



- European summit in Moldova tackles Ukraine war, regional conflicts
- Russian bombardment of Ukraine's capital kills at least 3 people
- India, Nepal likely to ink number of pacts after Modi-Prachanda talks
- IAF's trainer aircraft crashes in Karnataka, pilots eject safely

## VPP president Ardent Basaiawmoit withdraws fast after govt's announcement

## M'laya Govt forms expert panel to review quota policy

**SHILLONG, June 1 (PTI):** The Meghalaya government set-up all-party meeting to review the 1972 job reservation policy has proposed the constitution of an expert committee to review the policy.

The all-party meeting was held on Wednesday chaired by Meghalaya law minister Ampareen Lyngdoh. The meeting proposed the constitution of an expert committee to review the state's job reservation policy, Lyngdoh said.

The expert committee should have legal, constitutional and economic background experts that will look at data and evaluation of population, she said.

"The (constitution of an expert committee) will be one of the suggestions to be sent to the government by the committee," Lyngdoh told media persons after the meeting with leaders and representatives of all political parties



including those of the agitating Voice of the People's Party (VPP) on Wednesday.

She, however, said that not all political parties are in agreement to have an expert committee.

"There are political parties who agreed and there are political parties who did not agree. So we will

do our job by sending the minutes to the government that were discussed in the meeting," she added.

The minister suggested that all political parties should submit their suggestions in writing on the matter within a period of 15 days. "All political parties are to prepare their suggestions, omissions, cancella-

tions, deletions with substantial legal footings... to ensure that there will be no obstruction or scrutiny that will result negatively for the government," Lyngdoh said.

Meanwhile, VPP president Ardent Basaiawmoit is on an indefinite hunger strike for more than nine days demanding a review of the 1972 job reservation policy of the state. Basaiawmoit said the agitation will be withdrawn only if the government expresses its readiness to review the 1972 job reservation policy which awarded 40 per cent of reserved jobs to Garos, 40 per cent for Khasi-Jaintia tribes, 5 per cent for other tribes and 15 per cent for general category candidates. "Our stand was made clear to the government. I will not leave the venue (of the hunger strike) till the government agrees to review the job reservation policy," he said. "I will continue (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Judicial probe, peace committee to resolve Manipur violence: Shah

**IMPHAL, June 1 (PTI):** Union home minister Amit Shah on Thursday said a judicial probe headed by a retired high court chief justice to inquire into clashes which erupted in the northeastern state of Manipur, will soon be announced.

At a press conference held here on Thursday, he also announced that a peace committee under the Governor of Manipur Anusuiya Uikei which will have representatives of all political parties, besides representatives from both Kuki and Meitei communities and social organisations will be set up.

"Dialogue is the only solution to the ongoing crisis in Manipur," Shah said. "We will soon announce a judicial probe headed by a retired high court chief justice and set up a peace committee," he said.

The Home Minister also announced a CBI probe to investigate FIRs alleging five criminal conspiracies and one general conspiracy behind the violence in Manipur.

He, however, also said, "Violence was a temporary phase, misunderstandings will go away... the situation will soon be normal."

Shah said he had visited relief camps, met both Kuki and Meitei civil groups, and discussed the peace process.

The leaders of both the warring Meitei and Kuki communities, as well as other civil society representatives who have met him, have assured him that they would work to assuage hurt feelings and remove misunderstandings, Shah said. The home minister said an Inter-Agency Unified (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## AEC tragedy

## CM asks edu deptt to conduct probe



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, June 1:** In view of the tragic road accident in Jalukbari where seven students of Assam Engineering College lost their lives, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, on Thursday, asked the Education department for instituting a high level enquiry committee to enquire into the circumstances leading to the accident and the premature death of the students. It may be noted that till the enquiry is completed and the report is examined by the government, the Principal of AEC, Jalukbari and the Superintendent of the concerned hostel to which the ill-fated students belonged, would be asked to go on leave.

Moreover, the chief minister also asked the Education department to constitute a committee to look into the present system of election in colleges and universities and report regarding the need for reviewing the system in the wake of frequent clashes during the pre and post-election period amongst the student community.

Further, to prevent recurrence of any incident which is potentially life threatening to the student community, Sarma also asked the Education department to constitute another committee to strengthen discipline, rules and regulations in hostels of education institutions. The committee will also look into strict enforcement of, in and out time of hostels, complete prohibition of alcohol etc. in hostel campuses and hostels and prohibition of extended stay of ex borders of hostels. The committee will also recommend ways for the promotion of healthy community life within the hostels.

## HT BRIEFS

### Timing adjustment

**DIPHU:** Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) has changed the timing of the Lower Primary Section of all educational institutions under its jurisdiction from 7:30 am to 12:30 pm. The Department of Primary Education, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), has issued an order on new timing for primary schools in Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong districts. The order said that in view of the rising temperature, the Lower Primary section of all educational institutions would start their classes at 7:30 am and be over at 12:30 pm from the months of June to August.

