

# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI MONDAY 24 JUNE 2024



**NATION | 3**

**Rahul Gandhi pens letter to Wayanad people, says their love protected him**



**WORLD | 6**

**If you vote, we can't lose: Ex-US President Trump tells evangelical Christians**

**DELHI AGE | 16**

**Siddharth Mallya marries Jasmine in an intimate ceremony in London**



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**WINDOWS**



Sonakshi Sinha and Zaheer Iqbal during a photoshoot at their wedding ceremony in Mumbai on Sunday. — PTI

Report on Page 16

**Delhi water crisis: AAP delegation meets L-G Saxena**

**New Delhi:** A delegation of AAP met Delhi lieutenant-governor V.K. Saxena on Sunday over the water crisis in the national capital and said they were assured that the matter would be taken up with the Haryana government. Delhi minister Saurabh Bharadwaj, AAP MP Sanjay Singh and AAP MLA Somnath Bharti were among the 10-member delegation that met Mr Saxena. "The monsoon is expected around June 28. The rains have already started in Shimla and Himachal Pradesh. It is a matter of one week. We have requested him to get Delhi water for this one week," Mr Bharadwaj said. Full report on Page 2

**Jaishankar in UAE for bilateral talks**

**Abu Dhabi:** External affairs minister S. Jaishankar on Sunday arrived here to hold wide-ranging talks with his United Arab Emirates counterpart Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Mr Jaishankar visited the iconic BAPS Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi before the meeting with Al Nahyan. Full report on Page 3

**BSP's Mayawati picks her nephew 'successor' again**

**Lucknow:** BSP president on Sunday declared nephew Akash Anand her successor and made him the party's national coordinator, reversing her own previous decision. In the middle of the Lok Sabha elections on May 7, she had termed Akash Anand immature and relieved him of the party post. — PTI Full report on Page 3

**COUNTERPOINT**



Don't worry, sir... we will arrange life jackets for all VVIPs during inauguration!

**WEATHER**

Max: 39°C  
Min: 32°C  
RH: 43%  
Rain: 10%

Forecast: Cloudy

**ASTROGUIDE**

**Krodhi:** Uttarayana  
Tithi: Jyeshtha Bahula  
Tadiya till 1.22 am  
Star: Uttarashada till 3.52 pm  
Varjyam: 7.38 pm to 9.09 pm  
Durmuhurtam: 12.45 pm to 1.37 pm; 3.21 pm to 4.13 pm  
Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am  
SUNSET TODAY 7.23 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.25 AM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 10.28 PM  
MOONSET TODAY 7.20 AM

**PM to take oath in LS today Speaker election on June 26**

**Parliament to meet today: Row over pro-tem Speaker likely by NDA, Opp.**

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

Amid a strong possibility of the first face-off between the government and the Opposition, the first session of the 18th Lok Sabha will begin on Monday. The special session will essentially focus on oath-taking by all newly elected Lok Sabha members, followed by the election of the Speaker on June 26 and President Droupadi Murmu's address to the joint sitting of both Houses on June 27. Clouds of confrontation between the treasury benches and the Opposition, particularly the Congress, have started looming over the inaugural session as the Congress is determined to challenge the government from the beginning itself. The President has appointed BJP leader and seven-term member Bhartruhari Mahtab as pro-tem Speaker. She had also named Congress' Kodikunnil Suresh, DMK's T.R. Baalu, BJP's Radha Mohan Singh and Faggan Singh Kulaste and TMC's Sudip Bandyopadhyay to assist



Union home minister Amit Shah chairs a high-level meeting in New Delhi on Sunday to review the preparedness to deal with floods that affect various parts of the country. Union minister C.R. Paatil and home secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla are also seen. — PTI

**THE CONGRESS** has questioned the selection of Bhartruhari Mahtab as pro-tem Speaker as it was pitching for K. Suresh for the post, saying he is the senior-most MP in the House

Mr Mahtab in administering the oath to the newly elected members of the Lok Sabha.

The Congress has questioned the selection of Mr Mahtab as it was pitching for Mr Suresh for the post, saying he is the senior-most MP in the House. Unhappy with the

government's decision, the Congress withdrew its members from the panel to assist Mr Mahtab. Other Opposition members on the panel — Mr Baalu and Mr Bandyopadhyay — also withdrew their names.

Parliamentary affairs minister Kiren Rijju asserted that Mr Mahtab has had seven uninterrupted terms as a Lok Sabha member, making him eligible for the post, while Mr Suresh had a break in tenure after he lost elections in 1998 and 2004, which makes his

**HM chairs meet to review flood preparedness**

**New Delhi, June 23:** Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday reviewed the preparedness to deal with floods that affect various parts of the country during the monsoon. Every year, large areas of Bihar, Assam and other eastern states are inundated due to a rise in the water level of various rivers due to monsoon rains. "The home minister chaired a high-level meeting here and reviewed overall preparedness for flood management in the country," a home ministry official said.

Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and a few other states also encounter landslides and other rain-related issues during the monsoon. — PTI

More on Page 3

**INDIA LS MPs to gather in Parl, march together**

**New Delhi, June 23:** Lok Sabha MPs from the INDIA bloc will assemble in the Parliament complex Monday morning and will march to the House together on the first day of the first session of 18th Lok Sabha, sources said.

The MPs will gather near Gate No. 2 of the old Parliament building, where the Gandhi statue once stood, a senior Opposition party leader said. The Gandhi statue, which was a popular protest site for MPs in the Parliament complex, was recently relocated along with 14 other statues that dotted the complex. — PTI

**BJP targets INDIA bloc, asks why leaders quiet on TN hooch deaths?**

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

The Parliament session is expected to be a stormy affair with an upbeat Opposition, with its increased tally of Lok Sabha MPs, all set to corner the government on issues like Neet, railway safety and protem Speaker, while the BJP-led NDA government is ready to counter the Opposition and made its intent clear by questioning the INDIA bloc leaders' silence on the hooch tragedy in DMK-ruled

**THE BJP** alleged that the INDIA bloc leaders are silent on the issue as it does not serve their politics and asked M.K. Stalin to clarify if he was 'complicit' in the incident that took place in the state

Tamil Nadu. Sharpening its attack on the Opposition on the eve of the first session of the 18th Lok Sabha, the BJP labelled the hooch tragedy, in which over 50 people have died, a "state-sponsored murder". The

BJP alleged that the INDIA bloc leaders are silent on the issue as it does not serve their politics and asked Tamil Nadu chief minister M.K. Stalin to clarify if he was "complicit" in the incident that took place in the state's Kallakurichi district.

Addressing the media at the BJP headquarters in the national capital, BJP national spokesperson and MP Sambit Patra hoped that the Opposition alliance leaders who have not spoken on the issue

Turn to Page 4

**2 jawans killed in Sukma as Naxals blow up truck**

**Sukma, June 23:** Two personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force's jungle warfare unit CoBRA were killed after Naxalites blew up a truck with an improvised explosive device (IED) in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district on Sunday, the police said. The Naxal blast took place around 3 pm near Timmapuram village between Silger and Tekalgudem camps of security forces, over 400 km from the state capital Raipur, a senior

police official said. An advance party of the 201st unit of Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) had launched patrolling from Silger camp under Jagargunda police station limits as a part of its Road Opening Party duty towards Tekalgudem, he said. The security personnel were on motorcycles while their luggage and rations were being ferried in the ill-fated truck, he said. — PTI

More on Page 4

**Maratha activist for Muslim quota**

Seeks reservation under OBC category, may complicate Maha politics

BHAGWAN PARAB MUMBAI, JUNE 23

In a demand that is further likely to complicate the reservation issue in Maharashtra, Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange Patil on Sunday insisted that Muslims in the state should also be given a reservation under the OBC category.

Mr Patil, till now, was fighting for the inclusion of his Maratha community in the OBC category and had demanded that Marathas be declared Kunbis, who enjoy reservation in gov-

ernment jobs and educational institutes as OBCs. His call for Muslims to be included in the OBC category is likely to create a new controversy. The demand is also expected to have its echo in the forthcoming budget session of the Maharashtra Assembly, beginning on June 27.

"In the list of OBCs, people were included according to their occupation. Muslim community also does agriculture. We have found old records of Muslims registered as Kunbis because they were involved in agriculture. If that is the case, Muslims should also be included in the OBC category as Kunbis," the activist said.

**THE DEMAND** is also expected to have its echo in the forthcoming budget session of the Maharashtra Assembly, beginning on June 27

occupation. Government records have found that the Muslim community also does agriculture. We have found old records of Muslims registered as Kunbis because they were involved in agriculture. If that is the case, Muslims should also be included in the OBC category as Kunbis," the activist said.

Mr Patil demanded that the government clarify if it is true or not that the occupation was the basis for the inclusion of the Mali community.

"Every community having Kunbi records should be given reservation benefits. Muslims should not be treated unfairly and the government should speak according to the law," he added. However, OBC activist Laxman Hake has countered Mr Patil saying Muslims do not have castes in their religion. Turn to Page 4

**Prajwal brother arrested over sexual assault of male worker**

**Bengaluru/Hassan June 23:** JD(S) MLC Suraj Revanna, the brother of former MP Prajwal Revanna who is facing allegations of sexually abusing several women, was arrested in Hassan on Sunday on charges of "unnatural offences" against him. He was booked on Saturday for allegedly sexually abusing a male party worker a few days ago, and has been booked under various sections of the IPC, including "unnatural offences".

The investigation into the case has been handed over to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

Following this, Suraj was shifted to Bengaluru from Hassan, and produced before the 42nd additional chief metropolitan magistrate Court (ACMM) judge, at his residence here, who remanded him in judicial custody for 14 days.

Suraj, a doctor, was questioned at CEN police station in Hassan overnight before he was arrested on Sunday morning, the police sources said, adding that he was later taken to Hassan Institute of Medical Sciences (HIMS) for medical examination. — PTI

More on Page 4

**Sunak hit by more allegations over UK election date betting**

**London, June 23:** British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is on Sunday dealing with yet another senior party official being involved in placing bets on the date of the general election before July 4 was confirmed, as the scandal engulfing his top aides continues to be investigated by the country's gambling watchdog.

The British Indian leader, who has said he was "incredibly angry" on learning about the allegations that emerged earlier this month, now finds the Conservative



Rishi Sunak Party's chief data officer also being investigated by the Gambling Commission for allegedly betting on the timing of the election before the date had been announced. Following the revela-

tions first reported in *The Sunday Times*, Nick Mason is said to have taken a leave of absence but denies wrongdoing. It comes as a fresh blow for the Rishi Sunak-led Tories, already trailing far behind the Opposition Labour Party in all pre-election opinion polls, after his director of campaigns, Tony Lee, and his Tory MP candidate wife, Laura Saunders, were named earlier in the election date betting investigations. — PTI

More on Page 6



Delhi water minister and AAP leader Atishi during the 3rd day of her indefinite hunger strike over the ongoing water crisis in New Delhi on Sunday. — PTI

Report on Page 2



## IN BRIEF

## HC junks bizman's bail in excise case

**New Delhi:** The Delhi high court has refused to grant interim bail to Hyderabad businessman Arun Ramchandran Pillai, who is lodged in judicial custody in a money laundering case related to the alleged Delhi excise scam, noting that he is receiving adequate medical treatment in jail. Mr Pillai, who sought to be released on interim bail on medical grounds, submitted that his family has taken opinion from ayurvedic doctors who have opined that he needs to be admitted at an ayurvedic centre to undergo 21 days "panchkarma therapy" with further rest of 21 days. The high court said, "Without commenting on the efficacy of Panchkarma treatment with regard to the back pain, suffice to say that the applicant needs to follow the treatment advice of the doctor and even thereafter if he does not get relief and then if so advised, he would be at liberty to file an application to explore the alternative remedies of ayurveda/panchkarma treatment etc." A vacation bench of justice Ravinder Dubeja noted that none of the medical reports even remotely state that Mr Pillai is suffering from any life threatening ailment.

## BJP pays tribute Shyama Prasad

**New Delhi:** The leaders and workers of Delhi BJP on Sunday paid tributes to Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee on his martyrdom day, remembering his contributions to the country and the party. The party organised a prayer meeting remembering the late Mukherjee, founder of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. It was led by Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva, national spokesperson and MP Sudhanshu Trivedi, along with other leaders and workers. Mr Trivedi said, "Dr Mukherjee was not just the founder of our party but the first political martyr of the country. Those who sit in the opposition change with time, but we are the ones who change time." Delhi unit president said, "The country will always be indebted to Dr Mukherjee for his contributions to unity and integrity. If Punjab and Bengal are part of India today, it is solely due to him."

## 10 summoned in Godfrey Philips case

**New Delhi:** A court here has directed the personal appearance of a Delhi police investigating officer on the issue of preservation of CCTV footage linked to the alleged assault on Samir Modi, an executive director of cigarette maker Godfrey Philips India (GPI), during a board meeting on May 30. Metropolitan magistrate Aridamam Singh Cheema was hearing the plea for a court-monitored probe in the FIR registered by Samir Modi at the Sarita Vihar police station. The plea had sought several directions to the police including the preservation of the CCTV footage of the alleged assault by a personal security officer (PSO) of Samir's mother Bina Modi.

## 6 NABBED FOR DUPING MAN OF ₹2.5 LAKHS

**New Delhi:** Six people were arrested for allegedly duping a man from the national capital of around ₹2.50 lakh by claiming an international courier that was being probed by the Mumbai police was booked in his name, officials said on Sunday. The fraudsters asked him to make the payment to avoid legal hassle, the Delhi police officials said. The accused were identified as Vishal Joshi (24), an engineer from Delhi, and five other graduates - Ansh (24) and Samarth (23) from Haryana, Pranjal Kumar Sahni (24), from UP, Satender Dhaka (29) from MP, and Vedant Prabhakar Nagarkar (26) from Maharashtra. "On April 29, complainant Deepanshu Vaid of Vasundhara Enclave reported that he received a call from an unknown number, with the caller impersonating as an employee of an international courier of Mumbai branch," deputy commissioner of police (East) Apoorva Gupta said. The caller claimed that a parcel containing passports, bank cards, clothes, a laptop, some cash and drugs had been booked using Mr Vaid's Aadhaar card and phone number.

Haryana has shut gates of barrage that release water: Mantri  
On Day 3 of Atishi fast, BJP & Cong train guns on AAPAGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

The politics over alleged unavailability of water in Delhi heated up on Sunday as city minister Atishi, who is sitting on an indefinite hunger strike over the issue, accused Haryana of shutting all the gates of the Hathnikund barrage. The Delhi Congress meanwhile accused the AAP and BJP leaders of playing politics with water scarcity instead of finding an amicable solution. The BJP however on their part dubbed the AAP's protest as a drama and blamed the ruling party of neglecting the increasing cases of deaths due to heatwave.

The closure of the gates of the barrage on the Yamuna river, she said, has led to the water shortage in the national capital. The minister claimed that the Haryana government asked how it would release water for Delhi when it did not have adequate supply.

