



Government of Rajasthan

# Labharthi Utsav

**Hon'ble Chief Minister Sh. Ashok Gehlot** will be inaugurating the Indira Gandhi Gas Cylinder Subsidy Yojna

Today **12:00 noon**

Direct transfer  
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registered beneficiary families

## 76 Lakh

families will benefit from the yojna

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**₹500/-**

For 76 lakh families

*In these times of inflation the Mehngai Rahat Camps, are my humble attempt to ensure that the relief aimed through Indira Gandhi Gas Cylinder Subsidy Scheme reaches the needy and the middle class families of Rajasthan.*

*You are all requested to register yourself in these camps and avail the benefits.*

*~Ashok Gehlot, Chief Minister, Rajasthan*

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Railways seeks CBI probe, hints at sabotage; two tracks repaired

CONTD. FROM PG-3

Officials said till the overhead electric cable is repaired, only diesel locomotives can be run and it may take another three days before electric trains can ply.

The ministers said restoration work was being carried out on a war footing and efforts were on to send people affected back home.

"By Tuesday we should be able to do it," Pradhan said.

The accident disrupted passenger and goods traffic between important industrial centres. Many of the patients initially admitted to Balasore and other local hospitals have been released or shifted to bigger cities with multi-specialty hospitals including Cuttack, Bhubaneswar and Kolkata.

The railways said 123 trains have been cancelled, 56 diverted, 10 short terminated, and 14 trains have been rescheduled for the period June 3-7.

Many of the passengers in the two trains were migrant workers. Railway spokesperson Amitabh Sharma said that even if the victims were ticketless travellers, they will receive compensation.

This is in line with a Supreme Court order, officials said.

So far, the railways has disbursed Rs 3.22 crore as ex-gratia in 285 cases — 11 deaths, 50 grievous injuries and 224 minor injuries.

"Could be tampering or sabotage from within or outside"

Top railway officials, while explaining how the point machine and the interlocking system function, said the system is "error proof" and "fail safe" but did not rule out the possibility of outside intervention.

"It is called a fail-safe system, so it means that even if it fails, all the signals will turn red and all train operations will stop. Now, as the minister said there was a problem with the signalling system."

"It could be that someone has done some digging without seeing the cables. Running of any machine is prone to failures," Jaya Verma Sinha, Member of Operation and Business Development, Railway Board, said.

An electric point machine is a vital device for railway signalling for quick operation and locking of point switches and plays an important role in the safe running of trains. Failure of these machines severely affects train movement and deficiencies at the time of installation can result in unsafe conditions. Agencies

# Driver error ruled out, possible sabotage being probed; minister says people behind 'criminal' act identified

New Delhi

The railways on Sunday virtually ruled out driver error and system malfunction, indicating a possible "signalling interference" and hinting at "sabotage" and tampering of the electronic interlocking system behind the triple train accident that claimed 275 lives in Odisha.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has sought a CBI enquiry into the accident. However, officials said the inquiry by the commissioner of railway safety (CRS) would continue.

Vaishnaw said that the "root cause" of the accident and the people responsible for the "criminal act" have been identified.

"It happened due to a change made in the electronic interlocking and point machine," he told reporters at the site of Friday's accident in Balasore district.

Here in Delhi, top railway officials indicated a "signalling interference".

"There is probability of some kind of signalling interference...whether it was manual or incidental, wear and tear related, maintenance failure or weather related will come out in the CRS inquiry," Jaya Verma Sinha, Member of Operations and Business Development, Railway Board, said.

Explaining how the point machine and the interlocking system function, she said that

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the system is "error proof" and "fail safe" but did not rule out the possibility of outside intervention.

"It is called a fail safe system, so it means that even if it fails, all the signals will turn red and all train operations will stop. Now, as the minister said there was a problem with the signalling system. It could be that someone has done some digging without seeing the cables. Running of any machine is prone to failures," Sinha said.

While Sinha refused to comment on particular findings, she said that "no defect" was found in the electronic interlocking system but did not even rule out negligence.

A senior railway official who did not want to be identified said this kind of tinkering with the "logic" of the AI-based electronic interlocking system can only be "intentional" and ruled out any malfunction in the system.

"It could be a case of tampering or sabotage from within or from outside. We have not ruled anything out," the senior railway official said.



Sinha said that even with the anti-collision technology Kavach, this accident could not have been averted due to the speed of the Coromandel Express and its distance from the station-ary goods train.

The crash involving Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express and Shalimar-Chennai Central Coromandel Express had entered the loop line at the station on which an iron ore-laden goods train was parked.

It also indicated that a tampering could have occurred stating that the signal was "given and taken off for the up main line for train number 12841 (Coromandel Express), the train entered the loop line, dashed the goods train and derailed.

In the meantime, train number 12864 passed through the down main line and two of its coaches derailed and capsized." Explaining how

clean chit by stating that he had the green signal to move forward and he was "not over-speeding".

A preliminary report from the ground accessed by PTI on Friday stated that the Coromandel Express had entered the loop line at the station on which an iron ore-laden goods train was parked.

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the two components mentioned by the minister are key to train operations, Sandeep Mathur, Principal Executive Director of Signalling, Railway Board, said that these two work in co-ordination to show the driver whether the track is clear to move forward.

"Signal is interlocked in such a manner that it will show if the line ahead is occupied or not. It will also be known whether the point is taking a train straight or towards loop line."

"When the point shows straight and the track ahead is not occupied then the signal is green and if the point is taking the train on loop and track is clear then signal is yellow and the route is shown of a different direction," he said.

He said that the interlocking system is a safe way to guide a train out of a station.

A point machine is a vital device for railway signalling for quick operation and locking of point switches and plays an important role in the safe running of trains. Failure of these machines severely affects train movement.

Sinha said that the direction, route and signal were set for the Coromandel Express.

"Green signal means that in every way the driver knows that his path ahead is clear and he can go forward with his permitted maximum speed. The permitted speed at this section was 130 kmph and he was running his train at 128 kmph which we have confirmed from loco logs," she said.

The Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express train was running at a speed of 126 kmph.

"In both the trains there was no question of over-speeding. Preliminary finding has found that there is a signalling issue," she said.

"Only one train was involved in the accident, it was the Coromandel Express. The Coromandel Express crashed with the goods train and its coaches went on top of the goods train. It was an iron ore train, a heavy train, therefore entire impact of the collision was on the train," she said.

Agencies

## Stung by Lalu's remark on train crash, Ravi Shankar talks of scams

Patna

Senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad on Sunday raked up "scams" during Lalu Prasad's tenure as Railway Minister, a day after the RJD president blamed the Balasore triple train crash on "negligence" of railways by the Narendra Modi government at the Centre. The former Union minister was replying to questions from journalists at a press conference organised at the BJP's Bihar headquarters to showcase the Modi government's achievements in nine years. When pointed out that Prasad had, on the previous day, spoken of "negligence" and accused the Modi government of having "destroyed railways", Prasad shot back that the former Bihar CM was embroiled in a number of "scams" and was busy securing bail. "His achievements as Railway Minister are there for all to see. He is facing investigations in the land for hotels scam and the land for jobs scam, and busy

securing bail in both cases", quipped Prasad, a former law and justice minister. He also criticised opposition parties for "indulging in politics" over the accident which has killed hundreds of people and claimed that the government was making all necessary efforts. "The Prime Minister visited the site of the mishap himself and the Railway Minister is camping there", Prasad pointed out. The BJP leader, who represents Patna Sahib in the Lok Sabha, also asked Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to clarify his stand on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's reported statement that Muslim League was a "secular party". "It is the party responsible for the country's Partition. We would like to know what Nitish babu thinks of the statement", said Prasad. Kumar was a BJP ally until August last year when he snapped ties and joined the 'Mahagathabandhan' that includes Congress, RJD and the Left.

## Cong demands Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw's resignation; slams PM Modi

New Delhi

The Congress on Sunday demanded the resignation of Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw over the Odisha rail tragedy and attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying he should accept part of the responsibility for creating an "all is well" facade even as the critical infrastructure of the Indian Railway "languishes in neglect".

The Opposition party asked whether the prime minister will take responsibility for the "deadliest rail tragedy" of this century. It also asked who is responsible for ignoring the warnings and suggestions of experts, the parliamentary committee and CAG report.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge alleged that Modi was busy flagging off trains while not paying attention to railway safety. He called for fixing accountability of all posts from top to bottom to prevent such incidents in future.



Addressing a press conference at the AICC headquarters here, Congress MP Shaktisinh Gohil and AICC's publicity and media department head Pawan Khara

alleged that the Odisha rail tragedy was a "man-made devastation caused by 'utter negligence, serious lapses in the system, incompetence, and a narcissistic sense of know-it-all attitude of the Modi government'".

Khara said the prime minister has a "Kavach" which no other PM had, protecting him from public scrutiny and television debates. He urged the media to not provide that shield to the PM.

"This 'Kavach' does not save rail passengers but only your (PM's) image," Khara said.

The Opposition party also said that Modi should accept part of

the responsibility for the "mess" that it alleged that his government has inflicted on the Indian Railways and the people.

Prime Minister Modi, who has announced that the guilty would be punished, must first start with his railway minister, Khara said.

"Unequivocally and unambiguously, we demand the resignation of the Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. Nothing short of it," he said.

"Resignation means taking responsibility on moral grounds, here there is neither responsibility nor morals, do you think any resignation would come? We don't know whom we should ask for resignation."

"The person who goes to inaugurate even small stations or the one who has been busy since yesterday morning in publicity. Modi ji, you decide whose resignation you want. But now the nation expects that

## Monsoon misses onset date in Kerala, IMD says conditions becoming favourable

New Delhi

The monsoon missed its onset date in Kerala on Sunday with the India Meteorological Department anticipating a further delay of three to four days.

The southwest monsoon normally sets in over Kerala on June 1 with a standard deviation of about seven days.

In mid May, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said it might arrive in Kerala by June 4.

In a statement on Sunday, the IMD said, "Conditions (are) becoming favourable with the increase in westerly winds over the south Arabian Sea. Also, the depth of westerly winds is gradually increasing and today, June 4, the depth of westerlies has reached up to 2.1 kilometres above the mean sea level."

"The cloud mass over the southeast Arabian sea is also increasing. We expect that these favourable conditions for monsoon onset over Kerala will further improve during the next three-four days. It is being monitored continuously and further updates will be provided tomorrow (Monday)." Scientists, however, said the delay is unlikely to impact kharif sowing and total rainfall over the country.

### NAME CHANGE

It is for general information that Sujeet Kumar S/o Sudarshan Mehra R/o CN-856, Village Dallupura, Delhi-110096, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as Sujeet Kumar Kishwahia in my Driving License. The actual name of mine is Sujeet Kumar, which may be amended accordingly

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Known to all men by these presents that my clients shri Mahesh Kumar S/o Dharam Singh and Smt. Bala W/o Mahesh Kumar R/O RZF-1/45, Gali No. 1 Mahavir Enclave Nasirpur Road, Palam Village New Delhi -110059, have debarred and dishonoured their son Pankaj and his wife smt. Savita from their immovable and movable properties due to their misbehaviour and out of control and severed all the connections from them in any manner whatsoever. Any person dealing with them in future, will do of his/her their own risk and responsibilities for any legal, illegal act civil and criminals cases caused by them in future and my client have not concerned for the same.

Sumit Kumar Jha Advocate  
CH.756 DWARKA DISTRICT COURT, DWARKA NEW DELHI 110075  
Mob. No. 9990270722

### PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for notice of the general public that a political party is proposed to be registered by the name of Bhartiya Mazboot Party. The office of the party is located at Village & Post Tigr, Block Gajraula, District Amroha U.P. This party has submitted application to the Election Commission of India, New Delhi for its registration as Political Party under Section 29A of the Representation of people Act, 1951. Names/address of the office bearers of the party are as follows: President-Anil S/o Sri Phool Singh, Village & Post Tigr, Block Gajraula, District Amroha U.P. Vice President-Nepal Singh, S/o Sri Phool Singh, 21-Ka, Tigr, Block Gajraula, District Amroha U.P. General Secretary-Santiram S/O Sri Ghasia, Chaundheri, Chandpur, District Bijnore U.P. Treasurer-Suresh S/o Sri Ghasia, H.No.46, Chaundheri, Chandpur, District Bijnore U.P. If any one has any objection to the registration of Bhartiya Mazboot Party they may send their objection with reasons thereof, to the Secretary, (Political Party) Election Commission of India, Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001 within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

## Vatsalya Sadan, a new ray of hope for the needy children

New Delhi

Department of Women & Child Development of Delhi Government takes a big leap towards ensuring justice to the children in difficult circumstances through restorative action for rehabilitative accomplishments. Delhi at its three different locations in Alipur, Tughlakabad Institutional Area and Dwarka will have rehabilitation centric integrated complex for children under juvenile justice system having residential institutions with therapeutic intervention and well-being facilities.

With laying foundation stone of Vatsalya Sadan one of its kind

integrated complex in the country on 27th May, 2023, at Alipur, Justice Ravindra Bhat, Judge of Supreme Court says the Department has truly manifested the potential of fulfilling its commitment to bring out the best facilities for children in vulnerable situations. The enabling and healthy environment is the core of the complex designed for such children.

Justice Ravindra Bhat in a matter of Court on its own motion before him passed a direction in 2018 for the Delhi Government to construct a proper building such as to cater the future needs in conformity to the requirements of

Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Rules, 2016. In his order, Justice Bhat emphasised that the construction should be child friendly in terms of the space and particularly the extent of natural light within the building at the same time balancing the other concerned such as security etc.

Justice Mukta Gupta, Judge High Court, also the Chairperson of Juvenile Justice Committee ensured regular monitoring of the progress of the project from the Department on concept, visualisation, design, accessibility of child protection services including in-house rehabilitation for drug addicted young children.

She acknowledged the compliance made by the Department appreciating the bonafide efforts made by Krishan Kumar, Director of Department of Women & Child Development which has finally shown the light of the day.

Atishi Singh, Minister, WCD present on the occasion reiterated the government's commitment towards safeguarding the best interest of the children of Delhi. It is the responsibility of the government to fulfil the needs of children who are deprived by the nature, said the Minister. She further stated that the services must help the children for their rehabilitation to enable their restoration.

tion with the families and reduce the need for Homes. Atishi, also the Minister of Public Works Department has assured to take up the project with the PWD for completion of the project within a period of two years positively with advanced infrastructural facilities and convenience for children including those with special needs.

Krishan Kumar, Director, WCD explained that the Vatsalya Sadan at Alipur will consist of residential institutions for children in conflict with law, rehabilitation centre, remedial education and well-being clinic, medical and mental health, legal aid

and probation services besides environment for milieu based intervention. A Juvenile Justice Board with technologically equipped facilities including vulnerable witness room and video-conferencing facilities, waiting lounge for children and families will be the highlights of the integrated complex.

Ms. Garima Gupta, Secretary, WCD said that services for the children in the capital must be best and be treated as of our own children. Government is the guardian and it cannot shirk away from its responsibility. The state of art creation of complex with modern amenities will benefit many children.

dren coming under juvenile justice system making their future bright and blissful.

The foundation laying ceremony of integrated complex at Alipur, bhoomi poojan at Tughlakabad plot and inauguration of Juvenile Justice Board at Dwarka were attended by the Member Judges of the Juvenile Justice Committee at High Court, dignitaries from Government and PWD Engineers. The Juvenile Justice Committee congratulated Ms. Garima Gupta, Secretary, WCD for her leadership and consistent endeavour for making the project a reality.





Josh Hazlewood out of WTC final, Naser joins Australia squad



Biden's 2024 pitch highlights pragmatism over Trump's pugilism

"Will make you proud PB": Urvashi Rautela begins prep for Parveen Babi biopic



CRICKET

PAGE-10

WORLD

PAGE-9

FILM

PAGE-12

4 DELHI

Bharadwaj takes part in clean Yamuna River program, affirms to clean river by 2025

8 STATE

'Tiffin Pe Charcha' campaign: UP CM interacts with party workers in Gorakhpur

9 BUSINESS

Private sector investment set to witness significant increase: CII President R Dinesh

11 SPORTS

India win two gold and one bronze in Asian U-20 Athletics C'ships

## Railways seeks CBI probe, hints at sabotage; two tracks repaired

■ Railway officials also indicated that possible "sabotage" and tampering with the electronic interlocking system, which detects the presence of trains

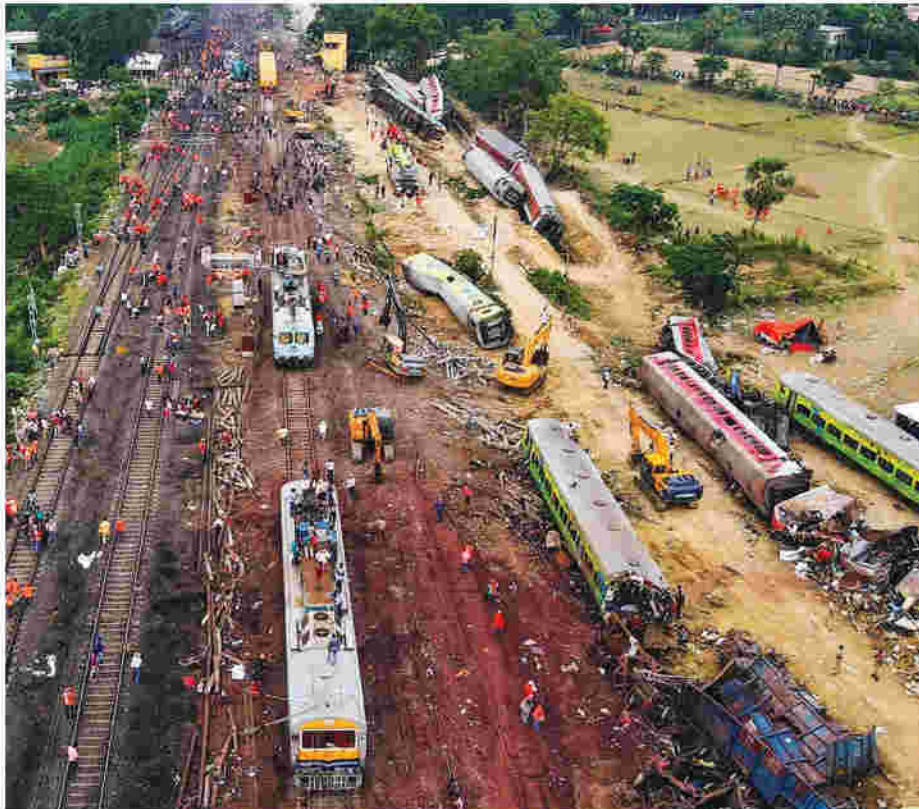
■ The BJP hit back, saying the track record of the Congress-led UPA government's railway ministers was nothing short of a disaster and they should not politicise the issue.