### Rainstorm

**DIPHU:** A sudden rainstorm accompanied by strong winds has blown out electricity in Diphu town. Trees were uprooted, and tree branches were ripped off, which fell into the residential compounds of the citizens. No casualties were reported from anywhere. Since the filing of this report, power has not been restored in town.

## Three police personnel injured in gunfight with suspected Kuki militants

**IMPHAL, June 1 (PTI):** Three police personnel were injured in a gunfight with suspected Kuki militants in Manipur's Bishnupur district, officials said on Thursday. The gunfight took place at Tangjeng under the Kumbi police station on Wednesday night, they said.

The injured police personnel have been admitted to an Imphal hospital, they added. "Heavy exchange of fire has also been reported from Chanung in Imphal East district. We have not got any casualty report from there yet," a senior official told PTL. Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said here that the government is committed to restore peace in Manipur and ensuring

an early return of all internally displaced people back to their homes.

Meeting victims from both Meitei and Kuki communities in relief camps in the state, he assured them of security and said the government's focus is to ensure their safe return home.

Shah said, "We are committed to restoring peace in Manipur as early as possible and ensuring their (refugees) return to their homes." Ethnic clashes broke out in the state nearly a month ago after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. After a relative lull for (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Modi, Prachanda give fresh Indo-Nepal ties

**NEW DELHI, June 1 (PTI):** India and Nepal will strive to take their relationship to Himalayan heights and resolve the boundary issue and all such matters in this spirit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday after holding wide-ranging talks with his Nepalese counterpart Pushpakamal Dahal 'Prachanda'.

In his media statement after the talks, Modi said he and Prachanda took many important decisions to make the partnership between the two countries a "super hit" in the future even as the two leaders remotely inaugurated a number of projects and laid the foundation stone of some others.

The two sides also signed seven agreements to boost cooperation in a range of areas, including extension of cross-border petroleum pipeline, development of integrated check posts and boosting cooperation in hydro-electric power.

One of the key pacts signed was the revised India-Nepal treaty of transit. "We will continue to strive to take our relationship to Himalayan heights. And in this spirit, we will resolve all issues, be it boundary related or any other issue," Modi said in presence of Prachanda.

Modi also referred to his priority in strengthening ties with Nepal after he took charge as prime minister nine years back. "I remember, nine years ago, in 2014, within three months of taking office, I made my first visit to



Nepal. At that time I had given a 'hit' formula for India-Nepal relations - Highways, I-ways, and Trans-ways," Modi said. "I had said that we will establish such a relationship between India and Nepal that our borders do not become barriers between us," he said. Modi said he was feeling proud to say after nine years that "our partnership has been really a 'hit'."

Following the talks, the two leaders virtually inaugurated integrated check posts at Rupaidiha in India and Nepalgunj in Nepal. They also virtually flagged off a cargo train from Bathnaha in Bihar to Nepal custom yard. To further strengthen (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Congress welcomes Amit Shah's peace measures for Manipur but questions delay

**NEW DELHI, June 1 (PTI):** The Congress welcomed the measures announced by Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday to bring back normalcy in Manipur but asked why he did not do this earlier and allowed the state to burn for a month.

In Imphal, Shah said a judicial committee headed by a retired high court chief justice will soon be announced to inquire into the violent clashes that have claimed over 80 lives. He also announced that a peace committee under Governor Anusuiya Uikei having representatives of all parties, Kuki and Meitei communities and social organisations will be set up. A CBI probe to look into FIRs alleging five criminal conspiracies and one general conspiracy behind the violence in Manipur was also announced.

Congress general secretary, com-



munications, Jairam Ramesh said Shah's series of announcements on measures related to bringing Manipur back to normalcy is welcome.

"Why couldn't he have done this, weeks ago? Why did the Modi government let Manipur burn for a month? Are only Manipuri votes valuable and Manipuri lives dispensable," he asked on Twitter.

"The RSS' agenda, the BJP state government's diabolical acts and the Union government's inaction is the reason why Manipur is bitterly di-

vided today. And what has happened in Manipur has implications for the entire Northeast," the Congress leader also said. The party has claimed that the BJP's "divisive politics" was responsible for the crisis in Manipur and has questioned why Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not made an appeal for peace to the people of the northeastern state. The opposition party has also questioned why Shah delayed his visit to the violence-hit state. Shah said he visited relief camps, met both Kuki and Meitei civil groups, and discussed the peace process. According to Shah, the leaders of both the warring Meitei and Kuki communities, as well as other civil society representatives who met him, assured that they would work to assuage hurt feelings and remove misunderstandings.