"But yesterday (Saturday), when many journalists went to the Hathnikund barrage, from where water is released for Delhi, everyone took photos and made videos in which it is clearly visible that there is water in the barrage. But the gates from which the water is released for Delhi are closed," she claimed.

"I request the Haryana government with folded hands to open the gates of the barrage. Until the gates of the barrage are opened, this hunger strike will continue," she added. "Today is the third day of my indefinite fast. I am on this fast because there is a huge water crisis. The city does not have its own water and all of it comes from neighbouring states. Delhi needs 1,005 million gallons per day (MGD) of water, out of which 613 MGD comes from Haryana," the minister said, adding that "for the last three weeks, they have reduced the supply and is only sending 513 MGD of water. One MGD fulfils the water needs of 28,500 people which means when they are releasing 100 MGD less, 28 lakh people are not getting water," she alleged.

The minister entered the third day of her hunger strike and asserted she will continue it over the issue. The AAP however said doctors advised her to end her fast as her ketone level returned a positive result

## New Delhi Metro station set to have 3 interchanges

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

The New Delhi Metro station is all set to emerge as a triple interchange facility with the expansion of the Green Line from Inderlok to Indraprastha. The 12.37 km long Inderlok - Indraprastha corridor will expand the already operational Brigadier Hoshar Singh - Inderlok Green Line corridor (28.78 km), official said on Sunday.

On this new extension, the New Delhi station will be expanded as an interchange facility where three lines - Yellow, Orange (Airport Line), and now the Green Line will meet each other. It will be a major connectivity boost for the entire city as now, commuters coming from Bahadurgarh as well as parts of west Delhi such as Nangloi, Rajdhani Park, Udyog Nagar etc. Will be able to travel directly to the New Delhi railway station, adjacent to the New Delhi Metro station, DMRC official said.

This will make access to the New Delhi station more convenient and help decrease congestion near the station as more people will prefer to travel by the Metro than by road. Like the existing New



A doctor examines Delhi minister and AAP leader Atishi during the third day of her indefinite hungerstrike in New Delhi on Sunday. — PTI

## L-G assures AAP netas of resolving water issue

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

Amid the ongoing water crisis, the Delhi lieutenant-governor V.K. Saxena assured an AAP delegation that met him on Sunday that he will try to resolve the issue.

During the meeting, the 10-member delegation highlighted that Delhi has been receiving 113 million gallons per day (MGD) less water than what it is entitled to, a statement said.

The delegation noted that Delhi's population increased from 1.1 crore in 1994 to three crore now while the amount of water it has been receiving remained the same and stressed for urgent action over the matter, it said, adding that the L-G assured the delegation of his commitment to resolving the L-G issue and making every effort to ensure Delhi receives its fair share of water from Haryana, it said.

The L-G reiterated that the apex court's advice that Delhi could approach Haryana for extra water on humanitarian grounds, could be fructified only in an atmosphere of cooperation and amicable dialogue, rather than by indulging into accusations and blame game through

while her blood pressure and sugar levels are down. The BJP Delhi chief Virendra Sachdeva however lashed out at the AAP over unabated death in the city due to heatwaves. He said, "Instead of taking measures to prevent them, the AAP government is



AAP leaders Sanjay Singh and Saurabh Bhardwaj with other party leaders outside lieutenant-governor V.K. Saxena's residence in New Delhi on Sunday. — PTI

media and social media. However the Raj Nivas note stated that, the AAP even after being urged not to indulge in blame game again resorted to the accusations, even as the L-G spoke to Haryana chief minister in the evening who assured that he would seriously look into the matter and try to help tide over the situation, to the farthest possible extent.

The delegation comprised 10 prominent AAP members, including Rajya Sabha MPs Sanjay Singh and N.D. Gupta, General Secretary Pankaj Gupta, Cabinet Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj, and MLAs

Dilip Pandey, Somnath Bharti, Rajesh Gupta and Rituraj Jha. Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said, "We told the L-G that Delhi is getting the same amount of water today as was allocated for it in 1994. Whereas in the 30 years since 1994, Delhi's population has increased three times."

Mr Bharadwaj said a delegation of AAP leaders met the L-G and held a positive discussion. "We told the L-G that there is a shortage of about 113 MGD in the water coming from Haryana right now. Due to this, lakhs of people in Delhi are facing problems."



Employees search their belongings from remains of a company in Gurgaon on Sunday, a day after a blast. Four people were killed and almost 12 seriously injured in the blast. — PTI

## Neet-PG deferral: Students &amp; parents slam Centre; experts say decision was shocking

AVINASH PRABHAKAR  
JHA  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

After the Neet-PG 2024 was postponed a night before the exam on Saturday, several students and parents who had arrived at the exam centres rued allegations of irregularities. The aspirants heavily criticised the decision as many of them had to travel to other cities to appear in the exam.

On the other hand, the health experts and the academicians urged the Centre to preserve the integrity of the exams.

Terming the decision as 'shocking', Dr Manish Jangra, founder of Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA), said, "the decision has raised the question mark over the integrity of the government. It shows that govt is not able to conduct an exam which was planned many months earlier. Many students had booked hotels, flights and even reached the examination center. The decision has shocked the aspirants and will definitely add to the agony of them. Many students wanted to join a job after the exam to survive

## Kejriwal moves SC against interim stay on bail by HC

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has moved the Supreme Court against the high court's interim stay on his bail granted by the trial judge in the money laundering case linked to the excise policy "scam".

In his plea, Mr Kejriwal has urged the apex court that the matter be taken up for hearing on Monday. The plea said: "The manner adopted by the high court in staying the bail order is contrary to the said clear dicta of law laid down by this Hon'ble court and would violate the basis of fundamental threshold on which the bail jurisprudence is premised in our country."

Hours before his anticipated release from Tihar jail, the Delhi high court



Arvind Kejriwal

on Friday accorded an interim stay over the trial court order granting regular bail to Mr Kejriwal in the matter. The high court put a spanner in the relief to the AAP supremo till the pronouncement of its final verdict on an urgent petition by the Enforcement Directorate challenging the bail order. "Arguments are heard. I am reserving this order for two-three days. Till pronouncement, the operation of the impugned order shall

remain stayed," high court's vacation bench of Justice Sudhir Kumar Jain said.

The high court order came on the ED petition challenging the June 20 order passed by Rouse Avenue court judge Nyay Bindu granting bail to the chief minister. The 26-page order passed by the trial judge was made available on Friday, after the ED moved the high court for the cancellation of the bail.

The trial court judge, in her bail order, held that prima facie Mr Kejriwal's guilt was yet to be established. She said: "It may be possible that some persons known to the applicant are having involvement in an offence...But ED has failed to give any direct evidence against the applicant in respect of the proceeds of crime."

## 'Just for fun': Teen held for hoax bomb threat to airport

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

A 13-year-old boy was apprehended for allegedly sending an email to the Delhi Airport falsely claiming that a bomb had been planted in the Dubai-bound flight, the police said on Sunday.

The boy had sent the mail "just for fun" after being influenced by the news of another teenager who made a hoax bomb threat call a few days ago, deputy commissioner of police (IGI Airport) Usha Rangnani said.

The incident occurred on Monday when a complaint was registered regarding a bomb threat on a Dubai-bound flight on June 18, DCP said. Based on the complaint, an FIR was lodged, and an investigation was launched. All the guidelines, protocols and SOPs were followed to ensure

the safety and security of the passengers, DCP said. "Airport was put on high alert, and an emergency was declared," she said. However, during the investigation, the email was found to be a hoax, she said.

"During the investigation, it was revealed that the e-mail ID was deleted just after sending the email. The email was traced at Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand," Ms Rangnani said.

A team was sent, and the boy was apprehended for sending the hoax email, she said. "The boy told the police that his parents had given a mobile to him for study purposes through which he sent the email and later deleted his ID. He did not share any information with his parents as he was scared. He was apprehended and handed over to his parents," she added.

## Rains relief in Delhi; more showers likely for 2 days

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

Light rains and cloudy sky brought some relief for the residents of the national capital on Sunday, with the maximum temperature being recorded at 39.8°C according to the India

meteorological department. According to the weather department, a thunderstorm with rain is expected on June 24 and 25.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) of the national capital was recorded in the "moderate category with a reading of 143 at 6 pm.

## 3 arrested for killing man in scuffle in Shastrri Park

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

Three men were arrested for allegedly killing a man following a scuffle in Delhi's Shastrri Park, the police said on Sunday.

The accused were identified as Akash alias Moossi (24), Yogesh alias Bunty (33), and Rohit (24), all residents of Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh, they said.

The incident occurred on May 30 when the police received information that a man was rushed to the GTB hospital with an incised wound on his body. He was declared dead on arrival, a senior

police officer said.

The deceased was identified as Jauhar Abbas (28), a resident of Shastrri Park and was working as a cab driver, the officer said. The police arrested three people in the case on June 11. Two pistols and eight cartridges were recovered from them, DCP Sanjay Kumar Sain said.

During interrogation, Akash informed that his wife was working in a call centre in Ghaziabad. Her manager, Waqar, had financed a mobile phone using her documents and promised to pay the EMIS, DCP said.

## Man dies after truck hits him

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

A 48-year-old man died allegedly after being hit by a truck here, the police said on Sunday. The accused truck driver, Arun Kumar (22), has been arrested, they said.

The incident happened on June 15 at around 11.30 pm when a speeding truck hit a truck helper, identified as Tribhuvan, in front of the PWD office, near Ring Road, a senior police officer said, adding that he was taken to a hospital where he succumbed.

Police said that they checked CCTV footage and identified the truck.

## SHORT TAKES

### Ink thrown at OPCC president, 5 expelled

**Bhubaneswar:** The Congress on Sunday expelled five of its leaders in Odisha, including the party's state unit general-secretary, for six years for their alleged involvement in an incident in which ink was thrown at OPCC president Sarat Pattanayak. Two masked persons had on Friday thrown ink at the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee chief at its state headquarters here. OPCC general secretary Prakash Mishra, Odisha Pradesh Mahila Congress general-secretary Shriyasmitha Panda, the party's student wing National Students Union of India secretary Sandip Routray, youth Congress state secretary Amresh Parida and NSUI state secretary Aryan Sasmal were expelled for six years, a party leader said. OPCC disciplinary action committee chairman Santosh Singh Saluja issued the expulsion order.

### WB not consulted on Bangla treaty: TMC

**New Delhi:** The ruling Trinamul Congress (TMC) in West Bengal on Sunday criticised the Centre for not consulting the state before taking the decision to start negotiations with Bangladesh for the renewal of the 1996 Ganga Water Sharing Treaty. The criticism by the TMC comes a day after talks were held between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina on a range of issues including the treaty. TMC's parliamentary party leader in Rajya Sabha, Derek O'Brien, said the state is a party to the treaty, but was not consulted. Farakka-Ganga treaty is being renewed without consulting West Bengal, he said. "The state is a party to the treaty. Even our dues for the previous treaty have not been cleared," he said here. — PTI

### BJP youth wing leader killed in MP

**Indore:** A BJP youth wing leader was shot dead by two motorcycle-borne persons in Indore in Madhya Pradesh in the early hours of Sunday, a police official said. Monu Kalyane (35), vice-president of the city unit of Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM), was gunned down in front of a shop near Chimanbaag square on Jail Road at around 2am, additional deputy commissioner of police Ram Snehi Mishra told PTI. "Kalyane and two others were pasting posters at the site when two men came on a motorcycle and asked for his phone number and details of a vehicle rally the deceased was set to organise on Sunday. One of the motorcycle borne persons then fired at Kalyane's chest," he said. "When his friends tried to react, the accused fired in the air and fled," the official said. — PTI

### 'ENSURE AID TO REFUGEES FROM MANIPUR DIST'

AGE CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI, JUNE 23

Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has directed the Cachar district administration, bordering Manipur, to extend humanitarian aid to over 1,700 residents who fled Manipur's Jiribam after the recent violence and took shelter in the district. Displaced people from Manipur's Jiribam are taking shelter in a camp in Cachar's Lakhimpur area. Mr Sarma, who took stock of the situation, gave this direction in a video conferencing with Cachar's district commissioner (DC) Rohan Kumar Jha and superintendent of police (SP) Numal Mahatta. The chief secretary, DGP and other senior officials also attended the meeting. After the meeting, the CMO in a social media post said, "CM Himanta Biswa Sarma held a video conference with Cachar DC and SP on the recent incidents in Jiribam, Manipur, and instructed them to ensure peace and tranquillity is maintained in Cachar." The CM has ordered the officials to ensure all humanitarian aid to those who have taken refuge in the district, the CMO said.

## 'Giving youth's future in greedy people's hands has led to leaks' Priyanka: Edu system handed over to 'mafia' by Modi's govt

**New Delhi, June 23:** Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday attacked Narendra Modi government over the alleged irregularities in national competitive exams, including the Neet-UG, alleging it has handed over the entire education system to the "mafia" and the "corrupt".

Her reaction came a day after the Union education ministry set up a panel to review the functioning of the National Testing Agency (NTA) — the body responsible for conducting the tests — and recommend exam reforms.

The Centre on Saturday also shunted out the agency's director-general Subodh Singh and handed over the probe into the irregularities in medical entrance exam Neet-UG to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

In a post on X, Ms Vadra said the Neet-UG question paper was "leaked" while the Neet-PG, UGC-NET and CSIR-NET exams were "cancelled".

"This is the condition of some of the biggest examinations in the country today. Under the BJP's rule, the entire education system has been handed over to the mafia and the corrupt," the Congress leader said in her post.

"The political stubbornness and arrogance of handing over the country's education and the future of children to greedy and sycophantic incompetent people has made paper leaks," Ms Vadra said. — PTI



Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan and MP Biplob Kumar Deb being welcomed by BJP workers after their arrival in Haryana's Bahadurgarh. — PTI

### Neet case: 2 teachers held in Latur district

SONU SHRIVASTAVA MUMBAI, JUNE 23

The Maharashtra anti-terrorism squad (ATS) has detained two Latur-based teachers in connection with the alleged Neet paper leak. Both teachers worked at a government-run school in Latur and Solapur and also taught at private coaching centres on a clockwise basis.

According to a senior IPS officer, there are a total of four accused named in the FIR. Out of the four, three are teachers and one's profession is yet to be ascertained.

The two accused hail from Latur district — one from Sangli district and one from Nanded district in Maharashtra region. According to the

reports, the two accused have been identified as Sanjay Jadhav and Jalil Pathan. Both of them are working in zilla parishad schools of Latur and Solapur district.

Mr Pathan is a headmaster in the zilla parishad school in Katpur village of Latur district. The education department has sealed all the records of the school, said sources.

Mr Jadhav is a teacher in Zilla Parishad school at Takali village in Solapur district. Mr Pathan and Mr Jadhav used to come to Latur to take coaching classes for Neet preparation on the weekends.

A senior IPS officer said that the ATS has lodged an FIR and the Latur district police will carry out the probe into it.

### 4 arrested after CBI team probing UGC-NET leak attacked in Bihar

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI/PATNA, JUNE 23

A CBI team probing alleged irregularities in the conduct of the UGC-NET examination was allegedly attacked by locals at Nawada in Bihar after which four persons were arrested by police on a complaint from the Central agency.

