



### CHALLENGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

P6



### LDF LS POLL DEBACLE RESULT OF KERALA CM'S ARROGANCE: CPI

P4



### NEW CRIMINAL LAWS WILL TAKE EFFECT FROM 1 JULY: MEGHWAL

P5 P12



### MANDHANA BECOMES 2ND INDIAN WOMAN TO SCORE 7,000 INT'L RUNS

## WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. Rain / thundershower likely to occur in some areas.. Maximum and minimum temperatures likely to be around 36 °C and 29 °C respectively.

**RAINFALL:** NIL  
**RELATIVE HUMIDITY**  
Max: 86 % Min: 57 %  
**TEMPERATURE**  
Max: 36.4°C (+2.6) Min: 29.3°C (+2.3)  
**SUN RISES** 04:52 hrs  
**SUN SETS** 18:23 hrs  
**MOON RISES** 13:17 hrs  
**MOON SETS** 00:35 hrs  
Full Moon on 22 June

## THUMBNAILS



Aspirants leave the examination centre after appearing in the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) Civil Services (Preliminary) exams, in New Delhi on Sunday. ■ ANI

**Mob attacks madrasa in Telangana:** Ahead of Bakrid, tension prevailed in Medak in Telangana after a mob attacked a madrasa over allegations that cattle were being transported for sacrifice. Several local BJP leaders were taken into custody and party MLA Raja Singh who was trying to reach Medak was also placed under preventive custody. Sec 144 has been imposed to prevent any untoward incident in the district. BRS and other political parties have blamed the Congress government in the state for failing to control law and order. (Pg 4)

# Replicate Kashmir model in Jammu: HM

## Fight against terrorism in J&K in decisive phase: Shah at security meet

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

Reiterating the government's zero tolerance policy against terrorism, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said the government will leave no stone unturned in rooting out terrorism from Jammu and Kashmir.

Chairing a high-level review meeting on the security scenario in Jammu and Kashmir in the national capital, the Union Home Minister said the fight against terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir is in its decisive phase, adding that recent incidents show that terrorism has been forced to shrink from highly organised acts of terrorist violence to a mere proxy war. "We are determined to root it out as well," he stressed.

In the five-hour-long meeting, which was separated into two rounds, including a short break, the Union Home Minister also took stock of preparations for the upcoming annual Amarnath Yatra which will commence on 29 June and conclude on 19 August. The meeting was attended by National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Lieutenant Gov-



In the five-hour-long meeting the Union Home Minister also took stock of preparations for the upcoming annual Amarnath Yatra which will commence on 29 June and conclude on 19 August.

ernor of J&K Manoj Sinha, Chief of Army Staff General Manoj Pandey, Union Home Secretary, Director, Intelligence Bureau, senior Army Officers including Chief of Army Staff (Designate) Lt. General Upendra Dwivedi, Directors General of CAPFs, Chief Secretary and DGP of J&K and other senior officers.

Mr Shah directed security agencies to replicate the successes achieved in Kashmir valley through Area Domination Plan and Zero Terror Plan in Jammu division.

Mr Shah asserted that Narendra Modi-led government is committed to set an example by cracking down on terrorists

through innovative means. He directed all security agencies to work in a mission mode and ensure quick response in a coordinated manner. He laid stress on seamless coordination amongst the security agencies, identifying vulnerable areas and addressing the security concerns of such areas.

Mr Shah said efforts of the Government of India have yielded great positive results in Kashmir Valley with significant reduction in terror related incidents. He noted that the improvement in law-and-order situation is reflected in record flow of tourists in Kashmir Valley. The Union Home Minister appreciated securi-

ty agencies and the J&K administration for successful conduct of the Lok Sabha elections, which saw record voter turnout in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr Shah held a similar meeting on Friday with Home Ministry officials, who informed him about the current security situation and preparedness to handle such terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir.

Since 9 June, there have been terror strikes at four places in Reasi, Kathua and Doda, in the course of which nine pilgrims and a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawan were killed, and a civilian and at least seven security personnel were injured.

# 'INDIA bloc will support TDP's candidate for Speaker's post'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

A day after the INDIA bloc hinted that it might field its candidate for the Lok Sabha Speaker's post, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday asserted that the Opposition's alliance will back a Telugu Desam Party (TDP) candidate for the post.

Speaking to reporters in Mumbai, Mr Raut said that the election to the Speaker's post is important and that the situation is not the same as it was in 2014 and 2019.

He claimed that the BJP will try to break the NDA alliance partners if the Speaker's post is not given to them.

"This fight of the Lok Sabha Speaker is important. This time, the situation is not similar to 2014 and 2019. The government is not stable... We have heard that Chandrababu Naidu has asked for the Lok Sabha Speaker post... If a candidate of NDA does not get the post of Lok Sabha Speaker, then PM Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah will break



TDP, JDU and LJP (Ram Vilas)... If Chandrababu Naidu doesn't get this position then we will ensure that his candidate gets the support from the INDIA alliance..." he said.

According to reports, the INDIA bloc has been demanding the post of Deputy Speaker. If not given the post, the Opposition alliance said, it will field its own candidate for the Speaker's post as it has the numbers to make it a tough contest. Nitish Kumar's JD-U, which is the second largest constituent of the ruling NDA alliance, has said that they will support the BJP's pick for the important post of Lok Sabha Speaker. However, Chandrababu Naidu's TDP has reportedly demanded an "NDA candidate".

### NDA discusses candidates for Speaker, Dy Speaker posts

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

A meeting of the NDA was held at Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's residence to discuss candidates for the posts of Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the 18th Lok Sabha, sources said.

The sources further said that the meeting, attended by among others, BJP President JP Nadda, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, Union Ministers Rajiv Ranjan Singh (Lalan Singh) and Chirag Paswan, held discussions on the first parliamentary session of the 18th Lok Sabha.

The election to the post of Speaker is scheduled to be held on 26 June during the first session of the 18th Lok Sabha.

# India attends Ukraine peace summit but refrains from signing communiqué

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

India participated in the two-day "Summit on Peace in Ukraine" at Burgenstock in Switzerland but did not sign any communiqué or document.

Mr Pavan Kapoor, Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs, attended the Opening and Closing Plenary Sessions of the two-day summit which concluded this evening. "India did not asso-

ciate itself with any communiqué/document emerging from the summit," the Ministry of External Affairs said.

Reports said Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Thailand, Indonesia, Mexico and the UAE were also among countries that did not sign the final communiqué. Switzerland said over 90 countries took part in the talks, and a vast majority of them signed the communiqué. Brazil, which was listed as an 'observer' on the list of attendees, also did not fea-

ture as a signatory. "India's participation in the Summit, as well as in the preceding NSA/Political Director-level meetings based on Ukraine's Peace Formula, was in line with our consistent approach to facilitating a lasting and peaceful resolution to the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy. We continue to believe that such a resolution requires a sincere and practical engagement between the two parties to the conflict," the MEA added.

# Bihar: Two accused 'confess' their role in NEET paper leak

AGENCIES  
PATNA, 16 JUNE

Two accused, including an examination mafia, have confessed their role in the question paper leak in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET), an official of the Economic Offences Unit (EOU) of Bihar Police said.

The EOU has constituted a 9-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the NEET question paper leak case. Thirteen persons including six examination mafias, four students and three parents have been arrested in connection with the alleged question paper leak case.

One of the arrested exam mafia, Sikandar Yadvendu (56) who is a Junior Engineer in Danapur Municipal Council, confessed his role in the paper leak. A candidate named Ayush Kumar also confessed that he was the question paper a day

**Thirteen persons including six examination mafias, four students and three parents have been arrested in connection with the alleged question paper leak case.**

before the exam. The NEET was held on 5 May and the examination mafia obtained the question paper a day earlier on 4 May. As per the confession of Sikandar Yadvendu, two persons named Amit and Nitish had obtained the question paper on 4 May.

They went with the question papers and answers to a playschool located within Ramakrishna Nagar police station limits. At least 25 to 30 NEET candidates were already there. All were made to memorise the question paper and its answers till 9:00 a.m. on 5 May. He also confessed that all the candidates were dropped off directly at the exam centres by car after 9:00 a.m.

# Chandrasekhar, Elon Musk debate EVMs; Rahul calls them 'black box'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

After former Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar joined issue with Tesla chief Elon Musk after the latter called for elimination of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday jumped into the debate, calling the voting machines a "black box" that can't be scrutinised.

In a social media post on microblogging site X, the Gandhi scion said: "EVMs in India are a 'black box', and nobody is allowed to scrutinize them. Serious concerns are being raised about transparency in our electoral process. Democracy ends up becoming a sham and prone to fraud when institutions lack accountability."

His remarks came against the backdrop of a social media debate following Mr Musk's remarks. On Saturday, the Tesla chief had called for elimination of EVMs, saying



they were prone to hacking by humans and Artificial Intelligence.

"We should eliminate electronic voting machines. The risk of being hacked by humans or AI, while small, is still too high," Mr Musk said.

Former Union Minister and BJP leader Rajeev Chandrasekhar was quick to counter Mr Musk's apprehensions on EVMs and asserted that the voting machines that are built in India can't be hacked.

Moreover, the BJP leader also offered to run a tutorial for the Tesla chief on how to build EVMs correctly. "This is a huge sweeping generalisa-

tion statement that implies no one can build secure digital hardware. Wrong," replied the former minister.

"Elon Musk's view may apply to US and other places - where they use regular compute platforms to build Internet connected Voting machines... Indian EVMs are custom designed, secure and isolated from any network or media - No connectivity, no bluetooth, wifi, Internet. ie there is no way in. Factory programmed controllers that cannot be reprogrammed. Electronic voting machines can be architected and built right as India has done. We would be happy to run a tutorial, Elon," Mr Chandrasekhar said.

However, Mr Musk rejected the BJP leader's claim and said: "Anything can be hacked". Mr Chandrasekhar, in turn responded by saying anything is possible with quantum compute and "I can decrypt any level of encryption".

# Dharavi redevelopment project: 'Land transfer is to Maharashtra govt, not developer Adani Group'

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, 16 JUNE

The world's largest slum redevelopment project involves no land transfer to Special Purpose Vehicle created for the project (SPV) or to the Adani group, sources close to the project have clarified.

The sources told Asian News International that land transfer will be done to Dharavi Redevelopment Project/slum rehabilitation authority (DRP/SRA) which is part of the Maharashtra government's housing department.

According to the tender documents, DRPPL will pay for the land in lieu of development rights and build facilities like housing, commercials and hand over back to the Maharashtra government's DRP for



allotments as per government schemes. This arrangement ensures that the land remains under government control throughout the process.

The state support agreement which is part of the tender, clearly states that government of Maharashtra has the obligation to provide land to their own DRP/SRA depart-

ment. The Rs 23,000 crore slum redevelopment project comes under controversy after questions were raised whether the project would unduly benefit the Adani Group.

In a 15th June news report in an English daily, newly elected Congress MP Varsha Gaikwad raised questions about the issue of government land

transfer to Adani for the project. "Earlier, the Mulund land was sought for the project. Then, the government allocated salt pan lands in Mumbai for the project. They also want Deonar land now, the government issued an order to hand over the land at Kurla. Why does the government want to transfer so much land to Adani?" asked Mr Gaikwad.

However, DRPPL sources clarified that the railway land allocated to the DRP was acquired by DRPPL at a premium of 170 per cent above the prevailing market rates.

On concerns about the allocation of land across Mumbai to Adani when residents of Dharavi prefer in-situ rehabilitation, under which they are provided pucca dwelling units with basic civil infra-

structure to improve the quality of life, sources clarified that the tender norms and government resolutions from 2018 and 2022, have specifically assured that no Dharavi resident will be displaced. Residents with tenements existing on or before 1 January 2000, are eligible for in-situ rehabilitation within Dharavi.

Those with tenements from 1 January 2001 to 1 January 2011, will receive homes under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana outside Dharavi for a nominal fee of Rs 2.5 lakh or through rental housing. Those with tenements after 1 January 2011 up to a government-determined cut-off date, will be provided homes under the state's proposed affordable rental housing policy, with an option for hire-purchase.

Heartfelt Greetings

to all On the occasion of Eid-Ul-Azha

Eid Mubarak

Mamata Banerjee  
Chief Minister, West Bengal

Government of West Bengal

ICA-D968(22)/2024

THUMBNAILS



A cloudy summer afternoon in Kolkata on Sunday. MOUL MONDAL

BJP to review its Lok Sabha performance in Bengal at grassroots level

KOLKATA, 16 JUNE

The BJP will review its Lok Sabha poll performance in West Bengal at the grassroots level to ascertain the reasons for the loss in seats.

The decision was taken at a core committee meeting of the party that started on Saturday afternoon and continued till late evening.

The meeting was attended by party's central observers Amit Malviya, Mangal Pandey and Asha Lakra.

Party insiders aware of the developments said that it was decided that the review should be done at the grassroots level of all five organisational zones in the state.

It was also decided that for reviewing the outcomes, there will be individual meetings at all the five party organisational zones, which will be attended by MPs, Lok Sabha candidates, MLAs and Lok Sabha and Assembly in-charges of the party, sources added.

At the core committee meeting, sources said, discussions were also held on the list of probable candidates for the bypolls in four assembly constituencies, slated for July 10. The final list of candidates would be announced within a day or two, they added.

The BJP won 12 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal while the Trinamul Congress got 29 and the Congress 1. AGENCIES

Monsoon fury: Sikkim CM visits affected areas

While the Teesta remains stable, other rivers have fluctuating water levels causing erosion problems in the area

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE SILIGURI, 16 JUNE

The North Bengal and Sikkim region will continue to experience heavy rain for the next three days, with no relief in sight.

While the Teesta remains stable, other rivers have fluctuating water levels causing erosion problems in the area.

The irrigation and waterways department and their engineers are closely monitoring the situation in Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, and Alipurduar after heavy rainfall in the Dooars region last night.

The situation could worsen if Mangan region in north Sikkim also receives heavy rain, as predicted for the next seven days, said chief engineer North Bengal Circle, Krishnendu Bhowmick.

Landslides have already occurred in various places, particularly in Sikkim, due to incessant rainfall, causing damage and leaving tourists stranded.

In addition, the Darjeeling and Kalimpong region has been significantly impacted by overflow from the Teesta river, resulting in flooding and erosion that has disrupted normal traffic flow.

Some families have had to be relocated to safer areas as a result.

The state government has allotted funds to implement temporary solutions in order to combat erosion in the north Bengal region, specifically in the Teesta Basin area. As per official reports, the irrigation department was unable to carry out crucial protective measures due to the model code of conduct enforced during the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections.

The irrigation department's authorities are currently experiencing challenges due to a considerable build-up of sediment in river channels caused by sudden floods in Sikkim last year.

Yesterday, the chief minister of Sikkim, Prem Singh Tamang, visited the site of the Majua landslide in Yangang.



Mr Tamang provided financial assistance, housing allotment orders under the Sikkim Garib Awajojana (SGAY), and other relief materials to the affected families at a camp set up at the Tourism Centre in Yangang Helipad.

The purpose of his visit was to conduct a thorough inspection of the landslide that occurred on June 10th and resulted in the loss of three lives, numerous homes, and livestock.

During his tour of Rangang

Yangang constituency, Mr Tamang announced that families whose houses were completely destroyed by the disaster would receive half an acre of cultivable land each and Rs 5 lakh for each deceased family member.

Thirty-six families were safely evacuated from the affected area and are currently staying at the camp with a total of 157 members.

Mr Tamang also instructed officials from the roads and bridges department to quick-



ly restore the road that leads to Majua for uninterrupted connectivity.

CM then went on to Melli Bazar to assess damage caused by the Teesta river and discussed preventive measures with concerned officials from the irrigation department.

He also directed for permanent flood walls to be built after the monsoon season ends. Furthermore, he took time to meet with residents from Melli Constituency and attentively listened to their con-

cerns which he promised to address positively.

Following the instructions of district magistrate, Mangan, Hem Kumar Chettri, SDM Mr Prakash Rai and his team conducted a visit to the affected areas in Lower Jhushing and Rakal wards.

After assessing the damages, it was confirmed that the entire stretch from Kwaley Dara to Sibukholsa is at risk, and as a precautionary measure, tarpaulin sheets were provided. Approximately, 10

households were relocated to temporary housing at zilla panchayat's residence in Tibuk-Mangshila GPU in Rakal and Dawgyal Bhutia's residence on Lower Thingchim (Dikchu-Mangan Road).

The team of administrators in the Mangan district, led by district magistrate Hem Kumar Chettri, has been actively involved in the rescue, repair, and evaluation of properties affected by the recent heavy rainfall.

The affected areas have been surveyed by government officials, including ministers Pintosang Lepcha, Samdup Lepcha, and Tshering Thendup Bhutia, along with relevant departments.

Minister for tourism & civil aviation Tshering Thendup Bhutia will oversee the evacuation of tourists from Lachung tomorrow by air or road transportation, depending on weather conditions.

As per NDRF regulations, a compensation of Rs 4,00,000 has been given to the families of the deceased through their respective MLA and minister.

Metro to change lighting at Blue Line stations

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, 16 JUNE

The Kolkata Metro Railway has decided to change the lighting arrangements of Blue Line stations for enhanced illumination.

The city Metro shifted to LED lights in 2018 to save more energy. However, the old LED lights had an illumination capacity of 100 lumen/watt approx. The carrier is now gearing up to replace the old LED lights with new LED lights, which are 40 per cent to 60 per cent more energy-efficient, according to the Metro railway office.

The new lights with 140-160 lumen/watt illumination capacity are being installed across platforms, mezzanines and subway passages of different stations of Blue Line. As informed by the city metro office, the new lighting arrangements have increased the illumination by 2 to 5 times than the older LED lights in the stations and have superior Lux level compared to the airport standard. In airports, 150 lux is required as per standard of illumination whereas aided by the new arrangements Metro has been providing 250-500 lux



illumination at platform and mezzanine levels. Lux is a measurement of illuminance i.e., the total amount of light that falls on a unit surface.

In addition to this, the Metro authorities are also taking initiatives of installing warm white lights with a yellowish tint for the first time in Kolkata Metro at the mezzanine and subway passages. The lights are said to be more soothing ensuring a higher comfort level and better visibility for the commuters. At platforms, LEDs capable of providing lights equivalent to cool daylight are being installed for the convenience of the commuters. The advancement in the lighting system is aimed at improving safety and security of commuters. The change is also

expected to be helpful for motormen to check boarding and deboarding of passengers from rakes on a real-time basis.

With enhanced illumination, CCTV monitoring systems would also be boosted. According to the chief public relations officer of the city Metro, Kausik Mitra, the work has already been completed at Chandni Chowk, Central, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Girish Park, Sovabazar-Sutanuti, Shyam-bazar, Rabindra Sarobar, Jatin Das Park, Netaji Bhawan, Rabindra Sadan, Esplanade, Netaji, Masterda Surya Sen, Gitanjali, Kavi Nazrul and Sahid Khudiram stations. If everything goes according to the plan, other Blue Line Metro stations will also have new lux levels by July.

Heavyweight CPM leader joins TMC, to bolster party's prospects before upcoming civic polls in Durgapur

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE DURGAPUR, 16 JUNE

Pankaj Roy Sarkar, a former district committee member of the CPM, has joined the Trinamul Congress in the presence of state ministers Arup Biswas, Pradip Mazumdar and Moly Ghatak at the Durgapur TMC party office today and is expected to bolster the party's prospects in the upcoming civic polls in Durgapur.

Sources said that Pankaj Roy Sarkar is very close to Kabi Dutta, the newly appointed chairman of Asansol Durgapur Development Authority (ADDA).

During the Lok Sabha polls this year, chief minister Miss Mamata Banerjee has stayed in the Durgapur hotel of Kabi Dutta for about 16 days during her campaigning in South Bengal districts. Kabi Dutta was initially made the vice chairman of ADDA and then a few days ago chairman to revive the faction ridden TMC in Durgapur before the crucial civic and next assembly polls.

During that period, she had held meetings with all the top



TMC leaders of West Burdwan district and had instructed them to revive the party in Durgapur before the next civic polls.

The Durgapur Municipal Corporation polls are due for more than a year and will likely to be held in the next few months after the excellent results of TMC in Durgapur-Burdwan and Asansol Lok Sabha seats.

This morning, a few hours before his joining the TMC, Pankaj Roy Sarkar was suspended from the CPM after a meeting of the district secretary of the CPM in Durgapur. Gouranga Chatterjee, veter-

eran CPM leader told the media that Pankaj Roy Sarkar has been suspended from the party for six months for anti-party activities.

Speculation was rife in Durgapur, after Kabi Dutta was suddenly appointed chairman of ADDA replacing another heavyweight, Tapas Banerjee, the Raniganj MLA, that Pankaj Roy Sarkar will join TMC through him.

"I have joined TMC today because I feel that from here I can work better for the development of Durgapur," said Mr Sarkar, who was once close to CPM politburo member

Nirupam Sen. Narendra Nath Chakraborty, district president of the TMC said that the entry of Pankaj Roy Sarkar today in the party will further boost the TMC in Durgapur.

Political sources said that initially Mr Sarkar will be entrusted to look after the trade union wing of the district and later will be in contention for the race of mayor of Durgapur Municipal Corporation and a possible ticket for the Durgapur West assembly seat in 2026.

Mr Sarkar has strong organisational skills and good acceptance amongst the industrial workers of Durgapur.

Going by the 2024 Lok Sabha votes results the TMC is behind the BJP in 32 out of the 43 wards and the induction of Pankaj Roy Sarkar could be a political masterstroke to win the civic body board.

Durgapur which was once a bastion of the CPM, saw a large chunk of voters returning from the BJP to the Left in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, helping the Trinamul Congress' Kirti Azad to win.

District govt school holds blood donation camp

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE HOOGHLY, 16 JUNE

The number of blood donation camps have come down drastically in the district due to the prevailing heatwave-like conditions. Some social organizations are trying to set up blood donation camps but due to excessive heat, none of the blood donors are turning up to donate blood.

The Serampore Chatra Nandalal Institution, a state-run secondary and higher secondary school, has come forward to help this acute crisis in the district blood banks.

The Serampore IMA president, Dr Pradeep Das said due to acute shortage of blood most affected are the thalassemia-affected children, accident victims or in anyone with an emergency condition.



It is for the first time in the district that a state-run school has come forward to conduct a blood donation camp.

Headmaster of the school Shushil Kumar Saha said, "The school management, teachers, parents and the students who passed this year's higher secondary exam came together to organize a blood donation camp, especially for the thalassemia

children. The Calcutta Medical College Hospital, the Serampore Walsh Hospital and Shramjibi Hospital lent a helping hand to the school in their noble effort, held within the school campus. More than 200 names have been enlisted as donors. Many of the people from the neighbourhood also voluntarily come ahead to donate their blood.

BSF, BGB meet on border peace & harmony

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE SILIGURI, 16 JUNE

A meeting was arranged between the Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) at the Indo-Bangladesh border at Changrabandha in Cooch Behar yesterday in order to establish trust and strengthen the relationship between the two border protection forces of these amicable nations.

