

# THE TIMES OF INDIA

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**Mehbooba Mufti terms stay on BS Yediyurappa's arrest in a Pocco case on grounds that he is a former CM "selective delivery of justice", cites examples of Arvind Kejriwal, Hemant Soren, who, she says, are in jail for far lesser charges**

**A day after his reference to Indira Gandhi as 'mother of India' received widespread attention, Union minister Suresh Gopi says that he called her mother of Congress and his remarks were misinterpreted by media**

**Supersup Wout Weghorst scores late to give the Netherlands a narrow win over Poland in a Euro 2024 match**

**PM Modi extends his greetings to Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu on Eid Al-Adha. Notably, the frosty relations between India & the Maldives has witnessed an apparent thaw after Muizzu attended Modi's swearing in**



## Smriti's ton gives India 143-run win over SA in 1st ODI

Smriti Mandhana struck a 127-ball 117 to power India women to a 143-run win against South Africa women in the first ODI at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Sunday. After India lost five wickets for 99, Smriti steadied the ship to take her team to 265/8 in 50 overs. Debutant Asha Sobhana also made merry, scalping four wickets to bundle out the visitors for 122 in 37.4 overs and help India take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. Mandhana also became second-highest int'l run-scorer (7,000-mark) for India in women's cricket. **P 13**

## Man claims plot to kill Yogi, held

An Allahabad driver who posted a message on social media saying a Kanpur police SI could get Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi murdered, was arrested. The SI had lodged a complaint alleging threat, verbal abuse and defamation by the accused. **TNN**

## Paytm in Zomato talks for movie biz

Paytm is in advanced stages of discussion to sell its movie and events ticketing business to Zomato, sources told TOI. The deal, if finalised, could value the business vertical of Paytm at close to Rs 2,000 crore. **P 11**

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## Bihar ASI seriously hurt by sand mafia

An ASI suffered grave injuries after being hit by a tractor ferrying illegally mined sand in Laund village in Bihar's Nawada on Sunday. He had tried to stop the vehicle but the driver knocked him down and fled. **P 5**

## Raj man held for 'plot' to kill Salman

In the 3rd case of death threat against Salman Khan this year, Mumbai crime branch has arrested a Rajasthan man on criminal intimidation charges for allegedly uploading a video threatening to kill the actor. **P 5**

## 3 killed in gelatin explosion in Maha

Three workers died and another suffered serious injuries while they were digging a well on Saturday evening at Takli Kadevali village of Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district. **TNN**

# EVMs can be hacked: Musk. Not in India: Ex-IT jr minister

Rahul, Akhilesh Join In, Doubt EVM Security

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Electronic voting machines (EVMs) were again in focus with Elon Musk, the multi-billionaire founder of Tesla and SpaceX, and former Union IT minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar engaging in a debate on X after Musk suggested eliminating the machines following reports of EVM irregularities in Puerto Rico's primary elections.

Chandrasekhar, a former MoS for electronics and IT, strongly disagreed with Musk and said it was a "huge sweeping generalisation" that held no truth for the EVMs used in India that are

## 'HAPPY TO RUN A TUTORIAL, ELON'

**ELON MUSK ON X, RESPONDING TO POST BY US POLITICIAN ROBERT F KENNEDY JR ALLEGING IRREGULARITIES IN PUERTO RICO'S PRIMARY ELECTIONS**

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... EVMs can be architected and built right as India has done. We would be happy to run a tutorial, Elon | **RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR, BJP'S FORMER UNION MINISTER**

When well-known international tech experts are flagging the dangers of EVMs, what's the reason behind this adamance over its use, BJP must clarify

EVMs in India are a 'black box'...nobody's allowed to scrutinise... Concerns are being raised about transparency in our electoral process

standalone systems not connected to the internet. "We should eliminate electronic voting machines. The risk of being hacked by humans or AI, while small, is still too high," Musk wrote on

► **Applicable in US, P 5**

## EC junks report of tampering at Mumbai booth

As claims of illegal EVM access in Mumbai North-West LS seat intensified, Mumbai suburban returning officer (RO) Sunday issued a rebuttal and sent notices to publications over reports on use of a phone by a poll agent. EC and RO Vandana Suryavanshi clarified that EVMs were standalone devices and needed no OTPs for unlocking, report **Pratula Marpakwar & Nishu**

► **EDIT: EC, Talk Better**

**tasha Natu.** While a relative of Sena MP Ravindra Waikar has been booked for illegal use of a phone, cops said some media outlets incorrectly said the phone was used to access OTPs for opening EVMs. **P 5**

# CM defends fuel price hike; oppn parties to protest today

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Bengaluru:** A day after the Karnataka govt effected a Rs 3 increase in motor fuel prices with immediate effect, chief minister Siddaramaiah Sunday defended the decision fuelled by the tax revision amid ramped-up calls by the opposition parties for a statewide protest starting on June 17 till the hike is rolled back.

In a statement, Siddaramaiah said fuel prices in Karnataka—despite raising tax on petrol to 29.84% and diesel to 18.44%—continue to remain the lowest in the entire south and "more affordable" compared with BJP-governed Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.

"We remain steadfast in our commitment to maintaining reasonable fuel prices

## WILL IMPACT FOOD TO TRAVEL

- Truckers Sunday said fuel price hike to negatively impact transport of essential commodities like of milk, vegetables, fruits and operation of taxis and cabs
- Truck operators to meet on Tuesday to draw up next step
- Govt claimed inter-state losses influenced the decision to revise motor fuel prices
- CM's economic adviser Basavaraj Rayareddy said petrol, diesel are still the cheapest in the entire south; hence people from neighbouring states sneak in and tank up
- This was impacting neighbours' revenue collection through fuel sales, forcing Karnataka to revise prices

for our citizens," he said.

The CM accused BJP of reducing tax on petrol and diesel at the state level, while increasing central taxes during the party's "double-engine" regime from 2019 to 2023. "This calculated manipulation resulted in diminished revenue for Karnataka, while the central govt received more for its coffers, thereby deceiving Kannadigas," he claimed.

According to the state-  
► **Tax rejig needed, P 4**

# After terror strikes, Shah reviews scene; Jammu troop levels to go up

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**New Delhi:** The Jammu division of J&K — which witnessed back-to-back terror attacks in its Reasi, Kathua and Doda districts last week — is set to get a big boost in number of security forces who will dominate the mountain tops to tackle fresh infiltration bids by terrorists from Pakistan and comb its forested and undulating terrain for terrorists holed up there with an intent to create unrest and communal flare-up among the region's mixed Hindu-Muslim population.

At a review meeting chaired by him here on Sunday, home minister Amit Shah directed security agencies to use "innovative methods" & replicate successes achieved in Kashmir by rolling out an area domination plan and zero-terror plan in the Jammu division

► Sources tell TOI that revised counter-terror strategies for Jammu

## BOOST FOR VILLAGE DEF COMMITTEES?

► **HM Amit Shah** directs security agencies to use 'innovative methods' & replicate successes achieved in Kashmir by rolling out an area domination plan and zero-terror plan in the Jammu division

and high voter turnouts in recent Lok Sabha polls — by rolling out an area domination plan and zero-terror plan in the Jammu division that seems to be the new target of Pakistan-based terror outfits.

Shah, in a separate meeting, also reviewed security and other arrangements for the Amarnath Yatra beginning June 29. Among measures stressed by him to make the yatra secure and hassle-free for devotees

es were tracking their movement and that of yatra vehicles through RFID tags, deployment of sufficient security personnel, proper sanitisation of yatra routes, fortification of camps and disaster preparedness. Both meetings were attended by NSA Ajit Doval, J&K LG Manoj Sinha and officials from MHA, J&K, Army, paramilitary forces & intel agencies.

► **In decisive phase, P 8**

# Speaker's post will be decided by parties: Birla

New Delhi: Amid growing speculation that the BJP leadership may prefer his continuation as Lok Sabha speaker, Om Birla Sunday said the decision would be made by all political parties, reports **Manash Gohain**

"Changes should keep happening. But I am nobody to comment on this. Speaker's post will be decided by political parties in the House," he said.

Speculation about Birla getting a second term as speaker has gathered force amid strong indications that the constitutional position will stay with BJP, the single largest party in Lok Sabha by a huge margin and, also, that two of its crucial allies—TDP and JD(U)—are comfortable with the idea.

► **Landscaping exercise, P 8**

# Russia not at Ukraine meet, India refrains from signing communique

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**New Delhi:** The issue of Russia's absence loomed large at the peace summit in Switzerland, as India joined over a dozen countries in not signing a joint communique that declared any peace agreement must be based on Ukraine's territorial integrity. India backed out saying abiding peace wasn't possible in the absence of options acceptable to both sides, as the summit also could not elicit the kind of support Ukraine was hoping for from the Global South.

Among others who did not back the communique, which was endorsed by 84 countries and organisations out of the 100 that participated, were important Indian BRICS partners like UAE, Brazil and South Africa, apart from countries like Indonesia and Thailand.

► **Will remain engaged, P 8**

## NOT MUCH SUPPORT FROM GLOBAL SOUTH

- 'Respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty can serve as a basis for achieving comprehensive, lasting peace in Ukraine', says communique
- Endorsed by 84 countries and organisations out of the 100 that participated
- India didn't associate with communique as only options acceptable to both parties
- can lead to abiding peace, says MEA secretary (west) Pavan Kapoor, who led the Indian delegation
- India's position in line with stand taken by China, which boycotted the summit
- Summit could not elicit the kind of support that Ukraine was hoping for from the Global South

Given the efforts to keep Russia out and Moscow's own reservations about the summit, India was represented, as reported by TOI Saturday and earlier, by a secretary-level official at the two-day summit that ended on Sunday.

India never considered participation at the highest or even ministerial level.

Justifying India's decision to not associate itself with any communique/do-

cument emerging from this summit, MEA secretary (west) Pavan Kapoor, who led the Indian delegation, said in India's view, only those options acceptable to both parties could lead to abiding peace: "In line with this approach, we have decided to not associate with the joint communique or any other document emerging from the summit."

► **Will remain engaged, P 8**

# Some NEET irregularities at specific locations have come to light, says Pradhan

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Taking a serious view of the row over National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test for admission to medical colleges, education minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday said no one, including officials of National Testing Agency that conducts the exams, will be spared if irregularities are found, and interests of all students who took the test will be protected.

► **Doctors, students, activists lead fight against NEET, P 6**

Govt is looking at reforms to ensure that such problems do not occur in future.

Pradhan, who took charge of the key portfolio last week, noted that "some irregularities in NEET exam have come to light from some specific locations" and assured students that these will

"I assure students and parents that govt has taken this (irregularities) seriously. Even if big officials of NTA are found guilty, they will not be spared. A lot of improvement is required in NTA. Govt is concerned... no culprit will be spared, they will get the harshest punishment

► **DHARMENDRA PRADHAN, UNION EDUCATION MINISTER**

not be tolerated. "Some irregularities have come to light in two places. I assure students and parents that govt has taken this seriously. Even if big officials of NTA are found guilty, they will not be spared," Pradhan said.

► **'None will be spared', P 6**

# NCERT chief: Riot lessons in texts can create 'violent citizens'

New Delhi: Steps to boost jobs by expanding the Production Linked Incentive scheme to furniture, toys, footwear and more segments of textiles, along with a focus on MSMEs, while increasing income levels of women and boosting infrastructure are expected to be among the key

Rejecting accusations of the school curriculum, NCERT director Dinesh Prasad Saklani has said that references to the Gujarat riots and Babri Masjid demolition were modified in school textbooks to avoid creating "violent and depressed citizens".

The tweaks were part of the annual revision process and shouldn't trigger a row, he said, adding, "Why should we teach about riots in school textbooks? We want to create positive citizens..."

"Should we educate our students in a way that makes them offensive or creates societal hatred? Teaching about riots at a young age is unnecessary; they can learn about these events as they grow up," he said, adding there was no similar outcry over the absence of the 1984 riots in textbooks. **P 5**

► **Landscaping exercise, P 8**

# Ist Modi 3.0 budget to eye job creation by expanding PLI scheme, focus on MSMEs

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**New Delhi:** Steps to boost jobs by expanding the Production Linked Incentive scheme to furniture, toys, footwear and more segments of textiles, along with a focus on MSMEs, while increasing income levels of women and boosting infrastructure are expected to be among the key

► **FM to meet farmers, economists this week, P 6**

thrust areas of the Modi govt's first budget in its third term with several of the issues also being part of govt's 100-day agenda that will feed into the targets for 2030.

Besides, the finance ministry is looking at sops for the middle class, which may not necessarily be limited to options around tax concessions but may extend to interest rate subsidies for housing loans and other measures. These are preliminary

## MIDDLE CLASS SOPS?

- FM looks at sops for the middle class, which may not be limited to tax concessions but may extend to interest rate subsidies for home loans
- Multiple suggestions to raise income levels for women
- In case of infrastructure, govt is keen to continue with the thrust on public spending

areas of emphasis, some flowing from the election outcome, with detailed consultations yet to begin given that ministers took charge last week and Prime Minister Narendra Modi was travelling, sources familiar with the deliberations told TOI.

The pre-budget consultations are to begin this week, but a lot of groundwork has already been done by officials, who were tasked by Modi to prepare the 100-day plan.

► **Public spending, P 6**

## Expand base, avoid super rich tax: CII

ITC chairman and managing director Sanjiv Puri, who took over as the new CII president during Lok Sabha elections, in an interview to TOI, emphasised the need to widen the tax base, while rejecting higher levies on the super rich and backed a three-slab GST structure. **P 11**

Between Wednesday and June 25, the finance minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, is slated to meet economists, farm sector exports, market participants, bankers and labour unions, among others.

Besides, on Saturday, she will meet state finance ministers to seek their inputs on the budget, before joining them for the GST Council meeting in the afternoon.

► **Public spending, P 6**

# Villagers in Maoist dens vow to keep guerrillas out

**Nagpur:** Seven tribal hamlets along the Maharashtra-Chhattisgarh border have volunteered to shut out armed Maoists for good, going for laying booby traps for govt forces at the guerrillas' behest barely two months ago to braving the fear of a backlash to extricate themselves from the stranglehold of four decades of indoctrination, reports **Soumitra Bose**.

Paraynar, Nalgunda, Kucher, Kawande, Gondewad, Midadapalli and Mahakapadi in Bhamragarh taluka sit at the foothills of Abujmarh on the Maharashtra-Chhattisgarh border, housing the headquarters of the proscribed People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA).

► **Fear in villagers, P 8**

# Tech gig economy grows, India to have 23.5mn workers by 2030

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**Bengaluru:** As the demand for remote work continues, the gig workforce is emerging as one of the levers for enterprises to bridge the tech talent demand-supply gap. According to a Nasscom Aon report, India's gig workforce is projected to reach 23.5 million by 2030 — up from 7 million in 2021. This means gig workers will constitute 4.1% of the total workforce in India by the 2029-30 financial year, compared to 1.5% in the 2021-22 fiscal year.

Gig workers get paid from \$5 per hour for basic work, while mid-level prompt engi-

## TOP ROLES IN FUTURE

- Software development
- Product development
- Data analytics
- AI/Machine Learning
- Cloud computing
- Digital marketing
- Content management
- Sourcing and recruitment
- UI/UX design, data science

neers, prompt engineering specialists, and senior AI engineers can make from \$15 to \$400 per hour, respectively, depending on the complexity of the programmes.

The size of the global gig economy was estimated to

generate a gross volume of \$455 billion by 2023, up from \$368 billion in 2021.

Covid has transformed the talent landscape, blurred boundaries, and enabled firms to tap into the gig talent pool. Hiring gig workers provides access to a larger talent base, while saving on additional recruiting costs. Anshuman Chaubey, a freelance techie with five years of experience, exemplifies this trend. He began taking up gig roles after completing internship at an MNC and now has a team of four developers assisting him with the increased workload.

► **30% of job market, P 8**

# 'Fan flooded Pavithra with lewd messages for a week'

**K**amakshipalya police have found that actor Darshan's fan Renukaswamy had flooded his icon's girlfriend, Pavithra Gowda, for a week before he was brutally beaten to death on June 8 over his posts, reports **Chaitanya Swamy HM**.

An annoyed Pavithra is said to have informed her aide Pavan K about the messages and asked him to track him down. Pavan, who was working for Pavithra on instructions of Darshan, also informed him about the messages.

► **FULL COVERAGE | PAGE 2**

► **Police searching for fan's mobile phone, P 2**

According to Pavan's confession, Darshan asked his men to kidnap Renukaswamy and bring him to Bengaluru, police sources said.

Meanwhile, police Sunday recovered from Pavithra's house her footwear with which she had clobbered Renukaswamy with at a shed in which he was held captive on June 8. After Pavithra's attack, Darshan and his aides allegedly pounced on Renukaswamy and unleashed on him savage beatings that resulted in his death, police sources said.

# BBMP shuts 8 gaming zones for lacking safety measures

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**Bengaluru:** Close on the heels of a gaming-zone fire claiming 28 lives in Gujarat's Rajkot last month, BBMP has conducted a safety audit at 29 gaming zones and found eight lacking in safety measures.

According to BBMP officials, the gaming zones were inspected soon after deputy CM DK Shivakumar instructed the civic body to check the safety measures there.

Palike officials said they closed eight gaming zones lacking in safety measures. These include Hex Entertainment at 5th Block in Koramangala in

## MOST IN YELAHANKA

- BBMP finds eight of 29 gaming zones across city lacking in safety measures
- At six, Yelahanka zone has the highest number of gaming zones, of which five were shut
- Of the eight, officials said one had no trade licence, other seven had not obtained NOCs from govt depts

BBMP's South zone, one at Kempfort Mall on HAL Road in East zone, and one at Vaishnavi Mall on Yeshwantpur Main Road in RR Nagar zone. Five gaming zones in Yelahanka zone—in RMZ Galleria Mall, Yelahanka, Mall of Asia near Byataray-

anapura, Elements Mall in Thanisandra, and two in Bharatiya City Mall on Thanisandra Main Road—were shut.

Officials mentioned that the gaming zone at Vaishnavi Mall has no trade licence. The remaining seven gaming zones had not obtained NOCs from Bescom, fire and police departments. They can restart the gaming zones if they comply with all the safety measures and obtain NOCs from the authorities concerned.

Palike officials said Yelahanka zone has the highest number of gaming zones (6), followed by East and West (5 each). Dasarahalli zone has no gaming zone.

# FATAL MESSAGES Renukaswamy Created 2nd Insta Account His lewd messages for a week angered Pavithra, say police

Chaithanya Swamy  
@timesgroup.com

**Bengaluru:** Investigating the motive behind the kidnap and murder of Sandalwood star Darshan's fan Renukaswamy, Kamakshipalya police have found that he had sent lewd messages to his icon's girlfriend, Pavithra Gowda, for a week before he was brutally beaten to death on June 8 over his posts.

According to a senior police officer, Renukaswamy, in his comments on Pavithra's Instagram posts, criticised her relationship with Darshan, prompting her to block him. Renukaswamy then began sending lewd messages, including pictures of his private parts, to Pavithra through a fake Instagram profile named 'Reddy2205', created in the name of Tanisha Reddy. Renukaswamy's fake account had about 500 followers and he was following 2,348 people. He had posted 304 messages.

Though the account had been opened much earlier, he started sending her messages two weeks before June 8. His messages became obscene a week before his death.

Police have also found that Renukaswamy was allegedly messaging to many other women through his fake account. He had also sent obscene messages to many other women, including a couple of actresses. "But we aren't sure whom all he had sent the messages to as his phone is missing. We're going to write to Instagram to

## SEARCH ON FOR PHONES OF DECEASED

Kamakshipalya police are scouring a rajakaluve near Satva Anugraha apartments in Sumanahalli for the mobile phones of Renukaswamy and one of his killers, Raghavendra, also from Chitradurga.

Police have so far seized around 10 mobiles of the accused persons. The suspects, including Raghavendra, during their confession before the investigating officer, have claimed that after dumping Renukaswamy's body, they threw his and Raghavendra's phones into the same rajakaluve. Raghavendra is said to have kidnapped Renukaswamy and brought him to Bengaluru.

A fire and emergency services team is helping cops in the rajakaluve search. "We didn't find the phones in the rajakaluve till late in the evening on Sunday. Efforts will be continued to trace the phones," a senior police officer said.

give details about the account and submit them to the court while filing a chargesheet," the officer said.

"The messages sent to Pavithra through the account have been collected from her account. We've already seized her phone and taken screenshots of a few messages he had sent her and a few posts he had posted about Darshan travelling with his wife Vijayalakshmi," the officer said. An annoyed Pavithra is



KILLED & DUMPED IN DRAIN

Shyam Sundar MS, advocate, told TOI that if police have seized the woman's mobile phone, that would be enough evidence for them to establish the motive for kidnap and murder. "But the defence counsel can raise the ground that in the absence of the original device, police could have planted the evidence on the woman's phone," he added. However, police have time till the filing of chargesheet to get in touch with Instagram & find details.

## Former Rangayana director recalls Darshan's 'change'

Former director of Rangayana Addanda C Cariappa, who claims to have introduced Darshan to the field of theatre, which he used as the launching pad for his film career, said the actor was surrounded by bad elements.

Cariappa recounted that in 1987, Darshan and his brother Dinakar were part of a theatre



camp held in Ponnampet in Kodagu district. Darshan was in class 7 at the time. "He played the role of a king in my play. He acted beautifully. During that period, his family's financial condition was bad," he said. "A few years later, when I saw Darshan's performances in a few television serials, I found him lacking acting skills. I asked him to get trained at Ninasam theatre school in Heggodu, Sagar, in Shivamogga district. When his first movie, 'Majestic,' became a hit, he came to me and offered sweets. But after that, there was no contact with him," he said. Cariappa said Darshan was on the right path initially. "But after he got into the film industry, he allowed himself to be surrounded by bad elements, which tarnished his life." TNN

## Seer wants govt job for kin of deceased

Veerasomeswar Shivacharya Swami, pontiff of Balehonur Rambhupuri Peetha, has demanded that chief minister Siddaramaiah and home minister G Parameshwara meet the bereaved family members of S Renukaswamy and give one of them a govt job.

Speaking to reporters after visiting Renukaswamy's kin in Chitradurga on Sunday, the pontiff condemned the murder and demanded that the govt extend help to the poor family. Sri Karivrubha Deshikendra Shivayogishwar Swami, pontiff of Nonavinakere Kadasiddeshwar Mutt, also visited the family and expressed deep condolences. Nagaraj Salagere, from Annadeta Seva Samsthe of Ranebennur, & his associates issued a cheque for Rs 1 lakh to the family. TNN

## Justice for man's kin priority, not ban: Sudeep

**Bengaluru:** Amid the demand to ban Sandalwood star Darshan over his arrest in the Renukaswamy murder case, his colleague Kichcha Sudeep said, "Ban is secondary. The focus should be on providing justice to the person in pain."

Speaking to reporters Sunday, Sudeep lauded the police and media for bringing out the facts. "The film chamber is there to provide justice to those in the in-

dustry. The right word is not ban, but justice. The focus should first be on providing justice to the aggrieved family," he said.

Refusing to take a stand for or against Darshan, he said, "As an artist, it is wrong to speak for or against someone. What is needed is justice for the family — the woman, the unborn child, Renukaswamy. People should have their faith restored in justice."

"Everyone's heart goes out to the family. The whole atmosphere doesn't seem right; the cinema industry needs justice. Everything wrong gets attributed to the industry. It needs a clean chit. After justice is delivered in court and the guilty are pinned, the industry will get a clean chit," he said, adding, "Celebrities are not gods. Don't treat them like that. Don't put that sort of pressure." TNN

## Mahazar: Pavithra's footwear recovered

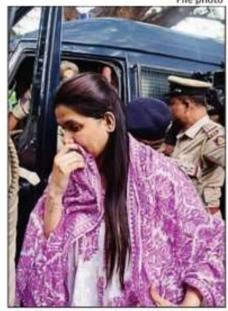
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Bengaluru/Chitradurga:** Kamakshipalya police, investigating the kidnap and murder of Renukaswamy, on Sunday recovered the footwear of accused no. 1 and Sandalwood star Darshan's girlfriend Pavithra Gowda from her house in Kenchenahalli, Rajarajeshwari Nagar.

Darshan, Pavithra and his aides are among 17 people arrested for murdering Renukaswamy over his obscene posts against her.

"As per the confession of the accused persons, Pavithra was the first one to assault Renukaswamy with her footwear before others subjected him to brutality at a seized-vehicle parking yard in Pattanagere, Rajarajeshwari Nagar, where he was held captive on June 8," a cop said.

Police also recovered the clothes Pavithra wore on the fateful day. The recoveries were made during a mahazar at her three-storey building.



IN THE DOCK: Pavithra Gowda, accused no. 1 in the murder case

Pavithra used the two floors, and rented out the ground floor to another accused and aide, Pavan K. The three-hour mahazar exercise also covered Pavan's house.

Police also conducted mahazar at the houses of other accused — Vinay in Pattanagere and Deepak in BEML Layout, RR Nagar. Vinay stays in a house next to that of the

## 17TH SUSPECT HELD

Police on Sunday arrested Dhanraj alias Raju, Pavithra Gowda's manager and south Bengaluru resident, in the Renukaswamy murder case. He was part of the

Darshan gang that assaulted Renukaswamy.

He is also said to have brought a parcel to the shed and police are looking into what he had brought. He is the 17th person to be arrested in the murder case. TNN

owner of the parking yard. Police seized his clothes from the house and collected some other evidence. A senior police officer said Vinay was also involved in the assault and disposal of the body.

Deepak was also taken to his aunt's house where he had taken a bath after assaulting and killing Renukaswamy. Police have seized his clothes and footwear as well.

Four of the accused were taken to Chitradurga for a spot inquest on Saturday. One of the accused, Arun Kumar, was allowed to take part in his father Chandranna's funeral. Chandranna had died after police arrested his son on Friday. A mahazar

was also conducted at Arun Kumar's house on Sunday.

The team visited the house of another suspect and Darshan's fan club office-bearer in Chitradurga, Raghavendra, at Doddapete. Sources confirmed that police officers seized Rs 5 lakh cash and gold from the house.

Officials also visited the house of Ravi Shankar, a taxi driver, and seized his car that was allegedly used to kidnap the victim.

Police have also recovered the clothes Renukaswamy wore when he was beaten up and died, from a Pattanagere location. The accused had changed his clothes and dumped his body.

# They're infusing fresh ideas into THEIR HEIRLOOM CAMPUSES

In the concluding instalment of its series focusing on a new breed of education barons transforming institutions in Bengaluru, TOI looks at how three youngsters are ensuring that teaching goes beyond rote learning

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

When Vanaja Srikrumar started preschools — Gauri Kids — in the mid 1990s, in a small shed in Jayanagar and off Mysuru Road with single-digit admissions, it was her passion for offering quality education to lower-income families that drove her.