The incident occurred on Saturday evening when the CBI sleuths had gone to Kasiadeeh village in the area, they said.

A mob gathered around the CBI vehicles and heckled the officers, they said, adding a call was made to the local police station which dispatched force from Rajauli police station.

An FIR was filed by the local police against the accused on charges of causing disruption in government work and assault, among others.

The local police arrested four persons allegedly involved in the attack and they have been sent to judicial custody, they said.

The CBI had registered an FIR into the UGC-NET paper leak case on Thursday against unidentified people on a reference from the Union education ministry.



Himachal Pradesh Congress president Pratibha Singh and her son Vikramaditya Singh pay tribute to former chief minister Virbhada Singh on his birth anniversary in Shimla on Sunday. — PTI

## Shah suggests large ponds in N-E for control of floods

Minister seeks reports on floods in Sikkim & Manipur

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday said at least 50 large ponds should be created in the Northeast to divert water of the Brahmaputra to help tackle floods and to develop agriculture, irrigation and tourism.

Chairing a high-level review meeting on preparedness for flood management during the monsoon, Mr Shah emphasised that new technologies should be adopted by all the agencies and the expansion of their network for flood management, and stressed on optimum use of satellite imagery provided by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) by various agencies for flood and water management.



Amit Shah

He also took stock of the preparations to deal with Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF). The home minister said efforts should be made to upgrade the forecast system of water level of rivers for better flood management, adding that at least 50 large ponds should be created in the Northeast so that the water of the Brahmaputra can be diverted and stored in these ponds.

This will help develop agriculture, irrigation and tourism in those areas at a low cost and also help tackle floods, eventually benefiting the local economy, the official statement reads.

Recurring flooding of the Brahmaputra is a major issue for Assam and the north-eastern region as it claims scores of lives and inundates thousands of hectares of land every year.

He directed the India Meteorological Department and the Central Water Commission to complete the process of recalibrating all the equipment used in flood forecast, at the earliest.

Instructing the concerned departments to conduct a detailed study of the recent floods in Sikkim and Manipur, he asked them to submit a report to the Union home ministry.

He also directed to ensure that floodgates of all the major dams are in good condition.

## Maya names kin 'successor', gives him chance again

**Lucknow, June 23:** Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) president Mayawati on Sunday declared nephew Akash Anand her successor and made him the party's national coordinator, reversing her own previous decision.

In the middle of the Lok Sabha elections on May 7, she had termed Akash Anand immature and relieved him of the party post.

After a national-level meeting at the BSP state office here on Sunday, the party in a statement said it was handing Akash Anand his former responsibilities back. "BSP president Mayawati has once again given Akash Anand a chance to work in the party with full maturity. He will continue to hold all his posts in the party as before. That is, he will remain Mayawati's only successor along with being the party's national coordinator," the statement read.

Ms Mayawati, a former Uttar Pradesh chief minister, said she is hopeful her nephew will emerge as a "mature" leader.

"I am hopeful about him (Akash Anand) that now he will definitely emerge as a fully mature leader at



Mayawati Akash Anand

every level in the interest of his party and movement. The people of the party will also now encourage him by giving him more respect and honour than before. So that now he can live up to all my expectations in the future," she said.

The BSP chief had announced Akash Anand as her "successor" in December last year. She revoked her decision after the third phase of LS polls. She had then said that she had taken the decision in the interest of the party and the movement till Anand attained "full maturity".

Mr Anand was booked in a case of violation of the model code of conduct for allegedly using "objectionable" language in an election rally in Sitapur.

The BSP, which contested the LS polls on its own, did not win a single seat out of 80 seats in UP this time. — PTI

## BAPS Hindu temple EAM's first stop ■ Gaza crisis may figure in discussions Jaishankar arrives in UAE for bilateral talks

**Abu Dhabi, June 23:** External affairs minister S. Jaishankar on Sunday arrived in Abu Dhabi to hold wide-ranging talks with his United Arab Emirates counterpart Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Mr Jaishankar visited the iconic BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi before the meeting with Mr Al Nahyan, where the two leaders are expected to deliberate on the overall situation in Gaza besides bilateral relations.

"Blessed to visit the BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi today. A visible symbol of India-UAE friendship, it radiates a positive message to the world and is a true cultural bridge between our two countries," Mr Jaishankar posted on X soon after the visit to the temple inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 14 this year.

At the temple, the minister interacted with the monks of BAPS, the Bochasanwasi Akshar



S. Jaishankar

Purushottam Sansthan, the organisation that built the temple on the land donated by UAE. Situated on a 27-acre site

in Abu Mureikah near Al Rahba, the BAPS Hindu Mandir, the temple is a stunning display of craftsmanship.

Earlier in the day, the ministry of external affairs (MEA) said Mr Jaishankar's visit to the United Arab Emirates will provide an opportunity to review the entire spectrum of comprehensive strategic partnership between India and the UAE as well as regional and global developments. "During the visit, the

external affairs minister will have a meeting with his UAE counterpart on wide-ranging issues of the partnership," the MEA said in a statement.

About 3.5-million-strong and vibrant Indian community forms the UAE's largest expatriate group.

Following the landmark visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the UAE in August 2015, bilateral relations between the two countries were elevated to a comprehensive strategic partnership. — PTI



Isro's reusable launch vehicle "Pushpak" during its landing experiment in Karnataka's Chitradurga on Sunday. The space agency said it has achieved a third consecutive success in the experiment by demonstrating the autonomous land-

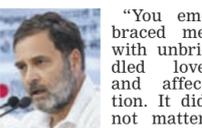
ing capability of the launch vehicle under more challenging conditions. The winged vehicle, named "Pushpak", was released from an IAF Chinook helicopter at an altitude of 4.5 km "from a release point 4.5 km away from the runway". — PTI

## 'You embraced me with love': Rahul in a letter to Wayanad

**New Delhi, June 23:** Ahead of taking oath as the member of Parliament from Rae Bareilly, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi wrote an emotional letter to the people of Wayanad on Sunday, thanking them for their support.

In the letter, the former Congress chief said he is sad but also consoled as his sister, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, will represent the people of Wayanad in Parliament.

"You must have seen the sadness in my eyes as I stood in front of the media and told you about my decision. So why am I sad? I met you five years ago. The first time I visited you, I came asking for your support. I was a stranger to you and yet you believed in me," Mr Gandhi said.



Rahul Gandhi

"You embraced me with unbridled love and affection. It did not matter which political formation you supported, it did not matter which community you were from or which religion you believed in or which language you spoke," Mr Gandhi said in the letter.

"When I faced abuse day after day, your unconditional love protected me. You were my refuge, my home and my family. I never felt for even a moment that you doubted me," he added.

Mr Gandhi was elected to the Lok Sabha from Kerala's Wayanad in 2019 after he lost the poll con-

test from his family bastion Amethi in Uttar Pradesh.

Recalling the floods in Kerala, the Congress leader said, "I will never forget what I saw during the floods. Family after family who had lost everything. Life, property, friends all gone and yet not one of you, not even the smallest child had lost your dignity."

"I will remember the countless flowers and hugs you gave me. Each one given with such genuine love and tenderness," he added.

Mr Gandhi said it was a matter of "joy and honour" for him to be the voice of the Wayanad people in Parliament. "It was truly a joy and an honour to be your voice in Parliament," the Congress leader said. — PTI

### Raut: BJP won LS polls after pressurising EC

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, JUNE 23

Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday claimed the BJP won more than 100 seats by a margin of 500-1,500 votes in the recently held Lok Sabha elections because BJP leaders pressurised the election machinery in the counting process.

Mr Raut said Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde has been purchasing the teachers' votes for the Legislative Council polls like shares in security markets.

He also blamed the Election Commission for the "mess". Maharashtra is witnessing the LC polls for two seats each from the graduates' constituency (Mumbai and Konkan) and the teachers' constituency (Mumbai and Nashik).

## Patnaik asks BJD MLAs to stay united amid crisis

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 23

Amid speculations of a growing crisis of cohesion among the 51 MLAs of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), the regional party's president and former chief minister Naveen Patnaik on Sunday appealed to the legislators to stay united and work hard to make a comeback in 2029.

The BJD, which ruled the state for a little over 24 years, lost power to Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the recently held Assembly elections. The party won 51 of the 147 seats as against 74 bagged by the BJP.

Mr Patnaik's sudden call for unity has stoked the speculation of grow-



Naveen Patnaik

ing discontentment in the BJD legislature party (BJDLP) over the influence of V. Karthikeyan Pandian — a Tamil Nadu-born bureaucrat-turned BJD politician — who overtly managed the party affairs and interfered in the governance system, thereby, drawing public wrath that led to the fall of the government.

"You all know that the BJP in Odisha has got four seats more than the majority mark of 74 in the 147-member State Assembly. In Delhi, the BJP is running a minor-

ty government. Hence, you should work hard, stay united, and strengthen the party," Mr Patnaik told party workers. Several theories are now doing rounds over such statements from the BJD president. Has Mr Patnaik got some inkling about leaders deserting the party? Is he worried the party disintegration? Are workers angry over a clean chit to VK Pandian? Soon after the results were announced, the angry BJD workers attributed the party's loss to Mr Pandian and had even raised slogans against him. Taking accountability, Mr Pandian subsequently announced his retirement from active politics.

SHORT TAKES

**'Wife' found alive in UP after cremation**

**Gorakhpur, UP:** A man who cremated his 40-year-old "wife" four days ago in this Uttar Pradesh district was reunited with her after she was found alive about 600 km away in Jhansi, the police said on Sunday. Ram Sumer (60), a resident of Bansgaon in Gorakhpur, lodged a complaint that his wife Phoolmati had gone missing on June 15. Four days later, on June 19, a woman's body was found in the Uruva Bazaar area. Mr Sumer identified the body as that of his wife and completed the last rites, the police said. However, the case took a mysterious turn after her post-mortem revealed that the woman had been strangled to death, prompting a further probe, they added. To nab the suspected killer, the police traced Phoolmati's mobile phone, which was found active about 600 kilometres away in Jhansi. Call records showed frequent communication between Phoolmati and a number belonging to one Shubham from Sultanpur. When questioned, Shubham told the police that Phoolmati was alive and he had brought her to Jhansi. — PTI

**Fresh gunfight in Manipur, none hurt**

**Imphal:** A fresh gunfight broke out between armed men belonging to two warring communities in Manipur, police said. The incident took place after some armed persons opened fire towards Thamnokpi and Lamai areas in Imphal East district from hilltop positions in adjoining Kangpokpi district around 10.30 pm on Saturday, a police officer said. — PTI

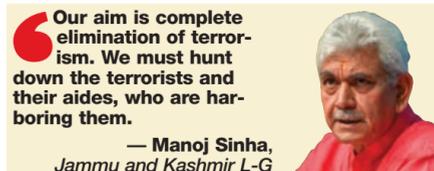
**Maratha activist for Muslim quota**

**Continued from Page 1**  
"Mr Patil should understand the policy of reservation. Hinduism is divided into social hierarchies. But the Muslim community is seen as a religion. As there is no caste, they are divided into two groups, the Karu and the Naru, of which the Karu is the entrepreneurial element. Therefore, they are given a certificate by the local authorities as per the Constitution," said Mr Hake. Mr Hake had begun an indefinite hunger strike opposing Maratha's demand for inclusion in the OBC category. He withdrew his agitation after the state government assured him that the OBC reservation will not be harmed. Mr Hake further argued that even the Maratha community should not get OBC reservation as the 'Kunbi' and 'Maratha' communities were completely different. "If Manoj Jarange wants to make any logical argument, he should come and debate with me with a team of advisers who have properly studied this matter. He should stop making baseless demands and threats," Mr Hake said.

**Terrorism is breathing its last breath in J&K, says L-G**  
**Terror hits in Jammu show our neighbour's desperation: Sinha**

**YUSUF JAMEEL**  
SRINAGAR, JUNE 23

The J&K lieutenant-governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday claimed that the recent terror attacks show "our neighbour's" desperation as terrorism is on its last breath in J&K. Mr Sinha who was speaking at the attestation cum passing out parade of the 16th border battalion batch of the J&K police at its subsidiary training centre at Talwara in the Reasi district in an obvious reference to Pakistan said, "Terrorism is breathing its last breath and this has made our neighbour, the exporter of terror, desperate. The recent terror acts are a sign of our enemy's desperation." Pertinently, eight pilgrims to Mata Vaishno Devi shrine were along



— Manoj Sinha, Jammu and Kashmir L-G

with the driver and conductor of a bus killed and 41 other passengers injured when it skidded off a hilly road and fell in a deep gorge after being targeted by a group of militants, believed to be Pakistani nationals and their local accomplice, in Reasi recently. Referring to this and other terror incidents that took place in the Jammu region's Doda, Poonch and Rajouri districts earlier this month, L-G vowed to eliminate the perpetrators

and their overground associates. He said, "Our aim is complete elimination of terrorism. We must hunt down the terrorists and their aides, who are harboring them." As many as 860 new recruit constables of the border battalion of the J&K police have completed their rigorous training at its Reasi subsidiary training centre. The L-G congratulated them for becoming the integral part of police. He said, "I am confident that these brave per-

sonnel will discharge their duty with utmost responsibility and dedication and carry the rich legacy of J&K police forward."

Mr Sinha lauded police for its "valour, sacrifice and selfless service to the nation". He said, "J&K police have always shown high level of professional excellence under extremely challenging circumstances. For several decades, this elite police force is working with dedication to preserve the integrity and security of our country and has kept the wheels of J&K's progress moving."

Reiterating the "resolve" of the administration, the police and Central security forces to root-out terrorism from J&K, the L-G asked new recruits to work "as a force multiplier in neutralising the terror threats".

**SC will hear Haryana plea over marks policy today**

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea of Haryana government against a high court order, quashing the state's policy of granting additional marks to its residents in recruitment exams. A vacation bench of Justices Abhay S. Oka and Rajesh Bindal will hear the plea moved jointly by the Haryana and the state staff selection commission challenging the May 31 order of the high court.

On May 31, the Punjab and Haryana high court had struck down the policy of the state government granting five per cent bonus marks on socio-economic criteria of the candidate, who is a state resident, to the total percentage of marks in the Common Eligibility Test (CET) for Group C and D posts.

The high court had ruled that no state can restrict employment to its own residents alone by allowing the benefit of 5% weightage in marks and said, "The respondents (state government) have created an artificial classification to the similarly situated candidates applying for the post."

The high court had further said: "While principally we agree that the state has to follow the provisions which are for the welfare of the people, but they cannot create an artificial classification which results in discrimination between similarly placed persons."



Officer cadets during the passing out parade of the Jammu and Kashmir police's 16th BRTC batch at the Subsidiary Police Training Centre in Reasi district on Sunday. — PTI

**JD-S MLC remanded in judicial custody for 14 days**  
**Prajwal brother arrested for party worker's 'sexual abuse'**

**Hassan (Karnataka), June 23:** JD(S) MLC Suraj Revanna — the brother of former MP Prajwal Revanna who is facing allegations of sexually abusing several women — was arrested on Sunday on charges of "unnatural offences" against him, police sources said.



