One reason so few of us achieve what we truly want is that we never direct our focus; we never concentrate our power. Most people dabble their way through life, never deciding to master anything in particular.

TONY ROBBINS

Don't wait to be successful at some future point. Have a successful relationship with the present moment and be fully present in whatever you are doing. That is success.

ECKHART TOLLE

We are not victims of aging, sickness and death. These are part of scenery, not the seer, who is immune to any form of change. This seer is the spirit, the expression of eternal being.

DEEPAK CHOPRA

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1717: The world's first Masonic Grand Lodge is established. Freemasonry is a fraternal organization that has counted among its members a large number of known intellectuals. Due to its secretive nature, many myths about their underground activities have emerged through the ages. A Grand Lodge is the governing body for a certain geographic area.

1812: Russia invaded by Napoleon and his Grand Army. On this day in 1812, French Emperor Napoleon—who had massed his troops in Poland in the spring to intimidate Russian Tsar Alexander I—and 600,000 troops of his Grand Army launched an ill-fated invasion of Russia.

1901: Pablo Picasso opens his first exhibition. The 18-year-old Spanish artist was featured for the first time in Ambroise Vollard's gallery in 6 Rue Laffite in Paris. Neither of the two art critics that visited the show thought much about the works. Picasso went on to become one of the most influential artists of all time.

1932: The Promoters Revolution, a bloodless coup, overthrew Prajadhipok, the king of Thailand, ending the absolute monarchy in that country and initiating the so-called Constitutional Era.

1948: The Berlin Blockade begins. In reaction to the currency reform in West Germany, the Soviet Union blocked all access to West Berlin. It was one of the first major international crises of the Cold War. Western Allies launched the Berlin airlift to transport supplies to the blocked area. In Germany, the planes became known as "raisin bombers" or "candy bombers".

FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

TIGHTROPE WALK FOR INDIA

The US joined the war between Israel and Iran, by bombing three nuclear sites in Iran. President Donald Trump used his presidential authority to send stealth bombers, which dropped the bombs. They could not be stopped by Iran's anti-aircraft defense. The President ordered the strike on a sovereign nation, without any provocation, and without the approval of Congress, that is their legislature. Whether he exceeded his authority or not will be debated for long and might perhaps go to court. Even the right-wing supporters of Trump do not want America to be dragged into wars in distant lands. The bombs included bunker-busters, weighing nearly 15 kilotons. It is unlikely that Iran's nuclear programme has been destroyed. Does the American bombing mean that the war is over, and peace has commenced in the region? Will there be an immediate regime change? Of course not. Iran is expected to retaliate.



Ajit Ranade

IN GEOPOLITICAL TERMS, INDIA HAS TO DO A TIGHTROPE BALANCING ACT BETWEEN TWO NATIONS WITH WHICH IT HAS GOOD RELATIONS

Iran's government has two choices. Either to capitulate and surrender, which will weaken the position of 86-year-old Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, or to be defiant and counterattack, which can be suicidal. Both choices are bad because the Iranian leadership has to choose between humiliation and huge further damage. It is impossible to predict how this will play out. The Americans have around 50,000 troops present in West Asia and more than a dozen military bases, across countries like UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. The Iranian lawmakers have approved the closure of the Strait of Hormuz which will blockade substantial oil and gas flow into the rest of the world from the region. This is something that Iran has never done and will hurt oil exporters including itself. It will affect a major supply to China, who is



The pursuit of strategic autonomy and building domestic economic strength need not justify geopolitical ambiguity bordering on timidity

currently firmly on Iran's side. Iran will risk losing diplomatic, moral and geopolitical support from all oil importing nations. The other retaliatory action is an attack on US military bases, by itself or by its proxies. The Houthis of Yemen have announced their intention and willingness to attack US bases.

The economic impact of war in the Middle East is a flare up in oil prices, and consequent inflation, investor nervousness and negative impact on world trade. It must be remembered that the US is now the oil sheikh of the world, producing one fifth of all the crude oil output, a share which is the highest in six decades. It is also nearly self-sufficient in its energy needs and has become a net exporter. That is the reason that oil prices did not spike up to 100 or 150 dollars when Israel attacked Iran on June 9. Even after America's bombing and the imminent closure of Hormuz, oil prices are under 100 dollars.

How does all this impact India. In geopolitical terms, India has to do a tightrope balancing act between two nations with which it has good relations. Israel has become a critical supplier of defense and surveillance equipment and technology. The port of Haifa has an Indian investor and represents a collaboration

in infrastructure. India-Israel trade has also increased rapidly and is close to \$5 billion. On the other hand, Iran is an oil supplier to India. It was one of the few countries which agreed to export to India in India's own currency. The Chabahar port being jointly developed is an important part of India's proposed India Middle East Europe Economic corridor. Thirty eight per cent of India's crude oil, and 52 per cent of liquefied gas comes through the Strait of Hormuz. The disruption in supply of LNG can affect delivery of cooking gas to households as well as India's fertiliser production. Also, India cannot quickly switch to buying more Russian crude, without earning the ire of Americans. Higher oil prices affect inflation, foreign exchange stock and the fiscal deficit negatively. It also puts downward pressure on the rupee-dollar rate, which looks likely to slip below 87. It is estimated that a 10-dollar sustained increase in oil prices can reduce GDP growth by around 0.3 per cent and increase inflation by 0.4 per cent. Stock market sentiment can also take a hit due to investor nervousness.

There is also a moral issue, although geopolitics is increasingly indifferent to any moral aspect. How can an unprovoked

attack on a sovereign nation not be condemned? India distanced itself from the joint statement of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which had condemned Israel for attacking Iran. Even in the UN, if there is a resolution to condemn attacks by both Israel and the US, it is likely that India will abstain. Even more remarkable was the Indian abstention from voting on the recent UNGA's resolution seeking an immediate, unconditional and lasting ceasefire in Gaza. A total of 149 countries including US allies like Australia, Japan and the UK voted in favour, while 12 countries including the US and Israel voted against.

What is then the meaning of India expressing concern at the humanitarian crisis and murderous assault on the people in Gaza, when it chooses to abstain from a crucial vote? It is called pragmatic geopolitics, because of closer relationships with America and Israel. But then it also undermines India's quest for leadership of the so-called Global South. Pragmatism might topple a principled approach in the current situation, but it leaves a blemished track record, at odds with India's historic position of being non-aligned, and providing moral leadership.

No doubt it is a tightrope walk and a balancing act, but it is also a chance to crystallise and define the foundational values guiding India's global engagement. The pursuit of strategic autonomy and building domestic economic strength need not justify geopolitical ambiguity bordering on timidity. The three major conflicts in the world, Ukraine-Russia, Israel-Palestine and now in Iran, are severely testing India's economic, geopolitical and diplomatic skills, strength and resilience.

The writer is a noted economist.
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SPECTRUM BRICS+

Development agenda for Global South

On July 6-7, Rio de Janeiro will host the BRICS+ Summit of presidents and heads of state. With ten current member states and many others seeking to join, the BRICS+ brings together countries with diverse political, cultural, and civilizational outlooks, but which share a commitment to fostering South-South cooperation and pursuing a more equitable, multipolar global order.



Fernando Amorim Teixeira

TO TRANSLATE COMMITMENTS INTO CONCRETE ACTION, POLICYMAKERS MUST ENGAGE A BROADER COALITION OF STAKEHOLDERS

Such efforts are needed more than ever, because climate-change mitigation and adaptation cannot be separated from socioeconomic development. From a production standpoint, responding to such a complex, multifaceted challenge requires integration into higher rungs of the value chain, through strategies underpinned by strong sustainability principles. In practice, that means adopting policies to incentivize energy-efficient production methods and an expansion into higher value-added industrial outputs.

But industrial decarbonization depends on knowledge-intensive sectors and technologies, and investments in these areas do not arise organically from market dynamics. They require political will, strategic planning,

a risk appetite for long-duration projects, and – crucially – increased productivity through the more efficient use of natural resources. Such an agenda demands empowered states; it calls for a strategic mobilization of public institutions that can operate with relative independence from fiscal constraints.

In this context, the BRICS+ should focus on identifying complementarities across strategic sectors and activities, so that member states can drive innovation and strengthen their international competitiveness without undermining each other. Initiatives such as the Partnership for the New Industrial Revolution (PartNIR) represent important steps in this direction. But moving beyond dialogue is essential. To translate commitments into concrete action, policymakers must engage a broader coalition of stakeholders – including companies, civil society, trade unions, and academia – to co-develop policies, guiding principles, and common standards. Creating shared value among businesses and communities not only strengthens relationships but also enhances sustainability and those businesses' reputations. This, in turn, fosters greater public acceptance and

reduces the potential for resistance or conflict.

Specifically, new investments could require labor safeguards such as fair working conditions, the prohibition of child and forced labor, and protection of freedom of association and collective-bargaining rights, all in accordance with international agreements and national legislation.

Finance is another critical pillar. Here, the discussion should be led by members' state-owned financial institutions, since these are best positioned to direct capital to strategic sectors and coordinate their efforts with private investors. BRICS+ countries already have dozens of public development banks and sovereign wealth funds with patient-investment (long-term) mandates, technical expertise, and demonstrable experience in supporting structural change and sustainable development initiatives. These institutions offer fertile ground for further cooperation, particularly through innovative financial instruments that could strengthen the role of the New Development Bank.

Importantly, public development banks and sovereign wealth funds must go beyond merely correcting market failures. They should serve as ear-

ly-stage investors to catalyze the necessary structural transformation, including by attaching social and environmental conditionalities to their investment frameworks to influence private decisions across the value chain.

With clear short-, medium-, and long-term targets – like the BRICS+'s goal of tripling renewable energy capacity by 2030 – public programs to direct resources toward specific sectors would naturally enhance coordination. Each member state will need to adopt policies to target sectors that are ripe for productivity and efficiency enhancements.

An effective BRICS+ development agenda will require a coordinated mobilization of resources and institutional efforts, with the state playing a central role in steering the overall strategy. Brazil's BRICS+ presidency, which comes at a time of rising protectionism and global economic fragmentation, offers a historic opportunity to advance a model of cooperation attuned to the Global South's economic realities and development imperatives.

The writer is Coordinator of Public Policy at Brazilian Centre for Sustainable Finance.
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West Asia on boil

Sir, With the US attacking Iran and destroying its three nuclear sites, the Israel-Iran war has entered a new phase. The American attack could lead to Iranian capitulation on terms friendly to Israel and the United States. But it is equally or even more likely to draw the US deeper into the war with profoundly negative consequences. Iran will certainly seek some kind of retribution, perhaps by attacking nearby US bases in the Middle East. That could lead to ever widening escalation, with devastating effects for the region. Iran may be forced to accept terms favourable to Israel and the United States, and the war may also quickly end. But the track record of American military interventions in the Middle East and the nature of war over human history shows that American involvement comes with tremendous risks. The best and most durable option for the US all along was to pursue a diplomatic deal with Iran and restrain its nuclear programme. Unfortunately, after the latest events, that option is much less likely.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Benefits of sports

Sir, Popular sport disciplines unite people and connect minds besides keeping loneliness away. International Olympic Committee (IOC) in association with the World Health Organisation (WHO) observed the "Olympic Day" on 23 June to commemorate the commencement of the Olympics on this day in 1884. "Let's move" is the worldwide theme, and "#Let's Move +1, India" was chosen as the theme in India to highlight the physical and emotional bonding power of sports. Nearly, 80 per cent of youngsters across the globe are not able to meet the minimal activity level to keep them fit. Moving, or walking in general terms, implies the benefits of shedding physical inertia. When the walk becomes a movement, the enormous energy it brings to participants is indescribable. Free access to games like padel, pickleball, among others, at 50 sporting venues was the highlight of Olympic Day in India.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 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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Tripura: India's 3rd fully literate state after Mizoram, Goa

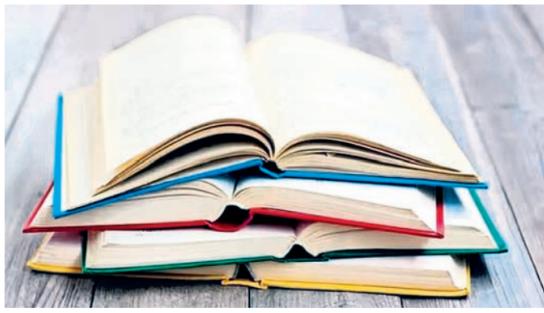
UNESCO has defined that states which cross 95% literacy rate would be declared as fully literate; Tripura has 95.6%

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agartala, June 23: In a significant development, Tripura was Monday declared fully literate, with the state's literacy rate rising to 95.6 per cent.