The initial encounter between the sector commanders of both sides took place. It was recognized during the meeting that these gatherings are crucial for upholding peace and harmony along the Indo-Bangladesh border. This also enhances the relationship between the two countries.



During the border coordination meeting at the Border Outpost (BOP) Changrabandha, located in the Cooch Behar district, representatives from the BSF and BGB came together to discuss border issues. These represen-

tatives included Brig (Retd) Rajeev Gautam, DIG BSF SHQ Jalpaiguri, Md Mamun R Rashid, BGB Sector Commander Rangpur, and other high-ranking officials from both parties.

At the meeting, the com-

manders reaffirmed their dedication to preventing cross-border crimes and illegal immigration. They also stressed the importance of enhancing mutual cooperation between the border guarding forces of both countries.

tries, namely BSF and BGB.

At the meeting, a variety of topics were addressed, such as improving border management and reducing cross-border illegal activities. The meeting ended amicably and without conflict, official sources said.

Notably, after concluding an official visit of North Bengal Frontier from 13 to 16 June, Ravi Gandhi, the additional director general of the Eastern Command of the Border Security Force, departed for the organization's headquarters in Kolkata today.

Mr Gandhi, the ADG of BSF Eastern Command, praised the North Bengal Frontier for their efforts in reducing cross-border crimes and effectively securing the Indo-Bangladesh border during their interaction.

RPF to instal face recognition system for security ahead of Shravani Mela

DEBAJYOTI CHAKRABORTY ASANSOL, 16 JUNE

In wake of the upcoming month-long Shravani Mela in Deogarh of Jharkhand, face reading system technology will be introduced at all the major railway stations under Asansol Division of Eastern Railway, including Asansol railway station to nab hardcore interstate criminal movements.

Mr Rahul Raj, senior divisional security commissioner of Asansol has informed that the face reading system will help the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP) to recognize the faces of dreaded and hardcore inter-state criminals, who are moving in trains and boarding through these railway stations.

Providing safety and security to pilgrims and tourists and passengers of Shravani Mela is a big task for the RPF of Asansol division. Every year several lakh devotees come to Deogarh to offer water and puja at the Basukinath temple from all over the country.

The divisional railway arranges additional seating capacity, drinking water and other safety precautionary measures for the Shravani Mela every year.

At present, work is on for restoration and renovation and upgradation of Asansol railway station, under the Amrit Bharat scheme.

The Asansol Railway division has planned to set up face reading technology fitted with close circuit television (CCTV) sets on 53 railway sta-

tions under the division. The facial recognition system will help both RPF and GRP to remain alert on the suspected movements of the notorious criminals during the festive seasons through these railway stations and nab them.

Face recognition is an application-oriented technology and helps immensely to accurately match with live facial movements.

"A database of 200 hardcore and notorious interstate criminals will be uploaded in the database which the face recognition system will automatically be able to match swiftly," Mr Rahul Raj added.

In the first phase, the face recognition system will be fitted in railway stations like Asansol, Jasidih, Basukinath,

Deogarh, Chittaranjan, Madhupur, Andal, Raniganj, Durgapur etc.

There have been many cases of theft and dacoity during this period in the past. Drug peddlers also become very much active during this period.

The Asansol Railway division security unit of RPF will also share the database and the inputs with their counterparts in other railway divisions.

Railways made elaborate arrangements for the convenience of pilgrims like 'May I Help You Booth', adequate drinking water facility, extra booking counters, cleanliness and sanitation at stations, additional shelters in the circulating area during the Shravani Mela. Eastern Railway officers and supervisors are also



closely monitoring the comfort of the pilgrims at these stations.

The Shravani Mela will be inaugurated on 21 July and the month-long mela will start from the day after.

Serampore MP holds rally thanking voters for win

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE HOOGHLY, 16 JUNE

The Serampore MP Kalyan Banerjee on Friday evening set out from Serampore Gandhi Maidan, leading a massive rally to thank and express his gratitude towards his voters. All along the way, people gathered in large numbers to welcome the 4th time elected MP.

The Serampore MP Kalyan Banerjee was quite confident of his comeback for the 4th consecutive time as an elected MP with a massive lead against his BJP opponent Kabir Shankar Bose. Overwhelmed by his thumping victory, he gives credit to his voters, party workers and leaders and above all the party chairperson Mamata Banerjee.



The massive rally ended at Mahesh Sanam Piri Math. The Serampore MP was victorious against Mr Bose by a margin of 1,74,830. Mr Banerjee received 6,73,970 votes while his BJP opponent Mr Bose received 4,99,140 votes.

Mr Banerjee got a big lead against his immediate opponent Mr Bose receiving 1,13,092 votes in Jagatballavpur, in Domjur 1,29,382,

Serampore 71,927, Chanditala 99,001 and Jangipara 1,03,086.

Mr Banerjee said, "I give all the credit to my voters, my party workers and leaders and above all I thank my party chief and chief minister Mamata Banerjee because people vote in favour of Mamata Banerjee in all the 42 Lok Sabha constituencies. I am just a dedicated and devoted soldier of my party."

Mr Banerjee added the huge number of votes cast in his favour indicate that the common people have acknowledged the progress and developmental work carried on in the Serampore Lok Sabha constituency and they are confident that the progress of the constituency will continue ahead at a faster pace.

# Trinamul identifying causes of defeat in LS seats it lost

TMC to take stern action against party members who had betrayed the party in recent elections

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 16 JUNE

The Trinamul Congress has started to identify those of its members who had worked against the party in the recently concluded general election.

Trinamul Congress will take stern action against them. "Those who had betrayed the party has no role to play in the party and will be thrown out," senior party leaders said.

The party leadership believes that the party should have got 30 plus seats in the Lok Sabha election but it finally got 29 seats. The BJP got 12 seats and the Congress one seat.

The party leaders are organizing rallies and road shows to thank the people for supporting the party.



Abhishek Banerjee, party's national general secretary had visited his constituency in Diamond Harbour yesterday to thank the people. Mr Banerjee defeated his BJP rival candidate Abhijit Das by 7.10 lakh votes. Mr Banerjee had set a winning margin target of 4 lakh votes but had surpassed his target.

Mr Banerjee thanked the people and his colleagues for their tireless work which had led to the victory by the highest ever margin in Bengal.

He said the arrogance, pride and backbone of the BJP have been shattered and reduced to dust when the result of the Lok Sabha election was declared on 4 June.

The party leaders feel that it lost the seats of Bishnupur and Balurghat to BJP after a section of leaders had betrayed the party. Sujata Mondol, the Trinamul candidate from Bishnupur lost to the BJP's sitting MP Saumitra Khan by a margin of 5,500 votes.

Ms Mondol was defeated handsomely in Bishnupur town area. In the municipality area Trinamul was trailing behind Mr Khan in all the municipal wards. The party is doing analysis of the result and has identified those who had backstabbed the party.

In Balurghat, the BJP sitting MP and the state president Sukanta Majumdar won by 10,000 votes. He has become the Union minister of state for Education.

Trinamul Congress is car-

rying out analysis to find out the cause of defeat of the party's candidate.

Trinamul Congress is also trying to find out why the party candidates could not do well in the urban areas.

In south Kolkata which is supposed to be a Trinamul Congress stronghold, party candidate, sitting MP Mrs Mala Roy, had trailed in some important wards of Kolkata Municipal Corporation.

"The party is gearing up for 2026 Assembly election and will leave no stone unturned to increase the number of seats," said a senior party leader.

In the 2021 Assembly election the Trinamul Congress got 213 seats, the BJP got 77 seats while the Congress and CPI-M had failed to fetch even one seat.

## Eid-Ul-Azha: Elaborate police arrangements made in city

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 16 JUNE

Elaborate police arrangements have been made to ensure peace on Eid-Ul-Azha in the city which falls on Monday.

Additional police force will be deployed from Sunday. The people have been requested not to fall prey to any instigation.

Special police arrangements will be made in areas surrounding Nakhoda Mosque, Tipu Sultan Mosque, Jama Masjid, areas surrounding Park Circus Maidan and Red Road.

Two officers in the rank of deputy commissioner will be posted in the areas where gathering is heavy in the mosques for offering prayers.

Police pickets will be deployed at important intersections in the city. Anybody loitering in the area suspiciously will be interrogated.

Fifty PCR vans will

**Two officers in the rank of deputy commissioner will be posted in the areas where gathering is heavy in the mosques for offering prayers**

deployed to patrol the sensitive areas. In addition to this, 28 heavy radio flying squads, 13 quick response teams and 55 sergeants on motor cycles will be pressed into service.

There will be police teams and plainclothes policemen deployed at Victoria Memorial Hall, Alipore Zoo, New Market and Science City. Ambulance will be stationed at nine intersections.

State minister Siddiquilal Chowdhury has urged people to take part in prayer and qurbanī (animal sacrifice) without causing inconvenience to others.



**Mrs. Sheila Mitra (1936-1980) Teachers & Staff of Model K.G. School, Kolkata**

**₹4,000 crore to improve health infrastructure in rural areas**

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 16 JUNE

The state government with financial assistance from the World bank is going to invest Rs 4,000 crore to improve rural health infrastructure in the state.

Apart from the upgradation of infrastructure the money will be spent for the treatment of diseases like diabetes, cancer, heart related ailments and hypertension.

Mr NS Nigam, state health secretary, said the World Bank has approved the assistance and the state cabinet also given its nod.

Health workers for the rural sector will be given three years' training, both in the classroom and hands-on practical training.

A committee comprising senior doctors have been set up. Telemedicine service has been introduced to provide treatment to people staying in the remote areas.

Through this, people in the rural areas can visit the health centres to get advice from senior doctors of state-run hospitals. Telemedicine service is now available at 6,680 wellness (susasthya) centres, 780 primary health centres and 450 municipal health centres. More than one crore people have received medical advice through telemedicine, an official of the state Health department said.

The telemedicine service has been named Swasthya Ingit by Chief Minister mamata Banerjee.

During Covid when seeing a doctor by a patient and vice versa became a challenge, Swastha Ingit scheme was inaugurated as Swasthya Bhavan.

There are 68 telemedicine hubs and through them 700 doctors are giving medical advice to rural patients.

There was telemedicine service for general medicine, gynaecology, paediatrics, ENT and psychiatry.

From May, telemedicine services are being given for the treatment of cancer and nervous disorders.

## Suwendu Adhikari meets Governor with post-poll violence victims

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 16 JUNE

Leader of the Opposition in the state, Suwendu Adhikari, met Governor CV Anand Bose today at the Raj Bhavan with BJP workers who were allegedly attacked in post-poll violence.

The workers were allowed entry into the Raj Bhavan after verifying the list of names.

Addressing them, the Governor said he had received a total of 1,025 complaints of post-poll violence. He assured them that he would see an end to the violence.

Speaking in Bengali during the meeting, the Governor stated: "The Calcutta High Court has issued an order expressing surprise that the Governor is house-bound, as those who have



been subjected to violence have not been able to meet with the Governor. We will make Bengal free of violence. I swear in the name of Netaji, Rabindranath, and Swami Vivekananda that I will fight till the end."

He said that the victims would meet with him, and until then, no one from the Home Department would be allowed to meet him.

Mr Adhikari provided a

brief account of the incidents of violence against his party's workers to the Governor. He requested the Governor to ensure that central forces remain in Bengal until Durga Puja.

After leaving the Raj Bhavan, Mr Adhikari stated: "I told the Governor that all four pillars of democracy in Bengal are under attack. More than five thousand people's ration cards have been taken away, and even livestock have been seized."

On Saturday, Mr Adhikari visited Cooch Behar to meet those affected by post-election violence. There, he announced that he would go to the Raj Bhavan in Kolkata on Sunday.

Previously, Mr Adhikari had approached Calcutta High Court because he was not allowed to take the vic-

tims to the Raj Bhavan despite having permission.

In a hearing on Friday, the court stated that Suwendu would need to obtain new permission if he wanted to go to the Raj Bhavan again. He received this permission on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the Governor has made several comments about the post-election violence that has stirred state politics. Allegations of violence had also arisen after the results of the 2021 Assembly elections, leading Calcutta High Court to order a CBI investigation. With the BJP making similar allegations this time, the Governor stated: "Innocent people are being placed in front of gun barrels. The state government has failed in its constitutional duties. As the Governor, I will not sit idle."

## Kolkata building collapse: Six including promoter named in chargesheet

AGENCIES  
KOLKATA, 16 JUNE

A total of six persons have been named as prime accused persons in the chargesheet filed by Kolkata Police in the case related to the collapse of a five-storey under-construction building at Garden Reach area in the southern outskirts of Kolkata on 17 March, which claimed 13 lives.

One of the six persons named in the chargesheet filed at a lower court in Kolkata on Saturday includes Md Wasim, the promoter of the said building.

Insiders in the state police said that in the 730-page chargesheet, a number of sections of cognizable offences under the Indian Penal Code



including murder, attempt to murder, criminal conspiracy, and others have been included.

The mishap in March exposed illegal constructions in the Garden Reach area involving some real estate promoters and high officials in the building section of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC).

After the Calcutta High Court directed the state gov-

ernment to submit a report on the mishap, KMC authorities started an investigation into the matter. On the basis of the preliminary report submitted by KMC's probe committee, three civil engineers attached to the building department of the corporation were suspended.

A total of 170 witnesses have been named in the chargesheet.

## Businessman receives threatening calls after shooting incident in Belgharia

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 16 JUNE

No one has been yet arrested following a shooting incident targeting a businessman's car at Rathtala More in Belgharia yesterday afternoon, even as the targeted businessman, Ajay Mandal, has received a threatening call.

Allegedly, a criminal from Bihar has been repeatedly calling the businessman, claiming responsibility for the shooting. Mr Mandal claimed

the criminal stated that if they had intended to kill him, they would have done so, meaning, they did not intend to kill him on Saturday.

Mr Mandal has informed the police about the entire matter. He claimed that a criminal named Subodh Singh has been calling him. Subodh Singh is currently imprisoned in Bihar, and it is unclear how he is making the calls, according to Mr Mandal.

He said: "Subodh Singh is

calling me. I heard he is currently imprisoned in some jail in Bihar. I don't know how he is making the calls."

Since the incident on Saturday, Mr Mandal has received two calls from the same number.

In the shooting incident at Rathtala More, multiple rounds were fired at the businessman's black Volvo car. No one was injured. According to the police, besides Mr Mandal, there were two to three other people in the

car. Five bullet marks were found on the car. The broad daylight shooting created a sensation in the area. Belgharia police have started an investigation.

Mr Mandal had informed the police that for the past few days, some criminals had been calling him demanding money. Not giving the money might have led to the attack.

So far, no one has been arrested in connection with this incident.

According to the busi-

nessman's claims to the police, Subodh Singh subsequently threatened him over the phone, saying that if the intention was to kill, they would have shot him in the showroom, not just at the car.

Subodh Singh also allegedly warned Mr Mandal that to continue his business, he must comply with their demands. If he does not, he won't be able to run his business, according to the businessman.

## 150 residents of Bowbazar to be shifted to city hotels

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 16 JUNE

The Kolkata Metro Rail Corporation Limited (KMRL) has decided to shift more than a hundred Bowbazar residents to various city hotels for the next two weeks for undertaking cross passage work relating to the East-West Metro in the gold hub.

The implementing agency of the East-West Metro Corridor is to kick off the work for closure of cross passage at Madan Dutta Lane. For this, the KMRL has decided to temporarily shift residents of five buildings, including three in B.B. Ganguly Street and two in Madan Dutta Lane.

According to the implementing agency a total of 150 residents from the five identified buildings are to be shifted by Tuesday. As the identified buildings are vulnerable and fall in the influence zone, it was decided to shift their residents to stay in various city hotels for about 15 days. However, if the work

completed before that, they might be brought back before the stipulated time.

The evacuees are being relocated in three city hotels in and around Bowbazar as a precautionary measure and to avoid a rerun of the 2019 fiasco.

Notably, the implementing agency had initially planned a cross passage at Madan Dutta Lane that was named CP2. Another cross passage was also planned and named CP5. Later, this was also dropped on account of soil challenges.

It was relocated to an area with better soil strata and renamed as 5B where work is said to be at an advanced stage.

The implementing agency is now carrying out the relocation of residents to seal the CP2 at Madan Dutta Lane.

According to a senior KMRL official, the closure is targeted to be completed in two weeks. However, the work might well be done in 10 to 12 days.

## Sea cruise for tourists at Digha

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 16 JUNE

Digha-Sankarpur Development Authority is all set to introduce sea cruise soon.

The decision has been taken following the huge inflow of tourists at the sea town throughout the year. Parks, cafes, museums have been set up in Digha. Senior state government officials believe that the volume of tourists will go up once the Jagannath temple is also inaugurated. The temple is likely to be inaugurated in July.

Initially, the plan to inaugurate the sea cruise was in December 2023. But problems cropped up over the pontoon jetty. The problem has been ironed out and MV Nivedita is ready for operation once the fitness certificate arrives.

The people will be able to enjoy the sunrise and sunset from the ship. There will be accommodation for 80 people. There will be two air-conditioned decks. The state government is calculating the charges. There will be musical shows on the cruise.

It may be recalled that Digha as a tourist spot was set up by Dr BC Roy in the early 1960. Saikat Abas, the state-run tourist lodge, was set up in the late 1960s.

New Digha came up during the Left Front regime. After coming to power in 2011, chief minister Mamata Banerjee took up a well-knit plan for the development of Digha. New Digha now looks like a modern sea town. A senior state government official said a survey is on to find out what kind of sea sport can be introduced in Digha. Because of the inflow of traffic, the local artisans are doing brisk business.

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## Four arrested in Mirza Ghalib Street shooting incident, main accused still at large

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 16 JUNE

Four people have been arrested by police in connection with the shooting incident on Mirza Ghalib Street, but the main accused remains at large.

The shooting occurred late Friday night in the Mirza Ghalib Street area of Park Street police station, Kolkata, resulting in a young man being injured.

So far, four individuals have been arrested in this case. Three were arrested on Saturday night, and another person was apprehended by police on Sunday morning.

On Sunday, the police arrested a young man named Sabbir, who was being firing a gun in the CCTV footage. The main accused in this



Mirza Ghalib Street shooting incident is named Sona.

The injured youth filed a police complaint against Sona, but he has not been arrested yet, and a search for him is ongoing. According to police sources, Sabbir, who has been arrested, is the brother-in-law of the main accused. It is believed that questioning Sabbir might provide clues about Sona's whereabouts.

The three individuals

arrested on Saturday night are 31-year-old Asif Ahmed, a resident of Colin Street, 41-year-old Farooq Khan, a resident of Mirza Ghalib Street, and 24-year-old Afsar Ali, also a resident of Mirza Ghalib Street.

Although they were not seen firing guns in the CCTV footage, they are suspected to be involved in the incident. The police are interrogating them as well.

The shooting occurred after midnight on Friday when a young man was targeted and shot in the right leg. He is currently being treated at Kolkata National Medical College.

Police revealed that the shooting was a result of an altercation between two groups over a bike race that took place on Friday evening.

## Railway minister reviews progress of Bandel Station upgradation

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 16 JUNE

The railway minister, Ashwini Vaishnaw, has reviewed the progress of major upgradation and integrated redevelopment of different stations including Bandel Jn. Railway station of Eastern Railway.

Bandel Junction in the Eastern Railway's Howrah division will be redeveloped as a station with world class facilities.

Bandel station serves as a junction station for Kolkata suburban network, Howrah/Sealdah- New Jal-

paiguri-Guwahati and Howrah-Delhi main line route.

At present, 80 per cent passengers at this station are suburban commuters who are using local trains for daily work travel. However, after developing a coaching depot, 5-6 mail/express trains can be originated from here to cater to a population of about 30 lakhs.

The re-development plan at Bandel to make it a world class station envisages, among other things, an iconic station building with facilities to cater needs of another 50 years, a spa-

acious Concourse/roof plaza connecting terminal building, platforms having all essential facilities i.e. Food Court, retail, ATM, One Station One Product, Pharmacy, internet, wash rooms etc.

It also envisages integration of both sides of city (Station building on both sides of the Yard), Divyangjan and old citizen friendly facilities, sufficient circulating area and adequate provision for passenger drop off, pick up and vehicle parking.

Other features envisaged include green building,

energy saving, solar panels, firefighting facilities, rain-water harvesting, Waste water/Storm water reuse and Solid waste management on site.

Remodelling of Bandel Station yard is also planned, eliminating 19 out of 23 diamond crossings facilitating through movement of Main Line trains along with three additional full length Platforms as well as widening and extension of six existing platforms to full length to accommodate full length trains.

A coaching depot is being proposed under PH-16 with

a view to originate and terminate a few Mail/Express trains from Bandel.

The new station building will have a total of 12 lifts and 20 escalators, with a total parking area of 15,791 sq. mtrs. The station building area coverage of around 23,473 sq. mtrs. all packed with amenities and facilities including commercial area, roof plaza, food plaza, separate departure/arrival lounge etc.

A master plan has been prepared accordingly for a complete facelift and makeover of this station to international standard.



People gather around a private car that rolled into the Ganga at Nimtala ghat. The car was eventually brought out. ■ SNS

## Teenager rescued after car plunges into Ganga

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 16 JUNE

A teenager was successfully rescued from the Ganga river after the car he was in rolled into the river at Nimtala ghat near the Bhutnath temple on Sunday morning. The car was also retrieved from the river after an hour of effort from local people and rescue teams.

According to local sources, on Sunday morning, a family from the Anandapur area of South Kolkata came by car to offer prayers at the Bhutnath Temple. While the family members went to the temple, the youngest son remained in the car. It was at this time that the accident occurred.

The teenager apparently caused the mishap while playing with the car's steering wheel. The car rolled into the Ganges. Locals, upon seeing this, immediately jumped into the river and

started the rescue operation. Police and a rescue team arrived at the scene after being informed.

The teenager was successfully rescued from the car. The car was also tied with rope and pulled out of the water

by the locals and the rescue team.

The prompt actions of the locals and the rescue team saved the teenager's life. Questions are being raised regarding the family's sense of responsibility.



AIADMK's decision to boycott the Vikravandi by-election is clear evidence that it has received instructions from the 'top' to facilitate the electoral chances of the NDA candidate (PMK)...The INDIA bloc must ensure the resounding victory of the DMK candidate.

SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER P CHIDAMBARAM  
SLAMMING AIADMK FOR BOYCOTTING VIKRAVANDI BY-POLLS

THUMBNAILS

164 kg ganja seized in Hyderabad, six held: The Hyderabad Police have seized 164 kg of 'ganja' (cannabis) and arrested six inter-state drug peddlers. Acting on credible information, the sleuths of the Commissioner's Task Force, South West Zone Team, apprehended drug peddlers who were found in possession of a huge quantity of narcotic substance weighing 164 kg in Humayun Nagar and Bhavani Nagar police station limits. In the second case, the Task Force arrested three persons and seized 64 kg of ganja under the limits of the Bhavani Nagar police station.