Suraj Revanna

He was booked on Saturday for allegedly sexually abusing a party worker a few days ago and has been booked under different sections of the IPC, including "unnatural offences".

Suraj was questioned at the police station overnight, before he was arrested, sources said.

He was produced before a magistrate court judge, who remanded him in judicial custody for 14 days. The investigation into the

case was handed over to the criminal investigation department (CID) earlier in the day, following which

Suraj was shifted to Bengaluru from Hassan. Meanwhile, his father and former Karnataka minister H.D. Revanna termed the allegations against his son as a "conspiracy" and said he has faith in God and the judiciary.

Not wanting to react to anything, he said when time comes he will tell everything. A 27-year-old man had complained to the police that Suraj sexually abused him at his farmhouse in Ghanikada on June 16. Based on the complaint, the Holarasipura police registered a case against the JD(S) MLC under relevant sections of the IPC late on Saturday evening. However, Suraj Revanna (37), the grandson of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda and the nephew of Union minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, has categorically refuted the charge. Suraj had also alleged the man had filed a false complaint against him in a bid to extort ₹5 crores from him. On Friday, the police registered a case of extortion against the JD(S) worker on a complaint by Suraj Revanna's close aide Shivakumar. — PTI

**2 CoBRA personnel killed after Naxals blow up truck**

**Martyrdom of jawans will not go in vain, says CM Sai**

**Sukma (Chhattisgarh), June 23:** Two personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force's jungle warfare unit CoBRA were killed after Naxalites blew up a truck with an improvised explosive device (IED) in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district on Sunday, the police said.

**THE NAXAL** blast took place around 3 pm near Timmapuram village between Silger and Tekalgudem camps of security forces, over 400 km from the state capital Raipur, a senior police official said.

An advance party of the 201st unit of the Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) had launched patrolling from the Silger camp under the Jagargunda police station limits as a part of its road opening party duty towards

evacuated from the forest, while a search operation was underway, he said.

Expressing grief over the incident, Chhattisgarh chief minister Vishnu Deo Sai said in a message on X that the martyrdom of jawans will not go in vain.

"Received the sad news of the demise of 2 CoBRA soldiers in an IED blast triggered by Naxalites in Sukma district. I pray to God to rest the departed soul in peace and to give strength to their families," he said. "The Naxals are frustrated with the ongoing anti-Naxalite operation in the Bastar region and have been committing such cowardly acts out of frustration. The martyrdom of the soldiers will not go in vain. We will not sit quiet until Naxalism is eliminated," Mr Sai asserted. — PTI

The Naxal blast took place around 3 pm near Timmapuram village between Silger and Tekalgudem camps of security forces, over 400 km from the state capital Raipur, a senior police official said.

The security personnel were on motorcycles while their luggage and rations were being ferried in the ill-fated truck, he said. "Naxalites triggered an IED blast targeting the truck that claimed the lives of constable Shailendra (29), a resident of Uttar Pradesh, and driver Vishnu R (35) hailing from Kerala. The truck did not have any other occupant," he said.

After being alerted about the blast, more forces were rushed to the spot and the bodies were

**Man dies as car hits motorbike in Pune**

**NCP legislator's nephew arrested**

**Pune, June 23:** A 19-year-old man was killed after a car allegedly driven by the nephew of an NCP MLA hit his motorbike on a highway in Maharashtra's Pune district. The accused, Mayur Mohite, was arrested after the incident on Saturday.

The police said, adding the car was speeding on the wrong side of the road. Khed NCP MLA Dilip Mohite Patil termed the incident as unfortunate and said he will not support any wrongdoing. The accident took place at around 9.30 pm on Saturday at Mauje Eklahar village on the Pune-Nashik highway in Ambegaon taluka, the police on Sunday said, adding the victim was identified as Om Bhalerao.

"The accused was driving a Fortuner car on Pune-Nashik road. He was driving the car on the wrong side of the road while travelling to Manchar village when the vehicle had a head-on collision with the motorbike. The two-wheeler rider was seriously injured in the accident and lost his life," a senior police official said.

"Both the vehicles were badly damaged in the incident. The car driver has been arrested and a case has also been registered against him. We are conducting further probe into the incident," he added. A case has been registered against the accused by the Manchar police under various Indian Penal Code sections, including 304 A (causing death of a person by a rash or negligent act not amounting to culpable homicide) and provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, the police said. — PTI

Both the vehicles were badly damaged in the incident. The car driver has been arrested and a case has also been registered against him. We are conducting further probe into the incident," he added. A case has been registered against the accused by the Manchar police under various Indian Penal Code sections, including 304 A (causing death of a person by a rash or negligent act not amounting to culpable homicide) and provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, the police said. — PTI

**Student held for links with B'desh-based terror outfit**

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI**  
KOLKATA, JUNE 23

A terror suspect with alleged links to a Bangladesh-based outfit was arrested by the STF of the West Bengal police on Saturday afternoon from Kanksa in Burdwan West. Five of his aides were also detained for questioning. The accused, Mohammed Habibullah, is a member of banned terrorist group, Shahadat-e al-Hiqma, which was formed by the operators of another

major outfit, Ansar-al-Islam, after it faced crackdown in Bangladesh.

Booked under the UAPA and IPC charges, the culprit was remanded in police custody by a district court after his production on Sunday. Habibullah is a college student with computer science. He allegedly headed a module that used encrypted messaging platforms like "BiP" to coordinate the recruitment of youth from India and Bangladesh, as per STF.

**IAF to soon get 6 Tapas drones for surveillance**

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

In what could bring life to indigenous development of advance medium-altitude long endurance (male) drone Tapas for surveillance, Indian Air Force (IAF) is reported to have made a proposal to buy 10 Tapas drones.

This comes amidst reports that DRDO had removed Tapas from the category of mission mode projects as it failed to fully meet the joint services qualitative requirements. The Tapas project which was sanctioned in 2011 was to be completed by August 2016. But it faced problem due to increase in weight and did not meet the required altitude and required operational endurance.

The IAF will be the lead agency for the induction and acquisition of the Tapas drones into the defence forces. Out of the 10 Tapas drone, six will be for Indian Air Force and 4 for Indian Navy. Initially, the plan was to build 76 Tapas drone for the Indian Army, Air Force and Navy.

The defence ministry will take up the IAF proposal. These will be manufactured by a consortium of Bharat Electronics Limited and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. In the near future DRDO will be working to improve the performance of Tapas drones so that a large number of them could be deployed by the armed forces.

**BJP targets INDIA bloc, asks why leaders quiet on TN hooch deaths?**

**Continued from Page 1**

will at least show repentance by gathering near the Mahatma Gandhi statue in the Parliament complex and "observing a moment of silence for the lives lost". "More than 56 people have died... Many are still critical. More than 40 of those who died consuming spurious liquor are Dalits. This is state-sponsored murder and I am surprised that the Congress' Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Sonia Gandhi, leaders of the DMK, and those of other constituents of the INDIA bloc, are silent on it," Mr Patra said, adding that it seems they are silent on this issue as it does not serve their politics.

"When the Parliament session starts tomorrow, I hope INDIA bloc leaders will go to Mahatma Gandhi's statue to observe silence, wearing black bands on their arms and repent for the death of people in the hooch tragedy," Mr Patra said.

"Mahatma Gandhi was against illicit liquor. Gandhi Ji's statue is waiting for you, his principles are waiting for you," he added.

Hitting out at the Tamil Nadu chief minister, the BJP MP accused his government and the leaders of the DMK of being complicit in the hooch tragedy.

"In his first statement, the district collector initially denied that people died after consuming spurious liquor. He was asked to do so because the Assembly session was scheduled to start the very next day," the BJP leader alleged, citing

some media reports.

Due to the district collector's denial, those who had stock of the spurious liquor continued to consume it and more than a dozen people died the next day, he added.

"Of course, the (Tamil Nadu) government is complicit in this. Look at the behaviour of the chief minister. I am astonished that a tragedy of such magnitude has struck the state, yet the chief minister is absent. Till the time I came to hold this press conference, he had not visited the bereaved family members of those who died," said Mr Patra, adding, "Shouldn't the CM come out with a statement."

Hitting out at the Congress, Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman demanded that the case be handed over to the CBI for investigation. She said: "You have no statement coming from the Congress president (Mallikarjun Kharge) or the former Congress president (Rahul Gandhi), who rushes to the South seeking people's vote in elections."

She alleged that the ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu has had a hand in supporting those selling spurious liquor in the state.

"I don't think justice will be served if inquiry and the whole matter are left only to the Tamil Nadu government," she added.

The Union finance minister said the Tamil Nadu government has shown "total incompetence" in handling the issue. The state government has not even allowed a discussion in the state Assembly on this matter, she added.

**Neet-UG row: CBI takes over probe**

**Continued from Page 1**

police in Gujarat and Bihar. The CBI probe is based on a complaint it received from the department of higher education under the Union education ministry. In the complaint, the department of higher education said that the Neet-UG 2024 examination was conducted by the NTA on May 5 at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including 14 cities abroad, with over 23 lakh candidates appearing for the same.

The complaint alleged that certain isolated incidents of irregularities occurred in a few states during the conduct of the entrance examination. "In its communication to the CBI, the department of higher education has requested the probe agency conduct a comprehensive investigation into the entire gamut of alleged irregularities, including conspiracy, cheating, impersonation, breach of trust and destruction of evidence by candidates, institutes and middlemen, including attempted irregularities," an official said.

The department has also requested the CBI for an investigation into the role of public servants, if any, connected with the conduct of the examination and also into the entire gamut of events and the larger conspiracy, the education ministry official said, adding that the same has been done to ensure "transparency

in the examination process". During the re-test on Sunday, as many as 48 per cent of the 1,563 students awarded grace marks in the Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test Undergraduate (NEET-UG) did not appear for the re-exam at seven centres in the country.

According to NTA officials, only 813 students appeared for the re-test while 750 did not turn up.

The NTA also debarred 17 candidates who had appeared for the exam on May 5 at centres in Bihar. The agency had earlier debarred 63 candidates for adopting unfair means in the exam. On Saturday, 30 additional candidates from Gujarat's Godhara were also debarred.

Meanwhile, the NTA also said that its website and all its other web portals are fully secure. Reacting to reports that its website has been compromised, a senior officer said, "The NTA website and all its web portals are fully secure. Any information that they have been compromised and hacked is wrong and misleading."

Hitting out at the Centre, the Congress criticised the government over the bureaucratic reshuffle in the NTA, saying the buck stops at the doorstep of the top echelons of the regime.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge alleged that the NTA was projected to be an autonomous body but, in

reality, was made to serve the "devious interests" of the BJP and the RSS.

In a post on X, Mr Kharge said, "In the Neet scam, the buck stops at the doorstep of the top echelons of the Modi government. Shuffling the bureaucrats is no solution to the endemic problem in the education system rotted by the BJP."

The Centre has already shunted out NTA's director-general Subodh Singh and the education ministry has also set up a seven-member panel headed by former ISRO chief K. Radhakrishnan to review the agency's functioning and recommend exam reforms.

Besides Neet-UG, three other exams — UGC NET, CSIR-UGC NET and NEET-PG — have also faced controversy. The UGC NET was cancelled by the government a day after the exam, while the CSIR-UGC NET and NEET-PG exams have been postponed.

In the meantime, the local police in Bihar's Nawada arrested four persons in connection with the alleged attack on the CBI team probing the UGC-NET leak case.

To combat exam malpractice, the Central government has also notified rules to implement the Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act 2024. This act aims to prevent unfair practices in public examinations and address related issues.

**Row over pro-tem Speaker likely by NDA & Opposition**

**Continued from Page 1**

current term the fourth straight one in Lok Sabha. Mr Suresh was earlier elected to the Lok Sabha in 1989, 1991, 1996 and 1999.

On Monday, Ms Murmu will administer the oath to Mr Mahtab as the pro-tem Speaker of the Lok Sabha at the Rashtrapati Bhawan. Mr Mahtab will then reach the Parliament House and call the Lok Sabha to order at 11 am. The proceedings will begin with members observing a moment of silence on the occasion of the first sitting of the 18th Lok Sabha. This will be followed by Lok Sabha secretary-general Utpal Kumar Singh placing on the table of the House the list of the members elected to the Lower House.

Mr Mahtab will then call upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Leader of the Lok Sabha, to take the oath as a member of the House.

The pro-tem Speaker will then administer an oath to the panel of chairpersons appointed by the President to assist him in carrying out the proceedings of the House till the election of the Speaker on June 26.

After the panel of chairpersons, the pro-tem Speaker will administer the oath/affirmation as Lok Sabha members to the coun-

**THE PRESIDENT** is scheduled to address the joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament on June 27. The debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address will begin on June 28.

The members from the states, in alphabetical order, will take the oath or make affirmation over the next two days.

The election to the post of Lok Sabha Speaker will take place on Wednesday and the Prime Minister will introduce his council of ministers to the House soon after.

The President is scheduled to address the joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament on June 27.

The debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address will begin on June 28. The Prime Minister is expected to respond to the debate on July 2 or 3.

Both the Houses are expected to go into a brief recess and re-assemble on July 22 for the presentation of the Union Budget.

Besides the pro-tem Speaker issue, the Opposition is also gearing up to corner the government on the paper leak issue, terror strikes in Jammu and Kashmir and the implementation of new criminal laws from July 1.

THE ASIAN AGE

24 JUNE 2024

Cancel Neet-UG exam and hold retest for all

After dithering over weeks despite strong observations by the apex court, the Union government has finally acknowledged the possibility of foul play in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test for undergraduate medical courses (Neet-UG) and ordered an investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into the "cases of alleged irregularities/cheating/impersonation/malpractices" in it.

A barrage of reports on the other competitive examinations, including the National Eligibility Test (NET) and the CSIR-UGC NET examinations, has also forced the government take a series of measures, which include the removal of the head of the National Testing Agency (NTA) and the setting up of a review panel of experts to make the conduct of the competitive examinations fool proof. The government has also postponed the Neet examination for post-graduate courses which was scheduled for June 23.

The events that unfolded after the publication of the Neet-UG results on June 4 in which an unprecedented number of 67 students scoring full marks should have prompted the government to act with alacrity and take immediate steps to see if something had gone wrong. But it did not; it was in denial instead. That even the Supreme Court openly questioning the sanctity of the examination did not awaken the government from its slumber, with the education minister, Dharmendra Pradhan, claiming that there was no evidence of leakage of the question papers and dismissing the allegations as being motivated.

The government, which is "committed to ensuring the sanctity of examinations and protect the interest of students", now has been forced to act but only after it was pushed to the corner by a turn of events unacceptable to people who believe in the systems which the country has built assiduously over the decades. The removal of the head of the NTA should have immediately followed the surfacing of the serious allegations.