Balasore/New Delhi  
The railways on Sunday sought a CBI inquiry into the Balasore train crash, hours after minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the "root cause" of the accident and the people behind the "criminal" act have been identified. Railway officials also indicated that possible "sabotage" and tampering with the electronic interlocking system, which detects the presence of trains, led to the Friday accident.

However, several opposition parties stepped up pressure for Railway Minister Vaishnaw's resignation, with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge calling for fixing accountability from top to bottom.

The BJP hit back, saying the track record of the Congress-led UPA government's railway ministers was nothing short of a disaster and they should not politicise the issue.

"We have recommended a CBI probe into the triple train accident," Vaishnaw told reporters in Bhubaneswar on Sunday evening.



Earlier in the day, he said the cause of the accident was related to electric point machine and electronic interlocking.

"The setting of the point machine was changed. How and why it was done will be revealed in the probe re-

port." "The root cause of the horrifying incident has been identified... I do not want to go into details. Let the report come out. I will just say that the root cause and the people responsible for the criminal act have been identified," he said. The death toll in the

three-train crash on Friday was revised to 275 from 288 by the Odisha government which said some bodies were counted twice earlier.

With 187 bodies yet to be identified, keeping them till the time they are claimed by the victims' kin is proving to be

It could be that someone has done some digging without seeing the cables. Running of any machine is prone to failures.

-Jaya Verma Sinha, Member of Operation and Business Development, Railway Board

a challenge to the local administration.

While 110 bodies were being kept at the AIIMS Bhubaneswar, the remaining have been sent to Capital Hospital, Amri Hospital, Sum Hospital and some other private facilities.

Anxious relatives thronged the NOCCI Business Park to identify photos of passengers displayed by authorities.

Vaishnaw, who had been camping at the site of the train accident along with Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, said two railway tracks have been restored on the main trunk line connecting eastern and southern India and overhead electrification work has also started.

CONTD ON PG-2

## Government sets up 3-member panel to probe Manipur violence



New Delhi

The Centre on Sunday set up a Commission of Inquiry, headed by former chief justice of the Gauhati High Court Ajai Lamba, to probe the recent series of violence in Manipur that claimed more than 80 lives.

According to a notification issued by the Union Home Ministry, the commission will make inquiry with respect of the causes and spread of the violence and riots targeting members of different communities, which took place in Manipur on May 3 and thereafter.

It will probe the sequence of events leading to, and all the facts relating to such violence; whether there were any lapses or dereliction of duty in this regard on the part of any of the responsible authorities/individuals

### HIGHLIGHTS

■ The inquiry by the commission shall look into the complaints or allegations that may be made before it by any individual or association.

■ The commission shall submit its report to the central government as soon as possible but not later than six months from the date of its first sitting.

and adequacy of the administrative measures taken to prevent, and to deal with the violence and riots.

The inquiry by the commission shall look into the complaints or allegations that may be made before it by any individual or association.

The commission shall submit its report to the central government as soon as possible but not later than six months from the date of its first sitting. Agencies



"We will be able to give a safe environment to our coming generations only when every citizen of the country makes a united effort to maintain the balance of water, air and land."

- Narendra Modi

# World Environment Day

June 5, 2023





## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Spurious butter, 'Ghee' in Amul packaging seized

Noida

Fake butter and 'Ghee' of Amul brand worth Rs 64 lakh have been seized by the police station phase 3 from a house at sector-70.

Five persons who had been doing this business for the last about five months, have also been arrested from the spot in this connection.

DCP Ram Badan Singh said that the arrested accused used to bring 'Ghee' and butter at cheap prices from New Kundli, Delhi. They used to supply the cheap ghee and butter in Amul packaging in Noida NCR. Most of its supplies were done at railway stations and footpaths.

The local police has recovered 5 quintals of butter and 'Ghee' from them.

The accused have been identified as Sanjay, Rajkumar, Ashish, Sajid and Deepak. The main leaders of this gang are Sanjay and Rajkumar. Five accused are absconding in this case.

## Noida Authority to reply to CAG's objections

Noida

The Noida Authority is once again preparing to respond to the objections of the CAG regarding the Sports City project spread in five sectors.

This time on June 7, the government will have to answer before the public accounts committee. The CAG is probing the functioning of the Noida Authority.

In the first phase, from 2005 to 2017, each and every point of the allocation of the project was examined. In some cases, investigations were carried out even till the year 1976. In this, it there was a scam of about Rs 60,000 crore, out of which a scam of Rs 8643 crore is related to the Sports City.

The audit report of CAG states that this scheme was started without the approval of the government.

## Woman found dead at rented home in Delhi's Narela, 1 held

New Delhi

A 26-year-old woman was found dead inside her rented accommodation in northwest Delhi's Narela area, police said on Sunday. The accused, identified as Anil Sahu alias Arjun, a resident of Narela's Swatantrata Nagar, was arrested on Sunday, they said.

A PCR call was received at Narela police station regarding the incident following which the staff reached the first floor of the house and found the body of a woman with blood scattered around, a senior police officer said.

Police also found blood

## Bharadwaj takes part in clean Yamuna River program, affirms to clean river by 2025

New Delhi

Delhi Water Minister Saurabh Bhardwaj joined in the effort to save the Yamuna by participating in the "Yamuna Sansad" program, organised at the Chhath Ghat, ITO, on Sunday.

Demonstrating solidarity with the citizens of Delhi, Shri Saurabh Bhardwaj took an oath for the cleanliness of the Yamuna. During this event, a human chain was formed from Wazirabad to the banks of Kalindi Kunj, emphasising the importance of public participation in ensuring the cleanliness of the Yamuna.

The primary objective behind creating this human chain was to draw people's attention towards the problem of pollution in the Yamuna and work towards restoring the river to its original form.

On this occasion, Water Minister Shri Saurabh



Bhardwaj said, "Pollution is a big problem all over the world: be it air pollution or water pollution. With modernisation came some shortcomings in our society, pollution being one of them. However, the positive aspect is that in recent years, there has been an increasing awareness

about pollution among both individuals and governments.

Governments allocate separate funds in their budgets to address pollution. In this regard, for the last few years, people have also cooperated a lot and spread awareness in society. In the past, numerous

unauthorised colonies lacked a sewer network, leading to untreated sewage directly flowing into the Yamuna. However, in recent years, sewer networks have been established in many unauthorised colonies.

When a sewer network is implemented in such

colonies, their sewage no longer directly reaches the Yamuna. Instead, it is directed to a sewer treatment plant for proper treatment before being released into the Yamuna. This is a huge task. With the cooperation of the people, this work will be done quickly."

Bhardwaj further stated that pollution increases in major cities of every state where rivers flow. This is because it has been a tradition to discharge all the sewage from factories, industries, and large colonies into the rivers.

Bhardwaj added, "The Kejriwal government in Delhi is working diligently to make the Yamuna pollution-free. In 2014, sewer lines were only installed in 220 unauthorised colonies, whereas today, sewer lines have been laid in 832 unauthorised colonies. Now, their sewage does not flow into the Yamuna."

Similarly, treatment of sewage at all sewer treat-

ment plants was around 350 MGD in the past, but STP Capacity has now increased to approximately 550 MGD. By 2025, the capacity of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) in Delhi will be enhanced to nearly 900 MGD. This means that sewage from Delhi's colonies will not be discharged into the Yamuna; instead, it will be treated at the sewage treatment plants.

Colonies that never had sewer lines before are now having them installed. This is a significant task, and the Kejriwal government is committed to completing it within the specified timeframe. By the year 2025, the Yamuna will be made pollution-free."

It is important to note that cleaning the Yamuna is the topmost priority for the Delhi Government under the leadership of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

In line with this, the Delhi government has been

working tirelessly on a six-point action plan announced by the Chief Minister in 2021. Under this action plan, the Kejriwal government is focused on increasing the capacity of sewage treatment plants, trapping and cleaning major polluted drains in Delhi, providing sewer connections to every household and integrating them with the sewer network, preventing the flow of sewage from slums into drains, and strengthening the sewage distilling process.

The primary cause of pollution in the Yamuna is the drains, and now most of these drains do not discharge sewage into the river; instead, it is treated in STPs. By following the directives of Chief Minister Shri Arvind Kejriwal, the Delhi government is making significant progress in the direction of cleaning the Yamuna, and the results are gradually becoming visible in the river.

## Delhi Govt committed to cleaning Yamuna: Gopal Rai HC to pronounce order on Monday on Sisodia's interim bail plea

New Delhi

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Sunday said that rejuvenation of the Yamuna river will happen only with the joint efforts of government and social partners.

This was stated by Rai during the "Yamuna Sansad" programme here.

The Delhi Environment Minister further said that the city government is committed towards cleaning of the Yamuna river.

Rai participated in the "Yamuna Sansad" programme organised at Chhath Ghat, ITO. During the "Yamuna Sansad", the citizens of Delhi formed a human chain and collectively pledged to work towards the cleaning of the Yamuna.



Rai, while addressing the journalists present during the "Yamuna Sansad" programme, said, "The Yamuna is not just any river for Delhi, but it sustains a vast ecosystem within the city. The majority of Delhi's wa-

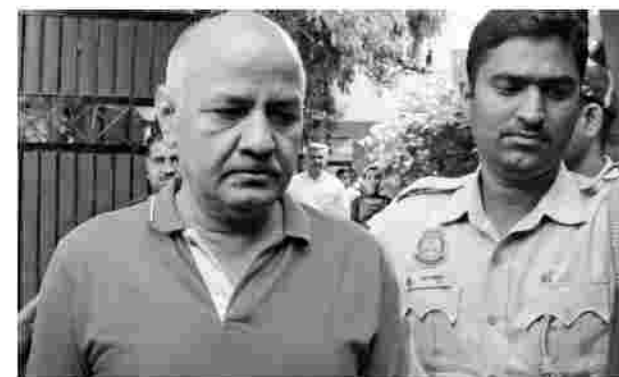
ter requirements are met by the Yamuna, making it a crucial resource for both economic and ecological purposes."

"However, the river's ecological balance has been disrupted over time due to the

excessive discharge of chemicals, plastics, and other non-biodegradable pollutants. Nevertheless, our government is taking all necessary steps to preserve the sanctity of this sacred river," he added.

He said under the Summer Action Plan launched by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, a public awareness campaign has been initiated as a significant component. Today, "Yamuna Sansad" has been organised at the social level to promote public participation, the Delhi Environment Minister said.

"To enhance the ecological condition of Delhi, it is imperative for all individuals to make a commitment to refrain from contaminating the Yamuna river water. It is only through public participation that the environment can be made better and pollution free. The Delhi government will run this campaign as a public campaign in collaboration with the citizens of Delhi," he said.



New Delhi

The Delhi High Court will on Monday pronounce its order on AAP leader Manish Sisodia's plea seeking interim bail for six weeks in a money laundering case arising from the alleged excise policy scam.

The former Delhi deputy chief minister has sought release on a temporary basis on the ground of being the sole caretaker of his ailing wife. His plea for regular bail in the matter is pending before the high court.

Sisodia, who was arrested on March 9, is currently in judicial custody in the case lodged by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

The verdict on the interim bail plea will be pronounced by Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma. It was reserved on Saturday when Sisodia's lawyer had claimed that pursuant to the court's directions passed on Friday, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader was taken in custody to meet his wife earlier in the day but the latter's health condition deteriorated and she was

taken to be the LNJ Hospital before he could reach home.

The ED has opposed the plea for interim bail on the grounds of possibility of evidence tampering.

The federal agency's lawyer has also claimed that Sisodia's wife has been suffering from a medical condition for the last 20 years and even earlier pleas for interim bail on identical grounds were withdrawn by the former minister.

The Delhi excise policy was implemented by the AAP government on November 17, 2021, but it was scrapped at the end of September last year amid allegations of corruption.

On May 30, the court had dismissed Sisodia's bail plea in the excise policy scam case being probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), saying he is an influential person and the allegations against him are very serious in nature. In the CBI case, the high court has kept the interim bail plea pending for July.

## Parts of Delhi witnesses light rains, max temp settles at 33.7 deg C

New Delhi

Light rains were witnessed in some parts of the national capital on Sunday, which recorded a maximum temperature of 33.7 degrees Celsius, six notches below the season's average, according to the India Meteorological Department.

Meanwhile, the minimum temperature settled at 23.8 degrees Celsius, three notches below the season's average, the IMD said.

The weather office has predicted a generally cloudy sky with light rain or drizzle for Monday with the maxi-



mum and minimum temperatures likely to settle around 35 and 24 degrees Celsius, respectively.

The city recorded 3 mm of rainfall between Saturday 8.30 am to Sunday 8.30 am. The relative humidity at

8.30 am was recorded at 86 per cent.

Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) stood in the moderate category with a reading of 173 at 6 pm, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data showed.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered good, 51 and 100 satisfactory, 101 and 200 moderate, 201 and 300 poor, 301 and 400 very poor, and 401 and 500 severe.

According to the Air Quality Early Warning System, air quality in Delhi is likely to remain in the moderate category from June 4 to June 7.

## Delhi Metro completes structural work on stretch of elevated viaduct of Ph-IV corridor

New Delhi

Delhi Metro has completed the structural work on a stretch of an elevated viaduct on the upcoming Janakpuri West-R K Ashram Marg corridor of Phase 4, officials said on Sunday.

The 4-km-long viaduct, starting from Majlis Park to Mukarba Chowk, connects the Majlis Park and Bhaswa Metro stations on the corridor, they said. The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has successfully completed the structural work, it said in a statement.

"This particular completed stretch of the elevated viaduct is now being offered to the system con-



tractors for track laying and traction work involving the erection of overhead electrification (OHE) masts etc.

"The structural work for the viaduct shall also be completed till Haiderpur Badli soon, as just a crossing over a railway track is left there," it added.

This is an important achievement for DMRC's engineers since the work on this corridor had started amidst the COVID-19 crisis and had to face intermittent delays due to the pandemic, and issues pertaining to obtaining tree-cutting clearances. The construction

work of this corridor shall be completed by March 2026, officials said.

This work was completed without causing any major disruption to the flow of traffic below, it said. Work on the Janakpuri West - RK Ashram Marg Metro corridor is progressing at full speed now.

The DMRC completed 2.2 km of underground tunnels (for up and down movement) between Janakpuri West and Krishna Park Extension on this corridor last year, the DMRC said. On June 2, another tunnel boring machine (TBM) was lowered for tunnelling work between Derawal Nagar to Pulbangash.

This TBM drive will achieve a depth upto 25.9 metres near the Najafgarh Drain and will be 5,800 m in diameter, officials said.

The movement of the TBMs is being monitored round the clock digitally by DMRC since there are a lot of old buildings above, they added.

As part of its Phase-IV expansion, DMRC is currently engaged in the construction of 65 km of new lines across three different corridors. Out of these 28 kilometres will be underground and the rest shall be elevated.

Eleven new interchange stations shall also come up as part of this new expansion.

## Over 7.4 mn QR code-based paper tickets sold, dip in sale of tokens: DMRC

New Delhi

More than 74 lakh QR code-based paper tickets have been sold to Delhi Metro commuters following their launch in early May and the sale of tokens has dipped by over 30 per cent since then, officials said.

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) introduced the QR code-based paper ticket system on May 8, describing the development as a move towards a "more transparent and human intervention-free mechanism".

The DMRC intends to gradually phase out the concept of physical tokens, officials said.

However, any future planning will keep in mind the constraints of digital technology and that not all com-



muters may have access to smartphones, they said.

"The total number of QR code-based paper tickets sold till May 30 is nearly 74,00,854," a senior official of the DMRC said.

The urban transporter hopes that commuters will gradually start using fewer physical tokens after the launch of this service. But many passengers have complained about technical issues faced at AFC (automatic fare collection) gates while

using QR code-based paper tickets.

DMRC official said there are "no technical issues" at AFC gates right now.

"Around 50 per cent of AFC gates across the network have been made QR code-compliant. Since the introduction of QR code-based paper tickets, token sales have dropped by about 32 per cent," the senior official said.

Currently, in addition to tokens, commuters can buy QR code-based paper tickets from metro station counters. The DMRC also issues smart cards for seamless travelling on its network. It has upgraded its AFC gates and customer care counters, to support the new QR code-based feature, a senior official said on May 8.



## Haryana CM pays tribute to Sant Kabir Das Ji

Chandigarh:

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal, who resides at Sant Kabir Kutir today paid tribute to mystic poet Sant Kabir Das Ji on his birth anniversary. He also extended warm greetings to the people of the state on Sant Kabir Das Jayanti.

Manohar Lal stated that the teachings and beliefs of Sant Kabir Das promote equality of all religions and social harmony in society. Referencing the couplet of Sant Kabir Das, "Jaath na poocho sadhu ki, pooch lijiye gyan, mol karo talwar ka, pada rahen do meyaan," the Chief Minister emphasized that the teachings of Sant Kabir are relevant to society even today.