## SCHOOL INFRA IN A SHAMBLES



Lessons being imparted to school students as they sit on the floor at Chandmari Tea Model school, Panitola in Tinsukia district on Thursday. UB Photos

## Celebrate India's success: Rijiju

**NEW DELHI, June 1 (PTI):** With India reporting 7.2 per cent growth rate, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju on Thursday asked Congress to celebrate it and not take "sardistic pleasure" by undermining the country's success stories.

Rijiju, the Earth Sciences Minister, recalled that former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan had told Rahul Gandhi in 2022 that India would be lucky to do 5 per cent GDP growth next year.

"Now India has registered 7.2% growth in 2022-23 FY. Congress party should at least celebrate India's success even if they have problems with Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji," Rijiju, the former law minister, said on Twitter.

## Funds will bolster Pixxel's plans to launch six satellites

## Space startup raises \$36 million in funds; Google new investor

**NEW DELHI, June 1 (PTI):** Space startup Pixxel, which is building a constellation of hyperspectral imaging satellites for monitoring the earth, on Thursday said it had raised USD 36 million in funding and found a new investor in Google, which offers mapping services besides a popular search engine. The new funds will also help further the development of 'Aurora', Pixxel's AI-powered analytics platform to make hyperspectral analysis accessible for everyone, a company statement said.

The funds will also bolster Pixxel's plans to launch six satellites in 2024 and another 18 by 2025.

"With this round of funding, we are even closer now to realising our mission of building a health monitor for the planet, and empowering people around the world to make informed decisions about our collective well-being," said Awaiz Ahmed, co-founder and CEO of Pixxel said in a statement here.



The new funds will advance Pixxel's mission to build the world's first and highest-resolution hyperspectral satellite constellation, delivering actionable climate insights on a planetary scale, a company statement said. Pixxel's venture funding now totals USD 71 million, propelling it to the highest-funded space tech startup in India. New in-

vestors join existing backers like Lightspeed, Radical Ventures, Accenture Ventures, Relativity's Jordan Noone, Seraphim Capital, Ryan Johnson, Blume Ventures, Sparta LLC, growX Ventures, Athera Venture Partners, Omnivore VC, the company statement said.

Data from Pixxel's satellites will be critical in helping global organi-

sations closely monitor emissions, water pollution, gas leaks, oil spills, soil composition, forest biodiversity and crop health in unprecedented detail and at faster speeds.

"We are incredibly grateful for our world-class investors for their unwavering support and belief in our vision and are excited to work together to create a meaningful positive impact on the future of our planet," Ahmed said.

Pixxel's hyperspectral satellites can capture images at hundreds of wavelengths in the electromagnetic spectrum and reveal key data about the health of the planet. Both the hyperspectral constellation and advanced data analytics platform will provide up to 10 times more information compared to today's multi-spectral satellites in space and increase the spectral resolution available by 50 times. Pixxel launched three pathfinder missions last year and added new customers for its (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Journey of First 1000 Days launched in Kohima

**HT Correspondent**  
**DIMAPUR, June 1:** The First 1000 Days programme, which begins with pregnancy planning and goes up to when the child reaches the second birthday, was launched in Kohima's chief medical officer's conference hall on Thursday.

The programme was launched under the National Health Mission (NHM) Nagaland to lay the foundation for a child's healthy growth and development with the concept of child development through public health interventions and support, which are crucial and effective for a child's life during the first 1000 days. Different benefits and supports like absolute neutrophil count (ANC) check-ups, Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK) and Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) schemes for hospital deliveries, approved vaccines available for free in government facilities, provision of a medical care plan (MCP) card, iron folic acid to reduce anaemia, the chief minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme, nutritional support, and cash incentives under the Pradhan Mantri Matru

Vandana Yojana are provided by the government under the programme, provided the required details are registered correctly.

Launching the programme, Kohima deputy commissioner Shanavas C said that in Nagaland, people have a habit of taking things very lightly. "This is a serious problem that may have a negative impact, especially regarding the health sector," he said.

He urged the public for mass participation in the programme to reduce the child mortality rate. The DC hoped that the message of the First 1000 Days would reach the rural populace through the department concerned, line departments, NGOs, and SHGs.

Shanavas also requested the health and family welfare department to make the village health committees functional, through which correct information can be disseminated to the people at the village level, eradicating the stigma. The DC further urged the department to accord due importance to utilising the machinery and equipment (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## FlyBig begins daily Guwahati-Silchar flights

**GUWAHATI, June 1 (PTI):** Fly-Big Airlines on Thursday began daily flights between Guwahati and Silchar in Assam. The flight was flagged by Assam Tourism Minister Jayanta Malla Baruah. A total of 63 passengers took the flight from Guwahati to Silchar.

This is FlyBig's second service in Assam. Its first service started on May 1 in the Guwahati-Dibrugarh-Guwahati sector. The FlyBig flight in the Guwahati-Silchar-Guwahati route will be supported by the Assam Tourism Development Corporation Limited (ATDCL).