However, it defies logic that Mr Pradhan, who presided over the decadent system that failed the students and the nation at large, before, during and after the examinations, is being allowed to continue

it defies logic that Mr Dharmendra Pradhan, who presided over the decadent system that failed the students and the nation at large, before, during and after the examinations, is being allowed to continue. That the corrosion in the system is so pervasive that it has almost brought itself down has not dawned on him yet. One can only hope that the review panel under the former chairman of the Indian Space research Organisation, comprising people in the higher education system, will be able to identify the moles and loopholes.

There has been clamour for cancelling the Neet-UG examination held on May 5. The Supreme Court has already sent notices to the NTA and the Union government on petitions calling for a retest. It will be difficult for the government to defend its earlier stand that there was no shortcoming in the conduct of examination after ordering a CBI investigation into the allegations. Given the observations the apex court has made earlier, and to remove the chances of people getting into medical courses through fraudulent means, it will be best for the government to cancel the Neet-UG and take early steps towards the conduct of a retest.

Subhani



The pursuit of learning in Nalanda's homeland



Sanjaya Baru

Sanjayovacha

It is ironic that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was extolling the virtues of Asia's oldest centre of higher learning at Nalanda in Bihar in the same week when a controversy around the national testing of the educational attainments of students was engaging nationwide attention.

Nalanda University did not become world famous overnight. It took long years of scholarship of learned men and women for the institution to earn its reputation.

"Learned men from different cities who desire to acquire renown in discussion, come here in multitudes to settle their doubts, and then the streams of their wisdom spread far and wide", wrote the Chinese Buddhist monk Hieun Tsang after his mid-7th century visit. By then Nalanda was already at least a 100-year-old institution, if not more. How many Indian universities set up in the 20th century have been able to protect their reputation into the 21st? Nalanda is a question and a reminder.

The Indian civilisation, with all its faults and inequalities, was a knowledge-based civilisation, like any other great civilisation. It respected scholarship and the flights of imagination. On his visit last week to the Nalanda University campus, Prime Minister Narendra Modi lamented its destruction. The point is moot that the person responsible for Nalanda's destruction was a Muslim invader. In the same week, a movie aimed at damaging the already "blemished" reputation of contemporary India's best-ranked university was released in cinema halls. Titled *Jahangir National University*, the movie has been pitched as an attack on Jawaharlal Nehru University, a public uni-

versity that the Union education ministry's own ranking places it at the top of Indian universities.

Of what use is the lament of past tragedies when new ones occur every day and we learn so little from the experience of the past? There is, however, no point in engaging in the usual political blame game. No political party, no PM, no CM, no minister for education at the Centre or in the states can be absolved of the responsibility for the sorry state of public universities today. Nor, indeed, can they be pardoned for presiding over the extensive privatisation of education at all levels.

None other than the political, business and intellectual elite of the country have demonstrated their lack of pride in the country's educational system. Just look at how many of them take pride in the fact that their children have studied or are studying overseas.

Till a couple of decades ago, most students going overseas went for post-graduate education. Today they also do for undergraduate and even high school education. The Covid-19 lockdown and suspension of cross-border travel brought the extent of such elite dependence on overseas education to the fore. Some attribute the rise in numbers to the growing prosperity of the Indian middle class. Perhaps so.

However, what is striking is that even as more Indian students go overseas, fewer foreign students are coming to India. According to data collected by the ministry of external affairs, the number of Indian students studying overseas was estimated to be 13,24,954 in 2022. This does not include the 20,000 students forced to return home that year from

The number of foreign students studying in India was estimated to be 46,878 in 2022. Most foreign students in India are nationals of Nepal and Afghanistan. Most are concentrated in four states.

Ukraine after the outbreak of war with Russia. The MEA data also probably underestimates the number of Indian students studying in China, at 6,000, since many who returned home after the Covid-19 outbreak did not go back. Given news reports of increasing numbers of Indian students going overseas in the past year, one can safely presume that the number in 2024 would be upwards of 14 lakhs.

By comparison, the number of foreign students studying in India was estimated to be 46,878 in 2022, according to the All-India Survey on Higher Education conducted by the Union ministry for human resources development. While most Indian students going overseas are concentrated in the United States, Canada, Australia and the UAE, most foreign students in India are nationals of Nepal and Afghanistan.

Most foreign students studying in India are concentrated in four states: Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana and Delhi.

There was a time when Indian universities attracted many students from Africa. The numbers have dwindled with many Africans headed to China. In 2019, before Covid-19, over 80,000 African students were studying in China compared to 25,000 in India. There may be any number of reasons why foreign students do not prefer Indian universities over campuses in China or elsewhere. We must reckon with the fact that we are not considered to be an attractive destination by comparison to others.

There was a time when Western governments did not recognise Indian

degrees. A medical graduate had to pass an examination administered overseas to be able to study and work abroad. The ITs succeeded in building a global reputation that enabled its products to secure easy admission into American universities. The same political system, under different political parties, that destroyed the credibility of public universities also allowed the growth of private institutions. These private institutions were able to cater to the elites and the wealthy, who then secured access to education and employment at home and overseas. As long as the two lived in non-intersecting worlds, few bothered about it. The Neet and NET scandal shows that when the two worlds began to intersect, the system unravelled.

As long as different parts of India performed differently, the system was able to pull on. Large numbers of good students from backward states migrated to states that had a better system of education or where education could be bought with money. But then, it is easy to destroy the reputation of institutions that have been slowly and studiously built over the years. The Neet and NET controversy may have already damaged the reputation of the best Indian institutions if it is discovered that the recently exposed lapses have been long in occurring.

There were good reasons why the architects of our Constitution kept certain areas of public policy within the realm of state governments and a few on the concurrent list. The federal structure was built with care. Recent attempts to weaken this structure have partly contributed to controversies such as the present one in the sphere of education. We are paying the price for over-centralisation.

The writer is an author, a former newspaper editor and adviser to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. He has recently edited *The Importance of Shinzo Abe: India, Japan and the Indo-Pacific*.

LETTERS ANGRY MIDDLE CLASS

There is considerable anger among the middle class when every year at this time of the year the taxman comes knocking. The pain of having to pay for the free rations and the subsidies to the poor and other classes and categories when they themselves are struggling to make both ends meet is unbearable. For many years now the hopes that they would have to pay less income tax have been dashed. They wouldn't mind even paying more if they got something back from the government in return. This middle class is the most deprived of any government considerations and continues to be a milking cow.

Anthony Henriques Mumbai

RETHINK OLD BILLS

THE DENOUEMENT of the 2024 Lok Sabha election provides a massive opportunity to the Opposition to discuss bills that were previously being bulldozed through amid suspension of MPs and without proper debate, as Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said on X. The implementation of these bills should be deferred to enable a thorough review and reexamination, which would augur well for the country.

Jakir Hussain Kanpur

SHRINKING MEDIA!

IN THE LAST 10 years, India has seen the phenomenon of 'godi media', a phrase coined later by the Magsaysay Award-winning journalist Ravish Kumar. However, the revenues of India's six listed news media companies have not risen in the last decade. The total sales of these companies as per report in 2014 was ₹6,325 crores and the total in 2023 was ₹6,691 crores. The total profits in 2014 were ₹761 crores and in 2023, they in fact fell to ₹254 crores. Adjusted for inflation, these six listed companies (which represent some of the nation's largest news channels and newspapers) are now half the size they were in 2014. Why is the godi media acting against its own interest?

Bhagwan Thadani Mumbai

₹500 for the best letter of the week goes to Sujit De (June 23). Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

Bangla ties: India ticks all boxes

India served its foreign policy focus of "neighbourhood first" in a productive meeting between the Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh. In welcoming her as the first major foreign guest and sovereign leader after the new government was formed this month, India expanded on warm ties with Bangladesh with a series of 10 pacts, besides agreeing on initiatives in several sectors such as maritime security, space and telecommunication.

India's good intentions in strengthening bonds with its nearest neighbour to the east may have gone beyond the warm vibes that Mr Narendra Modi and Ms Sheikh Hasina Wazed have been sharing for quite some time now. The underlying trust and understanding were reflected in several agreements signed towards cooperation.

A free trade pact is also being put on the anvil while agreements on defence assistance by way of modernising Bangladesh forces and initiating talks on river water sharing, which has been a sensitive subject for decades, signify how much the two countries are prepared to move their ties forward. That the two states also see eye to eye on the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative also means that the relationship is on a higher plane while considering that the China factor will always be present in any bilateral relationship in the region for India.

The trade deficit of more than \$10 billion annually may be weighing on Bangladesh, but it must make sense logistically for it to procure certain goods from India while its flourishing garments industry still imports raw material from China. As against a favourable trade deficit, India has been helping Bangladesh build up its infrastructure with loans amounting to \$8 bn in the last eight years.

Whatever may be an occasional challenge like immigration, economic cooperation is on a firm footing and India can pride itself on having a warm neighbour with ties fostering regional growth as well as stability.

There is a pattern to be seen in India stepping up the ante in extending the hand of friendship to Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Mauritius, and Maldives too despite the strains showing there in China's strong hand, meaning the neighbours first is not just a slogan.

THE ASIAN AGE

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Kishwar Desai London Diary



Diet guru dies of heatstroke... Will Starmer go 400 paar?

It doesn't matter how rich or clever or thin you are because the heat can get you. One of the smartest doctors in recent times — who revolutionised the way we eat by propagating the 5:2 diet — Michael Mosley died during a holiday in Greece — of suspected heat stroke. The tragedy was that it took more than five days to find his body, because he had somehow wandered off away from his family — and when his body was found, he was extremely close to habitation, but probably too weak to ask for help. This was a man who successfully introduced us to weight loss through intermittent fasting. He had experimented often with food and diet — and was a health guru on the BBC. His sudden death — and the subsequent hunt for his body — shocked the nation.

Though I loved watching his shows, I never tried his diet or followed his advice — but many people did all over the world. And to think it was just heat and perhaps dehydration that would ultimately destroy him... Fat or thin — life can be taken away in an instant! So diet all you want — but live life to the fullest.

Another person whose life changed so very suddenly — despite leading what looked like a charmed one — is Catherine, Princess of Wales. Finally she came out in the public after her cancer diag-

nosis, though she did appear very much more serious than she had been before. There was no public interaction which she had been very good at. She was able to perform her duty surrounded by her children and husband. This was much appreciated as she has been frank about her cancer in recent weeks. Indeed, King Charles as a fellow cancer sufferer had elevated Kate to Companion of Honour in recognition of her determination to go public about her ailment. This has had a very good impact on the way people view cancer.

However, it seems she is now focussed on projecting Prince William as a father, possibly concerned about what lies ahead. A keen photographer, she recently released some lovely photos on his birthday which showed the future King playing on the beach with his children. These only depict Prince William with the children, all rather poignant moments, as she is not in them.

On the more mundane political front, Rishi Sunak faces the prospect of leading his Party to the lowest number of seats in its 300-year history. From a previous high of 365 his party is expected to get just around 50 seats. Of course, the good news for him is that those who were plotting to replace him such as Penny Mordaunt are set to lose their seats anyway...

And it is the Labour leader, Sir Keir Starmer, who is supposed to go "400 paar".

The Tory losers may yet thank Rishi. The life of MPs is becoming hard. Eight years ago, a woman MP, Jo Cox, was murdered by a fanatical constituent. Another Conservative MP, Sir David Amess, was stabbed by a constituent who came to his office on the excuse of getting some help.

MPs get abused, trolled and threatened on the social media, not just in real life.

This could be one of the reasons why nearly 80 sitting MPs have decided not to run again in the Conservative Party. The anger they face is partly due to the dreadful circumstances like inflation and slow growth and hardship for people who are in the frontline. The reality is that being a member of the ruling party means you get blamed when things go wrong. Unlike in India MPs in the UK do not get homes and offices with security guards. Thus many of them are now opting for a different career altogether. And besides, there is no point running, according to them, when they are likely to lose!

The anger among the people is made worse by the betting scandal which has just popped up. It seems that people connected with Rishi's campaign and security allegedly laid bets on when the elections were likely to be held. This is a nation that loves to bet on all kinds of things — but to bet on something that

was meant to be confidential (and about which there are strict rules, especially if you are in the know) is disastrous.

Speaking of Yorkshire (Rishi Sunak's constituency lies here), if you are planning to visit Castle Howard, do not miss a chance to visit Castle Howard. It is a spectacular, big castle used as personal property of the Howard family. It is known as the Versailles of England. It was used in the TV production of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*. Indeed Waugh had written his famous novel keeping Castle Howard in mind as a model for Brideshead. Now the saga of the Castle itself has become like another novel or perhaps a Netflix serial. The master of Howard Castle, George Howard, has decided not to pass on his Castle to his son, despite the fact that the son is on the managing board of the Castle. He has decided to throw the transfer into a contest between his son and various nephews and nieces. They will be questioned as to how they will preserve this monumental pile and the smartest will win the Castle. To have a game show for a grand inheritance seems ripe for reality TV!

Kishwar Desai is an award winning author and columnist. She is also the Chair of the Partition Museums in Amritsar and Delhi.



SHORT TAKES

**2ND SOUTHERN MEXICO MAYOR KILLED IN A WEEK**

Chilpancingo, June 23: A second southern Mexico mayor has been killed in less than a week, local authorities announced on Saturday, after he had gone to visit an indigenous community.

The murder of Acacio Flores, who represents Malinaltepec, comes days after the killing of Salvador Villalba Flores, another mayor from Guerrero state elected in the June 2 polls.

The body of Flores was discovered with a bullet wound to the back of the head in the back of a van in Malinaltepec, a human rights campaigner told AFP.

**LUXEMBOURG GRAND DUKE TO TRANSFER POWER**

Brussels, June 23: Grand Duke Henri of Luxembourg on Sunday announced he will start transferring powers to his son Guillaume in October, in a surprise move paving the way for the monarch's abdication.

"I would like to inform you that I have decided to appoint Prince Guillaume as Lieutenant-Representative in October," Henri, 69, said in a national holiday address.

"It is with all my love and confidence that I wish him the best of luck." Taking over the title marks the beginning of the transfer of the crown to Guillaume, 42.

**WILL NOT BE INTIMIDATED BY CHINA: MARCOS**

Manila, June 23: President Ferdinand Marcos said on Sunday the Philippines "will not be intimidated" by anyone after a violent clash between the Filipino navy and the Chinese Coast Guard in the South China Sea.

The confrontation took place on Monday off Second Thomas Shoal as the Chinese sailors foiled an attempt by Philippine forces to resupply marines stationed on a derelict warship.

It was the latest and most serious incident in a series of escalating confrontations between Chinese and Philippine ships in recent months.

**EU, CHINA OPEN ELECTRIC CAR TARIFFS TALK**

Brussels, June 23: EU and China trade chiefs held "candid and constructive" talks on Saturday over plans from Brussels to ramp up tariffs on Chinese electric cars, and the two sides will hold further consultations, the EU said.

The European Union warned this month that it would slap additional tariffs of up to 38 per cent on Chinese electric car imports from July.

European trade commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis and China's commerce minister Wang Wentao "had a candid and constructive call."