Addressing a function here, Director (Adult Education), Union Ministry of Education Preeti Meena said that after Mizoram and Goa, Tripura became the third in India to attain the distinction of being a fully literate state.

"According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) report published for the financial year 2023-24, Tripura's literacy rate stood at 93.7 per cent. According to a previous survey, the state's non-literate population was 23,184. By successfully implementing the 'ULLAS (Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society) - New India Literacy Programme', Tripura's literacy rate has now increased to 95.6 per cent," Meena said.



tainable Development Goals (SDGs), by 2030, India aims to be a fully literate nation.

The Government of India had earlier launched the Centrally Sponsored Scheme 'ULLAS' for 2022-2027 to cover all aspects of 'Education For All' (erstwhile termed as Adult Education) to align with National Education Policy 2020.

Addressing the function, Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha said that in 1961, the literacy

and basic arithmetic are three key aspects.

The Chief Minister claimed that in per capita income and GDP, Tripura is the second-highest in northeastern states.

A senior official of the Education Department said that under the leadership of the School Education Department, the State Literacy Mission Authority, State Council of Educational Research and Training, retired teachers, students from schools and colleges, volunteers and trained personnel from various levels worked together tirelessly to execute the ULLAS programme.

Community effort

According to the official, educational materials were prepared in Bengali, English, and tribal Kokborok languages; teachers and officials were specially trained; and students were engaged as volunteers.

Through the relentless efforts of 2,228 volunteer teachers, 943 Social Awareness Centres, and

the active involvement of the Youth Literacy Corps, education has reached even the remotest corners of Tripura.

Some opened classrooms in their courtyards, while others taught the basics of literacy in hill markets. In the 2011 Census, Tripura ranked as the third-highest literate state in the country after Kerala and Mizoram.

However, earlier literacy programmes mostly focussed on basic signature skills, the official pointed out. The government has moved beyond that approach, emphasising functional literacy.

The official said that the goal was not only to impart basic literacy but also to ensure education in financial awareness, digital transactions, basic arithmetic, and various other practical skills through well-planned initiatives.

Senior Tripura government officials were also present at the function.

UP CM approves bridge on Ganga



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhadohi, June 23: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath approved the construction of a bridge over the Ganga river and a road over-bridge during his visit here on Monday as he lauded artisans for the local carpet industry's "resurgence".

In a major infrastructural push, Adityanath approved the construction of a bridge over the Ganga river near Dengarhpur in Sitamarhi and a road overbridge on the railway line between Gopiganj and Mirzapur.

Noting the famed carpet industry of Bhadohi has led to Uttar Pradesh gaining a 60 per cent share in India's carpet exports, he emphasised the state's support to boost the industry's global footprint.

"Ten years ago, this industry was in a poor state. But local artisans have revived it with encouragement from Prime Minister Narendra Modi. As a result, Uttar Pradesh now accounts for 60 per cent of India's carpet exports, with Bhadohi contributing the largest share," Adityanath said.

He stressed that the industry's Geographical Indication (GI) tag and the development of the Carpet Expo Mart were the results of coordinated efforts by both the Central and state governments.

The government is also supporting entrepreneurs and artisans through various initiatives to promote India's ancient handicrafts globally, the chief minister highlighted.

The chief minister directed officials to expedite the devel-

opment of an already approved mini-stadium and said an auditorium that has been sanctioned at the district headquarters would now be developed as a multipurpose hall.

He said efforts were underway to prioritise residential facilities for government officers and staffers. The status of outsourced sanitation workers under the Panchayati Raj Department was being reviewed, and steps would be taken to improve connectivity to roads linked with the district headquarters, Adityanath said.

Adityanath also inspected the district hospital, describing it as a "living monument of the previous government's apathy and corruption." He said his administration had restarted work at the facility and was overseeing the construction of a 50-bed critical care centre.

"Funds have been sanctioned for the renovation of the old hospital building and the target is to complete it by this December."

The chief minister also hinted at plans to establish a medical college in Bhadohi under the public-private partnership model and said preparations were ongoing to meet required norms.

Referring to local education infrastructure, Adityanath spoke about the expansion of Kashi Naresh Government PG College.

"A proposal has been sought for land allocation. With the establishment of the agriculture faculty and staffing, the college could be developed into a state university if over 50 acres of land is made available, he said.

INFRA PUSH

Two waterbodies notified as proposed reserve forest



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, June 23: The Assam Cabinet Sunday approved proposals for notifying two 'beels' (waterbodies) in Goalpara as proposed reserve forest (PRF) to maintain 'social and natural balance'.

The Cabinet also gave its nod to a scheme for bringing back bodies of youths and students residing outside who die there. It also declared transgender as 'socially and educationally backward class'.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, addressing a press conference after chairing the Cabinet, said, "Cabinet has approved the proposal to notify Urpad Beel area (1256 Ha) as a PRF under Section 5 of the Assam Forest Regulation, 1891."

The Cabinet has also okayed a proposal to notify Hasila Beel area (245 Ha) as a PRF under the same law, and in both cases, one month's time will be given to the public to register their opinion, Sarma said.

"Through these steps, we can ensure that social and natural balance in Goalpara is maintained," the chief minister added.

Sarma said the Cabinet approved the 'Shradhanjali' scheme for the government to facilitate coordinated transportation of bodies of people from Assam who are working or studying in other states and die of various causes.

"The scheme will be implemented from October one. It will be applicable primarily for youth engaged in low-paying jobs outside the state, along with those who have died in special circumstances, such as murder and accidents," he said.

The scheme will not include cases of death during medical treatments outside the state, he added.

"Family members will inform local administration, or police by dialing 112. Moreover, a social media ID will be created dedicatedly for the purpose," Sarma added.

Sivasagar gas leak curbed: Residents told to return

ONGC clears way for capping well in Assam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 23: The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) said on Sunday that it has paved the way for capping of its well following the gas blowout that took place June 12 at the Rudrasagar oil field in Assam's Sivasagar district.

A further decline in gas pressure has been achieved, which is expected to facilitate a safer and more controlled capping of the well. As a continuous safety measure, water blanketing of the well is being maintained around the clock, according to a company statement.

The ONGC said that in collaboration with international well control experts from Cudd Pressure Control, it has achieved a significant milestone in its ongoing operations at Well RDS#147A.

Approximately 10 trailer loads of rig material have been successfully removed by ONGC's Crisis Management Team (CMT) and the expert crew, clearing the majority of the rig equipment from the site and paving the way for the upcoming well capping operation. The necessary heavy equipment required for the



capping process is currently being mobilised to the site.

In parallel, the team has conducted a detailed inspection of the elevated section of the rig mast to plan the safe removal of the tubing stacked in the derrick. A specialised extra-long boom crane is being mobilised for this critical operation, with deployment scheduled at the earliest possible time.

Air quality monitoring continues uninterrupted in and around the site. Encouragingly, there is no detectable trace of hydrocarbons beyond 30 metres from the well. Based on current assessments, residents living beyond a 500-metre radius from the incident site

have now been advised that it is safe to return to their homes and resume normal activities, including cooking and the use of electricity.

Additionally, the ONGC said it continues to actively support the district administration at the relief camps. The corporation is providing 247 medical assistance to all those in need, reaffirming its commitment to the well-being of the affected communities.

Salkhan Fossils Park joins Unesco's tentative World Heritage List



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, June 23: In a significant achievement for Uttar Pradesh, Salkhan Fossils Park - one of the world's oldest fossil sites secured a place in Unesco's tentative list of World Heritage Sites Sunday.

The park is set to attain full World Heritage status within the next two years. Mukesh Meshram, Principal Secretary of Tourism Department stated that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has consistently undertaken key initiatives to strengthen tourism in the state, with a particular focus on eco-tourism.

He said that the Board achieved major accomplishment days ago, by securing a place for Salkhan Fossils Park - located near Salkhan village, approximately 15 km from Robertsganj in Sonbhadra - on

UNESCO's Tentative List.

The Tourism Department had been working towards this goal for the past year. A pivotal step in the process was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Uttar Pradesh Eco-Tourism Development Board and the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences, Lucknow. The institute conducted scientific studies of the park's fossil-bearing rocks, which revealed 1.4 billion-year-old stromatolites and algae fossils - considered some of the earliest evidence of life on Earth. These findings formed the scientific foundation for the park's nomination to UNESCO. This recognition not only highlights the geological significance of Salkhan Fossils Park but also places Uttar Pradesh prominently on the global eco-tourism map.

Tourism Director Prahar Mishra explained that the process of including any site in the UNESCO World Heritage List begins with its entry into the Tentative List.

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ISRO CENTRALISED RECRUITMENT BOARD [ICRB]
सिविल, वैद्युत, प्रशीतन एवं वातानुकूलन और वास्तुकला में वैज्ञानिक / अभियंता एस.सी.की भर्ती
RECRUITMENT OF SCIENTIST/ENGINEER 'SC' IN CIVIL, ELECTRICAL, REFRIGERATION & A/C AND ARCHITECTURE

इसरो के संघटक केंद्रों में वेतन मैट्रिक्स के स्तर 10 में वैज्ञानिक/अभियंता एस.सी. (समूह क राजपत्रित पद) एवं अ.वि.के अंतर्गत स्वायत्त निकाय (पि.आर.एल) में वेतन मैट्रिक्स के स्तर 10 में वैज्ञानिक/अभियंता एस.सी. (समूह क अराजपत्रित पद) की निम्नलिखित रिक्तियों हेतु प्रतिभावान स्नातकों से निम्नांकित विवरण के अनुसार, ऑन-लाइन आवेदन आमंत्रित किय जाते हैं।

Online applications are invited from meritorious graduates for the following vacancies of Scientist/Engineer 'SC' (Group 'A' Gazetted posts) in Level 10 of Pay Matrix at constituent ISRO Centres and Scientist/Engineer 'SC' (Group 'A' Non-Gazetted posts) in Level 10 of Pay Matrix in an Autonomous Body (PRL) under DOS as detailed below :

पद कोड सं Post Code No.	पद का नाम Name of the Post	कुल रिक्त पदों की संख्या Total number of vacancies
बी.ई./BE004	वैज्ञानिक/अभियंता एस.सी. (सिविल) Scientist/Engineer 'SC' (Civil)	18 (PwBD-01) (पि.डब्ल्यू.बी.डी.-01)
बी.ई./BE005	वैज्ञानिक/अभियंता एस.सी. (वैद्युत) Scientist/Engineer 'SC' (Electrical)	10
बी.ई./BE006	वैज्ञानिक/अभियंता एस.सी. (प्रशीतन एवं वातानुकूलन) Scientist/Engineer 'SC' (Refrigeration & Air Conditioning)	09 (PwBD-01) (पि.डब्ल्यू.बी.डी.-01)
बी.ई./BE007	वैज्ञानिक/अभियंता एस.सी. (वास्तुकला) Scientist/Engineer 'SC' (Architecture)	01
बी.ई./BE004A	वैज्ञानिक/अभियंता एस.सी. (सिविल) - स्वायत्त निकाय Scientist/Engineer 'SC' (Civil) - Autonomous Body	01

2. विस्तृत चयन प्रक्रिया एवं आवेदन भरने हेतु, कृपया इसरो की वेबसाइट www.isro.gov.in देखें। ऑनलाइन आवेदन प्राप्त करने की अंतिम तिथि 14.07.2025 है।
For detailed Selection Procedure and for applying, please visit ISRO website at www.isro.gov.in. Last date for receipt of on-line application is 14.07.2025.