Cut to 2011, her son Jayant Gauri returned to Bengaluru after completing his Masters in marketing in the UK. Bitten by the entrepreneurial bug, he started Spectrum Ventures that dealt with glow lanterns and later in real estate. As he visited his mother at her preschools, he realised he enjoyed being with children and decided to upgrade the school. Thus was born Raintree Schools in 2014. The K-12 schools have over 1,000 students on two campuses put together, and an overall staff strength of 80.

Raintree Schools are budget-friendly with fees in the range of Rs 3,000-3,500 a month. "My mother believes service to society is service to god. We want to make good-quality, holistic education with global exposure affordable and ac-

cessible. At a time when quality education demands a high cost, making it accessible to a limited audience, we wanted to be able to break the stereotype," he said.

Jayant, 35, worked towards building the schools, starting from licences and permits to building infrastructure and re-branding. "We changed the name to Raintree. Raintrees are known for their strong trunk, from where the tree branches out beau-



JAYANT GAURI  
FOUNDER, RAIN TREE SCHOOLS

1. Schools governed by Jayant Gauri:  
● Raintree School (Jayanagar 4th T Block) — 650 students  
● Raintree School (New Guddadahalli, off Mysuru Road) — 400 students

2. Three things he is focusing on/doing differently compared to previous generation:  
● Focusing on real-world syllabi and current affairs to prepare students for practical life and its challenges  
● Focusing on a strong foundation and activity-based learning compared to rote learning

● Awareness and exposure to various life skills such as self-defence, understanding finance, mental health, etc.

3. What he is most concerned about in this generation: Persistent pressure over the importance of marks, peer pressure, and strong negative influence of social media on mental health

I wanted the same for our children — to have a strong foundation and then to branch out to explore the world. Our logo itself is a combination of a world map and a raintree," he said.

Like many intelligent engineering graduates in 2013, Sheethal too had an offer letter from Infosys and TCS. But she didn't join the corporates and simply decided to try her hand at the educational institutions of her father, politician-cum-educationalist DK Mohan. She developed a liking for it and there was no looking back. She now is the director of the school, which has about 1,700 students. Sheethal's brother Nithin works with Cambridge Institute of Technology and Cambridge PU and Degree College.

"As a student myself, I realised our education system is immersed in rote learning. There is a gap between what we learn and what society wants. That is something I'm trying to bridge since taking over. We encourage giving back



SHEETHAL M  
DIRECTOR, CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL, KR PURA

to society, we have a zero-waste campus and we prioritise incorporating values. We also promote collaborative learning where students work together in teams to solve problems mimicking real-world work situations," she said.

Schools governed by Sheethal M: Cambridge School and Cambridge Juniors, with about 1,700 students

Three things she is doing differently: STEM learning with hands-on learning through experiments, personalised learning with adapted teaching methods, and shifting assessment methods from relying solely on traditional tests to implementing authentic strategies that assess students' critical thinking abilities and application of knowledge

What she is most concerned about today: Lack of empathy and compassion. Social media influence, family dynamics, mental health issues, societal narratives, highly polarized social and political climate are all contributing factors to the lack of empathy among kids of this generation

## BBMP intensifies clearance of flexes, collects ₹75k in fines

**Bengaluru:** BBMP has intensified its crackdown on unauthorized flexes and advertisements across Bengaluru, clearing over 3,800 such installations and collecting Rs 75,000 in fines. Legal action is being taken against offenders, with 76 complaints filed at police stations and 48 FIRs registered so far.

Acting on instructions from deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar, BBMP decided to eradicate unauthorized advertisements within its jurisdiction. BBMP chief commissioner Tushar Giri Nath has issued directives, and Munish Moudgil, special commissioner of revenue (BBMP), is conducting dai-

ly review meetings with officers from all eight zones to ensure compliance.

"I've instructed the officials to remove all unauthorized advertisements and file FIRs against those responsible," Moudgil said. From June 1 till date, 3,843 flexes, banners, LEDs, and hoardings have been removed citywide.

Under the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Corporation Outdoor Billboard and Public Message Sub Rules-2018, billboards are prohibited in residential areas and on private properties. The rules also ban unauthorized placement of advertisements on flexes, banners, bunting, posters, and flags. TNN

## Palike to construct 75 free-to-use SHE toilets; work orders soon

Nithya Mandyam  
@timesgroup.com

**Bengaluru:** Of 100, construction work on 75 'SHE toilets' is set to begin soon across the city. Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is expected to issue work orders in the coming week for the smart toilets, which will be available for use free of cost. These will feature feeding rooms, changing rooms, washrooms, sanitation rooms with vending machines, mobile charging accessories, and seating areas for women.

The civic body had planned to build 100 SHE toilets at 18 locations under a public-private partnership (PPP) model. It floated a tender for the toilets under the design, finance, build, operate, and transfer model. "This initiative faced delays as initial bidders didn't qualify, necessitating a re-tendering. Now, we've categorised the bidders into three groups: General, SC, and ST. The general category will oversee the construction of 75 'SHE' toilets, while SC and ST bidders will construct 17 and eight toilets, respectively," said Praveen Lingaiah, chief engineer, solid waste management, BBMP.

"We wanted bidders to ensure the overall design and build of SHE toilets is innovative, utilises the latest technology for construction with space-saving compact designs and IoT components, and ensures water and electricity conservation, waste management, security, and hygiene, among others. While allowing service providers to advertise on SHE toilets, the services will be provided to women free of cost," he added. The work order for 75 SHE toilets will be issued in the coming week. "These smart toilets will feature smart auto-



A tentative view of the SHE toilets to be built in the city

matic toilet seats, dual flushing options, nozzle self-cleaning functions, and water temperature adjustments," Lingaiah said.

## No touch or water

"The urinals will also be touch-free and waterless. The designated spots will also feature a sit-out area with horticultural and decorative plants if there is enough room. To protect users, the restroom doors will have automated, secure door locks that are enabled by the Internet of Things. To provide IoT-enabled control over user access, maintenance of toilet hygiene levels, and collecting user data, the facilities will be smartly administered using mobile applications," he added.

A neon glow signboard with detailed signage will be installed by the agency on the building structure, and a cubical glow signboard will be placed on a pole at the main road showing directions and location. A digital video wall may be placed at each location to run advertisements for businesses and commercial entities to generate revenue, with 20% of the time allocated for public awareness, govt announcements, and social messages.

## BBMP to fix footpaths linking to Purple Line stations

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**Bengaluru:** Months after starting redevelopment and construction of pavements on roads leading to Namma Metro Green Line stations, BBMP has now proposed doing the same for the Purple Line under the 'Lite Tender-SURE' model.

Palike officials said they would redevelop and construct pavements on major roads connecting to Kengeri, RR Nagar, Attiguppe, Vijayanagar, BGS, and Magadi Road stations. The initiative seeks to develop seven roads: Railway Parallel Road, 5th Main Road, 8th Main Road, 1st Main Road, and 1st Cross Road in Vijayanagar and Kengeri area, RR Nagar Main Road in RR Nagar, and Dr Rajkumar Road (from GT World Mall).

BBMP officials said the civic authority has allotted over Rs 24 crore to ensure pedestrian-friendly footpaths. The road infrastructure divi-



ONE-YR PROJECT: Officials said the civic authority has allotted over Rs 24 crore to ensure pedestrian-friendly footpaths on the Metro line

sion will take up the project and aims to complete it within 11 months after the commencement of work. Therefore, officials estimate it will be completed by June 2025.

Officials said the footpaths on roads connecting to Metro stations aren't in good condition as they weren't redeveloped after the Namma Metro project work. So, the Palike has decided to develop them to provide safe foot-

paths for pedestrians who depend on Metro services. The Palike's East zone will commence similar work soon in their area.

## Green Line works may end by Feb 2025

BBMP's similar projects for the Green Line began in March this year. The Palike allocated Rs 30 crore to develop footpaths along the line, covering Subedar Chatram

Road, Dr Rajkumar Road, Mahalakshmi Layout Main Road, Pipeline Road, Watch Factory Road, Jalahalli Cross Road, Lake Road, and Hesaraghatta Road in West zone. These roads provide connectivity to Metro stations at Sampige Road, Rajajinagar, Mahalakshmi Layout, Peenya, Jalahalli, Dasarahalli, and Nagasandra.

In South division, BBMP allocated Rs 28 crore for the development of 100ft Road in Talaghattapura, 80ft Road connecting KSIT, Vasanthapur Main Road, Sarakki Village Road, South End Road, Vasavi Temple Street, Shankar Mutt, and 10th Cross Road, BVK Iyengar Road, and Tipu Sultan Road. These thoroughfares link to Talaghattapura (Silk Institute), Vajarahalli, Komanakunte, JP Nagar, South End Road, National College, Chickpete, and KR Market Metro stations.

BBMP officials said the work in both South and West divisions is expected to be completed by Feb 2025.

## NO NOD FOR SKYDECK ON NGEF LAND

**Bengaluru:** After the defence ministry refused to grant permission to build a 250-metre-tall skydeck on the NGEF land in Byappanahalli, as it is close to HAL airport, BBMP has identified three alternative spots.

Chief minister Siddaramaiah, in his recent budget, had stated that internationally renowned architects have been invited to prepare a novel design for the skydeck, which is to become a landmark tourist destination in Bengaluru.

A senior official said BBMP had initially identified two properties — the NGEF land and the Mysore Sandal Soap Factory land at Yeshwantpur — for the project. The Palike finalised the NGEF land. But the defence ministry refused to give permission as it would pose a threat to HAL airport and the test flying that

happens there. BBMP officials said they've identified three more pieces of land — at Kommaghatta near Kengeri, Ramapura off NICE Road, and another one near Jnanabharathi — and would finalise one of them to implement the project.

According to civic officials, BBMP's initial estimates put the project cost at Rs 850 crore — around Rs 350 crore to construct the skydeck and another Rs 500 crore to build its commercial portions. The proposed skydeck is to be the tallest view-tower in the city.

The base part will have facilities such as a shopping area, restaurants, and a theatre. The top portion will feature a roller-coaster station, an exhibition hall, a sky lobby, a skydeck for panoramic views, restaurant and bar, and a VIP area. — Santoshkumar RB

OFFSIDE



# Security staffer steals flyer's earpods, booked

**Bengaluru:** A 40-year-old man working as a trolley operator at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) has been booked for stealing earpods of a passenger recently. The passenger who flew from Bengaluru to Hyderabad forgot to take his earpods after security checking and the accused allegedly took it home.

According to the complaint filed by Roji Ariyattu, executive of Manque Global Services Private Limited which is involved in security services at the airport, with KIA police, the incident happened between 5.50am

and 6.30am on June 14. An air passenger identified as KV Sudhir Kumar flew to Hyderabad from KIA in a Vistara UK0897 flight. Kumar underwent a security check at Terminal - 2 of the airport and proceeded without collecting his earpods. He realised the mistake after reaching the departure gate at 6.25am. Soon, he alerted the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel.

The officials informed their counterparts at the screening counter. The search didn't yield any results. They checked with the lost and found counter and the earpods were not deposited there either.



CAUGHT ON CAMERA

her. Since the flight was scheduled to depart from KIA around 7am, Kumar boarded it. CISF officials checked the CCTV camera footage at the screening counter and found that Ramesh MN, 40, trolley operator of Manque and de-

ployed at the automatic tray retrieval system (ARTS) number 14 taking the earpods and keeping it in his trouser pocket at 6.05am. After finishing his duty, Ramesh went home without depositing it at the lost and found section. The CISF staff alerted Manque management about the theft and they instructed the passenger to lodge a complaint.

An officer said they have registered a case under IPC section 379 (theft) against Ramesh. "We have recovered the earpods from him and it will be returned to the passenger. Necessary action will be initiated against Ramesh," he added.

# No HC relief for man who wrote woman's number on toilet walls

## Labelled Her Call Girl, She Got Calls From Strangers

**Bengaluru:** Writing the mobile number of a married woman on the walls of a men's toilet of the KSRTC bus stand at Majestic in Bengaluru and terming her a "call girl" has proved costly for a man from Chitradurga.

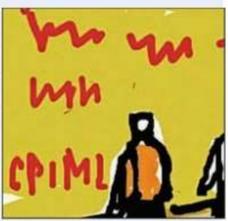
Incidentally, petitioner Allahbakhsh Patel had allegedly done this at the instance of a female colleague of the complainant woman, both of whom worked as junior health assistants in a govt PHC at Holalkere taluk.

"It needs no emphasis that sexual violence against a woman apart from being a de-humanising act is intrusion into the right to privacy of the woman, which can by no stretch of imagination be construed to be lawful. It causes the woman to undergo a traumatic experience. Therefore, such cases before the court need to be dealt with sternly," Justice M Nagapranna observed in his recent order, while rejecting Patel's petition seeking the quashing of the case.

## 'Impact on woman's modesty'

In today's digital age, one need not cause physical harm, a woman's modesty can be railroaded by sheer circulation of pejorative statements, pictures or videos in the social media. The petitioner, therefore, cannot get away with making such belittling comments on a woman in public," Justice Nagapranna said while dismissing the petition.

The judge also said it is open to the prosecution to invoke Section 319 of the CrPC



to include the colleague of the complainant into the array of the accused after following due process of law.

The woman had stated in her complaint dated March 19, 2020 that she was getting calls at odd hours from various numbers and the callers also threatened her life. When she made enquiries, she learnt that her mobile number was displayed on the walls of a toilet at Majestic bus stand.

The matter was transferred to Upparapete police station in Bengaluru. Police filed a chargesheet for offences punishable under IPC sections 501 (printing or engraving matter known to be defamatory), 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace), 507 (criminal intimidation) and 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult

the modesty of a woman). Patel was one of the two accused identified in the FIR. Challenging the proceedings, Patel claimed that he wrote the number at the instance of her woman colleague who had a quarrel with her. The colleague has been named as a prosecution witness in the chargesheet. However, Justice Nagapranna noted the contentions raised by the petitioner have to be decided in a trial.

"Causing physical harm to a woman is punishable with different offences, but intruding into her privacy and personal integrity would cause a serious psychological harm which sometimes generates much more pain than physical harm, as it scars the soul," the judge noted.

# Jumbo deaths: HC seeks govts' response

**Bengaluru:** Taking serious note of a media report regarding the electrocution of elephant Ashwathama and 47 such deaths of pachyderms in the past four years, the high court on Friday registered a suo motu public interest litigation.

A division bench, comprising Chief Justice NV Anjaria and Justice KV Aravind, has directed both the state and central govts to submit their responses with regards



DASARA JUMBO ASHWATHAMA

to steps and measures being taken and proposed to be taken in future for safety and protection of elephants and other wildlife assets and prevent such unnatural deaths in Karnataka.

They are also required to spell out the statutory machinery activated by the authorities in this regard and what is the mechanism adopted and developed for the safety and safeguard of the elephants and other wildlife within the sanctuary area and outside the reserved area.

Further, response is also

sought on how the authorities have worked on the liability of officers, when such elephant and wildlife deaths occur. "The successive and repeated incidents of the elephant deaths in Karnataka due to electrocution and other unnatural causes is a serious matter to worry. The elephants and wildlife have the right to live in a safe environment, not to die unnatural deaths, as they stand under statutory protection," the division bench noted in its order, while directing the matter to be listed on July 2.

Senior advocate Puttige R Ramesh has been requested to assist the court as amicus curiae.

—Supriya Behera

# RGUHS to conduct paperless test for MDS

SruthySusan.Ullas @timesgroup.com



CHANGING NORMS

**Bengaluru:** Buoyed by the success of holding exams via digitabs for physiotherapy students, Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS) is now introducing the same for MDS later this month.

The university aims to extend the paperless exams to all its 3.3 lakh students by this year-end. According to its plans, students will be provided with digitabs for writing the exams. The tabs will have internet connections for the first few minutes when students can download the question papers. Following this, the students can write the exam just like on paper, with facilities to erase, colour, and draw among others. The tabs will be stored by the colleges and used for further batches.

RGUHS has given the option for students to choose the digitabs or go by the conventional way of writing on paper. In the allied health sciences programmes, among 250 students who took the paper, four opted out. As per the university, the students expressed interest in digitabs after three exams, but the conversion was not possible then.

The students are being given mock exams and training on how to use the tabs before the exams are rolled out. MDS exams will also have 250 students. "The pilot for the exams has been found so successful that we thought we could extend it to other programmes also. By the end of the year, if all logistics fall in place, we could have all our programmes going paperless. Internal assessment will be done on these tabs soon," said RGUHS VC MK Ramesh.

"The cost of procuring the digitabs will match with that of printing and providing answer scripts and question papers, thus making it financially viable. One advantage is that answer scripts that are uploaded on cloud become available for evaluation shortly after the exam. It also saves the colleges the effort of collecting the answer scripts and transporting them to the storage areas," he added.

# Road rage: Bikers assault bus driver

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Bengaluru:** A BMTCL bus driver was assaulted by two bikers in Hebbal, after he refused to let them overtake his vehicle on the service road recently. The incident, which left the driver injured, highlighted the growing problem of road rage in the city. Girish V, 53, was navigating his bus through the congested service road when the two bikers — one with a woman riding pillion — attempted to overtake the vehicle. As Girish told them not to do so, the bikers abused him. When the bus came to a halt in the traffic, one of the bikers approached the driver's window and pulled Girish out. Along with the other biker, he beat him up and fled the scene.

Girish was taken to a nursing home in Kempapura, where he was treated for head and abdomen injuries. He could not return to work immediately. An FIR was filed on Wednesday at the Anurathahalli police station. Police arrested three individuals involved in the incident on Thursday.

—Supriya Behera

# BASE to hold convocation four years after first batch graduated

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Bengaluru:** Four years after its first batch graduated, BR Ambedkar School of Economics University (BASE) is set to hold its inaugural convocation for previous batches on June 19, at the university auditorium. Students from 2017-18 to 2022-23 batches will receive the medals and degree certificates.

Four gold medals, 12 rank medals, and 180 rank certificates will be awarded. Niharika Choudhary (BSc Honors economics, 2017-20), Meera Mohan (Integrated MSc economics 2018-2023), Dhanusha

Prabhu (MSc economics 2020-22), and Prakhar Rana (MSc economics 2021-23) will receive the gold medals.

NR Bhanumathy, VC of BASE said: "We couldn't conduct a convocation ceremony until now for various reasons. Our first batch graduated in 2020, so we couldn't hold a ceremony for two years due to the pandemic. We also wanted to hold the event on our campus, so we waited until our auditorium was built, which was in 2024."

C Rangarajan, former governor of the Reserve Bank of India and former chairman of the Prime Minister's economic advisory council, will be the chief guest. The college currently offers three courses — B.Sc (Honors) in economics, M.Sc economics, and M.Sc financial economics. "Ten out of 12 rank holders and three out of four gold medalists are girls," noted the VC.

Established in 2017 as an affiliate of BU, the foundation for BASE was laid by then-President Pranab Mukherjee. The academic session was started later that year by former PM Manmohan Singh. In 2019, BASE was made into a unitary university. As a state-funded varsity, it allocates 60% of its seats to students from Karnataka.

—Aaditya Menon

# Missing case: Girl was killed for not bringing gutka

A man has been arrested for allegedly killing seven-year-old Anushree Madiwalar from Kinnal village in Koppal, whose body was found wrapped in a gunny bag recently.

Siddalingaiah Naikal Hirerath, a local resident, murdered her as she refused to bring him gutka, said SP Yashoda Vantagodi on Sunday.

On April 20, her father Raghavendra Madiwalar had filed a complaint at Koppal rural police station after she went missing. The suspect admitted to fatally striking the girl on the head with a stick in a fit of rage. The stick, the deceased's footwear and the steel water tank used to hide the gunny bag were seized.

# RIDING ON MEMORIES OF HEROES



**MOVING FORWARD:** The southern team of the 'Delta 5 Expedition', a pan-India motorcycle odyssey by the Indian Army, was flagged off towards Anantapur from the MEG main gate on Sunday. Maj Gen Harish Bhutani, president of SSB Centre South, Bengaluru, flagged off it at 7am. The journey that commemorates the Rajat Jayanti of Kargil Divas is being carried out on Hero Moto Corp's Maverick and Xpulse bikes. Riders arrived in the city on June 14, after it was flagged off at Dhanushkodi on June 12. On June 15, the team visited the Isro facility here. The riders, en route the Kargil War Memorial in Dras, will traverse through Manali in Himachal Pradesh, Sarchu, and Nyoma in Ladakh, covering 4,000km

# Girl's farm tool gets patent after 5 yrs

Vindhya.Pabolu @timesgroup.com

**Bengaluru:** Anushree N, who, as a 12-year-old class 7 student, had developed an eco-friendly agricultural tool five years ago, has now secured a patent for her technology.

In 2019, Anushree was one of the five students from Karnataka, to participate in the Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE) exhibition, and present her innovative farm tool idea. The student of a govt school in Doddabomballi village in Bangarpet taluk in Kolar district, she had developed a bicycle plough, equipped with a funnel tube and other attachments like blade harrow cultivator, furrower, hiller and seed drill, which can all be fixed and removed, using nuts and bolts. She said her tools are easy to handle and move, besides being cost-effective and eco-friendly, as they consume less energy.

Now, after half a decade of hard work and perseverance, she has been granted a patent, which has been recognised by the National Innovation Foundation (NIF), an autonomous body under the department of science and technology (DST), govt



Anushree (inset) showcases her tool along with her guide Kavitha V (left) at Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship in 2019

## Invention inspired by senior

Inspired by her senior (Anushree) from school, another student, Padmashree G has developed an 'Expandable lunch box,' which earned recognition at the IGNITE awards, organised by NIF in Nov 2019. Out of 16,000 participants, Padmashree was one of the 18 selected for her innovative idea. The sixth-grade student had made a foldable lunch box, with a built-in compartment that can be used as a plate,



IGNITED MINDS: Padmashree with her expandable lunch box

and two individual boxes to store curry and rice, which can also be folded, when twisted and turned around, saving up space.

Anushree's family farm with her mother's approval.

'TOI report helped' Kavitha also highlighted the positive impact of a report, 'Girl who created multi-purpose farm tool among five INSPIRE awardees', published in the Times of India on March 10, 2019. "Following the report, Caterpillar, a multinational corporation from Bengaluru, visited the school. They organised excursions, educated students about the future of science, and donated computers and projector screens to help improve the educational infrastructure," she said.

Anushree's family farm with her mother's approval.

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# BDA floats tender for drone survey

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**Bengaluru:** BDA has floated a tender for conducting a 3D drone survey to support the Revised Urban Master Plan-2041, aimed at addressing the city's rapid growth. The exercise, slated to cover an area of approximately 1240 sqkm, encompasses both the BBMP jurisdiction (800 sq km) and the BDA area (440 sqkm). The survey will produce a base map, land use map, ortho-rectified images, and digital elevation models.

"This data will be crucial in crafting a master plan that accurately reflects the current state and future needs of the city. Contractors



GROWTH FOCUS

conducting the survey are required to obtain permission from various entities, including the ministry of defence, due to the sensitive nature of drone operations. The survey will identify all buffer zones, including lakes and canals, and collect 360-degree images to create a realistic 3D representation of the city," BDA chairman N Jayaram said.

The city's development has long been guided by master plans, with the most recent being the Master Plan 2015, formulated in 2005. Although a Revised Urban Master Plan-2031 was released, it drew criticism for being unscientific and lack-

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# Govt: Inter-state losses triggered fuel price hike

## COMPARISON OF PETROL AND DIESEL PRICES (BPCL)

State	Petrol (in Rs)	Diesel (in Rs)
Karnataka (Bengaluru)	99.85**	85.95**
Tamil Nadu (Hosur)	102.84	94.41
Kerala (Kasaragod)	106.66	95.60
Andhra Pradesh (Ananthpur)	109.44	97.29
Telangana (Hyderabad)	107.40	95.65
Maharashtra (Kagal)	104.46	91.02

\* Prices increased by Rs 3 per litre in Karnataka now. Prices as of June 1, 2024

File photo

**TOUGH COMPETITION:** According to economic advisor to CM, other states say they're losing out as people travel to K'taka for cheaper fuel

Sandeep.Moudgal  
@timesgroup.com

**Bengaluru:** In a fresh twist to the controversial decision of the govt to hike fuel prices by Rs 3, the administration has claimed that a lot of "inter-state losses" had influenced the move.

Economic advisor to CM Siddaramaiah, Basavaraj Rayareddy, told **TOI** that the govt had been repeatedly asked by Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and ruling parties in Maharashtra to hike the fuel prices in Karnataka.

"Across as much as 700km, people from the other side of the border have been entering Karnataka to fill their tanks due to petrol and diesel being available cheaper than in their own states. This had created an impression that Karnataka taking volume sales from the neighbouring states was hurting their economies. They had been demanding repeatedly to hike the prices," said Rayareddy. He claimed that the price hike was a rational decision, which had to be considered for the purpose of ensuring "inter-state harmony".

The Yelburga MLA also claimed that in some cases, a lot of the border districts of the neighbouring states were filling their tanks every other day to sell them in black market back home. "With petrol prices as much as Rs 10 cheaper than in their states, it was giving rise to lot of black marketing as well," he said.

Rayareddy said the biggest impact was being felt along the state's eastern border from Aurad in Bidar to Malur in Kolar and also in

areas that border Maharashtra. Meanwhile, "internally", govt officials suggested the proposal for hiking the fuel prices had already been placed and approved by CM during budget 2024-25, but was held back due to political reasons with Lok Sabha and subsequent MLC elections.

"Now, with the Lok Sabha polls completed and the model code of conduct lifted, it is considered the right time to hike the prices to recover revenue," said one official.

According to finance department officials, the Rs 3,000 crore gain by way of hiking the tax on the petrol and diesel was in fact "factored in" at the time of preparing the budget, placing a target of Rs 1.10 lakh crore in terms of the revenue.

"While we do not anticipate much shortfall in other revenue generation avenues, there is a plausible situation of a slight shortfall in IGST collections, as they are adjusted by the Centre on receiving the taxes from the sale of products, which are originally transported from Karnataka," said the official.

**Rationalisation of duties on liquor likely**  
The state govt is also planning to "rationalise" the prices of high-end liquor early this week. According to officials, the govt is going to implement the proposal made in CM Siddaramaiah's budget speech of rationalising the high-end liquor prices by reducing the excise and additional excise duties to make it more "competitive" with the neighbouring states.

## Tax rejig needed for funds: CM

Contd from page 1

The CM defended Karnataka's tax rejig, stating it was necessary to ensure sufficient funds for essential public services and development projects undertaken by the govt — a shorthand for funding signature welfare projects started by the Congress last year.

The BJP-JD(S) alliance called it an act of "revenge" against the people of Karnataka for "not supporting" Congress in the recent LS elections, in which it scored less-than-expected 9/28. It attributed the fuel-price decision to the Siddaramaiah govt's "mismanagement of finances" due to guarantee schemes. Union minister HD Kumaraswamy said this will negatively impact the state's finances, leading to inflation.