**29 INJURED AFTER SHOOTINGS ACROSS U.S.**

Montgomery, Rochester, Columbus, June 23: Three shootings across the US left 29 people injured. A shooting at a crowded party in Alabama's capital left 13 people injured — nine of whom were shot, officials said on Sunday. Four others were hurt in the subsequent chaos.

Six people were wounded in a shooting early on Sunday at a park in Rochester, New York. None of the injuries are believed to be life threatening. Rochester police chief David Smith said at least one person started shooting into a crowd of people during an argument at Dr Martin Luther King Jr Memorial Park at Manhattan Square around 2:45 am on Sunday.

Police in Ohio say 10 people were injured, including one seriously, in a shooting in Columbus. The shooting occurred early on Sunday in the Short North Arts District, local media said.

Mayor Steven L. Reed said in a statement that police and medics responded to reports of gunshot victims at 1:46 am on Sunday. "This morning, more than 600 rounds were fired at a crowded party in the North Pass area," Reed said. "Nine were wounded, and at least four more were injured in the chaos that followed."

He said officers from the Montgomery police department, the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives are interviewing witnesses and suspects.

**Israeli tanks advance to edge of Rafah Mawasi refuge zone**

Strike kills eight at Gaza aid centre, Hezbollah targets Israeli barracks

Cairo, Beirut, June 23: Israeli tanks advanced to the edge of the Mawasi displaced persons' camp in the northwest of the southern Gaza city of Rafah on Sunday in fierce fighting with Hamas-led fighters, residents said.

Eight Palestinians were killed on Sunday in an Israeli airstrike on a training college near Gaza City being used to distribute aid, Palestinians said. The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group said on Sunday it had targeted two military positions in northern Israel with an armed drone in response to the killing of an Islamist commander.

On Saturday, the Jamaa Islamiya group announced the death of one of its commanders, Aymen Ghotmeh, saying he was killed "in a treacherous Zionist raid" in Khiaara in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa area.

Meanwhile, thousands of fighters from Iran-backed groups in the Middle East are ready to come to Lebanon to join with the militant Hezbollah group in its battle with Israel if the

**GALLANT TO MEET AUSTIN**

**ISRAELI DEFENCE CHIEF TO TALK GAZA, LEBANON ON U.S. TRIP**

Israeli defence minister Yoav Gallant headed to US to discuss the Gaza war and escalating border hostilities with Lebanon, where exchanges of fire with Hezbollah have stoked fears of wider conflict. He will meet his counterpart Lloyd Austin and secretary of state Antony Blinken.

**AERIAL DRONE LIKELY LAUNCHED BY YEMEN'S HOUTHIS HITS SHIP IN THE RED SEA**

An aerial drone likely launched by Houthis damaged a vessel in the Red Sea. Private security firm Ambrey identified the ship as a Liberia-flagged container ship bound for Qingdao, China.



**NETANYAHU AGAIN CLAIMS THE U.S. IS WITHHOLDING ARMS SHIPMENTS, DAYS AFTER WASHINGTON DENIES IT**



Relatives and supporters of Israelis taken hostage by Palestinian militants in Gaza in the October 7 attacks light flares and hold portraits of those taken during a protest calling for their release, in the Israeli coastal city of Tel Aviv. — AFP

ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER Benjamin Netanyahu told his Cabinet on Sunday that there had been a "dramatic drop" in US weapons deliveries for Israel's war effort in Gaza, doubling down on a claim that the Biden administration has denied and underscoring the growing strains between the two allies.

simmering conflict with Israel escalates into a full-blown war, officials with Iran-backed factions and analysts say.

Images of two Israeli tanks stationed on a hilltop overlooking the coastal area went viral on social media, but Reuters could

not verify them. "The fighting with the resistance has been intense. The occupation forces are overlooking the Mawa-

si area now, which forced families there to head for Khan Younis," said one resident, who asked not to be named. — Agencies

**LANKA HAILS UK AS LTTE UNDER PROSCRIBED LIST**

Colombo, June 23: Sri Lankan foreign minister Ali Sabry has hailed the decision of the UK government to continue to maintain the LTTE under the proscribed list, saying that the move will thwart every plan of the former armed group to revive itself in the island nation.

In a post on the social media platform X, Sabry said that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's (LTTE) international network's approach and strategy is to get foreign governments to deproscribe it so that they could revive the group once again. The decision by the UK authorities to carry on with Sri Lanka's LTTE under the proscribed list has thwarted the group's plans to revive them in Sri Lanka, Sabry said in his post on X.

"The LTTE's international network's approach and strategy is to get foreign governments to deproscribe the LTTE so that they could revive the LTTE," he added. On June 21 it was announced that the UK proscribed organisations appeals commission had ruled against deproscribing the LTTE and will continue to keep the ban on the former armed group who ran a three decades old bloody armed conflict to carve out a separate Tamil homeland.

The LTTE remains banned in Sri Lanka, India, the UK, the USA, Canada, Malaysia and EU nations. Sri Lanka first banned the LTTE in 1998 but revoked its proscription in 2002 in order to facilitate the Norway-led peace process. With talks failing and clashes resuming, the ban was reimposed in 2008. In mid-May 2009 the group was completely defeated in the government's military campaign. — PTI

**Another official's poll date betting charge hits Sunak**

London, June 23: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is on Sunday dealing with yet another senior party official being involved in placing bets on the date of the general election before July 4 was confirmed, as the scandal engulfing his top aides continues to be investigated by the country's gambling watchdog.

The British Indian leader, who has said he was incredibly angry on learning about the allegations that emerged earlier this month, now finds the Conservative Party's chief data officer also being investigated by the Gambling Commission for allegedly betting on the timing of the general election even before the date had been announced.

Following the revelations first reported in *The Sunday Times*, Nick Mason is said to have taken a leave of absence but denies wrongdoing.

It comes as a fresh blow for the Sunak-led Tories,



Rishi Sunak

already trailing far behind the Opposition Labour Party, led by Keir Starmer, in all pre-election opinion polls, after his director of campaigns, Tony Lee, and his Tory MP candidate wife, Laura Saunders, were named earlier in the election date betting investigations.

It followed reports of Sunak's close protection officer being arrested by the Metropolitan Police on suspicion of misconduct over placing an election date bet and Sunak's parliamentary aide, Tory MP candidate Craig Williams, also under investigation. While betting is

legal in the UK, any bets placed with the advantage of insider information could fall within the purview of illegality.

"There are multiple investigations happening. It's right they're allowed to proceed. They're independent and necessarily confidential," Sunak told reporters this week.

"There's also a criminal investigation, and these are potentially criminal matters. If anyone is found to have broken the rules, they should not only face the full consequences of the law, but I will make sure they are booted out of the Conservative Party," he said. Since then, he and senior party leaders have refused to comment on ongoing investigations, with a senior Cabinet minister condemning the actions of his party colleagues.

"It looks like one rule for them and one rule for us. That's the most potentially damaging thing," said levelling up secretary Michael Gove. — PTI

**A new ride**



A person slides down in a toboggan in a park in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia as others wait for their turn, on Sunday. — AFP



Donald Trump

**TRUMP URGES EVANGELICALS TO VOTE FOR HIM**

Washington, June 23: Former US president Donald Trump urged evangelical Christians on Saturday to vote en masse for him in Nov, vowing to "aggressively" protect their religious freedom if he is elected.

The ex-leader, who rarely appears in church himself, has built a crucial base among the religious right, promising — and delivering — on some of their biggest priorities, including by appointing Supreme Court justices who helped overturn the federal right to abortion.

"The evangelicals and the Christians, they don't vote as much as they should," Trump told hundreds of supporters at a Washington conference put on by the Faith and Freedom Coalition, a conservative advocacy group.

"They go to church every Sunday, but they don't vote," he said, adding in a half-joke that "in four years, you don't have to vote. Okay? In four years, don't vote. I don't care." If elected, Trump would be ineligible to run for president again in 2028 because of term limits.

Evangelical voters were crucial for Trump's 2016 victory and again in his failed 2020 campaign, when 84 per cent of white evangelical Protestants voted for him, according to the Pew Research Center.

Trump promised to protect their interests on Saturday. — AFP

**US-sent weapon used to kill 6 in Crimea: Russia**

Kyiv, June 23: Russian authorities said four people died and over 100 were wounded in Ukrainian drone and missile attacks on Sunday, while the second day of Russia's aerial bombing of Kharkiv in northeastern Ukraine killed at least one person.

Meanwhile, one person was killed and ten others wounded by Russian strikes on Ukraine's eastern city of Kharkiv on Sunday, regional governor Oleh Synehubov said. "The occupiers have conducted strikes on the civilian infrastructure of Kharkiv," Synehubov wrote on Telegram, adding that the strikes appeared to have been conducted with glide bombs.

Five people, including two children, were killed by falling debris when five Ukrainian missiles were shot down in Sevastopol, a port city in Russia-annexed Crimea, said Mikhail Razvozhayev, the city's Moscow-installed governor. Russian state news agency RIA Novosti, citing the health ministry, said 124 people were wounded.

Razvozhayev declared Monday a day of mourning in the city, with public events cancelled.

One person was killed and three injured in Russia's Belgorod region, bordering Ukraine, when three Ukrainian drones attacked the city of Grayvoron, regional Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said.

Air defences overnight shot down 33 Ukrainian drones over Russia's western Bryansk, Smolensk, Lipetsk and Tula regions, the Russian ministry of defence said on Sunday.

**LAWMAKER SAYS MAY CHANGE NUKE ARM USE TIMING**

Moscow, June 23: Moscow may change the timing for use of its nuclear weapons if threats against Russia increase, the RIA state news agency cited Andrei Kartapolov, the head of the Russian lower house's defence panel, as saying on Sunday.

The former general's comments follow recent warnings by President Vladimir Putin that Moscow may change its nuclear doctrine, which lays out the conditions in which such weapons could be used. "If we see that the challenges and threats increase, it means that we can correct something in (the doctrine) regarding the timing of the use of nuclear weapons and the decision to make this use," he said.

Russia's 2020 nuclear doctrine sets out when its president would consider using a nuclear weapon: Broadly as a response to an attack using nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction, or conventional weapons. — Reuters

No casualties or damage were reported.

A fresh attack on Kharkiv killed at least one person and wounded 10 on Sunday, according to local officials. Mayor Ihor Terekhov said the city was attacked by a guided bomb and that around half of Kharkiv was without electricity because of the strike. — Agencies

**PML-N accepts all PPP demands**

Islamabad, June 23: The ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has accepted all the demands of its major ally over the federal budget and allocation of development funds, the Bilawal Bhutto Zardari-led Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), a media report said on Sunday.

Jailed ex-PM Imran Khan's party-backed Sunni Ittehad Council is not eligible for reserved seats as the party does not allow non-Muslims to be a part of it, Pakistan's election commission has said in a response submitted to the Supreme Court, according to media reports.

Meanwhile, PTI on Sunday reiterated its demand for Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja's immediate resignation for failing to hold "free and fair" elections and protested against the "injustices" being committed against the party.

Earlier this week, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had assured PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari that the government would take steps to address the key ally's reservations on multiple issues by forming a committee after tensions rose among the ruling coalition partners over the budget.

The agreement between the two allies came in the third round of talks between the negotiation committees of the two parties. The PPP had expressed concern for not taking it into confidence regarding

**23 NABBED FOR INVOLVEMENT IN SWAT LYNCHING**

Islamabad, June 23: Pakistan police have arrested more than 20 people for alleged involvement in the lynching of a tourist, Muhammad Ismail, a 40-year-old resident of Sialkot in Punjab province, in the picturesque town of Swat for allegedly desecrating the Quran, media reports said here on Sunday.

Those arrested were shifted to an undisclosed location while efforts were on to arrest others involved in the incident, police said. — PTI

the federal budget. "The government will prefer the PPP for development funds and appointments on administrative posts in Punjab," *Geo News* reported.

According to the sources, the PML-N has accepted the PPP's demands regarding district administrations, appointment of law officers, representation in various boards and authorities, early holding of local bodies elections, and distribution of development funds equal to PML-N lawmakers.

The PPP has demanded the appointment of an additional secretary in the chief minister's secretariat. — PTI

**CLIMATE | CONTRAST**

**Rock Valley lacked running water as wells were unusable; Heat warning for 15 mn**

**Flooding ousts Iowa residents as much of US broils**

Washington, June 23: Floodwaters forced people out of their homes in parts of Iowa, the result of weeks of rain, while much of the US longed for relief from yet another round of extraordinary heat.

Sirens blared at 2 am in Rock Valley, Iowa, population 4,200, where people in hundreds of homes were told to get out as the Rock River could no longer take rain that has slammed the region. The city lacked running water because wells were unusable. Mayor Kevin Van

Otterloo said a state helicopter was on its way to help but was called off when boats were able to reach stranded residents. "We've had so much rain here. We had 4 inches last night in an hour and a half time. Our ground just can't take anymore."

Gov. Kim Reynolds declared a disaster for 21 counties in northern Iowa, including Sioux County, which includes Rock Valley. In drone video posted by the local sheriff, no streets were visible, just roofs and treetops poking

above the water. Elsewhere, the miserable grip of heat and humidity continued. The National Weather Service said 15 million were under a heat warning — the highest level of alert — while another 90 million were under a heat advisory.

Temperatures around 37.8 degrees Celsius were predicted for Washington, D.C., and Richmond, Virginia, while Philadelphia, Newark, New Jersey, Columbus, Ohio, and Detroit were bracing for the high 90s. — Reuters

**One dead, 2 missing in Switzerland flood**

Vienna, June 23: Rescuers in Switzerland have found the body of one of three people who had gone missing on Saturday after massive thunderstorms and rainfall in the southeast of the country caused a rockslide, Swiss authorities say. The other two are still missing. Meanwhile, one woman

was pulled out alive from the rubble earlier on Saturday morning.

"Today is a sad day," said Ignazio Cassis, member of the Swiss Federal Council, who addressed reporters on Sunday after travelling to the region to show solidarity with the victims on behalf of the Swiss Federal Government. — AP



A police van in the water in the Graubunden canton in Switzerland after violent downpours caused floods and landslides, on Sunday. — AFP

## quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	77,209.90	-0.35
Nifty 50	23,501.10	-0.28
S&P 500*	5,464.62	-0.16
Dollar (₹)	83.54	0.14
Pound Sterling (₹)	105.70	0.54
Euro (₹)	89.38	0.38
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	71,594.10	0.01
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	85.07	0.75
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.973	-0.003
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	4.257	0.003

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

## IRCTC hosts Int'l Yoga Day in multiple cities

Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) celebrated the International Yoga Day on June 21 at its zonal and regional offices including in Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Secunderabad and Chandigarh. Sanjay Kumar Jain, chairman and managing director, stressed the importance of incorporating yoga into daily routines. IRCTC aims to enhance the quality of life and contribute to a healthier, more balanced society.



## FII put ₹12,170 cr in Indian equities so far this June

Staging a strong comeback after general election results, foreign investors pumped ₹12,170 crore in Indian equities so far in June, mainly driven by expectations of continued policy reforms and sustained economic growth. This came following a net withdrawal of ₹25,586 cr from equities in May on poll jitters and more than ₹8,700 crore in April amid concerns over a tweak in India's tax treaty with Mauritius.