CBC-49101/11/0008/2526

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No.O-330
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II, NAYAGARH
E-Mail: nayagarhrw2@yahoo.in

e-Procurement Notice for Building Works | Identification No. Online Tender/02/RWD-II/2025-26
Rs.7.10 lakh to Rs.40.00 lakhs. 4. Class of Contractor: D, C & B Class of Contractor. 5. Period of Completion: Sl. No. 1 & 2 = 4 Months; Sl. No. 3 = 1 month
6. Other Details.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender online for bidding		Last Date & Time for seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of tender
		From	To		
1	2	3	4	5	6
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division-II, Nayagarh	Online Tender/02/RWD-II/2025-26	26.06.2025 at 11.00 AM	14.07.2025 up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt. 14.07.2025 upto 1.00 P.M.	Dt.15.07.2025 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
OIPR-25144/11/0015/2526 Sd./- Superintending Engineer, R.W. Division-II, Nayagarh

भारत सरकार
कारपोरेट कार्य मंत्रालय
त्वरित कॉर्पोरेट समापन प्रसंस्करण केंद्र (सी-पेस),
आई.आई.सी.ए. बिल्डिंग, 7वीं मंजिल,
प्लॉट P-6,7,8, से.-5,
आई.एम.टी. मानस,
गुडगांव, हरियाणा - 122050
Email: roc.cpace@mca.gov.in

Government of India
Ministry of Corporate Affairs
Centre for Processing Accelerated Corporate Exit (C-PACE),
IICA Building, 7th Floor,
Plot P- 6, 7, 8, Sector-5,
IMT Manesar,
Gurgaon, Haryana - 122050
Email: roc.cpace@mca.gov.in

Form No. STK - 6
PUBLIC NOTICE
[Pursuant to sub-section (2) and sub-section (4) of section 248 of the Companies Act, 2013 and rule 7 of the Companies (Removal of Names of Companies from the Register of Companies) Rules, 2016]
Public Notice: ROC/C-PACE/STK-2/248(2)/2024-25/695 Date: 17/06/2025
Reference: In the matter of striking off or removal of names of (3) companies in the state of Odisha under section 248 of the Companies Act, 2013 in respect of:

S. No.	Work Item	CIN	Company Name
1	AB4127925	U19209OD2023PTC044098	SARALA GREEN FUEL PRIVATE LIMITED
2	AB4286030	U51909OR2021PTC037551	DASH AGRO-TRADING PRIVATE LIMITED
3	AB4325594	U72200OR2012PTC015812	NP2 TECHNOLOGIES & SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS PRIVATE LIMITED

2. Notice is hereby given that the Registrar of Companies had received applications from the above-mentioned companies under section 248(2) of the Companies Act, 2013 for removal of its/their name (s) from the register of companies either on the ground that they have failed to commence business within one year of their incorporation or on the ground that the company/ies is/are not carrying on any business or operation for a period of two immediately preceding financial years and has/have not made any application (s) within such period for obtaining the status of a dormant company under section 455 of the Companies Act, 2013 or the company/ies have obtained the status of dormant company/subscribers to the memorandum have not paid the subscription which they had undertaken to pay at the time of incorporation of a company and a declaration to this effect has not been filed within one hundred and eighty days of its incorporation under subsection (1) of section 10A/ have not been carrying on any business or operations, as revealed after the physical verification carried out under sub-section (9) of section 12, but it/they do not wish to continue its/their registration as companies and have, therefore, requested for removal/strike off of its/their names from the register of companies.
3. Accordingly, the Registrar of Companies proposes to remove or strike off the names of the above-mentioned companies from the Register of Companies.
4. Any person objecting to the proposed removal or striking off name of the companies from the register of companies may send his or her objection to the office address mentioned here above within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice.

Irkan Tirkey
Assistant Registrar
Centre for Processing Accelerated Corporate Exit
CBC 07123/11/0268/2526



When Ambedkar passed away in Delhi, the Congress even refused to conduct his last rites, forcing his wife to take his mortal remains by a plane to Mumbai (then Bombay) for cremation. The Congress leaders also charged his wife for the plane (fare) on which his body was taken

MOHAN YADAV | MP CM

JYOTI'S JUDICIAL CUSTODY EXTENDED

A court Monday extended the judicial custody by 14 days of social media influencer Jyoti Malhotra arrested last month on the suspicion of espionage. The Hisar Police arrested Malhotra, who ran a YouTube channel 'Travel with JO', on the suspicion of espionage May 16. Hailing from Hisar, the Youtuber was arrested at the New Aggarsain Extension and booked under provisions of the Official Secrets Act and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)



of the day quote

Our heritage, legacy and history is so rich that our country was never authoritarian and expansionist. However, there is a kind of uncontrollable over ambition that is leading to the conflict in the world today, and a need has arisen to send a message of world peace and humanism in the world

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

A Major Step Forward. The public hearing for the Greenfield Dolu (sic) Airport project in Cachar district concluded peacefully today - a significant milestone in our journey to transform Barak Valley into a hub of connectivity and development

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

What a scientist needs most is the liberty to try and that space was given to us by the hon'ble Prime Minister

JITENDRA SINGH | MINISTER OF STATE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

SHORT TAKES

Man held for beating daughter to death

Sangli: A 16-year-old girl was bludgeoned to death by her father, a school teacher, for scoring low marks in a test in Maharashtra's Sangli district, police said Monday. The incident occurred at Nelkarani village in Atpadi tehsil Saturday night, an official said. He said that the accused, Dhondiram Bhosale (45), was upset with his daughter Sadhana, a Class 12 student, for scoring low marks in a test. The official said the accused grabbed the wooden handle of a stone grinder used for making flour and attacked the girl with it in the presence of his wife and son.

Two pilgrims dead in landslide

Uttarkashi (U'khand): Two pilgrims were killed after being hit by a landslide that occurred Monday near the 9 Kaichhi Bhairav Mandir on the trek route to the Yamunotri temple in Uttarakhand. The mutilated bodies of the duo were pulled out of the debris, while one pilgrim from Maharashtra was rescued in an injured condition earlier and hospitalised. Efforts are being made to ascertain the identity of the deceased, the emergency operation centre in Uttarkashi said.

Tanker crashes into creek, kills 1

Thane/Mumbai: A tanker crashed through a bridge safety railing on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad Highway Monday after colliding with a container truck and landed into the creek below, leading to the death of its driver, officials said. The incident occurred around noon when the tanker was crossing the old Versova bridge in the Ghodbunder area of Thane. "The tanker was headed towards Thane when it collided with a container truck carrying wooden logs, causing it to veer off the course and plunge into the creek below," a Fire Brigade official said.

Fire breaks out at 6-storey building

Mumbai: A blaze broke out at an office in a six-storey building at Marine Lines in south Mumbai Monday, an official said. The fire brigade and police were involved in the rescue efforts at the Nilkanth Niranjan building on Bhagwandas Tolani Marg, the official said. There were no reports of casualties, he said in a statement.

AAP wins in Gujarat, Punjab; Cong in Kerala



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 23: AAP's Gopal Italia Monday won from Gujarat's Visavadar Assembly constituency and his party also retained Punjab's Ludhiana West seat while the Congress-led UDF wrested Nilambur from the ruling LDF in Kerala, according to results of Assembly bypolls in four states.

The ruling BJP in Gujarat retained the Kadi seat, while the Trinamool Congress maintained its hold on the Kaliganj Assembly seat in West Bengal's Nadia district.

The bypolls in the five constituencies were held June 19. Italia, the former president of the Gujarat unit of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), defeated his nearest rival, BJP candidate Kirit Patel, in Visavadar seat of Junagadh district by a margin of 17,554 votes, according to data shared by the Election Commission.

Despite its near-total dominance in the state, the BJP has not won the Visavadar seat since 2007. The seat fell vacant in December 2023 after the then AAP legislator Bhupendra Bhayani resigned and joined the ruling BJP. Punjab's ruling AAP retained the Ludhiana West Assembly seat with its candidate Sanjeev Arora defeating his nearest rival and Congress candidate Bharat Bhushan Ashu by a margin of 10,637 votes.

Thanking the voters for the

wins, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal called the bypolls a "semi-final to 2027" and a clear sign that voters would reject both the BJP and the Congress. Gujarat and Punjab will face assembly elections in 2027.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said the result is a clear indication that the people of the state are "extremely happy" with the government's work.

BJP's Rajendra Chavda bagged the Kadi seat of Mehsana district in Gujarat, reserved for the Scheduled Caste candidates, by a margin of 39,452 votes over Congress' Ramesh Chavda.

The Kadi seat fell vacant in February following the death of BJP MLA Karsan Solanki. Gujarat Congress president Shaktisinh Gohil resigned from his post, taking moral responsibility for the defeat of the party's candidates in Kadi and Visavadar Assembly constituencies.

In Kerala, the Pinarayi Vijayan-led LDF government received a setback as the opposition Congress-led UDF wrested the Nilambur assembly constituency from it by a margin of 11,077 votes.

It is the fourth byelection defeat for the Marxist party-led Left Democratic Front during the ongoing tenure of the second Pinarayi Vijayan govern-

ment. The LDF earlier lost in Puthuppally, Palakkad and Thrikakara Assembly segments. The ruling CPI(M) said it accepted the people's ruling.

Significantly, it is the first time the LDF has lost a seat held by it to its political rivals. The Nilambur seat fell vacant after LDF-backed independent and two-time MLA P V Anvar resigned, setting off a heated political contest in the forest-fringe constituency.

Shoukath said the outcome was expected. Independent candidate and two-time legislator P V Anvar delivered a strong performance in the Nilambur by-election, surprising both the UDF and the LDF.

For the Congress-led UDF, a win here would provide a much-needed boost ahead of the Assembly polls next year.

In West Bengal, the ruling Trinamool Congress candidate Alifa Ahmed won from the Kaliganj Assembly seat by a landslide margin of 50,049 votes over her nearest BJP rival Ashish Ghosh, bettering the 2021 winning margin of her father Nasiruddin Ahmed, whose demise in February this year necessitated the byelection.

After the final 23rd round of counting, Alifa bagged 1,02,759 votes compared to Ghosh who finished the race with 52,710 votes, according to figures posted by the Election Commission on its website.