"For example, the price of Black Label in Karnataka is double than the neighbouring states. It is, in fact, more economically viable to fly down to these states and pick up the liquor. Now, we intend to rationalise this and increase our volume of sales," said Rayareddy.

# Truckers mull stir, say price rise will make essentials dearer

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**Bengaluru:** With fuel prices suddenly spiking by Rs 3 a litre in Karnataka after the state govt increased the sales tax on Saturday, truckers are looking at protesting against it in the days to come. With Monday being the Bakrid festival, they have rescheduled a crucial meeting in this regard to Tuesday.

From food to travel, everything is set to get impacted by the fuel price rise, according to a truckers association. C Naveen Reddy, president of the Federation of Karnataka Lorry Owners' Association, said drivers, who transport milk, travel about 400km daily between districts, and within city, they travel about 40km from one delivery point to another.

With a mileage of 4km per litre, as Reddy suggests, the trucker would incur an additional cost of Rs 30 within the city, and about Rs 300 daily.



UP IN ARMS

Reddy said the prices of perishables like vegetables to fish and cereals will all be hit as their transport expenditure will rise, he added.

**'Rise in food price will impact every single person'**  
"This would mean that salaries of truckers will have to increase too. District associations are in touch with me, and we will have a meeting on Tuesday. We will have to get down to protest, something that a common citizen ought to do, considering the increase in prices of food impacting every single person," he said. Meanwhile, a member of

## Revive Lingayat religion agitation: Pontiff

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Dharwad:** Sanehalli Taralabalu Mutt pontiff Panditaradha Shivacharya has called upon Lingayat leaders and politicians to continue the agitation to get the 'independent religion status for Lingayat'.

Speaking at the inauguration of Sirasangi Lingaraj Desai Auditorium at Lingayat Bhavan here, he said the agitation launched when Siddaramaiah was the CM between 2013 and 2018 was scuttled and there is a need to revive it.

The seer said, "It is not sufficient for govt to just name 12th century social reformer Basaveshwar as the state's cultural leader. It should propagate Basava's philosophy by including lessons in school textbooks." Panditaradha Shivacharya also demanded that the govt construct Basava Bhavan in each district, and

organise programmes to propagate Basava's vachanas and other preachings. Minister for major industries MB Patil said Lingayat religion is casteless and anyone can embrace it. "The Mahasabha session has resolved that people belonging to Lingayat should mention religion as either Veerashaiva or Lingayat in religion column during national census and set in the caste column," he said.

## Weather effect: Cattle prices double in 3 mnths

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**Hubballi:** Reeling under intense heatwave with weathermen forecasting a longer dry spell, hundreds of distressed farmers sold their cows and oxen at Rs 40,000 to Rs 60,000 per pair in Feb-March this year. With the onset of monsoon, which has revived agriculture activities in North Karnataka in early June, farmers are now struggling to buy a pair of oxen, whose prices have breached Rs 1.2 lakh.



UPWARD TREND: The cost of a pair of oxen went up to Rs 1.2L

cattle seller in Kataral village of Koppal district, told **TOI** that oxen are being sold for

over Rs 1 lakh per pair. "Same oxen were sold at around Rs 40,000 in Feb and March due to water shortage and unavailability of fodder. Weekly cattle markets in Gadag and Koppal districts are facing shortage of cattle, and it has led to price hike," he said.

Murigeppa Pujari, a farmer in Ranebennur of Haveri district, said he had sold a pair of his oxen for Rs 50,000 in Feb this year. "We had no fodder and were facing financial crisis due to the drought. Now that it's raining, we need oxen at the earliest. However, we need a minimum of

## CINEMA OF THE WEEK

**Chandu Champion (Biopic, Sports) ★★★★★**  
Cast: Kartik Aaryan, Vijay Raaz, Bhuvan Arora, Rajpal Yadav  
Direction: Kabir Khan  
Duration: 2 hours 23 minutes  
Language: Hindi (U/A)

Based on a true story, the film celebrates the fascinating and surrealistic life of Murlikant Petkar, an army man and athlete, who won India its first Paralympic gold in 1972. His achievements and remarkable tryst with destiny lurked in anonymity, until he decided to claim the honour and respect he deserved.

We often hear that it's wise to leave the table if respect is not served. But what if you decide to sit at the table, compelling people to acknowledge your presence? Victory belongs to the most tenacious after all. Kabir Khan's film celebrates this thought. It's about building yourself as a champion, even when the world labels you as a

chandu, chomu or looks at you as a laughing stock.

Oscillating between past and present, the story takes us through Petkar's life, right from the 1950's to 2018, when he was finally awarded the Padma Shri. We discover that the man who nurtured an Olympic dream since his childhood has a strange love-hate relationship with fate and God. He survived when he didn't hope he would and was left devastated when he least expected. However, never defeated.

The film has *Forrest Gump's* free-flowing nature and *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag's* essence to it, but unlike the two, this one feels a tad rebellious without a pertinent cause or conflict. Being ridiculed unleashes Petkar's aggression, giving an outlet to his talent and persistence. He dared to question the naysayers, 'Hasta kayko hai', which ignited the fire within him. Medal se izzat milti hai, he tells himself. Most sports biopics follow athletes who pursue a certain sport and excel in it against the odds. Kabir Khan's film feels different because it's about a man who desperately wants an Olympic medal, for which he tries everything — wrestling, boxing and swimming. Sounds



preposterous and ridiculously ambitious but that's the fun of it. Petkar makes you wonder if being delusional to a certain level helps. Only then can you see yourself as a champion, even when no one thinks you are in the reckoning.

In many ways, Kartik Aaryan's ambition to be taken seriously as an actor, coincides with the inner turmoil of the character he essays here. You almost hear him say, "Ae hasta kayko hai? Actor hai main actor." Kabir Khan's choice of leading man is a clever casting move. Kartik shows considerable restraint, spontaneity and brings a certain ease to his character that we haven't seen from

him before. He is impressively uninhibited in 'Satyanaas', a well-shot train song. Along with undergoing physical transformation, he does justice to the character's emotional arc. Bhuvan Arora deserves a special mention as Petkar's likeable sidekick. Rajpal Yadav and Vijay Raaz add a lot of depth to the story with their presence. For a sports drama, the music could have been far more inspiring though. Kabir Khan loves to make feel-good cinema and *CC (Chandu Champion)* falls into that category, too. Be it Salman Khan in *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, Ranveer Singh as Kapil Dev in *83* or Kartik as Petkar, he extracts the best out of his mainstream actors. He loves to infuse humour, sports and earnestness into his stories, but he can dig deeper than that. There's more focus on what happened to a person than their inner conflict. Things get monotonous and tiring beyond a point, making the climax less effective. *CC* is engaging and heartwarming even, but it seems to follow a template. Staying the course is fine, but breaking the rules is not a bad idea.

— Renuka Vyavahare

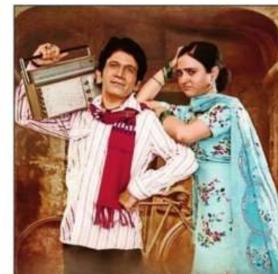
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**Manihar (Drama) ★★★★★**  
Cast: Badrul Islam, Roshni Rastogi, Pankaj Berry, CP Bhatt  
Direction: Sanjeev Kumar Rajput  
Duration: 2 hours  
Language: Hindi (UA)

Ballu, a bangle seller from a small village in Kannauj, Uttar Pradesh, is eagerly preparing for his wedding. However, life takes an unexpected turn when he begins to experience problems with his eyesight.

As the plot of *Manihar* unfolds in the first fifteen minutes, it gives the impression of being an adaptation of a short story by a vernacular literary giant. However, as the film progresses, all the positive expectations established early on begin to dissipate. Despite its simple yet intriguing premise, the film ultimately falls flat by the end of its runtime. The initial promise quickly fades, leaving viewers disappointed with its execution.

*Manihar* is a simple film that tells the story of Ballu (Badrul Islam), a poor bangle seller from a small village in Uttar Pradesh. Encouraged by matchmaker Sadi Ram (CP Bhatt),



Ballu receives a proposal to marry Savitri (Roshni Rastogi). When the two families meet, they instantly like each other and quickly begin discussing wedding plans. However, Ballu's life takes a turn when he develops eyesight issues, rendering him unable to see at night. On the wedding day, Savitri's wrestler brother, Balwant (Sunny Thakur), discovers Ballu's condition and decides to cancel the wedding. Furious, Ballu vows to take revenge by learning wrestling and defeating Balwant at his own game.

This comedy-drama could have been a much better film with more

attention to the screenplay. The tension-filled moments are handled in an amateurish manner, making one wonder why the writer could not come up with a better version. Even the comedic scenes fail to elicit any laughter. The scene where a character decides to ruin the wedding solely because the barber didn't do his job seems trivial and laughable. The film does a commendable job of capturing the rustic milieu, which looks genuine and authentic. *Manihar* is an extremely simple film with a linear plot, virtually no action sequences, and boats as the mode of commute, enhancing its rural appeal. However, despite its appealing exterior, the film lacks depth and soul.

Badrul Islam as Ballu and Roshni Rastogi as Savitri deliver average performances. Among the supporting cast, only CP Bhatt, as Sadi Ram, manages to engage the viewers. Sanjeev Rajput's direction fails to make an impact. *Manihar* has the potential to excite viewers with its simplistic plot, but it appears the makers were unwilling to invest the necessary effort. Ultimately, it's a soulless film that squanders a promising premise.

— Abhishek Srivastava

**Love Li ★★★★★**  
Cast: Vasishta N Simha, Stefy Patel  
Language: Kannada  
Duration: 170 Minutes (UA)  
Direction: Chethan Keshav



A gangster, Jai, who has realised his mistakes, tries to lead a new life, but must overcome many obstacles in his path.

**Movie Review: Love Li**  
features Jai (Vasishta N Simha), an orphan and reformed gangster, who grew up without friends. He first meets Janani (Stefy Patel), when he visits a hospital to donate blood. Impressed by Jai's virtues, Janani proposes to him.

Initially, Jai is reluctant to accept her love due to his criminal background. Eventually, he accepts Janani's love, and they decide to marry. However, Janani's parents strongly oppose the proposal and decide to cut ties with her. The couple relocate to Mangaluru, where Jai finds a job in a private firm, and they lead a happy life. They are soon blessed with a baby girl. Just when everything seems perfect, tragedy strikes as Janani contracts a deadly disease, shocking Jai and adding a twist to the tale in the second half. The couple travels to London for her treatment and from here on, the plot thickens.

Love Li has a familiar story, filled with love, sentiment, and action, but falters in execution. The narration fails to lift the formulaic plot, which is marred by a shallow storyline, lacking depth. The film predominantly revolves around Jai and Janani's life, making it predictable and tests the audience's patience. However, Vasishta's performance and character arc hold the story together. Newcomer Stefy Patel does a decent job, and the duo's on-screen chemistry works to some extent.

— Vinay Lokesh



Nobin Paul's background follows the template, but Vasuki Vaibhav's song Maathu Sothu stands out. Parameshwara Gundkal has created a city, which feels like a character in itself in the film. A 'heist in hulivahusa' pre-climax balances the roller-coaster of a drama that Kotee is. That said, constant 'slapfest' throughout the film is a bit of an overkill!

But the movie is more than just a melodrama, and has multiple moments that stay with you. The runtime of almost three hours is a bit long, but the tug-of-war between Dhananjaya and Ramesh Indira makes this slow-burner, a perfect family entertainer to watch in theatres this weekend.

— Sridevi S

**Kotee ★★★★★**  
Cast: Dhananjaya, Moksha Kushal, Tara, Rangayana Raghu  
Language: Kannada  
Duration: 169 Minutes (UA)  
Direction: Param

An honest, lower middle-class man, Kotee (Dhananjaya), is pushed to his limits by a local thug, Dinoo Savkaar (Ramesh Indira). Can Savkaar break him?

Kotee (Dhananjaya), is an honest, lower middle-class man. His family consists of mother (Tara Anooradha), sister Mahati (Thanuja Venkatesh), and brother Nachchi (Pruthvi Shamanur). Kotee lives in a fictional Janata City, run by a thug, Dinoo Savkaar (Ramesh Indira). To eke out a living, he runs a small packers and movers business, and doubles as a cab driver. Despite having to work multiple shifts, Kotee is against taking loans. But, unforeseen circumstances, some created by Savkaar himself, force Kotee to take multiple loans, worth Rs 31 lakh, from the former. Saavkaar, who happens to have chanced upon Kotee's shooting skills, wants him to take up a crooked project, which goes against the latter's belief system. When push comes to shove, will Kotee change his belief

system or will he fight back?

Dhananjaya is in his element. He is flawless as Kotee. Be it playing a responsible son or enduring emotional labour from Savkaar, Dhananjaya aces it with his brilliant acting skills. Ramesh Indira, who was a revelation in last year's *Sapta Sagaradaache ELo*, continues to show off his fabulous performance as a conniving, scheming villain. In fact, he adds a lot of life to this film, which seems slow and dragged in certain parts. The movie has a few character details that are very heartwarming like Tara's hearing problem. Small quirks sure leave a big impact and it is evident in the handiwork of debutant director Parameshwar Gundkal, which he's picked up from his stint on the small screen. Moksha Kushal shows promise, but her character deserved more finesse. Also, it's a treat to watch Rangayana Raghu in his villain avatar, albeit in a small role. A special cameo is sure to take the audience by surprise, but it somehow misses much emotional depth.

The first half of the film establishes characters and their quirks, and it takes off well in the second half. Technically, the film's writing is up to the mark, but slow presentation and a couple of repeat sequences can get onto one's nerves.

## RATING SCALE

TRASH ★ | BELOW AVERAGE ★★ | AVERAGE ★★★ | ABOVE AVERAGE ★★★ | GOOD ★★★★★ | VERY GOOD ★★★★★ | OUTSTANDING ★★★★★ | MASTERPIECE ★★★★★

## Investment promises worth ₹4.2k cr

**Bengaluru:** The federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industries, in association with the Karnataka govt, on Sunday managed to secure Rs 4,200 crore investment promises across the five states of south India. The investment promise is a big boost to the state and the rest of south India.

Karnataka tourism minister H K Patil, who presided over the event, said Karnataka has seen a big boost in terms of domestic tourism on account of Shakthi scheme, that provides free bus service to women across the state.

## TIMES TRIBUTE

PAYING HONOUR TO THE DEPARTED SOUL

<b>SAD DEMISE</b> <b>A. G. Ramakrishnan</b> S/O A. K. Gopalakrishnan 29-03-1949 to 16-06-2024 Passed away peacefully on 16th June 2024 Last rituals on 18.06.2024, at 1pm, Our residence Pearl Icon Apartments HBR Layout, 2nd Block, Stage 1, Bangalore-45 Gita: 9845985725 Deeply Mourned by: Anusuya Ram, Mathura, Srinivas & Family	<b>SAD DEMISE</b> <b>P. Balaram Menon</b> Passed away peacefully on 16.06.2024 Last rites will be conducted at Harishchandra Ghat Srirampuram at 10am today. Loving husband, devoted father and respected professional is fondly remembered by Gita, Ajit, Arathi, Jack, Laurent, Veer, Maya, Krishna, Venu, Mani, Rukmini, Rahul & Gayatri	<b>FIRST YEAR DEATH ANNIVERSARY</b> <b>Mrs. MARY JULIANA ALFRED</b> (18.06.1935 - 17.06.2023) "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." Revelation 14:13 As time unfolds another year, memories keep you ever so near. Silent thoughts of time together. Hold memories that last forever. We shall congregate to honour and celebrate the life of MARY JULIANA ALFRED On 17th JUNE 2024 Fondly remembered by: Sekhar Alfred, Mural Sekhar, Rita John, Stella Pandhare & Other Family Members.
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## Poll officer junks EVM-tampering report as row erupts over Mumbai NW result

**Says Need No OTP To Unlock Device; Cops Send Phone For Forensic Test**

**Prafulla Marpakwar & Nitasha Natu | TNN**

**Mumbai:** With allegations of unauthorised EVM access intensifying, the Mumbai Suburban Returning Officer (RO) issued a rebuttal on Sunday and notices to publications that carried reports on the use of a phone by a polling agent in the Mumbai North-West Lok Sabha constituency. The RO, Vandana Suryavanshi, clarified that EVMs are standalone devices without wired connectivity and need no OTPs on mobile phones for unlocking.

On June 13, Vanrai Police in Goregaon had booked Mangesh Pandilkar, a representative of an independent candidate and a relative of Shiv Sena MP Ravindra Waikar, for unauthorised use of a phone in a counting centre at NESCO ground. Police said some media outlets had incorrectly reported that the phone was used to access OTPs for opening EVMs. The phone, belonging to the operator of the EC portal, was sent for forensic analysis.

Refuting allegations of EVM rigging, Suryavanshi said on Sunday, "There is no OTP (one time password) on mobile phones for unlocking EVM as it is non-programma-

ble, and it has no wireless communication capabilities. It is a complete lie being spread which is being used by some politicians to create a false narrative. EVMs are standalone devices without any wired or wireless connectivity with units outside EVM system. Advance 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."

Suryavanshi also pointed out that the counting of electronically transmitted postal ballot systems (ETPBS) takes place in physical form (paper ballots) and not electronically, as suggested by the false narratives. She mentioned that a criminal case has been filed in response to the spread of misinformation.

In his statement to Vanrai Police, Pandilkar, a representative of Lata Shinde, said he had borrowed the phone from Dinesh Gurav, the operator of EC's Encore portal, claiming he needed to call his driver. He claimed the phone was seized by police before he could make the call following a complaint by candidate Surinder Arora of Bharat Jan Aadhar



Waikar (extreme right) during the poll campaign in May. The returning officer sent notices to publications that carried reports on use of a phone by a polling agent in the Mumbai North-West LS constituency

Party. Gurav was the one authorised to use the device for receiving OTPs for the Encore portal. A forensic examination of the phone will confirm if Pandilkar's claims are true or whether he used the phone and for what purpose.

A senior bureaucrat explained that Encore portal operators like Gurav are responsible for entering polling data at the end of each round on the portal. The operator receives an OTP on a registered cellphone, which they enter into the system to gain legal authorisation to enter the data.

The seized phone has been sent for forensic analysis to determine its purpose, calls made, and texts received. The bureaucrat said the phone may have received many OTPs whenever Gurav needed to up-

load data from his computer. The RO slapped a show-cause notice against the newspaper that had published the report containing "false, baseless and fictitious" allegations regarding "unlocking" of EVM with an OTP. The notice asked the editor of the newspaper to reply within 24 hours why criminal proceedings should not be initiated under IPC section 499 and 505 against them for "spreading rumours, maligning Indian voters and the electoral system".

As the controversy led to political reactions, chief minister Eknath Shinde dismissed the allegations as baseless and attributed them to frustration over Shiv Sena's (Shinde faction) electoral success.

(With inputs by Chittaranjan Tembhekar & Bharti Jain)

**Rahul: EVMs are 'black box' here, no permission for scrutiny**

**New Delhi:** Opposition politicians Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav raised questions about "lack of scrutiny" of EVMs, warning that "absence of accountability" was threatening to turn democracy into a sham and that voting be held with paper ballots. The remark came after a discussion thread on X in which Elon Musk called for a ban on voting machines for fear of hacking.

Rahul posted a news report which alleged a relative of the narrow winner by 48 votes in Mumbai belonging to the BJP alliance had accessed EVMs through a mobile phone.

He said, "EVMs in India are a 'black box', and nobody is allowed to scrutinise 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."

"When fears of EVM tampering are being expressed in many elections of the world and... experts are openly writing about danger of tampering, BJP should clarify the reason behind insistence on using EVM," said Akhilesh. TNN

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## Lessons on riots can create 'violent citizens': NCERT chief Defends Book Changes, Denies Saffronisation Charge

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Rejecting accusations of saffronisation of the school curriculum, NCERT director Dinesh Prasad Saklani clarified that references to the Gujarat riots and Babri Masjid demolition were modified in school textbooks to avoid creating "violent and depressed citizens".

Textbooks have seen several crucial topics dropped or altered. The assertion that ancient DNA from the Rakhigarhi site rules out Aryan immigration, leading to calls for more research into whether the Harappans and Vedic people were the same, has been removed. Also omitted is a detailed table of Mughal emperors' achievements. Other deletions include BJP's 'rath yatra' from Somnath to Ayodhya, the role of kar sevaks, communal violence after the Babri Masjid demolition, President's rule in BJP-governed states, and BJP's "regret over the happenings in Ayodhya".

The New Class 11 political science textbook claims political parties prioritise minority groups' interests for "vote



Changes in textbooks were part of the annual revision process and should not stoke a controversy, NCERT director Saklani said

bank politics", leading to "minority appeasement", a shift from the 2023-24 session's focus on the lack of evidence for this idea. Additional changes include dropping references to the Babri Masjid demolition, the killing of Muslims in the Gujarat riots, Hindutva, and tweaking the reference to Manipur's merger with India.

During an interaction with PTI, Saklani emphasised that these tweaks were part of the annual revision process and should not stoke a controversy. "Why should we teach about riots in school textbooks? We want to create positive citizens. Should we educate our students in a way that makes them

offensive or creates societal hatred? Teaching about riots at a young age is unnecessary; they can learn about these events as they grow up," he said and pointed out that there was no similar outcry over the absence of the 1984 riots in textbooks.

Saklani's comments come as new textbooks, featuring several deletions and changes, were released. The revised Class 12 political science textbook now refers to Babri Masjid as a "three-domed structure" and focuses more on SC judgment that allowed the construction of a Ram temple at the disputed site, rather than the details of the Ayodhya issue. This judgment led to reconstruction of the temple with the consecration performed by the PM on Jan 22.

Responding to allegations of curriculum saffronisation, Saklani said, "If something has become irrelevant, it must be changed... We teach history based on facts, not to create conflicts. Talking about the Indian knowledge system or the metallurgical advancements demonstrated by the iron pillar in Mehrauli is not saffronisation. These are facts."

## Man arrested in Raj over video threatening to kill Salman

**Mumbai:** Mumbai crime branch has arrested a 25-year-old man from Rajasthan on charges of criminal intimidation for allegedly uploading a video threatening to eliminate actor Salman Khan, reports **Ahmed Ali**.

The arrested accused, Banwarilal Laturial Gurjar from Bundi, was brought to Mumbai on Sunday and produced before a local court which remanded him in police custody till June 18.

The south cyber police registered an FIR on June 12 after Gurjar allegedly uploaded the video on his YouTube channel in which he says: "Goldy (Brar), Rohit (Godara), Nitin and Vivek (they are all associated with jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi) and many more brothers are with us... Despite being told to apologise for the blackbuck killing, he hasn't..."

Police said the video was shot on a highway. They traced the IP address to Rajasthan. Police said Gurjar had used a fictitious name, 'Are choddo year', and email address, but they managed to track him down from his mobile number.

## India, US in 'advanced talks' for co-production of combat vehicles

Rajat.Pandit@timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** India and the US are now in an "advanced stage of talks" for the proposed joint manufacture of the latest generation of Stryker armoured infantry combat vehicles (ICVs) as part of their defence-industrial cooperation roadmap.

With the US also recently offering to demonstrate the mobility and firepower of the eight-wheeled Stryker in high-altitude areas in India, the defence ministry is examining a three-phase plan for the proposed project, sources told **TOI**. Under the plan, there will be a limited off-the-shelf purchase of the Strykers under the foreign military sales (FMS) programme of the US, which will be followed by joint production in India, and finally there will be co-development of its futuristic versions, sources said.

All this, however, is contingent on the Stryker meeting the operational requirements of the Army's mechanised infantry battalions as well as a high level of indigenous origin and transfer of critical technologies to the Indi-



If the project is finalised, the Strykers will have to be customised and technologically configured for Indian terrain, including operations in high-altitude areas like eastern Ladakh and Sikkim, a source said

an co-production partner, which could be a defence PSU or a private firm.

"If the Stryker project is finalised, the existing Indian capabilities in ICVs will be taken into account. Strykers will have to be customised and technologically configured for Indian terrain, including operations in high-altitude areas like eastern Ladakh and Sikkim," a source said.

With the Army having a huge requirement of futuristic wheeled and tracked ICVs to progressively replace its existing fleet of over 2,000 Russian-origin BMP-II vehicles in the years ahead, MoD is also

pursuing indigenous projects. "Army also needs ICVs capable of amphibious operations in large numbers as well. Strykers are not amphibious," another source said.

The US is hard-selling the Strykers. Ahead of US national security advisor Jake Sullivan's visit to India, secretary of defence Lloyd J Austin cited the "co-production of armoured vehicles with India" as yet another indicator of the upward trajectory in the bilateral defence partnership during the Shangri-La dialogue in Singapore two weeks ago. The US, incidentally, has bagged lucrative Indian defence deals

worth around \$22 billion since 2007. While the Stryker project is still in the discussion stage, India and the US are conducting the final techno-commercial negotiations for inking two mega deals within this financial year.

The first is acquisition of 31 armed MQ-9B high-altitude, long endurance drones and associated equipment for \$3.9 billion, as reported by **TOI** earlier. The second is the co-production of GE-F414 jet engines by General Electric and Hindustan Aeronautics for the Tejas Mark-II fighters in India, with 80% transfer of tech for around \$1 billion.

## Pak spies pose as Indian girls to honeytrap desi officials

Shishir.Arya@timesgroup.com

**Nagpur:** A beehive of Pakistani spies posing as young Indian women with alluring names honeytraps officials in Indian defence establishments, reveal court papers about Nishant Agrawal, a former scientist of Brahmos Aerospace Private Limited's (BAPL) Nagpur unit recently convicted of leaking military secrets.

Many could fall for the Indian-sounding Sejal Kapoor, Arohi Alok, Aditi Aaron, Aditi Agrawal, Anamika Sharma, Divya Chandan Roy, Neha Sharma and Pooja Ranjan. Agrawal did so, too, six years ago.

Uttar Pradesh's Anti-Terrorist Squad (UP-ATS) arrested Agrawal in Oct 2018. The UP native was sentenced to life by a court in Nagpur earlier this month.

Pankaj Awasthi, UP-ATS investigation officer, said in his deposition during Agrawal's trial that one 'Sejal' had set up a Facebook account from Pakistan. Using this, she chatted with Pakistani operatives and her Indian targets.

The chats showed she was part of a group that shared

**Nishant Agrawal, a former scientist of Brahmos Aerospace Private Limited's Nagpur unit, was recently convicted of leaking military secrets**

data and tips on deceiving Indian defence staffers. Awasthi added that one of the chats showed the group was trying to launch a cyberattack.