Fire breaks out at private hospital in Haryana's Jhajjar: A fire broke out at a private hospital in Haryana's Jhajjar. The fire broke out in store room. After receiving information about the incident, two fire tenders reached the spot and doused the fire, an official said. "We reached the spot with 2 fire tenders after we received the information. A fire broke out in the store room upstairs, we controlled the fire and doused it," fire officer Bijender Dagar

# Tension in Telangana town after violence on Eid eve

Madrassa attacked by mob over allegations of cattle sacrifice; many arrested

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD, 16 JUNE

Ahead of Bakrid, tension prevailed in Medak in Telangana after a mob attacked a madrassa over allegations that cattle was being transported for sacrifice.

Several local BJP leaders were taken into custody and party MLA Raja Singh who was trying to reach Medak was also placed under preventive custody.

Section 144 has been imposed to prevent any untoward incident in the district. BRS and other political parties have blamed the Congress government in the state for failing to control law and order.

Four people were injured after a Hindu mob attacked a madrassa in Medak district. Staff of the Minhaj Ul Uloom Madrassa were transporting cattle to celebrate Bakrid when the Hindu right wing organisations stopped the vehicle which led to stone pelting by



the youths of both communities.

An hour later a mob surrounded the madrassa and attacked it.

A video clip showed people carrying sticks and chanting 'Jai Shri Ram'. Several people inside the madrassa were injured in the attack and the mob even attacked the hospital where they were being treated.

The police then resorted to lathi charge to bring the situ-

ation under control. Several Muslim businesses were damaged.

The police have arrested eight people including the BJP's district president Gaddam Srinivas.

AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi spoke with DGP Ravi Gupta and some of the injured were brought to Hyderabad and admitted at Esra Hospital.

BJP MLA Raja Singh said that cow vigilantes had quar-

relled with the butchers after police failed to take action over their complaints. "I want to ask the chief minister of Telangana Revanth Reddy who had raised the slogans of 'Gau mata kaji' before elections, what is he doing? Duplicate Hindu Revanth Reddy why is he sleeping? When cow vigilantes went to police with their complaints the police had lathicharged them," said Raja Singh.

Amjed Ullah Khan of the MBT has blamed the communal tension on the failure of Medak police. Blaming the BJP and RSS he said, "RSS and BJP workers started the communal tension around 3 pm when some oxen kept in a madrassa were bought for sacrifice... Since Anumula Revanth Reddy took charge as chief minister of Telangana the communal elements have been given free hand to attack Muslims and damage their properties with police being mute spectators," said the MBT leader.

# LDF LS poll debacle result of Kerala CM's arrogance, minority appeasement: CPI

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
16 JUNE

In a critical review of the outcome of the Kerala Lok Sabha elections, the Communist Party of India (CPI) held Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan responsible for the poll outcome debacle of the Left Front in.

The CPI is the second largest constituent of the CPI-M-led ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF) in the state.

The Thiruvananthapuram District Council, on Sunday, pointed out that the chief minister's arrogance and the underperformance of cabinet ministers were the key factors that contributed to the electoral defeat of the LDF in the state.

Several leaders were of the view that the strategy of overemphasising minority appeasement distanced the electorate from the LDF.

They said excessive appeasement of minorities backfired on the front. "The minority appeasement went overboard. Most of the political and civic meetings turned



into religious gatherings. Religious leaders were given undue importance. Even a candidate for a Rajya Sabha seat was selected from a minority group," said some of the participants.

The participants of the meeting also pointed out that issues such as financial mismanagement associated with the Nava Kerala Sabha, delays in disbursement of welfare pensions, and non-availability of essential commodities at the Supplyco outlets led to alienation of the voters. The electoral defeat was also attributed to allegations of corruption involving the chief minister's daughter,

Veena Vijayan. "The CM's daughter being dragged into a controversy at a time when the elections were due also led to the defeat of the LDF. The debt-ridden Supplyco's inability to provide essential items to its outlets also went against the LDF," they said.

Some reportedly even argued that governance won't improve unless a new chief minister comes to power while others argued that anti-incumbency sentiments significantly affected the outcome. The LDF faced severe drubbing in the Lok Sabha polls in Kerala. The LDF could win only one of the 20 seats in the state.

# BRS demands thorough probe into NEET exam fiasco

AGENCIES  
HYDERABAD, 16 JUNE

Slamming the Centre over its handling of the NEET exam, Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) Working President K.T. Rama Rao on Sunday demanded a thorough investigation into the incident.

He said the confusion surrounding the examination has dashed the hopes of students and parents who dream of seeing their children become doctors.

He condemned the Union government for its inaction despite reports that NEET question papers were sold in Bihar for up to 30 lakh each, with several arrests already made.

He accused the Union government of neglecting its responsibility and adopting a lackadaisical attitude towards the NEET entrance exam from the start.

KTR said that despite numerous allegations and



suspicions surrounding the prestigious NEET exam, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government has not yet responded, which he found unacceptable.

He questioned why the Prime Minister, who frequently holds discussions with students about exams, has remained silent on the critical issue of NEET.

In his open letter to the NDA government, KTR demanded a thorough investigation into the entire matter and strict

action against those found responsible.

He also called for reassurance to be given to students and their parents.

KTR highlighted the unprecedented scenario of 67 students achieving the first rank in NEET, which raised numerous suspicions.

He noted that eight students from the same centre scored 720 marks each, suggesting a significant level of paper leakage.

He reminded that even a sin-

gle mark difference can change students' rankings and result in many losing opportunities.

KTR questioned how so many students from one centre could score such high marks and criticised the announcement of results 10 days early, coinciding with the election results day, which added to the suspicion.

He demanded an explanation from the Union government for not taking action despite the gravity of the situation coming to light.

He also criticised Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan for attempting to cover up the issue by claiming everything was in order.

The BRS leader emphasised that despite numerous complaints from students, the Union government has not responded.

Even prominent individuals filing cases in the Supreme Court did not prompt a clarification from the Centre.

He expressed surprise that the Union government ignored the issue until the Supreme Court intervened and noted that the National Testing Agency (NTA) provided unusual responses when questioned.

The awarding of grace marks in NEET this year to 1,563 students was also criticised by KTR, who pointed out that the practice of grace marks is not typically applied in exams like NEET.

He demanded clarity on the criteria used for awarding these marks and questioned the NTA's handling of the matter.

KTR called for a comprehensive investigation into the allegations of paper leakage and demanded strict action against those involved.

He emphasised that the issue is not limited to NEET but affects several competitive exams conducted under the NTA's supervision, which could lead to a loss of trust among students.

# Centre may extend Arif Mohammad Khan's tenure as Kerala Governor

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
16 JUNE

The Centre is likely to allow Arif Mohammad Khan to continue as the Governor of Kerala.

Reports suggest that the central government is contemplating extending Arif Mohammad Khan's tenure as the Kerala governor after assessing that his actions have helped in countering the politically biased actions of the LDF government and exposing them to the people.

The central government believes that Khan's firm stance on several issues has helped uncover and prevent many controversial decisions of the state government. The Centre also feels that Governor Khan's actions have helped the BJP to make significant progress in the state.



Khan's criticism of Pinarayi Vijayan and his government's policies and decisions have often been seen as echoing the voice of the opposition. People even attribute to him the role of interpreting the viewpoint of the opposition in Kerala.

According to the established norms, the President can replace governors before their term ends in consonance with the central government's advice.

Alternatively, they can continue their term until their successor is appointed. No governor has been given two terms in recent times.

# Telangana to revise property registration charges from 1 Aug

AGENCIES  
HYDERABAD, 16 JUNE

New registration charges for agriculture and non-agriculture land and properties will come into force from August 1.

This followed the recent decision of the Telangana government to revise the market value of lands to boost its revenues.

This will be the first hike in land value and registration charges after the Congress came to power in December 2023.

The Stamp and Registration Department has initiated an action plan to study the current value and revise it to fix new registration charges accordingly.

The department will begin the groundwork in this regard

on June 18 after a meeting with additional Collectors and Revenue Divisional Officers (RDOs).

The Stamp and Registration Department has issued guidelines for revising the market values in rural and urban areas.

After an analysis in a phased manner, new registration charges will be decided on 1 July.

Subsequently, the final market value will be fixed after a few rounds of scrutiny. After a study by committees at the Mandal and district levels, new market value will come into effect from August 1. The Stamp and Registration Department will also hold meetings with officials of Revenue, Municipal Administration, Panchayat Raj, and Survey departments.

# This is not Modi's victory, but his defeat: MK Stalin

AGENCIES  
COIMBATORE, 16 JUNE

DMK chief and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin claimed that the Lok Sabha results were Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "defeat" and he became the PM because of the support of TDP's Chandrababu Naidu and JDU's Nitish Kumar.

While addressing a public meeting in Coimbatore on Saturday, the Tamil Nadu CM also targeted the BJP over its slogan of 'Abki Baar, 400 Paar', saying, "Despite a lot of efforts, the BJP got only 240 seats."

"This is not Modi's victory, but Modi's defeat. Modi is the Prime Minister because of Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar. If they had not supported it, where would Modi have gotten the majority from? BJP can't do any-



thing as per their wish," Stalin said.

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) won a majority for the third time in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, winning 293 seats. The BJP won 240 seats on its own, in the 543-member lower house, where the majority mark stands at 272. Chandrababu Naidu's TDP and Nitish Kumar's JDU, had won 16 and 12 seats

elections, the DMK and Congress fought together and the coalition secured 31 out of 39 seats.

The DMK had won 22 seats, while Congress secured nine seats. On the other hand, CPI and CPI (M) secured two seats each.

Stepping up his attacks on the BJP, Stalin said, "In 2004, Kalaigarn (M Karunanidhi, former Tamil Nadu CM) got us a 40/40 victory (39 seats of Tamil Nadu and one seat of Puducherry). That time, AIADMK was ruling the government... In 2004, the exit poll predicted (Atal Bihari) Vajpayee would form the government but Congress formed the government. A similar thing has happened. Many said BJP would cross 400 but it has broken and we made BJP not cross majority single-handedly."

Notably, in the Lok Sabha

elections, the DMK and Congress fought together and the coalition secured 31 out of 39 seats.

The DMK had won 22 seats, while Congress secured nine seats. On the other hand, CPI and CPI (M) secured two seats each.

Stepping up his attacks on the BJP, Stalin said, "In 2004, Kalaigarn (M Karunanidhi, former Tamil Nadu CM) got us a 40/40 victory (39 seats of Tamil Nadu and one seat of Puducherry). That time, AIADMK was ruling the government... In 2004, the exit poll predicted (Atal Bihari) Vajpayee would form the government but Congress formed the government. A similar thing has happened. Many said BJP would cross 400 but it has broken and we made BJP not cross majority single-handedly."

Notably, in the Lok Sabha

# Suresh Gopi reacts on calling Indira Gandhi 'Mother of India'

AGENCIES  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
16 JUNE

Union Minister Suresh Gopi on Sunday clarified his comments on former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, where he referred to her as "Mother of India", and said it was a "contextual reference."

The BJP MP said that it was a contextual reference, while he was elaborating on the role of late Congress leader and former Kerala Chief Minister K Karunakaran, who Gopi had earlier described as a "courageous administrator."

Speaking to reporters on Sunday, Gopi said, "It was a contextual reference. I was talking about the true worth of leader Karunakaran. Like how to the Congress and non-Congress people of Kerala,



even though there might be founders and co-founders, the administrative quality and efforts that result totally to the benefit of people, Karunakaran should be the father of Congress in Kerala. In the context of that, I had referred to Indira Gandhi as the mother of Congress in India."

Earlier, Gopi referred to veteran leaders of the Communist Party of India-Marxists, EK Nayyanar and K Karunakaran, as his "political gurus."

# Communicable disease control, Dastak Abhiyan, to begin on 1 July in UP

AGENCIES  
LUCKNOW, 16 JUNE

To tackle health challenges due to water-borne diseases and other seasonal vagaries ahead of the monsoon season, the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh will initiate the Communicable Disease Control Campaign statewide from July 1 to 31, a government spokesman said.

Concurrently, the Dastak Abhiyan will be conducted from July 11 to July 31.

A detailed action plan has been prepared, with officials instructed to implement it effectively.

The Urban Development Department is actively supervising the initiative and issuing directives to urban bodies for seamless execution of the plan, said a government spokesman.

The Urban Development Directorate has instructed all Municipal Commissioners,



General Managers of the Water Institute, and Executive Officers of the Municipal Council to implement action plans following the directives provided.

Additionally, sensitisation meetings have been scheduled for Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils, and all Nagar Panchayats.

Instructions have been issued to provide the District Chief Medical Officer with a micro-plan detailing ward-wise and area-wise activities to be completed by June 28 for the special Communicable Disease Control Campaign.

Urban bodies are also directed to submit consolidated reports to the govern-

ment regarding the activities conducted and completed during the campaign as per this micro-plan.

Urban bodies have also been directed to collaborate with the Health Department to educate officials and staff about preventing encephalitis and other vector-borne and waterborne diseases, as well as maintaining cleanliness.

Continuous awareness campaigns through Mohalla Committees will be con-

ducted to address these health concerns.

Urban areas will also see regular fogging and targeted vector control activities in high-risk areas identified by the Health department. Additional instructions include promoting environmental and personal hygiene, preventing open defecation, ensuring the use of clean drinking water, and controlling mosquito population.

Guidelines have also been provided for waterlogging and water supply.

Mini public water supply systems and tank-type stand posts must be installed and monitored according to standards.

Roads and pavements will be constructed to prevent waterlogging and vegetation growth.

Vegetation along roads will be regularly cleared, and activities will be focused on sensitive urban population and slum areas.

# Nara Lokesh holds Praja Darbar in Mangalagiri

AGENCIES  
AMARAVATI, 16 JUNE

Andhra Pradesh Minister Nara Lokesh held a Praja Darbar in his constituency Mangalagiri on Sunday to address the problems that the people were facing.

On the second day, the IT, Electronics, and Education Minister met people and heard their grievances.

Lokesh, who is the son of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, assured people that he will always stand by them.

People from various parts of the constituency gathered in large numbers for the programme and narrated their problems to Lokesh, as per reports.

Representatives of the Andhra Pradesh Velugu Teachers Association appealed to Lokesh that the services of the 2,193 employees who are now on a contract basis, be regularised.



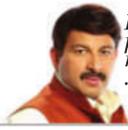
A student, Jagadeesh, appealed to the Minister to initiate steps to clear the fee reimbursement dues to the Nuzvid College so that he will get back his polytechnic certificate from the college.

The non-teaching staff members of Acharya Nagarjuna University wanted their retirement age to be extended to 62 years while Sheik Nazina of Mangalagiri wanted financial assistance for her five-month-old nephew who

is suffering from a rare disease.

K. Kiran Babu of Tadepalli wanted employment for him and his sister, Mounika, who had completed their MBA, as per reports.

A differently-abled student B. Srinivasa Rao of Tadepalli told Lokesh that though he is now 40-year-old he did not get any kind of employment till now and wanted some kind of livelihood to be provided to him.



Every year water crisis happens. Who is Atishi cheating? Atishi should bring a white paper on which pipes were changed in the past ten years. These are lazy people, they neither have any work policy nor any intention, they just want to loot the treasury

BJP MP MANOJ TIWARI  
ACCUSING AAP OF NEGLIGENCE AMID DELHI WATER CRISIS

# New Criminal Laws will take effect from 1 July: Union Law Minister

Training facilities for the implementation of the new laws are being provided in all states: Meghwal

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

Minister of State (MoS) (Independent Charge) Law and Justice, Arjun Ram Meghwal on Sunday said that the new Criminal Laws, namely Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, will come into force on July 1, 2024.

"IPC, CrPC, and Indian Evidence Act are changing. After following the due consultation process and keeping in mind the reports of the Law Commission of India, the three laws have been changed," said Meghwal.

"The three laws will be implemented from July 1 with the names Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam. Training facilities for the three new laws are being provided in all states," said Meghwal.



He highlighted that Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD) is providing training for it. He added, "Our judicial academies, national law universities are also providing training for the same. Everything is going hand in hand and from July 1, all these three laws which is crucial for criminal justice system will be implemented in the country."

Notably, under the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, police custody under general criminal laws has been increased from 15 days to 90 days, depending on the nature of the offense. Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita will have 358 sections (instead of 511 sections in the IPC). A total of 20 new crimes have been added to the bill, and the imprisonment sentence has been increased

for 33 of them. The amount of the fine has been increased in 83 crimes and mandatory minimum punishment has been introduced in 23 crimes. The penalty of community service has been introduced for six crimes and 19 sections have been repealed or removed from the bill. Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita will have 531 sections (in place of 484 sections of CrPC). A total of 177 provisions have been changed in the bill, and nine new sections as well as 39 new subsections have been added to it. The draft act has added 44 new provisions and clarifications. Timelines have been added to 35 sections and audio-video provision has been added at 35 places.

A total of 14 sections have been repealed and removed from the bill Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam will have 170 provisions (instead of the original 167 provisions), and a total of 24 provisions have been changed. Two new provisions and six sub-provisions have been added and six provisions have been repealed or deleted from the bill. The recent criminal justice reform in India marks a significant shift in priorities, placing crimes against women, children, and the nation at the forefront. This stands in stark contrast to colonial-era laws, where concerns like treason and treasury offenses outweighed the needs of ordinary citizens.

# NDA government at Centre is not stable, can fall anytime: Sanjay Raut

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, 16 JUNE

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday took a jibe at the government formed by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) at the centre and said that it is not stable and can fall anytime.

"The situation in sansad is not similar to what it was in 2014 and 2019. If Rahul Gandhi says that they can make the government fall anytime, then, there is a meaning to it. The NDA government that has been formed at the centre is not stable enough. Anything can happen," said Sanjay Raut.

"We have heard that Chandrababu Naidu has asked for the Lok Sabha Speaker post... If a candidate of NDA will not get the post of Lok Sabha Speaker, then PM Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah will break TDP, JDU and BJP (Ram Vilas)... If Chandrababu Naidu doesn't get this position then we will ensure that his candidate gets the support from the INDIA alliance," he added.

Amid the controversy over Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) leader Indresh Kumar's



remark of calling the BJP arrogant which restricted it to 240 and terming the INDIA bloc anti-Ram, Sanjay Raut said, "RSS has to play a role in safeguarding the constitution and democracy in the country. RSS is also responsible for all the damage caused in the last ten years. Whatever damage that Modi and Shah caused to Kashmir, Manipur, country's security, RSS is also responsible for it."

Earlier, RSS leader Indresh Kumar whipped up a political storm for stating that the BJP was restricted to 240 seats, well below the majority mark, in the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls, due to its "arrogance".

"Desh ka vatavaran iss

samay mein bahut spasht hai - jinhone Ram ka virodh kiya wo sab satta se baahar hai, jinhone Ram ki bhakti ka sankalp liya aaj wo satta mein hain aur teesri baar ki sarkar Narendra Modi ke netritva mein bann gayi hai.

The country will make progress under his leadership - there is this trust among the people. We hope that this trust thrives (The mood of the country is very clear at present).

Those who opposed Lord Ram are not in power, those who set the goal to respect Lord Ram are in power and the government has been formed for the third time under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," Kumar said.

# Jairam Ramesh raises serious questions on integrity of NTA, NEET

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Sunday targeted the National Testing Agency (NTA) and NCERT over irregularities in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-Undergraduate), emphasizing potential issues with fairness and transparency.

In a post on X, Jairam said, "I was a member of Parliament's Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare between 2014 and 2019 and recall broad support for NEET. But there were MPs, especially from Tamil Nadu, who had raised concerns that NEET would privilege CBSE students and would disadvantage young coming from non-CBSE schools."

"I do think now that this CBSE issue needs proper analysis. Is NEET discriminatory? Are students from poorer backgrounds being denied opportunities? Other



states, like Maharashtra, also expressed grave doubts about NEET. There are also serious questions about the integrity of the National Testing Agency itself and the manner in which NEET is designed and administered. NCERT itself has lost all professionalism in the last decade," Jairam added.

The Congress leader expressed hope that the newly constituted Standing Committees of Parliament would

prioritize a comprehensive review of NEET, NTA, and NCERT

"Hopefully, the new Standing Committee(s), when they get constituted, will take up an in-depth review of NEET, NTA and NCERT. This should receive the highest priority," Jairam Ramesh said on X.

Meanwhile, students in different parts of the country held protests over the 204 NEET-UG exam issue.

The protests follow concerns over reported paper leaks and the allocation of grace marks during the May 5 exam, which was administered by the National Testing Agency (NTA) across 4,750 examination centres for approximately 24 lakh students.

The NTA told the Supreme Court on Thursday that the scorecards of 1563 candidates who got "grace marks" in the NEET-UG exam will be cancelled and the candidates will have a chance to reappear for the exam on June 23 and the results will be declared before June 30. "The exam will be conducted on June 23 and the results will be declared before June 30," the NTA said.

Several petitions were filed in the apex court seeking direction to recall NEET-UG 2024 results and to conduct the examination afresh, alleging paper leakage and malpractices in the test held on May.

# Decision on 1,563 candidates taken as per students' conformity, says Union Minister Giriraj

AGENCIES  
BEGUSARAI, 16 JUNE

Expressing his views on the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) undergraduate exam issue, Union Minister Giriraj Singh said that the decision on 1,563 candidates who got "grace marks" has been taken as per the students' conformity.

Union Minister Giriraj Singh said, "Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan held cordial talks with representatives of students and parents. The decision on almost 1,563 candidates has been taken as per the students' conformity. I hope that Dharmendra Pradhan will work very seriously on this matter."

Earlier, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan assured students that a transparent process will be followed and they should not



worry. "The government assures the students that full transparency will be adopted in the probe into alleged irregularities and re-conducting the NEET exams. The students do not need to worry," Pradhan said while speaking to ANI. "Students who wanted to meet us, I called them, their parents also came, I met them. I heard their side and I made them feel better. The government is committed, and all students should have this assurance that a transparent

process will be followed. 24 lakh students were the applicants, and 23.30 lakh students have taken the exam, this is natural, whatever doubts come to their minds, some issues came to mind that some irregularities in the centre were noticed, due to lack of time for grace marks, some objections were raised in the formula used for giving grace marks, that was also rectified", he added.

Pradhan further stated, "The Supreme Court permitted them to take the exam again, they have been informed. Those who want to take the exam can take the exam there as well". However, the education minister ruled out the possibility of any irregularities in the NEET-UG examination, stating that there has been "no paper leak" in the NEET-UG paper and the government is ready to give answers to the Supreme Court which is hear-

ing the petitions related to the exam.

"I want to assure the students and their parents that the Government of India and NTA are committed to providing justice to them. Twenty-four lakh students have successfully taken the NEET examination. There is no paper leak, no proof has been found yet. A court-recommended model was adopted for around 1560 students and a panel of academicians has been formed for the same... We will accept the verdict of the Court," he said.

Meanwhile, the National Testing Agency (NTA) told the Supreme Court that the scorecards of 1563 candidates who got "grace marks" in the 2024 National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (undergraduate) exam will be cancelled and the candidates will have a chance to reappear for the exam.

# Besides Rupauli, Bihar to have bypolls in four more Assembly constituencies

AGENCIES  
PATNA, 16 JUNE

Besides Rupauli, bypolls will also be held in Ramgarh, Belaganj, Tarari, and Imamganj assembly seats of Bihar to fill vacancies that have arisen after the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections.