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said in a tweet that "With the lowest fare, these two services from Guwahati to Dibrugarh and Silchar will tremendously help the people of Upper Assam and Barak Valley. We are committed to serving our people in all possible ways". Baruah said that these services will enhance the regional connectivity in the Northeastern region and will be executed in non-Udan routes. "These flights will have a far-reaching impact on the (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)



# GST mop-up crosses ₹ 1.5 lakh crore for third month in a row; up 12 pc in May

The collections reflect a continuation of the good economic performance across states witnessed since last year

**NEW DELHI, June 1 (PTI):** GST collections crossed ₹1.50 lakh crore for the third month in a row, recording a 12 per cent increase in May at over ₹1.57 lakh crore, according to the official data released on Thursday. The collections, tax experts said, reflects a continuation of the good economic performance across states witnessed since last year. The gross Good & Services Tax (GST) revenue collected in the month of May, 2023 is ₹1,57,090 crore of which Central GST is ₹28,411 crore, State GST is ₹35,828 crore, Integrated GST is ₹81,363 crore (including ₹41,772 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is ₹11,489 crore (including ₹1,057 crore collected on import of goods), a finance ministry statement said.

"The revenues for the month of May 2023 are 12 per cent higher than the GST revenues in the same month last year," the ministry said. During the month, revenue from import of goods was 12 per cent higher and the revenues from domestic transactions (including import of services) are 11 per cent higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year. May is



the third month in a row that tax collections from goods sold and services rendered have crossed ₹1.50 lakh crore. In April GST revenues had touched a record high of ₹1.87 lakh crore, while in March it was ₹1.60 lakh crore. May is the 14th month in a row when monthly GST revenues came in more than ₹1.4 lakh crore. Collections have crossed the ₹1.5 lakh crore-mark for the 5th time since the implementation of GST on July 1, 2017. KPMG in India national head (Indirect Taxes) Abhishek Jain said the GST collection matches with the government budget estimates for this fiscal.

"With extensive department GST audits lined

up before September 2023, these figures may likely go up from here in the months to come," Jain added. Deloitte India partner M S Mani said these collections, while being lower than the previous year-end month, pertain to supply transactions undertaken in April.

"While the collections in absolute terms are lower than the previous month -- which had an embedded year-end impact -- it reflects a continuation of the inherently good economic performance across states witnessed since last year," Mani added. ICRA chief economist Aditi Nayar said GST revenues in May 2023 have modestly exceeded expectations. "Over the next few months, we expect GST revenues to print at ₹1.55-1.65 trillion and record an expansion of 10-11 per cent in YoY terms, broadly in line with the nominal GDP growth expected in FY2024," Nayar said. EY Tax Partner Saurabh Agarwal said GST collection figures for May 2023 further strengthen the belief in India's macroeconomic stability and continued growth momentum as we see a 12 per cent YoY growth.

# SJVN to develop 669 MW Lower Arun Hydro Power project in Nepal

**NEW DELHI, June 1 (PTI):** State-owned SJVN Ltd on Thursday inked a project development agreement with Investment Board of Nepal to develop 669 MW Lower Arun Hydro Power project worth ₹5,792 crore in Nepal.

The agreement was inked in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Nepal Pushpa Kamal Dahal, according to a statement. "...a Project Development Agreement (PDA) of 669 MW Lower Arun Hydro Electric Project in Nepal has been signed," it said. The PDA was signed by Nand Lal Sharma, chairman & managing director of SJVN, and Sushil Bhatta, CEO of Investment Board of Nepal, here on Thursday, it stated. Sharma said SJVN is committed to make Lower Arun project a Model Hydro Project with complete execution, from concept to commissioning within 7



to 8 years. "This is our second large-scale investment in Nepal after 900 MW Arun-3 HEP (Hydro Electric Project) which is in advance stage of construction. Now, our target is to start the construction of the project in current fiscal after obtaining investment approval from Government of India," Sharma said. According to him, the project shall be constructed in five years at a cost of ₹5,792 crore with a levelised tariff of ₹4.99 per unit. The project will be developed on BOOT (build own operate transfer) basis, and on completion, it will generate 2,901 million units of energy, annually.

The project is located in Sankhuwasabha and Bhojpur districts of Nepal.

SJVN won the project through International Competitive Bidding in February 2021.

SJVN is already operating India's largest underground 1,500 MW Nathpa Jhakri Hydro Power Station in tandem with 412 MW Rampur Hydro Power Station in Himachal Pradesh.

In addition, SJVN is developing a 217 kilometre-long associated transmission network for power evacuation and export to India.

Presently, SJVN is executing three hydro projects of 2,059 MW in Nepal. A 900 MW Arun-3 HEP is in advance stage of construction and 490 MW, Arun-4 HEP will be developed in joint venture mode by SJVN and Nepal Electricity Authority. SJVN is targeting for 5,000 MW projects in Nepal by 2030.