According to Awasthi, Sejal introduced herself to Agrawal as a recruiter from a UK-based company, and as a student from Manchester to a former IAF staffer. For Agrawal, Sejal was a recruiter in UK's Hays Aviation. Agrawal's profile had mentioned that he was a senior systems engineer at Brahmos Aerospace. He was also Facebook friends with two other individuals, Neha Sharma and Pooja Ranjan, whose accounts too were active from Pakistan, testified Awasthi.

Agrawal had chatted with Sejal on Linked in too, where she showed interest in hiring him. Awasthi told the court that on Sejal's directions, Agrawal had clicked on links

sent by her and installed three apps — Qwhisper, Chat to Hire and X-trust — on his personal laptop in 2017.

The apps were malware that stole data from Agrawal's laptop, which contained classified information. Sejal and other spies tried to contact other defence officials too, Awasthi told the court.

In the case of the Lucknow-based former IAF officer, the sleuths came across romantic chats between him and Sejal. However, the officer was not included as an accused.

Sejal had sent the data-stealing malware Qwhisper to this officer, too. However, no secret records or evidence of crime was found in his personal laptop. The officer admitted chatting with Sejal. In cross-examination by defence (Agrawal's) lawyer Chaitanya Barve, Awasthi said he had not sent IAF man's laptop for forensic examination. Investigations revealed that the officer had formatted the device.

Investigations revealed that Sejal was in touch with another former IAF staffer in Amritsar and had shared his mobile number with her.

## 'Musk's view may be applicable in US'

Continued from page 1

Replying to a post on X by Elon Musk advocating the elimination of EVMs, former Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar said that view may be applicable in the US and other places where regular computing platforms are used to build "internet-connected voting machines" but not in India.

"This is a huge sweeping generalisation statement that implies no one can build secure digital hardware. Wrong. 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," he posted.

He said EVMs could be "architected and built correctly", as India has done, and even offered to run a tutorial for Musk on the subject. Replying to this, Musk said, "Anything can be hacked."

Chandrasekhar agreed that "anything is possible", at least in theory. "With quantum compute, I can de-

crypt any level of encryption. With lab-level tech and plenty of resources, I can hack any digital hardware/system including the flight controls of a glass cockpit of a jet, etc. But that's a different type of conversation from EVMs being secure and reliable," he said. The Supreme Court on April 26 upheld the EVM system of polling and refused a plea to revive paper ballots, saying "blind distrust" of an institution or a system "bred unwarranted scepticism and impeded progress".

BJP's IT department head Amit Malviya said Musk or whoever else thinks they can hack EVMs should approach the Election Commission and take a shot at it. He also took a swipe at Rahul Gandhi after the Congress MP raised Musk's comments to flag "concerns" about the electoral process. "Why is Rahul Gandhi complaining about Indian democracy to Musk? What can Musk do? Or is crying before the world and demeaning India part of Congress's DNA? We just had an election and people of India rejected this dynast for a third time in row. But he still does not get it," Malviya said.

## Bihar ASI hit by tractor ferrying illegally mined sand, badly hurt

**Nawada:** An assistant sub-inspector (ASI) suffered grave injuries after being hit by a tractor ferrying illegally mined sand in Bihar's Nawada on Sunday, reports **SB Sinha**. The attack on ASI Sanjit Kumar came exactly a week after a constable was crushed to death by a tractor of the sand mafia in the state's Aurangabad district.

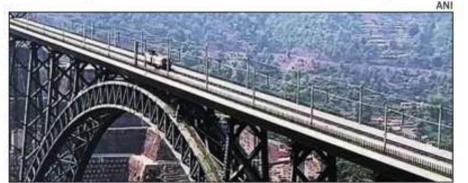
In Nawada, Kumar tried to stop the vehicle in Laund village but the driver knocked him down and fled. The vehicle was plying despite a prohibition on sand mining in the area from June 15 to Oct 15.

According to SHO Ranjit Ram, Kumar had gone to the area after a tip-off about sand-laden vehicles. "The ASI spotted the tractor and tried to stop it but the driver deliberately ran the vehicle over him," the SHO said. The ASI was rushed to a hospital in nearby Pawapuri.

On June 9, constable Deepak Kumar, 29, was out on a routine check for illegal sand miners in Aurangabad when he was fatally hit by a tractor. The tractor driver, Ramta Singh, and its owner, Dharmendra Yadav, were arrested hours later.

Sand mining is a significant issue in Bihar, with several attacks on cops by the mafia. The practice is rampant in many parts, harming environment and denying the govt revenues.

## 1st trial train reaches Reasi in J&K via highest rail bridge



With this rail link, travel between the Valley and the rest of the country is set to become a reality in the next 4-5 months, railway officials said

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Indian Railways operated the first trial train from Sangaldan to Reasi, including on the world's highest rail bridge built on Chenab river in Jammu and Kashmir, on Sunday. With this rail link, travel between the Valley and the rest of the country is set to become a reality in the next 4-5 months, officials said.

Reasi was recently in the news because of a terror attack that claimed nine lives. The railways also achieved this feat days before PM Modi visits Srinagar to celebrate International Yoga Day.

In a social media post, railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said, "First trial train has successfully run from Sangaldan to Reasi, including crossing the Chenab bridge. All construction work for the USBRL are nearly finished, with only

tunnel No. 1 remaining partially incomplete."

Railway officials said the Commissioner of Railways Safety is scheduled to conduct a two-day inspection later this month on the Sangaldan-Reasi section.

The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project spans 272 km and 209 km has been commissioned in phases. Currently, trains operate from Kanyakumari to Katra and the railway link from Baramulla to Sangaldan in the Kashmir Valley is operational. The USBRL project, including the 48.1-km Banihal-Sangaldan section, was inaugurated by Modi on Feb 20.

The project is significant because of the Chenab bridge, which has been constructed 359 metres (around 109 feet) above the Chenab river and it is 35 metres taller than the Eiffel Tower.

## Teen stabbed to death at birthday party in MP's Indore

**Indore:** A 19-year-old boy was allegedly stabbed to death after a minor dispute during a birthday party in Madhya Pradesh's Indore late Saturday, police said. The deceased was identified as Shiva Jarele. DCP Rishikesh Meena said his family members told police that

Shiva and his friends were celebrating the birthday of a friend. There was a dispute over one of their female friends, following which the accused identified as Kunal stabbed Shiva. Shiva called up his parents, who took him to a nearby hospital where he succumbed. TNN

## Doctors, students and activists team up to lead fight against NEET irregularities

Himanshi Dhawan & Shruti Sonal | TNN

Three days before the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-UG) on May 5, some students received pop-up alerts on Telegram: "Leak paper available, price Rs 5000, message to buy @HQPaper".

The Supreme Court has now issued notices to the Centre and NTA on these alleged leaks after PILs piled up. But RTI activist Vivek Pandey says he had posted about these 'leak paper' offers on social media platforms even before the test. "But it fell on deaf ears," he says. On May 5, the day of the exam, Pandey felt a sense of déjà vu.

But rather than just being happy with his I-told-you-so moment, Pandey has been spending most of his time filing complaints with the Union health ministry on the problems with NEET-UG, seeking updates from Bihar



**QUESTION MARK OVER FUTURE:** Besides hitting the streets to protest, stressed students are seeking advice and aid for filing complaints and petitions

up in arms against the NTA.

Like Pandey, Kota-based educator and students rights' advocate Dr Amit Gupta regularly posts videos sharing the plight of aspirants, amassing nearly 30,000 followers on X (formerly Twitter). Gupta, who completed his MBBS but decided to become a teacher instead, began his 'activism' in 2015 after the AIPMT paper leak. "I gathered about 2,000 students, and we decided that enough was enough. Every time the cheaters just get away," Gupta says. The group held rallies and dharnas, demanding a re-exam. However, they soon realised that taking the judicial route would bear more fruit. Eventually, the SC ruled in their favour.

Since then, 46-year-old Gupta has been fighting for other reforms too. This year, after the NEET results row, Gupta began helping students out to file petitions. Years of experience in fighting legal battles have come in handy as his lawyers help students draft petitions and crowd-source legal fees. "If students take a single exam on one date with a single question paper in offline mode, there are bound to be leaks. Why can't we adopt the JEE model where multiple question papers are prepared and exams are held on different dates online?" he asks.

Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan has denied that there have been any leaks calling the allegations motivated. But the turmoil among students and parents has been hard to contain.

Students Islamic Organisation of India too has been vocal in its protests on the exam. The group has about 10 lakh students in their network who

look to them for career guidance or funds as many belong to economically deprived backgrounds. SIO national secretary Abdullah Faiz says they received 300 complaints from students related to NEET discrepancies. "Then we saw reports about grace marks being given without a proper explanation, paper leaks in Bihar and Gujarat and six toppers from just one centre in Haryana. We decided to file a petition as we no longer trust the agency conducting the exam." SIO also conducted a survey among its students and found 64% had encountered problems like delayed start or early finish of the exam while 48% found discrepancies or errors in their scorecard. The most troubling thing, Faiz says, is that controversies surrounding the exam had impacted the mental health of over 70% of students.

Desperate students have hit social media, organised street protests and petitioned influencers and politicians. The recent controversies also prompted Dr Dhruv Chauhan, national council coordinator with the Indian Medical Association Junior Doctors Network, to request a re-examination. "Students have approached me saying they feel helpless. They and their families spend years planning and preparing for a medical career. Their faith has been shaken," Chauhan says.

Among the other petitioners are coaching institutes such as PhysicsWallah's Alakh Pandey and students like 19-year-old Andhra student Jaripiti Karthek who took the exam for the third time. Even with the result of 506, he finds himself at a rank of 200520 which makes state medical colleges out of reach. "So many of the students who sat for the exam are struggling. NTA should change its approach—divide the courses and branches, and conduct different exams for each," he says.

### DHRUV CHAUHAN DOC-ACTIVIST

Students approached me saying they feel helpless. Their families spend years planning and preparing for a medical career. Their faith has been shaken



police about investigations into a leak from the state while also petitioning for action against the NTA in the SC. He had earlier filed an RTI seeking clarifications on the grace marks awarded by NTA which later withdrew them.

Discrepancies in exams are personal for him. He attempted to pass the pre-medical test (PMT) in Madhya Pradesh for nearly four years but always ended up in failure. It was only when the Vyapam scam—where students cheated on a large scale to pass the state medical exam in connivance with senior officials, teachers and many middlemen—hit headlines that he realised that he was trying to win a fixed match. Pandey eventually cracked NEET but decided to work towards greater transparency in the medical education system, filing around 1,000 RTIs since 2016. "Though no one paid heed to his warnings in May, they are paying attention now."

"When the 'leak' stories came out, we had a small group of 50 students who were disturbed by the reports. Now our support group has expanded to 4,500," Pandey says, adding that there are lakhs who are now



**HELPING HAND:** Amit Gupta gives legal aid to students

## Zero FIR against Ananda nephew over rape & conspiracy charge

### Kol Police Transfer The Case To Delhi

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Kolkata:** The Kolkata Police have lodged a zero FIR against Bengal governor C V Ananda Bose's nephew linked to rape and criminal conspiracy allegations levelled against both by an Odissi dancer, saying she was assaulted in a Delhi hotel in Jan 2023.

The case, based on a complaint filed at Kolkata's Hare Street police station in Oct last year, has been transferred to the Delhi Police on orders of the chief metropolitan magistrate's court.

Police declined to comment on the complaint, registered under sections 376 (rape) and 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), beyond saying that the chief metropolitan magistrate's court ordered that a zero FIR be filed and the case transferred to Delhi



The complainant alleges that she had approached the governor to help her resolve some issues she had been facing regarding overseas travel for dance performances

since the alleged assault took place there.

Raj Bhavan is still to respond to the development.

The complainant alleges that she had approached the governor to help her resolve some issues she had been facing regarding overseas travel for dance performances. Bose, according to her, had promised assistance and had also advised her to approach Ministry of external affairs (MEA).

The Odissi dancer said she received flight tickets and a hotel booking in Delhi for Jan 5 and 6, 2023, through the gov-

ernor's nephew. Bose, who was staying at Delhi's Banga Bhavan at the time, allegedly visited her at the hotel and abused her.

She hasn't explained why she waited 10 months to lodge a complaint, officials said.

On May 2 this year, a Raj Bhavan staffer had also complained that the governor molested her twice (on April 24 and May 2). In this case, three Raj Bhavan employees, implicated in a different FIR, got bail from a lower court. They have since moved Calcutta HC to quash the criminal charges against them.

Bose cited the apex court's interpretation of Article 361 in the Rameshwar Prasad case to point out that the governor enjoys complete immunity, even for their personal acts, while in office. In a statement, he said, "It logically follows that police cannot investigate/inquire into the matter; in any manner, whatsoever. Thus, in view of the immunity enjoyed by the governor, police are constitutionally barred from carrying out any kind of preliminary inquiry or registering an FIR."

### 'Won't see CM till I meet victims of poll violence'

**Kolkata:** The rift between Bengal governor CV Ananda Bose and Trinamool Congress got escalated on Sunday with Raj Bhavan shutting the door on CM Mamata Banerjee until Bose meets all the people affected by post-poll violence in state. This decision follows a Calcutta HC order on Saturday permitting alleged victims and BJP MLA Suvendu Adhikari to meet the governor.

Bose expressed his dismay over the treatment of violence-affected people. "All victims will be allowed to meet me at Raj Bhavan. The CM will not be allowed to meet me till then. Police working at Raj Bhavan will be transferred (if they disallow affected people from meeting him)," he said.

This escalated a month-long tension since Banerjee's public declaration on May 11, vowing never to visit Raj Bhavan again, accusing the governor of misconduct. TNN

## No culprit will be spared, they'll get the harshest punishment: Pradhan

Continued from page 1

Some irregularities have come to light in two places. I assure students and parents that Govt has taken this seriously. Even if big officials of NTA are found guilty, they will not be spared. A lot of improvement is required in NTA. The govt is concerned about this, no culprit will be spared, they will get the harshest punishment," Pradhan said.

NTA and the education ministry is looking into allegations of paper leak at some centres in Patna, which has been flagged by local police although govt officials maintained that the number of candidates who cleared the exams from these centres was not significant. Usually, as a matter of abundant precaution, there are two sets of papers, with the final one to be used decided on the morning of the exam.

The assurance from the minister came amid attacks from the opposition over NEET-UG, where 23 lakh candidates appeared on May 5. The results were declared on June 4, and NTA has come under severe criticism, amid allegations of irregularities, inflated marks and

paper leak in the medical entrance exam.

Stating that information on alleged irregularities have emerged from some specific places, Pradhan said, "Govt is working towards its resolution and reform. Keeping the cognisance of the (Supreme) court, specific action has been initiated. Everything is being done under supervision of the court."

The minister added that the govt was committed to 100% transparency for an important exam like NEET. "The Supreme Court itself is keeping an eye on the matter. We will not let anything wrong happen and action will be taken whoever is found responsible."

Earlier on Friday, Pradhan had indicated that scrapping the entire entrance examination was unlikely as the sanctity of the process could not be judged by alleged irregularities in a handful of centres. Some states with a large presence of a powerful lobby of education institutes have been opposing NEET and officials argued that coaching centres were fanning the controversy as the syllabus was aligned with Class 12, helping more students secure high marks.

## FM to meet economists, farm bodies for pre-Budget talk

Vishwa.Mohan@timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** As part of her pre-budget consultations with stakeholders, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman will meet farmers' associations and agriculture economists on Friday and seek their suggestions on the policy landscape for the politically and economically crucial sector.

The full budget is expected after mid-July and may expand on the ideas presented in the Feb 1 interim budget.

where the FM stuck to the basic requirements ahead of Lok Sabha elections.

"Ideas and suggestions of stakeholders are thoroughly discussed before budget preparation. It's a standard procedure and is followed for finalising the budget for all ministries/sectors," said an official. This time, however, given complaints of farm and rural distress, the agriculture sector will be a crucial component of the budget and will also outline the Modi govt's strategy for the coming five years.

Promises made in the interim budget may get a concrete shape with more specific allocation, sources said.

In her interim budget, Sitharaman had announced that the govt will formulate a strategy to make the country self-reliant in edible oils by boosting domestic output of oilseeds, come out with a comprehensive programme to support dairy farmers, and set up five integrated aqua parks and launch a new climate resilient scheme for the blue economy 2.0 for fisheries development.

"Making India self-reliant in oilseeds such as mustard, groundnut, sesame, soybean and sunflower is expected to remain a focus area of the budget as India currently has to import a large quantity of edible oils to meet its domestic demand," the source said. During the 2022-23 marketing year (Nov-Oct), India imported nearly 165 lakh tonnes of cooking oils worth almost Rs 1.4 lakh crore.

While there have been suggestions to be more ambitious and reduce the fiscal deficit target to 5.1% of GDP, compared to 5.6% achieved during the last financial year, FM Nirmala Sitharaman is expected to balance it out with the need to undertake higher expenditure to achieve political goals while also satisfying investors and rating agencies.

## Govt keen to continue with the thrust on public spending

Continued from page 1

While the proposal for expanding PLI to more sectors has been on the table for a while, including to specialty chemicals where European companies are retreating, there have been issues around the size of investment that should be promoted by govt as large global champions are sought to be created in India.

The details of the MSME package are yet to be firm up but the idea is to empower small businesses, which were a focus of the post-Covid scheme too, so that there is enough impetus to create employment in the largest sector after agriculture. Jobs, both in terms of quantity and quality, have been a key concern during the election and many see BJP falling short of the majority mark as a fallout of the widespread discontent on this count. Similarly, there have been multiple suggestions to increase income levels for women, and increase their participation in the work-

force, including through some tax arrangements. Officials said the proposals will be discussed in detail as women are a key target group for NDA.

In the case of infrastructure, govt is keen to continue with the thrust on public spending, an issue on which industry too is fully supportive, to ensure that the economy taps into the opportunity it creates for sectors such as steel and cement besides feeding into the overall demand for jobs. Yet, it is cognisant of the overall fiscal arithmetic and does not want to take any steps that affect the fiscal path that will see Centre reduce the fiscal deficit to 4.5% of GDP by 2025-26.

While there have been suggestions to be more ambitious and reduce the fiscal deficit target to 5.1% of GDP, compared to 5.6% achieved during the last financial year, FM Nirmala Sitharaman is expected to balance it out with the need to undertake higher expenditure to achieve political goals while also satisfying investors and rating agencies.

## Tankha says he wants change of guard in MP and Chhattisgarh

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Raipur:** Congress Rajya Sabha member Vivek Tankha on Sunday said that there was a need for new leadership in the party in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. "I believe the two states need to introspect and need a new leadership," he told media in Raipur. Tankha's statement comes at a time when speculation is rife about organisational changes in both the state Congress units. "Despite many setbacks, Congress made significant gains overall, increasing its number from 54 to 99 seats in Lok Sabha," the SC lawyer pointed out.

"Whoever is in govt or opposition, the fact is that democracy is back after the recent Lok Sabha elections. There is an atmosphere of enthusiasm for Congress par-

### Cong prez Kharge to launch review in 'problem' states, may reshuffle units

Seeking to plug organisational loopholes and prepare for the future, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge will soon kickstart a review of states where the party performed badly in the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections. It will be followed by meetings with functionaries of states that will go for assembly elections in coming months. Sources said Congress will effect an organisational reshuffle in AICC and state units after the string of meetings where the role of party chiefs and managers will also be assessed. The review is likely to start later this month. The issue came up for discussion in the recent CWC meeting held to discuss the 2024 election results. The party also wants to quickly finalise the strategy for Haryana, Maharashtra and Jharkhand, which will go for assembly elections in the coming months. TNN

ty among the public across country," he said. Congress made a stunning comeback in other parts of the country but suffered humiliating defeats in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. Several senior leaders, including former MP CM Digvijaya Singh and former Chhattisgarh CM Bhubaneswar Baghel, lost the Lok Sabha polls. In Chhattisgarh, Congress managed to hold on to just one of the 11 seats, but was defeated on all 29 seats in MP.

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## CPM should introspect on poll debacle, insists min

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Senior CPM leader and former finance minister TM Thomas Isaac has said there should be a discussion on what went wrong for the party in the Lok Sabha election.

His "plainspeak" on poll results in an interview given to a YouTube channel came in the midst of assertions by some senior party leaders that LDF had not suffered that big a rout.

"CPM is a party of people and hence we have the responsibility to explain it to them on where we had gone wrong. We should listen to people on what they have to say about our party and why they voted against us," Isaac, who lost the election in Kerala's Pathanamthitta constituency, said.

"It should be found why the common people, who are CPM's vote bank, kept off the party during the Lok Sabha election," he said.

Senior leaders like CM Pinarayi Vijayan had rejected assertions that the election result was a verdict against his govt.

Some leaders sought to attribute the setback to single causes like failure in disbursing welfare pensions while many hid behind the stock reply of party going to analyse the results.

## Clashes in Kerala over bid for uniform mass in churches

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Kochi:** An attempt to implement uniform holy mass, prescribed by the Synod of the Syro Malabar Church in the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese in Kerala, led to clashes on Sunday between faithful. Police had to intervene to maintain law and order following the stand-off.

The latest circular of the Church, which warns priests that they would be ipso facto out of the Catholic communion if they conduct any mass other than the synodal form after July 3, was supposed to be read out in churches on Sunday. However, the circular was not read out in majority of the churches in the archdiocese, and in churches like the Edappally St George Church, the faithful boomed and jeered at a group which



Laity activists burn the circular in front of the Ernakulam St Mary's Basilica Church. The circular was issued by Syro Malabar Church to implement the unified mass in the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese

demanding the unification.

At Udayamperoor synodal church, some of the laity (lay people, as distinct from the clergy) members entered into an argument over the circular even as the mass progressed. Churchgoers pushed and shoved at each

other over the issue.

Meanwhile, Almayya Munnettam, the laity group coordinating the resistance to the synodal mass in the archdiocese, said that churches in the archdiocese have completely rejected the circular issued by Syro-Ma-

labar Church major archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil and Mar Bosco Puthur. The group said in a statement that it was not read out in any of the 321 churches in the Ernakulam archdiocese.

Laity activists protested by burning the circular in front of most churches. In many churches, the circular was torn and deposited in waste bins. At Udayamperoor Kochupally, the circular was thrown into the backwaters as a unique form of protest. "Today's protest demonstrates that believers in all parishes are prepared to resist any move to impose any agenda without considering the stance of the Ernakulam archdiocese or attempting to resolve the issue," said Shaiju Antony and Riju Kanjookaran of Almayya Munnettam in a statement.

## Guerrillas still strike fear in hearts of villagers

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There is a leap of faith powered by the promise of the development they have missed out on through the decades when Maoists held sway. The guerrillas still strike fear in the hearts of the villagers, but their writ is being slowly eroded.

This Lok Sabha election was the first in memory that the run-up to voting day

and beyond in south Gadchiroli's "liberated zone" went off without security forces suffering any damage.

On June 14, villagers of Midadapalli who had admittedly helped the Maoists set up "spike-hole" traps in the forests to kill or maim commandos and central forces deployed for poll duty were among those who embraced the govt's Gaonbandi scheme during a "krishi melava", or farmer congrega-

tion, at the Dhodraj police outpost.

In return for taking a vow not to collude with the Maoists, the villagers were promised benefits of all welfare schemes that form the bulwark of the scheme.

"The same tribals who were working with the Maoists two months ago came forward to pinpoint ambush locations and help sanitise the area by uprooting IEDs," a senior police officer said.

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

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Pointing to the Modi govt's resolve to uproot terrorism in all its forms through "innovative means and seamless coordination among various security agencies," Shah said the fight against terrorism in J&K was in a decisive phase. He emphasised on seamless coordination among security agencies, identifying vulnerable areas and addressing the security concerns of such areas. Reiterating the govt's zero-tolerance policy against terrorism and commitment to crack 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.

Sources in the security establishment told TOI that the revised counter-terror strategies for Jammu region shall include returning to the force deployment pattern of the 1990s, with more personnel

## Amid search for terrorists, J&K police warn against rumours, fear-mongering

Security forces have been conducting search operations across J&K's Jammu division following reports of suspicious movements of armed men. Some of these operations have resulted in wild goose chases, prompting police to reiterate their advice for public to stay vigilant but not to succumb to rumours and fear-mongering, reports Sanjay Khajuria. Panic has gripped locals following four terrorist attacks on June 9, 11, and 12 in the three frontier districts of Reasi, Kathua, and Doda. These attacks resulted in the deaths of seven pilgrims, their bus driver and conductor, and a CRPF constable. In a counteroffensive, two terrorists were killed. Police also assured the public that areas around Vaishno Devi temple in Katra are safe. Searches by police, Army, and paramilitary teams confirmed no threats, an official said.

guarding the mountain tops, resuming and intensifying counter-operations sector-wise and strengthening village defence committees (VDCs) in all districts of the Jammu region by refining their training and equipping them better to bust future terror strikes.

"The deployment levels of J&K police, central paramilitary forces as well as Army troops will be considerably en-

hanced in the Pir Panjal region," a senior officer said.

With higher force deployment expected to boost the intelligence flow and reduce response time to alerts on the presence or movement of terrorists in Jammu region — which unlike the flat-floor Valley has a difficult terrain with limited road and communication connectivity — counter-operations will be intensified in the days to come.

## 'India will remain engaged with all stakeholders'

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In a separate statement, the foreign ministry said a lasting and peaceful resolution required "sincere and practical engagement between the two parties to the conflict".

"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 facilitate a lasting and peaceful resolution to the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy," said the Indian statement, alluding to PM Narendra Modi's repeated assurances to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that India would do everything within its means to support a peaceful solution.

However, India and others who did not endorse the communicate had doubts whether the peace summit would be able to achieve its objective of "just peace" in the absence of Russia, the main party to the conflict along with Ukraine. The govt also said India will continue to remain engaged with all stakeholders as well as both the parties to contribute to all "earnest efforts" to bring about an early and abiding peace.

The communicate said the UN Charter and "respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty can and will serve as a basis for achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine". Zelenskyy had called Modi earlier this year to seek a high-level participation for the summit. He later sent his foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba to India to explain the efficacy of his 10-point peace plan.

## 'IT-related gig work now makes up 30% of the job market'

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Job portal foundit.com reports that IT-related gig work now makes up 30% of the job market, up from 12% at the end of March. Software development, data analytics and UI/UI design are the most sought-after skills in the gig space.

Manpower Group, an HR solutions firm, has observed a 10% increase in demand for IT gig work compared to the previous year. Sanju Ballurkar, president of Experis, a subsidiary of Manpower Group specializing in tech staffing, said, "Gig is becoming accepted from a customer's perspective as it is a more efficient way for non-tech companies to get tech work done without investing in a full-fledged IT team."

Pharma companies, oil and gas firms, and tech firms are the primary users of gig workers for accelerating their tech roadmaps. Troogue.ai, a gig working platform, said 85% of the projects on their platform are outsourced by GCCs seeking gig workers or contractors. As companies aim to reduce costs, more opportunities for gig work are expected to emerge.