## Apparel export body plans to host garment fair

Over 350 domestic players and foreign buyers from more than 50 nations will participate in the garment fair, beginning from June 25, apparel export promotion council (AEP) said on Sunday. The fair, aimed at boosting garment exports from India, will be inaugurated by textiles minister Giriraj Singh in New Delhi, it said. AEP chairman Sudhir Sekhri said that the garment exports rose by 10 per cent in May.

## Armeef Infotech to raise ₹250 cr through IPO

IT infrastructure solutions provider Armeef Infotech has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise ₹250 crore through an initial public offering (IPO). The Gujarat-based company's initial share sale is completely a fresh issue of equity shares with no offer for sale component, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) filed with securities and exchange board of India.

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## Electronic parts' demand to rise manifold: CII

New Delhi, June 23: Demand for electronic components and sub-assemblies is estimated to grow over five-fold to \$240 billion by 2030, including some of the key parts like motherboard, lithium ion batteries, camera module etc that are largely imported, a CII report released on Sunday said. The report recommends the government to come up with revised electronic components production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes with higher incentives in the range of 35-40 per cent to reduce dependence on imports.

"The demand for components and sub-assemblies stood at \$45.5 billion to support \$102 billion worth of electronics production in 2023. This demand is expected to scale to \$240 billion to support the \$500 billion worth electronics production by 2030."

Priority components and sub-assemblies, including printed circuit board assembly (PCBAs), are projected to grow at CAGR of 30 per cent, reaching \$139 billion by 2030," the report said. The report identifies components and sub-assemblies of batteries (lithium-ion), camera modules, mechanicals (enclosures etc), displays and PCBAs as high priority for India that cumulatively account for 43 per cent of the components demand in 2022 and is expected to grow to \$51.6 bn by 2030.

"These components have either a nominal production in India or are heavily import dependent. India can hardly afford to



● THE CII report has recommended that the government craft a scheme aimed at providing fiscal support for select components and sub-assemblies in the range of 6-8 per cent for 6-8 years.

sustain this trend of importing the priority components.

"Similarly, PCBA is a high potential category for India since most of the demand is met by imports. This segment is expected to grow 30 per cent, leading to a demand creation of around \$87.46 billion by 2030," the report said. According to the report, manufacturing-related cost disabilities compared to other competing economies like China, Vietnam, Mexico (10-20 per cent), lack of big domestic manufacturing corporations, lack of domestic design ecosystem for Indian companies and lack of raw materials ecosystem are challenges for manufacturing of components and sub-assemblies in India.

The CII report has recommended that the government craft a scheme aimed at providing fiscal support for select components and sub-assemblies in the range of 6-8 per cent for 6-8 years. — PTI

## E-COMMERCE HUBS PLANNED FOR HANDLING ONLINE EXPORT SHIPMENTS

Kolkata, June 23: The directorate general of foreign trade (DGFT) is working with the department of revenue to establish designated e-commerce hubs across the country to streamline the process for online export shipments.

India's e-commerce exports currently stand at \$2 billion as compared to China's \$350 billion, according to industry sources.

The government aims at bridging the gap by establishing a supportive e-commerce ecosystem, they said.

"A lot of streamlining is required in this regard. We are working with the department of revenue to have designated e-commerce hubs so that clearance of goods happens fast," director general of foreign trade Santosh Kumar Sarangi said.

He said these hubs will have facilities like dedicated customs and security checks, allowing cleared parcels to proceed through a green channel at airports, eliminating the need for inspections. The approach mirrors best practices observed in other countries, he said.

He also pointed out that the e-commerce hubs will be built and maintained by private entities, while the government will oversee security and customs clearances. This public-private partnership aims at creating a infrastructure for e-commerce exports, the official said. — PTI

## Markets likely to sway on Budget expectations

### Expectations are high for govt actions aimed at consumption

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, JUNE 23

Market is likely to remain range bound after touching record highs as it approaches Union Budget some time in mid-July. Last week the Nifty-50 hit an all time high of 23,667.1 on Friday and the Sensex recorded 77,851 on Wednesday, but the benchmark indices saw some profit taking and closed lower for the week.

Union Budget is likely to be pro-people this time as indicated by recent moves by the new government as it announced three crore houses under PM Awas Yojana, focus on rural India with transfer of ₹20,000 crore to farmers and GST rate adjustments for certain items. The Cabinet also approved 5 per cent to 11 per cent rise of minimum support price for Kharif crops.

"With a coalition govern-



● THE INDIAN market has extended its upward trend as anticipated, reaching all-time high levels and the short to medium-term outlook remains positive.

ment in place, there is optimism that the upcoming budget will strike a balance between growth initiatives and populist measures. Additionally, expectations are high for government actions aimed at stimulating consumption, a critical area to focus on," said Vinod Nair, head-Research, Geojit Financial Services. Profit booking emerged last week on concerns about the slow progress of the monsoon, Nair added.

"Nifty-50 at the record levels depicts indecisiveness between the bulls and

bears as it oscillates in a well-maintained range of 23,400-23,660; breakout on either side will determine the future trend," said Aditya Gagar, director, Progressive Shares.

"If we do not witness any aberrations from the global peers, we might witness consolidation to continue. However, the outperformance of the banking space and a further move would certainly play in favour of the bulls, hence a close tab is required over sectoral performance in the upcoming week," said Osho Krishan,

senior analyst - Technical & Derivatives, Angel One. Speculations around new taxes on derivative trading could keep bulls in control.

"The Indian market has extended its upward trend as anticipated, reaching all-time high levels and the short to medium-term outlook remains positive. Key factors to watch in the coming weeks include monsoon developments and the upcoming Budget," said Mahavir Lunawat, managing director, Pantomath Capital Advisors.

"India may roll out the FAME 3 scheme to encourage the sale of EVs in the upcoming budget. Electric two, three, and four-wheelers are expected to be supported under the faster adoption and manufacturing of electric vehicles (FAME) scheme, which could receive a budgetary allocation of about ₹10,000 crore," Lunawat said.

## GSTC GoMs to be revamped

FC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the GST Council (GSTC) would have to reconstitute three groups of ministers (GoMs) under it as new ministers from 11 states joined the body.

The 53rd GST Council meeting held on Saturday witnessed that 11 new ministers joined the Council from Andhra Pradesh,

Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Odisha, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Telangana and Tripura.

With new ministers joining the council, the reconstitution of three GoMs on analysis of revenue from GST, boosting the real estate sector under GST, and GST system reforms are on cards.

While the GoM on GST rate rationalisation has already been reconstituted

● WITH NEW ministers joining the council, the reconstitution of three GoMs on analysis of revenue from GST, boosting the real estate sector under GST and GST system reforms are on cards.

ed in Feb., making Bihar deputy chief minister Samrat Chaudhary its convenor, the reconstitution of the other three is

yet to be notified. In the GoM on analysis of revenue from GST, the new finance minister from Odisha has to be inducted.

The name of the new finance minister from Haryana has also to be included in the panel. The GoM on boosting the real estate sector, headed by Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar, has to be reconstituted as the finance minister from Bihar has changed.

## ONGC seeking partners for gas field

New Delhi, June 23: State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is seeking partners to rescue the Deen Dayal gas field in the KG basin in Bay of Bengal.

ONGC sought expression of interest from "global oil and gas companies with requisite technical expertise and financial strength to join as partner (with participative interest) for firming up a viable strategy" for the field,

according to the tender document.

The field has produced negligible quantities of gas since ONGC in January 2017 acquired Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation's (GSPC) 80 per cent interest in the KG-OSN-2001/3 block off the east coast of India.

The block contains the Deen Dayal West (DDW) gas field which was discovered by GSPC almost two decades back. It had

● THE BLOCK contains the Deen Dayal West gas field which was discovered by GSPC almost two decades back. It had showcased the field as a promising prospect when it sold its stake to ONGC.

showcased the field as a promising prospect when it sold its stake to ONGC in order to cut its debt. The field, which was ini-

tially said to hold up to 20 trillion cubic feet in place gas reserves - by far the biggest in any deepsea field in the country - but later trimmed to a tenth, has proved to be tougher than anticipated.

"A total of seven development wells are drilled till date," ONGC said.

A development well is one that helps produce hydrocarbons from below the earth's surface or seabed. — PTI

## GST taxpayers can amend sales return

New Delhi, June 23: GST taxpayers will now have the option to amend outward supply or sales return form GSTR-1 before payment of taxes for a month or quarter.

The GST Council in its meeting on Saturday had recommended providing a new optional facility by way of form GSTR-1A to facilitate taxpayers to amend the details in Form GSTR-1 for a tax period and/or to declare additional details.

GSTR-1A will, however, have to be filed before filing of return in GSTR-3B for said tax period. This will facilitate the taxpayer

to add any particulars of supply of the current tax period missed out in reporting in form GSTR-1 of the said tax period or to amend any particulars already declared in GSTR-1 of the current tax period (including those declared in IFF, for the first and second months of a quarter), to ensure that correct liability is auto-populated in GSTR-3B.

Currently, GST taxpayers file outward supply return GSTR-1 by the 11th day of subsequent month and with an annual turnover of up to ₹5 crore can file within 13th day of the end of the quarter. — PTI



## HIGHER THRESHOLDS WILL REDUCE GST COMPLIANCE BURDEN

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, JUNE 23

The GST Council should look at keeping the turnover threshold of companies at ₹50 lakh as this will help reduce the administrative burden and compliance costs, while serving the cause of equity without much sacrifice on revenue, finds Brickwork Ratings.

As per the information gathered from Karnataka, businesses with less than Rs 50 lakh turnover accounted for 93 per cent of taxpayers and their turnover and tax shares were 6 per cent and 11 per cent, respectively.

"It is important to keep the threshold at a reasonably high level to focus on 'whales' rather than 'minnows'. This helps to focus on larger taxpayers and reduce the compliance burden on those with smaller turnovers besides serving the cause of equity," said Brickwork.

The number of rates also should be reduced. A single rate structure is the best, but considering the fact that the tax is levied at multiple rates at present, moving over to one rate may be politically difficult.

Though moving to one rate should be taken as the eventual goal, it may be feasible to move over to two rates at present.

Analysis shows that over 70 per cent of the revenue is collected from 12 per cent and 18 per cent and merging the two rates at 15 per cent will collect as much revenue.

A lower rate of 7 per cent for essential commodities which are presently charged 5 per cent could be levied and 28 per cent rate should be abolished altogether except for demerit goods and services. — PTI



## DAIKIN HOPEFUL OF MANUFACTURING 2 MN ACS IN INDIA

New Delhi, June 23: Air conditioner maker Daikin expects to manufacture two million units in India this fiscal and has plans to scout for more export opportunities by making India a manufacturing hub.

The company has already sold 7 lakh units of residential air conditioner (RAC) in the first three months of the year, helped by a blistering summer this season and expects over 50 per cent growth, said Daikin Airc conditioning India chairman and managing director Kanwaljeet Jawa.

Daikin is investing in compressor manufacturing here and aiming to manufacture five million units by 2030.

"The mandate is of 5 million units, which includes 4 million units for the domestic market and 1 million of exports by 2030 and we are very confident," Jawa said.

The company is anticipating a robust growth in RAC volumes in Indian market, which has a comparatively low penetration of around 7 per cent. "The India RAC market has already passed the inflexion point and is now come to the explosion stage," he said. — PTI

## Apple, Meta discuss AI for iPhones

Bengaluru, June 23: Facebook parent Meta Platforms has discussed integrating its generative AI model into Apple's recently announced artificial intelligence (AI) system for iPhones.

The move comes as Apple plans to add technology from other AI companies on its devices amid reports that it was discussing a potential tie-up with long-time search partner Alphabet's Google.

The iPhone maker is also expected to discuss partnerships with other AI companies in different regions like China, where Microsoft-backed OpenAI chatbot ChatGPT is banned.

AI start-up Anthropic has been in discussions with Apple to bring its



● THE SIZE of potential financial windfall is unclear, but the talks involved AI companies selling premium subscriptions to their services through Apple Intelligence.

generative AI to Apple Intelligence, the Journal reported, citing people familiar with the matter.

The discussions have not been finalised and could fall through. The deals with Apple would help AI companies to obtain a wider distribution of their products.

The size of potential financial windfall is unclear, but the talks involved AI companies selling premium subscriptions to their services through

## DIGITAL | HELP

### Same fear of job roles getting wiped out existed when computers came

## AI to empower humans, not replace them

New Delhi, June 23: Artificial intelligence (AI) will replace people with people, contrary to the common narrative, Deloitte's AI executive Rohit Tandon said, emphasising that the future belongs to AI-human collaboration, not replacement, as he envisions a revolutionary era where technology empowers, rather than replaces, the workforce.

Tandon, managing director, AI and Insights practice leader, Deloitte LLP, said AI will not snatch jobs, but will simply do away with some of the easier jobs, and create new

roles. "AI will, with people, replace people... It's not just AI replacing people. You still need humans in the loop," he said.

Tandon said same kind of fear of job roles getting wiped out existed when computers came.

"But just look at how many more jobs have been created across the globe because of IT. The same thing is going to happen with AI. It's going to be all-pervasive, just like it is today, just like you have some of the biggest supercomputers that exist today available on your phone, some of the most powerful



● SHARED SERVICES like finance and human resources that exist across all sectors are the first ones to be impacted by artificial intelligence.

AI algorithms will be at your disposal, in your purses, and in your wallets, in your pockets.

He said this is not the first time when a new technology has come and threatened job losses.

"We've done this before with automation, call centres, etc. We've automated

some of the easier stuff. What it leaves behind is tougher problems for humans to solve.

People will use AI to supplement their knowledge and their ability to find information and share that back and serve the population, he said. "It will eliminate certain

roles. But it will create more jobs than it will eliminate," Tandon said.

He said shared services - that exist across all sectors - are the first ones to be impacted by AI.

"Finance, human resources, and some of the shared services pieces. What we're seeing is energy, from an industry perspective, is taking on some very interesting use cases, which have a wide impact," Tandon said.

He further said setting up guardrails and regulations for AI is important, but they should be dynamic in nature. — PTI

# CRICKET



## SHORT SINGLES

### England rout USA, storm into semis

Pacer Chris Jordan grabbed a sensational hat-trick in his birthplace before captain Jos Buttler's blitzkrieg as England stormed into the semifinals of the T20 World Cup with a 10-wicket mauling of USA in Bridgetown, on Sunday.

Making a comeback in place of Mark Wood, Jordan (4/10) mopped up the USA tail by claiming four wickets in five balls, including the hat-trick, in the 19th over as the Americans folded for 115 in 18.5 overs.

Buttler then blazed away to a 38-ball 83 not out as England completed the chase in 9.4 overs to become the first team to make the semifinals of the showpiece.

During his scintillating knock, Buttler smashed seven sixes and six fours, including hitting five maximums in a Harmeet Singh over to leave the USA bowling bruised and battered.