Furthermore, inspired by the thoughts of Sant Kabir Das, the state government is working for the welfare of every section of the state by rising above caste and stepping forward with the spirit of "Haryana Ek-Haryanvi Ek," he added.

It is worth mentioning that Chief Minister, Manohar Lal has dedicated his entire life to social welfare. From a young age, he started working for the betterment of society. Even after becoming the Chief Minister of the state, he is still committed to fulfilling his goal of public service. In addition, Sh. Manohar Lal has initiated a new initiative that demonstrates his simplicity and respect for saints and eminent figures. He also changed the name of the Chief Minister's residence to 'Sant Kabir Kutir.'

## Man held for raping 5-yr-old girl

Kurukshetra:

A 29-year-old man, who worked as a labourer, was arrested on Sunday for allegedly raping a minor girl, police said. The accused identified as Vikram alias Vicky of village Bahal near Cheeka was arrested by the Pehowa police under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act on Friday. Pehowa Station House Officer (SHO) Kuldeep Singh said a case of rape of a five-year-old girl was registered on the complaint of her mother.

After that, she was taken to a hospital, where a municipal official rang up the police to inform them about the survivor. Finding her condition serious, she was referred to PGIMER in Chandigarh. Singh said the accused was identified with the help of CCTV footage.

He would be produced before a court here on Monday and his police remand would be sought for further investigation, he added.

# Ensuring availability of welfare scheme benefits to citizens: Haryana CM

Komal Ramola  
Chandigarh:

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Sunday said 12.5 lakh new ration cards have been generated with the help of 'Parivar Pehchan Patra' to ensure the availability benefits of public welfare schemes to eligible citizens.

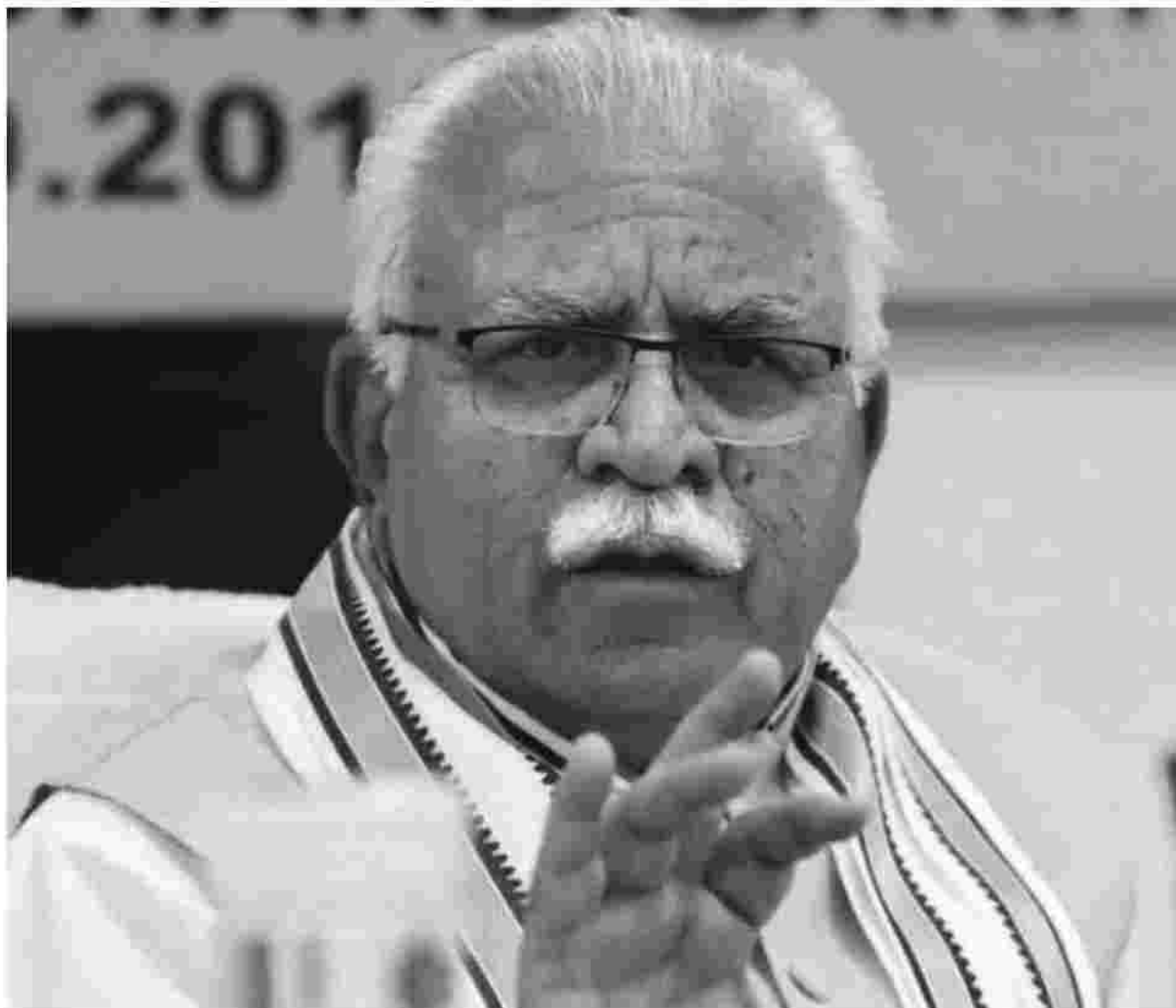
Addressing people at an event in Karnal, Khattar said beneficiaries can visit the office of the additional deputy commissioner to get their Below Poverty Line (BPL) data updated so that they can continue to get ration benefits.

Ensuring the benefits of welfare schemes to the actual beneficiaries is the top priority of the state government, he said.

The Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP) has become a key document to avail the benefits of the government facilities and other states are also now adopting it, Khattar said in a statement.

The chief minister said that gone are the days when the state youth used to get jobs on the basis of favouritism during the previous regime. Now jobs are being given on a pure merit basis.

He asserted that the BJP-led government has zero tolerance for corruption. Khattar said that the



Haryana government is making constant efforts to strengthen the health infrastructure and in this series, state-of-the-art facilities have been ensured in the government hospitals for the poor and

needy. "We are here to serve the people, not to enjoy power," he said.

He called upon the party workers to take all the development works and public welfare schemes

run by the government over the last over eight years among the people and ensure that they get the benefits from them.

Earlier in the day, Khattar paid tribute to mystic poet Sant Kabir Das on

his birth anniversary.

Khattar said that the teachings and beliefs of Sant Kabir promote equality of all religions and social harmony in society and are also relevant even in present times.

## Teachings of Sant Kabir relevant even in modern times: Bhupinder Hooda

Chandigarh:

Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Sunday said the teachings of Sant Kabir are relevant even in modern times and called the mystic poet and saint an epitome of human virtue.

The former Haryana chief minister in Rohtak at an event extended greetings to the people on the occasion of Sant Kabir Jayanti, and called the a social reformer, a thinker, critic, writer, guide, philosopher, poet, scholar, visionary, and an ideological movement in himself.

"Sant Kabir is our guide. Hindus and Muslims alike considered him as their own. His couplets are still remembered by all of us," he said and quoted some of his famous 'dohas.' According to a statement, Hooda, who is the Leader of Opposition in Haryana Assembly, said the teachings of Sant Kabir are also more relevant in today's era when some people are trying to create divisions on the basis of caste and religion for their political gains.

"We believe that every political party should take inspiration from the thoughts of Kabir Das ji when it formulates its policies, so that the participation of the deprived sections can be ensured at every level of the so-



ciet," he said.

Hooda said Congress party always gave priority to the welfare of the progress of scheduled castes, backward classes and the poor in the society.

"...the previous Congress government has set up schools in every village and locality to educate the children of SC, backward classes and the poor," he said. He alleged that the BJP led government stopped some of the schemes of the poor introduced by the previous Congress regime, which the party will resume once it comes back in power.

Haryana Congress president Udai Bhan claimed that every section of the society is

unhappy with the present government.

He said, if voted to power in 2024 assembly elections in Haryana, Congress will hike the old age pension from Rs 2,750 at present to Rs 6,000 per month, give 300 units of free electricity per month, restart the former Congress government scheme of giving free plots of 100 yards each to the poor.

"Farmers' crops will not be allowed to be sold for less than the MSP. Domestic gas cylinders will be given to every family for Rs 500 and apart from filling up 2 lakh government posts lying vacant, the backlog of SC, BC recruitment will also be completed," he assured.

# Mali community holds maha panchayat, raises quota demands

Jaipur:

The Mali community on Sunday held a 'maha panchayat' in the Rajasthan capital to demand 12 per cent reservation in jobs and higher education as well as increased political representation in the state and at the Centre.

The panchayat, attended by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, was called nearly a month after members of the community blocked the Jaipur-Agra National Highway to press for their demands. The BJP leaders were chief guests at the meet.

Maurya's speech at the event was disrupted after a large number of participants raised slogans in favour of Chief Minister and Congress leader Ashok Gehlot, who is a member of the Mali community. Birla did not address the 'maha panchayat' and left the programme. The 11-day-long protest on the highway was called off on May 2 after the state government assured that the Rajasthan OBC Commission will conduct a survey in view of the community's quota demand.

The reservation demands have to be fulfilled by the Centre, but it will have to be



routed through the state government, advocate Anubhav Chandel, a Mali community member who was present at the event, said and added that Chief Minister Gehlot has written to the prime minister over the issue.

Demands for quota have also been raised by other communities such as Jats, Brahmins, Rajputs and SCs and STs ahead of the assembly polls in Rajasthan. Elections in the state are due at the end of this year.

Senior Congress functionaries and the chief minister's son Vaibhav Gehlot, who is the Rajasthan State Cricket Association's president, were also present at

the 'maha panchayat' organised at the Vidhyadhar Nagar stadium.

The 'maha panchayat' passed a 11-point resolution, which stated that Mahatma Jyotiba Rao Phule and Savitri Bai Phule should be honoured with the Bharat Ratna, and the Saini, Mali, Kushwaha, Shakya, Maurya, Suman, Vanmali, Bhoi Mali community should be given 12 per cent reservation on the basis of their economic and social backwardness.

At least one ticket in each district from a national political party in the assembly polls and one ticket for the Lok Sabha elections should be given to a member of the

community, it said. Other demands included availability of resources to connect the extremely backward class society with the mainstream by releasing the figures of the 2011 caste census.

Speaking on the occasion, Maurya said in the 2018 Rajasthan assembly polls, while the BJP gave six tickets to members of the Mali community, the Congress gave four. "If we unite then the number can increase to 20 based on the community's population," the BJP leader said. "I assure that I will strongly present the 11-point demand raised by the community at the Centre," he said.

## NH-9 sees heavy traffic jam as devotees flocked to take holy bath



Avnish Tyagi

Hapur:

People had to face a tough time on account of long traffic jam on NH-9 on the Delhi-Lucknow Road on Sunday caused by the crowd of devotees who had

come to take bath in the Ganga.

Due to the long line of vehicles on both sides of the national highway between the town of Garhmukteshwar and Brighat, people coming to remote and near-

by cities faced a lot of trouble.

The jam that started late in the night reached ten km in a few hours. CO Garhmukteshwar Anukriti Singh reached the spot with the police force and kept

trying to open clear the vehicular traffic.

Hapur SP Abhishek Verma said that the situation of jam arose due to heavy traffic of vehicles on the national highway. The police is trying to clear it.

## Former J-K CM Mehbooba Mufti issued passport after three years

Srinagar:

PDP president and former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti has been issued a regular passport with a validity of 10 years, after more than three years of legal battle.

Authorities had declined to renew Mehbooba's passport since 2019 citing "adverse" police report, after which she moved the Delhi High Court. The high court, in an order in March this year, stated that the passport authority should decide within three months on issuing a fresh travel document to her.

The former chief minister got her new passport just days ahead of a hearing scheduled in the Jammu and Kashmir High Court this week on her

daughter's plea for a regular travel document for herself.

In her plea in the Jammu and Kashmir HC, Mehbooba's daughter Iltija challenged the decision of the passport office to give her a country-specific passport with a limited validity of two years to facilitate her higher education. Iltija had refused to accept the conditional travel document and approached the high court with a plea for a regular passport for all countries and with a validity of 10 years.

The new passport given to Mehbooba, the last chief minister of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state before it was bifurcated in 2019, is valid from June 1, 2023 to May 31, 2033.

After several rounds

back-and-forth pleas in the Delhi High Court, Justice Pratibha M Singh had ordered in March this year that the passport authority should decide within three months on issuing a fresh travel document to Mehbooba.

"Considering that the matter is remanded back to the passport officer and the initial rejection was two years ago, let the passport officer concerned take a decision expeditiously and in any case within three months," the judge had noted in the order.

The court's order had come on a petition by Mehbooba seeking a direction to the passport authorities to take an early decision on her appeal regarding the issuance of a new passport.

In her plea to the Delhi High Court, the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said there was a considerable delay in issuing a new passport to her despite reminders and that no decision was being taken on her appeal.

In February this year, Mehbooba had sought the intervention of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar for the issuance of the passport, saying she had been waiting for it for the past three years to take her 80-year-old mother on a pilgrimage to Mecca.

In March 2021, Mehbooba and her mother Gulshan Ara were denied passports after the Jammu and Kashmir Police had cited an "adverse report". Her mother had been issued a passport two months back.



WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

# Beat plastic pollution need of the hour



By Santosh Sharma

Plastic waste is choking our seas and coasts, threatening ecosystems, livelihoods, and lives in South-East Asia. Due to Covid-19, we are now fighting a plastic pandemic of new waste created from 'new norms' of plastic consumption such as the use of single-use plastics including personal protective equipment (PPE).

Around the world, one million plastic bottles are purchased every minute, while up to five trillion plastic bags are used worldwide every year. In total, half of all plastic produced is designed for single-use purposes — used just once and then thrown away.

Plastics including microplastics are now ubiquitous in our natural environment. They are becoming part of the Earth's fossil record and a marker of the Anthropocene, our current geological era. They have even given their name to a new marine microbial habitat called the "plastisphere".

We are seeing other worrying trends. Since the 1970s, the rate of plastic production has grown faster than that of any other material. If historic growth trends continue, global production of primary plastic is forecasted to reach 1,100 million tonnes by 2050. We have also seen a worrying shift towards single-use plastic products, items that are meant to be thrown away after a single short use.

Approximately 36 per cent of all plastics produced are used in packaging, including single-use plastic products for food and beverage containers, approximately 85 per cent of which ends up in landfills or as unregulated waste.

Additionally, some 98 per cent of single-use plastic products are produced from fossil fuel, or "virgin" feedstock. The level of greenhouse gas emissions associated with the production, use and disposal of conventional fossil fuel-based plastics is forecast to grow to 19 per cent of the global carbon budget by 2040.

Of the seven billion tonnes of plastic waste generated globally so far, less than 10 per cent has been recycled. Millions of tonnes of plastic waste are lost to the environment, or sometimes shipped thousands of kilometres to destinations where it is mostly burned or dumped. The estimated annual loss in the value of plastic packaging waste during sorting and processing alone is US\$ 80-120 billion.

Cigarette butts — whose filters contain tiny plastic fibers — are the most common type of plastic waste found in the environment. Food wrappers, plastic bottles, plastic bottle caps, plastic grocery bags, plastic straws, and stirrers are the next most common items. Many of us use these products every day, without even thinking about where they might end up.

Despite current efforts, it is estimated that 75 to 199 million tonnes of plastic is currently found in our oceans. Unless we change how we produce, use and dispose of plastic, the amount of plastic waste entering aquatic ecosystems could nearly triple from 9-14 million tonnes per year in 2016 to a projected 23-37 million tonnes per year by 2040. How does it get there? A lot of it comes from the world's rivers, which serve as direct conduits of trash into lakes and the ocean.

The same properties that make plastics so useful —

their durability and resistance to degradation — also make them nearly impossible for nature to completely break down.

Most plastic items never fully disappear; they just break down into smaller and smaller pieces. Those microplastics can enter the human body through inhalation and absorption and accumulate in organs. Microplastics have been found in our lungs, livers, spleens and kidneys. A study recently detected microplastics in the placentas of newborn babies. The full extent of the impact of this on human health is still unknown. There is, however, substantial evidence that plastic-associated chemicals, such as methyl mercury, plasticisers and flame retardants, can enter the body and are linked to health concerns.

In countries with poor solid waste management systems, plastic waste — especially single-use plastic bags — can be found clogging sewers and providing breeding grounds for mosquitoes and pests, and as a result, increasing the transmission of vector-borne diseases such as malaria.

Governments are key actors in the plastics value chain and there are several things that they can do:

Firstly, they can eliminate the plastic products we do not need, through bans for example.

Governments can also promote innovation so the plastics we need are designed and brought into the economy in a way that allows for their reuse.

Governments also need to ensure we circulate plastic in the economy for as long as possible.

There are also has a number of actions that the plastic industry can take to accelerate this systematic change:

They can eliminate problematic or unnecessary plastic packaging or products by redesigning products for enhanced sustainability and in-

novating their business models to move from single use to reusable plastic products. They should provide reliable and transparent sustainability information so consumers can make informed purchases. They can also increase the use of recycled content in new products in order to circulate plastic in the economy.

There are many things that you as an individual can do from asking the restaurants you visit to stop using plastic straws, to bringing your own coffee mug to work, to pressuring your local authorities to improve how they manage your city's waste. Take the Clean Seas pledge and adopt new habits to limit your plastic footprint.

At about 34 lakh tonnes generated in 2019-20, India has a staggering annual volume of plastic waste, of which only about 60% is recycled. What is more, a recent study of the top 100 global producers of polymers that culminate in plastic waste found six of them based in India.