ASSEMBLY BYPOLLS

SNIPPETS

AI Express flight returns to Delhi over suspected GPS interference

Jammu: An Air India Express flight from Delhi to Srinagar via Jammu returned to its origin airport before landing here Monday afternoon, officials said. A spokesman of the airline said the flight returned to Delhi as a precautionary measure following a suspected "GPS interference" and an alternative aircraft was later provided to the passengers to reach their destination. The officials said that the flight IX-2564 was supposed to land in Jammu around noon before leaving for Srinagar, but it hovered over the Jammu airport for sometime before its pilot decided to return to Delhi without landing. The weather and the runway were clear, but it seems the pilot could not find an appropriate landing area, they said. "Our Delhi-Jammu flight returned to Delhi as a precautionary measure following a suspected GPS interference incident. Subsequently, an alternative flight was organised to connect guests to Jammu," said an Air India Express spokesperson.

Passengers, crew on AI London-Mumbai flight fall sick

Mumbai: As many as five passengers and two crew members onboard an Air India flight from London fell sick Monday when the aircraft was on its way to Mumbai, the Tata Group-owned airline said. Of the seven, two passengers and two cabin crew, who continued feeling unwell, were taken to the medical room on landing in the city for further examination, Air India said in a statement. They were later discharged, and the incident is being investigated, the airline said. "On board flight AI130 from London Heathrow to Mumbai (June 23) five passengers and two crew reported feeling dizzy and nauseous during different phases of the flight," the airline said without sharing the total number of passengers and crew on board. The flight landed safely in Mumbai where the airline's medical teams were ready to provide immediate medical assistance, it said. "After landing, two passengers and two cabin crew, who continued to feel unwell, were taken to the medical room for further examination and were later discharged," Air India said.



Women plant paddy saplings in a field during the monsoon season, on the outskirts of Jagdalpur, in Bastar district, Chhattisgarh

Metal rods, pins helped in identification of AI crash victims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, June 23: An unexpected detail of surgical implants like metal rods, plates, and pins aided the doctors at the civil hospital in their harrowing task of identifying victims of the doomed Air India flight where many bodies were charred beyond recognition.

BJP MLA Hasmukh Patel, a medical doctor with years of private practice, found himself thrust into the frontlines of this identification effort of the victims.

He was among the first legislators to reach the post-mortem section of the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital, where the remains were being brought.

"Considering the magnitude of the accident, it was evident that identification was going

to be difficult," Dr Patel told PTI. Upon his arrival, seven to eight bodies, all "completely charred," had already reached the post-mortem section. He described the scene, noting that some bodies were so severely burnt that "parts of them were coming off."

He, along with other volunteers, immediately began the process of tagging bodies with cotton tape, marking the sequence of their arrival time on any available body part—head, chest, or arm.

Under normal circumstances, identification is done based on physical traits such as hair or ornaments. However, with the aircraft's internal temperature reaching over 1000 degrees Celsius, such markers were obliterated.

While tagging the victims,



Dr Patel and his team made a crucial observation. "We soon observed that although some bodies were charred, we could make out that some of the victims had undergone knee replacement surgeries and some had (surgical) plates, rods in-

This discovery proved invaluable, and as the families began to pour in, desperate for news, they were asked for basic details about the victims

The unique surgical implants, carefully noted during the initial tagging, became vital clues, significantly aiding in the DNA-matching process

part of the medical team when the 1988 crash of the Indian Airlines flight from Mumbai to Ahmedabad happened, killing 133 people.

As a second-year student at B.J.M Medical College — incidentally, the same site where the June 12 crash victims were brought — he volunteered to tag bodies with his classmates

Plea in SC seeks OBC certificate for kids of single moms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 23: The Supreme Court Monday termed "important" the plea for amending rules to issue OBC certificates to children of single mothers from the same category.

A bench of Justices K V Viswanathan and N Kotiswar Singh said the matter required a detailed hearing. "The present writ petition raises an important issue about issuance of OBC certificate to children of single mother wherein the mother belongs to the OBC," the bench said. The counsel representing the Centre said they had filed their counter affidavit on the plea.

On January 31, the apex court issued notice and sought responses from the Centre and the Delhi government on the plea filed by a Delhi-based woman. "This has to be heard," the bench said Monday, calling it an important issue. The bench referred to a 2012 judgement of the apex court which dealt with the question surrounding the status of a person, one of whose parents belongs to the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes and the other did not belong to either category.

The Centre's counsel said the issue needed deliberation and all states were needed to be made party in the matter.

The Centre's counsel said various factors had to be considered following which guidelines would be formulated. The petitioner said the Other Backward Class (OBC) certificate should be issued on the basis of the certificate held by the single mother.

"Considering the importance of the matter, subject to the order of the Chief Justice of India, the matter be placed for final hearing July 22," the bench said.

The parties were directed to file their written submissions. The bench also asked the parties to examine a scenario where the single mother was in an inter-caste marriage.

Jilted woman techie behind bomb threats in 12 states

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, June 23: A probe into e-mails threatening blasts at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad and different places in 12 states has unravelled a tale of unrequited love and vengeance allegedly unleashed by a woman consultant of an MNC in Chennai to defame a man, leading to her arrest.

After the man who she dreamt would be her husband, married another woman, the accused, identified as Rene Joshilda, decided to avenge the 'rejection' and used deception to wreak havoc in his life. According to police, she used fake email IDs, virtual private networks (VPNs), and the dark web to hide her identity and location. She was arrested by the Ahmedabad cyber crime from her residence in Chennai Saturday.

in 1988. Dr Patel, an MD in Pathology, described both incidents as "heart-rending" and said that despite his medical training, the emotional toll was immense.

A London-bound Air India flight crashed into a hostel complex in the Meghanagar area moments after taking off from the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport on the afternoon of June 12, killing 270 persons, including 241 on board. One passenger survived.

Last week, the hospital authorities said bodies were being handed over to the families only after the DNA match. Officials Sunday said 251 victims have been identified through DNA tests so far, and 245 bodies have been handed over to families.

Our government is committed to development. We had promised 560 guarantees during this election. Already, 235 of these have been fulfilled, and the remaining will be completed in the next three years
SIDDARAMIAHA | KARNATAKA CM

FIRE BREAKS OUT ON 'ANUPAMAA' SHOW SET

A fire broke out on the set of popular television serial 'Anupamaa' at the Film City complex in Mumbai Monday morning, civic officials said. No person was injured in the fire, they said, adding the blaze was doused after about four hours



of the day quote

Yet another case that proves NEET isn't about merit; it's only about the market. That's why we're saying it loud and clear, #NEET is not NEAT, and we have every reason to

Recently, Pakistani terrorists killed 26 people in Pahalagam. In response, the Indian armed forces carried out strikes on terror facilities inside Pakistan and eliminated the terrorists

The most significant aspect of the upcoming Bihar Assembly election, to be held later this year, is that people are already aware and alert against the anarchy and jungle raj that existed under the leadership of Lalu Prasad before 2005

India, US to finalise interim trade deal by July 9: Sources

New Delhi, June 23: India and the US are engaged in negotiations for an interim trade deal and are trying to finalise the pact before July 9, sources said Monday.

For the next round of talks, the Indian team may visit the US soon to discuss both the interim and first tranche or phase of the proposed bilateral trade agreement, they added.

The high tariffs, announced by the US on April 2, were suspended by the Trump administration till July 9. On April 2, the US imposed an additional 26 per cent reciprocal tariff on Indian goods but suspended it for 90 days. However, the 10 per cent baseline tariff imposed by America remains in place. India is seeking full exemption from the additional 26 per cent tariff.

"We are very keen, we are engaged, we are trying. Both sides are trying, but both sides have to be happy," sources said when asked if the two countries are keen to finalise an interim trade agreement by July 9. There are always certain areas which are difficult in a trade agreement, they added.

Agriculture and dairy sectors are "difficult and challenging areas for India. And India has not opened up dairy in any of its free trade pacts," one of the sources said.

When asked if US President Donald Trump's repeated claims on brokering a pause in Operation Sindoor and the rejection of these claims by



THE HIGH TARIFFS, ANNOUNCED BY THE US APRIL 2, WERE SUSPENDED BY THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION TILL JULY 9. ON APRIL 2, THE US IMPOSED AN ADDITIONAL 26 PER CENT RECIPROCAL TARIFF ON INDIAN GOODS BUT SUSPENDED IT FOR 90 DAYS. HOWEVER, THE 10 PER CENT BASELINE TARIFF IMPOSED BY AMERICA REMAINS IN PLACE. INDIA IS SEEKING FULL EXEMPTION FROM THE ADDITIONAL 26 PER CENT TARIFF

sions for labour-intensive sectors like textiles, gems and jewellery, leather goods, garments, plastics, chemicals, shrimp, oil seeds, grapes, and bananas in the proposed trade pact.

When asked if the July 9 deadline is not extended, the sources said the tariffs would come to the April 2 level (26 per cent in the case of India). If it is not extended, India may gain in something and may lose some compared to other countries, but the US will also get affected because of the high tariffs, they said.

There is complete uncertainty over the further extension of tariff suspension beyond July 9. They have fixed a deadline to conclude the first phase by the fall (September-October) this year.

However, dates for the same have not yet been decided. The US team was here from June 5 to June 11 for the talks. The negotiations will continue both virtually and physically in the days to come.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, would have any impact on the trade talks, the official said, "India's interest will always be supreme".

The US wants duty concessions on certain industrial goods, automobiles - especially electric vehicles, wines, petrochemical products, dairy, and agricultural items like apples, tree nuts, and genetically modified crops.

India is seeking duty conces-

Tharoor praises PM again

New Delhi, June 23: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's energy, dynamism and willingness to engage remains a "prime asset" for India on the global stage but deserves greater backing, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor said Monday, in remarks that are likely to irk his party and widen the growing cracks in his ties with its leadership.

Tharoor's praise for the prime minister comes at a time when the Congress has been consistently attacking the Modi government over its foreign policy, alleging that Indian diplomacy is being "shattered" and the country stands "isolated" globally. In an article published in The Hindu, Tharoor said the diplomatic outreach following "Operation Sindoor" was a moment of national resolve and effective communication.

The Prime Minister's Office shared Tharoor's article on X and said, "Lok Sabha MP and former Union Minister Dr. Shashi Tharoor writes- Lessons from Operation Sindoor's global outreach." The BJP took a swipe at the Congress over Tharoor's article and said the

Thiruvananthapuram MP has "exposed" Rahul Gandhi. Reacting to Tharoor's comments, Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) national spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari said on X, "Shashi Tharoor admits that PM Modi's dynamism and global outreach are a strategic advantage for India."

In his article, Tharoor said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi's energy, dynamism and willingness to engage remains a prime asset for India on the global stage but deserves greater backing." Tharoor said the lessons learned - the power of unity, the efficacy of clear communication, the strategic value of soft power and the imperative of sustained public diplomacy - will undoubtedly serve as guiding principles as India navigates an increasingly complex international landscape, leveraging its three Ts - tech, trade and tradition - and always striving for a more just, secure, and prosperous world.

In his article, Tharoor said the aftermath of the April 22, 2025, Pahalagam terror attack and India's resolute response through 'Operation Sindoor' presented a critical juncture for the nation's foreign policy.

POST OF THE DAY

A World War is the most natural outcome in a world ruled by men who equate looking at the mirror and going 'wow' as self-awareness, killing babies as justice, and the decibel levels of their voices as power. Add to that a global shift towards anti-science (and hence anti-compassion) sentiment - probably aided by a denial mentality towards climate crisis - and we are doomed. Only solace, these drunk drivers will put on a mega show that will be bizarrely, morbidly entertaining to watch till our bus goes up in flames.

SHORT TAKES

Government to launch 'NAVYA' programme

New Delhi: The government Monday said it is set to roll out a new pilot programme 'NAVYA' (Nurturing Aspirations through Vocational Training for Young Adolescent Girls) to equip girls aged 16 to 18 with vocational skills, focusing particularly on non-traditional job roles. The initiative will be launched jointly by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) in Uttar Pradesh's Sonbhadra June 24.