Gig work is primarily available for those with specialized skills in cloud, data, and cybersecurity, where firms require expertise to work on hybrid cloud strategies bound by data governance and compliance frameworks. Dinesh Chandrasekar, chief strategy officer at digital platform Centific, said, "Work has moved from data labelling, which is to identify raw data, to prompt engineering which is working on the data to make AI systems more efficient."

Non-tech firms are particularly interested in tal-



INCREASE IN DEMAND

ent with industry expertise, and gig workers are ensuring sector expertise when enrolling on platforms. Some high-paying projects happen in spurts, an exception rather than the norm, which typically require gig technologists to work for 15-20 days on a project, said Chandrasekar. Companies require project managers to help build project roadmaps, with this segment earning up to \$50 per hour.

The Nasscom Aon report revealed that over 40% of firms prefer the fixed-fee model based on proven capability in areas of expertise, qualifications, and years of experience, which are the top factors determining compensation for gig workers. Over 80% of organizations measure the performance of gig workers, with approximately one-third using internal tools such as TalentDroid Platform, Zoho People, Jobsonefactor.com, SAP SuccessFactors, Darwinbox, CSS On Demand Platform, or other internal tools.

Quest Corp, which acquired the gigworking platform Taskmo, has observed an increase in project tenure for gig workers. Its deputy CEO, Kapil Joshi, said, "Before Covid, the average tenure of freelance projects was 9 months. Now, firms are giving out projects that extend to over a year, which means clients are trusting freelance coders for bigger projects."

## Birla: Relocation part of landscaping exercise

Continued from page 1

BJP's preference for continuity in key appointments, especially for the Cabinet Committee on Security Ministries of defence, home, finance and external affairs, has also reinforced the estimate in certain quarters about the outgoing speaker being continued.

An agriculturist and grassroots worker, Birla was re-elected from Kota-Bundi LS constituency, becoming the first speaker in 20 years to win his second straight election. Prior to this, he was a member of the Rajasthan assembly, representing the Kota South constituency from 2003 to 2014.

Birla's first term saw him developing equations across the spectrum, especially because of his declared stance of preferring newcomers, the 'back-benchers' who always chafed at the chair's "out of turn" indulgence of veterans. He also encouraged the 'back-benchers' to participate in proceedings, motivating them to overcome the fright of the big stage, although the effort did not succeed with Sunny Deol, the actor who was elected from Gurdaspur on a BJP ticket in 2019.

On Sunday, Birla justified the move to relocate the statues of freedom fighters and national icons spread across the Parliament premises to a new enclosure, Prerna Sthal. He said the relocation was part of the landscaping and beautification exercise for which all stakeholders were consulted.

"I have been discussing these issues with different stakeholders. People were of the view that having these statues at one place will help disseminate information about their lives and achievements in a better way," Birla said.

**KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD**  
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)  
# 49, (East Wing, 4th & 5th Floor, Khanija Bhavan,  
Race Course Road Bengaluru - 560 001. Phone No. 080-22265383  
website : www.kiadb.in, e-Mail: cdoce1@kiadb.in

No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-03/179/2024-25 Date: 15.06.2024

**SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

Item Rate Tender under two cover bid system is invited for the work mentioned below as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Contractors who have got adequate financial resources, state of the art technology, suitable construction equipments, technical man power & sufficient past experience for the following work :

**Name of the work:** Construction of additional 4th, 5th & Terrace Floors with completion of balance works for G+3 Floors for KIADB Multistoried Office Building, Gandhinagar, Bengaluru. (2nd Call)

The last date and time of receipt of tender is : **03.07.2024 upto 4.30 pm.**

No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-04/178/2024-25 Date: 15.06.2024

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

Turnkey Tender under two cover bid system is invited for the work mentioned below as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Contractors who have got adequate financial resources, state of the art technology, suitable construction equipments, technical man power & sufficient past experience for the following work :

**Name of the work:** Establishment, Construction and Commissioning of 600 KLD Common Effluent Treatment Plant with ZLD facilities on Turnkey Basis including operation and maintenance of entire system for 10 years at Baikampadi Industrial Area, Dakshina Kannada District.

The last date and time of receipt of tender is : **18.07.2024 upto 4.30 pm.**

Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the E-Procurement Portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>.

Sd/-  
Chief Engineer-1, KIADB Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/407/Zen/2024-25

**KARNATAKA STATE MEDICAL SUPPLIES CORPORATION LIMITED**  
No.1, Dr. Siddalah Purank Road, KHB Colony, Magadi Road,  
Bengaluru - 560079. Phone: +91-80-2323818. E-mail: md.ksmscl@gmail.com

No.HFW/KSMSCL/EQPT/NPPCD/Re-TND/04/2024-25 Date: 15-06-2024

**SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION**

Ref: 1) Tender Notification No: HFW/KSMSCL/EQPT/NPPCD/Re-TND/04/2024-25, (IND-0117)Date:15/06/2024.  
2) Tender Notification No: HFW/KSMSCL/EQPT/NPPCD/TND/OAEA/05/2024-25 (IND-0118)Date:15/06/2024.

Nationwide Tender is invited through e-Tendering system under KTPP Act 1999 and Rules 2000 for the following tenders:

1. Re-Tender for Supply of ENT Equipments under NPPCD programme.
2. Tender for Supply of Oto Acoustic Emission Analyzer under NPPCD programme.

The tenderers who have registered under e-Procurement department may participate through e-tendering system.

Details regarding EMD, Terms and Conditions and other information are available in the Tender Document, which can be downloaded from the website: <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> from 15-06-2024. The eligible tenderers shall submit their e-tenders under e-procurement platform for above mentioned tenders. Further information if any may be obtained from this office.

Sd/- General Manager (Admin & Procurement)  
KSMSCL, Bengaluru.

DIPR/CP/387/2024-25

**पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन ऑफ उत्तराखण्ड लिमिटेड**  
(उत्तराखण्ड सरकार का उपक्रम)  
अधीक्षण अभियान्ता (जाणपद) चिह्नितकृत कार्यालय चिह्नित मन्त्र, नवीनक-आईएनएसटीडी  
क्र.1722/तसा/प.सं./2024, मन्त्र, देहरादून-248002 दूरभाष नं. 7088117360

निविदा विस्तारित सूचना 4 - 63/SE(C)O&M/E-Tender/PTCUL/D.Dun/2023-24

निविदा सं. 63/SE(C)O&M/E-Tender/PTCUL/D.Dun/2023-24 की डाउनलोडिंग, प्रारंभ एवं खुलने की तिथि क्रमशः दिनांक 16.07.2024 तथा 17.07.2024 तक विस्तारित की जाती है। निविदाएं दिनांक 16.07.2024 समय 5:00 बजे तक अधीक्षण अभियान्ता (जाणपद) परिचयपत्र, पिटकुल, विद्युत नवन, माजरा, देहरादून के कार्यालय में प्राप्त की जाएगी। तथा निविदा के तकनीकी भाग दिनांक 17.07.2024 समय 3:30 बजे जाणपदीय कार्यालय हेतु पंजीकृत इच्छुक फर्नी के समक्ष खोला जायेगा। निविदा सम्बन्धित अन्य विस्तृत विवरण ई-निविदा वेबसाइट [www.uktenders.gov.in/PTCUL](http://www.uktenders.gov.in/PTCUL) एवं ई-निविदा सूचना पिटकुल वेबसाइट [www.ptcul.org](http://www.ptcul.org) से डाउनलोड किये जा सकते हैं।

निविदा सम्बन्धित अन्य विवरण ई-निविदा वेबसाइट [www.uktenders.gov.in/PTCUL](http://www.uktenders.gov.in/PTCUL) एवं ई-निविदा सूचना पिटकुल वेबसाइट [www.ptcul.org](http://www.ptcul.org) से डाउनलोड किये जा सकते हैं। ई-निविदा से सम्बन्धित जानकारी हेतु अथवा किसी भी सहायता के लिए PH.No.-91-8999890000, +0120-4200462, 0120-4001002, 0120-4001005, 0120-6277787 से सम्पर्क स्थापित करें।

संकाय - 234 / अधीक्षण अभियान्ता/निविदासूचना/पिटकुल/देहरादून/टी-1  
दिनांक - 15.06.2024

अधीक्षण अभियान्ता (जाणपद)  
परिचय एवं अनु 0

"राष्ट्र हित में विजली बचाये"

**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.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). Offers for such e-Tender can be submitted only electronically by accessing the link [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.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, 0341-2525594 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 follows: [1]; 75244130; Stainless Steel Sheets, Plates, Bars and Flats for WAG 9HC as per Specn. 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; 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; 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; 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; 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. 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# Petite European spacecraft 'Bikini' falls off India ramp

Returns To French Launcher

Chethan.Kumar  
@timesgroup.com

**Bengaluru:** Petite European spacecraft "Bikini", which was set to hitch a ride aboard India's trusted PSLV, soar to a staggering altitude of 500km, make a re-entry into Earth's atmosphere and plunge into the deep sea, "has come a full circle and returned to launch from France". Originally slated to partner with France's Arianespace, Bikini's developer, The Exploration Company, had secured a contract with Indian Space PSU NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) owing to delays in the development of the Ariane-6 rocket.

Now, since PSLV mission's timeline was not suiting its requirement, the firm has returned to Ariane-6 for



Weighing a mere 40kg, Bikini is the brainchild of The Exploration Company, a European startup aiming to make inroads into the in-space delivery sector

the mission. NSIL's PSLV launch, tentatively planned for Jan 2024, has been delayed because of non-availability of the primary satellite, without which the mission cannot move forward.

"Bikini, our baby re-entry demonstrator that we built in nine months in 2022, has just landed in Kourou,

French Guiana. We are looking forward to the Ariane6 first flight that will bring Bikini to space," the European firm said.

Weighing a mere 40kg, Bikini is the brainchild of The Exploration Company, a European startup aiming to make inroads into the in-space delivery sector.

The success of the Bikini mission promises to unlock new possibilities, propelling the company toward even grander re-entry missions in the future. As part of its now-cancelled contract, NSIL was to harness PSLV's final stage — the PS4.

The plan was to mount the re-entry capsule onto PS4, which would have parted ways with Bikini once the primary satellites were deployed post launch.

Had the mission happened through NSIL, it would have been the PSU's maiden voyage into such a venture for a customer.

While the ultimate destination of Bikini's descent would only be known later, the capsule has not been designed to be recovered by The Exploration Company. And given that Bikini will have no propulsion systems, it would rely on the Ariane-6 rocket to reach an appropriate altitude from where it could re-enter the Earth's atmosphere.

## Stalin renews NEET ban demand

**Chennai:** Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin has reiterated his party DMK's demand to stop NEET, highlighting complaints about alleged irregularities in the medical entrance test this year.

In an X post on Sunday, Stalin cited Gujarat police FIRs pertaining to invigilators allegedly tampering with exam OMR sheets in exchange for money amid claims about cheques, some of several crores and others blank.

"This conspiracy, implicating a school principal, a physics teacher, and several NEET coaching centres, underscores the urgent need for systemic change," Stalin posted. Banning NEET has been one of the key demands of DMK and a poll promise. A few days ago, Stalin had shared on social media the report of a panel, Justice A K Rajan committee, constituted by his govt to expose NEET's purported flaws. According to Stalin, the ongoing controversies around NEET highlight its "fundamentally inequitable nature". Stalin's sister called for a nationwide probe into recent irregularities. **TNN**

## Never called Indira mother of India: Gopi

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Union minister of state Suresh Gopi on Sunday said he never called Indira Gandhi 'mother of the country.' Clarifying that his "Indira is mother of India" remark about former PM was misinterpreted by media, Gopi said what he has said was Indira "mother of Congress" and "mother of modern India."

While visiting the memorial of Tamil Nadu's former Congress CM K Karunakaran in Thrissur on Saturday, Gopi had described Indira Gandhi as the "mother of India" and Karunakaran as a "courageous administrator". **TNN**

## Bengal iPhone truck loot: Accused held

**Kolkata:** West Bengal CID on Sunday arrested in Delhi a man accused of looting a Kolkata-bound truck carrying over 1,000 iPhones from Chennai after intercepting it in West Midnapore's Debra on Sept 28 last year. "We conducted a raid in Delhi's Punjabi Bagh and arrested Aslam," CID source said. **TNN**

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**OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL, AUTONOMOUS STATE MEDICAL COLLEGE KAUSHAMBI**

Letter No. ASMC/KAUSHAMBI/ADVERTISEMENT/2024-25/349 Date 15-06-2024

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APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FOR THE POST OF PROFESSORS, ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS, ASSISTANT PROFESSORS AT **AUTONOMOUS STATE MEDICAL COLLEGE, KAUSHAMBI UP.** FOR DETAILS VISIT OUR WEBSITE [WWW.ASMCKAUSHAMBI.IN](http://WWW.ASMCKAUSHAMBI.IN) AND DGME WEBSITE- [WWW.DGME.UP.GOV.IN](http://WWW.DGME.UP.GOV.IN)

LAST DATE OF ACCEPTING APPLICATION IS 13.07.2024 TILL 05:00 PM.

**Principal,  
AUTONOMOUS STATE MEDICAL COLLEGE,  
KAUSHAMBI**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

My clients are the absolute owners of converted lands measuring 44 Acres 1 Gunta in various survey numbers situated in Sarjapura Village and 125 Acres 14 Guntas in various survey numbers at Chikkadunnasandra Village aggregating to 169 Acres 15 Guntas as per the details furnished herein. Eversince the date of purchase, my clients are in continuous, uninterrupted and peaceful possession of the said properties.

It has come to the notice of my clients that certain unauthorized persons are attempting to fabricate false documents and to alienate the same in favour of third parties with criminal intent. Any such attempts on the part of such persons is completely illegal, without any sanction from my clients who are the absolute owners of the said properties and render such persons liable for criminal prosecution.

Members of public are cautioned against dealing with anyone claiming to be having rights over the said properties as no other person or entity has any manner of right, title or interest over the same and any transaction relating to the said properties will not confer any valid title in favour of such purchasers nor is binding on my clients.

All attempts to claim any rights against the properties detailed hereunder will be stoutly defended by my clients and anyone claiming such rights shall do so at their own risk, cost and peril.

Table of Properties situated in Sarjapura Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru.

Sl. No.	Sy. No.	Extent	Sl. No.	Sy. No.	Extent
		AA GG			AA GG
1.	476	00 32	13.	496	03 21
2.	607/1	02 29	14.	493	00 37
3.	490/2	01 12.08	15.	492/2	01 17
4.	405/2	01 05	16.	494/1	01 33
5.	490/1	01 18	17.	500/1	01 22
6.	492/1	02 30	18.	495	01 36
7.	494/2	02 08	19.	499/2	00 30
8.	491	06 17	20.	482/1	02 28
9.	485/1	02 11	21.	482/2	00 05
10.	480/1	00 06	22.	485/2	02 16
11.	500/2	00 30.08	23.	488	00 28
12.	498	04 04	24.	494/4	00 05
			<b>Total</b>		<b>44 01</b>

Table of Properties situated in Chikkadunnasandra Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru.

Sl. No.	Sy. No.	Extent	Sl. No.	Sy. No.	Extent
		AA GG			AA GG
1.	6	05 34	36.	41/7	00 17
2.	11	06 15	37.	41/5	00 14
3.	55/3	00 02.08	38.	41/9	00 23
4.	80/2	01 30	39.	41/3	00 11
5.	74/2	01 27	40.	41/4	00 09
6.	84/1B	02 04	41.	41/10	00 18
7.	84/2	01 00	42.	55/3	00 02.08
8.	7/1	01 17.12	43.	78	02 28
9.	38	09 13	44.	14/1	01 07.12
10.	39	00 36	45.	41/2	
11.	48	00 12		(41/8)	00 07
12.	57	01 25	46.	84/1	01 27
13.	42	00 14	47.	94	07 15
14.	54	01 38	48.	74/1	03 00
15.	55/2	01 02	49.	84/1A	
16.	50/2	00 06		(84/15)	00 10
17.	17	01 21	50.	67	03 24
18.	43	02 01	51.	89/3	
19.	47/1	00 05		(89/1A)	03 04
20.	50/1	00 16	52.	47/2	00 02
21.	55/1	03 34	53.	62	00 28
22.	51	01 06	54.	70	02 22
23.	61	03 16	55.	71	04 03
24.	87	02 21	56.	73	01 27.08
25.	64	01 35	57.	46	03 02
26.	65	01 11.08	58.	63	00 28
27.	69	01 07	59.	66	03 14
28.	58/1	01 02	60.	44	00 10
29.	49	04 03	61.	88/4	03 00
30.	41/1	00 11	62.	73/2	01 27.08
31.	41/2	00 22	63.	74/3	01 28
32.	45	00 28	64.	84/2	00 10
33.	48	01 09	65.	75	02 30
34.	76	04 21	66.	77/3	01 22
35.	41/6	00 08	67.	88/3	01 20
			68.	75/2	03 09
			<b>Total</b>		<b>125 14</b>

(B. S. SHANKARARAYAN)  
Advocate,  
"EDEN PARK", No.20, Vittal Mallya Road, Bangalore-560 001. Tel : 22217971.  
Bangalore Date: 15/06/2024

**KARNATAKA STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD**  
No.49, "Parisara Bhavan", Church Street, Bengaluru - 560 001,  
Ph: 080-25586520, 25589112, Fax: 080-25586321  
E-mail: [contact@kspcb.gov.in](mailto:contact@kspcb.gov.in) Website: <https://kspcb.karnataka.gov.in>

NO.PCB/257/SEO/MNES/EPH/2024-25/1133 DATE: 14.06.2024

**ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEARING NOTIFICATION**

M/s. Shivashakti Stone Crusher has proposed to undertake Building Stone Quarry project of capacity 70,460 TPA in the total land Area of 4.26 Acres at Sy. Nos. 59/11, 16, 17 of Ambewadi Village, Belagavi Taluk, Belagavi District, Karnataka. This project proposal falls under cluster effect as per Office Memorandum issued by MoEF&CC, Gol vide No. F. No. L-11011/175/2018-IA-II(M) dated:12.12.2018.

As Per the Environment Impact Assessment Notification dated:14.09.2006 and Amendment dated: 01.12.2009, the project proponent has to obtain prior Environmental Clearance from the State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority and is required to go through the process of Environmental Public Hearing. As per the Terms of Reference letter (ToR) No. SEIAA 343 MIN 2023 dated:17.10.2023 issued by the SEIAA, Karnataka and request letter of the project proponent dated: 31.10.2023 and Regional Officer, Belagavi-1 letter dated:08.02.2024, the Environmental Public Hearing was scheduled on 16.04.2024 (Tuesday) and the Notification was published in the Newspapers (Kannada: Hosadigantha & English: The Times of India) on 15.03.2024.

Further, the Environmental Public Hearing was postponed as per the instructions of the Deputy Commissioner, Belagavi District in view of General Elections to Lok Sabha-2024 and as the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) was in force.

Now, the Regional Officer, Belagavi-1 in letter dated:11.06.2024 informed that, as per the instructions of the Deputy Commissioner, Belagavi District, the Environmental Public Hearing is re-scheduled on 03.07.2024 (Wednesday) at 11.00AM.

The details of the project are as follows:

- Name & Address of the proposed Quarry :** M/s. Shivashakti Stone Crusher, Sri. Chandrakant Mahadev Patil, H No. 384/A, Mahadev Road, Kangarali KH, Belagavi District.
- Location of the proposed Quarry Project :** Sy. Nos. 59/11, 16, 17 of Ambewadi Village, Belagavi Taluk, Belagavi District.
- Details of proposed Project:** Proposed to undertake Building Stone Quarry of capacity 70,460 TPA in the total land Area of 4.26 Acres.
- Date, time and venue of Environmental Public Hearing: Date: 03.07.2024 (Wednesday) Time: 11:00 AM Place: Project site, M/s. Shivashakti Stone Crusher, Sy. Nos. 59/11, 16, 17 of Ambewadi Village, Belagavi Taluk, Belagavi District.**
- Places of availability of project documents as per EIA Notification, which is kept open to public are:** (a) Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Belagavi District, Belagavi. (b) Chief Executive Officer, Zilla Panchayat, Belagavi District, Belagavi. (c) District Industries Centre, Belagavi District, Belagavi. (d) Thasildar Office, Belagavi Taluk (e) Gram Panchayath Office, Ambewadi Village, Belagavi Taluk. (f) Office of the Regional Office, Karnataka State Pollution Control Board, Belagavi-1 (g) SEIAA Karnataka (Ecology and Environment), Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment, Government of Karnataka, Room No. 709, 7th Floor, 4th Gate, MS Building, Bengaluru - 560 001. (h) HELP DESK, Karnataka State Pollution Control Board, Ground Floor, No.49, Parisara Bhavan, Church Street, Bengaluru - 560 001.

**Note :** Suggestions, views, comments and objections of interested bonafide residents, environmental groups and others located at project site and likely to be affected by the proposed project are invited within 30 days from the date of publication of this Notification to make oral/written/E-Mail suggestions to the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board/ Chairman, Environmental Public Hearing Committee (Deputy Commissioner, Belagavi District, Belagavi). Interested public can participate in the Public Hearing at the above place. For details please visit our Website: [kspcb.karnataka.gov.in](http://kspcb.karnataka.gov.in)

Sd/-  
Member Secretary

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**Bangalore Times**

## CONTRAPUNTO

It is error alone which needs the support of govt.  
Truth can stand by itself

-THOMAS JEFFERSON

## EC, Talk Better

Controversy over Mumbai North West LS poll result must be settled quickly by the commission

That the Mumbai North West Lok Sabha victory would snowball into a controversy was almost a given. When Shinde Sena nominee Ravindra Waikar beat UBT Sena candidate Amol Kirtikar by 48 votes after recounting of both EVMs and postal ballots, concerns of a misconduct amped up to strong suspicions of misconduct in opposition camps. UBT Sena and others allege three serious counts of wrongdoing.

One, Shinde Sena candidate's agent/associate used a mobile phone inside the counting area. None except the Returning Officer can carry a mobile phone into counting centres. Call records of this phone are under police investigation. Two, following SC's order to store all VVPAT machines with symbol loading units, UBT Sena has sought technical inspection of the same—but EC website apparently has no SOP for such a technical probe, so it's vague what the "probe" might entail. Three, allegations centre on RO at the NESCO centre, the site of irregularities.

That very day, both Kirtikar and party workers raised alarm over the counting. Once the presence of an unauthorised phone was established, surely EC could have reacted immediately by putting out a statement. This kind of incident puts EC in the spotlight, not simply the state poll commission. And every such incident contributes to the chatter. For instance, before counting day, opposition sought EC walkback on allowing postal ballots to be counted after EVMs. Law says postal ballots be counted first. Why tweak that in the first place?

Kirtikar has written to EC with his complaints. Mumbai North West has pressed all the buttons for those asking for complete transparency of the election process. EC is firm about sanctity of its processes; it holds results speak for themselves. It argues due process is underway. But reality is instances where EC doesn't make its response public run the risk of getting a life of their own online. EC must necessarily communicate to today's alert electorate on its due processes.

In the internet era, EC has faced civil society scrutiny like never before. Reliability of EVMs, including VVPATs, its "unhackability", is at the core of EC's business of trust. Elon Musk's tweet, unrelated to India's election, that EVMs should be done away with, can only add fuel to the fire. EC has yet to make a statement on breaches of protocol. It must engage with the electorate more—on processes, its parallel paper trails, and its MO in the event of a breach.

## Swiss Fantasy

Ukraine-Russia peace conference without Moscow in the room, is more spectacle than substance

More than 90 countries participating in a weekend conference to forge a peace plan for Ukraine, suggested its ambition was realistic. But this was an out and out misreading. Because one crucial country was not invited: Russia. International mediators are not going to get far without first bringing both Ukraine and Russia to the same negotiating table.

**Western prioritisation** | This conference in Switzerland was preceded by a G7 commitment to a new \$50bn loan for Ukraine, securitised through interest on the frozen assets of Russia's central bank. An architect of this plan, US treasury secretary Janet L. Yellen says that it's about "getting Russia to help pay for the damage it's caused". This is quite a distinct goal from a ceasefire or peace.

**Russian maximalism** | Even less formidable goals—from food security to return of Ukrainian children—cannot be accomplished without negotiations with Russia itself. The great stumbling block, of course, is "the realities of today" that are Putin's precondition to negotiate. He wants to hold on to the Ukrainian territory gained through incremental advances on the battlefield, and more. Such maximalism has been propped up by the surprising resilience shown by both Russia's military and economy. And now an additional factor is, calculating that he will get a better deal by waiting it out till Trump is US president.

**Middle ground** | A March opinion poll found that Ukrainians under 35 are the most pessimistic about victory and the most willing to accept limited war outcomes. Two years of death and destruction later, the bitterest truth is actually identical for Zelenskyy and Putin. It is that victory remains elusive for both Ukraine and Russia. This is what international diplomacy must build on. A shared truth is more fertile ground for compromise, than an unshared conference.

## Fashion vs Fahrenheit

Neanderthals matched dress to weather, we don't

Shinie Antony



The weather is a handy icebreaker. We say 'too hot' and 'such a cold winter' to fill awkward pauses. Harmless, obvious statements like these further the cause of human interaction, and let us all occupy the planet in consensual boredom. In fact, entire marriages have gotten by on weather reports—'I love you' replaced by 'looks like rain'. Novelists go on and on about the snowclad and the sun-dappled... But all ye who take its name in vain, beware! Weather wreaks revenge by being utterly unpredictable. It blows hot and cold.

However humid it may be, no human being is willing to sacrifice sartorial levels for comfort. At the ministerial swearing-in ceremony in Delhi recently, conducted in the open air, everyone came in bandhgalas and Banarasis. Brocade was the dress code. This despite the fact that due to an insufferable summer the city is stewing in its own juices. Deep underneath such finery, where the innermost fabric scratches skin, is where global warming gets personal. We are all about style statements. In strappy white linen when it's freezing and quilted jackets when sunny, pants cut at the ankle as if expecting floods, hair left loose in gyms. Spanx under skinny jeans two sizes small even if vital organs asphyxiate.

There was a time when cavemen ripped off the fur of the first bear they met to keep warm. In summers Neanderthals turned up naked for business meetings. Wardrobes used to be straightforward, attuned to climate conditions. But in the era of selfies, being photo-ready trumps discomfort. A grand occasion, like say a wedding or funeral, cannot succumb to whimsical temperatures. The kanjeevams and Nehru jackets must be unpacked, drycleaned and donned on D-day, just like the white chikankari kurtas must be teamed with mournful cream or beige dupattas. Brides and bridegrooms gently steam on stage in all their dolled-up finery. A corpse seldom minds the thinness of cotton sheets inside icy morgues.