The Rupauli seat was vacated by Bima Bharti, who resigned as JD(U) MLA and joined the RJD to contest the Lok Sabha poll from Purnea. Voting for the Rupauli bypoll is slated for July 10.

Of the remaining four constituencies where bypolls will be conducted, the Mahagathbandhan had won three -- Ramgarh (RJD), Belaganj (RJD), and Tarari (CPI-ML) -- in the 2020 Assembly elections. RJD's Ramgarh MLA Sud-



hakar Singh has won the Lok Sabha election from Buxar, RJD MLA from Belaganj Surendra Yadav won in Jahanabad, and CPI-ML's Tarari MLA Sudama Prasad has won from Arrah Lok Sabha seat.

Hindustani Awam Morcha-Secular (HAM-S) chief and Imamganj MLA Jitan Ram Manjhi has won the Gaya Lok Sabha seat.

It is likely the RJD will field Sudhakar Singh's younger brother Ajit Singh from Ramgarh. Ajit Singh was formerly in the JD(U). In the Yadav-domi-

nated Belaganj assembly seat, Surendra Yadav's son Vishwanath Yadav is preparing to contest by poll on the RJD ticket.

Mahagathbandhan sources have hinted that like in 2020, the Tarari assembly seat will be again contested by a CPI-ML candidate.

For Imamganj, it is being said that Jitan Ram Manjhi's younger son Praveen Manjhi is staking claim.

RJD spokesperson Mritunjay Tiwari has said that the Mahagathbandhan will win all five assembly seats in the bypolls.

"RJD is always ready for elections. Four members of the Bihar Legislative Assembly have won the Lok Sabha elections this time, out of which three are from the INDIA bloc," he said.

# Nitin Gadkari to chair review meeting in J&K today

AGENCIES  
SRINAGAR, 16 JUNE

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari is scheduled to chair a high-level meeting here on Monday to review the progress of various developmental projects in Jammu & Kashmir, officials said on Sunday.

Among the matters to be discussed will be Amarnath Yatra track and Jammu-Srinagar National Highway to ensure smooth Yatra to the holy cave shrine starting on June 29 and ending on August 19 after 52 days.

This is going to be Nitin Gadkari's first meeting in J&K after taking the charge of Road Transport and Highways Ministry at the Centre after the Lok Sabha polls.

Various strategically important developmental



projects including Zojila tunnel are under construction in the UT of Ladakh. Once operationalised, this tunnel will link Ladakh by road with J&K and the rest of the country throughout the year as the highway at present remains closed during winter months.

The project on the priority

list of the Central government is the construction of highway on Amarnath Yatra track from both Baltal and Pahalgam base camps.

Already the widening of the Yatra track and covering the surface with blocks besides attending to curves and slopes has been done by the Border Roads Organi-

# 'Govt's focus to create robust framework for social inclusion'

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

The government's focus is on creating a robust framework that supports the empowerment and inclusion of all sections of society, Union Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Virendra Kumar has said as per reports.

During the meeting, the Secretary of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Rajesh Aggarwal gave a comprehensive presentation on the department's initiatives followed by modernisation efforts of the Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO).

J&K Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, Union MoS (PMO) Dr Jitendra Singh will attend the meeting while Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, along with officers directly dealing with these developmental projects, will present a detailed progress report during the review meeting.

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# Bhuj's Smritivan Earthquake Memorial among UNESCO's Most Beautiful Museums list

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

Gujarat has added a new feather to its cap, further boosting its global recognition and prestige, as Bhuj's Smritivan Earthquake Memorial Museum has been listed as one of the world's seven most beautiful museums by the renowned Prix Versailles Award for Architecture and Design, presented annually by UNESCO.

Smritivan has become India's first museum to receive global acclaim for its adherence to local culture and environmental conservation. The recognition is a moment of immense pride for every Gujarati, with Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel congratulating the entire team involved in constructing and managing Smritivan on reaching this significant milestone.

On August 28, 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Smritivan Earth-



quake Memorial in Gujarat, in memory of the lives lost during the devastating earthquake that struck Kachchh on January 26, 2001.

After the museum made it to UNESCO's list, PM Modi hailed the achievement and called the museum a tribute to those who lost their lives in the tragic earthquake of 2001. "Smritivan in Kutch is

a tribute to those we lost in the tragic Earthquake of 2001. It is a reminder of human resilience and courage as well. Glad that this Museum has found a place on the World Selection for the Prix Versailles Museums 2024," he said in a post on X on Saturday.

Smritivan embodies Kachchh's resilience against

adversities--a tale of perseverance, a symbol of rebirth, and a testament to transformation. Envisioned under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi, Smritivan spans an area of 470 acres on Bhujjo Hill in Bhuj.

Smritivan features the world's largest Miyawaki forest with 500,000 trees. The site includes 50 check dams adorned with plaques bearing the names of 12,932 victims of the earthquake as a mark of tribute. Other features include Sun Point, an 8 km overall pathway, a 1.2 km internal road, a 1 MW solar power plant, parking for 3,000 visitors, a restored 300-year-old fort, extensive tree plantation, and electric lighting.

The dedicated museum, spanning 11,500 sq m, offers insights about earthquakes as one of the most devastating natural disasters, complemented by a special theatre that provides a realistic simulation using sound, light, and

vibration to recreate the 2001 earthquake experience with a 360-degree projection.

The list of the most beautiful museums in the world for 2024 includes A4 Art Museum, Chengdu, China; Grand Egyptian Museum, Giza, Egypt; Smritivan Earthquake Memorial, Bhuj, India; Simose Art Museum, Hiroshima, Japan; Paleis Het Loo, Apeldoorn, Netherlands; Oman Across Ages Museum, Manah, Oman; and Polish History Museum, Warsaw, Poland.

During PM Modi's tenure as Chief Minister of Gujarat, the government consistently aimed to elevate Gujarat's cultural heritage and bring international fame to its historical landmarks. His initiatives under the motto "Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi" have already earned global recognition for Gujarat's Garba and Dhor-do villages in the Kachchh district. On the back of the Prime Minister's vision and the Chief Minister's leadership,

the Statue of Unity, renowned as the world's tallest statue, has achieved global recognition. Smritivan Museum is the latest addition to Gujarat's cultural and heritage destinations that have garnered global prominence.

Last year, Gujarat's Garba attained global acclaim. UNESCO designated 'Garba of Gujarat' as the 15th element on its Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity list. Additionally, Dhordo village in Gujarat's Kachchh district was awarded the title of 'Best Tourism Village' by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Since 2015, the Prix Versailles Awards have been announced annually at UNESCO headquarters. The award honours exceptional architecture and design on a global scale. Categories span airports, campuses, passenger stations, sports facilities, museums, emporiums, hotels, and restaurants.

# More to say about next year's G7 when we assume presidency: Trudeau on inviting PM Modi

AGENCIES  
APULIA, 16 JUNE

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said that he will have more to say regarding next year's G7 Summit when Canada will assume its presidency.

Speaking to reporters, he appreciated the keenness with which Canadians are looking forward to the G7 Summit. Trudeau said that he looks forward to working with Italian PM Giorgia Meloni and all G7 partners on various issues that they have discussed.

On being asked whether Canada will invite Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the G7 Summit in 2025, Trudeau responded, "I can appreciate the keenness with which Canadians are looking forward to next year's G7. However, Italy continues to be the

President of this G7 for the rest of this year and I look forward to working with Prime Minister Meloni and all my G7 Partners on the broad range of issues that we've talked about. I will have more to say about next year's G7 when we assume the G7 Presidency next year."

The G7 summit was held in Italy's Apulia region from June 13-15, where India was invited as an 'Outreach Country' and had participation from the seven member countries, the US, UK, Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, and France, as well as the European Union. The next G7 Leaders' Summit will be hosted in Kananaskis, Alberta province of Canada in 2025. In a post on X, Canadian PM Justin Trudeau stated, "Just announced: The next @G7 Leaders' Summit will be hosted here in Canada -- in 2025."



## Prepare for earthquakes

A magnitude 4.8 earthquake struck near Buan, North Jeolla Province, early Wednesday, sending off alerts across the nation and causing minor property damage. Although no injuries were reported, the strong quake highlighted the need for tight, systematic preparations against tremor-related disasters. The tremor struck near the southwestern county at 8:26 a.m. at an estimated depth of 8 kilometers, according to the Korea Meteorological Administration. Firefighter and Interior Ministry officials said there were hundreds of reports stemming from the tremors.

The quake was the most powerful one reported in South Korea and its surrounding waters this year, the KMA said, adding that it marked the first earthquake over magnitude 4 to strike within an 80-km radius of where the quake hit. It is also notable that the quake occurred in the North Jeolla Province, a region where no major tremors have been reported in recent years. But experts have long warned that the Korean Peninsula is not completely safe from quakes, including such supposedly safe regions, and more safety measures are needed.

Quakes of 4.5 magnitude or greater have only rarely been reported in Korea. In May last year, a 4.5 magnitude quake struck in waters off Donghae, Gangwon Province. In February 2018, a quake of magnitude 4.6 struck in waters off Pohang, North Gyeongsang Province. In November 2017, a tremor of 5.4 struck near Pohang, marking the second strongest earthquake in de-

### The Korea Herald

cadec. President Yoon Suk Yeol, while on a state visit to Kazakhstan, asked the government to conduct a swift damage assessment and safety check for the earthquake near Buan, after being briefed about the incident, the presidential office said Wednesday.

Also on Wednesday, Prime Minister Han Duck-soon instructed the Interior Ministry to take thorough measures and manage the overall situation in the wake of the quake. Han called on public officials to provide safety guidelines to the public in high-risk areas regarding aftershocks, while asking related ministries to check power and communication networks.

Yoon and Han placed timely instructions to follow up on the rare quake, but some fundamental issues remain unresolved. Fast postquake measures led by the government are of course needed to minimize damage and help those injured. But Korea, hit by fewer and relatively weaker quakes compared with other neighboring countries, especially Japan, is known to be ill-prepared for massive earthquakes.

According to data from the People Power Party early last year, only 13.4 percent of buildings and houses across the nation have earthquake-resistant designs. Under the current law, buildings whose features meet certain standards must be built with mandatory seismic-resistant design, but the regulation has not been strictly enforced.

Alarmed by more quakes in neighboring countries, the Korean government belatedly recognized the potentially massive danger of powerful earthquakes.

In January this year, for instance, the government said it would boost the ratio of public facilities with earthquake-proof features to 87 percent from the current 76.5 percent and ultimately raise the ratio to 100 percent by 2035, a measure announced after a fatal tremor hit Japan on the first day of 2024. The Interior Ministry then said it would provide administrative incentives when owners of private buildings want to reinforce their property to better withstand earthquakes.

The Seoul Metropolitan Government also announced in January it would complete seismic reinforcement of all public buildings by 2030 in response to growing public concerns about the nation's poor earthquake preparedness.

# Renewed Demands

Even if Special Category status is awarded to Andhra and Bihar now, it is unlikely to solve their problems. More than finances, the problem of the states is their capacity to utilise the funds. Even now, almost a quarter of their budgetary allocation remains unutilised and had to be surrendered. Lack of institutional capacity continues to plague them, like many other Indian states, and unless this aspect is addressed, additional funds would only lead to additional waste. Further the flaws of the existing scheme need to be corrected



Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar are both indispensable to the NDA Government. They have now revived their old demands of special category status for their states with renewed vigour, which they had so passionately demanded in the past. Andhra Pradesh was promised this status on the floor of Parliament by no less than the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh when Telangana was carved out of it to include two of its most prosperous districts - Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy. These districts earned the bulk of revenues for the undivided state. Nitish Kumar has raised this demand time and again and has even prepared a special paper on this, highlighting why Bihar absolutely needed this status to address its backwardness.

Eleven economically backward hill states of India, including eight North-eastern states and the three Himalayan states including J&K, now an UT, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, comprised the group of 'Special Category States'. These states, created at different points of time in the history of independent India, suffered from many drawbacks arising from their remoteness and geographical isolation, lack of resources, capital and infrastructure, economic backwardness being their only inheritance from the past. The Centre sought to address this asymmetry, partly through Constitutional provisions under Schedules V and VI, and partly through the mechanism of awarding them 'special category status' which was designed to solve the problems of their economic backwardness by giving them liberal access to Central funds. This was rather an unimaginative solution that relied solely upon the use of funds, ignoring the inherent structural weaknesses and capacity constraints of these states. Like many of our national policies regarding backward areas, this too was an ad-hoc solution, applied without insight into the nature of their problems.

States were accorded this status by the National Development Council based on Planning Commission recommendations on fulfilling an arbitrarily defined set of criteria that included: (1) hilly and difficult terrain, (2) low population density and/or sizeable share of tribal population, (3) strategic location along borders with neighbouring countries, (4) economic and infrastructural backwardness, and (5) non-viable nature of state finances. Once the status is awarded, the specific assistance pattern follows to the state in perpetuity. There is no stipulation as to what was intended

to be achieved by such a status, or the time period within which this is to be achieved. The status once bestowed upon a state carries only rewards but no obligation on the part of the state. The status is also neutral to the scale of backwardness and limited only to the funding pattern, without any consideration of the state's capacity to utilise these funds. The mechanism concerns only the transfer of funds without any accountability - certainly not an ideal mechanism for upliftment and empowerment.

It is not that the mechanism failed to deliver altogether. While some of the special category states gradually developed the necessary capacity over time and could use the Central resources to their advantage, others could not do so for various reasons, including protracted militant insurgency and political instability combined with misgovernance. The unabated flow of funds, unlinked to any performance expectations, produced an overwhelming dependence on the Centre and led to complacency, an attitude that culminated in just seeking more and more funds from the Centre as a magic solution to any problem faced by these states.

During the Planning era, the Central plan assistance was provided to the states under the Gadgil formula. Under this, 30 per cent of the total plan assistance was earmarked for the special category states which were then divided among them. This kitty of 30 per cent remained constant even though the number of such states went up from three in 1969 to 11 in 2001. Thirty per cent of the Centre's gross budgetary support for plan expenditure went to the special category states on the basis of 90 per cent grants and 10 per cent loans. The 12th Finance Commission recommendations made the Centre give only grants, and left it to the states to raise loans from the market as and when they needed. The 90 per cent grants plus 10 per cent loans formula for special-category states is now restricted only to centrally-sponsored schemes (CSS)

As further incentives to attract industries, excise duty concessions are provided to companies for setting up new industrial units within these states, besides income tax holidays for 10 years for setting up new industries, extendable further for five years upon expansion. They also get certain subsidies on capital

investment, transport, interest, insurance, etc. However, in the absence of market, infrastructure and local resources, these incentives have hardly led to industrialisation of these states. But because of these benefits, there have been persistent demands from Bihar, Rajasthan, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh and even Goa for this status. Such claims had found favour in the era of coalition politics and wafer-thin majorities in Parliament. Initially around 70-80 per cent of the plan transfers were covered under the Gadgil formula. But with the gradual unchecked proliferation of CSS and appropriation of most plan resources by them through direct off-budget transfers, the Gadgil transfers progressively went on shrinking till they shrank to the point of insignificance, to only 9 per cent of the total plan transfers. It was a double whammy for the special category states, for while their number had proliferated from three in 1969 to 11 in 2001, their share of 30 per cent of the total plan assistance had not increased. It worsened their resource position substantially. Direct transfers were abolished in 2013-14. In 2013, CSS were

also restructured into six 'core of the core' schemes and 22 'core' schemes, which have since been proliferating. In the budget for 2015-16, the NCA was abolished, and with effect from 2017-18, the distinction between plan and non-plan expenditure itself was removed, making the Gadgil formula a thing of the past. Questions have since been raised about its fallout on some of the earlier federal fiscal arrangements inherited from the planning days like plan transfers to states including the special category ones.

The Fourteenth Finance Commission report submitted in December 2014 did not make any specific recommendations for them. The report gives an impression that the special category status has de facto been abolished. "After the 14th Finance Commission recommendations, the era of special category status to states has ended," then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had said in 2015 in response to persistent demands of Nitish Kumar for Bihar's special category status. "I don't want to go into history. The 14th Finance Commission is a constitutional body. The state would get what has been recommended for it. And, we are also giving additional

money to Bihar," giving an impression that henceforth, no special benefits were available under the Special Category Status.

However, it must be remembered that finance commission grants till then were only non-plan grants, while the special category states benefited mostly from plan grants. The quantum of finance commission grants did not make much difference to their resources, while the devolution of taxes from the divisible pool was formula-based, in which factors like population, area, fiscal discipline or tax effort mostly went against them. These states benefited primarily from the plan grants, though they received some non-plan grants for bridging their revenue deficits, which still continues. But the non-plan grants have been rather insignificant compared to the plan grants. To evaluate whether the special category status is still active we have to consider two things - whether there has been a curtailment of resources of these states and whether they have managed to retain their relative advantages vis-à-vis other states. As I have shown elsewhere, the reality is that the benefits enjoyed by these states remain well protected.

Even if this status is awarded to Andhra and Bihar now, it is unlikely to solve their problems. More than finances, the problem of the states is their capacity to utilise the funds. Even now, almost a quarter of their budgetary allocations remain unutilised and had to be surrendered. Lack of institutional capacity continues to plague them, like many other Indian states, and unless this aspect is addressed, additional funds would only lead to additional waste. Further the flaws of the existing scheme need to be corrected, like the absence of any accountability and monitoring mechanism or any performance expectation from the states in a time bound manner. Further, given the emphasis that is increasingly being placed upon good governance, accountability and transparency, equity and efficiency, the purpose of development is likely to be served better if the status is reviewed periodically and a target-based, time-bound approach is adopted for assistance. Suitable incentives for better performance and disincentives for sub-optimal performance should also be built into the system for it to work efficiently. A target-oriented formula-based approach for assistance instils accountability, improves performance, removes complacency and helps a state move rapidly forward. It also makes the field more level for all players, with open entry and exit to the special status for all states in need of assistance.



GOVIND BHATTACHARJEE

The writer is a commentator, academic and author of the book 'Special Category States of India', Oxford University Press, 2016

## Challenges in SA

The recent political shift in South Africa is nothing short of historic. The African National Congress (ANC) and the Democratic Alliance (DA) forming a government of national unity marks a profound change in the nation's political landscape. This collaboration between two former antagonists, one rooted in the struggle against apartheid and the other perceived as a pro-business advocate, signals a new chapter in South African democracy. The ANC's loss of parliamentary majority in the May 29 election and its subsequent alliance with the DA is a testament to the evolving political dynamics in South Africa. For decades, the ANC's dominance seemed unassailable, as a symbol of the post-apartheid era. However, unresolved problems such as poverty, inequality, corruption, and infrastructural decay have eroded its support base, prompting voters to seek alternatives. The DA's inclusion in the national government is noteworthy. Historically viewed by many as the party of the privileged white minority, the DA has struggled to shake off this perception despite its efforts to present a broader, more inclusive platform. Its emphasis on free-market policies and good governance is attractive to investors and those frustrated by the ANC's economic mismanagement. Yet, convincing a diverse electorate that it represents their aspirations remains a challenge. This coalition is a bold experiment in bridging South Africa's deep-seated racial and economic divides. DA leader John Steenhuisen's declaration that his party will co-govern in a spirit of unity and collaboration reflects a desire to move beyond historical antagonisms. The success of this government will hinge on its ability to foster genuine cooperation and deliver tangible improvements in the lives of ordinary South Africans. President Cyril Ramaphosa's expected re-election, supported by this new coalition, offers hope for stability and reform. Mr Ramaphosa, a seasoned politician with a pragmatic approach, has the potential to harness this unprecedented alliance to drive much-needed changes. His administration must now prioritise economic recovery, job creation, and infrastructure development while maintaining fiscal responsibility. The inclusion of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the Patriotic Alliance adds another layer of complexity to this unity government. The IFP's Zulu base and the Patriotic Alliance's support from the coloured community provide a more representative coalition, potentially smoothing over some of the frictions between the ANC and DA bases. This inclusive approach could help mitigate fears and foster broader acceptance of the coalition's legitimacy.

However, challenges loom large. The coalition must navigate the treacherous waters of political compromise, ensuring that policy differences do not lead to paralysis. They must also address the grievances of the Economic Freedom Fighters and the uMkhonto we Sizwe, who feel sidelined and have accused the election process of fraud. Maintaining social cohesion and preventing further political fragmentation will be critical. This government of national unity offers a unique opportunity to reshape South Africa's future. It embodies a hopeful vision of a country where political adversaries can come together for the common good.

it had gained in the previous election.

Despite Patnaik's widespread appeal and the effectiveness of his social programmes, the BJP's perceived successor, V.K. Pandian, an ex-IAS official from Tamil Nadu who left the service in November 2023, appeared to be the weakest link in the party's armour. In addition to causing a stir in the political community, Pandian's quick ascent through the ranks of the party seemed to unnervingly people of the State. It was observed that an ailing Patnaik had progressively ceded territory, and subsequently control of the party, to Pandian, who was thought to be speaking for the Chief Minister.

By remaining silent about the increasing rumors that Pandian would succeed him, Patnaik

## MARKET REBOUND

SIR, Apropos today's report "Market surge led by heavy weights," in The Statesman, after riding a roller-coaster for a week, the Indian stock market seems to have found firm footing. When the BJP's campaign ended way below the much-touted '400 paar' target, forcing the party to quickly sew up a coalition government, the stock indices went on a downward spiral.

Stability, probably the most comforting factor for stock markets, spurred the indices to a new peak. Stock analysts are exuding confidence that ministers will hit the ground running without disturbing the status quo, and continue with their reform agenda without any tinkering. Many believe that the first few months of the Modi 3.0 government will be crucial for several sectors, as they are likely to see a reiteration of the existing policy framework as well as new proposals.

The market is now eagerly awaiting the 100-day action plan. The government has been drawing up an agenda in line with proposals announced ahead of the elections as well as Viksit Bharat. The market is waiting to analyse how the agenda would impact a number of sectors. Whatever be the change this time, a gradual reduction in retail inflation and faster growth will remain the two most important triggers for the markets in the longer run.

Yours, etc., N Sadhasiva Reddy, Bengaluru, 13 June.

handed the BJP the justification it needed to dispel his seeming invincibility. "Odia asmita" (Odia pride). In addition to Pandian's ascent within the BJP, the party's

electoral collapse was exacerbated by the absence of a reliable second-rung leader. As all decisions were handled by Patnaik, the few leaders who were pro-

motored to prominent roles in recent years were not allowed to administer the party.

Yours, etc., Abhijit Chakraborty, Bally, 13 June.

# Children must be saved from online addictions

RISHABH MISHRA

In today's technological era, our system may boast about the ever-increasing number of mobile phone owners, and claim that in the 21st century we are providing everything at our fingertips. But perhaps by being engrossed in technology, we are forgetting that we are destroying our heritage.

At the same time, children and youth are being misled. This is because, at an age when they ought to be playing field games, listening to stories of brave men and reading books, our young children have fallen into the clutches of online games. In today's materialistic era, parents are short of time, due to which they give mobile phones to children at an age when they should have toys in their hands. This is really unfortunate.