It is unsurprising, therefore, that in spite of the staggering problem, policymakers have been treading on eggshells. The international view is changing, however, and support for a UN Plastic Treaty is growing; the majority of G7 countries too are supportive of cleaning up the oceans through a charter in the interests of human well-being and environmental integrity.

India's policies on environmental regulation are discordant, lofty on intent but feeble on outcomes, and plastic waste is no different. State governments have felt no compulsion to replace municipal contracts, where companies are paid for haulage of mixed waste, with terms that require segregation and accounting of materials.

Considerable amounts of plastic waste cannot be recycled because of lack of segregation, leading to incineration, while mixing newer types of compostable plastic will con-

found the problem. Patchy regulation has led to prohibited plastic moving across State borders. Now that the Centre has adopted a broad ban, further pollution must end. Microplastic is already found in the food chain, and governments must act responsibly to stop the scourge.

The global production of plastics has risen almost 200 times in seven decades—the average male life expectancy. It was two million tonnes in 1950 and, in 2021, it had risen to more than 390 mt. And more than half of the total plastics over this period was produced and marketed only since 2000. Bear in mind, these figures are plastics industry submissions. If one were to include synthetic fibres, the total plastic production would be much higher.

Of the plastics produced so far since 1950, almost two-thirds ended up in the environment, including in landfills, while only just over a quarter is still in use, as per one estimate. Recycling, the most effective plastic-pollution solution, accounts for a mere 6-9% of the plastics produced so far.

The plastic pollution problem, though, is not merely one of waste, but also one of a massive carbon footprint—production and disposal of the material through incineration, the European Commission estimates, emits close to 400 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually. For perspective, the annual energy savings from recycling all global plastic waste is pegged at an equivalent of 3.5 billion barrels of oil per year. With every year of our plastic addiction, the emission challenge will only worsen—the production, use and disposal of fossil-fuel-based plastics is forecast to reach 19% of the global carbon budget by 2040.

What is behind our addiction to plastics? There are, of course, many uses of the polymer and there is hardly any sector that is untouched by it. But, our problem largely is one

of single-use plastics. Almost 50% of the plastics used can be clubbed under the head of packaging material: globally, the UNEP says, one million plastic bottles are purchased every minute while a whopping five trillion plastic bags are used every year. The use-and-throw nature of many classes of plastic products—which never degrade and are only capable of becoming ever smaller particles—explains why beating plastic pollution has been such an insurmountable challenge. And, single-use plastics have a rather heavy carbon footprint, with 98% of these being produced from "virgin" feedstock, that is, from fossil fuels and not plastics already produced.

Pictures/videos of giant plastic islands in the oceans, turtles and seal-pups choking on six-pack yokes, and cattle with plastic bags in their rumen may stir us enough to vehemently demand action every now and then, but there are even deadlier consequences that we have become aware of only lately. Micro and nanoplastics, fragments that the naked eye can't see, have now permeated almost every sphere of our habitats, and are now part of the planet's fossil record, marking the Anthropocene, the age of humans.

Our agriculture is 4-23 times more likely to be contaminated by microplastics than our oceans. Microplastics are entering our body through food, drinking water, through the air we breathe, and even our skin. They are being detected in our lungs, livers and other key organs. Such is the exposure that it is likely to become congenital—a study showed presence in the placenta. The health effects are yet unknown, but there is evidence of chemicals linked to plastics causing severe health concerns.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

## Breaking Time Sudoku

What to do  
Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digit 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only correct solution.

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

## Solution, Sudoku

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

## THE WISDOM TREE BY SUVEEN KUMAR

### OBSERVE YOURSELF

If you observe yourself more often you will less often be confused. Observing yourself is not a spiritual activity, it is an individual activity. When you observe yourself you will find that people lie when they say you are unique, you will find that people butter you when they say you are wonderful, you will find that people fool you when they call you smart. When you observe yourself you will find that people butter you when they say you are wonderful, you will find that people fool you when they call you smart. When you observe yourself you will find that people butter you when they say you are wonderful, you will find that people fool you when they call you smart.

serve THE WISDOM TREE - BY SUVEEN KUMAR with the yourself you will find there is nothing special about you, but when you keep observing yourself you will find there is nothing ordinary about you. The water is found in the ground, not on the ground. The reason we don't observe ourselves because we find ourselves too ordinary to know or too scary to know. The people's opinion matter to you because you don't have a better opinion for yourself, the people put any label on you because you are not sure about your level, they define you because you see yourself only through their eyes.

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# INDIA's MULTILATERAL AIMS



Shivansh Mishra

India is gearing up to host the 2023 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit scheduled on July 4 this year, themed 'Towards a SECURE SCO' the acronym implying Security; Economy (and Trade); Connectivity; Unity; Respect (for Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity); and Environment.

Heretofore, India concluded meetings of the SCO Defence and Foreign Ministers where dialogues between the member countries, especially the Council of Foreign Ministers of India-Pakistan, made some highlights in the mainstream media.

Recently the Ministry of External Affairs announced that India will now host the summit in a virtual format and not in person as planned before. However, no reason, in particular, was given for the sudden change, but according to the media reports, the Indian government did not receive a final confirmation on Pak-PM Shehbaz Sharif's visit to

Delhi. Similarly, no confirmation from China was received.

Asserting the fact that the visit of the Pakistan Foreign Minister to India was heavily criticized in his home country, Pak-PM may have had second thoughts about it. Moreover, India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's remarks on terrorism targeting Pakistan being a "promoter, justifier and a spokesperson of a terror industry" witnessed a face-off between the two sides.

He stated, "Victims of terrorism do not sit together with perpetrators of terrorism to discuss terrorism. The victims of terrorism defend themselves, counter acts of terrorism, they call it out, they delegitimize it, and that is exactly what is happening." Thus, he clearly communicated that promoting terrorism and compromising member nations' sovereignty and territorial integrity will not be tolerated.

The developments in the geo-political sphere also have an overbearing on the region. The majority of the Central Asian countries are dependent on Russia for their import and export requirements. Both China and Pakistan have an ongoing territorial conflict with India and utilize the SCO meetings as a chance to engage in bilateral talks on projects such as CPEC that violate India's sovereignty. On the economic front, western sanctions have made it difficult for compa-

nies, especially Chinese companies, to operate in Russia. SCO, which has the objective to resolve these issues, seems to be lagging behind, and thus it has become an utmost priority to resolve conflicts between the member states and evade sanctions.

The urge to dominate the organization by a few players becomes futile as decisions within the organization are exclusively based on the principle of consensus. Further, the member nations are guided by the 'Shanghai Sprit' encapsulating the principles of mutual trust, equality, respect for cultural diversity, and the pursuit of joint development.

However, it seems that bilateral differences might overshadow the outcomes of the SCO meetings as even before the Council of Foreign Ministers meeting, during bilateral talks between External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Chinese FM Qin Gang, differed over their understanding of the situation at the Line of Actual Control after the Chinese MFA Qin said the situation was "stable".

Thus, it would be difficult for India at the SCO to find an appropriate space for dialogues and come to a mutual understanding of the various issues and conflicts with China and Pakistan respectively.

As the world has witnessed, the Ukraine-Russia conflict has led to the emergence of a new count-

er-block against Western alliances or more specifically against NATO. Russia and China now somewhere share parallel interests in the international arena, as both harbour anti-USA sentiments, especially after the sanctions from the West. With China's ever-growing influence in the SCO, it will now be difficult for India to maintain the Asian balance.

However, on the brighter side, there are certain positives that India would like to look at during the SCO meetings.

India's vision of multilateralism prioritizes cooperation and mutual respect while advancing and protecting its core interests through multilateral engagement, as against China's means to assert its supremacy through multilateral forums. Thus, being a host country will be a real-time tester for India's foreign policy, as diplomacy is all about engagement, conversations and navigating the areas of grey where compromise may be possible.

India could perceive its membership in the SCO as a means to increase engagement with the Eurasian region. The SCO strengthens New Delhi's positioning as a "Balancing Force" - part of SCO, IBSA, BRICS, but also Quad, I2U2, G-7 outreach, and others are a grouping of those resisting sanctions on Russia and like India, they have independent foreign policy and priorities their national inter-

est. The Central Asian countries look down upon raising bilateral issues at the forum as it goes against the 'Shanghai Spirit'. As the Chair, India is setting up new pillars of cooperation within the bloc such as Startups and Innovation, Traditional Medicine, Digital Inclusion, Youth Empowerment and Shared Buddhist Heritage.

SCO is now having more traction than NATO in Eurasia as there is a queue from the Middle East/West Asia and Gulf to join SCO. This shows that it is growing its relevance in the Western part of Asia as well. To counter this and to remain pertinent, India has not only strengthened strategic partnerships with Western Countries but also with the Middle East, Africa, and South East Asia.

Thus, SCO members must de-hyphenate bilateral tensions and focus on multilateral progress for securing the socio-economic requirements and addressing the security concerns emerging from the region.

Furthermore, various experts see the Quad grouping of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States as a counterweight to the SCO's influence that Russia and China seek to project, and India's membership in both as an irreconcilable contradiction.

However, if the Quad is India's diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific, the SCO exemplifies its diplomacy in the Eurasian region. It can

be seen as an exercise of true multi-polarity. If the SCO is a bipolar China-Russia platform, it offers several multi-polarities within as other members leverage their fortes to get the best deal for themselves. The forthcoming summit has also invited heads of six international and regional organizations- the UN, ASEAN, CIS, CSTO, EAEU and CICA- underscoring the pivotal role of coordination, cooperation and commitment 'Towards a SECURE SCO'.

Hopefully, the bilateral tensions shall not detract from the attendance at the SCO meeting or the lustre of the G20 summit two months later. The dual presidency of an expanding regional group and an international prestige club with some overlapping membership but different power centres are an opportunity for Delhi to demonstrate that it has the goodwill and clout to convene high-profile international gatherings despite geopolitical fault lines at a time of global turbulence.

(The writer is an An Independent Delhi-based researcher)



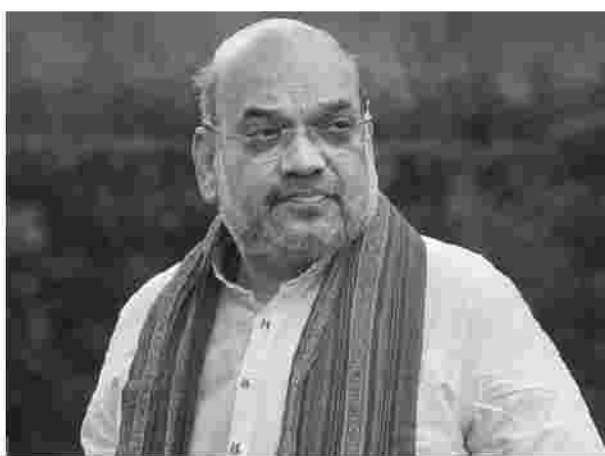
# Central govt taking holistic approach to revolutionise healthcare: Amit Shah

**Kochi**  
The Centre has taken a holistic approach to revolutionise healthcare by implementing a series of initiatives including Ayushman Bharat, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said here on Sunday.

Shah, who was in town to take part in the silver jubilee celebrations of the Kochi-based Amrita Hospital, also inaugurated two research centres under the institution.

Addressing the gathering, Shah said Mata Amritanandamayi has made immense contribution in creating appreciation for India's rich, spiritual culture and traditions.

"She has taught the art of giving to the world. Even after 50 years of serving mil-



lions of people, her humility is striking. Amma's ashram built 1,200 houses in Gujarat after the 2001 earthquake. Those villages are locally called Amma's villages. That is the gratitude of the people for the help provided by her in their hour of need," he said.

Shah said in the last nine

years, the central government has taken a holistic approach to transform healthcare with the launch of initiatives like the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Poshan Mission, Mission Indra Dhanush, Ayushman Bharat and Jal Jeevan Mission.

The hospital, run by Mata Amritanandamayi Math, also announced Rs 65 crore for charitable care.

The research centres are being set up at the Amritapuri campus of Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham in Kollam district and another one adjacent to the Amrita Hospital in Kochi.

The two new centres are intended to solve common man's problems by integrating high-quality research domains and translating them into affordable prod-

ucts for building sustainable and resilient communities, the hospital said in a statement.

Apart from Shah, state Health Minister Veena George, Agriculture Minister P Prasad, Congress MP from Ernakulam Hibi Eden, Mayor M Anilkumar, Congress MLA T.J Vinod, Swami Amritaswarupananda Puri, the Vice Chairman of Mata Amritanandamayi Math; and others participated.

Amrita Hospital in Kochi was inaugurated on May 17, 1998 by former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Over the last 25 years, the hospital has achieved numerous milestones, spearheaded innovations, and embraced technological advancements, enabling the provision of high-quality healthcare to all.

## Balasore train crash: 260 currently undergoing treatment in Odisha hospitals

**Bhubaneswar**

Altogether 260 people, who were injured in the triple train accident in Balasore, are currently undergoing treatment in various hospitals across Odisha, while around 900 have been discharged so far, health department officials said on Sunday. Three Union ministers - Ashwini Vaishnaw, Man- sukh Mandaviya and Dharmendra Pradhan - visited the state-run SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack where 202 injured people have been admitted, an official of the health facility said.

"Across the state, around 900 patients, out of 1,175 injured passengers in the train accident, have been discharged. A total of 260 injured are currently undergoing treatment in different hospitals, including private ones, in Cuttack, Balasore, Bhadrak, Soro and Jajpur.

"All are stable except one whose condition is stated to be critical," an official of the health department said. At least 202 people injured in the accident have been admitted to the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, Dr Bhubananda Maharana, the emergency officer, said.

"So far 13 passengers have been discharged, while seven patients are in the ICU. The condition of the remaining patients is stable," he said. Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and Education Minister



Dharmendra Pradhan, who hails from Odisha, visited wards of the state-run hospital and interacted with the patients who suffered injuries in the accident, Maharana said, adding that the ministers spoke to the doctors to enquire about the health condition of the victims.

Mandaviya said that doctors from three premier health facilities in New Delhi - AIIMS, Lady Hardinge Hospital and RML Hospital- have reached the state along with modern equipment and medicines for the treatment of the injured passengers.

Noting that over 100 patients need critical care, he said, "We had a detailed discussion, and a working plan has also been prepared." Mandaviya visited AIIMS Bhubaneswar where the bodies of those who died in the train crash were kept. He held a review meeting with senior doctors and officials of the health facility in the state capital.

He also visited the Capital Hospital in

Bhubaneswar to know about the condition of the injured patients admitted there. On their way to Bhubaneswar, Vaishnaw and Dharmendra also visited hospitals at Soro and Bhadrak and enquired about the treatment of the injured persons admitted to these facilities. At least 275 people were killed in the triple train accident in Balasore.

Three trains— Shalimar-Chennai Coromandel Express, Bengaluru-Howrah super fast and a goods train — were involved in Friday's crash, now being described as one of India's worst train accidents.

The Coromandel Express crashed into a stationary goods train, derailling most of its coaches at 7 pm on June 2.

A few coaches of Coromandel toppled over the last few coaches of the Bengaluru-Howrah Express which was passing by at the same time.

Investigators are looking into possible human error, signal failure and other possible causes behind the three-train crash.

## Top Maoist leader Sudarshan Kattam dies of heart attack in Chhattisgarh

**Raipur**

Top Maoist leader Anand alias Sudarshan Kattam, who carried a cash reward of Rs one crore on his head, has died of a heart attack in a forest area of Chhattisgarh's Bastar region, police said on Sunday.

Kattam, who was 69 years old, died on May 31, Additional Director General of Police (Naxal Operations) Vivekananda confirmed. "He was a politburo member of the central committee of Maoists. The government had declared a cash reward

of Rs 1 crore on his head," the police official said.

Maoists have released a press release informing about his death and more information is being collected about it, he added.

The press release issued by Abhay, the spokesperson of Maoists' central committee, said Kattam died last Wednesday around 12.20 pm after suffering a massive heart attack. He was a patient of chronic bronchitis, high blood pressure and diabetes, the release said.

## Oppn parties' meet in Patna likely to be postponed

**New Delhi**

A meeting of opposition parties, scheduled to be held in Patna on June 12, is likely to be postponed, sources said on Sunday.

With Congress leader Rahul Gandhi unavailable for the meeting, there is a view to hold the deliberations at a later date in consultation with the main opposition party so that he could also participate. Other members of the non-BJP grouping will also be reached out, the sources said. Gandhi is currently in the US.



JD(U) leader and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Ku-

mar has taken a lead in speaking to several regional satraps besides the Congress, Aam Aadmi Party, and the Left to forge unity among opposition's ranks to take on the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. He has held separate meetings with leaders of many parties, including Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge of the Congress, Delhi Chief Minister and AAP's national convener Arvind Kejriwal, West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee and NCP's Sharad Pawar.

## Train accident: TN govt says passengers from State safe; 6 remain to be directly contacted

**Chennai**

Direct contact is yet to be established with only six persons from the state vis-a-vis the Odisha train accident, the Tamil Nadu government said on Sunday while over a 100 survivors arrived here by a special train from Bhadrak.

On his arrival here following a visit to Odisha along with Transport Minister SS Sivasankar to coordinate rescue activities, Youth Welfare Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin said they did not find any one from TN in any hospital in the eastern state being treated for injuries. Udhayanidhi and Sivasankar visited hospitals, mortuary, and a call centre as well set up by Odisha for rescue initiatives. The Ministers held discussions with Odisha Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena and senior officials. Following his two-day visit to Odisha, Udhayanidhi said no passenger hailing from Tamil Nadu was affected. The state government, citing official information received so far on the train accident,



said no person from Tamil Nadu was killed or injured warranting treatment.

As regards eight Tamil Nadu people with whom contact could not be established, Udhayanidhi said authorities have now traced and spoken to two men -- Narakanigopi and A Jagadeesan-- and they were safe. Co-passengers have informed railway police that six others were also safe, he said. However, "when we speak directly to the six others also, we can come to a conclusion that no one from Tamil Nadu is affected," the Youth Welfare Minister said.