## Gold falls by ₹150 to ₹60,250; Silver jumps ₹150

**NEW DELHI, June 1 (PTI):** Gold prices eased ₹150 to ₹60,250 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid a fall in yellow metal price overseas, according to HDFC Securities. The precious metal had ended at ₹60,400 per 10 grams in the previous trade. Silver, however, jumped ₹150 to ₹72,900 per kg.

"Spot gold prices in the Delhi markets traded at ₹60,250/10 grams, down ₹150 per 10 grams," Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst - commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the international markets, gold was quoting lower at USD 1,955 per ounce, while silver was marginally up at USD 23.27 per ounce. Comex gold prices edged lower in Asian trading hours on Thursday as the dollar and bond yields rebounded from lows in Wednesday's session, Sriram Iyer, Senior Research Analyst at Reliance Securities, said.

## Diageo goes carton-less in Maharashtra

**GUWAHATI, June 1:** Diageo India, the leading beverage alcohol company in the country, has revealed its plans to gradually eliminate mono cartons from several of its spirit brands, including McDowell's and Signature. This initiative, called "Be A #PlanetHero," is part of Diageo's Society 2030: Spirit of Progress, a 10-year environmental, social, and governance (ESG) action plan aimed at fostering a more inclusive and sustainable world. As part of this plan, Diageo aspires to achieve zero-waste to landfill from its own operations.

The Be A #PlanetHero movement has already been implemented in various states across India and is projected to save 10,000 tonnes of paper and reduce carbon emissions by 7,000 tonnes annually. Diageo India's well-loved brands, including Vat 69, Black Dog, Black & White, McDowell's No 1, Signature, and DSP Black, have transitioned to a carton-less experience. The objective of this campaign is to drive thoughtful initiatives and showcase the company's commitment to sustainability through its "sustainable by design" approach. Diageo India aims to provide high-quality products and has implemented additional safety measures to address concerns related to breakage and spilling.

Deepika Warrier, chief marketing officer of Diageo India, stated, "Be A #PlanetHero is a step towards promoting a sustainable and environmentally conscious future for our brands and consumers. This initiative aligns well with the conscious choices being made by our consumers and reflects our commitment to being sustainable by design."

# BJP will win 2024 Lok Sabha elections: Nitin Gadkari

**NEW DELHI, June 1 (PTI):** Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said BJP will again win the Lok Sabha elections scheduled to be held next year, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Addressing the 'Times Network India Economic Conclave', Gadkari further said the government has done good work for the country's development in the last nine years. There is a need to generate employment to eradicate poverty and achieve the Prime Minister's goal of making India a USD 5 trillion economy, Gadkari said. "2024 hum jitne wale hai. (We will win

2024 Lok Sabha elections)," the road transport minister said while responding to a question.

"We have done good work and (will) form the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. People will elect us for the country's development," he added. The BJP had won 303 seats out of 543 in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, while the Congress managed to win 52. The minister said India's biggest problems are hunger, poverty and unemployment. Gadkari said, he is contemplating to provide loans at cheaper rates for construction equip-

ment which will operate on clean fuel like green hydrogen, LNG and electricity. He further said there is also need to reduce the cost of construction without compromising with the quality of construction.

"Presently, construction equipment run on diesel. I would like them to operate on green hydrogen, LNG and electricity. "I am thinking of coming out with a policy under which loans can be provided to them (construction equipment which will run on clean fuels) at cheaper rates," the road transport and highways minister said.

# Surya Cement launches 'Proud to Protect' offer

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, June 1:** Surya Cement, a prominent cement brand in North East India, has recently launched a consumer offer called "PROUD TO PROTECT." This initiative aims to provide additional value to customers who purchase Surya Gold Cement and Surya Concrete. The consumer offer will be available for a period of four months, starting from June 1st, 2023, until September 30, 2023, specifically in Assam. Under the "Proud to Protect" offer, customers who buy 100 bags (50kg each) of Surya Cement will receive an umbrella as an assured gift. Furthermore, those purchasing 200 bags will be rewarded with a packet containing five T-shirts, while customers buying 300 bags will receive a helmet.

"We believe in offering the best deals to our customers and

honoring the trust they place in Surya Cement. This offer will strengthen our brand's association and enable us to continue the legacy of Surya Cement," stated Vedant Agarwal, the Managing Director of Purbanchal Cement Ltd.

In addition to the assured gifts, Surya Cement is hosting a contest called "Take a Selfie." This online lucky draw competition encourages customers to participate by sharing their selfies on Facebook or Instagram with the branded hashtag "Surya Strong Protection." By posting a selfie wearing the helmet, T-shirt, or with the umbrella and using the designated hashtag, participants will earn a bonus entry into the contest. The lucky draw will take place on October 15, 2023, and the winners will have the chance to receive a two-wheeler or Amazon gift vouchers.