In fact, the increasing inclination of youth and children towards online games is not just a problem for India. In the last few years, a different kind of craze for this has developed among children all over the world. This is now taking the form of addiction. Many studies show that this addiction is having a negative impact on the physical and mental health of children. Despite this, the situation in India is not hidden from us. In our country, even a two-year-old child is given a mobile phone. And he grows up watching the mobile with great interest.

It is noteworthy that in 2017, more than 130 children died in Russia due to online games. So far, about 100 children have embraced death in India. Children become so addicted to online games that they forget eating and drinking, and remain engaged in them day and night. Their sleep is affected and they become irritable.

According to another source, currently about thirty crore people play online games in India. And by 2028,



this number is likely to increase to 55 crore. From this it can be estimated that a large population of India is busy playing online games.

At present, some estimates suggest the online gaming market in the country is between Rs 7,000 to 10,000 crore, and is expected to reach Rs 29,000 crore soon. According to a FICCI report, an increase of 26 per cent has been recorded in "transaction-based" games. These figures point to the magnitude of the situation.

But our system does not seem to be unduly bothered, nor do families seem to care enough to see what children and young adults are doing on their mobile phones. A child can fall easy prey to online game addiction;

thus it is the responsibility of parents, guardians and society to ensure this does not happen.

It is noteworthy that the World Health Organization has identified addiction to playing online games (which has been named gaming disorder) as a mental illness. According to the WHO, online gaming can be as addictive as 'cocaine' and 'gambling'. This problem has become even more acute after the period of Covid-19.

During the Covid-19 period, children's participation in online gaming increased by 41 per cent. Also, the addiction to online games has been seen more among the children of nuclear families. It is also a bitter truth that children are becoming aggressive

and violent by getting involved in online games. Sometimes the game also pushes them towards depression. Many have turned obese. In the past years, many children lost their lives in India due to games like 'Blue Whale'. It is a worrying situation that online games are running rampant in our country without proper regulations.

When a child plays mobile and computer games continuously for hours, it has serious side effects on his eyes and other body parts. Curbing online games is the need of the hour and should be taken seriously. While the ubiquitous mobile has become a critical and sometimes indispensable part of our lives, it has also caused great harm.

There are some children who get addicted to the phone from childhood. Many times parents also offer the lure of a mobile phone because they are busy, or sometimes only to feed a child. This soon becomes an addiction and adversely affects the child's development. Children who are exposed to mobile screens at an early age and who spend more time on mobile devices have a higher risk of developing behavioral problems like depression and anxiety. It is time to pause and reflect.

(The writer is Assistant Professor, Mechanical Engineering Department, Kanpur Institute of Technology.)

## OCCASIONAL NOTE

Old Calcutta-ites are falling thick as autumnal leaves. One of the latest departures to be chronicled is that of Mr. D. F. Mackenzie who twenty years ago was the resident head of the firm of McNeill and Company. Mr Mackenzie came out to Calcutta in the 'seventies of last century, and retired from India after putting in nearly thirty-five years' service. He was a brother of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, who became Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and their father was a Scottish dissenting minister in Birmingham. Both brothers were strikingly handsome men, and Donald, the younger, was possessed not only of the pawky humour which was his national birthright, but of a mimetic power seldom seen off the stage. When Sir Surendranath Banerjea and twenty seven other Indians resigned the Corporation as a protest against Sir A. Mackenzie's Municipal Bill, the Lieutenant-Governor's brother headed a small group of British merchants who joined the municipal body in order to keep it alive and did so.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### "PATRIOTIC" PSYCHOLOGY

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "STATESMAN."  
SIR,—Your comments on the patriotism of Gopinath Saha betray a lack of appreciation of the true psychology of the thing. Gopinath is a patriot because (1) he killed an Englishman; (2) he intended to kill an official; (3) his attempt to escape arrest was prompted by the noble desire that he might live to kill again; (4) he shot in the pursuit with the idea of ridding the country of traitors and (5) his plea of insanity, though false, was prompted by the same noble desire of being of further service. His patriotism is hallowed by his subsequent conduct in court when he delivered his message from the dock. It must now be conceded that the killing of Englishmen generally and of officials in particular is the highest form of patriotism. Gopinath therefore was a great patriot—certainly greater than Mr. C. R. Das, who does not shoot with fire-arms and runs little risk. He shoots by persuasion and gentle force, and his victims have only themselves to thank if they find themselves in jail.

ORTHODOX, Hindu June 7

## IT CAME TO MIND | MANISH NANDY

### Earnest life, fervent dreams



A gatha Christie mentioned one of the unusual advantages of aging. She married an archeologist, Max Mallowan, and said that the older she got "the more interested" he grew in her. I do not have a statistician as my spouse, but the older I get the better gets to be the estimate of my remaining days.

The average Indian's longevity is 70 years and that of an American is 80 years. Since I have lived roughly half my life in India and half in the US, one may estimate my longevity to be 75. You can increase it a little, given my place in the income scale, and decrease it a little given the onslaught of the pandemic. As I have gone past that milestone, I feel like an illicit tenant who is staying on without paying the rent.

No doubt the end point is nearing. It is perhaps worth a thought or two about what I should do with the scant allowance left to me.

A friend suggested that I might compile the things I would like to do but hadn't done yet. It conjures the idea of making what has the uncouth name of a 'bucket list.' Derived probably from the ugly phrase 'to kick the bucket' for dying, it is an inventory of things to do before one's end.

Frankly, I couldn't find in my mind anything I have long craved to do. If I were allowed 15 minutes before my execution, I would probably just ask to take a walk around the lake near my home. I think a look at its shiny ripples would, as Johnson said,



Illustration by : Debabrata Chakrabarty

'concentrate my mind.' I do not have a longing to see the fjords of Norway or soar in the hot-air balloon festival fifty miles from my town. I am quite content to have seen the pyramids and the Libyan desert.

If I think of the last minutes, I imagine a scene – doubtless prompted by a myriad of sentimental Hollywood movies – of lying in bed surrounded by my daughters and their children, muttering some inane profundity as they listen, sad and solemn,

rather someone play Mozart's Symphony 40 in G minor, that thrilling and uplifting piece that I have always loved, rather than something solemn like Verdi's requiem.

When talking of a bucket list, I find people talk of places they have not visited. They speak of romantic places like Florence and Venice in Italy or adventurous places like Pamukkale and Capadocia in Turkey. I might be a tad unromantic or deficient in a sense of adventure, but these prospects would leave me apathetic in my waning days. Perhaps I have traveled too much, seen too many things. In my last hours if I long to see anything it will be the familiar sights of the Lodi Gardens where I walked many a morning or the trails of Virginia where I loved running as the birds sang their evening Retreat. I will be serenely content to revisit familiar grounds, touch familiar trees and plants, perhaps see a few familiar faces.

Also in people's bucket list is a longing to gather experiences they have missed. Like a parachute jump from a plane or a bungee jump from a bridge. Going up a mountain, like the Annapurna circuit or hopping into a lake, like the Baikal in southern Siberia. I can't say I have swum the English Channel or taken the SpaceX rocket to spaces beyond our sight, but I don't feel any craving for out-of-the-world experiences. I encounter stunning experiences every other day in the most mundane of places, in very

prosaic circumstances. I see ordinary people doing extraordinary deeds, common men performing uncommon duties, simple women in their simple rounds performing heroic, staggering tasks. Their stories are what I want to hear, their history is what I want to know and talk about.

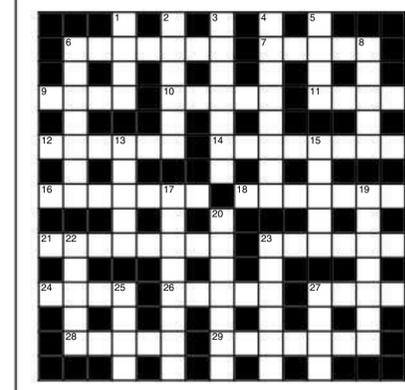
Why do I need a list of new places or new experiences? Every day is a day of excitement, every path is a path of adventure, every encounter is an encounter of endless drama and potential, every experience is an experience of myriad facets and million consequences. I can stand on a street corner and see a rainbow every day; I can sip coffee in a bistro and absorb the colorful cavalcade of the human race. I can be born every minute, live every second, soar beyond the limits of fantasy.

No, I don't need a bucket list. Like everybody else, I want to go in good shape and in good mind, in fair calm and high spirit, watching the day's light fade slowly, my strength ebb gently, my stray thoughts cease flapping its wings and land quietly, peacefully, contentedly on the winding of a life that cared for old friends, dared for new ideas, hoped for brighter days, shunned all unkind takes, loved all loving creatures, cherished men and women who crossed its byways and enhanced every one of its fervent dreams.

(The writer is a US-based international development advisor and had worked with the World Bank. He can be reached at mnandy@gmail.com)

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**YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION**

HOPSCOTCH PROOF  
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E M R I K S  
APED CROPCIRCLE  
R T R A S N E M  
SCHMALTZY GUNGE  
E E C I N U D R  
DIERRY CIACOPHONY

- ACROSS**
- 6 Novelist introducing last letters from Fanny Bravne in Time Out (4-3)
  - 7 Mad? As mad as Fanny, perhaps (5)
  - 9 Clues note Psyche and suchlike, for starters (4)
  - 10 Bit of magic from outside right, said Mark Wright (5)
  - 11 Writers putting Nightingale in Berkeley Square originally (4)
  - 12 13 week period of not quite mutual admiration finally shattered (6)
  - 14 Surveillance job with second coffee option provides clue to theme (5-3)
  - 16 Free guitarist? Being given one for nothing gets rude rejection (4-3)
  - 18 Stick, ultimately one used in running slope (3,4)
  - 21 Deny struggling with Melancholy and Indolence initially, performing as a handsome youth (8)
  - 23 Chain or whip, when not extremely penal (6)
  - 24 Was happy with new pen? (4)
  - 26 Near neighbour of Douglas's, about to get some 6A (5)
  - 27 Russian city cloaked in returning thick smog (4)
  - 28 John recited with some force, that's clear (5)
  - 29 Playwright unknown in China? (7)
  - 4 Linklater's content to respond cheekily (4,4)
  - 5 Win audience with small number that we hear might be Grecian (4)
  - 6 Spurs game I must lampoon, ironically at first (7)
  - 8 Setter blocked in by bus before lunchtime, cycling in Romanian city (5)
  - 13 Retract Nancy's article, for instance (5)
  - 15 Former postman, one now living abroad (5)
  - 17 Suddenly gets angry, obscure fish appearing in reverse (6)
  - 19 Male or female Lydians reimagined by poet (7)
  - 20 Making new sort of punk, met Shaggy! (7)
  - 22 Post from one we love (5)
  - 23 Heads are those of Cupid and Psyche, inscribed "To Apollo" (6)
  - 25 Part of 16 needing some bottle – and cheek! (4)
  - 27 Bits of old verse periodically appearing as part of today's theme (4)
- DOWN**
- 1 Fans missing "dark beer" drinks (4)
  - 2 Poet briefly working as comedian (6)
  - 3 Good person briefly supporting a Lake Poet's most lofty expression (7)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required. (By arrangement with The Independent, London)



CBIC mounting awareness against frauds in name of Customs

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) is mounting a multi-modal awareness campaign against the frauds committed in the name of Indian Customs, the Ministry of Finance notified on Sunday. It said that various incidents have come to light through news portals/social media platforms of fraudulent persons posing as Indian Customs officers cheating the public of their hard-earned money across the country.

These frauds are primarily done using digital means like phone calls or SMS, and are focused on extracting money through the 'purported' fear of immediate penal action, it highlighted.

In order to curb these prevailing frauds, the ministry mentioned the various campaigns undertaken by the CBIC. These campaigns include Newspaper advertisements, SMS/Emails to the general public, social media campaigns, and the public awareness campaigns by CBIC field formations across the country in coordination with local administration and trade bodies to spread awareness on this issue. The ministry also highlighted some of the common modus operandi used by fraudsters. These include fraudsters posing as Courier officials/staff contact via calls, text messages or emails claiming that Customs have held a package or parcel and requires payment of Customs duties or taxes before it can be released. They also use 'Pressure Tactics' like impersonating Customs/Police/CBI officials demanding payment of Customs duty/clearance fees for packages/gifts that purportedly have been received from a foreign country and require Customs clearance. Targeted individuals are asked to make payments for the release of their goods. As per the modus operandi, the targeted persons are informed that their package has been seized by Customs due to illegal contents (such as drugs/foreign currency/fake passport/contraband items) or violations of Customs regulations. Fraudsters threaten legal action or fines and demand payment to resolve the issue.

The CBIC has advised the public to take certain measures to safeguard themselves from becoming a victim of such scams. It said that the Indian Customs officers never contact the general public via phone, SMS, or e-mail for payment of duty in private accounts. Disconnect calls and never respond to messages, if you suspect fraud or encounter any irregularities.

"Never share or disclose personal information (Passwords, CVV, Aadhar number, etc.), or send money to unknown individuals or organizations without verifying their identity and legitimacy," it advised. Further, it advised to verify all the communications from Indian Customs consist of a Document Identification Number (DIN), which can be verified on the CBIC website. Immediately report such cases to www.cybercrime.gov.in or helpline number 1930.

# Five of top-10 most valued firms added over ₹85000 crore in market valuation

BSE benchmark Sensex climbed 299.41 points or 0.39% and hit its all-time high of 77,145.46 on 13 June

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

Last week (from June 10 to 14), the five of the top-10 most valued firms together added Rs 85,582.21 crore in market valuation.

The market extended the winning run for the second consecutive week with benchmarks hitting fresh record highs led by moderate US and domestic inflation print, positive global markets, FII buying and inline FOMC

meeting outcome. The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) emerged as the biggest gainer, in-line with positive trend in equities.

BSE benchmark Sensex climbed 299.41 points or 0.39% and hit its all-time high of 77,145.46 on June 13.

Among the top 10, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India and LIC were the gainers.

The Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), ICICI Bank, Infos-



market valuation. These five firms together lost Rs 84,704.81 crore from market valuation.

The top among them was the LIC whose valuation jumped Rs 46,425.48 crore to Rs 6,74,877.25 crore.

The mcap of HDFC Bank rallied Rs 18,639.61 crore to Rs 12,14,965.13 crore while that of the State Bank of India climbed Rs 9,192.35 crore to Rs 7,49,845.89 crore. However, the ICICI Bank's valuation declined by Rs 11,179.27 crore to Rs 7,77,795.90 crore. The mcap of TCS tumbled Rs 22,052.24

crore to Rs 13,86,433.05 crore and that of Infosys eroded by Rs 18,600.5 crore to Rs 6,18,030.37 crore. Reliance Industries added Rs 10,216.41 crore, taking its valuation to Rs 19,98,957.88 crore. However, the valuation of Hindustan Unilever dropped by Rs 22,885.02 crore to Rs 5,82,522.41 crore.

Bharti Airtel went up by Rs 1,108.36 crore to Rs 8,11,524.37 crore. ITC went lower by Rs 9,987.78 crore to Rs 5,38,216.34 crore. Reliance Industries

remained the most valued firm in the pack of top-10 companies, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, LIC, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever and ITC. This week, BSE Sensex added 299.41 points or 0.39 percent to finish at 76,922.77, while Nifty50 index gained 175.45 points or 0.75 percent to end at 23,465.60. During the week, BSE Sensex and Nifty50 touched their fresh record highs of 77,145.46 and 23,490.40, respectively.

## Modi 3.0: Stock markets to touch new high in 1 yr, say global rating agencies

AGENCIES NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

Indian stock markets have seen a robust rally since the new government's formation, closing at an all-time high in the last week. According to top rating agencies, the indices are set to gain new highs in the next 12 months.

It was the second consecutive week when Indian frontline indices Sensex and Nifty made a new all-time high of 77,145 and 23,490 respectively, as inflation cooled off.

The stock market is attracting global funds which are going to accelerate soon.

Moreover, the stock markets have emerged as a favourite investment destination for retail investors.

According to global rating agency Moody's, its '12-month forward BSE Sensex target is 82,000, implying 14 per cent upside'.

In its latest report, Moody's said that the key benefit to the market of the NDA's re-election is "policy predictability, which will influence how growth and equity return pan out in the coming five years".

"We believe the government is likely to continue focusing on macro stability (i.e., inflation hawkishness) to inform policy," according to the report.



"With government continuity now in place, we believe the market can look forward to further structural reforms, giving us more confidence in the earnings cycle. Macro stability with rising GDP growth relative to real rates should extend India's outperformance over emerging markets equities," it added.

According to Moody's, India's stock market has been making new highs, and the debate now is over what could take the market materially higher.

"In our view, the government's mandate is likely to result in policy changes that will lengthen the earnings cycle and surprise the market," it emphasised.

With Modi 3.0 in power, more will come over the next five years in the form of positive structural shifts.

Moreover, India has reclaimed the fourth-biggest global equity market tag from Hong Kong. The country's market capitalisation soared 10 per cent to reach \$5.2 trillion. In comparison, Hong Kong's equity market cap is \$5.17 trillion, down 5.4 per cent from the high of \$5.47 trillion this year.

## 95 pc Indian fathers agree parenting calls for both parents' equal effort



RITWIK MUKHERJEE KOLKATA, 16 JUNE

If mothers come forward, can fathers be far behind? That seems to be the spirit in New India. Quite contrary to the popular perception, as high as 95 per cent (on an average) of fathers in India agree parenting calls for equal effort from both parents, marking a significant departure from traditional gender roles and underscoring the evolving dynamics within modern families.

Region-wise, the highest agreement with this sentiment is found amongst fathers in South India at 97 per cent, followed by 95 per cent in the North and West, and 92 per cent in the East. At least that's what a recent survey report titled 'One Mosquito, Countless Threats', conducted by Goodknight, India's leading household insecticide brand from Godrej

Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL), has come up with. This is notwithstanding the fact that misconceptions persist about fathers being less involved in raising their children or contribute towards the household.

The survey reveals that 94 per cent of fathers in India believe in being proactively involved in household chores and taking care of their children. Regionally, 96 per cent of fathers in the Southern and Western states, 93 per cent in Northern states and 91 per cent in Eastern share this belief.

That's not all. Another key finding of the survey is that fathers have a softer side. Amongst the 500+ fathers who were interviewed, a remarkable 88 per cent of fathers reported waking up in the middle of the night to ensure their children are sleeping peacefully and free from mosquito disturbances.

This trend is consistent across the country, with Fathers in Eastern region showing the highest involvement at 92 per cent, and the Northern, Western and Southern regions following at 86 per cent.

June 16 (Sunday) being observed as the Father's Day, it's evident that their role in parenting is more vital and active than ever. The modern dad is deeply involved in ensuring the health and happiness of their children, embodying the spirit of equal parenting and creating stronger, more balanced families across India.

"Goodknight is one of the most loved and preferred brands of households across the country. This survey by Goodknight brings to light the transformation in parenting dynamics in India. The initiative is part of our ongoing campaign where we are trying to acknowledge the commitment of fathers. Be it child's sleep and overall parental duties, fathers are stepping up to deliver with dedication and supporting their partner," said Shekhar Saurabh, AVP & Category Head - Home Care, Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL).

He said, "Goodknight is committed to partner with parents to deliver completely safe and the most effective protection against mosquitoes for their child. We believe that every child deserves a good night's sleep, and we are here to support parents in achieving that goal."

## Stock market to remain closed on Monday for Bakri Eid, Nifty, Sensex gained 0.5 pc last week



AGENCIES NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

The stock market will be closed for trading on Monday on account of Bakri Eid. The trading is set to resume on Tuesday, according to the National Stock Exchange's (NSE) official website.

The market will be closed on Monday in all segments, including stocks, derivatives, and SLBs. Additionally, the Multi Commodity Exchange of India Limited (MCX) will be closed for the morning session on June 17 but will reopen in the evening from 5:00 PM until either 11:30 PM or 11:55 PM.

Last week, the Nifty-50 Index and BSE Sensex saw marginal gains of 0.5 per cent each, reaching new all-time highs as market expectations became more bullish. The mid-cap index outperformed with a gain of around 3.6 per cent, and the small-cap index rose by 5 per cent, surpassing the performance of large-cap stocks. This improvement in market sentiment suggests that the market has stabilized following the Lok Sabha elections.

According to market experts, better-than-expected fourth-quarter FY24 earnings in certain key sectors helped sustain this momentum.

On the economic front, May's Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation was 4.75 per cent, close to April's figure of 4.83 per cent, while food inflation stood at 8.7 per cent. Most sectoral indices experienced weekly gains, with Capital Goods, Consumer Durables, Oil and Gas, Auto, Metals, Realty, and Power sectors rising between 1.5 per cent and 5 per cent.

The Bank Nifty saw only marginal gains during the week. Conversely, the IT and FMCG indices each declined by around 1 per cent.

"Meanwhile, both FPIs and DIIs were net buyers in the entire week. Going forward, D-street will focus on the macro trends, inflation, and global situation including geo-political concerns," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research at Kotak Securities.

In Asia, they weakened past the 158 per dollar mark after the Bank of Japan announced it would detail a plan for bond purchases at its July meeting, delaying any reductions in buying until at least then. The Bank of Japan maintained its benchmark rate within a range of 0 per cent to 0.1 per cent.

## Titagarh Rail Systems commences production for Bangalore Metro with CRRC

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, 16 JUNE

Titagarh Rail Systems Limited (TRSL), a leading Indian rolling stock manufacturer, has commenced the production of train-sets as part of a contract with China Railway Rolling Stock Corporation (CRRC) for the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited's (BMRL) Phase 2 Yellow Line project. This marks a significant milestone in Titagarh's ongoing contribution to India's urban transportation infrastructure. Titagarh Rail Systems is a leading comprehensive mobility solution provider with a strong presence in India and Italy. With state-of-the-art factories in both countries, the company is committed to meeting the



diverse requirements of passenger and freight rolling stock

Interestingly, the contract agreement between BMRL and CRRC Nanjing Puzhen Co Ltd, had been signed in December 2019, encountered challenges, which led to delays in meeting the original deadlines. To address these delays in the

rolling stock supply, CRRC sought additional time and subsequently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Titagarh Rail Systems. Under this MoU, Titagarh will manufacture the trainsets at its state-of-the-art facility.

Under the agreement with BMRL, Titagarh is responsible for producing 34 of the 36 trainsets needed for the Yellow Line at its advanced manufacturing facility. Only two trainsets, comprising 12 coaches, will be manufactured in China. To meet the specific requirements of the project, Titagarh has established a dedicated stainless steel production line at its facility. Production began on May 18th, 2024, and the first trainset is slated for delivery in August 2024.

## IIFL Finance reports 6pc decline in consolidated net profit for Q4FY24



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

IIFL Finance reported 6 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 431 crore for the March quarter as the RBI barred the financial services firm from undertaking gold loan business.

Notably, for the same quarter last year, the company earned a net profit of Rs 458 crore. Its consolidated total income during January-March 2024 rose to Rs 2,922 crore as compared with Rs 2,276 crore in the year-ago period, IIFL Finance said in a regulatory filing.

Interest income of IIFL Finance offers a range of loans and mortgages increased

to Rs 2,720 crore during the quarter, as against Rs 2,058 crore in the year-ago period. On RBI's action, the lender said it has taken necessary measures to address the identified concerns and prevent their recurrence.