Woman molested by 'intoxicated' men

Bangalore: A 25-year-old woman was allegedly molested by a group of four "intoxicated" men on the outskirts of the city, leading to the arrest of one of the accused, police said Monday. They added that the incident occurred in Yellamma Layout near Myslasandra Road in Anekal taluk Sunday at around 5 pm. A video of the alleged incident has now surfaced online. In her complaint, the woman alleged that she was going to a shop to purchase some essentials when she spotted a group of men fighting among themselves.

Nitish inaugurates bridge over Ganges

Patna: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Monday inaugurated a six-lane bridge over the Ganges, connecting state capital Patna with Raghohpur, a pocket borough of his arch rival, RJD president Lalu Prasad. Kumar inaugurated the 4.57 km-long bridge by cutting a ribbon near Kachchi Dargah, a mosque situated in the eastern fringes of the city.

Teacher arrested for sexually harassing 24 girls in Himachal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla/Nahan, June 23: A teacher has been arrested for allegedly sexually harassing 24 girl students at a government school in Sirmaur district of Himachal Pradesh, officials said Monday.

The mathematics teacher has been remanded in police custody for three days and suspended from service, they said. The accused was arrested after the students of classes VIII to X complained to the school principal about the harassment. The school authorities informed the police which took him into custody. The accused was produced in a local court Sunday evening and remanded to three days police custody.

Acting swiftly, the education department has placed the accused trained graduate teacher (TGT) under suspension with immediate effect. Terming it a "serious and sensitive" issue, the Director of School Education has asked the Deputy Director of Elementary Education, Sirmaur, to conduct a preliminary inquiry into this matter immediately. In a letter, the Director asked him to visit the school personally, record the version of the students, teachers and other staff present in the school, and submit a report to his office within a week.

Meanwhile, an outfit - Akhil Bhartiya Mahila Janvadi Samiti - took out a protest march Monday, alleging rising incidents of sexual assaults on school girls by teachers in the district. It submitted a memorandum to the state government through the Deputy Commissioner of Sirmour demanding quick and strict action against such offenders.

Doval meets Chinese foreign minister Wang

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 23: In an oblique reference to Pakistan's support to cross-border terrorist activities, NSA Ajit Doval Monday emphasised the need to counter terrorism in all its forms for regional peace and stability during a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing.

Doval's call for counter-terrorism terrorism comes nearly a month-and-a-half after India carried out precision strikes on nine terror infrastructures in Pakistani territories early May 7 in response to the horrific Pahalagam terrorist attack that killed 26 civilians.

NSA Doval is visiting China to attend a conclave of top national security officials of the member nations of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), an influential regional grouping focused on security related issues. Doval and Wang also deliberated on various aspects of India-China relations amid efforts by the two sides to rebuild the ties that came under severe strain following the eastern Ladakh border standoff.

Both sides reviewed recent developments in India-China relations and underscored the need to promote the overall development of the ties, including by fostering greater people to people engagement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. "The NSA also emphasised the need to counter terrorism in all its forms and manifestations to maintain overall peace and stability in the region," it said. The remarks are also seen as an indirect message



to China to put pressure on its all-weather ally Pakistan to take action against terror outfits operating from its soil.

Wang noted that China-India relations have made some positive progress and it is essential that both sides further enhance communication, build mutual trust, and work toward resolving practical issues, according to Chinese envoy to India Xu Feihong. "Only when the dragon and elephant dance together can there be a win-win outcome. China and India should properly handle sensitive issues and maintain peace and tranquillity in the border regions," Xu said in a social media post. "Doval said that India is willing to strengthen collaboration with China in multilateral fields and fully supports China's role as the rotating presidency of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in hosting a successful summit," the envoy said.



Youngsters play in a stream during a hot day, on the outskirts of Srinagar

India extends airspace ban for Pakistan airlines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 23: India Monday extended the closure of its airspace for flights operated by Pakistan airlines by another month till July 24.

The Indian airspace has been closed for planes operated, owned or leased by Pakistan airlines and operators, including military flights, since April 30. The ban was imposed as part of various measures taken by the government against Pakistan in the wake of the Pahalagam terror attack that killed 26 people April 22.

Initially, the ban was to end May 24 and was subsequently extended till June 24. On Monday, a fresh NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) was issued, extending the closure by one more month till July 24, 2025.

As per the NOTAM, Indian airspace will not be available for Pakistan-registered aircraft and aircraft operated, owned or leased by Pakistan airlines and operators, including military flights.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has also extended by one month the closure of its airspace for Indian aircraft till July 24. On April 24, Pakistan banned its airspace for India until May 24, after the Indian government suspended the Indus Water Treaty with Pakistan. The airspace curf was extended till June 24. On April 23, a day after the Pahalagam attack, India announced a raft of punitive measures against Pakistan, including suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, shutting down of the only operational land border crossing at Attari and downgrading of diplomatic ties in view of cross-border links to the massacre.



Asia warming twice as fast as global average: WMO

THE SEA SURFACE IN ASIA IS ALSO WARMING AT NEARLY DOUBLE THE GLOBAL AVERAGE OVER THE PAST DECADES, SAID THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION'S "STATE OF THE CLIMATE IN ASIA IN 2024" REPORT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 23: Asia, the largest continent in the world with around 60 per cent of the global population, is now warming nearly twice as fast as the global average, according to a report released Monday.

The sea surface in Asia is also warming at nearly double the global average over the past decades, said the World Meteorological Organization's "State of the Climate in Asia in 2024" report.

"In the two most recent sub-periods (1961-1990 and 1991-2024), Asia, the continent with the largest land mass, extending to the Arctic, has warmed faster than the global land and ocean average," the report said.

In 2024, the average temperature in Asia was about 1.04 de-



grees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average, making it either the warmest or second warmest year on record, depending on the dataset. Many parts of the region saw extreme heat events this year.

Prolonged heatwaves hit

East Asia from April to November. Japan, the Republic of Korea and China broke monthly average temperature records repeatedly. India reported nearly 48,000 cases of heatstroke and 159 deaths due to extreme heat in 2024.

Sea levels rose faster than the global average on both the Pacific and Indian Ocean sides of Asia, increasing risks for low-lying coastal areas, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said. Reduced winter snowfall and extreme summer heat severely affected glaciers.

In the central Himalayas and Tian Shan, 23 out of 24 glaciers lost mass. This has increased the risk of disasters like glacial lake outburst floods and landslides and poses a long-term threat to water security.

Extreme rainfall caused severe damage and heavy loss of life in several countries, while tropical cyclones brought destruction. Droughts caused major economic and agricultural losses.

"The State of the Climate in Asia report highlights the changes in key climate indicators such as surface temperature, glacier mass and sea level, which will have major repercussions for societies, economies and ecosystems in the region. Extreme weather is already exacting an unacceptably high toll," said WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo.

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) Director General Pema Gyamtsho said, "Given Asia's population and economic exposure to the impacts of temperature rise, it is an injustice that the devastating consequences of inaction on climate goals are hitting some of the most vulnerable communities and ecosystems on Earth."



This is an absolutely unprovoked aggression against Iran, has no basis or justification
VLADIMIR PUTIN | PRESIDENT, RUSSIA

STARMER, ZELENSKIY MEET IN LONDON

Volodymyr Zelenskiy and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced a new defence co-production initiative Monday during a short visit by the Ukrainian president to London to discuss his country's defence against Russia



international

Europe scrambles to revive diplomacy

The crisis topped the agenda for European Union foreign ministers meeting in Brussels, where diplomats agonized about the potential for Iranian retaliation to spark a wider war and global economic instability

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, June 23: European nations worked Monday to keep diplomatic efforts to curb the Israel-Iran war alive as the two countries traded strikes following the United States' weekend attack on Iran's nuclear programme.

Calls for Tehran to enter talks with Washington appeared to fall on deaf ears as it reached out to ally Russia for support.

The crisis topped the agenda for European Union foreign ministers meeting in Brussels, where diplomats agonized about the potential for Iranian retaliation to spark a wider war and global economic instability.

"The concerns of retaliation and this war escalating are huge," said the bloc's foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas.

Kallas said any attempt by Iran to close the Strait of Hormuz, a key route for global shipping, would be "extremely dangerous and not good for anybody."

EUROPE SEEKS MORE TALKS

Along with the EU, the "E3" of Britain, France and Germany have led efforts to find a diplomatic solution, holding a tense seven-hour meeting in Geneva Friday with Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. A day after those talks ended with a vague promise to "meet again in the future," US

bombers struck three Iranian nuclear and military sites.

No further E3 talks with Iran are currently planned, a European diplomatic official said on condition of anonymity to discuss the negotiations.

Still, UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy urged Iran to meet the E3 again, and to open negotiations with the United States. Planned US-Iran talks in Oman were scuttled after Israel began attacking Iran's nuclear facilities June 13. Iran has since ruled out negotiating while it is under attack.

"Take the off-ramp, dial this thing down and negotiate with the United States immediately and seriously," said Lammy, who spoke to both Araghchi and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio Sunday. German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl said Europe had a role to play, but that "a real precondition for a settlement to the conflict is that Iran be ready to negotiate directly with the US."

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani told reporters in Brussels that he was proposing a meeting between the United States and Iran in Rome.

IRAN'S ENVOY VISITS RUSSIA

It was Moscow that Iran reached out to Monday, though, sending Araghchi to meet President Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin. Putin condemned the



European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas waits for a standup space as she arrives for a meeting of EU foreign ministers at the European Council building in Brussels

United States' "unprovoked aggression" against Iran and said Russia would help the Iranian people. Putin said he saw the visit as a chance to explore "how we can get out of today's situation." Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia had offered to mediate.

European diplomatic efforts were complicated by a lack of foreknowledge of the Trump administration's moves. Some countries had no advance notice of the strikes. Britain was notified, but only shortly before bombs fell. Another hurdle was Trump's post on social media late Sunday musing about the potential for "regime change" in Iran, despite US officials'

Tankers U-turn, zig-zag, pause around Strait of Hormuz

Singapore/London: At least two supertankers made U-turns near the Strait of Hormuz following US military strikes on Iran, shiptracking data shows, as more than a week of violence in the region prompts vessels to speed, pause, or alter their journeys. Washington's decision to join Israel's attacks on Iran has stoked fears that Iran could retaliate by closing the strait between Iran and Oman through which around 20% of global oil and gas demand flows. That has spurred forecasts of oil surging to \$100 a barrel. Both Brent and West Texas Intermediate crude hit fresh five-month highs Monday in choppy trade as investors weighed the potential risks to supply. Shipping rates for supertankers, which can carry 2 million barrels of oil, have also soared, more than doubling in a week to over \$60,000 a day, freight data shows. The Coswisdom Lake, a very large crude carrier supertanker, reached the strait Sunday before making a U-turn and heading south, Kpler and LSEG data showed. It turned back again Monday, resuming its journey towards the port of Zirku in the United Arab Emirates. The South Loyalty, also a VLCC, made a similar U-turn and remained outside the strait Monday, LSEG data showed. It was scheduled to load crude from Iraq's Basra terminal, according to Kpler data and two shipping sources. The Coswisdom Lake was scheduled to load crude at Zirku for delivery to China. It was chartered by Unipek, a trading arm of China's state-run Sinopec, LSEG and Kpler data showed. Sinopec did not respond to a request for immediate comment.

insistence that Washington is not seeking to change the government in Tehran.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot stressed Monday that "we reject all attempts to

organise a change of regime by force." "It would be illusory and dangerous to think that such a

SHORT TAKES

Bangladesh's ex-election commission chief held

Dhaka: Bangladesh's former chief election commissioner KM Nurul Huda has been arrested on charges of manipulating elections during his tenure, police said. Dhaka metropolitan police's Deputy Commissioner Mohidul Islam Sunday said Huda was arrested in the case filed by former prime minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) against the former election commission chief and 18 others, including deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

Russian attacks on Kyiv area kill 10

Kyiv: Waves of Russian drones and missiles in and around Kyiv overnight killed 10 people including one child, lit up the night sky with fires in residential areas and damaged the entrance to a metro station bomb shelter, Ukrainian officials said Monday. Rescue workers pulled bodies from the rubble of an apartment block in Kyiv's busy Shevchenkiy district, less than a kilometre from the US embassy. At least nine people died in the district, the interior ministry said. At least 34 people including four children were wounded in the attacks on Kyiv, the emergency services said. In a separate missile attack on the Ukrainian Black Sea region of Odesa around midday Monday, at least two people were killed and 12 wounded, local governor Oleh Kiper said.