Following screening procedure for the over 100 passengers, medical examination was conducted for 36 of them and one person has been admitted as in-patient at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital here. All others have been sent home following examination. Some were treated for minor injuries.

For several survivors of the Odisha train accident who arrived here on Sunday in a special train, the trauma they endured is unlikely to dissipate soon and it was more than shock and disbelief for them.

**Hyderabad**

The threat of pandemics is far from over and the current need is to integrate surveillance systems of countries under the "One Health" framework and strengthen it, Union Minister of State for Health Bharati Pravin Pawar said on Sunday.

"The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted that partnerships are most fruitful only when developed during peacetime and not amidst an ongoing pandemic, and that we need to focus on creating resilient health systems, with primary health as its cornerstone," Pawar said in her address at the third G20 Health Working Group meeting here.

G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister of Tourism, S P Singh Baghel, Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, and Dr V K Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog, were present on the occasion.

Pawar further stated that



the "partnership we share as G20 members is vital and facilitates in building trust, sharing knowledge, creating networks and working together to achieve meaningful impact and results." Pawar also highlighted the need for availability of safe, effective and quality medical countermeasures.

Stating that India's G20 presidency is working towards building consensus for an end-to-end global medical countermeasure

ecosystem, following a network of networks approach and leveraging existing global and regional initiatives, Pawar urged the leadership of G20 countries to create an interim platform which will be guided by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) process and will feed into the same.

"Pandemics may not wait for the finalization of the Pandemic Treaty and hence, the time to act is now," she stated.

Pawar also informed the delegates of India's proposal of a global initiative on digital health, a WHO-managed network to converge ongoing initiatives in use of technology in the global health arena.

She stated that this initiative can enable bridging the digital divide amongst nations and ensure that the fruits of technology are made available to every citizen of the world.

Underscoring the contribution of Indian traditional knowledge systems to healthcare, G Kishan Reddy stated that "Indian traditional knowledge system propagated preventive and holistic wellbeing for all". He highlighted the significant impact of ayurveda and yoga across the world. He stated that "Indian civilization and cultural heritage have given us ayurveda or the science of lives which is a five-thousand-year-old medical practice. Similarly,

yoga has emerged as one of the most trusted practices to boost both physical and mental wellbeing." Highlighting the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make India one of the new hubs of medical value travel, the Union tourism minister said that India is home to affordable, efficient and reliable healthcare which positions the country as a go-to destination for medical value travel.

Reddy stated that India takes great pride in being a reliable partner in the noble vision of saving lives and protecting livelihoods and highlighted the country's recognition as the "pharmacy of the world". He stated that Genome Valley in Hyderabad alone contributes close to 33 per cent of the world's vaccine production.

Reddy emphasized that India is committed to achieving universal healthcare for all by 2030. He con-

## Unarmed 'Secret Force' Coming Up In MP's Maoist-Hit Areas With Multiple Roles

■ The process of recruitment has already been initiated as an experiment in one of these three districts that are covered under the 'Security Related Expenditure (SRE)' scheme, which funds focused operations against the rebels in 70 LWE-affected districts in 10 states.

By Praveen Dwivedi  
Bhopal

Aimed to having a strong grip over Maoist-hit districts - Balaghat, Mandla, and Dindori, the Madhya Pradesh government is in the process of establishing an unarmed force - the Vishesh Sahyog Dasta (Special Support Squad) - in the region.

The 'Dasta' would be a non-policing staff of local tribal youths, who will be given special training by the police and will be tasked to keep close watch on activities of suspects and to pass the information to the security forces secretly through a channel set up. The structure will be in the line of area commander, zonal incharge and a central command.

As per the officials, local tribal youths will be given most priority on the line of Chhattisgarh's District Reserve Guard (DRG), but the working pattern will be completely different. The functioning of the new group be directly supervised by the state police's Intelligence Department.

The process of recruitment has already been initiated as an experiment in one of these three districts that are covered under the 'Security Related Expenditure (SRE)' scheme, which funds focused operations against the rebels in 70 LWE-affected districts in 10 states.

In its classification list released in 2021, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs in-

cluded Balaghat district of Madhya Pradesh among the '25 Most Affected Districts' across eight Indian states. In addition, Mandla was identified as one among the 'Districts of Concern' among eight districts from six states.

According to IGP Intelligence Anurag, the idea of the 'Vishesh Sahyog Dasta' is to connect the tribals living in Maoist-hit areas into mainstream of development. The new system will also be utilised for implementing community policing, and the youths will be encourage to join police and security services.

Anurag (who uses a single name), a 2003 batch IPS officer, said with development of road connectivity in dense

forests have strengthened the grip of security forces a lot, but still there is need to reach to the people who are highly dominated by Maoists. He said that Vishesh Sahyog Dasta will be a multi-tasking unit.

It would be non-policing staff of local youths with sound minds, who will be creating impression among people living in Maoist-affected areas that they are being used by Left Wing Extremists (LWE) to execute their plans on the direction of the anti-national forces. After getting recruited, they will be given special training by the police. It would a non-armed secret force will be functioning through a proper set up channel," the IGP told this reporter.

■ Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra claimed the activities of Maoists have reduced as the security forces have successfully targetted their shelters and have eliminated their top leaders in the past one and a half decade.

Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra claimed the activities of Maoists have reduced as the security forces have successfully targetted their shelters and have eliminated their top leaders in the past one and a half decade.

According to data from the state Home Department, a total 11 dreaded Maoists were eliminated by state Hawk Force between 2008 to 2021. The Hawk Force, a specialised force deployed on anti-Maoist duty, is drawn up mainly from the state armed police and its personnel get an additional hardship allowance for serving in Maoist areas.

"Further, in the past one and a half year, as many as eight Maoists having reward

of more than Rs 1 crore were killed by Hawk Force of MP police. The more important is have strong willpower to take challenges and without any compromise with anti-national people. Our moto is very clear that no compromise will be done when it comes to matter of the security of people," Mishra added.

However, Maoists still remained a challenge in Madhya Pradesh as they have developed strong grip in the Balaghat, Dindori, and Mandla districts. A senior IPS officer posted with the state Home Department, said the LWE outfits are operating with a single motto to create unrest in the country.

"Despite the Maoists' disappointment with the fail-

ure of their efforts to expand and strengthen their cadres in Madhya Pradesh, their surviving operational capacities cannot simply be disregarded. Rather, preemptive action is necessary to thwart the residual Maoist threat in the state," the officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said.

"They (LWE) are being funded by foreign countries and they are brainwashing tribals using various methods - social, economically and in the name of religion. As these outfits have been operating for last several decades and have achieved strong domination among tribals, they won't stop easily," the officer told this reporter.

He claimed that many well-

meaning liberals fall prey to the Maoist propaganda without understanding the true nature of their insurgency doctrine which glorifies violence and believes in adopting a militant line to capture power.

"The majority of the civilians killed are tribals, often branded as 'police informers' before being brutally tortured and killed. In fact, the tribal and the economically underprivileged sections, whose cause the Maoists claim to espouse, have been the biggest victims of the so-called 'protracted peoples war' of the CPI-Maoist against the Indian state. This is all a conspiracy to weaken India and to create a hurdle in the path of its growth," the official said.



Blacklist agency that does not do timely and quality work: CM Yogi

Gorakhpur:

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inspected the construction works of the state's first Ayush University being built at Pipri in Bhathat on Sunday.

Expressing his displeasure over the physical progress of the work so far, he warned of fining and blacklisting the construction agency in the event of failure in improvement of its functioning in order to complete quality work on time.

On reaching the Ayush University, the Chief Minister inspected the layout design and visited the campus and took stock of the construction done so far. While inquiring about the ongoing works regarding academic block, hostel, drainage etc., he said, "Any lapse in timeliness and quality would be unforgivable."

After meeting with the vice chancellor of the Ayush University, the Chief Minister gave instructions to the agency's staff and executive body to determine the priority of the construction projects and execute accordingly.

## 'Tiffin Pe Charcha' campaign: UP CM interacts with party workers in Gorakhpur

Gorakhpur:

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday interacted with party workers here as part of the ruling BJP's 'Tiffin Pe Charcha' campaign in the run-up to next year's parliamentary polls.

Ahead of the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP launched its then-prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi's famous 'chai pe charcha' sessions to connect with voters after Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar mocked Modi's past as a tea seller.

The BJP registered a landslide victory in the elections and Modi was sworn in as the country's prime minister for the first time on May 26, 2014.

The 'Tiffin Pe Charcha' campaign, which implies "discussion over a meal", was launched to mark nine years of the Narendra Modi government at the Centre.

In a series of tweets in Hindi, Adityanath said, "On the occasion of the completion of nine years of



the Modi government, a 'tiffin pe charcha' was organised with senior BJP workers in Gorakhpur. "The meeting was extremely successful and positive. In this meeting, 328 workers took part. My good wishes to them," Adityanath added. Addressing the meeting, Adityanath said under the

leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has built considerable clout in the world.

"Today during any crisis, the world looks up to India and Prime Minister Modi with hopes in their eyes," he said lauding the PM for his "visionary leadership and continuous hard work," he said.

the northeastern states and Naxalism were at their peak with around 12 to 15 states being affected.

"Today, due to the abrogation of Article 370, there is an atmosphere of peace, harmony and development in Kashmir. In the panchayat elections held there, people participated in large numbers and the BJP got huge support. What was a fantasy earlier is a reality today," he said.

At present, there is a BJP government in the northeastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Manipur and Assam. In Nagaland and Meghalaya too, the government is running with the cooperation of the BJP, Adityanath said.

Earlier, one had to take permits to visit northeastern states, he said, adding that Naxal incidents have been curbed in affected states and the process of development has progressed rapidly.

He said in the last nine years, the respect given to Indians in foreign countries has increased.

## HP Govt stresses on protected & balanced development

Top Story News  
Hamirpur

HP Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla stressed the need for protected and balanced development in the direction of environment conservation. He said that today India is emitting the least carbon as compared to the western countries and their environment was so unbalanced that it affected the whole world.

The Governor was addressing at the 'North Zone Environment Workshop' organized by Arogya Bharti Himachal Pradesh in association with National Institute of Technology, Hamirpur at NIT, today.

The Governor said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said in the Environment Summit, "environmental protection is our commitment and not compulsion". He said that trees and plants have religious importance in our culture and we worship them. He said that he

has also reiterated his commitment towards the environment by planting Tulsi saplings in the Raj Bhavan. He added that Himachal Pradesh has good environmental condition and we need to preserve our green cover. He said that for a healthy life we have to adopt chemical free agricultural practices and go back to millets.

He said that today climate change has emerged as a matter of global concern which also directly affects us. He said that due to rapid urbanization, industrialization, population growth and uncontrolled human activities in the northern region, the environmental balance was being affected in a big way. He said that air pollution has become the biggest concern in this area. Industrial emissions, vehicular pollution etc. were contributing factors to this problem, he said. To end this, he advocated strict regulations to promote sustainable development, adopt cleaner technologies.

## Bhaderwah emerges as lavender capital of India, says Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh

Javed Mehrab  
Bhaderwah:

Union Minister of State (In-charge) Science & Technology, MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space Dr. Jitendra Singh said it is a moment of pride for all of us as Bhaderwah has emerged as the lavender capital of India and agri start up destination.

CSIR- Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine, Jammu organised the event as part of its 'One Week One Lab Campaign'.

Dr Jitendra Singh described Bhaderwah as the birthplace of India's Purple Revolution and the destination of Agri-StartUps.

The Minister said that the valley of Bhaderwah is the best example of development of the present progressive government at the centre which should have been celebrated much earlier, Bhaderwah being the best place for lavender cultivation in terms of land and climate.

Dr. Jitendra Singh while referring to the lavender cultivation in the region, said that Lavender is an avenue of employment generation and research opening many paradigms of development.

The lavender cultivation has changed the lives of many farmers and it is heartening to note that Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, in the 99th Edition of Mann ki Baat, appreciated the efforts of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research- Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM) in supporting farmers in the cultivation of Lavender in the



region of Lavender in the Bhaderwah, Doda district, J&K under CSIR-Aroma Mission.

He said that farmers had been engaged in traditional maize cultivation for decades, but some farmers thought of doing something different. "They turned to floriculture, that is, the cultivation of flowers. Today, around two and a half thousand farmers are cultivating Lavender here. They have also been handheld through the Aroma Mission of the Central Government. This new cultivation has greatly increased the income of the farmers."

The CSIR-Aroma Mission is a flagship project of CSIR under which Lavender cultivation is being promoted in the temperate regions of J&K. The aim of the project is to increase the income of small and marginal farmers and develop agriculture-based Startups. The project is being directly monitored by Dr. Jitendra Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister of

State (IC) of the Ministry of Science & Technology. Under his directions, CSIR-IIIM is implementing Lavender cultivation in Bhaderwah and other parts of J&K.

It is important to mention that over many decades of scientific interventions, the CSIR-IIIM has developed its elite variety (RRL-12) and agrotechnology of Lavender. The variety of Lavender is highly suitable for cultivation in the rainfed temperate regions of India. Under CSIR-Aroma Mission, CSIR-IIIM introduced Lavender and provided more than 30 Lakh free Lavender plants to the farmers of different districts of J&K. The end-to-end technology package for cultivation, processing, value addition, and marketing of the Lavender crop were also provided to the farmers. CSIR-IIIM installed fifty distillation units (45 fixed and five mobile) at different locations across J&K to support farmers in processing their produce.

Many small and marginal

maize farmers in the temperate regions of the Jammu division have successfully adopted Lavender. Lavender cultivation has employed large numbers of farmers and young entrepreneurs in the geographically remote regions of J&K. Due to the intervention of CSIR-IIIM, a new industry around Lavender cultivation has developed in the region. More than 2500 farmers are cultivating Lavender in different parts of J&K. Women are primarily employed in the Lavender fields for harvesting and processing the flower, which has increased women's income in the region. Many young entrepreneurs have started small-scale businesses through the value addition of Lavender oil, hydrosol, and flowers. CSIR-IIIM conducted many skills development programs and trained more than 2500 farmers and young entrepreneurs from J&K on Lavender cultivation, processing, value addition, and marketing.

## Health ATMs will be installed at all 5 CHCs with PICU: CM Yogi

Gorakhpur:

Strengthening the health infrastructure in Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday inaugurated the newly constructed Pediatric Intensive Care Units (PICU) at five Community Health Centres (CHCs), located at Bhathat, Sahjanwa, Pali, Bangsaon and Harnahi. On this occasion, the Chief Minister also announced that health ATMs will be installed at all the five CHCs with PICU.

All these five PICUs have been constructed by Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan Limited (HURL) with Corporate Environmental Responsibility (CER) funds.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony held at Bhathat CHC, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said, "Starting a Pediatric ICU at five CHCs simultaneously is a big achievement. PICU is the companion in trouble. Now the commissioner and CMO have been directed to install Health ATMs at these five CHCs."

"With the Health ATM, people will get the facility of 60 types of medical tests and through tele-consultation they will be able to consult experts, doctors from Gorakhpur, Lucknow, Delhi in hardly ten minutes", he added.

CM Yogi added: "During the Corona times, when people were having breathing problems, there was a huge demand for ICU beds. Earlier there were not even a single ICU bed in 26 districts. Under the guidance of PM Modi, arrangements were made for ten ICU beds in every



district and the health staff were trained for it. Uttar Pradesh was successful in reducing the death toll to a minimum while doing excellent corona management."

Talking about the painful history of Uttar Pradesh in terms of deaths caused by encephalitis for four decades, the Chief Minister said, "Every year more than 1500 children died prematurely due to encephalitis. Poor children neither could get the required medicine nor treatment. Even if someone escaped encephalitis, they would face disability for the rest of their lives."

He further added that now no child dies of encephalitis and the disease has been completely controlled. This has been possible due to excellent surveillance, cleanliness, pure drinking water, PHC, CHC, district hospital, medical college and excellent arrangements for treatment, he pointed out.

Thanking HURL for PICU, Chief Minister Yogi

Adityanath said, "Along with compost production, HURL is taking forward its social commitments as the process of setting up Pediatric ICUs in 14 health centers has been started. The inauguration of two PICUs at Jungle Kauria and Chargaon was done a few months ago. Five are being inaugurated today."

Informing about the rapid development, the Chief Minister said that due to excellent connectivity, areas like Bhathat, Pipraich, Pipiganj would become like Gorakhpur in future.

He further informed that earlier it used to take one hour to reach Bhathat from Gorakhpur temple but today he has arrived in just 12 minutes.

Describing Bhathat as the junction of Gorakhpur and Maharajganj Chief Minister said, "People of Shyamdeurwa and Parataval will also get the benefit of PICU. Fertilizer factory, AIIMS was never expected but today it has become a reality. Super

specialty service is being provided in BRD Medical College. Excellent health facilities are available in rural areas."

He assured to increase the number of doctors and other facilities at Bhathat CHC.

Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan Limited from Gorakhpur Unit's Corporate Environmental Responsibility (CER) Fund is constructing 14 PICUs in the district in different phases at a cost of more than Rs 24 crore in Community Health Centres.

So far the construction process of seven medical units (Jungle Kauria, Chargaon, Bhathat, Pali, Sahjanwa, Bangsaon and Harnahi) has been completed.

CM Yogi inaugurated two on March 6 itself. Five were inaugurated on Sunday. The main objective of this project is to reduce the child mortality rate through installation of the latest equipment used in pediatrics at the district level.

## CM Ashok Gehlot to Launch Gas Cylinder Subsidy Yojana on Monday

Jaipur:

The state government is providing gas cylinders just for Rs 500 to 76 lakh consumers under the Indira Gandhi Gas Cylinder Subsidy Scheme. Along with the select families of the Ujjwala Scheme, BPL families with gas connections are eligible for this scheme. This scheme has been implemented in the state from April 1, 2023. After registration, based on the transaction data from the gas companies, a provision has been made to automatically deposit the difference amount on a fortnightly basis in the bank account linked with Jan Aadhaar of the consumer.