The company has formed a team to implement corrective actions and revise policies and procedures, IIFL Finance added.

In early March this year, the RBI directed the company to stop sanctioning or disbursing new gold loans or assigning, securitising, or selling any of its gold loans.

Explaining the rationale behind this move, the RBI had indicated that certain "material supervisory concerns" were observed in the company's gold loan portfolio.

IIFL's gross non-performing assets (NPAs) increased to 2.3 per cent as against 1.8 per cent at the end of March 2025.

At the same time, the net NPAs also rose to 1.2 per cent from 1.1 per cent at the end of fourth quarter of previous year.

Total Capital to Risk (Weighted) Assets Ratio (CRAR) stood at 19.7 per cent as on March 31, 2024, as against minimum regulatory requirement of 15 per cent, it said.

## TENDER

**CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS**  
**OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE**  
 No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162  
 Date: 08.06.2024. The following e-Tenders can be accessed under the link www.iireps.gov.in. Offers for such e-Tender can be submitted only electronically by accessing the link www.iireps.gov.in - login - E-Tender Stores/Supply. Vendors may also contact the following officials to obtain clarification regarding particular tender or IREPS related information if any. Dy.CMM/HQ/CLW/Chittaranjan, 0341-2525594 or SMM/CON/HQ. 0341-2535631. Office Address: Office of the PCMM/CLW/Chittaranjan. SL No.; Tender No.; Brief Description of Item; Quantity; Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees); Tender Closing Date & Time (IST) are as follow: [1]; 75244130; Stainless Steel Sheets, Plates, Bars and Flats for WAG 9HC as per Spec. no. CLW/MS/3/039 Alt.7, (One Set consisting of 17 items as per set details attached). [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]; 739.00 Set; ₹ 1,67,430.00; 01.07.2024 at 11:00 AM. [2]; 75243726; Holder for TM Suspension for WAG-9HC as per Drg. No.: 1209-01.118-002 Alt-3. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]; 5652.00 Numbers; ₹ 20,00,000.00; 31.07.2024 at 11:00 AM. [3]; 91240884; Machined Stator Assembly [Modified], Drg. No.: ITWD.096.102 Alt-14, Specn. No. 4TMS.096.070 Rev-2, Alt-1. STR No. CLW/TM/18600, Rev-2. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]; 940.00 Set; ₹ 20,00,000.00; 12.07.2024 at 11:00 AM. [4]; 81240992; Brazing Flux suitable for Silver Brazing Alloy Rod & Silver Brazing Alloy Foil as per Specification No. IS 2927-75, 4TMS.096.096 Rev-1, GR BA-CU-Ag -16A, STR No. CLW/TM/961 Rev-1. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]; 122.00 Kg; ₹ 0.00; 09.07.2024 at 11:00 AM. [5]; 81240187; Polyester Film [Y-P] 2 MIL. THK., Size: 100 PLUS 2 PLUS 0 MM. x 500 PLUS 3 PLUS 0 MM., Specification No. 4TMS.096.104. STR No. CLW/TM/187 Rev-1 [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]; 279200.00 Numbers; ₹ 0.00; 09.08.2024 at 11:00 AM. [6]; 81240186; (i) Adhesive Glass Cloth Tape, Size: 0.14 x 19 MM. wide [In Continuous Roll of 30M], Specification No. 4TMS.096.026, Rev-1, STR No. CLW/TM/12079/STR/AGCT [Rev. 1] (Shelf Life 24 Months) [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]; (ii) Adhesive Glass Cloth Tape, Size: 0.14 x 50 MM. wide [In Continuous Roll of 30M], Specification No. 4TMS.096.026, Rev-1 STR No. CLW/TM/12079/STR/AGCT [Rev. 1] (Shelf Life 24 Months) [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]; (i) 24210.00 Metre, (ii) 10150.00 Metre; ₹ 0.00; 02.08.2024 at 11:00 AM. [7]; 81240863; Polyamide Paper [NOMEX] PAPI, Size: 0.38 x 914 MM. [In Continuous Roll of 10 M.], Specification No. 4TMS.096.091 Rev-1 Alt-1, STR No. CLW/TM/176 [Rev. 1]. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]; 435.00 Kg; ₹ 0.00; 23.07.2024 at 11:00 AM. [8]; 81240868; Brazing Flux, Specification No. DIN EN 1045-FH 10, STR No. CLW/TM/961 Rev-1. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]; 435.00 Kg; ₹ 0.00; 16.07.2024 at 11:00 AM. [9]; 81240148; Glass Tape [EGT] Size: 0.18 x 25 MM., Specification No. 4TMS.095.016 Rev-1 STR No. CLW/TM/20150 & 20160 (Rev-1) [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]; 100125.00 Metre; ₹ 0.00; 30.07.2024 at 11:00 AM. [PR4468] PCMM/CLW/Chittaranjan Like us on: www.facebook.com/clwrailways

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LOST Share certificates of MSTC Ltd in the name of Ascharj Lal Sakhuja (total:41600) were lost in Delhi NCR vide certificate no.59 of (Dist no. 1052081-1053380) C no.242 (Dist no.2152071-2153370) C no.1475 (8505581-8513380) C no.2320 (17219986-17230385) C no.2696 (34446571-34467370) If any person finds it or have any objection to issue of duplicate shares may write to company secretary MSTC LTD plot no.CF18/2, Street no.175, Action Area 1C, Newtown Kolkata-700156 (West Bengal)



UNSMIL remains committed...to working with all parties to end the crisis, preserve Libya's unity and sovereignty, and ensure a stable and prosperous future

STEPHANIE KOURY, DEPUTY SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS FOR LIBYA

STRESSING COMMITMENT TO HELP END LIBYAN CRISIS

WEATHER

Table with 3 columns: CITY, MAX(°C), MIN(°C). Rows include SINGAPORE, HONG KONG, TOKYO, LONDON, DUBAI, SAN FRANCISCO, NEW YORK, MOSCOW.

S= sunny, CL= clear, H=hazy, R= rainy...

Doctors' group in S.Korea offers to vote on walkout if govt accepts 3 demands: South Korea's biggest doctors' group on Sunday offered to hold a vote on whether to go ahead with a mass walkout this week if the government accepts three demands, including revisiting the issue of increasing medical school admissions.

Israeli military will pause daytime fighting in south Gaza

The international community has urged Israel to do more to ease crunch in aid delivery

ASSOCIATED PRESS JERUSALEM, 16 JUNE

Israel's military announced on Sunday that it would pause fighting throughout daytime hours along a route in southern Gaza to free up a backlog of humanitarian aid deliveries destined for desperate Palestinians enduring a humanitarian crisis sparked by the war, now in its ninth month.

The "tactical pause" announced by the military, which applies to about 12 kilometers (7.4 miles) of road in the Rafah area, falls far short of a complete cease-fire in the beleaguered territory that has been sought by the international community, including Israel's top ally, the United States.

The army said the pause would begin at 8 a.m. (0500 GMT) and remain in effect until 7 p.m. (1600 GMT). It said the pauses would take place every day until further notice. The pause is aimed at allowing aid trucks to reach



the nearby Israel-controlled Kerem Shalom crossing, the main entry point for incoming aid, and travel safely to the Salah a-Din highway, a main north-south road, the military said. The crossing has suffered from a bottleneck since Israeli ground troops moved into Rafah in early May.

COGAT, the Israeli military body that oversees aid distribution in Gaza, said the route would increase the flow of aid to other parts of Gaza, including Khan Younis, the coastal area of Muwasi and central Gaza. Hard-hit north-

ern Gaza, which was an early target in the war, is being served by goods entering from a crossing in the north. The military said the pause Sunday, which begins as Muslims in Gaza and elsewhere start marking the major Eid Al-Adha holiday, came after discussions with the United Nations and international aid agencies. Following criticism over the move from ultranationalists in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government, who oppose a halt in the war, the military said fight-

ing is not being paused in the rest of southern Gaza and neither is there any change regarding the entry of aid in general. Aid agencies, including the U.N., did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Scott Anderson, the Gaza affairs director for the U.N. agency for Palestinians, told CNN that he was hopeful the pause would "bring in much-needed aid for the population."

The pause along the southern route comes as Israel and Hamas are weighing the latest proposal for a cease-fire, a plan that was detailed by President Joe Biden in the administration's most concentrated diplomatic push for a halt to the fighting and the release of hostages taken by the militant group. While Biden described the proposal as an Israeli one, Israel has not fully embraced it and Hamas has demanded changes that appear unacceptable to Israel. The fighting continues unabated, and Israel announced the names Sunday of a total of 11 soldiers killed in recent attacks in Gaza, including one who died from wounds sustained in an assault last week. That puts the number of soldiers

killed since Israel began its ground invasion of Gaza last year at 308. Hamas killed 1,200 people during its Oct. 7 attack and took 250 hostage, Israeli authorities say. Health officials in Hamas-run Gaza say more than 37,000 Palestinians have been killed in the war.

Israel's eight-month military offensive against Hamas, sparked by the militant group's Oct. 7 attack, has plunged Gaza into a humanitarian crisis, with the U.N. reporting widespread hunger and hundreds of thousands of people on the brink of famine. The international community has urged Israel to do more to ease the crunch and has said the ongoing fighting, including in Rafah, has complicated aid deliveries throughout the war.

Another crossing, the Rafah terminal between Gaza and Egypt, has been closed since Israel moved into the city, adding to the pressure. Hamas supreme leader, Ismail Haniyeh, on Sunday called for more pressure to open border crossings into Gaza, including Rafah. Egypt has refused to reopen the crossing as long as Israel controls the Palestinian side in Gaza.

The US supports 'a just and lasting peace' for Ukraine, Harris tells Zelenskyy at Swiss summit

AGENCIES SWITZERLAND, 16 JUNE



Vice President Kamala Harris on Saturday pledged America's full support in backing Ukraine and global efforts to achieve "a just and lasting peace" in the face of Russia's invasion, representing the United States at an international gathering on the war and meeting with Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy to discuss his country's vision for ending it.

As she arrived at the meeting venue overlooking Lake Lucerne, Harris announced \$1.5 billion in U.S. assistance through the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development. That includes money for energy assistance, repairing damaged energy infrastructure, helping refugees and strengthening civilian security in the wake of the aggression by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Russia's aggression is more than just an attack "on the lives and the freedom of the people of Ukraine," Harris told leaders from 100 nations and global organizations participating in the summit. "It is not only an attack on global food security and energy supplies. Russia's aggression is also an attack on interna-

tional rules and norms and the principles embodied in the U.N. Charter," Harris said. She said the U.S. was committed to continuing "to impose costs on Russia and we will continue to work toward a just and lasting peace," reaffirming words she used at the start of her private meeting with Zelenskyy. For Zelenskyy, the gathering was a beginning toward finding a "real peace."

"The world majority definitely wants to live without bloody crises, deportations, and ecocides," Zelenskyy said. "And so every nation that is not represented now and that shares the same values of the U.N. Charter in deed and word, will be able to join our work at the next stages." President Joe Biden was in Los Angeles after three days at the Group of Seven summit in Italy, where he held talks with Zelenskyy. Biden flew from Europe to California for a Saturday night fundraiser with Hollywood A-listers George Clooney and Julia Roberts.

Sweden frees an Iranian man convicted over 1988 mass executions in exchange for 2 men held by Iran

AGENCIES DUBAI, 16 JUNE

Iran and Sweden carried out a prisoner swap Saturday that saw Tehran release a European Union diplomat and another man in exchange for an Iranian convicted in Stockholm of committing war crimes over his part in 1988 mass executions in the Islamic Republic.

The arrest of Hamid Nouri by Sweden in 2019 as he traveled there as a tourist likely sparked the detentions of the two Swedes, part of a long-running strategy by Iran since its 1979 Islamic Revolution to use those with ties abroad as bargaining chips in negotiations with the West.

While Iranian state television claimed without evidence that Nouri had been "illegally detained," Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristers-



son said diplomat Johan Floderus and a second Swedish citizen, Saeed Azizi, had been facing a "hell on earth." "Iran has made these Swedes pawns in a cynical negotiation game with the aim of getting the Iranian citizen Hamid Nouri released from Sweden," Kristersson said Saturday. "It has been clear all along that this operation would require difficult decisions, now the government has

made those decisions." State TV aired images of Nouri limping off an airplane at Tehran's Mehrabad International Airport and being embraced by his family. "I am Hamid Nouri. I am in Iran," he said. "God makes me free." He made a point of repeatedly referencing the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq, mocking them with his release. The Iranian dissident group criticized

the swap in a statement and said "it will embolden the religious fascism to step up terrorism, hostage-taking and blackmail."

Oman, a sultanate on the eastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula, mediated the release, its state-run news agency reported. Oman long has served as an interlocutor between Iran and the West. The swap comes as the Muslim world celebrates Eid al-Adha, which marks the end of the Hajj pilgrimage and typically sees prisoners freed.

In 2022, the Stockholm District Court sentenced Nouri to life in prison. It identified him as an assistant to the deputy prosecutor at the Gohardasht prison outside the Iranian city of Karaj.

The 1988 mass executions came at the end of Iran's long war with Iraq. After Iran's

then-Supreme Leader Ruhollah Khomeini accepted a United Nations-brokered cease-fire, members of the Iranian opposition group Mujahedeen-e-Khalq, heavily armed by Saddam Hussein, stormed across the Iranian border in a surprise attack. Iran ultimately blunted their assault, but the attack set the stage for the sham retrials of political prisoners, militants and others that would become known as "death commissions."

International rights groups estimate that as many as 5,000 people were executed. Iran has never fully acknowledged the executions, apparently carried out on Khomeini's orders, though some argue that other top officials were effectively in charge in the months before his 1989 death. Authorities initially said they believed as many as 10

Shooting in Detroit suburb injures nine, leaving an 8-year-old in critical condition

AGENCIES ROCHESTER HILLS, 16 JUNE

Nine people were injured, including two young children and their mother, after a shooter opened fire at a splash pad in a Detroit suburb where families gathered to escape the summer heat Saturday. Law enforcement tracked a suspect to a home, where the man died by a self-inflicted gunshot wound, authorities said.

An 8-year-old boy was shot in the head and in critical condition Saturday night, Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard said during a news conference. The boy's mother also was in critical condition after being wounded in the abdomen and leg, and his 4-year-old brother was in stable condition with a leg wound.

Authorities initially said they believed as many as 10



people had gunshot wounds from the shooting in Rochester Hills, but that number was revised after they checked with area hospitals.

The other six victims, all 30 or older, were in stable condition, Bouchard said. They included a husband-and-wife couple and a 78-year-old man.

The shooting happened just after 5 p.m. at a city park featuring a recreation area with a nonslip surface where people can turn on sprays and fountains of water to play in. Bouchard said the attack appeared to be random, with the shooter driving up to the

park, walking to the splash pad and firing as many as 28 times, stopping multiple times to reload.

At least one witness reported that the shooter appeared to use two hand guns during the attack, but that has not yet been confirmed, the sheriff said.

In the chaos, "People were falling, getting hit, trying to run," Bouchard said. "Terrible things that unfortunately all of us in our law enforcement business have seen way too much."

The gunman was "apparently in no rush. Just calmly walked back to his car," the sheriff said.

Police heard the 911 call reporting the shooting as it came in, Bouchard said, because the agency uses a service that simultaneously sends emergency calls to first responders. An officer was at the scene within two minutes, he said.

Singapore rushes to clean up oil slick after boat hits stationary fuel supply ship

AGENCIES MALAYSIA, 16 JUNE

An oil spill caused by a dredger boat hitting a stationary cargo tanker has blackened part of Singapore's southern coastline, including the popular resort island of Sentosa, and sparked concerns it may threaten marine wildlife as a clean-up operation was underway Sunday.

The Netherlands-flagged dredger Vox Maxima struck the Singaporean fuel supply ship Marine Honor on Friday. It damaged the cargo tank on Marine Honor, which leaked oil into the sea.

Singapore's Maritime and Port Authority said in a statement late Saturday the oil leak from the vessel had been contained, and that the oil that escaped from the damaged tanker had been treated with



dispersants. But due to the tidal current, it said the treated oil had landed along shorelines including at Sentosa and other southern islands, a nature reserve and a public beach park. Sentosa, which attracts millions of visitors annually, houses one of Singapore's two casinos, golf courses and Southeast Asia's only Universal Studios theme park. Part of the beachfront at the public park and at the nature reserve have been closed to facilitate clean-up efforts, it said. The Sentosa beach will remain

open to the public but sea activities and swimming are prohibited.

On Sunday, workers in orange suits were seen scooping up sand in a clean-up operation at an empty beach in Sentosa. Black water washed up on the oil-stained shore.

Authorities have deployed 18 crafts for the clean-up efforts and laid close to 1,500 meters of container booms, temporary floating barriers to trap the oil spill.

"More will be laid over the next few days to prevent further spread of oil onto the shore, and facilitate the recovery of the trapped oil off the affected shorelines and lagoons to prevent them from going back to sea," the statement said.

Conservationists and biologists are monitoring the full extent of the damage on marine and wildlife.

French protesters are standing up to the far right ahead of the country's snap elections

ASSOCIATED PRESS PARIS, 16 JUNE

Anti-racism groups joined French unions and a brand-new left-wing coalition in protests in Paris and across France on Saturday against the surging nationalist far right as frenzied campaigning is underway ahead of snap parliamentary elections.

The French Interior Ministry said 250,000 people turned out to protest, 75,000 of them in Paris. Despite rainy and windy weather, those who fear that the elections will produce France's first far-right government since World War II gathered at Place de la Republique before marching through eastern Paris. Up to 21,000 police and gendarmes were deployed.

The protesters held placards reading "Liberty for all,



Equality for all and Fraternity with all" — a reference to France's national motto — and "Let's break frontiers, documents for all, no to the immigration bill." Some chanted "Free Palestine, viva Palestina," and wore keffiyeh scarves. Among them was Nour Cekar, a 16-year-old high school student from the Paris region, who has French and Algerian parents and wears the hijab.

"To me, the extreme right is a danger because it supports

an ideology based on the fear of the other, whereas we are all French citizens despite our differences," she told The Associated Press. Cekar said she will vote for the left-wing coalition because "it is the only political party that addresses racism and Islamophobia."

"I fear the rise of the National Rally because I am afraid that they will ban the hijab in name of women's liberty. I am a woman and I should be able to decide what I want to

wear. I am a free woman," she said, adding that she is insulted on social media and in the streets on a daily basis because of her headscarf.

Against the backdrop of music of French-Malian singer Aya Nakamura, the crowd chanted "Everyone hates racism."

"France is made up of people of different origins. It is its strength. The National Rally wants to break that," 68-year-old Mohamed Benamar, a French doctor with Tunisian roots who works in a Paris public hospital, told agencies.

"We provide medical care to everyone, without worrying about their nationality, the color of their skin or their religion, unlike the fascists (extreme-right leaders) that single out Black, Arabs or Muslim people," he said. Although his son told him

that it was useless to protest, Benamar said he's convinced that it is important to make his voice heard. "I am here to send a strong signal to politicians. We won't stay silent in the face of the far right," he said.

Police in Paris reported "numerous attempts at damage" by protesters. They said that nine protesters were arrested and three officers were injured. A journalist said police used tear gas against demonstrators who tried to vandalize a bus stop and advertising boards.

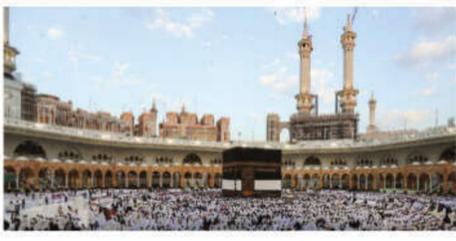
In the French Riviera city of Nice, protesters marched down Jean Medecin Avenue, the city's main shopping street, chanting against the National Rally, its leader Jordan Bardella as well as against President Emmanuel Macron. Local police said 2,500 people took part.

Pilgrims commence the final rites of Hajj as Muslims celebrate Eid al-Azha

ASSOCIATED PRESS MINA, 16 JUNE

Masses of pilgrims on Sunday embarked on a symbolic stoning of the devil in Saudi Arabia under the soaring summer heat. The ritual marks the final days of the Hajj, or Islamic pilgrimage, and the start of the Eid al-Azha celebrations for Muslims around the world.

The stoning is among the final rites of the Hajj, which is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. It came a day after more than 1.8 million pilgrims congregated at a sacred hill, known as Mount Ararat, outside the holy city of Mecca, which Muslim pilgrims visit to perform the annual five-



day rituals of Hajj. The pilgrims left Mount Arafat on Saturday evening to spend their night in a nearby site known as Muzdalifa, where they collected pebbles to use in the symbolic stoning of pillars representing the devil. The pillars are in another

sacred place in Mecca, called Mina, where Muslims believe Ibrahim's faith was tested when God commanded him to sacrifice his only son Ismail. Ibrahim was prepared to submit to the command, but then God stayed his hand, sparing his son. In the Christian and Jewish versions of the

story, Abraham is ordered to kill his other son, Isaac.

On Sunday morning, crowds headed on foot to the stoning areas. Some were seen pushing disabled pilgrims on wheelchairs on a multi-lane road leading to the complex housing the large pillars. Most pilgrims were seen sweating and carrying umbrellas to protect them against the burning summer sun.

An Associated Press reporter saw many pilgrims, especially among the elderly, collapsing on the road to the pillars because of the burning heat. Security forces and medics were deployed to help, carrying those who fainted on gurneys out of the heat to ambulances or field

hospitals. As the temperature spiked by midday, more people required medical help. The heat had reached to 47 C (116.6 F) in Mecca, and 46 C (114.8 F) in Mina, according to Saudi meteorological authorities.

Despite the suffocating heat, many pilgrims expressed joy at being able to complete their pilgrimage.

"Thank God, (the process) was joyful and good," said Abdel-Moaty Abu Ghoneima, an Egyptian pilgrim. "No one wants more than this." Many pilgrims will spend up to three days in Mina, each casting seven pebbles at three pillars in a ritual to symbolize the casting away of evil and sin.

Chinese premier promises more pandas and urges Australia to put aside differences

AGENCIES MELBOURNE, 16 JUNE

Chinese Premier Li Qiang on Sunday promised a new pair of giant pandas to a zoo and urged Australia to set aside its differences with Beijing at the outset of the first visit to the country by China's second-highest ranking leader in seven years.

China's most powerful politician after President Xi Jinping arrived late Saturday in Adelaide, the capital of South Australia state, which has produced most of the Australian wine entering China since crippling tariffs were lifted in March that had effec-

tively ended a 1.2 billion Australian dollar (\$790 million) a year trade since 2020.

Li's trip has focused so far on the panda diplomacy, rebounding trade including wine and recovering diplomatic links after China initiated a reset of the relationship in 2022 that had all but collapsed during Australia's previous conservative administration's nine years in power. Relations tumbled over legislation that banned covert foreign interference in Australian politics, the exclusion of Chinese-owned telecommunications giant Huawei from rolling out the national 5G network due

to security concerns, and Australia's call for an independent investigation into the causes of and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Beijing imposed an array of official and unofficial trade blocks in 2020 on a range of Australian exports including coal, wine, beef, barley and wood that cost up to AU\$20 billion (\$13 billion) a year.