## Markets extend losses for 2nd day in highly volatile trade

**MUMBAI, June 1 (PTI):** Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower in highly volatile trade on Thursday due to selling in banking, metal and energy counters amid a mixed trend in the global markets.

Falling for the second day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 193.70 points or 0.31 per cent to settle at 62,428.54 even after a positive beginning. During the day, it fell 263.1 points or 0.42 per cent to 62,359.14.

The NSE Nifty fell 46.65 points or 0.25 per cent to finish at 18,487.75. "Despite challenges in the global economies, the domestic market displayed better than estimated Q4 earnings growth, along with 7.2 per cent GDP growth in FY23, adding buoyancy to the market during the week.

"However, today the market closed with a marginal negative bias in which banks witnessed heavy profit-booking. Investors turned cautious in anticipation of inflationary pressure in the US after raising the US debt ceiling," said Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services.

From the Sensex pack, Bharti Airtel fell 3.42 and Kotak Mahindra Bank declined 3.31 per cent. ICICI Bank, ITC, HDFC Bank, UltraTech Cement, HCL Technologies and Maruti were the other major laggards.

Tata Motors, Hindustan Unilever, Asian Paints, Sun Pharma, Nestle, Tata Consultancy Services, Wipro, Bajaj Finance, Axis Bank and IndusInd Bank were among the gainers.

Meanwhile, S&P Global Ratings said Reliance Industries Ltd's

operating performance is likely to remain resilient over the next two years, as the firm's growing presence in the digital and retail segments will temper softer earnings in the energy business. Reliance shares fell 0.51 per cent to close at ₹2,462.05 apiece on BSE. Institutional investors lapped up Coal India's share in the maiden government's stake sale this fiscal, with ₹6,500 crore bids pouring in on the first day of the offer for sale. Investors sought 28.76 crore shares against the 18.48 crore total shares offered in the 2-day OFS, stock exchange data showed. The government offered over 8.31 crore shares to institutional investors on Thursday under the OFS, but, received bids for 28.76 crore shares or 3.46 times.

"Within the Indian market, Coal India witnessed a 4 per cent decline as the government set the Offer for Sale (OFS) floor price at ₹225 per share. This announcement might have influenced investor sentiment and contributed to the profit booking in the market," said Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.61 per cent and the midcap index advanced 0.11 per cent.

Among the indices, bankex fell 0.82 per cent, metal declined 0.79 per cent, energy (0.65 per cent), financial services (0.41 per cent), telecommunication (0.27 per cent) and commodities (0.18 per cent).

Realty jumped 1.19 per cent, healthcare (0.84 per cent), consumer discretionary (0.64 per cent), utilities (0.68 per cent) and IT (0.52 per cent).

## Rupee rises 33 paise to close at 82.42 against US dollar

**MUMBAI, June 1 (PTI):** The rupee appreciated by 33 paise to close at 82.42 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, as positive macroeconomic data strengthened investor sentiments.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82.54 against the US dollar and settled at 82.42 (provisional), up 33 paise over its previous close amid sustained foreign fund inflows. During the day, the domestic unit witnessed an intraday high of 82.36 and a low of 82.54. On Wednesday, the rupee closed at 82.75 against the US currency. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.20 per cent to 104.12. Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures advanced 0.17 per cent to USD 72.72 per barrel. "The Indian rupee strengthened amid stellar economic data and foreign fund inflows.

## Amazon Fresh announces summer refreshment deals

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, June 1:** As the summer season kicks in, Amazon Fresh is here to help you embrace the heat and stay refreshed with an array of delicious and juicy fruits. From the June 1-7, Amazon Fresh is hosting its Super Value Days, offering great deals on seasonal fruits, vegetables, and more. With scorching temperatures and sweaty days, there's no better time to indulge in the season's favorite fruits and vegetables. Amazon Fresh has curated an enticing selection, including juicy watermelons, luscious mangoes, crisp cucumbers, and vibrant bell peppers. These refreshing treats will not only help you beat the heat but also provide a healthy boost to your summer diet. During the Super Value Days, customers can take advantage of exciting discounts on popular brands such as Sunfeast, Kwality Walls, Fortune, and Daawat, among others. With discounts of up to 45%, it's the perfect opportunity to stock up on all your seasonal essentials. To make the deal even sweeter, customers using ICICI Bank Credit & Debit Cards can enjoy an instant discount of 10% on their purchases from June 1st to June 4th, 2023. The minimum transaction value to avail of this offer is ₹2,500, with discounts of up to ₹300.