Vanity at some point meets ACs and central heating, when entering a door means frostbitten Narnia or the fires of hell. In a magical reversal of Celsius, you are now boiling or shivering. Suddenly covered in goosebumps, rubbing your arms, shifting closer to people for warmth, like the Little Match Girl lighting her last matchstick. Or beaded with perspiration and expected to remove your sweater, your sole outerwear. That's when you insist it's actually cold and borrow someone's shawl.

## Note For FM: Save For India

Declining savings rate is a red flag in a growing economy. Unemployment as an election issue showed how low savings-led patterns of growth have a political cost

Narendar Pani



With general elections behind us, FM can take a step back from celebrating high growth rates and the size of the Indian economy to look more closely at some points of concern. Election results were a reminder that India's growth rates haven't always translated into an improvement in critical social indicators as well as in employment.

The conventional wisdom that inequality does not matter if growth is high enough to lift large numbers above an economists-defined poverty line, is losing some of its political sheen. Besides, there are warning signals in the growth process itself. Prominent among these red flags is the challenge of declining savings rates.

**Savings trend since 1991** | The proportion of Gross Domestic Savings to GDP since liberalisation began has followed an inverted U curve. It rose steadily from 23.3% of GDP in 1990-91 to 37.8% in 2007-08. Since then, there has been an equally steady decline, reaching 28.2% in 2020-21. Studies have shown that the increase was largely achieved through increased inequality. As the share of the rich in GDP rose, income moved from the poor who consumed most of their earnings to the rich who could afford to save more.

Increasing savings by raising the share of the rich in GDP, necessarily limits, if not squeezes, the share of consumption of the poor. This pattern cannot continue indefinitely.

In a democracy, there is political pressure to transfer resources to the worst off through welfare measures. While these measures could be dismissed as freebies, they've become a political necessity. There's also the possibility that, beyond a point, a rising share of income

for those at the top of the economic pyramid may only lead to assets being held outside the country, without a sustained effect on domestic savings. And there are signs that this has become an increasingly significant factor.

**Price to pay for shift to tech** | Decline in the rate of savings hasn't had an immediate impact on growth. Rise in FDI has made up for some of the shortfall in domestic investment. There has also been a structural shift in the Indian economy towards more productive sectors. But these are not unmixed blessings.

FDI can fluctuate quite sharply. The shifts to more productive sectors are no doubt very good news as far as growth rates are concerned, but this increase in productivity often comes from movement towards more capital-intensive work practices. This can leave large sections of the labour force out of work.

With employment already becoming a political issue, there'll be a price to be paid for a sustained shift to labour-substituting technologies. Lower domestic savings rates thus raise the prospects of both fluctuating growth rates as well as patterns of growth that are insensitive to employment.

Revising domestic savings rates would need a review of economic strategies that have taken deep root since liberalisation. In his 1991 Budget speech, Manmohan Singh suggested opening up the economy to make Indian industry more competitive. When that did not always happen, the economy became more dependent on foreign investment, both FDI and Foreign Institutional Investment (FII).

**Losing out on small investors** | Efforts to make India more attractive to FIIs included sustained pressure to move from multiple regional stock exchanges to two

large stock exchanges in Mumbai. Closure of regional stock exchanges had a negative impact on the still-developing links between local savings and investment in emerging corporate entities.

The regional stock exchanges helped businesses with local reputations to raise local capital. The more successful among these businesses could then move on to the national and even international stage. The Ambanis may have been the more striking story of movement from small business to a global empire, but they were not the only ones.

The emergence of local economic players also suited another dominant, but usually ignored, trend in the Indian economy: the movement from agriculture to industry. Agrarian families with access to traditional capital had an opportunity to move into local industry, and then use their local reputations to tap regional capital. This also allowed small savers to invest in the enterprises of families they had long known about.

The closure of regional stock exchanges cut a critical link in this chain. The large stock exchanges were associated with much larger Initial Public Offerings (IPOs), where the minimum investment was well beyond the capacity of very small investors. From a capital market in the 1980s where investors with no more than ₹1,000 could apply for shares in IPOs, we moved to a regime where such investors had no place.

**Revive regional stock exchanges** | A meaningful strategy to raise the savings rate would need to build links between small savers and the local, national and global economies. This would require mobilising local savings in ways that develop the relationship between local investors and small savers. This could include the revival of regional stock exchanges as small cap exchanges, as well as other financial innovations that recognise all levels of the economic pyramid from the bottom to the top.

The writer is JRD Tata Chair Visiting Professor, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru

## Why Govt Jobs Should Be Less Secure

Dismissing or demoting bureaucrats must be made simpler to ensure efficiency and accountability. Without this, no administration can achieve the speed of development it desires

Praveen Gedam &amp; Arghya Sengupta



With a new govt taking charge, the spotlight turns to bureaucrats who'll work to fulfil its mandate. The tenure and service conditions of bureaucrats are often overlooked, but are critical to ensuring the whole govt works in concert to achieve its development goals. Highest in criticality is the ability of govt to hire and fire civil servants.

**Mis-firing officers** | Most of us haven't heard of a govt employee being fired. This tells us how super secure govt jobs are. That's one reason why lakhs of highly educated people apply for lower-level govt positions every year, and why govt servants are often preferred over higher paid private-sector employees in arranged marriages.

Such security of tenure was a key feature of govt jobs globally as well, but has changed over time. In India, it hasn't.

**Pleasure to permanence** | Traditionally, all civil servants served at the "pleasure" of the Crown. This meant that the monarch could dispense with their service at any time. When India became a democratic republic, this was sought to be balanced by the need to create an independent and empowered bureaucracy. This led to the incorporation of Article 311 of the Constitution based on which disciplinary laws for govt servants were enacted. But the process laid down has become so complicated over the years that it's almost impossible to dismiss someone from a govt job. The only exception is if the person is convicted by a criminal court, another rarity in India for govt servants. The pendulum has swung from pleasure to permanence.

Unlike private sector, where bosses can fire someone for not doing her job well, in govt it's practically impossible. No doubt, job security is of paramount

importance. But it also means that it's extremely difficult to get rid of employees who're not discharging their duties. Anecdotal, we know of numerous cases where an engineer was unaware of standard guidelines for construction, a police officer prepared a criminal chargesheet under civil laws, and a clerk couldn't even write the name of his office. Most of them, and countless others like them, continue to 'serve'.

**Long & winding process** | Here's how extant disciplinary rules work in practice. The process starts with gathering evidence, followed by a showcause notice, some-



times suspension, hearing the govt employee's side, deciding whether to conduct an inquiry, gathering more evidence, preparing a chargesheet, appointing an inquiry officer, holding hearings, examinations and cross-examinations, giving the employee a chance to defend, preparing a report, giving this report to the employee, hearing the employee again twice—first on the report, and then usually also on the quantum of punishment—seeking views of the public service commission, and then finally making a decision.

Unsurprisingly, this takes years to complete. By

that time, every stakeholder other than the employee involved has moved on, and the problem leading to the inquiry isn't seen as important anymore. As a result, the employee is usually declared not guilty.

**Urgent reform needed** | For an efficient, modern, service-oriented bureaucracy, this process must be simplified. It should be completed within three months, during which other stakeholders (say, seniors and affected persons) are still around and consequences of misconduct of the employee are fresh in memory. Second, the quantum of punishment should also be an effective deterrent. At least for corruption, inefficiency, lack of delivery, insubordination, gross negligence and frequent absenteeism, major punishments such as dismissal or demotion should be made mandatory.

**Idea for first 100 days** | That said, protection from undue influences needs to be kept intact or even bolstered by shielding bureaucrats from arbitrary transfers (legally not punishments, but in practice so) through enacting suitable rules. The Indian bureaucrat is rightly praised for holding the vast and diverse country together, and guiding it towards progress. But at the same time, she is also criticised, again rightly so, for being slow and inefficient.

As India celebrates 75 years of its Constitution and with govt ready to unveil its first-100-day plan, it's time to rethink how govt itself works. Listening to people and reducing friction are important. A part of this can be achieved by ensuring faster and tougher punishments for bureaucratic inefficiencies while increasing protection of bureaucrats from undue influences. We must move away from the idea that govt jobs should be secure and permanent at any cost. Instead, let us start instilling accountability by ensuring that the dead wood is weeded out regularly and expeditiously. This will be one reform that will change the face of govt service for 100 years.

Gedam is Divisional Commissioner, Nashik. Sengupta is Research Director, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy

## Calvin &amp; Hobbes



## Sacredspace

Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding... And could you keep your heart in wonder at the daily miracles of your life, your pain would not seem less wondrous than your joy.

Kahlil Gibran

## Knowledge Of The Self Liberates Us From Sorrows

V Balasubramaniam

Adi Shankaracharya said, "Though ignorance, avidya is beginningless—it is completely wiped out by the emergence of Vidya, knowledge."

Ignorance never goes away unless knowledge, its opposite, is born. The moment we learn what a pot is like, our unfamiliarity with it is over. Similarly, when we learn what a camera is like, our lack of knowledge of how it works is addressed.

Vedanta reveals that all our sorrows, fears, anxieties, stress, and confusion are not because we do not know physics, maths, or other subjects; they are because we do not know ourselves. Only knowledge of the Self liberates us from all sorrows and leads to a state of fearlessness.

In Vivekachudamani, Shankara-

charya states that all our sufferings are only due to a lack of awareness of our true nature. Just as a lack of understanding of physics can only be remedied by learning about physics, an absence of self-awareness can only be remedied by acquiring Self-knowledge.

Action cannot sublimate ignorance. Knowledge does verily destroy avidya just as light eradicates deep darkness. Trying to sweep darkness out of a dark room is futile. Even if an army of men carry the darkness in baskets and pour it out, the room will still be dark. Sweeping is not the right method of removing darkness. Only light can remove darkness, however thick it may be. Similarly, ignorance in us can be overcome by the pure light of Self-knowledge. That is why it is said



THE SPEAKING TREE

action cannot sublimate ignorance; knowledge is its only antidote. By removing avidya, one uncovers the Self.

The Bhagwad Gita states that the Lord does not take the virtue or sin of any; knowledge is enveloped by ignorance, and thereby, beings are deluded (5.15). Our scriptures clearly say ignorance is the problem, and knowledge of the Self is the only solution.

When *ajnan*, unawareness, is removed, there is nothing more to be done. Everything is clear, like daylight. Ignorance is like night; when it passes, you are in the daylight of enlightenment.

Sometimes, we see thick mist enveloping a garden. If we try to grab it, nothing comes into our hands. It is not a wall; we can walk through it. Still, it obstructs our vision and hinders our

progress. The mist continues till the bright sunlight emerges. Thereafter, it evaporates. Similarly, this inexplicable ignorance causes troubles and endless sorrows in our consciousness. It can be dispelled only by the flash of Self-knowledge.

As a child, one looks, touches, tastes, smells, and listens to the sound, which is a word naming the object being perceived. In this way, ignorance is shed, and knowledge is gained, first of forms and names, then of colour and other related attributes. Later, finer distinctions, including shades of colour, various sizes, and shapes, become apparent.

Ignorance is present in every individual; it is like a dark place where the light of knowledge is essential. It is a cause of bondage and will disappear, just as a solitary lamp dispels darkness in a dark room.

## MUTUAL FUN by HSBC Mutual Fund



An Investor Education & Awareness Initiative by HSBC Mutual Fund



Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

Visit <https://gpp.hsbc/kyc> w.r.t. one-time Know Your Customer (KYC) process, complaints redressal process including SEBI SCORES (<https://www.scores.gov.in>). Investors should only deal with Registered Mutual Funds, to be verified on SEBI website under Intermediaries/Market Infrastructure Institutions (<https://www.sebi.gov.in/intermediaries.html>). Investors may refer to the section on Investor Education on the website of HSBC Mutual Fund for the details on all Investor Education and Awareness Initiatives undertaken by HSBC Mutual Fund.

CL 1525

## Paytm in talks with Zomato to sell its movie, ticketing biz

### Transaction Seen Valuing Fintech's Vertical At ₹2,000 Crore

Asmita.Dey@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: Paytm is in advanced stages of discussion to sell its movie and events ticketing business to Zomato as part of the fintech's strategy to divest its non-core assets, sources aware of the development told TOI. The deal, if finalised, could value the business vertical of Paytm at close to Rs 2,000 crore.

In a stock exchange filing late Sunday, Zomato said that it is in discussions with Paytm to acquire its movies and events ticketing business. The discussion, the firm said, is being undertaken with an intent to strengthen its 'going-out' business. "However, no binding decision has been taken at this stage that would warrant a board approval and subsequent disclosure," Zomato added.

In a separate filing, Paytm also said that the discussions

### To Boost Zomato's 'Going-Out' Segment

► Paytm's movie and events ticketing vertical is housed under its marketing services business which also includes advertising, credit card marketing, deals and gift vouchers

► The deal with Zomato, if finalised, could value the business vertical of Paytm at close to ₹2,000cr

► The co had said that it aims to achieve significant cost efficiencies, among other things, through the pruning of its non-core businesses

► The deal would give a leg-up to Zomato's going-out business, which already offers discovery and ticketing of offline experiences such as in-restaurant dining and live events such as Zomaland

are preliminary and do not involve any binding agreements that require approval or disclosure. "The company routinely explores various strategic opportunities aimed at enhancing shareholder value. The potential transfer of Paytm's entertainment business, a component of our marketing services, is one opportunity under consideration. As noted in our earnings

call, our focus will be on payment and financial services along with digital goods commerce, which are designed to help our merchants scale their businesses," the firm said.

"Paytm wants to focus on its payments and financial services businesses. It will only focus on opportunities which would help its merchants scale their businesses," sources said. For Zomato, the deal will

add value — acquiring Paytm's movie and events ticketing verticals would fit in well with and give a leg-up to its going-out business, analysts said. The food delivery firm's 'going-out' vertical already offers discovery and ticketing of offline experiences such as in-restaurant dining and live events such as Zomaland.

Revenues from its going-out segment have grown by over 100% year-on-year to Rs 93 crore in the March quarter. "Paytm is currently merging its movies and the Insider (events platform) vertical into one team. For now, customers may continue to book both movies and events on the Paytm app," sources said. However, Zomato is likely to work on integrating the two verticals within its platform once the deal is through, they added. A formal announcement of the deal could happen as early as next week, sources said.

## Hero Future Energies to invest \$2bn

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New Delhi: Hero Future Energies, the renewable energy arm of the Munjal family-promoted Hero group, will invest upwards of \$2 billion over the next 30 months to ramp up its generation capacity. It will focus on projects with energy storage to leverage a sharp fall in battery prices, company's global CEO Srivatsan Iyer told TOI.

"Currently we have an operating capacity of 1.8 gigawatts (GW). We reached here in about 12 years. We will implement projects with a total capacity of 2.6 GW in the next two-and-a-half years as we feel the time has come for the company to spread its wings," Iyer said.

A good part of the projects in the pipeline include battery energy storage systems and were won in auctions conducted by SECI (formerly Solar Energy Corporation of India), the state-run agency tasked with implementing the National Solar mission. "We want to focus on integrating multiple technologies such as solar, wind and energy storage, instead of pure-play solar or wind projects," he said.

## Industry frets over new ad mandate

### Self-Certification Norms To Kick In From Tomorrow As Directed By Supreme Court

Rupali.Mukherjee@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Starting Tuesday, advertisers in India face a new mandate: A self-declaration certification (SDC), as directed by the Supreme Court. Conceptualised as a "positive step for protecting consumers, fostering trust, transparency, and enhancing brand reputation", the move aims to ensure that all stakeholders are more vigilant and compliant. Yet, opinion is divided among advertising bigwigs, media agencies, and marketing experts on the ease of its implementation and whether it will effectively curb the widespread issues of misleading claims and surrogate advertising.

On May 7, in a case involving the Indian Medical Association and the Centre, SC directed that no advertisements on television, print, digital, or radio can be published or aired without the SDC, aiming to ensure compliance with regulations and prevent misleading claims. "The entire advertising ecosystem, be it advertisers, agencies or publishers will need to create internal systems to be compliant," Manisha Kapoor, CEO and secretary general, Advertising Standards Council of India, told TOI.

This is true for all sectors and categories. "Practices such as advertising reviews, prior to publishing and preventive risk assessments to avoid potential backlash will now be embedded in the brand strategy of an organisation. The threat of adverse impact that emerges from this regula-

tion requires that organisations invest in verifying the claims of external communication," said Mustafa Surka — partner, risk advisory services at KPMG India.

The pre-release approval by the regulatory agency works better for all the stakeholders and saves time, resources and effort rather than a post-correction, feels Nandini Dias, former CEO of Lodestar UM. "Often after ad is released, someone objects and puts a stop to it. If the ad is pulled off, it disrupts the entire marketing activity for that quarter and causes huge loss to the brand. In the Doordarshan days, one had to submit the complete storyboard, frame-by-frame and get approvals,

Most consumer-focused sectors will face increased scrutiny, while the lens is now on the entire product life cycle, say industry experts. Several misleading ads are still being aired, despite the existence of several regulatory agencies, they add

and only after that was the film shot. And once we had DD approval, no other objections were considered. Today, the scenario is far more dynamic and complicated, it is essential to create a new system. While there is resistance as it will slow the systems down in the short-run, it will be beneficial to consumers and will help transparency in the long-run," she added.

"All consumer brands may associate themselves with a cause, but these claims may not be trustworthy. For

instance, making claims like a product is green, net zero, plastic neutral, will all need to be verifiable. Building brand trust requires clarity, responsibility, and accurate advertising," said Namrata Rana — partner, national head (ESG), KPMG India.

Advertising experts fear it may increase red tape, and companies and agencies will need manpower to navigate the cumbersome process.

"This seems to be an exercise in bureaucracy rather than the law. Creating bureaucratic hurdles make things difficult for advertisers, without solving the problem of misleading ads," said Santosh Desai, advertising veteran and former CEO, Future Brands.

More efforts may be needed. "Prima facie (the move) has been conceptualised to protect consumer rights. However, it may not be able to curb the menace of surrogate advertising and misleading claims — the basic objective for which it was created. The entire implementation and thereafter — monitoring, policing and punishment require a lot of thought, and is not clear at this stage," said Sandeep Goyal, chairman, Rediffusion.

In a representation to the I&B ministry, the Indian Newspaper Society too has flagged several concerns, including problems with the portal where self-declaration has to be made, and sought that the implementation may be deferred. It has suggested that the existing mechanisms should be strengthened and govt may consider limiting the mandate to healthcare related or medical ads.

## Frequent policy changes a worry, impact investment, says Hyundai

Pankaj.Doval@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Korean car major Hyundai, which is eyeing a Rs 25,000 crore fund-raise from the Indian stock market by selling 17% equity, has flagged "frequent changes" in govt policy as a key concern, saying it impacts investment flows into India as well as pace of technology changes.

The company, which has invested nearly Rs 30,000 crore in India since it began operations around 1996, has said stability in policy will be key to adapting confidently to the required technological upgrades mandated by govt.

"Another challenge that the industry is facing is frequent changes in policies, which make it difficult for auto industry stakeholders not only to ensure adherence but also commit investments," the company said in the Draft Red Herring Prospectus filed with market re-

### 'CNG share to be more than EVs by FY29'

New Delhi: Hyundai said in its DRHP that the share of EVs will go up from the current 2.3% to as much as 17-20% by the end of FY29. However, EVs will trail CNG, which will see its share go from the current 15% in FY24 to 22-27% by FY29, the company said. "CNG station infrastructure is projected to rise at a healthy pace till 2030," it said. TNN

gulator Sebi. "Overall policy stability and transparency will be required going forward to ensure smooth technology transition and localisation in the country," the company said.

Hyundai has said it will invest a fresh Rs 32,000 crore in India over the next few years, mainly towards launching electronics and creating the requisite component and changing infrastructure for the greens, apart from boosting its production capacity.

It said EVs will be a key focus area for the company and it will start localising the manufacturing of elec-

trics for the mainstream, high-volume market.

However, the draft prospectus also expresses concerns over the localisation norms mandated by govt, which is pushing the growth of EVs. "Govt is encouraging localisation across sectors, especially in automotive sector via policies like PLI for automotive technology, PLI for advanced cell chemistry, phased manufacturing programme, atmanirbhar Bharat, and make in India. While the end goal of localisation is to reduce import dependence and bring down overall manufacturing costs, it also involves significant initial

capital investments from several stakeholders within the automotive industry. While the government has designed the schemes to support investments by offering several subsidies and import duty benefits, there are still concerns around meeting the eligibility criteria and availing of the benefits," the company said.

It said that "simplification and better tracking of policies" will ensure localisation in India. "The progress of the vendors tied up with individual OEMs would also lead to a change in the risk profile of the industry from a supply-side perspective."

To maximise price competitiveness of its EV models, Hyundai said it intends to focus on securing local production capabilities for key parts such as cells, battery packs, power electronics, drivetrain and building a localised EV supply chain.

RBI's Risk Monitoring Department has been central to formulating and implementing an enterprise-wide risk management (ERM) framework. Over the past year, RBI has focused on three main areas: strengthening existing risk controls, developing new frameworks to cover a broader range of risks, and promoting a robust risk culture throughout the organisation. Their efforts have improved RBI's operational risk management from a "managed" to an "advanced" category by international standards.

RBI has benchmarked its practices against international standards and is working on cybersecurity controls.

## RBI bags risk manager award

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: RBI has been awarded the "Risk Manager of the Year 2024" by Central Banking, UK, for improving its risk culture and awareness. The award was received by RBI executive director Manojan Mishra last week.

RBI's Risk Monitoring Department has been central to formulating and implementing an enterprise-wide risk management (ERM) framework. Over the past year, RBI has focused on three main areas: strengthening existing risk controls, developing new frameworks to cover a broader range of risks, and promoting a robust risk culture throughout the organisation. Their efforts have improved RBI's operational risk management from a "managed" to an "advanced" category by international standards.

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## Expand base, avoid super rich tax: CII prez

Surojit Gupta & Sidhartha | TNN

ITC chairman and managing director Sanjiv Puri took over as the new CII president during elections. The industry chamber is recommending several measures, including creating more jobs, skilling and generating political consensus on crucial reforms related to land & labour laws and farm & power sector. In an interview with TOI, Puri emphasised the need to widen the tax base, while rejecting higher levies on the super rich and backed a three-slab GST structure. Excerpts:

### How is a coalition govt at the Centre going to impact policymaking?

A number of policy instruments have been used in the past, while following a model of inclusive growth within the fiscal glide path and dealing with energy transition. The outcome is before us, the economy grew 8.2% last year. The economy is in robust health, that's really shows the strategy of investment-led inclusive growth is directionally right, because it creates

One of the first recommendations that CII has given is to create some institutional mechanism to develop consensus on some of the big reforms of land, labour, power, agriculture, fiscal sustainability because that also involves the states"

For creating good quality of jobs, CII is recommending some policy enablers to provide impetus to labour-intensive sectors, like apparel, toys, retail, entertainment, logistics, tourism, wood-based industry"

We are recommending three (GST) slabs...Real estate, petroleum are outside, all these should be brought in"

— SANJIV PURI | PRESIDENT, CII

a virtuous cycle and enhances the productive capacity. That should energise more reforms. One of the first recommendations that CII has given is to create some institutional mechanism to develop consensus on some of the big reforms of land, labour, power, agriculture, fiscal sustainability because that also involves the states.

### What are the stumbling blocks that you want govt to remove to accelerate job creation?

Job creation is also a responsibility of the private sector, govt mainly has to put the enablers in place. Private capex is on the right trajectory. In FY22-23, it was at 23.8% of GDP, which is higher than

what it was pre-Covid and had dropped to 20.7% of GDP in 2021. There are several sectors where investments are coming, sectors related to infrastructure, cement and steel, sectors which have received impetus PLI like electronics, food processing, telecom, pharma, logistics, renewable energy, automobiles, EVs, semiconductor. On the issue of jobs — it's about jobs and also the quality of jobs. For creating good quality of jobs, CII is recommending some policy enablers to provide impetus to labour-intensive sectors, like apparel, toys, retail, media, entertainment, logistics, tourism, wood-based industry. There are so many areas where the employment to capital ratio is very favourable. So,

we're recommending employment-linked incentives for these sectors, with some outcome metrics.

The second important thing is to provide impetus to MSMEs, which create a lot of employment and there is larger integration into global value chains. The journey has started because the world also is looking at supply chain diversification. So, free trade agreements provide some impetus to this. Human capital development and social infrastructure is important. We have recommended increasing the investment in education to 6% of GDP and for healthcare to 3%. What is also important is to create a vibrant rural economy. The first piece that has to be solved is agriculture, both from a productivity perspective plus also resilience because weather events are only going to multiply. The second is to empower the youth in rural areas to be able to participate in other opportunities in the economy.

There has been a lot of debate around inequality and there have been suggestions about taxing the super rich to raise resour-

### ces. What is your view?

The most important facet is really about continuing to create the virtuous cycle of employment, consumption, investment and creating good quality jobs. Improving farm incomes, that's the most important area to focus on. As far as specifically direct tax is concerned, it's more about getting more people within the tax system, and not resorting to, as some have suggested, taxing the so-called super rich, or (imposing) wealth tax and things like that. The focus right now has to be on creating an economy that creates a lot of jobs, that's ultimately where the solution is going to live. The second is expanding the (tax) base.

### How complex do you find GST in terms of number of slabs, classification issues? What changes would you want?

We are recommending three slabs. In addition to that, we are also saying it should be more inclusive. Real estate, petroleum are outside, all these should be brought in. There is room for process simplification, which is an ongoing exercise.

## MFs' Net Asset Value: The What, When (Is It Calculated) & How

Every mutual fund scheme declares its net asset value (NAV) at the end of each working day. The NAV is updated daily at 11 pm for all schemes, except for fund of funds, which are updated at 10 am the next day and displayed on websites of the fund house, Amfi, and investment platforms.

### What Is Net Asset Value?

The NAV represents a fund's per unit market value. This is the price at which investors are allotted units by the fund house or the price at which they can sell it back to the fund house. This is calculated by dividing the total value of all the assets in a portfolio, minus all its liabilities. The NAV is calculated by the fund house or by an accounting firm hired for the purpose.

## Invesco Mutual Fund

An investor education and awareness initiative

For Know Your Customer (KYC) guidelines along with the documentary requirements and procedure for change of address, phone number, bank details, etc., please visit the Education and Guidance section on [www.invescomutualfund.com](http://www.invescomutualfund.com). Investor should deal with only SEBI registered Mutual Funds, details of which can be verified under "Intermediaries/Market Infrastructure Institutions" on <https://www.sebi.gov.in/index.html>. For any grievance / complaint, please call us on 1800-209-0007 or write to us at [mfservices@invesco.com](mailto:mfservices@invesco.com). Alternatively, complaints can be registered on the SEBI SCORES Portal at <https://scores.gov.in>

Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

### When Is Scheme's NAV Calculated?

The NAV is calculated and declared after market closing hours at the end of the day. Since stock prices move up and down every second, it is difficult to calculate NAV during market hours as the price of the underlying stocks in the portfolio could change. Hence, the NAV is calculated at the end of every market day, factoring in the closing market prices of the securities that the fund holds.