To provide relief from inflation to the people of the state Gehlot announced an inflation relief package of Rs 19,000 crore in the budget 2023-24. The Mehanga Rahat Camps are being organised across the state from April 24 in which



guarantee cards are being provided on registration in 10 public welfare schemes. Around 1.43 crore families in the state have registered themselves in these camps.

Out of the customers eligible in this scheme, 22 lakh consumers had booked the refill in the month of April this year. Of these, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Monday will di-

rectly transfer the benefit in accounts of 14 consumers who had registered themselves in the mehanga rahat camps. As and when the remaining consumers will get themselves registered in the rahat camps, the benefit amount will be transferred.

It is to be mentioned that the state government is providing gas cylinders just

for Rs 500 to 76 lakh consumers under the Indira Gandhi Gas Cylinder Subsidy Scheme. Along with the select families of the Ujjwala Scheme, BPL families with gas connections are eligible for this scheme. This scheme has been implemented in the state from April 1, 2023. Currently, the benefit of this scheme is being provided through

registration in the mehanga rahat camps. Till now around, 48.63 lakh families have registered themselves in the scheme.

After registration, based on the transaction data from the gas companies, a provision has been made to automatically deposit the difference amount on a fortnightly basis in the bank account linked with Jan Aadhaar of the consumer.

Chief Minister Shri Ashok Gehlot to provide relief from inflation to the people of the state announced an inflation relief package of Rs 19,000 crore in the budget 2023-24.

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## HP govt aims to reduce dependency on loans: Sukhu

Special emphasis on resource mobilization

Top Story News  
Shimla

Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said here on Sunday that despite inheriting a substantial debt of Rs. 75,000 Crore from the previous BJP government and facing financial restrictions on restoring the old pension scheme from the Union Government, the state government is actively focused on resource mobilization. He said that the state government has initiated several measures to generate additional revenue for the state exchequer. These include seeking a larger share in power projects of Central PSUs that have recouped their costs. The government has also conducted auctions for liquor vends, resulting in an additional 40 percent revenue for the state coffers.

Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu emphasized that the state government is striving to maintain the pace of development despite the precarious financial condition. The state government is committed to enhancing the state's own resources and ensuring that the lack of funds does not hinder the state's progress.

He said that the Union Government has imposed a ceiling on new proposals for external assistance through external aided agencies from Himachal Pradesh. This restriction will be in place for three years, from 2023-24 to 2025-26 and by the end of the financial year 2025-26, Himachal Pradesh will only be eligible for approval of proposals up to Rs. 2,944 crore from the Government

of India.

The Chief Minister said that State Government's decision to reinstate the old pension scheme for the government employees has led to a deduction of Rs. 1,779 crore from the borrowing ceiling for the financial year 2022-23. Additionally, the limit of open market borrowing has been reduced by around Rs. 5,500 Crore as compared to the previous year. The state government has obtained authorization for borrowing Rs. 4,259 crore until December 2023, and it is expected to receive authorization for around Rs. 8,500 crore.

Despite these challenges, Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu stated that, the state government is placing special emphasis on resource mobilization.



Far-left protesters clash with German police in Leipzig after trial verdict

Berlin:

Far-left supporters of a young woman given a lengthy prison sentence for participating in attacks on neo-Nazis and other extremists clashed with police in the eastern German city of Leipzig over the weekend, leaving 50 officers and a number of protesters injured.

Saturday's planned demonstration among backers of Lina E., whose full name wasn't released because of privacy rules, was banned by the city of Leipzig. Police said that around 1,500 protesters showed up despite the ban.

What started out as a largely peaceful rally eventually led to clashes between protesters and police, in which some demonstrators threw stones, bottles and fireworks as police attempted to clear certain areas of the city. Leipzig police chief Rene Demmler said Sunday that 50 officers and an unknown number of protesters were injured, according to German news agency dpa.

Authorities are now investigating individuals for serious disturbance of the peace and attacking police officers. Around 30 people were arrested, Demmler said, and another 40 to 50 were detained and released by Sunday afternoon.

German interior minister Nancy Faeser denounced some protesters' violent actions and wished the injured officers a speedy recovery in a statement Sunday.

"Nothing justifies the senseless violence of left-wing extremist chaos and rioters," she said. "Anyone who throws stones, bottles or incendiary devices at police officers must be held accountable."

## Biden's 2024 pitch highlights pragmatism over Trump's pugilism

Washington:

President Joe Biden promised voters in 2020 that he knew how to get things done in Washington and could bring stability to the capital. It seemed like a message out of step with the more combative era brought on by Donald Trump.

But Biden prevailed, and as he seeks a second term, he is again trying to frame the race as a referendum on competence and governance, pointing to the bipartisan debt limit and budget legislation he signed on Saturday as another exemplar of the success of his approach.

The agreement the Democratic president negotiated with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy and other Republicans averted the catastrophe of a US government default — and forestalled another threat until after the 2024 election — while largely protecting the domestic agenda that formed the backbone of what he hopes will form his legacy.

His approach, favouring pragmatism over Trumpian pugilism, will be tested as



never before in the coming campaign, with his approval rating even among Democrats low despite the results he has delivered, in large part because of concerns about his age as the oldest person to ever seek the presidency.

"The results speak for themselves," said Jeff Zients, the 80-year-old Biden's chief of staff. "This level of support

shows that we got a bipartisan deal that, most importantly, protects the president's priorities. And now we have a runway to execute on the president's priorities." Biden's allies say his strategy reflects his broader view of the presidency: tuning out the daily chatter and focusing on making a prolonged impact.

"This was quintessential

— longevity — is also perhaps Biden's steepest hill as he seeks four more years.

Biden, aides said, devised a strategy shortly after Republicans took the House in November and stuck by it through the talks, despite second-guessing from members of his own party. He pressed the Republicans to define their budget priorities, then hammered them in public for unpopular proposed cuts once they did, to enter the negotiations with the strongest hand possible.

"He believes in the institutions of American governance. He's approached this with an eye toward making the presidency and the Congress work and the way they were designed to work," said Mike Donilon, a senior adviser to the president.

As the talks progressed, Biden stepped out of the limelight to allow Republican leaders to claim a win — necessary to sell it to their caucus — and quietly reassured Democrats that they would grow to like the deal the more they learned about it.

## Russian governor offers to meet group holding soldiers captive

Moscow:

The governor of Russia's Belgorod region said on Sunday that he was willing to meet a pro-Ukraine group of Russian partisans holding two Russian soldiers captive, as he reported a renewed flare-up of fighting near the border. The Freedom of Russia Legion and the Russian Volunteer Corps have claimed responsibility for a spate of cross-border attacks inside Russian territory, including last week when Moscow said two civilians were killed during fighting.

In a video on the Freedom of Russia's Telegram channel, a man identifying himself as the commander of the Russian Volunteer Corps said he would hand over two soldiers they were holding captive in exchange for a meeting with the governor. The video showed the two captives, one of whom appeared to be injured and was laid out on an operating table.

"Today until 17:00 you have the opportunity to communicate without weapons and take home two Russian citizens, ordinary soldiers whom you and your political leader-

ship sent to the slaughter," read a joint statement posted along with the video. The governor of Belgorod, Vyacheslav Gladkov, appeared in a video message three hours later, in which he agreed to meet the group if the soldiers were still alive.

"Most likely they (the saboteurs) killed them, as hard as it is for me to say. But if they are alive, from 5-6 p.m. - Shebekino checkpoint. I guarantee safety," Gladkov said. He added that fighting with a group of "Ukrainian saboteurs" was taking place in the town of Novaya Tavolzhanka, near the Ukrainian border, without providing any details.

Russia, which launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, says the two groups are "terrorists" acting as proxies for Kyiv. Ukraine has denied direct involvement in the attacks but has cast them as a consequence of Russia's invasion.

Gladkov said on Sunday that Ukrainian forces continued to shell his region overnight after two people were killed the previous evening and hundreds of children were evacuated away from the border.

## 'Pak women who attacked military installations to be jailed for 10 years'

Lahore:

The women supporters of ousted Pakistan premier Imran Khan who have been arrested in connection with arson attacks on military installations will be jailed for 10 years for their "unpardonable crime", a senior official has said.

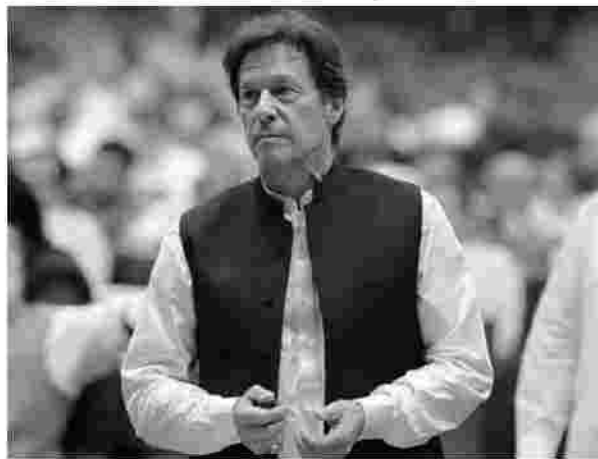
Addressing the media here on Saturday evening, Prime Minister's Special Assistant Attaullah Tarar told reporters that a joint investigation team has been formed to find out the mastermind of those attacks.

"All those including

women involved in attacks on military installations will be handed down a severe punishment," he said.

"The women who attacked the military installations on May 9 will get a punishment of 10 years as their crime is unpardonable," Tarar said.

Widespread violence erupted in Pakistan after Khan was arrested by paramilitary personnel outside the Islamabad High Court on May 9. The 70-year-old Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief was later released on bail.



Over 20 military installations and government buildings, including the military headquarters in Rawalpindi, were damaged or torched in the violence that ensued from Khan's arrest. Over 100 vehicles of police and other security agencies were set on fire.

Law enforcement agencies have arrested over 10,000 workers of Khan's PTI party across Pakistan, most of them from Punjab.

Tarar slammed the imprisoned women from the PTI for complaining about the substandard food served to them in jails.

"We can't provide them tasty food in jail. These women were on the forefront in attacking the state installations," he said.

Tarar also said there would be no talks with the PTI till all culprits of the May 9 violence are punished.

A joint investigation team has been formed to find out the mastermind of these attacks, he said, adding that it has been established that Khan was behind the unrest.

Several federal ministers including Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah have said Khan is likely to be tried under the military laws for masterminding attacks on the military installations.

Reacting to reports of mistreatment of arrested PTI women in jails, former prime minister Khan tweeted on Sunday: "PTI women have been abducted and are being mistreated in jails, kept under inhumane conditions and subjected to severe mental torture when none were involved in the arson." Khan said the party's women supporters were humiliated while protesting peacefully to terrorise and scare them from exercising their fundamental right of protest in the future and also to depoliticise them.

## BUSINESS

### FPIs investment hit 9-month high at Rs 43,838 cr in May

New Delhi:

Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) pumped in Rs 43,838 crore in Indian equities in May, the highest level in nine months, supported by strong macroeconomic fundamentals, and reasonable valuations.

FPIs continued the buying stance in June too, and invested Rs 6,490 crore in just two trading sessions of the month, data with the repositories showed.

VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said that inflow by FPIs will continue in the current month since the latest GDP data and high-frequency indicators reflect a robust economy gaining further strength.

According to the data, FPIs invested a net sum of Rs 43,838 crore in the Indian equities in the entire month of May.

This is the highest level of investment by FPIs in the last nine months. Before this, they put in a net sum of Rs 51,204 crore in equities in August 2022, data showed.

This came following a net infusion of Rs 11,630 crore in



equities in April and Rs 7,936 crore in March.

The March investment was mainly driven by bulk investment in the Adani Group companies by US-based GQG Partners. However, if one adjusts for the investments of GQG in Adani Group, the net flow was negative.

Moreover, in the first two months of the year, FPIs had pulled out over Rs 34,000 crore.

Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research at Morningstar India, said the latest net inflows are largely driven by the strong domestic macro-outlook, reasonable valuation of the Indian equities, and a good earning season signifying better growth prospects.

The sustained buying by FPIs has lifted the NSE benchmark index, Nifty, during the period under review.

## Private sector investment set to witness significant increase: CII President R Dinesh

New Delhi:

Private sector investment is set to witness a significant increase, as capacity utilisation in several key sectors has already crossed 80 per cent and economic growth is estimated to be 6.7 per cent in the current financial year, newly elected CII President R Dinesh said on Sunday.

He also exuded confidence that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will maintain status quo on interest rate in the next bi-monthly monetary policy to be announced later this week.

On why the government unsuccessfully keeps on nudging private companies to increase investment, the CII president said that the period between 2016 to 2019, was not good for growth and in 2020 there was COVID.

"We have circumstances beyond our control which hampered demand ... We did come out of the COVID much faster," he said, adding that as per the CMIE data investment commitment of Rs



Citing the CII's annual CEOs survey, he said all sectors have crossed 75 per cent capacity utilisation and the figure was 80 per cent in key sectors like cement, steel, chemicals and machinery.

"We are at the cusp of where private sector capex will see a significant increase happening," he said, adding that as per the CMIE data investment commitment of Rs

25.7 lakh crore was made last year, as compared to Rs 14.3 lakh crore a year ago.

Last year in September, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman sought to know from the industry what is holding it back from investing in manufacturing, even though foreign investors show confidence in India.

Drawing a parallel between India Inc and the

mythological character, 'Hanuman', Nirmala Sitharaman said the government is willing to engage with the industry and take policy action.

On the question about when the investments will happen, he said: "I think you will shortly get the answer... Now we see that visibility." When asked about the pressure points, Dinesh

said at the global level the world economy itself is facing issues and at present no other country in the world is getting near to their normal growth rates.

"From the domestic side, I think the only big worry for us is the El Niño effect on the monsoon," he said adding, however, El Niño does not necessarily mean that there will be a low rate of growth.

After a rare triple-dip La Nina, there is a probability of the warming of the equatorial Pacific Ocean in the coming months, called the El Niño phenomenon, that is associated with higher global temperatures, and it is likely to impact monsoon in India.

La Nina refers to the phase of cooling of the sea-surface temperatures than normal.

Further, he said that the continued focus of the government on increasing spending to develop modern infrastructure is a "big blessing" in ensuring that the economy grows and is also building a virtuous cycle.

## Govt holds preliminary talks with BALCO for withdrawing arbitration

New Delhi:

The government is looking to sell a part of its residual 49 per cent stake in Balco through a public offer and is engaging with the firm's promoter Vedanta to withdraw arbitration and facilitate stock exchanges listing of the company, DIPAM Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said.

The Ministry of Mines and the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) have held

'preliminary talks' with Vedanta Ltd — the promoters of erstwhile public sector company BALCO, he said. BALCO has to withdraw a 2009 arbitration case it filed against the government over valuation dispute of the residual stake.

"We have talked (with BALCO promoters) at preliminary level. We will engage with them in detail. If we have to do public listing, they (Vedanta) will have to withdraw the case. If they agree



then we can move forward," Pandey said. The government wants to sell part of its 49 per cent stake in BALCO in the initial public offering (IPO) before eventually exiting the company. A stock exchange listing would give an idea on the fair valuation of BALCO.

The government had in 2001 sold 51 per cent stake in the then state-owned Bharat Aluminium Company Ltd (BALCO) to Sterlite Industries Ltd, a subsidiary of Vedanta Ltd, for Rs 551 crore. The remaining 49 per cent is with the government of India.

The deal had a call option in the shareholder agreement which allowed Sterlite Industries to acquire residual 49 per cent stake from the government by March 2004. When Sterlite offered Rs 1,099 crore in 2004 for buying the residual stake, the government rejected it as a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report had said that BALCO valuation should be higher.

Following this, Anil Agarwal-led Vedanta Group initiated arbitration against the government in 2009.

The BALCO arbitration story is the same as that of Hindustan Zinc (HZL) in which Vedanta had initiated arbitration against the government in 2009, but the Supreme Court in November 2021 allowed the government to proceed with open market sale of its 29.5 per cent in the zinc company, instead of selling the stake to the promoters of the company.

"The BALCO arbitration story is the same as that of Hindustan Zinc (HZL) in which Vedanta had initiated arbitration against the government in 2009, but the Supreme Court in November 2021 allowed the government to proceed with open market sale of its 29.5 per cent in the zinc company, instead of selling the stake to the promoters of the company."

Domestic investors would track the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) data for the services sector, scheduled to be announced, on Monday.

Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equities Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd, said, domestic market participants will keep an eye on the upcoming Reserve Bank of India (RBI) policy meet and monsoon progress.





# A look at top performers who took Australia to final against India

New Delhi

The mighty Australians will be playing their first-ever final of the ICC World Test Championship at The Oval from June 7 onwards, where they will lock horns against rivals India for the prestigious golden championship mace. Before the start of WTC cycle 2019-21, the World Test Championship winner was determined by a ranking system from 2003 to 2019. On April 1 every year, the Test championship mace was given to the top-ranked team along with cash prize. Australia has emerged as the top-ranked team on this cut-off date set by ICC a total of eight times. India has also won the Test mace five times, but all these wins came before the Championship was played in a league format.

But the WTC started to be played in a league format in late 2010s, with the first WTC cycle held in 2019-2021. India and New Zealand emerged as top two sides under this new league format and battled in the final in UK, which NZ won. Under the league format, Australia is playing its first-ever final of ICC World Test Championship.