EU, Canada to deepen ties with security pact

Brussels: The European Union hosts Canada for a summit Monday designed to deepen their already close ties as both face increased geopolitical threats, including a more hostile US president, Russia and Middle East instability. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Antonio Costa, who chairs EU summits, will greet Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney for a two-hour meeting in Brussels, a day before a NATO summit in the Hague.

PAK WILL GO TO WAR: BHUTTO

Bilawal, in a speech in parliament, rejected the Indian decision on IWT to suspend the agreement and threatened to get Pakistan's share of water

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, June 23: Pakistan's former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari Monday said his country will go to war if India denies Islamabad its fair share of water under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT).

India put in abeyance the 1960 agreement soon after the April 22 Pahalgam terrorist attack that killed 26 people. Home Minister Amit Shah last week announced to never restore the historic accord.

Bilawal's comments came two days after Pakistan's Foreign Ministry criticised Shah's "brazen disregard" for international agreements.

Bilawal, in a speech in parliament, rejected the Indian decision to suspend the agreement and threatened to get Pakistan's share of water.

"India has two options: share water fairly, or we will deliver water to us from all six rivers," he said referring to the six rivers of the Indus basin.

He said that the IWT was still in vogue as the agreement cannot be held in abeyance.

"The attack on Sindhu (Indus



India has two options: share water fairly, or we will deliver water to us from all six rivers
BILAWAL BHUTTO-ZARDARI | FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER, PAKISTAN

River) and India's claim that the IWT has ended and it's in abeyance. Firstly, this is illegal, as the IWT is not in abeyance, it is binding on Pakistan and India, but the threat itself of stopping water is illegal according to the UN charter," he said.

Bilawal, who is head of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), also threatened that if India decides to follow through on the

India put in abeyance the 1960 agreement soon after the April 22 Pahalgam terrorist attack that killed 26 people

threat, "we will have to wage war again". The former foreign minister also highlighted the importance of talks and cooperation, especially in counter-terrorism efforts.

"If India and Pakistan refuse to talk, and if there is no coordination on terrorism, then violence will only intensify in both countries," he said.

Bilawal also accused India of "weaponising terrorism for political purposes".

He claimed that during his diplomatic visits to the UK and European nations as foreign minister, it was evident that India had lobbied hard to reverse Pakistan's progress on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) front.

"At a time when Pakistan had successfully moved from

the FATF grey list to the white list, India made every effort to drag us back to the grey list using false narratives and diplomatic pressure," he claimed.

Pak extends airspace ban for Indian aircraft

Pakistan authorities Monday announced to extend the airspace ban on Indian aircraft for another month. The ban was initially imposed April 23 for one month in the wake of tension between the two countries following the Pahalgam terrorist attack that killed at least 26 people. Later, it was extended for another month May 23, when ties had deteriorated due to the four day conflict as India launched Operation Sindoor May 7 and destroyed terror infrastructure in territories controlled by Pakistan. According to a NOTAM, or Notice to Airmen, issued by the Pakistan Airports Authority, the ban has been extended from June 23 to July 23. "Pakistan airspace not available for Indian registered aircraft and aircraft operated/owned or leased by Indian airlines/operators including military flights," it said.

Suicide bomber kills 25 at Church in Syria

Mideast governments condemn suicide bombing of Syrian church as death toll rises to 25

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dweil'a (Syria), June 23: A suicide bomber in Syria opened fire then detonated an explosive vest inside a Greek Orthodox Church filled with people praying Sunday, killing at least 25 and wounding 63 others, state media reported.

The attack took place in Dweil'a on the outskirts of Damascus inside the Mar Elias Church, according to state media SANA, citing the Health Ministry for the toll of dead and wounded. Britain-based war monitor the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said there were at least 19 people killed and dozens wounded, but did not give exact numbers. Some local media reported that children were among the casualties.

The attack on the church was the first of its kind in Syria in years, and comes as Damascus under its de facto Islamist rule is trying to win the support of minorities. As President



Ahmad al-Sharaa struggles to exert authority across the country, there have been concerns about the presence of sleeper cells of extremist groups in the war-torn country.

No group immediately claimed responsibility Sunday. Syrian Interior Ministry spokesman Noureddine Al-Baba said in a news conference that their preliminary investigation points to the extremist Islamic State group. The ministry said one gunman entered the church, fired at the people there before detonating himself with an explosives vest, echoing some witness testimonies.

"The security of places of worship is a red line," he said, adding that IS and remaining members of the ousted Assad government are trying to destabilise Syria.

Prez Lee picks SK's first civilian defence chief in 64 years

Since a 1961 coup that brought military dictator Park Chung-hee to power, all of South Korea's defence ministers have come from the military — a trend that continued even after the country's democratization in the late 1980s

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, June 23: South Korean President Lee Jae Myung nominated a five-term liberal lawmaker as defence minister Monday, breaking with a

tradition of appointing retired military generals.

The announcement came as several prominent former defence officials, including ex-Defence Minister Kim Yong Hyun, face high-profile criminal trials over their roles in carrying out martial law last year under then-President Yoon Suk Yeol, who was indicted on rebellion charges and removed from office.

Ahn Gyu-back, a lawmaker from Lee's Democratic Party, has served on the National Assembly's defence committee and chaired a legislative panel that investigated the circumstances surrounding Yoon's martial law decree. Yoon's authoritarian move



involved deploying hundreds of heavily armed troops to the National Assembly and election commission offices in what prosecutors described as

an illegal attempt to shut down the legislature and arrest political opponents and election officials.

That sparked calls to

strengthen civilian control over the military, and Lee promised during his election campaign to appoint a defence minister with a civilian background.

Since a 1961 coup that brought military dictator Park Chung-hee to power, all of South Korea's defence ministers have come from the military — a trend that continued even after the country's democratization in the late 1980s.

While Ahn will face a legislative hearing, the process is likely to be a formality, since the Democrats hold a comfortable majority in the National Assembly and legislative consent isn't required for Lee to appoint him. Among Cabinet appointments, Lee only needs

legislative consent for prime minister, Seoul's nominal No. 2 job.

"As the first civilian Minister of National Defence in 64 years, he will be responsible for leading and overseeing the transformation of the military after its mobilisation in martial law," Kang Hoon-sik, Lee's chief of staff, said in a briefing.

Ahn was among 11 ministers nominated by Lee Monday, with longtime diplomat Cho Hyun selected as foreign minister and five-term lawmaker Chung Dong-young returning for another stint as unification minister — a position he held from 2004 to 2005 as Seoul's point man for relations with North Korea.



New export orders continued to fuel private sector business activity, especially in manufacturing
PRANJUL BHANDARI | CHIEF INDIA ECONOMIST, HSBC

HINDUSTAN COPPER WELCOMES CHILE'S CODELCO TEAM

Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL) welcomed a delegation from CODELCO (Corporación Nacional Del Cobre), the State-owned Copper mining company of Chile, in New Delhi, early Monday. In a mission first-of-its-kind in India, experts from the Chilean Copper major will be visiting all HCL units and offices across the country to assess various mining and operational aspects. Their three-week-long visit aims to explore opportunities for knowledge sharing and value addition



of the day quote

ULI is envisioned as a DPI for credit delivery designed to integrate technology, data, and policy into one seamless platform
M NAGARAJU | FINANCIAL SERVICES SECRETARY

The domestic market remains the company's biggest opportunity and we have clear plans in place to continue the growth momentum
ASHER O | MD, MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS

Around 1,00,000 tonnes of basmati rice meant for Iran is currently stuck at Indian ports, with Iran accounting for 18-20 per cent of India's total basmati rice exports
SATISH GOYAL | PRESIDENT, AIRA

Impact of rate cut limited

THE MPC DELIVERED A LARGER-THAN-EXPECTED 50-BP RATE CUT IN JUNE TO BOLSTER ECONOMIC GROWTH AS INFLATION REMAINED BELOW TARGET

REUTERS

Mumbai, June 23: The immediate incremental impact of an additional 25 basis-point rate cut delivered earlier this month by the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) monetary policy committee may be relatively limited, external member Saugata Bhattacharya told Monday.

The MPC delivered a larger-than-expected 50-bp rate cut in June to bolster economic growth as inflation remained below target.

"Interest rates transmission also works through a transfer of disposable incomes across various economic stakeholders," Bhattacharya, the only member to vote for a 25-bp rate cut said while sharing his personal views.

He said the most crucial shift will be to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) and home loan borrowers from retail depositors.

"These shifts are likely to accumulate over the course of the year. How the relative marginal propensities to consume and save play out will determine inter alia changes to the credit multiplier and hence deposit and loan growth," he added.

Bhattacharya said inflation is likely to align with the RBI's four per cent target on a durable basis in the coming quarters.

"Although the overall picture remains mixed, many high-frequency economic indicators also suggest continuing growth resilience," he said, adding



There may be space for more "good news" rate cuts, but I prefer a more gradual and calibrated path over this easing cycle
SAUGATA BHATTACHARYA | EXTERNAL MEMBER, RBI MPC

that the RBI's forecast of GDP growth at 6.5% for fiscal year 2026 precluded the need for a deeper rate cut given current global uncertainty.

There may be space for more "good news" rate cuts, but Bhattacharya said he would "prefer a more gradual and calibrated path over this easing cycle".

The RBI's June policy actions should be seen as a step towards propelling growth to a higher aspirational trajectory, Governor Sanjay Malhotra had said in a post-policy briefing, adding that the country would like to achieve seven per cent to eight

per cent growth. Bhattacharya said he would like to assess the effects on aggregate demand from the government's policy initiatives, particularly income tax cuts, as well as price and income support on demand revival.

Bringing short-term market rates and overnight rates a little closer to the floor of the monetary policy corridor is probably needed at this point to accelerate the transmission of the policy rate into bank lending and deposit rates, Bhattacharya said.

Once transmission begins to align with the intended easing cycle, liquidity can then be calibrated, which the RBI has done in the past through various instruments to bring overnight rates closer to the policy rate, he added.

Markets slump on Middle East tensions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 23: Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled Monday, as intensifying tensions in the Middle East after US bombed three major nuclear sites in Iran unnerved investors.

30-share index recovered some lost ground to close with a loss of 511.38 points or 0.62 per cent at 81,896.79. The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 140.50 points or 0.56 per cent to 24,971.90.

From the Sensex pack, HCL Tech, Infosys, Larsen & Toubro, Mahindra & Mahindra, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, Tata Consultancy Services and Maruti were the biggest laggards.