### What Is The Applicability Of A Day's NAV?

Investors are allocated units in a scheme after a fund house receives money to purchase units on a market trading day. For equity and debt funds, and redemptions from liquid and overnight funds, orders placed before the cut-off time of 3 pm will be

processed at the same day's NAV. The cut-off time for purchase orders in liquid and overnight funds is 1:30 pm. For buy orders, the fund house should receive the payment by the cut-off time for applicability of same-day NAV. Orders & payments received beyond cut-off times will be processed at the next trading day's NAV

### Is NAV Key In Picking A Scheme?

Wealth managers believe the mere NAV number of a scheme is irrelevant for an investor looking to buy a mutual fund. It should not matter to an investor if the NAV is ₹10 or ₹ 1,000. Take, for example, an investment of ₹1 lakh each in Scheme A at a NAV of ₹20 and Scheme B at a NAV of ₹50. The investment amount being equal, Scheme A would appear cheaper as 5,000 units were allotted compared to 2,000 units in Scheme B. Now suppose both schemes grow by 10% in a month. Scheme A's NAV will be ₹22 and Scheme B's will be ₹55. The value of your investment in both cases is ₹1,10,000.

For two schemes with identical portfolios and other things remaining constant, the difference in NAV will hardly matter and both schemes will grow at the same rate. Financial planners say daily changes in NAV don't matter. It is best to look at the annualised return of a fund over different timeframes to judge its performance.

— PRASHANT MAHESH



**CELEBRITY CHEF GORDON RAMSAY 'LUCKY TO BE HERE' AFTER A 'REALLY BAD' BICYCLING ACCIDENT: 'HELMET SAVED MY LIFE'**

**JOE ALWYN BREAKS SILENCE ON TAYLOR SWIFT SPLIT, SAYS IT IS 'ABNORMAL' FOR BREAK-UP TO BE WEIGHED-IN BY OUTSIDERS**



## Kyiv's territorial integrity must be basis of any peace: Summit

**Snubbed Moscow Mocks Meet; No Country Volunteers To Host Sequel**

**Buergenstock:** Eighty-four countries called Sunday for the "territorial integrity" of Ukraine to be the basis for any peace agreement to end Russia's two-year war, though some key developing nations at a Swiss conference did not join in — and the way forward for diplomacy remains unclear.

Over 90 countries attended the two-day talks at a Swiss Alpine resort at the behest of Ukrainian Prez Volodymyr Zelensky, billed as a "peace summit" even though Moscow was not invited. A decision by China to stay away all but assured that the summit would fail to achieve Ukraine's goal of persuading major countries from the "global South" to join in isolating Russia. Brazil attended only as an "observer". India, Indonesia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia and South Africa all withheld their signatures from the summit communique, even though some contentious issues were omitted in the hope of drawing wider support.

Still, the conference provided Kyiv with a chance to showcase the support from Western allies that it says it needs to keep fighting against a far bigger enemy. Leaders including US vice-president Kamala Harris, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and French Prez Macron gathered at the mountain-top resort of Buergenstock. US Prez Biden did not attend despite invitations from Zelensky.

In the absence of a clear path to ending the war, Zelensky emphasised practical issues, such as securing food supplies and nuclear safety. Ukraine, one of the world's biggest grain exporters, has thwarted a blockade of its Black Sea



European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen with Zelensky in Lucerne

### Zelensky says Russia not ready for peace, wants China to play a bigger role in talks

Ukrainian Prez Zelensky said Sunday that Russia was not ready for a "just peace", insisting Kyiv was open to immediate talks if Moscow pulls its troops out of the country. The Ukrainian head of state was speaking at the end of a major summit in Switzerland, to which Russia was not invited. "Russia can start negotiations with us even tomorrow, if they leave our legal territories... (But) Russia and their leadership are not ready for a just peace, this is a fact," he said. Zelensky also said he would like to see China play a bigger role in discussing a settlement. Beijing, a close ally of Russia, did not attend in protest at Moscow not being invited. "I believe that China could help us. That is why I would very much like to see certain proposals that the Chinese side has," he said. "Ukraine has never said China is our enemy," he added. Asked whether he would consider China a friend, Zelensky said: "I believe that friends are those who help when things are difficult. I would like China to be a friend to Ukraine." AFP

ports, and also wants to build consensus around safety at a Russian-occupied nuclear power plant. In her closing remarks, Swiss Prez Viola Amherd warned that the "road ahead is long and challenging". Russia, as it has for weeks, mocked the gathering. "None

of the participants in the 'peace forum' knows what he is doing there and what his role is," said Dmitry Medvedev, Russia's deputy chairman of the country's Security Council. The final document said the UN Charter and "respect for territorial integrity and so-



**ROD STEWART BOOED FOR UKRAINE SUPPORT:** UK pop star Rod Stewart was greeted with loud boos at a concert in Germany on Friday while making a show of support for Ukraine. Wearing the colours of the country's flag, he dedicated the song 'Rhythm of My Heart' to Ukrainians before shouting a profane insult against Russian Prez Vladimir Putin

vereignty ... can and will serve as a basis for achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine." It also called for Ukraine's control over the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant and its Azov Sea ports to be restored. But it omitted tougher issues of what a post-war settlement for Ukraine might look like, whether Ukraine could join Nato alliance or how troop withdrawals from both sides might work. No country came forward to host another such meeting, with notable silence from Saudi Arabia, mooted as a possible future venue.

Moscow has demanded recognition of its rule over territory its forces captured. Western leaders at the summit endorsed Kyi's refusal to negotiate under such terms. "Confusing peace with subjugation would set a dangerous precedent for everyone," said Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. REUTERS & AP

### Russian forces kill six IS-linked hostage takers at detention centre

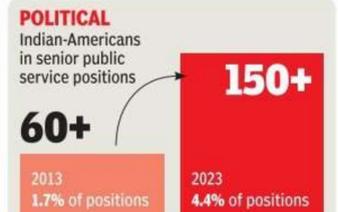
**Moscow:** Russian special forces freed two prison guards and shot dead six inmates linked to the Islamic State militant group who had taken them hostage at a detention centre in the southern city of Rostov on Sunday, Russian media said.

State media said that some of the men had been convicted of terrorism offences and were accused of affiliation with the Islamic State militant group, which claimed responsibility for a deadly attack on a Moscow concert hall in March. The six hostage takers, one of whom wore a headband with the flag used by the Islamic State that bears an Arabic inscription, knocked out window bars and climbed down several floors by rope before taking the guards hostage with a knife and fire axe. In video published by the 112 Telegram channel, one was shown brandishing a knife beside one of the bound guards in Rostov-on-Don. In negotiations with the authorities, they demanded free passage out of the prison.

But Russian special forces decided to storm the prison. Intense automatic gunfire could be heard in clips published on Telegram channels. "The criminals were eliminated," Russia's Federal Penitentiary Service said. "The employees who were being held hostage were released. They are uninjured," it said. According to local media, the hostage takers were from Russia's southern republic of Ingushetia and three of them had been detained in 2022 for planning an attack on a court in another Russian republic, Karachay-Cherkessia. REUTERS

### INDIANS LIVING THE AMERICAN DREAM

The no. of Indians living in US has grown to 5m (till 2023), which represents a 50% increase since 2010. A look at their far-reaching impact on...



**Kamala Harris** made history as the first Indian-origin woman to be sworn in as vice-president in 2021

**CULTURAL** 96 Indian movies grossed over \$1 million in North America, and \$340 million collectively between 2015 and 2023

**10+** awards won by Indian Americans across the Oscars, Golden Globes, and Grammys since 2015

**28 of the 34** Scripps National Spelling Bee champions have been of Indian origin since 2000 (PIO Bruhat Soma was this year's winner)

### ECONOMY

**\$40 billion** Indian investments in US as of 2023

**4,26,000** No. of jobs created in US

**16** of the Fortune 500 in US are currently led by Indian-origin CEOs

**72 out of 648** unicorns in US led by Indian-origin CEOs

**\$26 billion** US top source of global remittances to India in 22-23

**25%** of 114 unicorns in India in 2023 have US-educated founders

### EDUCATION

**2,50,000** Indian students enrol in US universities, making up 25% of int'l students annually

**10%** of US patents included a co-inventor of Indian origin in 2019, a 5X growth from 1975

**35 out of 50** top US colleges have an Indian-American in leadership posts

**10%** of all physicians in the US Indian-origin in 2023 serving 30% of patients

### PHILANTHROPY

**\$1.5 billion** donated by Indian-American households in 2023

**\$3 billion** given to US universities since 2008

**(65+ donations of \$1m+ to 40+ universities)**

Source: Inc 42; RBI; Confederation of Indian Industry; Open Doors

### Scottish poll PIO candidate's Modi, RaGa posts spark row

Naomi Canton

**London:** Social media posts on PM Narendra Modi and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi by an Indian-origin candidate for Glasgow in the Scottish elections have ignited controversy in UK, prompting a police report under new hate crime laws. Alba Party candidate Dhruva Kumar, 36, reported his rival party Scottish Greens for allegedly inciting hatred between Hindus and Muslims in Scotland.

Scottish police investigated the complaint lodged on June 8 and found no criminality. Scottish Greens dismissed the claims as a publicity stunt by Alba. Kumar, born in Bihar's East Champaran, has alleged criticism from Scottish Greens over his past social media posts about Modi and Gandhi as an attack on his religion and ethnicity. He claims to be the first India-born candidate to stand in Scotland and expresses support for Modi and BJP.

The controversy arose from alleged posts by Kumar on X from 2014, which contained inflammatory comments against "Nehru dynasty" and how "India has paid the price". Scottish Greens commented on these posts in National, a newspaper. In response, Kumar insisted his account was hacked and that someone "politically motivated" twisted his words into "bad English". He said: "In 2014 Modi took office and I remember I did some posts praising him and a new era for India. They have twisted what I wrote." Scottish Greens candidate Niall Christie accused Kumar of exploiting right-wing politics.

### ITALIANS TAKE POPE FRANCIS TO PRIDE



**A**t Rome's Pride celebration, bare-chested men in pink angel wings danced to songs, women wrapped in rainbow flags kissed, and shimmering drag queens waved from parade floats. And then there was Pope Francis. His image was everywhere. On cardboard cutouts adorned with flower necklaces, on glittery banners, on stickers. Romans came to the Pride parade on

Saturday dressed like Francis, wearing papal hats and T-shirts that read, "There is never too much froggiagine," a reference to an offensive slur against gay men that the pope has been accused of using twice in recent weeks. The slur "is the slogan of the 2024 Pride," said Martina Lorina, 28, an actress who was holding up a banner bearing the word. After Italian media reported that the

pope used the slur at a meeting with priests to complain that there was too much "gayness" in the church, the Vatican apologized. But Rome's Pride attendees took a different tact to respond to the insult: They made it their own. Pride participants symbolically invited the pope and his slur to the party, using a tactic of the LGBTQ community to turn insults into words of pride. NYT

### Le Pen: Ready to work alongside Macron

**M**arine Le Pen, the leader of the French far-right, said she won't try to push out Prez Macron if she wins the snap parliamentary election that begins later this month. "I'm respectful of institutions, and I'm not calling for institutional chaos," Le Pen told Le Figaro newspaper. "There will simply be cohabitation." Le Pen is seeking to appe-

al to mainstream voters as she aims to cement a majority in the next parliament. Her group, the National Rally, is already on track to become the biggest party, a prospect which has caused alarm among investors and France's international partners. Le Pen said that if she can form a majority — either with National Rally lawmakers alone, or with allies —

she would lead her party's parliamentary caucus and 28-year-old party leader Jordan Bardella will become PM. The two-round election concludes on July 7. Le Pen's party is on course to win as many as 270 of the 577 seats in the National Assembly, according to a projection by pollster Elabe, with 289 required for an absolute majority. Macron and his allies are projected to win between 90 and 130. BLOOMBERG

### Hollywood helps Biden raise \$30m for campaign

**Los Angeles:** Some of Hollywood's brightest stars headlined a fundraiser for Prez Joe Biden that took in a record \$30 million-plus for a Democratic candidate, according to his campaign. George Clooney, Julia Roberts and Barbra Streisand were among those who took the stage at the 7,100-seat Peacock Theatre in Los Angeles on Saturday. Late-night host Jimmy Kimmel and former prez Barack Obama, who both stressed the need to defeat former prez Donald Trump in a race that's expected to be exceedingly close.

During more than half an hour of discussion, Kimmel asked if the country was suffering from amnesia about the ex-



George Clooney and Julia Roberts were among those who took the stage at the fundraising event

prez, to which Biden responded, "all we gotta do is remember what it was like" when Trump was in the White House.

The amount raised outpaced the then-record \$26 million from Biden's fundraiser in March in New York that featured late-night host Stephen Colbert interviewing Biden, Obama and Bill Clinton. AP

### Trump challenges Biden to a cognitive test but confuses name of doc who examined him

**D**onald Trump on Saturday suggested Prez Biden "should have to take a cognitive test", only to confuse who administered the test to him in the next sentence. Trump referred to Texas Republican Rep. Ronny Johnson, who was the White House physician for part of his presidency, as "Ronny Johnson." The moment came as Trump was questioning Biden's mental acuity, something he often does on the campaign trail and social media. "He doesn't even know what the word 'inflation' means. I think he should take a cognitive test like I did," the former prez said of Biden during a speech in Detroit. Seconds later, he continued, "Doc Ronny Johnson. Does everyone know Ronny Johnson, congressman from Texas? He was the White House doctor, and he said I was the healthiest president, he feels, in history, so I liked him very much indeed immediately." Jackson was elected to Congress in 2021 and is one of Trump's most vociferous defenders on Capitol Hill. Trump took the cognitive test in 2018 at his own request, Jackson said at the time. The exam is designed to detect early signs of memory loss and other cognitive impairment. AP

### Israel: Will pause daytime fighting in part of S Gaza

**T**he Israeli military said on Sunday it would suspend daytime military operations near a border crossing in southern Gaza every day "until further notice" in order to allow more humanitarian aid to enter the besieged enclave. Israel said that it would halt military activity daily between 8 am and 7 pm along the route that connects the Kerem Shalom crossing to Salah al-Din Road in Gaza and then runs north. Kerem Shalom sits at the intersection of Gaza, Egypt and Israel, which controls the gateway.

The Israeli military later clarified that the pause would be limited and that there would be "no cessation of fighting in the southern Gaza Strip." "The fighting in Rafah is continuing," Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the Israeli military spokesman, said on social media.

It was not immediately clear what effect the pause would have on the volume of aid entering Gaza, where aid groups for months have warned of a hu-

manitarian crisis. To coincide with the pause, Israel said Sunday that 1,000+ aid trucks inspected by the Israeli authorities had crossed into Gaza from Kerem Shalom and were waiting to be unloaded. Distributing that aid, Israeli officials said, would be contingent on relief agencies, on whom they called to pick up the supplies.

The announcement of the pause, made on the Muslim holiday Eid al-Adha, comes amid a flurry of negotiations, mediated by the US, Qatar and Egypt, to reach a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas.

One sticking point in those talks is a disagreement between Hamas and Israel over the permanence of any cessation of hostilities. But by allowing for a limited pause for the delivery of humanitarian aid, Israel signalled that it recognised the magnitude of the crisis in Gaza, where aid agencies say people desperately need food, water, medicines, fuel and other basic supplies. NYT

### AROUND THE WORLD



**FUN WITH A CAUSE:** Amateur surfers participate in 'Paddle for Peace' to mark Juneteenth and International Surf Day in California

### Day after 1st public appearance, Kate takes snap of Will & kids for Father's Day



**'WE LOVE YOU, PAPA'**

a day after Kate, Britain's Princess of Wales, was seen in public for the first time since she revealed she was undergoing treatment for cancer. Kate, William and the children joined King Charles and other members of the royal family on the balcony of Buckingham Palace after watching a military parade to celebrate the monarch's official birthday.

**Unruly passenger who was restrained with duct tape faces record \$81k fine**  
An American Airlines passenger who kicked and spit at flight attendants and passengers and attempted to open the cabin door before she was secured to a seat with duct tape has been sued by the US FAA for \$81,950, the largest fine issued by the agency for unruly behaviour. The passenger, Heather Wells, 34, of San Antonio, was travelling first class on July 7, 2021, when about an hour into the flight she ordered a Jack Daniel's and became agitated and said she "wanted out" of the plane. Wells began running toward the back of the plane, where she dropped to her knees in the aisle and began "talking incoherently to passengers, before crawling back toward the main cabin," the lawsuit said. Wells told a TV channel that she was having mental health issues. The photograph was released

### Why a 3-legged lion and its brother swam across a crocodile-filled river

**O**n a dark night in Feb, two male lions stood in the shallows of the Kazanga Channel in Queen Elizabeth National Park, in Uganda, and looked across the water. Nearly a mile away was the shore on the other side. Hippos and 16-foot crocodiles inhabit the channel, which can be 20 feet deep in places. Barely 12 hours earlier, the two males had lost a battle for territory and were lucky to still be alive. Remaining on this side of the channel was dangerous, and they could probably hear the roars of female lions in the distance. As with many cat species,

lions don't like to swim. And one of the lions, known as Jacob by researchers, has only three legs. He lost a limb in a poacher's trap in 2020. But neither Jacob nor his brother, Tibu, were deterred. The two big cats set out for what the researchers call the longest-recorded swim ever taken by lions. The lions struggled on their first three tries to cross. During the second attempt, the drone that was tracking them picked up a large thermal signature that may have been a crocodile or a hippo in pursuit; the two male lions split into a Y formation before hurrying back to shore. Less



**SURVIVAL:** Researchers say the two male lions swam nearly a full mile across the Kazanga Channel, the longest by big cats ever recorded. The reason: Sex. Uganda's national park's lion population has fallen to around 40 today from 71 lions in 2018 with males outnumbering females 2 to 1

than an hour after their first attempt, the two set out again for a third time. The path seemed clear and they kept going until they crossed the channel. "It was pretty dramatic," said Alexander Braczkowski, a conservation biologist who has been studying the lions since 2017. Lions have been observed swimming in Okavango Delta in Botswana, but rarely farther than 150 feet. In 2012, a lion swam around 330 feet across the Zambezi River, from Zimbabwe to Zambia. In Nov 2023, a young male lion swam across the Rufiji River in Tanzania, crossing as much as 985 feet of water.

But Braczkowski estimated that the two lions swam nearly a full mile. Why would lions make such a dangerous crossing? "Sex," said Craig Packer, who ran the Serengeti Lion Project for 35 years. "If there's nobody to mate with, what are you doing?" According to Braczkowski, the park's lion population has fallen to around 40 today from 71 lions in 2018, with at least 17 lions, mostly females, poisoned by nearby residents aiming to protect their livestock. Males outnumber females 2 to 1. "These males and these swimming events are a symptom of this problem." NYT

"WE'VE LET THE ENTIRE NATION DOWN AND WE ARE SORRY. BUT WE HAVE NEVER TRAVELLED THIS MUCH FOR A WORLD CUP. IT'S NOT AN EXCUSE. ONLY SRI LANKA AND THE DUTCH PLAYED FOUR MATCHES IN FOUR DIFFERENT LOCATIONS."

—Angelo Mathews | SL ALLROUNDER



# USA DONE, OFF TO THE CARIBBEAN

India To Hit Nets Today In Barbados To Prepare For Super 8 Tie Vs Afghans

**TIMES IN THE US**  
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Miami: It's travel time. The American duty is over for India and now we're into what matters most — the Super-8 in the West Indies.

There wasn't everything perfect about the US leg — bad pitches, poor outfield, washed out game — but India didn't find it too tough to cross the first hurdle of the month-long marathon. Now it's Afghanistan, Bangladesh (most likely) and Australia in Barbados, Antigua and St Lucia respectively. And with two teams going ahead from the group — Rohit Sharma's boys should be there in Guyana for the semifinal on June 27.

With their last league game against Canada at Fort Lauderdale getting washed out without a ball being bowled, Team India players got a bit of time to put their feet up and relax. But with no practice also possible since their last match in New York on June 12, batting coach Vikram Rathour sounded a little worried. "This was of course not ideal. We would have preferred to build on the momentum and this was the game to express ourselves. But there's not much we can do about it," Rathour said.

The Indian team will hit the nets in Barbados on June 17 to prepare for their game against Afghanistan — a team that has been in fine form so far. But much like India, they, too, haven't played in Barbados and will have to adapt to conditions. The England vs Australia game was played at the Kensington Oval where the Aussies had plundered 201 and then leggie Adam Zampa got 2/28 to become Man of the Match.

Unlike Nassau County Ground in New York, where India played their three games, the Kensington Oval pitch should be batting-friendly and with no dew in the equation, the spinners, too,



Rohit Sharma and team during one of their league encounters

could come in handy.

It's to be seen whether India stick to the four-pacer theory or drop Mohammed Siraj, whose form has been slightly up and down, and play Kuldeep Yadav as the third spinner. Rathour kept the options open when he said: "We need to be a flexible team. We need to look at the conditions that are in front of us and be ready to deal with those. We'll react to what we get on that day and we have the resources to deal with any condition," Rathour said.

Afghanistan, of course, is a team that banks heavily on spinners with Rashid Khan leading the line. Mohammed Nabi and Noor Ahmed are the two other spinners who should get the nod. All of them were part of the IPL and they know everything about bowling to the Indian batters.

For India, it will be crucial that Virat

Kohli, who had an indifferent USA leg with scores of 1, 4 and 0, gets into the groove. Opening the batting, it could well be on Kohli to take the attack to the Afghan bowlers, and we might see him playing the slog sweep, a weapon that he has included in his arsenal to deal with the spin.

Rathour insists that a "hungrier" Kohli, following his slight bad patch in New York, could be even more dangerous. "I have absolutely no concern about his form. He batted superbly in the IPL and a couple of dismissals here doesn't change anything. Actually, it's good that he is a little hungrier, he is really keen to do well and really switched on," Rathour said.

That should be music to the ears of all those fans who have been waiting for India to break a decade-long ICC title jinx. The signs so far aren't bad at all.

# Pant, Arshdeep emerge as key players for India

Team Looking Forward To More Contributions From The Duo

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Miami: These are two guys at two different ends of the spectrum. One's a phenomenal talent who is still lucky to be alive, let alone playing, while the other is an honest trier who keeps fighting.

Rishabh Pant and Arshdeep Singh are two completely different personalities, but if you're to closely analyse India's United States leg of the T20 World Cup — they are the two stars who have gone slightly under the radar.

Arshdeep, of course, has won a Man of the Match award with a spell of 4/9 against the United States, but Pant's contribution has almost gone unnoticed. In all the three games that India won, the wicketkeeper-batter who is playing for India for the first time after his life-threatening injury late in 2022, played crucial knocks. 36 not out, 42 and 18 might not look huge, but if you put it in context, the importance becomes clearer.

Pant is batting at No. 3, a position that is always reserved for the crème-de-la-crème of any batting line-up. And in New York, Pant came into bat when India lost the early wicket of Virat Kohli with virtually nothing on the board.

The world knows Pant is a dynamite with the bat, but what made it special for him here was he wasn't always at his destructive best. Yet, the southpaw never went below run a ball, in fact his 31-ball 42 against Pakistan was probably the best batting effort on the New York minefield by any batter.

Pant's promotion to the No. 3 spot was the product of a brain-wave of captain Rohit Sharma, who seems to have meticulously prepared for this T20 World Cup after the heartbreak of the ODI World Cup in India. "The moment I saw Pant



Arshdeep Singh and Rishabh Pant celebrate a Pakistan wicket during the league stage

bat in the IPL, I knew where he would be batting in the World Cup," Rohit said in one of his press conferences. "The decision was communicated to the wicketkeeper-batter early and the 26-year-old has gone out of his way to justify the captain's faith in him.

In New York before the first game, on a practice pitch which everyone was avoiding due to its uneven nature, Pant asked the throwdown expert to test him with vicious short balls from less than 22 yards. Pant was getting hit on the body a few times, but you could see that the lion-hearted cricketer was trying to overcome fear.

The team management was also looking to have the left-right combination going through the middle-order, something that Pant's promotion facilitates. In his decision to promote Pant to No. 3, Rohit is in fact looking forward to the West Indies leg as well, where he wants to use the dasher's counter-attacking abilities.

"The kind of ability he has, it's always tough to find the right number for Pant. But with three right-handers in the top four, I thought it was nice to have him in the middle. And later on, in West Indies, when spin is going to play a big part, his counterattacking can come into picture in a big

way. He has got an all-round game and we want to utilize that upfront, where he gets to play maximum balls along with some of the other experienced players," Rohit said.

While Pant's batting is crucial to India's success going forward, Arshdeep's ability to swing the new ball and deliver the yorker at the death are equally important. The fact that he is also a left-armer adds the much-needed variety to the pace attack, which has three more right-armers.

After doing well against Ireland, Arshdeep was entrusted to bowl the last over against Pakistan, where he did just enough to keep the desperate batters at bay. That was followed by his matchwinning effort against USA and in all probability, if the team management decides to go with three specialist pacers in West Indies in the XI, he will be one of them. Arshdeep, though, doesn't want to think that far. "I remember what (batting coach) Vikram Rathour told us in the team meeting — 'stay where your feet are'. So right now, we just stay in the present and prepare for that."

For now, the Super-8s are "the present" and Arshdeep would surely love to be at the top of his game at the Kensington Oval on Thursday.

# Pakistan register 3-wkt consolation win over Ireland

Lauderhill: Pakistan beat Ireland by three wickets to register a consolation win in their inconsequential T20 World Cup match here on Sunday.

Pakistan and Ireland have already been eliminated from the tournament with India and debutants USA progressing to the Super 8 from Group A.

Left-arm pacers Shaheen Shah Afridi and Mohammad Amir wreaked havoc with the new ball, helping Pakistan restrict Ireland to 106 for nine.

Shaheen finally came to the party, albeit in a lost cause, returning with impressive figures of 3/22, while Amir scalped two wickets for 11 runs as Pakistan bowlers ignited fire on a damp pitch after electing to bowl.

Imad Wasim (3/8) bowled brilliantly while Haris Rauf (1/17) also accounted for a batter: Gareth Delany (31 off 19) and Mark Adair (15 off 19) shared 32-run for the seventh wicket to keep Ireland in the game.

Pakistan made a heavy weather of the chase as they were reduced to 57 for 5 in 9.3 overs before skipper Babar Azam (32 not out) and Abbas Afridi (17) did the repair job.