Australia's journey towards the 'Ultimate Test' against India was one filled with dominance and determination reminding fans of the Australian side of the 2000s when they had a stronghold over every format of the game. Here is the top performers from this star-studded Australian side. 1). Usman Khawaja



This 36-year-old southpaw had a career resurgence of sorts in 2022. After staying out of the Test side for two years, having played his last Test in August 2019, Khawaja entered the Australian set-up in 2022 as a man on a mission, to make the absolute best out of whatever number of Tests his

body could let him play. The batter went on a rampage, scoring 1,608 runs at an average of 69.91 in 16 Test matches. In 28 innings, Khawaja scored six centuries and seven half-centuries, with the best score of 195\*. He is the second-highest scorer in the WTC 2021-23 cycle, behind

England's Joe Root (1,915 runs). 2). Marnus Labuschagne

This 28-year-old was a rising star and was considered as the heir apparent to current Australian batting great Steve Smith before the start of the 2021-23 WTC cycle. Labuschagne proved himself as a superstar for the

future, scoring 1,509 runs in 19 matches at an average of 53.89. In 33 matches, he scored five centuries and five fifties, with best score of 204. He is the fourth-highest scorer in WTC 2021-23 cycle and even outscored Smith. 3). Steve Smith

This veteran continued to live up to his billing as the best Test batter of this generation during the 2021-23 WTC cycle. In 19 matches, he scored 1,252 runs at an average of 50.08. In 30 matches, he scored three centuries and six fifties, with best score of 200\*. He is the sixth-highest scorer in WTC 2021-23 cycle. 4). Travis Head

The 29-year-old solidified himself as a future staple in the Australian top order during the WTC 2021-23 cycle. In 17 matches, he scored 1,208 runs at an average of 52.52 at a strike rate of above 80. In 26 innings, he scored three centuries and six fifties, with best score of 175. He also took seven wickets with his useful spin bowling. 5). Cameron Green

This 23-year-old lanky, blonde-haired all-rounder from Western Australia is a star for the future. In 16 matches, he scored 705 runs at an average of 39.16. In 21 innings, he scored one century and five fifties, with best score of 114. He also took 23 wickets at an average of 29.17 and a strike rate of 3.10. His best bowling figures in the 2021-23 cycle is 5/27. 6). Nathan Lyon

The Australian spin great is the leading wicket-taker in WTC 2021-23 cycle. In 19 Tests, Lyon took a

whooping 83 wickets at an average of 26.97 and an economy rate of 2.97, with best bowling figures of 8/64. 7). Pat Cummins

The Australian skipper ended with a tally of 53 wickets in 15 matches at an average of 21.22 and an economy rate of 2.68. He also has the best bowling figures of 5/38. He ended as the sixth-highest wicket-taker in the WTC 2021-23 cycle. 8). Mitchell Starc

Sitting just next to Cummins in the seventh spot is Mitchell Starc. The fiery pacer took a total of 51 wickets in 16 matches at an average of 27.27 and an economy rate of 3.05. his best bowling figures are 4/33 in this cycle. India and Australia will lock horns in the WTC Final from June 7 onwards.

India's squad for WTC final: Rohit Sharma (Captain), Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli, Ajinkya Rahane, KS Bharat (wk), Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Shardul Thakur, Mohd. Shami, Mohd. Siraj, Umesh Yadav, Jaydev Unadkat, Ishan Kishan (wk). Rituraj Gaikwad, Mukesh Kumar and Suryakumar Yadav have been named as stand-by players for the high-stakes match.

Australia squad: Pat Cummins (c), Scott Boland, Alex Carey (wk), Cameron Green, Marcus Harris, Travis Head, Josh Inglis (wk), Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Todd Murphy, Michael Neser, Steve Smith (vc), Mitchell Starc, David Warner. Standby players: Mitch Marsh, Matthew Renshaw.

## Sri Lanka bounces back to beat Afghanistan in second ODI

Hambantota

Sri Lanka bounced back to beat Afghanistan by 132 runs on Sunday to square the three-match one-day series.

It was Sri Lanka's biggest win over Afghanistan in ODIs and makes amends for its disappointing performance in the first ODI on Friday, which they lost by six wickets.

Having set Afghanistan a stiff 324-run target, fast bowler Dushmantha Chameera dismissed the dangerous Rahmanullah Gurbaz cheaply for two runs to give his side an early advantage. Although Afghanistan put together two strong partnerships after that, the required run rate kept climbing and the Afghans lost their way trying to keep pace. Opening batsman Ibrahim Zadran continued his good form, posting 54 runs while captain Hashmatullah Shahidi top scored with 57 runs, but once Sri Lanka dismissed the top order there was not much resistance from the rest of the batters.

From 146-2, Afghanistan collapsed to be bowled out for 191 runs in 42.1 overs, losing their last eight wickets for just 45 runs. Spinners Wanindu Hasaranga and Dhananjaya de Silva shared six wickets between them to seal a comprehensive win for the home side. Sri Lanka's batting put on a show giving the team confidence ahead of the World Cup qualifiers in Zimbabwe this month.

Afghanistan have already qualified for the World Cup and despite the heavy defeat on Sunday, will feel positive with star Rashid Khan expected to feature in the final game on Wednesday. The leg-spinner was ruled out of the first two with a back injury.

Half-centuries by Kusal Mendis and Dimuth Karunaratne helped Sri Lanka post its commanding total. While Mendis top scored with 78 runs off 75 balls with seven fours and one six, Karunaratne, who was recalled for this series to stabilize the batting, made 52 off 62 balls with seven fours. Opener Pathum Nissanka contributed 43 runs while Sadeera Samarawickrama, featuring in an ODI for the first time since 2019, made 44 off 46 balls. There was some big hitting by the lower middle order with captain Dasun Shanaka chipping in with 23 runs while Wanindu Hasaranga finished things off in style with an unbeaten 29 off 12 balls with four fours and a six.

Dhananjaya de Silva was named Man of the Match for his unbeaten 29 and three wickets.

## "I have a tendency to put on my left shoe first," says Brett Lee

Sydney

Former Australian bowler Brett Lee shared his opinion on superstition and whether he believes in it. He said that he has certain beliefs and it all started when he scored a few wickets. He said, "Sometimes, I have the tendency to put my left shoe on first, which has become a routine for me. It all started when I happened to score a few wickets after doing so, and I didn't want to risk displeasing any higher powers or gods."

He further spoke about his superstitious beliefs and shared an incident. He added, "Rather than being overly superstitious, it has become a habitual part of my pre-game routine. I remember one match where I faced a player named Neil Mackenzie from South Africa, who was extremely superstitious."

"On one occasion, he went to bat in a test match and scored a century, but what made it peculiar was that all the toilet seats were lifted up. As a result, every time we had to bat afterwards, all the toilet seats had to remain up. It was a silly superstition," said Brett Lee. Ace cricketers Brett Lee and Chris Gayle appeared on a comedy-based reality show and shared a few memories associated with their sports careers.

In a hilarious conversation, Brett Lee also shared if he faces conflicts at home, like in India, concerning the TV



remote. As most men are keen on watching cricket while women at home are fond of enjoying their favourite TV shows. Commenting on the same, he said, "Everything is now accessible on our phones. So, you'd find yourself sitting there, and the kids absolutely love the phone. They'll constantly be pressing buttons. Personally, I don't watch much cricket while I am home. I don't indulge in sports much because I work extensively in the media, particularly covering cricket, which is a fantastic job. But when I'm home, I usually have music playing in the background while the boys are engrossed in their play."

## Hazlewood out of WTC final, Neser joins Australia squad

London

Australian fast bowler Josh Hazlewood was on Sunday ruled out of the World Test Championship final after failing to recover from the side strain he picked up during his IPL stint, dealing a huge blow to his side ahead of the marquee match against India.

The WTC final is scheduled at the Oval from June 7-11.

Pacer Michael Neser replaced Hazlewood in the squad as the selectors hoped that the latter will recover to be fit for the Ashes series. "Josh was very, very close to being given the green light but we are cognisant that our upcoming schedule means this is not a one-off Test match for us," Chair of Selectors George Bailey was quoted as saying in cricket.com.au.

Hazlewood had sustained the side strain during his injury-marred stint with Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) in the recently-concluded IPL in which he played only three games without much success before flying back home.

Hazlewood had returned to bowling upon his return in Sydney, since scans had shown no damage or injury. The five-Test Ashes series in England will start on June 16, and Hazlewood, who has already missed a plenty of Test cricket action for Australia, will get more time to be ready for the all-important series.

"This (break) will give Josh an ideal



preparation leading into Edgbaston. With six Test matches in a little over seven weeks we will need all of our fast bowling assets," Bailey added.

Neser has been playing in the County Championship for Glamorgan this season and has been in fine rhythm, having taken 14 wickets in his last three games which includes 7/32 against Yorkshire. He has played two Tests for Australia and has got seven wickets.

"Michael's County form has been strong and knowing that he was going to be close by allowed for him to keep playing and for us to be able to call on him. He is a great strength to have as part of the fast bowling group," the former Australian skipper said.

However, it is fast medium bowler Scott Boland, who looks a more likely

## Team India practices ahead of ICC World Test Championship final

New Delhi

India will take on Australia in the final of the ICC World Test Championship at The Oval from June 7 onwards. Ahead of the clash team India was seen practising for the WTC final clash. ANI covered the team practice today in the Oval ground. In the photos, Rohit and company are in practice mode as they prepare for the finals.

Team India did the warmup practice at the Oval and also conducted fielding drills where key players Kohli, Pujara and Rahane participated. In view of moisture content in the atmosphere of England, wicket-keeper KS Bharath, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli, Shubman Gill and Ajinkya Rahane did slip fielding practice as swinging conditions are the primary element in England grounds.

After the fielding drills and practice the Indian team hit the nets for batting practice. Rohit Sharma along with Virat Kohli, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Ishan Kishan and Umesh Yadav did batting practice on four different pitches. The Indian team practised with Jaydev Unadkat and a left-arm pacer as a practice bowler to prepare for Mitchell Starc. Ravindra Jadeja also did fielding and batting practice to prepare for the final.



Mohammad Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Umesh Yadav and Shardul Thakur did bowling practice, Shami looked was in invincible form knocking down the wicket of Subhman Gill. After batting practice, Ajinkya Rahane did some close slip catches practice to prepare for spinners in the finals.

India's squad for WTC final: Rohit Sharma (Captain), Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli, Ajinkya Rahane, KS Bharat (wk), Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Shardul Thakur, Mohd. Shami, Mohd.

Siraj, Umesh Yadav, Jaydev Unadkat, Ishan Kishan (wk). Rituraj Gaikwad, Mukesh Kumar and Suryakumar Yadav have been named as stand-by players for the high-stakes match.

Australia squad: Pat Cummins (c), Scott Boland, Alex Carey (wk), Cameron Green, Marcus Harris, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis (wk), Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Mitch Marsh, Todd Murphy, Matthew Renshaw, Steve Smith (vc), Mitchell Starc, David Warner.

## Josh Tongue has genuine chance of playing in Ashes: Eoin Morgan

London

Former England captain Eoin Morgan has praised young bowler Josh Tongue who has earned his spot on the Lord's Honours board with brilliant spell of 5/66 wickets against Ireland in a one-off test match. The 25-year-old bowler has also been added to the squad for the first two matches of the Ashes series, which was announced on Saturday. In the match against Ireland, Tongue made the most of his late call-up to the Test side to take a five-wicket haul to help England wrap up Ireland's second innings on Day 3, with the visitors setting a target of just 11 runs.

Morgan believes that Tongue can be a good addition to the team as in various stages of the game, "you require different bowling options". "As a captain, you need to have cards up your sleeve in order to play them at various stages of the game," Morgan told Sky Sports.

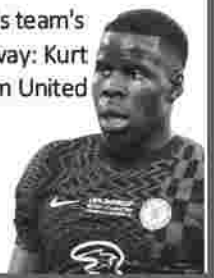
England has an eye on the much-awaited Ashes Series, which will start on June 16 after defeating Ireland, while Australia will play against India in the ICC World Test Championship final at the Oval in London on June 7 to June 11. Focusing on the Ashes, Morgan said, "One of the questions that are hovering over this team at the



moment is when it does go flat, will it turn, and if it doesn't, you need somebody with a bit of pace or some point of difference."

"He has a genuine chance of playing in the Ashes if the injuries continue to come. The fact that he's in the squad gives him the opportunity to continue to impress," he concluded.





## India win two gold and one bronze in Asian U-20 Athletics Championship

Yecheon

Fast-rising Rezoana Mallick Heena and Bharatpreet Singh clinched a gold medal each in women's 400m race and men's discus throw respectively to launch India's campaign at the Asian U-20 Athletics Championship on an emphatic note here on Sunday.

India ended the opening day at second spot with two gold and one bronze -- won by Antima Pal in women's 5000m race -- behind Japan (3 gold, 1 silver, 1 bronze).

The 16-year-old Heena clocked 53.31 seconds to win the gold -- her first international medal at the junior level. She clocked 53.51 seconds in her heat in the morning session.

The athlete from Bengal had also won a gold in the Asian U-18 Athletics Championships in Tashkent in April with a creditable personal best time of 52.98 seconds.

Sri Lankan quartermilers Disanayaka Tharushi Dilsara (53.70s) and Mudugamuwa Jayeshi Uththara (55.51s) clinched the silver and bronze respectively.

Bharatpreet picked up the second gold for India with a best throw of 55.66m, which he achieved in his



third attempt.

Sayfullaev Dunyozod (55.58m) of Uzbekistan and Mohammed Reza Sisakh (55.54m) of Iran bagged the silver and bronze respectively.

Antima clocked 17 minutes and 17.11 seconds to win the bronze in the women's 5,000m race. Compatriot Bushra Khan Gauri finished fifth with a time of 18:15.98 seconds.

Japan's Nanaka Yonezawa and Akari Matsumoto won the gold and silver medals respectively with times of 16:37.36 seconds and 16:42.21 seconds.

It was, however, a disappointing day for pole vaulter Dev Kumar Meena, who was competing with a borrowed pole provided by the organisers, as he failed to clear the

initial height of 4.50m in three attempts.

Due to technical reasons, the 18-year-old Meena was not allowed to take his pole with him in the Air India flight from New Delhi to Seoul. The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) had requested the organisers to provide him the pole.

He had a personal best of 5.00m and had won gold in the Federation Cup National Senior Championships last month by clearing 4.80m.

Seifeldin Mohammed Abdelsalam of Qatar won the pole vault gold with a best effort of 5.50m.

Vidhi finished fourth in the women's shot put with a best throw of 15.16m.

In the men's 800m, both Shyam Milan Bind and Shakeel advanced to the medal round scheduled for Monday. Bind clocked 1:52.62 seconds to finish third in his heat, while Shakeel ran 1:51.58 seconds to finish second in his heat.

In the women's 100m, Abinaya Rajarajan advanced to the final after clocking 11.91 seconds in her heat.

India is being represented by 45 athletes, including 19 women, in the June 4-7 championships.

## Rajiv Sethu, Mathana Kumar shine in National Racing meet

Coimbatore

Rajiv Sethu, Mathana Kumar and Vignesh Goud notched a double apiece in their respective categories as the Rolon Round of the MRF MMSC FMSCI National Motorcycle Racing Championship 2023 concluded at the Kari Motor Speedway here on Sunday.

Rajiv Sethu (RACR Castrol Power 1 Ultimate), determined to resurrect a sagging career, swept the honours in the premier Pro-Stock 301-400cc Open category while Mathana Kumar did much the same in the other top-end class, the Pro-Stock 165cc Open. Both had won Race-1 on Saturday quite comfortably and it was a virtual re-run in the second outing today.

Hyderabad's 19-year-old Vignesh Goud (Race'ists Motorcycle Club) was equally commanding in the Novice (Stock 165cc) category as he won both the races this weekend while Puducherry's Lani Fernandez (RACR Castrol Power 1 Ultimate) took the honours in the Girls (Stock 165cc) class after starting from P5 on the grid.

Sethu, 24, who moved from Honda to Yamaha this season by joining multiple champion Rajini Krishnan's RACR Castrol Power 1 Ultimate team, immediately made his mark on debut in the 301-400cc category by winning both the races.

In fact, Sethu, who started from pole position, had more than enough straight-line pace as he again held off Pune's upcoming teenager Sarthak Chavan who joined Petronas TVS Racing team this season, while Hyderabad's Rahil Pillarisetty (KTM Gusto Racing) completed the podium for a repeat of yesterday's Race-1.

"This double means a lot to me. I won just one race last season (in the Pro-Stock 165cc Open category). And now, I have started 2023 with two wins! In a way, this weekend could be a turning point in my career and I hope I will enjoy more success going forward," said Sethu who has had an up-and-down career with forays at the Asian level fetching desired results.

In the Pro-Stock 165cc Open race, the Pacer Yamaha duo of Mathana and Prabhu Arunagiri, who had finished in that order in yesterday's Race-1, looked poised for another 1-2 finish. However, Arunagiri packed up after nine of the 14 laps due to mechanical issue while Sarthak Chavan who was running second, also retired with clutch problem in the 11th. It left Mathana all on his own in the front as he finished a comfortable winner ahead of Bengaluru youngster Chiranth Vishwanath who did well to hold off his Petronas TVS Racing team-mate and the more experienced KY Ahamed.

Earlier, Vignesh Goud notched up another fine win in the Novice (Stock 165cc) category for a double.

## Ravi Dahiya pulls out of Bishkek UWW event due to knee strain

Bishkek

Olympic silver medallist wrestler Ravi Dahiya pulled out of the Bishkek Ranking Series event on Sunday due to a knee strain while Mulyam Yadav and Pankaj lost their bronze play-offs as Indian men's freestyle team will return empty-handed from the tournament.

Dahiya, who entered the 61kg competition, was up against Kyrgyzstan's Taiyrbek Zhumashbek Uulu in the Qualification round. It was Dahiya's first competition since finishing sixth at the World Championship in Belgrade in September 2022.