## CONTINUATION OF SUMMER SPECIAL TRAIN BETWEEN SECUNDERABAD-DIBRUGARH-SECUNDERABAD

It has been decided to continue the running of Summer special trains between Secunderabad-Dibrugarh-Secunderabad with existing days of service, timings, stoppages as per details given below:

Train No.	From	To	Days	Extension Period	Trips
07046	Secunderabad	Dibrugarh	Monday	05-06-2023 to 26-06-2023	04
07047	Dibrugarh	Secunderabad	Thursday	08-06-2023 to 29-06-2023	04

Composition: AC-2 Tier (Two), AC-3 Tier (Eleven), Sleeper Class (Five), General Second Class (Two), Luggage Van - (Two) = 22 Coaches.

General Manager (Operations)  
**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
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## WALK-IN INTERVIEW

**WALK IN INTERVIEW FOR ENGAGEMENT OF PART TIME SCHOOL TEACHERS ON CONTRACTUAL BASIS IN RAILWAY H.S. SCHOOL/LUMDING, RAILWAY H. S. SCHOOL/BADARPUR & RAILWAY H. S. SCHOOL/DIMAPUR**

**Notice No: 01/2023 Dated: 25-05-2023.** (1) It has been decided to conduct "WALK-IN-INTERVIEW" for filling up the following vacant posts of Teachers in Railway Higher Secondary School/Lumding, Railway Higher Secondary School/Badarpur, Railway High School/Dimapur by engaging suitable candidates, purely on contract basis. The engagement will be on a part time basis on fixed consolidated monthly remuneration for a period not more than 200 working days (Two Hundred working days) or appointment of regularly selected candidates from Railway Recruitment Board or availability of regular railway employee or as decided by the Railway Administration for termination of contract of engagement whichever is earlier or as per further instructions issued by Railway Board from time to time. (2) The details of vacancies of Teachers for part time engagement on contract basis are indicated below:

Railway Higher Secondary School/Lumding			
SN	Category	Total Vacancy	Subject wise Vacancy
1	PGT	02	PGT (Economics) = 01, PGT (Logic & Philosophy) = 01
2	TGT	12	TGT (Bio-Science) = 02, TGT (Assamese) = 01, TGT (Arts) = 02, TGT (Pure-Science) = 03, TGT (Hindi) = 02, TGT (Drawing) = 01, PTI = 01
3	PRT	09	PRT (Eng. Medium) = 07, PRT (Hindi) = 01, PRT (Assamese) = 01
4	Computer	06	Computer Teacher = 06
5	Music Teacher	02	
6	Dance Teacher	02	Special Category teachers for overall development of all School
7	Spoken English	02	

Railway Higher Secondary School/Badarpur			
SN	Category	Total Vacancy	Subject wise Vacancy
1	PGT	05	PGT (Economics) = 01, PGT (Hindi) = 01, PGT (Pol. Science) = 01, PGT (History) = 01, PGT (English) = 01
2	TGT	08	TGT (Bio-Science) = 01, TGT (Pure Science) = 01, TGT (Hindi) = 01, TGT (Arts) = 02, TGT Drawing = 01, Music Teacher = 01, TGT IT = 01
3	PRT	05	PRT (Hindi) = 01, PRT-04
4	Computer	01	Computer Teacher = 01

Railway High School/Dimapur			
SN	Category	Total Vacancy	Subject wise Vacancy
1	TGT	07	TGT (Bengali) = 01, TGT (English) = 01, TGT (Social-Science) = 02, TGT (Hindi) = 01, TGT (Bio-Science) = 01, Music = 01
2	PRT	03	PRT (Hindi) = 01, PRT = 02
3	Computer	01	Computer Teacher = 01

The willing candidates who fulfils the prescribed qualifications may fill up the application form enclosed herewith duly signed by candidate and pasting latest colored Photographs and may directly report for "Walk in Interview" to the venue of interview mentioned below:

Railway Higher Secondary School/Lumding			
SN	Category	Venue	Date & Time
1	PGT	Railway Higher Secondary School, Lumding	17th June 2023 9.30 AM
2	TGT		
3	PRT	Railway Higher Secondary School, Lumding	18th June 2023 9.30 AM
4	Computer		
5	Music Teacher	Railway Higher Secondary School, Lumding	24th June 2023 9.30
6	Dance Teacher		
7	Spoken English	Railway Higher Secondary School, Lumding	25th June 2023 9.30

Railway Higher Secondary School/Badarpur			
SN	Category	Venue	Date & Time
1	PGT	Railway Higher Secondary School, Badarpur	10th June 2023 9.30 AM
2	TGT		
3	PRT	Railway Higher Secondary School, Badarpur	11th June 2023 9.30 AM
4	Computer		

Railway High School/Dimapur			
SN	Category	Venue	Date & Time
1	TGT	Railway High School, Dimapur	15th June 2023 9.30 AM
2	PRT		
3	Computer		

For details please visit N.F. Railways [www.nfr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.nfr.indianrailways.gov.in)