Barry McCarthy (3/15) was the pick of Ireland bowlers.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Ireland 106/9 (Delany 31; Shaheen 3/22, Imad 3/8, Amir 2/11) lost to Pakistan 111/7 in 18.5 overs (Babar 32 n.o.; McCarthy 3/15). AGENCIES



Pakistan's Shaheen Shah Afridi collides with teammate Usman Khan while taking a catch

# Australia sink brave Scotland; England reach Super 8

Gros Islet (St Lucia): Australia saw off a determined challenge from Scotland to claim a five-wicket victory in a decisive final Group B match of the T20 World Cup for both teams at the Daren Sammy Stadium here on Saturday.

Replying to the Scots' 180 for five, their highest total in a T20 World Cup match, half-centuries from Travis Head (68; 49b, 5x4, 4x6) and Marcus Stoinis (59; 29b, 9x4, 2x6) paced them to the target and a 100 percent winning record in the group with two balls to spare. Tim David's unbeaten 24 off 14 balls finished the job to lift Australia to 186 for five.

But he required a generous slice of luck when dropped at deep mid-wicket before finishing off the match with a huge six in the same direction off the next ball from seamer Brad Wheel.

That result also eliminated Scotland and allowed title-holders Eng-



Marcus Stoinis in action against Scotland

land, who beat Namibia by 41 runs earlier in the day in a rain-affected match in Antigua, to qualify for the Super Eight alongside Australia.

Earlier, Brandon Mc Mullen led the Scottish effort with a top score of 60 off 34 balls after they were put in. His ultra-aggression, and support

from opener George Munsey (35) in an 89-run second-wicket partnership, pushed the scoring rate up to ten runs per over. However Australia were able to regain a measure of containment when McMullen fell to leg-spinner Adam Zampa in the 12th over. Despite a battling unbeaten 42

from skipper Richie Berrington, only 69 runs came off the last 52 balls of the innings when Scotland would have been looking to put up a total in excess of 200.

Glenn Maxwell's off-spin earned him the best figures of two for 44 although Zampa was the most economical, conceding 30 runs off his four overs.

A team that prides itself on impeccable fielding and catching, Australia fell away from that high standard with six chances, of varying degrees of difficulty, being put down by the 2021 champions.

**Brook boost for England**

Anything other than win would have seen England knocked out and they were left fearing an early exit when rain delayed the scheduled start by three hours. England, in a match eventually reduced to 10 overs per side, collapsed to 13-2 after losing

the toss. But a stand of 56 between the Yorkshire duo of Harry Brook (47 not out off 20 balls) and Jonny Bairstow (31) helped take them to a total of 122-5.

Namibia were left with a target of 126 under the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern method for rain-interrupted matches. But they were never up with the required run-rate against England's new-ball duo of Reece Topley (0-6 in two overs) and Jofra Archer (1-15), with the non-T20 nation finishing on 84-3.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Scotland 180/5 (McMullen 60, Berrington 42 n.o., Munsey 35; Maxwell 2-44) lost to Australia 186/5 in 19.4 overs (Head 68, Stoinis 59, David 24 n.o.; Watt 2-34, Sharif 2-42). England 122/5 in 10 overs (Brook 47 n.o., Bairstow 31; Truempelmann 2-31) bt Namibia 84/3 in 10 overs (Van Lingen 33, Wiese 27). AGENCIES

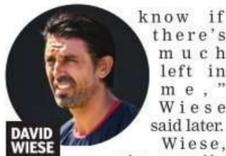
# Wiese retires from international cricket

North Sound (Antigua): Namibia allrounder David Wiese has retired from international cricket after his teams final T20 World Cup group stage match against England on Sunday.

Namibia's campaign ended after their third group stage loss on Sunday to defending champion England. Their only win in the tournament came against Oman.

After Wiese was dismissed in the final over of Namibia's chase, he raised his helmet and bat to the crowd as he walked off before being greeted by his teammates at the dugout.

"The next T20 World Cup is still two years away, I'm 39 years old now, so in terms of international cricket, I don't



David Wiese, who usually bats in the middle order, was promoted up the order to no. 3, smashed two sixes and a four in successive Adil Rashid in his 27 off 12 innings.

Originally from South Africa, Wiese has played in three consecutive T20 World Cups for Namibia. Wiese made his T20 debut for South Africa in 2013 and his ODI debut in 2015. He also represented the Proteas in the 2016 T20 World Cup. IANS

## GALLERY

### Archer Bhajan claims gold, earns Olympic quota place

Unheralded Bhajan Kaur earned India an Olympic quota place in the women's recurve archery by winning gold in the final Olympic Qualifier tournament in Antalya, Turkey, on Sunday, reports Archiman Bhaduri from Kolkata. Her teammate Anika Bhakat too was eligible for the quota place when the Kolkata-born archer made the quarterfinals, but the single berth on offer in the event went to Kaur as she fared better than Bhakat. India, who missed out on team quota places in both men's and women's categories earlier in the competition, will thus make it to the mixed team event too in Paris as Dhiraj Bommadevara had already won a men's quota place. Deepika Kumari lost to Azerbaijan's Yaylagul Ramazanova 4-6 in the third round after leading 4-0.

**Results: Women: Final:** Bhajan Kaur bt Mobina Fallah (Iran) 6-2 (28-26, 29-29, 29-26, 29-29). **Quarters:** Anika Bhakat lost to Mobina Fallah (Iran) 4-6 (27-27, 27-28, 29-27, 27-28, 29-29).

**Diksha tied third:** India's Diksha Dagar returned an even par 72 in the second round of the Ladies Italian Open golf tournament to be tied third at 5-under 139 in Rome. Diksha is two shots behind sole leader England's Amy Taylor (70-67) who is 7-under. Pranavi Urs (73-70, T-41) also made the cut. Ridhima Dilawari (75-73) and Vani Kapoor (72-77) bowed out. **Other scores: Meijer LPGA Classic (Grands Rapids, US):** 207: Aditi Ashok (68, 70, 69).

**Walsh sets record:** Katie Ledecky qualified for her fourth Olympic Games and Gretchen Walsh set a world record on the opening night of the US swimming trials in Indianapolis on Saturday. Seven-time gold medalist Ledecky won the 400m freestyle gold with a time 3 minutes, 58.35 seconds. Walsh's record of 55.18s came in the women's 100m butterfly semifinal heat. The previous mark of 55.48 seconds was set by Sweden's Sarah Sjöström in 2016.

### Pranathi wins silver, Gowthami bronze:

Karnataka athletes Pranathi (2:51.67s) and Gowthami (1:62m) claimed silver and bronze medals in the girls 1,000m and high jump respectively at the National Youth Athletics Championships in Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, on Sunday. Rajasthan's Muskan (2:51.11) topped the 1,000m charts while Tamil Nadu's Akslin M (2:53.37) finished third. In the high jump, Haryana's Prachi won gold with a jump of 1.71m while her state-mate Pooja clinched silver with 1.69m.

**Sujith scores brace:** Sujith struck a brace as Gameon Hockey Club scored a 6-2 win over Primrose HC in the 93rd State Level Travancore Cup hockey tournament in Bengaluru on Sunday. **Results:** Germanite Hockey Academy 3 (Sumit Kethan 9, 48, Arun 42) bt New Ashoka Hockey Club 1 (Mahendran P 37); Naveen Hockey Club 5 (Parasu 10, Ajith 33, Miteesh 38, Naveen Kumar CN 42, Manoj 48) bt Ideal Sports Academy 0; Gameon Hockey Club 6 (Pranav 4, Sujith 9, 47, Yogesh 12, Shrin 32, Lokesh 43) bt Primrose HC 2 (Dennis 19, Kiran 27). **Today's matches:** IISC Gymkhana Club Vs Southern Alpha Sports Academy (1.30pm); Leo's Sports Club Vs Bengaluru Blues HC 'B' (3pm).

**India women finish 5th, men 6th:** India women finished fifth and their men counterparts sixth in the Asian Team Squash Championships which concluded in Dalian, China, on Sunday. The Indian women's side beat Iran 2-0 in the match to decide the fifth and sixth positions. However, the men's team lost to South Korea 1-2.

**Lovlina clinches silver:** Lovlina Borgohain lost to China's Li Qian 2-3 to settle for silver in the women's 75kg contest at the Grand Prix Usti nad Labem boxing tournament in the Czech Republic.

**De Minaur clinches title:** Australian top seed Alex De Minaur beat American Sebastian Korda 6-2, 6-4 to win the 's-Hertogenbosch grasscourt Wimbledon warm-up on Sunday. The win in the Netherlands ensured the 25-year-old will reach a career-high world ranking of seven. **Result: Final:** 1-Alex De Minaur (Aus) bt 7-Sebastian Korda (USA) 6-2, 6-4.

# India ride on Smriti's century

## Asha Bags 4 As Hosts Drub SA by 143 Runs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Smriti Mandhana's 26-month wait for her sixth ODI ton ended on Sunday as she spearheaded India's charge against South Africa women in the opening match at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here. The southpaw, whose previous ODI hundred came against West Indies at the World Cup in March 2022, was the standout performer in the crushing 143-run victory which helped the hosts take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

On the back of Smriti's 117 (127b, 12x4, 1x6) and lower-order contributions from Deepti Sharma (37) and Pooja Vastrakar (31 n.o), India scored 265/8 in their 50 overs after Ayabonga Khaka's three-fer. Debutant Asha Sobhana also joined the party, scalping four wickets with her flight and spin to dismiss the visitors for 122 runs. The leg-spinner's first wicket was Marizanne Kapp (24) in the 22nd over before she bagged the last three South African wickets to complete the rout in style.

Smriti's teammates gave her a standing ovation as she raised her bat to celebrate the century in the



IMPRESSIVE: Smriti Mandhana in action on Sunday

43rd over. She deserved the adulation after bailing India out of trouble on a tricky surface. After opting to bat first, the home team lost wickets regularly. They were five wickets down, including those of skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (10), Shafali Verma (7) and Jemimah Rodrigues (17), before India reached the three-figure mark. While lower-order batters Deepti and Pooja came up with useful contributions, the onus continued to be on Smriti to take her team to a good total and she did not disappoint. First up, the

sixth-wicket partnership of 81 with Deepti kept the scoreboard ticking. After Deepti was sent back by Khaka, Smriti and Vastrakar were involved in a 58-run stand before the Mumbaikar was caught by Sune Luus off Masabata Klaas in the 47th over, helping India compile a competitive total.

**Brief scores: India women: 265/8 in 50 overs** (Smriti Mandhana 117, Deepti Sharma 37, Pooja Vastrakar 31 n.o.; Ayabonga Khaka 3-47, Masabata Klaas 2-51) **bt South Africa women: 122 all out in 37.4 overs** (Sune Luus 33, Marizanne Kapp 24, Sinalo Jaf-ta 27 n.o.; Deepti 2-10, Asha Sobhana 4-21).

# DeChambeau moves three shots clear

Bryson DeChambeau brushed off hip issues to move three shots clear at the top of the US Open third round leaderboard on Saturday, setting up a potential mouth-watering showdown with world number three Rory McIlroy. On another steamy afternoon at Pinehurst Resort in North Carolina, DeChambeau recovered from an early bogey and troublesome hip that required treatment to return a three-under 67 to lead Frenchman Matthieu Pavon (69), Patrick Cantlay (70) and McIlroy (69) by three.

Further two back and five off the pace are Japan's Hideki Matsuyama (70) and Swede Ludvig Aberg (73), who had held a one shot lead after the second round. DeChambeau will be partnered with Pavon for the final round but it is McIlroy, paired with Cantlay, who will share the spotlight as the former-US Open winners and two of golf's most intriguing figures grapple for the trophy.

McIlroy may be one of golf's most popular figures but DeChambeau has enjoyed the backing of the crowds at Pinehurst. There will also be some golf politics and bragging rights on Sunday with 2020 US Open winner DeChambeau now playing on the Saudi-backed LIV Golf tour and McIlroy, long one of the most vocal critics of the renegade circuit.

**Leading scores (after 54 holes):** 203: Bryson DeChambeau (USA, 67, 69, 67); 206: Matthieu Pavon (Fra, 67, 70, 69); Rory McIlroy (NIR, 65, 72, 69); Patrick Cantlay (USA, 65, 71, 70); 208: Hideki Matsuyama (Jpn, 72, 66, 70); Ludvig Aberg (Swe, 66, 69, 73); 209: Tyrrell Hatton (Eng, 68, 71, 70); Tony Finau (USA, 68, 69, 72). AGENCIES

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MY WIFE WAS VERY, VERY HAPPY FOR ME TO BE HERE. ON SATURDAY IT WAS HER BIRTHDAY AND WE WOULD HAVE BEEN IN SPAIN. IT THEN CAME DIFFERENTLY. MY FIRST CONTACT WITH THE COACH WAS ON WEDNESDAY. I MISSED HIS FIRST CALL."

—EMRE CAN  
GERMANY MIDFIELDER

# BENCH PRESS

**Weghorst takes the pole: Supersub Scores Late Again In Netherlands' 2-1 Win Over A Defiant Poland Team**

**Hamburg:** Modern-day football sometimes shuns the strapping centre forward but Netherlands supersub Wout Weghorst came off the bench to spare their blushes on Sunday and show the value of a number nine with a killer instinct in a 2-1 Euro 2024 win over Poland.

There was no question that the Dutch were the dominant side against a Polish outfit who were perfectly happy to sit and wait for their moments.

Yet goals win games and if the Netherlands are to go far at the tournament they will need to sharpen their knives after a largely wasteful display in Hamburg.

The Dutch started the game with a dynamic front three of Cody Gakpo, Memphis Depay and Xavi Simons who were full of running and creative interplay, carving apart the Poles and creating chance after chance. They had 64% of possession and 20 shots on goal but apart from Gakpo's deflected effort in the 29th minute to level the scores, the opportunities came and went.

As the Netherlands' hopes of opening their Group D campaign with a victory started to fade, boss Ronald Koeman summoned Weghorst off the bench in the 81st minute, one of a number of changes he made as he looked to shift the dial in their favour. Two minutes later, the Netherlands had the lead as Weghorst latched on to Nathan Ake's pass and rifled the ball into the back of the net left-footed.

Weghorst, who came on with the Dutch trailing 2-0 to Argentina at the 2022 World Cup to score twice, has



**FINISH LINE:** Wout Weghorst (9) does the job for the Netherlands

<b>POLAND</b>	<b>1</b>
Buksa 16	
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	<b>2</b>
Gakpo 29 Weghorst 83	

## STATS THE WAY

Poland		N'lands
12	Goal attempts	21
7	On target	4
33%	Possession	67%
293	Passes	583
78%	Pass accuracy	88%
10	Fouls	8
0	Yellow cards	1
0	Red Cards	0
2	Offsides	0

netted with his past three shots at major tournaments.

And underlining his super-sub credentials, it was the third consecutive game in which he has come off the bench to score for the Dutch.

"A real No.9 knows exactly where he needs to be to get those sort of goals," said former Netherlands striker and Dutch TV analyst Pierre van Hooijdonk.

Those who have followed Weghorst's club career would be forgiven for thinking they are watching a different player from the version who lines up for the Dutch.

He scored no goals in 17 league

games during a dismal loan spell at Manchester United last season, while this campaign he has scored seven in 28 games for his loan club Hoffenheim in the Bundesliga. He has bagged the same number for the Dutch this season in 11 appearances.

While the victory was deserved, Poland can take some solace from a competitive display when many had been predicting a more comprehensive defeat. There was some trepidation among Polish fans after they scraped into the tournament through the playoffs following a woe-filled qualifying campaign, even if their recent form had shown more

promise. With record scorer Robert Lewandowski, who boasts a remarkable 82 goals in 150 internationals, sidelined through injury, it was always going to be an uphill task.

There are occasions when losing your best player can be a blessing in disguise, as a team that has become overly reliant on an individual's brilliance is forced into a rethink.

In came Adam Buksa to lead the line, a big man to replace a big star and not only did the 1.93-metre striker open the scoring for the Poles but his all-round game gave the Dutch defence headaches. REUTERS

"WE SHOULD HAVE MADE MORE USE OF OUR OPPORTUNITIES. WE HAVE TO GIVE A HUG TO WOUT. ALL THE SUBS PERFORMED GREAT TODAY."

—Cody Gakpo, DUTCH GOALSCORER

"I TRIED TO EXPLAIN TO EACH PLAYER THE POSSIBILITY FOR STARTING OR COMING ON THE FIELD IN THE SECOND HALF WHEN WE MIGHT NEED A DIFFERENT APPROACH. AND WOUT WAS A LITTLE UPSET. THAT'S A GREAT MENTALITY FROM THE PLAYER."

—Ronald Koeman, DUTCH COACH

## TONIGHT'S TUSSLES

<b>Group E</b>	
Romania vs Ukraine	6.30pm
Belgium vs Slovakia	9.30pm
<b>Group D</b>	
France vs Austria	12.30am

Live on Sony Sports Network

## STANDINGS: GROUP A STANDINGS: GROUP B

TEAMS	P	W	D	L	GD	Pt
Ger	1	1	0	0	4	3
Swi	1	1	0	0	2	3
Hun	1	0	0	1	-2	0
Sco	1	0	0	1	-4	0

TEAMS	P	W	D	L	GD	Pt
Spain	1	1	0	0	3	3
Italy	1	1	0	0	1	3
Alb	1	0	0	1	-1	0
Cro	1	0	0	1	-3	0

# Slovenia spoil Eriksen's fairytale Euro return

**Midfielder Scores Three Years after His Onfield Collapse**

**Stuttgart:** Denmark captain Christian Eriksen marked a memorable return to the European Championship three years after suffering a cardiac arrest at the previous edition of the tournament, scoring the goal that secured a 1-1 draw with Slovenia in their Group C opener on Sunday.

**Group C: SLOVENIA 1 (Janza 77) DENMARK 1 (Eriksen 17)**



**BE RIGHT BACK:** Christian Eriksen scores the opening goal

The 32-year-old missed his team's run to the semi-final in 2021 after his shock on-pitch collapse in the opening match against Finland. On Sunday he did not waste any time to put the trauma of that game behind him as he played his first Euro game since then.

In a textbook playmaking performance, especially in a strong Danish first half, Eriksen orchestrated their game and set a quick early pace as per the orders of coach Kasper Hjulmand who fielded two strikers. He delivered almost

all of their set pieces while also scoring a 17th minute goal that handed the Danes the lead in a performance that will go a long way in silencing the critics.

Were it not for his team mates' sloppy finish, he could have added an assist or two to his match stats.

Only a few months ago this seemed a very unlikely scenario. "The Christian Eriksen we all know, he is no longer there. Christian Eriksen doesn't play football anymore," former Denmark and Real Madrid player Thomas Gravesen said in his scathing

criticism of the international. "Christian Eriksen sits on the bench and watches football. Christian Eriksen as we know him, he is no more." Eriksen was coming off a disappointing season with Manchester United that saw him earn little playing time under coach Eric ten Haag. That was hardly the run-up he needed for a major tournament. Many fans back home were surprised that Hjulmand had kept faith with him, while others were certain the midfielder was well past his best. REUTERS

# Deschamps eyes a ton of triumphs

**Hamburg:** After a shock last 16 exit from Euro 2020 and finishing runners-up as hosts in 2016, France can do themselves a big favour with a decisive win against an in-form Austria on Monday to stamp their authority on the tournament early on.

When coach Didier Deschamps takes to the dugout on Monday for France's European Championship opener, it will be an opportunity to register a phenomenal 100th win in charge of the team.

The 55-year-old is by some margin the most experienced coach at the tournament in Germany, with his almost 12 years in charge of Les Bleus, and brings with him impressive credentials as a player too.

Monday's Group D match in Dusseldorf marks Deschamps' 154th game as French coach with 99 wins, 30



## MBAPPE AGAINST 'DIVISIVE IDEAS' EVEN AS OFFICIALS URGE RESPECT FOR TEAM'S NEUTRALITY

France captain Kylian Mbappe declared himself "against extremes and divisive ideas" when asked about crucial upcoming legislative elections in the country. "We are a generation that can make a difference. We see the extremes are knocking on the door of power and we have the opportunity to shape our country's future," he said.

The striker also defended comments made by his teammate Marcus Thuram, saying he "had not gone too far" in calling on the country "to fight every day to stop" the far-right National Rally winning the elections. France's football federation has called for the national team's neutrality to be respected and for Les Bleus to not be politicised.

**80** Kylian Mbappe is on course to play his 80th game for France and a hat-trick would take him to 50 career international goals.

**80** (The political) situation is even more important than the game tomorrow. One does not impede the other, not at all. We know that it is a pivotal moment for French history, this is a never-before-seen event.—Mbappe

## AUSTRIA VS FRANCE

Dusseldorf Arena

**HEAD TO HEAD (25 games)**

AUSTRIA WON 9 DRAW 3

FRANCE WON 13

## FORM GUIDE

**AUSTRIA**

D W W W W

**FRANCE**

D W W L D

(most recent first)

draws and 24 losses in a glory-filled career, where consistency and calmness have been his hallmarks. He has been coach of his side more than three years longer than the next most experienced manager at Euro 2024 — England's Gareth Southgate.

There is the possibility in Germany for him to become the first to win the World Cup and the Euros as both a player and a coach but that is not something he said he was concerned about. AGENCIES

# Romania face tough test against Ukraine

**Munich:** While Romania cruised through the qualifying stages and topped their group, they face a stern test in their return to the European Championship finals after eight years when they take on an experienced and motivated Ukraine side on Monday.

Ukraine, making their fourth straight Euros appearance, have a talented squad with players such as Chelsea winger Mykhailo Mudryk and have a fierce desire to put on a performance to give supporters facing war at home something to cheer.

With manager Serhiy Rebrov's side appearing in their first major tournament since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, the former player underlined the importance of their opening Group E clash at the Munich Football Arena.

"I see a lot of kids supporting us when we play and it definitely gives our players extra motivation," Rebrov said. "Wherever we play we feel the support of all Ukrainians for whom football is a source of positive emotion."

## BELGIUM VS SLOVAKIA

Frankfurt Arena

**HEAD TO HEAD (3 games)**

BELGIUM WON 1

DRAW 2

SLOVAKIA WON 0

## FORM GUIDE

**BELGIUM**

W W D D W

**SLOVAKIA**

W W D L W

(most recent first)

## ROMANIA VS UKRAINE

Munich Football Arena

**HEAD TO HEAD (6 games)**

ROM WON 3

DRAW 1

UKRAINE WON 2

## FORM GUIDE

**ROMANIA**

D D L D W

**UKRAINE**

W L D W W

(most recent first)

# Lukaku looks for redemption

**Frankfurt:** Romelu Lukaku cut a disbelieving figure after missing a succession of chances in Belgium's 0-0 draw with Croatia that sealed an early exit from the 2022 World Cup, but returns to the big stage at the European Championship hoping to banish those memories.

A half-fit Lukaku managed 53 minutes across Belgium's three games in Qatar and was not at fault for their disastrous group-stage campaign, but it was a low point for the 31-year-old. He will lead the line against Slovakia in Belgium's Group E opener in Frankfurt on Monday having scored 17 goals



**ROMELU LUKAKU**

in 11 national team appearances since the World Cup.

Rejuvenated Belgium hope to banish the memories of a dismal World Cup campaign and extend a 15-match unbeaten run in their European Cham-

pionship Group E opener. The country's golden generation were tarnished by a first-round exit in Qatar but, with several fresh faces in the team and some new energy, Belgium have been unbeaten since coach Domenico Tedesco took over in February last year.

If they keep cool heads in the changing room and their key players remain injury-free, then anything is possible. Belgium have kept clean sheets in 10 of their 15 games and have scored 33 goals, with Romelu Lukaku, Kevin De Bruyne and Jan Vertonghen the old heads among young talents Jeremy Doku, Johan Bakayoko and Amadou Onana.

# Mean boys: Spalletti wants upped ante against Spain

**Holders Italy Come Back Strong After Early Albania Shock**

**Dortmund:** Italy must be meaner and more direct when they face Spain, though they may get more attacking opportunities, coach Luciano Spalletti said after his side's 2-1 win over Albania at Euro 2024 on Saturday.

Having conceded inside 23 seconds, defending champions Italy were ahead after 16 minutes and limited Albania to very few chances until a frantic finish as their opponents pushed for an unlikely equaliser. Spalletti said his team had showed character to recover from the early deficit and displayed a togetherness that will serve Italy well if they progress beyond the group stage. "We switched off but we need to appreciate the desire to try and go and play football even when the going got tough," he said.

Spalletti, who appeared frustrated during the second half, was clear Italy needed to improve, not least on Thursday against Spain who blew Croatia away 3-0 on Saturday. "There are a number of things we still have to improve because we thought we were better than we were in too many situations," he said. "We need to be



**NO DOUBT!** Italy celebrate Barella's winner on Saturday

**Group B: ITALY 2 (Bastoni 11, Barella 16) ALBANIA 1 (Bajrami 1)**

meaner, neat and tidy in the way we build things up, you free up a man but then you need to go and hurt the opposition... we thought we were brilliant at just keeping possession."

But Spalletti suggested Spain's strengths could also play into Italy's hands. "We need to move the

ball a bit more quickly, because we did so badly on occasions tonight, but against Spain there will be (chances) to play the ball forward more," he said. "Because they tend to be more aggressive in their press, there might be greater scope to actually play in behind their defensive line."



## FASTEST GOALS IN EURO HISTORY

- 0:23** Nedim Bajrami (Italy 2-1 Albania, 15/06/2024, group stage)
- 1:07** Dmitri Kirichenko (Russia 2-1 Greece, 20/06/2004, group stage)
- 1:22** Emil Forsberg (Sweden 3-2 Poland, 23/06/21, group stage)
- 1:39** Yussuf Poulsen (Denmark 1-2 Belgium, 17/06/2021, group stage)
- 1:40** Robert Lewandowski (Poland 1-1 Portugal, aet, Portugal win 5-3 on pens, 30/06/2016, quarter-final)

# Fans lay wreaths at Dachau site for Nazi victims

**Cologne:** Fans from Scotland, Ukraine, Germany, Israel and other nations laid wreaths at the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site on Saturday to commemorate victims of the Nazis, vowing "never again" and to use football as a force to unite people.

The group toured the camp and heard how the Nazis had persecuted Jewish footballers and coaches, forced prisoners to play soccer for propaganda before banning it, then allowed only some inmates to play under the camp's hierarchy of privileges for different categories of prisoner. Fans also heard the children of former camp victims tell their parents' stories, walked in procession with a Scottish bagpiper.

Dachau is half an hour's drive from Munich's football stadium, where Euro 2024 began on Friday. It was one of the first concentration camps to be set up by the Nazis, weeks after Adolf Hitler took power in January, 1933.

"It is a sombre place. You walk in and it is an uncomfortable feeling. But I think this sort of service is important to remember what happened, to



make sure we learn from mistakes... it has opened our minds to a lot of things," said Cole Cattanach, 21, a Scottish student from Falkirk, travelling through Germany to support the Scotland team. Andreas Erbel, representing German football fans, said he came to the commemoration to help protect democracy. "I wanted to show that there is also a counterweight to the move to the right across Europe, that there are more people... who are open to the world."

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