In contrast, Trent, Bharat Electronics, Bajaj Finance and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the gainers.

The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.57 per cent, and the midcap index rose 0.20 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, BSE Focused IT lost 1.48 per cent; IT tanked 1.46 per cent, teck (1.10 per cent), auto (0.88 per cent), FMCG (0.62 per cent), telecommunication (0.50 per cent) and bankex (0.38 per cent).

Capital Goods jumped 0.94 per cent, services (0.73 per cent), metal (0.71 per cent), commodities (0.46 per cent) and consumer durables (0.38 per cent).

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi and Japan's Nikkei 225 index settled lower.

European markets were trading lower in mid-session. US markets ended mostly lower Friday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.49 per cent to \$77.39 a barrel.

RARE EARTH RARITY

Major carmakers call HQs amid auto stock crunch

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 23: Auto sector is facing a critical time because auto giants like Maruti Suzuki India, Hyundai Motor India and Kia India are seeking assistance from their respective parent companies as the industry is facing supply-side challenges related to rare earth magnets.

The shortage of rare earth magnets, which are widely used in the components of electric vehicle (EV), hybrid and internal combustion engine (ICE) models, will impact vehicle production.

According to industry experts, the inventories may run dry by July 2025 due to export restrictions by China. With the production plan of the upcoming Maruti Suzuki's e Vitara taking a hit amid the rare earth magnet crisis. However, the carmaker is trying their best to tackle the issue with minimum damage.

The e Vitara is not only the maiden EV of Maruti but also that of Suzuki. It will be manufactured at the Gujarat facility of India's largest carmaker with the initial target set at around 67,000 units for FY26.

While the e Vitara sales will start in India before the end of September 2025, its production target has been reduced from the earlier 26,000-27,000 units in the first half of FY26 to below 10,000 units due to the shortage of rare earth magnets.

On the other hand, India is also promoting and finding solu-



tion to make the nation; self-reliant and looking at non-China alternatives for rare earth magnets, including suppliers from Japan and Australia.

China, which dominates the rare earth magnet supply chain with 70% of the total mining and almost 90 per cent processing, imposed export curbs on seven rare earth elements, including Terbium, Scandium, Samarium, Dysprosium, Yttrium, Gadolinium and Lutetium, and finished magnets, including Neodymium-Iron-Boron (NdFeB), in April 2025. The fresh guidelines require end-use certification to ensure their non-military use.

Rare earth magnets form an integral part of traction motors like permanent magnet synchronous motors (PMSMs), which are employed by EVs due to their efficiency, high and smooth torque, and a longer lifespan. Also, EV, hybrid and ICE models require them in heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) units, electric power steering (EPS), regenerative braking, electronic sensors and audio components, among others.

SHORT TAKES

L&T lists ESG bonds on NSE

New Delhi: Engineering and construction conglomerate Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Monday announced the listing of the country's first environmental, social and governance bonds on the NSE, raising Rs 500 crore through debentures. In a filing to BSE, the company said it "has listed India's first ESG bonds on the National Stock Exchange (NSE), setting a precedent for a greener and more sustainable financial future in India". The company said it has raised Rs 500 crore through non-convertible debentures (NCD) at a coupon rate of 6.35 per cent.

UPS' cut-off date extends

New Delhi: The finance ministry Monday extended the cut-off date for exercising option by government employees under Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) by three months till September 30. Earlier, the eligible employees including the present ones, retirees, and spouses of deceased retirees, were given three-month time up to June 30 to exercise their option under the scheme. UPS is applicable to the central government employees who are covered under the National Pension System (NPS) and who choose this option under the NPS, which came into effect on January 1, 2004.

GAIL to invest in pipeline capacity

New Delhi: State-owned gas utility GAIL (India) Ltd Monday said it will invest Rs 844 crore in expanding Dahej-Uran-Dabhol-Panvel natural gas pipeline capacity to meet increased energy demand. The DUPL-DPPL network, the name Dahej-Uran-Dabhol-Panvel natural gas pipeline network is referred to, currently has 19.9 million standard cubic metres per day capacity. This is being expanded to 22.5 Million Metric Standard Cubic Meters per Day (MMSCMD), said in a stock exchange filing. GAIL said the pipeline capacity will be added in three years.

PhonePe ropes in bankers for IPO

New Delhi: Country's biggest fintech firm PhonePe has roped in bankers -- Kotak Mahindra Capital, JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup and Morgan Stanley -- for launching its initial public offering, sources aware of the development said. The Walmart group firm had last raised Rs 7,021 crore (around \$850 million) at a pre-money valuation of \$12 billion (about Rs 1 lakh crore) from investors like General Atlantic, Walmart, Ribbit Capital, TVS Capital Funds, and Tiger Global in the financial year 2023.

BIZ BUZZ

JSW Steel's Nuagaon Mine gets Kalinga Environmental Excellence Award 2024



BHUBANESWAR: JSW Steel's Nuagaon Mine in Odisha has been awarded with the prestigious Kalinga Environmental Excellence National Award 2024, attaining a 4-star rating in acknowledgment of its consistent commitment to ecological sustainability and environmental preservation. The recognition was presented during the 10th National Conclave on Environment, Energy & Climate Change June 21, 2025 in Bhubaneswar. The award was received by Ram Shankar Sharma, Head of Mines Operations and Projects at JSW Steel Odisha, accompanied by the company's environment team. This accolade highlights the mine's outstanding adherence to responsible mining practices, environmental regulations, and sustainable development principles. The conclave brought together esteemed policymakers, industry leaders, and environmental scholars to discuss pressing environmental challenges and innovative solutions. Focused on the theme "Actions to End Plastic Pollution Globally," the event included sessions on net-zero emissions, decarbonization, regulatory frameworks, and energy efficiency. Among the dignitaries in attendance were Uma Nanduri, IFS (Member Secretary, Odisha Pollution Control Board), Nihar Ranjan Sahoo (Chief Environmental Engineer, SPCB), PK Merkap, IFS (Retd), Jaya Krushna Panigrahi (Working President, Orissa Environmental Society), and Joyce Kakuramatsi Kikafunda from Uganda, among others. The conclave also spotlighted outstanding initiatives in corporate social responsibility, energy conservation, and environmental governance by participating organisations.

EPTA urges govt to extend ISTS charges waiver

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 23: Apex industry body Electric Power Transmission Association (EPTA) Monday urged the government to safeguard the viability of around 30 GW clean energy projects facing risks from delays beyond the control of developers by extending the Inter-State Transmission System (ISTS) charges waiver till March 2026.

Investments of about Rs 2 lakh crore will be impacted if a relief is not given to the players in the form of extension in the waiver, GP Upadhyaya, Director General of EPTA said. The government had announced a waiver for solar and wind projects to be set up and commissioned by June 30, 2025.

Upadhyaya said "around 30 GW green capacities are under advance stages of development across various states. These projects are unlikely to be set up before June this year on account of multiple reasons". The capacity has been de-



laid due to reasons beyond power companies' control and they may move to CERC (Central Electricity Regulatory Commission) for solutions that may further delay in commissioning of these projects spread over states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra among others.

In some places there is issue of land availability, local issues, he said on reasons for delay in projects.

On a solution, the DG said, "We are not seeking a blanket extension. We are only proposing that the projects which have achieved key development

milestones, such as securing financial closure, acquiring at least 50 per cent of required land, and placing key equipment orders, should be granted a 6-9 month window to avail the ISTS waiver benefits."

As another alternative, Upadhyaya suggested recommended a more gradual phase-out of the waiver, starting with a 10 per cent withdrawal every year instead of the proposed 25 per cent.

Such a calibrated approach would significantly ease the impact of the waiver's withdrawal on the cost of green power, thereby allowing RE power to stay competitive and attract more investments in this key sector.

The industry is of the view that the proposed withdrawal at 25 per cent per year will disrupt ongoing projects, jeopardise investments, and undermine cost competitiveness, especially for commercial and industrial (C&I) consumers who already pay among the highest electricity tariffs globally, he said.

Iran, Israel conflict may have short-term impact

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 23: The ongoing conflict between Iran and Israel may have a short-term impact on demand and logistics, particularly in the Gulf region, which serves as a crucial hub for Indian exports, the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) said Monday.

FIEO said that the conflict may also lead to increased shipping costs, longer transit times, and hike in marine insurance premiums.

The organisation anticipates a short-term impact on demand and logistics in the Gulf region due to the Iran-Israel conflict, potentially increasing shipping costs and transit times. While crude oil price volatility poses challenges, India's diversified energy strategy and proactive monetary policy offer resilience.

The Israel-Iran conflict has escalated significantly in recent weeks, with both sides exchanging heavy strikes and US becoming directly involved in the hostilities.

"We do anticipate some short-term impact on demand and logistics, particularly in the Gulf region, which serves as a crucial hub for Indian exports. Increased shipping costs, longer transit times, and rising marine insurance premiums may add pressure, especially in price-sensitive sectors," FIEO President SC Ralhan said.

He said that crude oil price volatility can influence both inflation and logistics costs.

But India's diversified energy procurement strategy and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) proactive stance help maintain liquidity and macroeconomic stability, Ralhan added.

"Overall, while there are temporary headwinds, we see this as an opportunity for Indian exporters to explore alternate routes, strengthen regional partnerships, and consolidate India's role as a reliable trade partner in uncertain times," he said.

While geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, including the ongoing conflict, pose certain challenges to global trade dynamics, India's export sector remains resilient and adaptive.

Biotech sector grows nearly fivefold in past decade

Biotechnology is no longer a fringe discipline; it's now a strategic driver for India's economic and health priorities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 23: India's biotechnology sector has expanded rapidly in the past decade, with its bioeconomy growing from \$35.5 billion in 2014 to \$165.7 billion in 2024, according to Rajesh S Gokhale, Secretary, and Department of Biotechnology (DBT).

He said the sector is now aiming for a \$300 billion target by 2030, as scientific advances begin to translate into industrial and public health gains.

"Biotechnology is no longer a fringe discipline; it's now a strategic driver for India's economic and health priorities," Gokhale said at a press conference highlighting 11 years of DBT's achievements.

Among the standout initiatives is GenomeIndia, a nationwide effort to sequence the genomes of 10,000 individuals

from 99 population groups, he said. The data, released earlier this year, is expected to inform personalised medicine and help researchers develop diagnostics tailored to Indian populations.

Gokhale also highlighted India's first in-human gene therapy trial using a lentiviral vector for Severe Hemophilia A. India's vaccine response, Gokhale said, demonstrated the capacity of the DBT-backed innovation ecosystem.

Under "Mission COVID Suraksha", five COVID-19 vaccines developed with DBT support received emergency approvals, including GEMCO-VAC-19, the world's first thermostable mRNA vaccine.

Other products include the intranasal COVID-19 vaccine and CERVAVAC, India's first indigenous quadrivalent HPV vaccine, now part of the Nation-



al Immunization Programme, according to document shared at the briefing.

Indian scientists contributed to decoding the complex genome of bread wheat, a global staple crop, and published a reference genome with 94 per cent coverage. Other research showed how Mycobacterium

tuberculosis can infect liver cells and undermine TB treatment efficacy, while a study on taurine levels suggested amino acid may influence aging.

Gokhale said India's biotech startup landscape has changed dramatically, with over 10,000 startups now in the sector, up from a few hundred a decade

Pant, Rahul slam stunning centuries

Coventry takes over as IOC chief

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

India 364 all out after Pant, Rahul tons; England 21 without loss chasing 371 for win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Leeds, June 23: Generational talent Rishabh Pant indulged in self-reproach before becoming only the second wicketkeeper in the game's history to score hundreds in both innings of a Test, helping India set England a tricky 371-run target in the series opener here Monday.