All the trade bans have now been lifted except for Australian live lobster exports. Trade Minister Don Farrell predicted that impediment would also be lifted soon after Li's visit with Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao.



Our election symbol was a walking stick at the third number on the EVM. The Mool Niwasi Samaj Party had the hockey stick..Our voters got confused..

UTAR PRADESH MINISTER OM PRAKASH RAJBHAR  
BSP BLAMES ELECTION DEFEAT ON ITS POLL SYMBOL, WANTS IT CHANGED

# Mumbai: EC official rejects EVM hacking claim

No mobile OTP for unlocking EVM as it is non programmable and it has no wireless communication capabilities, official clarifies

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

An Election Commission of India (ECI) official on Sunday rejected charges over the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) hacking row at Mumbai North West Lok Sabha seat, saying that EVMs are stand-alone devices without any wired or wireless connectivity with units outside the EVM system. Vandana Suryavanshi, the Returning Officer of 27 Mumbai North West Parliamentary Constituency was reacting after a report by a Mumbai-based newspaper stated that Shiv Sena leader Ravindra Waikar's relative was carrying a mobile phone inside



a counting centre in Maharashtra's Goregaon that was allegedly used for generating the OTP that unlocked the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM). She dispelled such reports and clarified that no OTP

(One Time Password) on mobile is needed for unlocking EVMs. "There is no OTP (One Time Password) on mobile for unlocking EVM as it is non programmable and it has no

wireless communication capabilities. It is a complete lie being spread by a newspaper, which is being used by some leaders to create a false narrative," Suryavanshi said in a press conference in Mumbai.

The Returning Officer further stated that the incident at Mumbai North West Constituency Counting Centre is about unauthorised use of a mobile phone of an authorised person by a candidate's aide.

"Criminal case has already been filed by the Returning Officer," she added.

Asserting the efficacy of EVMs in conducting polls, Suryavanshi said, "EVMs are stand alone devices without any wired or wireless con-

nectivity with units outside the EVM system. Advanced technical features and robust administrative safeguards are in place to rule out any possibility of manipulation. Safeguards include conducting everything in the presence of candidates or their agents."

Sharing details about counting of votes through postal ballot, the Returning Officer said, "Counting of ETPBS (Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System) happens in physical form (paper ballots) and not electronics as being spread through false narratives."

"Every counting sheet at every table for ETPBS and EVM counting and postal ballot counting (including ETPBS)

is signed by all counting agents after due diligence," she added. The Returning Officer further stated that proceedings are against the newspaper for "spreading rumours maligning Indian voters and the electoral system."

Earlier in the day, an FIR was registered against Mangesh Pandilkar, a relative of Shiv Sena leader Ravindra Waikar for allegedly carrying a mobile phone inside a counting centre in Maharashtra's Goregaon.

The case has been registered at Vanrai Police Station. FIR has also been registered against a polling personnel Dinesh Gurav, who was an Encore (poll portal) operator with the Election Commission.

# INDIA bloc wants to rope in Azad for 2027 UP elections

AGENCIES  
LUCKNOW, 16 JUNE

Buoyed up by its recent victory in the Lok Sabha elections, the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Congress in Uttar Pradesh are now looking to expand their vote base by bringing in 'more influential leaders'.

The INDIA bloc members are clearly eyeing Azad Samaj Party MP Chandrashekhar Azad who registered a spectacular win from the Nagina reserved seat on his own.

While Chandrashekhar won his Nagina seat, another Azad Samaj Party (ASP) candidate Amar Singh Chaudhary in Domariyaganj ranked at the third position. The BSP in both constituencies ranked at the fourth position with 1.33 per cent votes in Nagina and 3.5 per cent votes in Domariyaganj.

"The fact is that Chandrashekhar has emerged as an alternative to Mayawati and her BSP in these elections. His acceptability among Dalit youth has increased substantially and the Dalit votes are rapidly veering towards him from the BSP. We would definitely like to bring (ASP) into the INDIA bloc so that our position gets stronger before the next assembly polls in UP in 2027," said a senior Samajwadi Party functionary. Chandrashekhar, it may be recalled, was brought in to meet SP President Akhilesh Yadav by RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary who was then in alliance with SP.

However, he was left to fend for himself when Jayant Chaudhary walked across to join the NDA. Akhilesh did not continue his relationship with Chandrashekhar after



being 'betrayed' by RLD.

Rahul Gandhi, however, was among the first leaders to call up Chandrashekhar when the latter's convoy was fired upon in June last year.

According to sources, Chandrashekhar has already started working to build up his party organisation and is preparing to contest assembly elections.

The SP and Congress have indicated that their alliance would continue and now there will be seat-sharing between the two in by-polls too. "The alliance will continue. Will be in play in the forthcoming by-polls also. And there will be seat-sharing discussions," said UP Congress President Ajay Rai. SP national secretary and party's chief spokesperson, Rajendra Chaudhary said: "Yes, the alliance continues and there will be seat-sharing between the SP and Congress in the by-polls as well."

SP sources said that if Chandrashekhar agrees to join the INDIA bloc, the formation could get greater strength.

"Dalits will now go with Chandrashekhar because Mayawati has already slipped into political oblivion. If he joins us, the PDA (Pichhda, Dalit and Alpasankhyak) formula will become stronger and the 2027 polls will bring good news for the INDIA bloc," said an SP functionary.

# Flood preparedness: Assam CM Sarma holds meeting at Kaziranga

AGENCIES  
GOLAGHAT (ASSAM), 16 JUNE

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma held a meeting at Kaziranga with the civil and police administration and Kaziranga authority to ensure the safety and security of the animals at Kaziranga National Park, especially during the flood season and asked the concerned functionaries to put in place all necessary steps and ramp up the response system.

During the meeting held on Saturday, Chief Minister Sarma said that three new commando battalions have been deployed in Kaziranga to ensure that no animals are killed in accidents while crossing the national highway and no poacher taking the opportunity of the flood situation to kill the wild animals.

**The CM during the meeting also took stock of the loss of land at the Kaziranga National Park primarily due to the swift flow of river water**

He also said that around 600 personnel of a new forest battalion will also be pressed into service in Kaziranga National Park during the flood season. The CM during the meeting also took stock of the loss of land of the Kaziranga National Park primarily due to the swift flow of river water.

He said that as a result of this, a sizeable chunk of the forest land of the park has been lost. Given this, he announced that a joint task force would be formed taking experts from the Forest Department,

Water Resources Department and the Kaziranga National Park to study the phenomena and recommend remedial steps.

"The team will submit its report within 45 days to the government. Based on the recommendations, the government will take appropriate steps to address the menace of soil erosion in the park," the Assam Chief Minister said. He also said that around 20 marine engine boats will be pressed into service in Kaziranga to help the forest department intensify its vigil in and around the park to thwart the possible movements of the poachers.

The CM during the meeting also said the government would also deploy a commando battalion in Bura Chaporai area for the safety and security of the wild animals.

# SP president demands future polls through ballot papers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
LUCKNOW, 16 JUNE

With Tesla Chief Elon Musk raising doubts over the credibility of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav joined the chorus against the electronic voting.

He said his party is in favour of holding future elections in the country through ballot papers.

Taking a cue from Elon Musk, several Opposition leaders in the country, including Rahul Gandhi, lent their voice against the EVMs in the wake of.

In a post on social media platform X on Sunday, Akhilesh Yadav wrote, "Technology is meant to solve problems. If it becomes the cause of problems, then its use should be stopped."



"Today, when the possibility of EVM tampering is being expressed in many elections around the world and the world's renowned technology experts are openly writing about the danger of EVM manipulation, then what is the reason behind the insistence on using EVMs? Yes, BJP should clarify this," he

said. The SP president further said, "We reiterate our demand to conduct all upcoming elections through ballot paper." Tesla chief Elon Musk, on Saturday, called for the elimination of EVMs saying they were prone to hacking by humans and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

# UPCM extends financial help to kin of Kuwait victims, injured devotees of J&K terrorist attack

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
GORAKHPUR, 16 JUNE

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday met with the families of two workers from Gorakhpur who died in a recent fire in Kuwait, as well as devotees injured in a terrorist attack in Shiv Khori, Jammu.

He expressed his condolences, provided financial assistance, and reassured them that "they need not worry as long as he is there".

Recently, a fire in a multi-storied building in Kuwait resulted in the deaths of almost 50 people, including Angad Gupta from Jatepur North in Sadar tehsil area and Jayaram Gupta from Bhammour in Campierganj



tehsil area, both in Gorakhpur.

CM Adityanath coordinated with the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Embassy in Kuwait to ensure repatriation of bodies with full dignity.

On Saturday, the bodies

were brought home and given cremation with full honours. On Sunday morning, the CM met the families of the deceased at Gorakhnath Temple, offering his condolences and emotional support.

He also provided cheques of Rs 5 lakh each to Angad

Gupta's wife, Rita Devi, and Jayaram Gupta's wife, Sunita, stating that he stood with them in their time of grief.

CM Adityanath also provided Rs one lakh each to Rajesh, Riksona, Gayatri, and Soni from Gorakhpur, who were injured in the recent terrorist attack in Shiv Khori. Riksona's cheque was received by her husband, Rajesh.

The Chief Minister enquired about their health and assured them that the government would cover all medical expenses. Notably, after learning about the attack in Shiv Khori, he immediately sent a team of officials to ensure the injured received proper treatment and arranged safe travel back of the stranded devotees.

# Millions take holy dip in different rivers in UP on Ganga Dussehra, DGP issues safety instructions

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
LUCKNOW, 16 JUNE

On the occasion of Ganga Dussehra on Sunday, millions of devotees took a holy dip in river Ganga and other rivers and ponds in Uttar Pradesh.

There was a huge crowd at the Ganga ghats of Prayagraj, Kanpur, Vindhyachal, Varanasi and Garh Mukteshwar along with Saryu Ghat in Ayodhya and in other places.

In view of the bathing on Ganga Dussehra on Sunday, UP Director General of Police Prashant Kumar has given instructions to make strict arrangements for the safety of people on the banks of river ghats and other water bodies.

He has issued guidelines

**Officers have been asked to get checking done in advance at bathing ghats and lakes and deploy male and female police personnel in plain clothes.**

in this regard to all the police commissioners, IGs, DIGs and district SPs, in which they have been asked to make all the arrangements to ensure the safe completion of the Ganga Dussehra bathing festival.

DGP Kumar said that police officers should visit the places where there is a possibility of a large crowd of bathers and make other arrangements including security. He has also given instructions to

ensure adequate lighting on river ghats, barricading from security point of view and deployment of divers and water police.

Officers have been asked to get checking done in advance at bathing ghats and lakes and deploy male and female police personnel in plain clothes.

He has also given instructions not to allow any non-traditional event in view of the controversies that have taken place in the past years. The DGP has directed the officers to keep a close watch on all social media platforms and take action against those spreading misleading information and issue immediate refutation of the news. He said that UP-112 vehicles (emer-

gency services) should be mandatorily deployed at crowded places.

A report from Varanasi said devotees took a dip in the ghats of the holy Ganga in Kashi on Ganga Dussehra on Sunday.

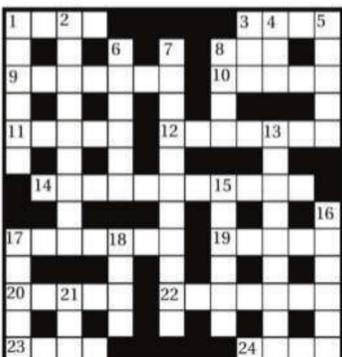
During this period, devotees from nearby districts gathered on the banks of Ganga to take bath and make donations.

From early morning, 'Har Har Gange' (Hail Mother Goddess Ganga) started resonating on the ghats amid the sound of gongs in the temples.

On Ganga Dussehra, Dashashwamedh Ghat, Assi Ghat, Tulsihat, Rajendra Prasad Ghat and other ghats have been decorated with colourful flowers.

## LEISURE

### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1 Make less distinct (4)
  - 3 Ticket-seller (4)
  - 9 Active (2,3,2)
  - 10 Large sea (5)
  - 11 The Devil (5)
  - 12 Ultimate consumer (3,4)
  - 14 Theatrical make-up (11)
  - 17 Downfall (7)
  - 19 Fool (5)
  - 20 Cost (5)
  - 22 Type of dog (7)
  - 23 Brook (4)
  - 24 Withhold (4)
- DOWN**
- 1 Peruse (6)
  - 2 Lacking in schooling (9)
  - 4 Lyric poem (3)
  - 5 Male singer (5)
  - 6 Rupture (6)
  - 7 Supreme power (11)
  - 8 Fearless (4)
  - 13 Easily irritated (9)
  - 15 Enclosure for birds (6)
  - 16 Floor (6)
  - 17 Shoe part (5)
  - 18 Wild goat (4)
  - 21 Unwell (3)

- SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD**
- ACROSS**
- 1 Scarce
  - 2 Torry (Scare story)
  - 3 Giddy
  - 4 Ottoman
  - 5 Inconspicuous
  - 6 derate
  - 7 Unless
  - 8 Terraced
  - 9 house
  - 10 Rival
  - 11 Tatters
  - 12 Rumbas
  - 13 Agri-culture
  - 14 Anaesthetic
  - 15 Scarlet
  - 16 Abusive
  - 17 Belt up
  - 18 Rival
  - 19 Heave

### BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



### RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



### DADDY DAZE/John Kovalcski



### NEED TO KNOW

- Ambulance**  
FD Block Association (Amb) 9830452536, 9830181286  
Happy Callcutans 24400160  
City Point Nurses Centre 2567-4113, 9831142623  
People's Relief Committee 2280-4943/9444
- 24 hrs Medical Oxygen Delivery**  
BOC India Ltd. 9831277777
- Blood Banks**  
Ashok Laboratory 24720333  
Central Blood Bank 23510619
- Life Care 2284-6940**  
Peoples Blood Bank 2455-5164/ 5557  
RK Mission Seva Pratishthan 2475-3636/39
- Police/Fire**  
Laibazar (Police Control Room) 22143230  
S. P. (North 24-Pgns) 25423005  
S. P. (South 24-Pgns) 2479-3333/1311  
Bhawani Bhawan 24791761/9, 24791933  
Fire Service Station Salt Lake: 2357-5293;
- Howrah 2666-8111; Behala 2497-6285**
- Civic Services**  
Kolkata Municipal Corporation: 2286-1000  
Water: 2543-1602
- Calcutta Telephones**  
Changed Number Announcement 1951,1952,1953
- Taxi Refusal**  
SMS 575756; Complaint and registration
- Police Toll Free No. 1073**  
Transport Deptt. No. 6451-6718
- CESC Fault Reporting**  
1912 and 4403-1912
- Trains**  
Howrah Station Old Complex 1331/1332 (Auto Telephone Numbers), 1310, 2638-7412/3542/2581 (manual).  
Sealdah: 2350-3535/2537  
Shalimar Station: 2668-1121, Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway: 139.

### SCRABBLE® (C R A M S)

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Directions: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each 4x4 grid of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 30-point bonus. "Blank" scores all other letters to total value of word. Official Scrabble Words (SOWPODS) and Official Scrabble Words (OSPD) are used.

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**SCRABBLE® YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION BY JUDO**

W.A.R.M.I.E.R. Rank 1 = 15  
C.O.T.E.R.I.E. Rank 2 = 15  
V.O.C.U.U.M. Rank 3 = 17  
F.O.O.L.I.S.H. Rank 4 = 18  
PAR SCORE: 120-130 ADDS TOTAL = 66

### SUDOKU Concepts Sudoku

By Dave Green

Difficulty Level ★★★

Answer to previous puzzle

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that no row, no column and no 3x3 box contains the same number. The difficulty level increases through the week.



# Modi's arduous journey & fate of Naga peace process

OKEN JEET SANDHAM

When Narendra Modi assumed office as the Prime Minister in 2014 after his party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), won 282 seats in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the Naga peace process remained fragile and moribund.

Less than four months after assuming office, he appointed RN Ravi as the interlocutor for the Naga talks to revive the moribund Naga peace process. He also announced that the Naga political issue would be resolved in eighteen months.

Remarkably, Ravi signed a Framework Agreement with the NSCN (IM) on 3 August 2015, less than a year after he was appointed as an interlocutor for the Naga talks.

He, however, failed to keep the NSCN (K) in the ceasefire loop. The outfit walked away from the ceasefire with Delhi in March 2015 after maintaining a fourteen-year ceasefire with them since 2001.

Delhi never tried to hold talks with the NSCN (K) in their fourteen-year ceasefire while holding talks with the NSCN (IM) in full swing.

Delhi's non-seriousness towards them caused discouragement to the rank and file of the group, becoming edgy. During the ceasefire with Delhi, they too had a rift; eventually, with no other choice, the group abandoned the ceasefire.

Two years after the signing of the Framework Agreement, Ravi signed another accord—Agreed Position (AP)—with the Working Committee of the NNPGs (WC-NNPGs) on 17 November 2017.

Despite signing the Framework Agreement and the Agreed Position, Prime Minister Modi could not show any visible sign of resolving the Naga political issue during his first tenure, 2014-2019. It became clear that the Naga issue would not be resolved during his first tenure.

As the 17th Lok Sabha polls were approaching, the Naga people became worried about the fate of the Naga issue. Their principal concern was that the Naga peace process would restart from scratch if Modi was unable to win back power.

But Modi returned to power with his party, the BJP, winning 303 seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, further increasing its substantial majority.

He also surprised the people of Nagaland by appointing interlocutor Ravi as the state's governor, even as the celebration over his party's resound-



ing win continued.

But the surprise did not stop there, as Ravi came with a message from him that the talks with the Naga Groups should be concluded in three months. That means the talks should be concluded on or before 31 October 2019.

Many, however, doubted that it was a ruse to prolong the problem, as the governor, who is also the interlocutor, would have limitations for the peace talks.

The NSCN (IM) leadership, on the other hand, was vehemently against the timeframe for concluding the talks, questioning how they would manage to do so without addressing the symbolic issues surrounding the distinct Naga flag and constitution. The "Indo-Naga talks" had descended to a "mere governor's level," they claimed. They demanded that the talks be restored to their previous status, that they be held at the highest level, in a third country, and without pre-conditions.

Ravi, however, cautioned that there would not be any more meetings after the deadline was passed. Finally, the talks concluded on 31 October 2019, in Delhi, but went untraceable.

After wrapping up the talks, Governor Ravi turned towards the Neiphiu Rio government. He pulled the chief minister up, saying law and order in the state had collapsed. "Armed gangs" were running the parallel governments in the state, he said, drawing sharp reactions from the government and the NSCN (IM).

In fact, after the conclusion of the

talks, friction between Ravi and the NSCN (IM) leadership soared. NSCN (IM) general secretary, Th Muivah, in an interview with The Wire on 16 October 2020, charged Ravi for betraying the NSCN (IM), throwing them away at the behest of the Union home ministry. He even warned that the Nagas would never join the Indian Union or accept the Indian Constitution.

Finally, Ravi was transferred to Tamil Nadu as the governor on 9 September 2021. After the transfer, he resigned as the interlocutor for the Naga talks.

After the opposition NPF MLAs joined Rio's NDPP-BJP-led government in Nagaland, the government no longer faced resistance. Later, on 29 April 2022, before the state's general elections in 2023, 21 MLAs from the NPF merged with them.

The opposition-less trend continued after the 2023 general elections in the state as the NPF, NPP, NCP, LJP (RV), RPI (Athawale), JD (U), and independent MLAs came forward and joined the NDPP-BJP-led government. Rio said the opposition-less government was for the cause of the Naga solution.

Currently, the state has no opposition lawmakers, which is terrible for a democracy. Nonetheless, a government devoid of opposition could not persuade the Naga Groups to unite.

More Naga groups have emerged today, and more are anticipated given the lack of a clear resolution to the political problem facing the Naga people. This will make solving the problem even more difficult.

Modi's silence over the Manipur issue, which started on 3 May, last year, impacted the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. His inability to go to Manipur and Nagaland during the 2024 Lok Sabha electioneering reflected his image, and the BJP's support has decreased as a result. In Nagaland, all 60 MLAs are with the ruling NDA but failed to stop Congress candidate S. Spongmeren Jamir from winning. Of course, the people from the ENPO areas and their 20 MLAs abstained from participating in the elections. It seemed inevitable that the BJP or NDA would lose these 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Manipur, Nagaland, and Meghalaya.

Now, resolving the Naga political issue will be a difficult assignment for Prime Minister Modi. In contrast to his previous and second terms, during which his party, the BJP, held an absolute majority, his government's stability is now in doubt.

During his second term, Prime Minister Modi had the chance to address the Naga issue since all the important issues had been settled and the negotiations with the Naga Groups had come to an end, but he missed it. Most significantly, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and Manipur—Nagaland's neighbouring states—have all been ruled by the BJP.

The Modi administration was the one that was missing the bus, not the Naga Groups, unlike what the Central leaders said.

The writer is the author of the book *Narendra Modi And Naga Peace Accord*

# Shifting dynamics in the North-East: The future of NEDA in question

ABHIJIT DEB

The recent Lok Sabha elections have dramatically reshaped the political landscape of north-east India, signalling significant challenges for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its regional coalition, the North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA).

With the BJP's seat count dropping from 19 in 2019 to 16 in the current elections and the resurgence of Congress alongside a rise in regional parties, the political dynamics in the region are undergoing a notable transformation.

The BJP managed to secure 13 out of the 25 seats in the north-east, with its allies contributing an additional 3 seats. Despite maintaining a strong presence, this marks a decrease from its previous tally, reflecting growing discontent and shifting allegiances among the electorate.

This downturn is particularly stark in states like Manipur, where Congress claimed both seats, and Nagaland, where Congress won the lone seat after a 20-year gap.

The election results indicate a setback for the BJP's strategy of consolidating power across the north-east under the banner of NEDA.

The alliance, formed in 2016 with the aim of uniting non-Congress parties and protecting regional interests, now faces an uncertain future. The decline in the BJP's influence and the resurgence of Congress suggest a more fragmented and competitive political environment.

The Congress party's improved performance, increasing its seat count from four to seven, underscores a significant shift in voter sentiment. Notable victories in traditionally challenging states like Nagaland and Manipur highlight Congress' growing appeal and strategic resurgence in the region. Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra, which began its second leg in Manipur, may have played a pivotal role in energising the party's base and attracting new supporters.

In Nagaland, Congress president Spongmeren Jamir's victory in the lone Lok Sabha seat against the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party's (NDPP's) Dr Chumben by a margin of 50,984 votes marks a symbolic and strategic win. Similarly, in Manipur, Congress' success in both seats reflects a broader discontent

with the ruling parties and a desire for change among the electorate.

The NEDA coalition, initially comprising parties like the Naga People's Front, Sikkim Democratic Front, People's Party of Arunachal, Asom Gana Parishad, Bodoland People's Front, Nationalist People's Party, and Mizo National Front, now faces significant internal challenges.

The regional allies of the BJP, such as the Nationalist People's Party (NPP), suffered setbacks in the recent polls. The NPP, led by Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, lost the Tura constituency to Congress, indicating a weakening hold in its stronghold.