However, the 25-year-old wrestler from Nahri did not take the risk of aggravating his injury and opted out. "Ravi has recovered from his right knee injury that he sustained in January this year but during the warm up, he suffered a strain on the same knee. Since Asian Games trials are near, he decided to pull out of the event as he did not want to risk aggravating the injury," said a member of the Indian support staff.

In the same 61kg category, Pankaj set up a quarterfinal clash against U-23 world champion Aman Sehrawat with a confident 8-2 win over Georgia's Giorgi Goniashvili.

It was Aman, winner of a bronze in Zagreb Open in February this year, who was favourite to win this all-Indian clash but Pankaj emerged a surprise winner with a comfortable 8-1 margin.

Pankaj was quick with his counter-attacking moves and it rattled Aman.

He could not make the final as he lost the last-four clash 0-7 to Uulu and later, Pankaj lost his bronze medal bout 1-6 to Turkey's Emrah Ormanoglu.



In the 70kg event, Yadav comfortably beat Kazakhstan's Doszhan Asetov 9-4 in his qualification round and followed that up with a confident 6-2 win over Georgia's Davit Patsinashvili. Yadav's defence stood out during his quarterfinal bout.

He later lost his semifinal 1-7 to local favourite Orozbek Toktomambetov. In the bronze medal match against Turkey's Servet Coskun, he was trailing 1-6 but logged five straight points to tie the score. However, he lost the match on criteria since Coskun had a bigger throw to show -- a four-pointer.

In 65kg, a category which Bajrang Punia has made his own, Anuj Kumar lost a close pre-quarterfinal 6-7 to Azerbaijan's Ali Rahimzade.

India did not have entries in 57kg, 74kg, 79kg and 92kg competitions. India won four medals in the tournament. The women wrestlers won three medals on Saturday while one came through Greco Roman grappler Manjeet.

## Akash Mishra credits coach Igor Stimac's trust in him for shaping his career

New Delhi

Young Indian footballer Akash Mishra has credited his head coach Igor Stimac's trust in him for building his career, saying that even an average player becomes a great one because of confidence shown in him and he keeps pushing himself to improve, as per All India Football Federation (AIFF). In the last nine matches the Indian senior men's team have played, Akash Mishra has not been on the pitch for only 12 minutes. Such has been his rise over the past few seasons that the 21-year-old has become India's best option at left-back. Head coach Igor Stimac and his trust in him has played a big role in his ascent, according to Mishra.

"I think it is a huge factor and very important for a player, especially a youngster like me, in his career when the coach trusts him to get the job done. And when that happens, even an average player becomes a great one because that gives him confidence, and he keeps



pushing himself to improve every day," said Mishra as quoted by an AIFF press release. Born in Balmampur in Uttar Pradesh, Mishra debuted as a 19-year-old for the Blue Tigers in March 2021 in a 1-1 draw against Oman in a friendly. He is still the youngest player in the current camp in Bhubaneswar for the Intercontinental Cup and the subsequent SAFF Championship in Bengaluru. With what Mishra has achieved at a young age, it is easy to get carried

away, but he is well aware that there is a long way to go in his career. And for his career to be fruitful, his feet have to be on the ground.

"I feel proud to be a part of the national team at a young age. I hope that my parents and my coaches are proud as well and happy to see me succeed. But at the moment, the only thing on my mind is to keep improving myself, and because I am young, I get to learn a lot from the senior players on and off the field. It is also important to know how to carry yourself off the pitch as a professional footballer," Mishra says. "In the national camp, you have the best players from every club in the country, and each player has some qualities which others do not. There are a lot of aspects of the game I still have to grasp, and if I keep learning something or the other from every player, it will help me in my game. My sole focus right now is improving myself in every training session," he adds.

## Aditi shoots 68, sits second in Americas Open on LPGA

Jerseycity

Indian golfer Aditi Ashok stayed in contention for the title as she carded 4-under 68 on the third day of the Mizuho Americas Open on the LPGA Tour here. Despite a late bogey on a chilly and cloudy day, the 25-year-old was tied second behind the 20-year-old Rose Zhang, who is making her debut as a pro at the Liberty National Golf Club. For the third time this season and for her third tournament in a row, Aditi is within five of the lead entering the final round. In the two previous instances, she was tied second, losing in play-off at the JM Eagle LA Championship and was tied fifth at the Cognizant Founders Cup.

This year, Aditi has won once on the Ladies European Tour, where she has also been second once and third on another occasion and leads the Order of Merit.

After a bogey-free 67 on the first day, she carded an even par 72 on the second with two birdies against two bogeys. In the third round, she had five birdies in the first 10 holes. The highlight was a hole out from the bunker for a birdie on Par-3 fourth hole. She looked set for another 67 before a bogey on Par-4 15th pulled her one back to 4-under for the day. Aditi had 25 putts.



At 9-under, Aditi is tied with Thailand's incredible Athaya Thitikul (68-71-68) and American Cheyenne Knight (69-68-70). The leader Rose Zhang shot 66 after 70-69 on the first two days and is at 11-under.

Still seeking her first LPGA win, Aditi is known for her short game. Now she is reaping the benefits of working on her long game ahead of her seventh season on the LPGA.

"This golf course makes you think a lot. If you get the right angles and if you play it smart, I think it's easier to not drop shots. At least that's what I felt when I played the first round, so that's what I tried to stick to. I think three bogeys so far is not too bad and hopefully I can keep that going," she said.

## CM Dhami extends wishes to players, coaches ahead of Special Olympics World Summer Games

Dehradun

Players and coaches who are going to participate in the Special Olympics World Summer Games called on Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami at the Chief Minister's Camp Office on Sunday. The Chief Minister extended best wishes to all the players and coaches for the games to be held in Berlin, Germany from June 17 to June 25, 2023, and wished them a bright future.

Two futsal players and three coaches from Special Olympics Bharat Area from Uttarakhand have been selected for the Special Olympics World Summer Games to be held in Germany. On June 12, these players will leave for Germany. The names of the futsal players who will leave for Germany are Himanshu Bisht and Harshit Kumar, volleyball coach Jagdish Chauhan, Updesh Upadhyay and futsal coach Jitendra Kumar.

Earlier, ahead of the Special Olympics World Games, Chandigarh MP Kirron Kher met with Special Olympics Bharat athletes who will be travelling for the prestigious Games from Chandigarh. The theatre, film and television actor invited the athletes to the Smart City Office Sector 17 on Friday, where Kirron Kher held a small ceremony to offer her best wishes to the special athletes from the district.

An Athlete (Swimming) and a coach (TT) will participate from Chandigarh at the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Berlin. Chandigarh MP Kirron Kher also extended her best wishes to the entire Indian contingent who will be competing at the Games. Afterwards, a Send-off ceremony was held at the Bhavan Vidyalaya School for the special athletes from the district in the presence of Neelu Sarin, Area Director, SO Bharat- Chandigarh.

Kirron Kher, she said, "I offer my best



wishes to the athlete and the coach who are going from Chandigarh to Special Olympics World Games, Berlin. I also extend my best wishes to all the athletes participating from India in the prestigious event", as per the official press release. Meanwhile, Bihar State Sports Authority hosted a befitting Send-Off ceremony for the Athletes and Coaches going for the Berlin Games from the state. DG Sports - Ravindran Shankran, IPS blessed and wished all the three participants from the state, which included an athlete, a unified partner and a coach.

On June 4, with over 200 persons in attendance, the state will organize yet another send off at the Patliputra Sports Complex with Samir Kumar Mahaseth, Member of Bihar Legislative Assembly at the SCADA Business Centre. Special Olympics World Summer Games 2023 will be from June 17 to June 25 in Berlin, Germany. The event will welcome 7,000 Special Olympics athletes and Unified partners from approximately 190 countries to compete in 26 sports. The athletes will be supported by more than 3,000 coaches and

20,000 volunteers. 198 Athletes and partners and 57 Coaches are gearing up from India to participate in 16 Sports.

The Special Olympics World Games offer the opportunity to unite the world like no other event can. Here people with and without disabilities, people of different nations, cultures, political views, and religions meet and can overcome existing prejudices through the power of sport. Ahead of the Special Olympics World Games which are slated to take place in Berlin, Germany, between June 17 and June 25, Kirron Kher met with Special Olympics Bharat athletes who will be travelling for the prestigious Games from Chandigarh.

The theatre, film and television actor invited the athletes to the Smart City Office Sector 17 on Friday, where Kirron Kher held a small ceremony to offer her best wishes to the special athletes from the district. An Athlete (Swimming) and a coach (TT) will participate from Chandigarh at the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Berlin.

Kirron Kher also extended her best to the entire Indian contingent competing at the Games.

## French Open night sessions come under sustained fire

Paris

The French Open night session has come under fire again this year as almost exclusively men's matches have been scheduled to take place under the lights and some players have complained about the late hours.

Since 2021, one match has been played on the main Court Philippe Chatrier in the evenings and broadcast exclusively by Amazon's Prime Video in France. Three out of the four Grand Slams -- the Australian Open, the French Open and the U.S. Open -- currently schedule night sessions with raucous fans ensuring a carnival atmosphere, especially if a local player is in action.

Wimbledon's Centre Court had a retractable roof installed in 2009, allowing play to continue at the grass-court major during rain and into the night up until a locally-imposed curfew of 11 p.m. BST. In the first two years in Paris, only one women's match got the honours of a night session. This year,

one of the eight matches so far scheduled to start at 2030 local time has been a women's game.

The start was brought forward to avoid play finishing too late but, on Saturday, Alexander Zverev played his last point against Frances Tiafoe after midnight. "When we play five sets, it can go until two in the morning. That's not so healthy for the player who wins the match and then has to play again the next day, like now," said the German, who will take part in his third night session on Monday when he plays Grigor Dimitrov in the fourth round.

"You need to get a massage, an ice bath, talk to the press, go back to the hotel and you don't fall asleep before 4 or 5 a.m. It's not good for your body." Zverev is advocating for more women's matches to be scheduled for the late slot as, with their matches being played over the best of three sets instead of best of five for the men, they tend to play fewer hours.



# Aditi Rao Hydari, Siddharth are on Rajasthan vacay with Bina Kak



**Mumbai**  
Actress Aditi Rao Hydari, who was recently seen in the second season of the streaming show 'Taj', and 'Rang De Basanti' actor Siddharth, who are rumoured to be dating, are currently on a vacation in Rajasthan.

Actress-turned-politician Bina Kak

Aditi and Siddharth were seen together flying out of Mumbai on Friday. There have been speculations around Aditi and Siddharth dating each other as they are often spotted together. However, they haven't confirmed or denied the reports of them dating.

Aditi took to her Instagram recently and dropped a few pictures with Aditi and Siddharth.

Along with the pictures, Bina wrote, "Happiest when the children visit me at home."

In the first photo, Aditi sat on the stairs while Bina posed near her. A dog was also seen in the frame with them. In the picture, Aditi wore a black and white T-shirt, blue denim and sneakers. Bina was seen in an all-white outfit.

The second picture has Aditi, Siddharth and Bina posing for the camera.

Aditi and Siddharth were

seen together flying out of Mumbai on Friday. There have been speculations around Aditi and Siddharth dating each other as they are often spotted together. However, they haven't confirmed or denied the reports of them dating.

The two actors met while working on the Telugu film 'Maha Samudram' in 2021.

Adding fuel to dating rumours that are already rife all over the tinsel town and social media platforms, Bollywood actor Aditi Rao Hydari called actor Siddharth her 'manicorn' as she recently wished him on his birthday.

Aditi took to her Instagram handle and posted a cutesy video with the 'Rang De Basanti' star and penned an adorable birthday wish for her 'magical' birthday boy. "Happy birthday manicorn. To happiness always! movies, love, music, to always having the strongest purest heart, to magic, truckloads of laughter and to never never growing up! Be magical, be you Happiest siddu day", wrote Aditi alongside the video with a unicorn and a red heart emoji as she wished Siddharth on his birthday.



## "Will make you proud PB": Urvashi Rautela begins prep for Parveen Babi biopic

**Mumbai**

After making head turns with her beautiful outfits at the Cannes 2023 film festival and the IIFA 2023, actor Urvashi Rautela has now begun the preparations for her new film, a biopic on the life of late actor Parveen Babi. Taking to Instagram, in the early hours of Sunday, the 'Sanam Re' actor shared a post which she captioned, "Bollywood Failed #ParveenBabi but i will make you proud #PB ~ UR Om Namah Shivay. Trust the magic of new beginnings." She shared a picture of the summary of the upcoming biopic.

Soon after she dropped the post, her fans and friends flooded the comment section with red heart emoticons and congratulatory messages.

"Thank you for making the movie about #Praveenbabi," a fan commented.

Another fan wrote, "your upcoming movie about #PraveenBabi is destined to

become a blockbuster"

Another fan commented, "First actress ever to come in support of Parveen Babi!"

Parveen Babi passed away on January 20, 2005 in her flat in Mumbai.

She made her film debut with the film 'Charitra' (1973), opposite cricketer Salim Durani. The film did not do well on the box office, but Parveen was noticed and was snapped up for several more films. Her first major hit was 'Majboor' (1974), opposite Amitabh Bachchan. Along with Zeenat Aman, Parveen Babi helped change the image of the Indian film heroine. She was the first Bollywood star to appear on the front page of Time in July 1976. Throughout her career, she was considered as a glamorous and fashion icon. Meanwhile, Urvashi has recently come up with the web series 'Inspector Avinash' opposite actor Randeep Hooda. The show is streaming on the OTT platform JioCinema.

## Urmila Matondkar urges people to spread love and not hatred



**Mumbai**

Actor Urmila Matondkar shared an inspirational post on her Instagram. The 'Rangeela' actor took to Instagram and dropped a picture of herself. She wrote, "Dance like no one is watching but more importantly Love As Everyone Matters...at the end of it love will sail you through the challenges of life not hatred and grudges"

Urmila looked gorgeous as she wore an off-shoulder black dress. She paired it with matching heels. The 'Judaai' actor opted for soft makeup look and left her curly hair untied.

The actor's fans chimed in the comment section as soon as the picture was uploaded. A fan wrote, "My favourite."

Another commented, "Urmila U R Looking Beautiful." "Wonderful weekend

vibes. wwwwow...supb", a social media user wrote.

Urmila married Mohsin Akhtar Mir, a Kashmir-based businessman in 2016 in a low-key ceremony.

Urmila entered the film industry as a child artist. She first appeared in BR Chopra's 'Karm', Marathi film 'Zaakol' and Shekhar Kapur's 'Masoom'. And years later, as an adult, she established her name as a Rangeela actress in Bollywood. Judaai, Satya and Jungle are some of her memorable films.

Like the other 90s actresses, Urmila is set to debut on the OTT platform. Helmed by Saurabh Varma, the series 'Tiwarei' is said to be a thriller, based on an emotional mother-daughter story. In the poster, Urmila could be seen with a rustic look, with injury marks on her body and white cloth tied to her hand.

## Priyanka Chopra attends Beyonce's concert with mother, takes daughter Malti Marie for a walk in the day

**London**

Actor Priyanka Chopra never fails to update her fans with the her fun time moments at work and personal life. She recently shared some videos from Beyonce's concert in London. She posted pictures and videos giving a peak inside the venue. She was seen enjoying the concert with mother Madhu Chopra. She captioned the video as, "@beyonce #JayZ thank you for the incredible experience...#renaissanceworldtour #besthusbandever @nickjonas." Seemingly, it was Priyanka's husband-singer Nick Jonas' gift for



her.

Priyanka's mother was seen cheering during Bey-

once's performance. She also dropped an advance birthday wish for her mom and wrote,

"Happy almost birthday @drmadhuakhourichopra"

Madhu also hugged actor Salma Hayek in another picture. Priyanka said, "@salma-hayek I love you."

In a picture, Madhu also smiled and posed with Jay Z. Along with the picture, Priyanka wrote, "Let's go @drmadhuakhourichopra #jayz." In the last story she posted Beyonce's picture from the concert. The picture featured Beyonce smiling in a golden and black outfit and captioned it as "Queen forever #beyonce."

Priyanka and mother were found in twinning outfits as both of them opted for a black dress.



## Richa Chadha drops pictures of her Cannes look in pink dress gifted by Ali Fazal

**Mumbai**

A few days after the Cannes Film Festival ended, actor Richa Chadha posted photos of her Cannes red carpet look in a pink dress that husband and actor Ali Fazal gifted her.

Taking to Instagram, Richa talked about the dress she donned at the red carpet and said it was a simple, different, creatively exciting Cannes experience for her.

"I got DMs from some of you asking about my Cannes red carpet look, voila! Wore @zimmerman, @karishma-jooly for the premiere of

Jessica Hausner's 'Club Zero', a refreshingly neurotic film! My director Shuchi Talati offered sartorial advice, helped me out, then we walked to the Palais together! A simple, different, creatively exciting Cannes experience for me! Dress present from @alifazal9. PS : Did my own HMU in 30 minutes! There's a pearl detail clip too, come on! Hehe. Thanks @anishagandhi3 for being, plz tell @rochelledsa to like me back," she said in a post.

Richa looked gorgeous as she wore an ankle-length pale pink dress with white embroidered details from

Zimmermann that matched a belt.

She paired it with white heels and matching earrings. She opted for soft glam makeup and left her hair untied and straight. Soon after she dropped the look, fans swamped the comment section with red hearts and fire emoticons. A fan wrote, "Absolutely stunning as always." Another commented, "Finally someone elegant wearing what one can actually decipher! Looking lovely!"

"We (me & my husband) saw you at the amazing Thai restaurant at Cannes, we

were super shy and didn't want to disturb you, @alifazal9 and others in your group, so we didn't come up for intros/selfies (we got a thrashing for that from our family) but we waved at you guys and you guys waved back and smiled. it was such a heartwarming gesture, it made our day! Thank you so much for being so human in this crazy world!", a social media user wrote.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Richa will be seen in Zee's 'Nurse Manjot' and the third instalment of the hit comedy franchise, 'Fukrey 3'.