Pant, the team's unflappable maverick with innate confidence in his ability to dominate bowling attacks anywhere in the world, struck 118 off 140 balls and added 195 runs for the fourth wicket with the elegant KL Rahul, who constructed a hundred of his own on the fourth and penultimate day of the first Test.

However, India's batting crumbled spectacularly for a second time in three days after the dismissal of the two second-innings centuries, as they were all out for 364 on a riveting day.

Ben Duckett (9 batting) and Zak Crawley (12 batting) reduced the target to 350 after England reached 21 for no loss at stumps. India lost most of their wickets in the final session.

This was after the iconic 'Hey Jude' by The Beatles played softly in the background as Pant closed in on his eighth Test ton, eventually getting there with a single off 130 balls to join Zimbabwe legend Andy Flower as the only stumpers to achieve a remarkable feat.

Having curbed his natural instinct after attempting a flashy shot in the first session, Pant bid his time and switched gears post lunch to reach his second century in the match, following his magnificent 134 in the first innings.

He embarked on an adventure straightaway, but having endured few nervy moments, Pant exhibited a tenacity to stay put at the crease, before cutting loose to dominate the bowlers, who seemed to have run out of ideas in the face of his dazzling display.

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Pant's landmark ton

RISHABH PANT ETCHED HIS NAME IN THE RECORD BOOKS YET AGAIN, BECOMING THE FIRST INDIAN WICKETKEEPER TO SCORE CENTURIES IN BOTH INNINGS OF A TEST MATCH

PANT, WHO HAD SCORED A FLUENT 134 IN THE FIRST INNINGS, FOLLOWED IT UP WITH ANOTHER MASTERCLASS UNDER PRESSURE, HELPING INDIA STRETCH THEIR SECOND INNINGS LEAD WITH A COUNTER-ATTACKING 118

WITH THIS, HE JOINS AN ELITE LIST OF JUST 10 INDIAN CRICKETERS—INCLUDING SUNIL GAVASKAR, RAHUL DRAVID, AND VIRAT KOHLI—TO HAVE REGISTERED CENTURIES IN BOTH INNINGS OF A TEST MATCH

MORE NOTABLY, HE ALSO BECAME ONLY THE SECOND WICKETKEEPER IN THE HISTORY OF TEST CRICKET TO ACHIEVE THIS RARE FEAT, AFTER ZIMBABWE'S ANDY FLOWER DID SO BACK IN 2001

Brief scores:
India: 471 and 364 all out in 96 overs (KL Rahul 137, Rishabh Pant 118; Josh Tongue 3/72, Brydon Carse 3/80, Shoaib Bashir 2/90).
England: 465 all out and 21 for no loss in 6 overs (Zak Crawley 12 batting).

Lausanne (Switzerland), June 23: Zimbabwe's Kirsty Coventry has been officially welcomed as the president of the International Olympic Committee after Thomas Bach handed over the keys of the Olympic House to the former Olympic swimming champion in a handover ceremony held here Monday.

Coventry was elected as the 10th president of the IOC and the first female president in IOC history, following voting at the 144th IOC Session in Costa Navarino, Greece, in March this year.

"In this spirit of gratitude, confidence, and joy, I hand over the keys of Olympic House to Mrs Kirsty Coventry, the 10th President of the International Olympic Committee," Bach said.

The president was elected by the IOC Members by secret ballot for a term of eight years. Coventry succeeds the ninth IOC president, Bach, whose 12-year tenure officially ended Monday.

Bach was also awarded the Olympic Order in Gold by IOC President-elect Coventry, recognising his outstanding contribution to world sport and faithfulness to the Olympic ideal. "This is the Olympic



family. It is one of my greatest honours that I get to do this today. President Bach, I have been watching over the many years you have had this honour. And I'm extremely honoured because, as a movement, we've chosen to give this recognition to you. As I said, for your passion, for your commitment, for your purpose. But I get to give you the Olympic Order in gold as my very first Olympic Order. And I'm very excited about that."

India tops medal table at Seychelles National Day Boxing Tournament

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mahe (Seychelles), June 23: Showcasing the growing depth and quality of India's boxing pipeline, all seven Indian boxers who participated in the Seychelles National Day Boxing Tournament, held at the Paradise Arena in Mahe, returned with medals.

Comprising medal-winners from recent Elite Nationals and National Combined Championships, the Indian contingent secured three gold, three silver, and one bronze, topping the charts with one more gold than Mauritius.

In the gold medal bouts, Himanshu Sharma (50kg) was awarded a walkover while Ashish Mudshaniya (55kg) claimed a well-earned 41 split decision. Gaurav Chauhan (90+kg) edged past his opponent in a tense final, sealing gold with a hard-earned 32 verdict.



The silver medallists - Anmol (60kg), Aditya Yadav (65kg), and Neeraj (75kg) - all fought their finals valiantly before going down by identical 23 split decisions, underlining the competitive quality of their performances. Kartik Dalal (70kg) added to India's tally with a bronze.

This campaign is part of a broader shift in India's boxing ecosystem, where international exposure is being extended beyond the top tier. This success follows India's recent medal-winning performances at the Thailand Open and the World Boxing Cup in Brazil, highlighting the expanding talent pool across weight categories.

WOMEN'S ASIA CUP QUALIFIER

Xaxa nets 5 as India destroy Mongolia

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chiang Mai, June 23: India began their AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026 qualifiers with a 13-0 victory against Mongolia at the 700th Anniversary of Chiang Mai Stadium Monday. The Blue Tigresses led 4-0 at half-time, before running riot in the second 45 minute period.

This was India's biggest ever win in an AFC Women's Asian Cup (final round and qualifiers). Previously, the Blue Tigresses' 10-0 victories against Guam in 1997 and 2005 held the record.

Pyari Xaxa (29', 45', 46', 52', 55') netted five goals in the match, while Soumya Guguloth (20', 59') and Priyadarshini Selladurai (73', 86') scored two each. Sangita Basfore (8'), Rimpa Haldar (67'), Malavika (71'), and Grace Dangmei (75' p) scored one each.

India imposed their iron grip on the match early on in the



game, with Basfore opening the scoring, when she nodded in a Soumya cross from close range. The latter doubled India's lead in an emphatic manner, when she produced a powerful volley off a Rimpa cross. Her volley pinged off the upright and went in.

Pyari scored two more before half-time, first scoring off a cut-back from Soumya, before producing a powerful long-range

effort that rifled into the top corner.

Rimpa, Malavika, and Priyadarshini added a goal each in close succession, as India went over the double digits, before a Grace Dangmei penalty took India to 12. With the clock ticking down, Priyadarshini scored her second and India's 13th to round off a big win for the Blue Tigresses.

Becoming an Olympian from my city after 26 years is something I'll always carry with honor and gratitude

LALIT UPADHYAY



Lalit calls time on stellar int'l career

The two-time Olympic medallist hockey forward draws curtains on over a decade-long journey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 23: Veteran Indian hockey forward Lalit Upadhyay has called time on his illustrious international career, drawing curtains on over a decade-long journey that saw him be a part of the teams that won bronze medals in Tokyo and Paris Olympic Games.

From making his debut at the 2014 World Cup to standing tall on the Olym-

pic podium twice, Lalit's career is a time-line of some of Indian hockey's biggest milestones in the modern era.

He was a crucial part of the squad that scripted history at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, helping India clinch a long-awaited bronze medal, and repeated the feat at the Paris Games in 2024, reinforcing his reputation as a big-match player.

"This journey began in a small village, with limited resources but limitless dreams," Lalit announced his decision through a heartfelt social media post shortly after India's final match of the European leg of the FIH Pro League 2024-25 season against Belgium Sunday. From facing a sting operation to standing on the Olympic podium—not once, but twice—it's been a path full of challenges, growth, and unforgettable pride," Lalit posted. A

natural play-maker with an uncanny knack for scoring goals, Lalit played 183 matches for India at the senior level, scoring 67 goals.

Over the years, he became a trusted name in India's forward line, known for his versatility, on-field intelligence, and calm demeanour in high-pressure situations. The 31-year-old's final appearance in the Indian jersey came against Australia June 15.

Reflecting on Lalit's contribution, Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey said, "Lalit has been one of the most graceful and dedicated forwards of his generation. Whether it was a crucial Olympic match or a league game, he always wore the Indian jersey with pride and played with heart."

"His journey from the narrow lanes of Varanasi to standing on the Olympic podium twice is

nothing short of inspirational. We thank him for his selfless service to Indian hockey and wish him the very best for the next phase of his life."

Beyond the Olympics, Lalit was instrumental in India's victories at the 2016 Asian Champions Trophy, 2017 Asia Cup—where he netted four goals—and multiple other podium finishes. His medal-laden career includes a bronze at the 2017 Hockey World League Final 2017, silver at the 2018 Champions Trophy, bronze at the 2018 Asian Games, and gold at the 2018 Asian Champions Trophy.

He was also a part of the squads that finished third in the FIH Pro League 2021-22 and won gold at the 2022 Asian Games.

In recognition of his contributions to Indian hockey, Lalit was honoured with the Arjuna Award in 2021.

NEW OLYMPIC HOPEFULS

TJ, Kujur in TOPS developmental group; Pranati named for TAGG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 23: Asian Championships silver-winning decathlete Tejaswin Shankar, fast-rising sprinter Animesh Kujur and the women's 4x100m relay team were included in the Target Olympic Podium Scheme's developmental group, while gymnast Pranati Nayak was added to the Target Asian Games Group in the latest round of evaluation by the Sports Ministry.

The 26-year-old Tejaswin, who is mostly based in the USA, became the first Indian to win two decathlon medals in the Asian Championships by upgrading his bronze from the previous edition to a silver this time in Gumi, South Korea last month.

The 22-year-old Kujur, on the other hand, claimed a bronze medal in the men's 200m event with a national record time of 20.32 seconds. This was his first medal at an international event.

The athletes included in the TOPS developmental group are entitled to a monthly allowance of Rs 25,000 and are considered long-term medal prospects.

Also making the developmental list was the quartet of 4x100m quartet of Abinaya Rajarajan, Sneha Shanuvalli, Nithya Gandhe and Srabani Nanda. They won a silver medal in the event at the Asian meet.

High jumper Pooja (gold, 1.89m PB), Servin Sebastian

(race walking), Vithya Ramaraj (hurdles), Sachin Yadav (javelin throw), Yoonus Shah (middle-distance) were the other good performers from the Asian event to make the group after a recent meeting of the ministry's Mission Olympic Cell (MOC).

Javelin superstar Neeraj Chopra, steeplechaser Avinash Sable and long jumper M Sreesankar are the only track and field names in the core group that was slashed to 94 from 179 at the beginning of the year following the end of an Olympic cycle.

The pruned core list features only 42 able-bodied athletes.

PRANATI ADDED TO TAGG

Gymnasts Pranati Nayak and Protishtha Samanta (vault) have been added to the Target Asian Games Group (TAGG). Nayak won a bronze medal in the Asian Artistic Gymnastics Championships in Jecheon, South Korea earlier this month.

This was her third bronze at the continental event after third-place finishes in Ulaanbaatar (2019) and Doha (2022).

TOPS CEO NS Johal, Olympic medallist Gagan Narang, Pulella Gopichand (Vice-president, Badminton Association of India), Viren Rasquinha (Olympic Gold Quest), Aparna Popat, Dronacharya awardee para coach Dr Satyapal Singh, and Arjuna awardee Prashanti Singh are among the members of the MOC.