The situation in Mizoram further complicates NEDA's future. The Mizo National Front (MNF), a NEDA constituent, severed ties with the BJP after losing the state election, reflecting broader dissatisfaction among regional allies.

This trend of shifting loyalties and electoral losses among NEDA partners suggests a fracturing alliance and a potential reconfiguration of regional politics.

Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the convenor of NEDA, did not campaign extensively in the north-east in the Lok Sabha elections. This limited engagement has also raised questions about the effectiveness of NEDA and campaign strategies.

The future of NEDA now hinges on its ability to adapt to the evolving political landscape, address internal discontent, and realign its strategies to regain the trust and support of the electorate.

The alliance's original mission of uniting non-Congress parties and safeguarding regional interests must be recalibrated to reflect the changing dynamics and aspirations of the north-east populace. The Lok Sabha election results underscore a shifting political dynamic in the north-east, with the BJP and NEDA facing new challenges.

The resurgence of Congress and the strengthening of regional parties indicate a diversifying political landscape. As regional parties seek to establish their own identities and footholds, the future of the NEDA remains uncertain.

The alliance must navigate these changes with strategic acumen and responsive leadership to remain a relevant force in north eastern politics.

# Grand legacy of composite culture ~ II

SHIBDAS BHATTACHARJEE

Assam is the homeland of many indigenous communities, and their distinctive cultural identities get fertile ground to thrive and achieve higher octaves. The culture and related activities encompass practice, performance, and propagation differently. Here, in the context of the culture in Assam, it provides space to others, which enriches culture and keeps it dynamic. This is why the indigenous culture of Assam has such extensive reach on the international stage.

In the previous article, the Koch Rajbanshi community of Western Assam and north Bengal had been discussed. Following is the Satriya culture, which forms the hub of socio-cultural regeneration.

SATRYA CULTURE

Another predominant cultural tradition here is Satriya culture. Prophet Shankardev preached a religion and gifted culture with all the facets to make religious teaching attain greater acceptability. The tools—religion and culture—were balanced to execute the requisite course corrections in perceptions, rituals, and, more importantly, the existing socio-economic order to ensure equality and justice. Along with Western Assam, the neo-Bhakti movement impacted the entire Koch Kingdom during the reign of King Naranarayan. The region between the famous Ram Rai Kuthi Satra of Dhubri district of Assam and the Madhpur Satra of Cooch Behar district of West Bengal came into contact with neo-Vaishnavism propagated by the Prophet way back during the golden era of the Koch Kingdom. Shri Shri Jinkata Rajhua Satra is located merely a kilometre away from the rural market. Halakura stands majestically as the symbol of the pride of Assam on the bank of the old Raidak River.



The saga continued, and the Satra evolved as the centre of practice and propagation of the great Satriya culture in this region with the passing of time. The region practices and propagates the Satriya tradition through cultural activities, including singing Satriya songs, dancing, drama, and playing musical instruments. The Satras are the hub of socio-cultural regeneration. Efforts are being made to revive the Satras in different parts of India that have already gone into oblivion. Apart from the Madhpur Satra, several other Satras came into existence through the endeavours made by both the Prophet and His immediate disciples, which include Bhanukumari and Nagakhana near Boxirhat, Jhingapuni, Maruchbari, Shalbari, Baikunthapur, and other places located within the Tufanganji subdivision of the present Cooch Behar district.

SATRYA IMPACT IN COOCH BEHAR RAAS FESTIVAL

The absence of Sri Radha at the Raas festival in Cooch Behar is a unique feature. Here, the influence of the Satriya concept and the monolithic concept of Prophet Srimanta Shankardev is quite evident and does not admit duality of any form. Madan Mohan represents both Sri Krishna and Sri Radha as totality and perfection, which does not require projecting Sri Radha in a different form. This is the fundamental difference between the Raas festival in Cooch Behar and other parts of India. Here, both Sri Krishna and Sri Radha are represented as Sri Sri Madan Mohan. This proves one crucial fact: in place of the dualistic concept of Prophet Sri Chaitanya of Bengal, the Koch kings prioritised the monolithic idea of Srimanta Shankardev and the Indian tradition of Adityabaad.

SUFISM

Assam, the land of Shankar-Azan, came into contact with Islam during the Ahom rule. Liberal Assamese society cordially accepted the people belonging to the Muslim community, and over time, indigenous Assamese culture and Islamic lifestyle contributed to the emergence of composite Assamese culture. Living examples are the Panbari Mosque, the Panch Pir Dargah of Dhubri, and the Dargah of Nasiruddin Bagdadi at Jaleswar, which proves how Sufi culture has been predominantly present in this part. The people of Chistia Tariqua of Sufism, popularly known as Krishna Tariqua, mostly live in the western part of Assam and adjacent areas of West Bengal. From Halakura, a rural market by the side of N.H. 31 at the Assam-West Bengal border, one needs to travel just 3 kilometres on the newly constructed PMGSY road to visit the village, where one will find a large number of people belonging to Chustia



Tariqa of Sufism. In areas like Kherbari Part-2 (Kuthimari), Dimachora, Ganesh Dham, Bauserkuthi, Assam More of Dhubri district, and villages like Mansai, Lakhkhimari, Silkhagri, Kashiabari, and Bhanukumari of Cooch Behar district, there is a large number of people belonging to Chistia Tariqa. As has been stated by the local people, there are more than 350 families and more than three thousand people who belong to this community.

SUFI RITUALS

Apart from following the Islamic rules like five Namaajes (prayer) in a day, Roja, month-long fasting in the holy month of Ramjan of the Islamic calendar, and other Islamic rituals, some other unique rituals are followed by people of this community. One significant feature is keeping the holy Quran in every residence in the same manner the sacred Bhagwat is placed

and worshipped. Lighting the candle is performed almost in the same manner people belonging to Hinduism lit the holy lamp (pradip) in the evening. There are also Guru and Diksha cultures among these people. Getting diksha from a Pir is a must for everyone in this community. At present, Pir Md. Azgarh Ali Mia of Choukoshi Baloram-pur (Bakshirkuthi), near Chilakhana in Cooch Behar district, is the Pir who gives Diksha to the people of this locality belonging to Chistia Tariqa.

All these show the grand legacy of the composite culture of the region. The essential attributes are extending the reach and accepting dynamism as the unavoidable realities that delineate the potentiality of evolving with more prominence with time. It is really encouraging to see that the youngsters take pride in all these and are ready to take forward the grand legacy to reach a higher octave.

The writer is an independent contributor



'BIGGEST MATCH-WINNER'

Former India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh hailed Suryakumar Yadav's unbeaten innings against the hosts in the ICC T20 World Cup 2024, the United States at the Nassau International Cricket Stadium in New York. Singh asserted that Suryakumar is the biggest match-winner because the day he performs not only does India win the match but also takes the match far away from the opposition's clutch. "It's extremely important. We always talk about match-winners. I feel Suryakumar Yadav is the biggest match-winner in this team because the day he plays, he not only wins the match but takes the match far away from the opposition. The opposition can't even think that they can win the game," Harbhajan said.

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THUMBNAILED

**Former Arsenal striker Kevin Campbell passes away at 54:** Premier League outfit Arsenal confirmed on Saturday that their former striker Kevin Campbell passed away at the age of 54. The club released a statement to announce the demise of Campbell, which read, "Everyone at Arsenal Football Club is devastated to hear of the death of our much-loved former player Kevin Campbell, at the age of 54." He was born in Lambeth, South London. He left a mark in a career that spanned over 20 years.

**Sharath, Manika among top Indian stars to be retained by franchises for UTT 2024:** The experienced duo of Achara Sharath Kamal and Manika Batra were among the five Indian paddlers who were retained by their respective franchises ahead of the upcoming Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) 2024, which will be played at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Chennai from August 22 to September 7." Last season's runners-up Chennai Lions retained the services of legend Sharath Kamal, while Bengaluru Smashers opted to continue with the highest-ranked Indian, Batra, as the franchises preferred to stick with their top paddlers for the upcoming season," a statement from the tournament read.

# 1st ODI: Mandhana, Sobhana help India to decimate SA by 143 runs

Vice-captain Smriti Mandhana slammed a fantastic 117 off 127 balls, also her sixth century in ODIs, while leg-spinner Asha Sobhana shined with a four-wicket haul on debut to setup India's 143-run thrashing of South Africa at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium and begin the multi-format series on a high note.

AGENCIES  
BENGALURU, 16 JUNE

Vice-captain Smriti Mandhana slammed a fantastic 117 off 127 balls, also her sixth century in ODIs, while leg-spinner Asha Sobhana shined with a four-wicket haul on debut to setup India's 143-run thrashing of South Africa at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium and begin the multi-format series on a high note.

On a slightly sluggish pitch which offered variable bounce, seam movement and spin, India were reduced to 99/5 at one stage after electing to bat first. But Smriti stood tall, played her shots all over the park and even kept cramps at bay to keep India's innings together with utmost discipline, control and remarkable composure.

In the process of bailing India out of trouble, Smriti brought up her first ODI century at home, laced with 12 fours and a six, to enthral an enthusiastic Sunday crowd. She was also well-supported by knocks from Deepti Sharma (37) and Pooja Vastrakar (31) as India crossed 250-mark.



In reply, Asha's fine spell of 4-21, where she spun the ball well and got good zip on her deliveries, ensured South Africa were never in the hunt to chase down 269. The Proteas lost wickets at regular intervals and didn't stitch a long partnership to be bowled out for 122 in 37.4 overs.

Renuka Singh Thakur, Pooja Vastrakar, Deepti Sharma and Radha Yadav were also supported Asha very well as India are now 1-0 up in the three-match series. South Africa suffered a big setback in the opening over of the chase as skipper Laura Wolvaardt was castled through the gate by a big nip-backer from Renuka.

Anneke Bosch was next to depart as she was trapped lbw by a seaming in delivery from Pooja Vastrakar which kept low. A returning Tazmin Brits didn't last long as she came down the pitch for a big shot, but was caught by point off Deepti, who was playing her 200th international match for India. Asha came in to have

## Mandhana becomes 2nd Indian woman to score 7,000 international runs

AGENCIES  
BENGALURU, 16 JUNE

In a significant milestone, India opener Smriti Mandhana crossed the 7000-run mark in international cricket during the first ODI against South Africa at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Sunday. Mandhana's achievement placed her in elite company, making her the second Indian woman to surpass 7000 runs including all formats. She followed in the footsteps of former captain Mithali Raj, who amassed a remarkable 10,868 runs in her illustrious career.



Close on Mandhana's heels is current captain Harmanpreet Kaur, who has accumulated 6,870 runs, underscoring the strength and depth of India's batting lineup.

Marizanne Kapp as her first ODI scalp, as the experienced campaigner cuts the ball straight to cover.

Scoreboard pressure then resulted in the run-out of Annerie Dercksen and Sune Luus, despite putting up a resistance with 33, missed a

sweep off Deepti to be trapped lbw. From there, the result was a foregone conclusion as Radha had Nondumiso Shange lbw, before Asha took out remaining three wickets to make her ODI debut memorable by sealing a dominant win for India.

Mandhana played a knock of 117 runs off 127 balls including 12 fours and a six to post her first ODI hundred on home soil and second against South Africa. During her sixth ODI century, she also build crucial partnerships with Deepti Sharma and Pooja Vastrakar to take India over 200-run mark.

Meanwhile, Deepti also completed 2000 ODI runs during her 37-run knock in 200th international match.

Earlier, Harmanpreet won the toss and opted to bat first in the opening match of the three-game ODI series.

**Brief Scores:** India 265/8 in 50 overs (Smriti Mandhana 117, Deepti Sharma 37; Ayabonga Khaka 3-47, Masabata Klass 2-51) beat South Africa 122 in 37.4 overs (Sune Luus 33, Sinalo Jafa 27; Asha Sobhana 4-21, Deepti Sharma 2-10) by 143 runs.

Raducanu opts out of Paris 2024, Murray to compete in Olympic swan song

AGENCIES  
LONDON, 16 JUNE

Emma Raducanu has declined the opportunity to represent Great Britain in next month's Paris Olympics. The 2021 US Open champion, who is still recovering from surgery on her wrists and ankle, was offered one of the two International Tennis Federation (ITF) places reserved for former Grand Slam champions.

However, Raducanu has chosen to focus on her fitness and prepare for the upcoming British grass-court season.

Raducanu's current world ranking is too low to qualify outright for the Olympics, a consequence of her time away from the sport due to injury. The 21-year-old missed the French Open, which is played on the same Roland Garros clay courts that will host the Olympic tennis tournament, to ensure she is in peak condition for the British grass-court swing.

Iain Bates, head of Great Britain's Olympic tennis team, shared insights into Raducanu's decision. "I have had various conversations with Emma over the last couple of weeks and a slightly longer period where it's very clear how much being part of a British team at an Olympics would mean to her," Bates said.

## Ankita secures Olympic quota in women's individual recurve archery for Paris 2024

AGENCIES  
ANTALYA, 16 JUNE

Ankita Bhakat secured a quota for the women's individual recurve archery event at the Paris 2024 Olympics by reaching the quarterfinals of the Final Olympic Qualifier tournament, here on Sunday.

Bhakat's impressive performance ensured India's presence in the coveted event, with eight individual quota places available and a maximum of one per National Olympic Committee (NOC).

Seeded ninth in the tournament, Bhakat received a bye in the first round, which gave her a smooth start. She then registered decisive victories, defeating Israel's Shelley Hilton 6-4 and Mikaela Moshe 7-3 in the second and third rounds, respectively. Playing for the crucial quota place, Bhakat showcased her skills and composure by defeating Gabrielle Monica Bidaure of Philippines with a 6-0 clean sweep in the fourth round. Meanwhile, Bhajan Kaur, the tournament's third seed,



stormed into QF of women individual event beating Slovenian archer Urska Cavic 7-3 in fourth round. After a bye into the round of 32, Kaur overcame Mongolia's Urantungalag Bishindee 6-2.

However, it was a challenging day for Deepti Kumari, the second seed and one of India's top archers. Despite receiving byes in the first and second rounds, Kumari was narrowly defeated by Azerbaijan's Yaylagul Ramazanova 4-6 in the third round, after leading 4-0. The loss was a setback for Kumari, who has been a prominent figure in Indian archery.

On the men's side, Dhiraj Bommadevara had already secured an individual quota from the Asian qualifying leg earlier, ensuring India's representation in the men's recurve event at the Paris Olympics. The individual competition for men will continue on Monday, with more opportunities for Indian archers to qualify.

Both the Indian men's and women's recurve teams missed out on direct qualification but will be relying on their world rankings as of June 24 for potential spots at the Paris Games.

## Asian Team Squash: India women's team finishes fifth

AGENCIES  
DALIAN, 16 JUNE



India women's team finished fifth while the men's team ended at sixth place in the Asian Team Squash Championships which concluded on Sunday. The women's team beat Iran 2-0 in the match to decide the fifth and sixth positions with Rathika Suthanthira Seelan and Pooja Arthi Raghu scoring comfortable wins.

However, the men's side lost to South Korea 1-2, with Velavan Senthilkumar recording a win before Suraj Kumar

Chand and Om Semwal lost by narrow margins.

**India results:**  
Men: India lost to South Korea 1-2 (Velavan Senthilkumar bt Jeongmin Ryu 11-5, 11-1, 11-4; Suraj Kumar Chand lost to Minwoo Lee 11-7, 11-13, 9-11, 8-11); Om Semwal lost to Jooyoung Na 9-11, 6-11, 9-11).

Women: India bt Iran 2-0 (Rathika Suthanthira Seelan bt Fereshteh Eghtedari 11-5, 11-9, 11-7; Pooja Arthi Raghu bt Parmin Nekopayantak 11-5, 11-7, 12-10).

## Ladies European Tour: Solid start in Italian Open puts Diksha in 4th place

AGENCIES  
ROME (ITALY), 16 JUNE

Diksha Dagar who started her opening round from the back nine birdied her first three holes and that set the tone for a solid first round of 5-under 67 at the Ladies Italian Open at Golf Nazionale. She was fourth and one shot off the trio of leaders, Australian Kirsten Rudgeley, Spain's Fatima Fernandez Cano, and Swiss Tiffany Arafri by one shot. The three leaders shot 6-under 66.

Diksha was the best among the five Indians in the field. Vani Kapoor (72) was T-30, Pranavi Urs and Tvesa Malik with 73 each were T-41 and Ridhima Dilawari (75) was T-76.

Diksha, who had a rare missed cut last week, birdied the 10th, 11th and the 12th. A fourth birdie came on the par-4 16th and she turned in 4-under. As she birdied twice more on the first and the third, she went into the lead at six under. Then came a dropped shot on the par-4 fourth and she ended at 5-under as she finished with five



pars, including at least two birdies misses.

Diksha in 2024 has had two Top-10s in a third at Joburg and five other Top-25 finishes. Last year was spectacular as she had nine Top-10s, including a win in Czech Ladies and third place in Hero Women's Indian Open.

Vani also starting from the tenth birdied the 11th, 12th and 13th, but then had five pars. On her second nine, she bogeyed three times on the first, third and fourth and finished even par.

Pranavi had three birdies

against four bogeys and Tvesa had two birdies against three bogeys.

Rudgeley set the tone with a 66 and she was followed by Fernandez Cano moments later after the Spaniard bounced back brilliantly from a bogey on the par-4 1st to post seven birdies. The duo was joined by Switzerland's Arafri.

The leaderboard saw the lead trio chased by Diksha (67) and Czechia's Sara Kousskova (68), who played together and they were fourth and fifth.

## Lovlina secures silver medal in Grand Prix 2024 competition

AGENCIES  
PRAGUE, 16 JUNE

Olympic medalist Indian boxer Lovlina Borgohain secured a silver medal in the Grand Prix 2024 competition held in the Czech Republic.

On the final day of the competition on Saturday, Lovlina lost 2-3 in her third bout against Li Qian of China. The competition was held in a round-robin format from June 12 to 15.

Lovlina won her first bout 3-2 against England's Chantal Reid but lost the second bout 0-5 against Cindy Ngamba of the Olympic Refugee team.

Lovlina will be one of the boxers to represent the country in the Paris 2024 Olympics, which will be held from July 26 to August 11. She had won a bronze medal in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics in the welterweight category.

India bagged six quotas in boxing for the Paris Olympics 2024 with Amit Panghal (51 kg), Nishant Dev (71 kg), Nikhat



Zareen (50kg), Preeti Pawar (54kg), Jaismine Lamboria (57 Kg), Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) in different categories.

Tokyo 2020 bronze medalist Lovlina Borgohain (women's 75kg), two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen (women's 50kg) and Preeti Pawar (women's 54kg) had clinched their respective quotas in the Asian Games at Hangzhou last year.

The rest of India's three quotas came during the Boxing World Qualifiers event in June. Amit, Nishant and Jaismine all won their quarterfinal bouts in their respective weight categories to obtain the quota.

## Gaurika Bishnoi produces stunning finish to win 7th leg of Women's Pro Golf Tour

AGENCIES  
MYSURU, 16 JUNE

Gaurika Bishnoi produced a stunning finish with a hat-trick of birdies in the last three holes for the week's best round of 4-under 66 to win the seventh leg of the Women's Pro Golf Tour at the Jayachamaraja Wadiyar Golf Club, Mysuru.

Gaurika, who was tied third after the second round and two shots behind the leader at the start of the day, totalled 1-under 209 as overnight leader Khushi Khanijau (71) cracked under pressure at the end. Khushi gave away bogeys on the 16th and the 17th and carded 2-over 212 to finish three shots behind in runner-up position.

It was Gaurika's first win of the 2024 season. She had two wins in 2023. Amateur Mannat Brar had a superb final round of 3-under 67 that had six birdies including four on the back nine and three bogeys overall. That took her to 4-over 214



and she was tied third. Vidhatri Urs, who took the lead on the first day in her first-ever round as a pro, shot 71 on the third day and finished at 4-over 214 to be tied third with Mannat.

Gaurika, who began the final day two shots behind Khushi, was still two behind with three holes left. At the end of the front nine, Khushi seemed the likely winner as she stretched

her overnight lead from two to four shots. Gaurika turned in even par, while Khushi with birdies on the seventh and ninth was 2-under.

Then things began changing. A bogey by Khushi on the 11th and a birdie by Gaurika on the 15th reduced the gap from four to two.

Then came the big turnaround. Gaurika's experience proved crucial as she birdied the 16th and the 17th, while Khushi bogeyed the 16th and the 17th. That four-shot swing in Gaurika's favour in a matter of just two holes changed the storyline. From two behind Khushi was now two ahead. She added another birdie and Khushi just about managed a par and settled for the runners-up position.

Jasmine Shekar, looking for her maiden win, started the day one behind the second-round leader Khushi. However, Jasmine, who has finished runner-up several times, faced disappointment yet again. Jasmine

was 1-under for the front nine but a bogey on the Par-3 14th was followed by a series of three bogeys from the 16th to the 18th. She carded 73 and ended fifth at 5-over 215.

Astha Madan (73) was sixth while amateur Saanvi Somu (70), with one of the only three cards of par or better for the final day, was seventh. Shweta Mansingh (72), Ananya Garg (73), Rhea Purvi Saravanan (74), Amandeep Drall (74) and new pro Anvitha Narendra (75) were in a big bunch tied at eighth at 11-over 221.

Last year's Order of Merit winner Sneha Singh was 13th after a final round of 74.

On the Hero Order of Merit, Hitaashee Bakshi stays on top despite not teeing up this week as she is playing in Singapore, while Amandeep Drall is now second with Khushi Khanijau third. Sneha Singh and Jasmine Shekar are fourth and fifth respectively, while Gaurika, who has played only three events in the seven held so far,

## Muhammed Nemil extends FC Goa contract until 2027

AGENCIES  
FATORDA (GOA), 16 JUNE

FC Goa announced that midfielder Muhammed Nemil has extended his association with the club, putting pen to paper on a new three-year contract.

Hailed as one of the team's brightest young talents since joining the Goans in 2020, Nemil will hence don the iconic orange shirt during the upcoming 2024-25 season and beyond.

The 22-year-old, who has played 33 matches and scored 7 goals for FC Goa to date, expressed his enthusiasm about the extension: "I'm absolutely delighted to continue my journey with FC Goa. This Club has become my second home, and I am excited about the future and what we can achieve together."

"I am grateful for the support from the fans and the management, and I'm committed to giving my best in every match and training session. We had a fruitful season

last time, finishing third in the ISL League stage and reaching the Durand Cup and the ISL Cup semi-finals - and we want to create a bigger impact this time around," he added.

For Muhammed Nemil, the journey with the Men in Orange has been marked by significant milestones. After signing in 2020, he spent a season on loan with the Marcet academy in Spain. His return saw him make an immediate impact, finishing as the joint-second-top goalscorer in the Durand Cup 2021 as Goa emerged champions.

The youngster made his ISL debut later that year and has featured in all of the Club's Durand Cup, ISL and Super Cup campaigns since then.

FC Goa's head coach, Manolo Marquez also shared his thoughts on the Kerala-based lad. "There is no doubt that Nemil is an exceptionally talented player. His ability to play with both feet and his powerful shots make him a significant asset."