Earlier, the 35-year-old Jordan, who was born and grew up in Christ Church, Barbados, began the penultimate over dismissing a well-set Corey Anderson for 29 with a low full toss.

After surviving the next ball, Ali Khan found his off stump knocked over before Jordan went on to dismiss Nosthush Kenjige and Saurabh Netravalkar off successive deliveries to pick the first hat-trick for England in T20Is.

Jordan had figures of 4/10 from his 2.5 overs. Jordan also became only the second bowler in T20 World Cup history to pick four wickets in a single over.

Curtis Campher of Ireland was the first to pick four wickets in a single over against the Netherlands during the 2021 edition in Abu Dhabi.

**Brief scores:** USA 115 in 18.5 overs (Nitish Kumar 30, Corey Anderson 29; Chris Jordan 4/10, Adil Rashid 2/13, Sam Curran 2/23) lost to England 117 for no loss in 9.4 overs (Jos Buttler 83 not out, Phil Salt 25 not out).

### Windies face SA in must-win clash

Hosts West Indies will need their all-round firepower for taming a rampaging South Africa in their must-win final Super Eight clash to seal the semifinal berth at the T20 World Cup in North Sound. After their only loss in six games to England in their opening Super 8 game, WI regrouped to smash co-hosts USA by nine wickets.

For WI, a win will see them through to the last-four, while a loss will bring it down to net run-rate and that too only if USA beat England in the other group match.

South Africa, who have won all their six games so far, are sitting at the top of the table but they too are not yet guaranteed a spot in the semifinal and will need a win to seal the position.

A loss will again leave their fate on the other result and NRR.

West Indies had failed to rotate strike against England but they quickly addressed the issue, producing a dominant show against USA led by Shai Hope's belligerent 39-ball 82.

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# OZ ON EDGE

## Rohit & Co. look to blow biggies out of Cup

MOSES KONDETY  
GROS ISLET (ST LUCIA),  
JUNE 23

A historic win by Afghanistan has suddenly put the all-conquering Australians under tremendous pressure. They must defeat India on Monday and hope the Afghans lose to Bangladesh in the last Super Eight game later in the day in order to qualify for the semifinals of the T20 World Cup. The top side are in danger of going down under.

The scenario sets up a perfect platform for the Blues to avenge their defeat in the final of last year's 50-over World Cup at home. That makes the India-Australia contest at the Darren Sammy National Cricket Stadium compelling.

India, with four points and a healthy run rate of 2.425, sit atop the group, with one foot in the semis. The Aussies are edgy and will look to come back hard. They will need to make a huge turnaround from the embarrassing defeat to Afghanistan though.

However, India will be wary of some dangerous players in the rival camp. Travis Head, with 179 from six innings, is sixth on the run-getters' list at the tournament. The left-hander is well acquainted with players on the Indian team, courtesy his recent IPL stint and is capable of punishing the bowlers, especially during Powerplay. His opening partner David Warner follows him at No. 7 with 172 runs against his name.

Marcus Stoinis is another Australian who is doing well in the batting depart-



India seek consistency in batting when they take on Australia in their last Super Eight encounter in the World Cup in Gros Islet, St Lucia, on Monday.

ment. He is among the top 10 too (eighth), having scored 167 from six innings at a high average of 55.66. The 34-year-old is also handy with the ball while 'Big Show' Glenn Maxwell hit a half-century in the losing cause against Afghanistan.

Pace partners Pat Cummins and Mitchell Starc pose a threat with the ball. The former comes

into the game with back-to-back hat-tricks in the Super Eight stage. Then there is leg-spinner Adam Zampa, who is second on the wicket-takers' list with 13.

India seek consistency when it comes to batting. Rishabh Pant is the only Indian batter in the tournament's top 10 with 152 runs. He will need to curb his attacking instincts at

times though and not get carried away while cruising, as was evident from his reverse sweep against Bangladesh that cost him his wicket.

Suryakumar Yadav scored a brilliant half-century against Afghanistan alright but would look to be consistent. Ditto with Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, who appears to be getting into the groove on



wickets here in the Caribbean, going by his run-a-ball 24 against the Afghans and a 28-ball 37 against Bangladesh in the Super Eight.

The Blues surely bat deep, with Shivam Dube, Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel and Ravindra Jadeja taking spots 5 to 8 in the order. Pandya shone bright against Bangladesh while Dube came up with a valuable knock after India had lost four wickets in that game.

The bowling machine looks well-oiled and has been delivering constantly. Seamer Arshdeep Singh is the third highest wicket taker in the tournament with 15 scalps. Jasprit Bumrah has boxed the batsmen in, evident from his astonishing economy rate of 3.42. Given the spearhead's accuracy, the Aussies would have to think out of the box to score runs off him.

Kuldeep has come to the party in style. The left-arm spinner has played key roles in India's two victories in the Super Eight and looks set for more. Bring it on.

## SUPER EIGHT

TEAMS	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
INDIA	2	2	0	0	4	+2.425
AUSTRALIA	2	1	1	0	2	+0.233
AFGHANISTAN	2	1	1	0	2	-0.650
BANGLADESH	2	0	2	0	0	-2.489

TEAMS	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
ENGLAND	3	2	1	0	4	+1.992
S. AFRICA	2	2	0	0	4	+0.625
WEST INDIES	2	1	1	0	2	+1.814
USA	3	0	3	0	0	-3.906

## Kuldeep digs deep into his reserves

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA),  
JUNE 23

All through the American leg, Kuldeep Yadav has been a silent spectator. Come Super Eights and the left-arm spinner has sprung into action in the Caribbean and has been making the batsmen dance.

His 3 for 19 on Saturday against Bangladesh followed a fine display against Afghanistan on Thursday and reserved his spot in the playing XI, from being among the reserves.

The 30-year-old is pleased as punch. "The wickets (here) are good for spinners, as seen in the last few games. I approach every game with the same intensity. I've got four overs to bowl during which I try to stick to the right lengths and keep varying my pace," he said after India's second victory in the second stage of the tournament.

"With the ball blowing, it was a bit difficult from the end I was bowling because my rhythm is not a one-step delivery, so the lines and lengths mattered. I was trying to adopt an aggressive

Kuldeep Yadav said his experience of bowling at the Feroz Shah Kotla's small ground back home in Delhi also came in handy.

approach — read the batsmen and be a step ahead of them," Kuldeep said of the challenges at the mostly open Sir Vivian Richards Stadium.

"When the asking rate is steep, the batsmen will try and attack you, but if you have a proper plan and bowl at better lengths you have the best chance of getting them out. I made my T20 and ODI debuts here (in the West Indies) back in 2017 so I knew the conditions very well," he added.

Kuldeep said his experience of bowling at the Feroz Shah Kotla's small ground back home in Delhi also came in handy.

"The IPL experience is totally different. It is actually helping me at this World Cup," he remarked before exercising caution: "We are in the Super Eight and obviously there is a lot of pressure... we're going to play Australia in a couple of days' time too."

## Afghans stun Australia with win

Arnos Vale (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), June 23: Gulbadin Naib was Afghanistan's man with the golden arm, bowling his team to a surprise 21-run victory over previously unbeaten Australia in their Group One Super Eight encounter in the T20 World Cup at the Arnos Vale Stadium on Saturday.

Set a target of 149, Glenn Maxwell (59 off 41 balls, six fours, three sixes) had the Test and One-Day champions on course until he became Gulbadin's third wicket in the 15th over, opening the door to a result which keeps the duel for semifinal spots alive going into the final two fixtures in the group on Monday.

Gulbadin finished with four for 20 from his four overs of medium pace to turn the match as Australia suffered their

### SCOREBOARD

**Afghanistan:** Rahmanullah Gurbaz c Warner b Stoinis 60, Ibrahim Zadran c Mitchell Marsh b Zampa 51, Azmatullah Omarzai b Zampa 2, Karim Janat c Tim David b Cummins 13, Rashid Khan c Tim David b Cummins 2, Mohammad Nabi not out 10, Gulbadin Naib c Maxwell b Cummins 0, Nangeyalia Kharote not out 1. Extras (b-4, lb-1, w-4) 9. Total (all out in 19.2 Overs) 148. Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-21, 3-22, 4-26, 5-41, 6-41.

**Bowler:** Ashton Agar 4-1-17-0, Josh Hazlewood 4-0-39-0, Pat Cummins 4-0-28-3, Adam Zampa 4-0-28-2, Glenn Maxwell 2-0-12-0, Marcus Stoinis 2-0-19-1. **Australia:** Travis Head b Naveen-ul-Haq 0, David Warner c Noor Ahmad b Nabi 3, Mitchell Marsh c Nabi b Naveen-ul-Haq 12, Glenn Maxwell c Noor Ahmad b Gulbadin 59, Marcus Stoinis c Gurbaz b Gulbadin 11, Tim David lbw b Gulbadin 2, Matthew Wade c Karim Janat b Rashid Khan 5, Pat Cummins, b Gulbadin 3, Ashton Agar c Gulbadin b Naveen-ul-Haq 2, Adam Zampa c Nabi b Azmatullah 9, Josh Hazlewood not out 5. Extras (b-2, lb-6, w-1) 16. Total (all out in 19.2 Overs) 127. Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-16, 3-32, 4-71, 5-85, 6-106, 7-108, 8-111, 9-113.

**Bowler:** Naveen-ul-Haq 4-0-20-3, Fazalhaq Farooqi 3-0-21-0, Azmatullah Omarzai 1-2-0-10-1, Mohammad Nabi 1-0-1-1, Nangeyalia Kharote 1-0-13-0, Rashid Khan 4-0-23-1, Noor Ahmad 1-0-11-0, Gulbadin Naib 4-0-20-4.

first-ever defeat to the Afghans in a senior international encounter; being dismissed for 127 with

four balls left in the match.

"It is a great moment for me, my nation, my peo-

ple," said an exultant Gulbadin on receiving the Man of the Match award.

Earlier, Pat Cummins claimed his second hat-trick in as many matches as Afghanistan lost momentum after another century opening stand from Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran, settling for a total of 148 for six having been put in.

A top score of 60 off 49 balls (four fours, four sixes) by Gurbaz and 51 off 48 balls (six fours) from Zadran gave the Afghans an excellent platform of 118 — their third century partnership of the tournament — by the 16th over.

But having ridden their luck via half-chances and misfields in gaining the ascendancy, four wickets for eight runs put the innings back in the balance. — AFP



Afghanistan's Gulbadin Naib (right) celebrates after taking the wicket of Australia batter Tim David during their Super 8 clash in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on Saturday. Afghanistan won by 21 runs. — AP

## RASHID LAUDS AFGHANISTAN'S 'MASSIVE' WIN

Kingstown, June 23: Skipper Rashid Khan lauded Afghanistan for their "massive" win over Australia in the T20 World Cup, saying such glorious moments were missing in the last couple of years and attributed the victory to the number of all-rounders at the team's disposal.

"Massive win for us as a team and as a nation. Great feeling. It's something we missed in last two years. Really happy with the win and super proud of the guys," Rashid said.

"The way Gulbadin bowled today — the experience he has, it came good today. The way Nabi started was also pleasing to see." — PTI

## NADA BANS BAJRANG AGAIN & SERVES HIM 'NOTICE OF CHARGE'

New Delhi, June 23: The National Anti-Doping Agency on Sunday suspended Bajrang Punia for a second time, three weeks after its Anti-Disciplinary Doping (ADDP) panel had revoked his suspension on the grounds that NADA had not issued a "notice of charge" to the wrestler.

NADA had on April 23 suspended the Tokyo Games bronze medalist wrestler for refusal to give his urine sample for dope test during the selection trials held in Sonapat on March 10. The sport's global governing body United Wrestling World (UWW) had also suspended him.

Bajrang had appealed against the provisional suspension and the ADPP had revoked it on May 31 till NADA issues the notice of charge.

"Swinging into action, NADA on Sunday served the notice to the wrestler.

"This serves as a formal

notice that you are being charged with the violation of Article 2.3 of the National Anti-Doping Rules, 2021 and now you are provisionally suspended," said NADA's communication to Bajrang.

Bajrang has time till July 11 to request for a hearing or accept the charge.

The elite wrestler has maintained that he never refused to give sample but only demanded to know NADA's response to his e-mail where he wanted to know why expired kits were sent to take his samples in December 2023.

Bajrang's lawyer Vidhushpat Singhania said they will challenge the suspension.

NADA also explained the reason for its action. "Chaperone/DCO had duly approached you and informed you that you were required to provide a urine sample for dope analysis purposes." — PTI

## Portugal cruise into Euro knockout stages

Dortmund (Germany), June 23: Portugal outclassed Turkey to secure their place in the last 16 of Euro 2024 with a 3-0 win in Dortmund on Saturday, while Belgium kept their hopes alive with a 2-0 victory over Romania.

Cristiano Ronaldo's Portuguese side, European champions in 2016, are among the favourites to win the title in Germany and they lived up to their status with a comprehensive victory in front of a partisan crowd to secure first place in Group 'F'.

Bernardo Silva of Manchester City opened the scoring midway through the first half, sweeping the ball home after a low Nuno Mendes cross was deflected into his path.

Portugal then doubled their lead just before the half-hour mark in comical



Portugal's Bernardo Silva (right) celebrates with Joao Cancelo after scoring against Turkey during their Group 'F' match at the Euro 2024 tournament in Dortmund, Germany, on Saturday. Portugal won 3-0. — AP

fashion. There appeared no danger for the Turkey defence following a poor pass by Joao Cancelo aimed at Ronaldo, but

Samet Akaydin's attempted backpass rolled beyond the reach of goalkeeper Altay Bayindir and crossed the line despite

the efforts of Zeki Celik to clear. Turkey never looked like getting back into the game and Portugal got their

third goal early in the second half as Ronaldo found himself in on goal but unselfishly squared for Bruno Fernandes to finish.

Having already beaten the Czech Republic 2-1, Portugal are one of only three sides to have a maximum six points from their opening two games and are now certain to win the section even before playing Georgia in Gelsenkirchen on Wednesday.

They therefore know they will play a last-16 tie in Frankfurt on July 1 against one of the best third-place finishers.

"We are first in the group and we can make changes in the next game which for me is very important as there are lots of players in the dressing room who deserve to play," said Portugal coach Roberto Martinez. — AFP

## INDIA WOMEN BEAT S. AFRICA AGAIN TO SWEEP ODI SERIES

Bengaluru, June 23: India put up yet another dominating performance to defeat South Africa by seven wickets and sweep the three-match Women's ODI series 3-0 here on Sunday.

Smriti Mandhana narrowly missed a century and got out for an 83-ball 90, having set up the 216-run chase with her superlative show at the top. She hit 11 boundaries.

Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur made a 48-ball 42 before Richa Ghosh sealed the chase with a six off Tumi Sekhukhune in the 41st over. India won with 56 balls to spare. — PTI

**Brief scores:** South Africa 215/8 in 50 overs (Laura Wolvaardt 61; Arundhati Reddy 2/36, Deepthi Sharma 2/27) lost to India 220/4 in 40.4 overs (Smriti Mandhana 90, Harmanpreet Kaur 42).