Divisional Railway Manager (P), Lumding  
**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
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# NTPC Green Energy, UPRVUNL to develop green energy parks

An MoU was signed between NGEL and UPRVUNL on May 31, 2023 at Lucknow

**NEW DELHI, June 1 (PTI):** NTPC Green Energy Ltd (NGEL) has signed an agreement with the Uttar Pradesh Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (UPRVUNL) for the development of renewable energy parks in the state. NTPC Green Energy Ltd (NGEL) is a subsidiary of NTPC Ltd. To collaborate in the development of renewable energy parks and projects and facilitate the government's efforts towards energy transition, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between NGEL and UPRVUNL on May 31, 2023 at Lucknow, NTPC Ltd said in a statement on Thursday.

The MoU was signed between NGEL CEO Mohit Bhargava and Director Finance Nidhi Kumar Narang UPRVUNL in presence of UPRVUNL MD P Guruprasad and other officials. As part of the agreement, the companies will set up ground-mounted and floating solar projects in Rihand reservoir and other water bodies



and land area and develop renewable energy parks and projects wherever land is made available. The companies will also develop solar PV project dedicated for solarization of Ayodhya city. "NGEL and UPRVUNL shall jointly work for formation of Joint Venture Company (JVC) to meet the renewable generation obligation, flexibility in generation and scheduling of thermal/hydro power stations through bundling with renewable energy and energy storage," the statement said.

NTPC is India's largest power utility, with a total installed capacity of about 72

GW (including JVs and subsidiaries).

As part of increasing its renewable energy portfolio, a fully-owned subsidiary NGEL has been carved out for renewable energy parks and projects including development in the areas of green hydrogen, energy storage technologies and round the clock RE power.

UPRVUNL was constituted to set up and operate power-generating stations in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

At present UPRVUNL has four thermal power stations within Uttar Pradesh with an installed capacity of 5,820 MW and one thermal power station with installed capacity of 1,320 MW under JV with NTPC. It is in the process of adding further 3,300 MW capacity with super critical technology on its own and another 1,980 MW in Joint Venture with CPSEs. UPRVUNL is looking to diversify into renewable energy and energy storage sectors.

No.KOK/BLDG/ Tech-50/Pr-III/2022-23/866

Date 29-05-2023

## SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Separate sealed tenders affixing Non-refundable Court fee stamp of Rs.8.25 (Rupees eight & paise twenty five) only with a validity period of 180(One hundred eighty) days which will subsequently to be converted and drawn up in the printed F-2 Form are invited from the intending Registered contractors of classes of the Assam PWD (Bldg.) and BTC for submitting tender for the works stated below. The tenders will be received by the undersigned up-to 1-30pm of 06-06-2023 and will be opened on the same date and place at 2.00Pm.

Sl. No.	Name of work	(Approx.) Estimated value of work	Earnest money 2% for GNL & 1% for ST/SC/ OBC/MOBC	Cost of tender document	Time of completion
1	Repairing & Renovation of No.673 Ghoramara L.P. School under Kokrajhar District.	Rs.4,43,000.00	Rs.8900/= & Rs.4500/=	Rs.200/=	4(four) month
2	Repairing & Renovation of Mahajonpara L.P. School under Kokrajhar District.	Rs.4,66,400.00	Rs.9400 /= & Rs.4700 /=	Rs.200/=	4(four) month

Detailed NIT may be seen in all working days in the office of the undersigned. Tender paper will be issued to the contractor or their authorized agent up-to 1-30pm in all working days from 03-06-2023 to 06-06-2023 in the office of the undersigned on payment in the form of Banker cheque/Bank draft/Demand draft pledged in favour of the Principal Secretary BTC, Kokrajhar. The contractor should submit up-to date Registration Certificate of contractor, latest clearance certificate of Income Tax and GST etc. along with the tender paper. In case the office is remain closed/bandh for any circumstances on tender receiving/opening date, then the same will be received/opened in the next working days.

Sd/=

Executive Engineer, PWD,  
Kokrajhar District & Chirang District  
Territorial Building Division, Kokrajhar

IPR(BTC)-2023-24/189



## BSF organises cycle rally



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, June 1:** BSF Guwahati Frontier organised a cycle rally under Mission LiFE which means 'LiFEstyle For Environment' to enhance the awareness about protection of environment to mark the upcoming World Environment Day 2023.

On Thursday, a cycle rally was flagged off by Dinesh Kumar Yadav, IPS, inspector general, BSF, Guwahati Frontier from BSF, Patgaon campus and after covering a distance of 10 km via Accoland-Rani Road, the rally concluded again at BSF campus. About 210

officers, subordinate officers and border men of Frontier Headquarters BSF Guwahati, 1st Bn National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), BSF Air Wing and Composite Hospital Patgaon participated in the cycle rally enthusiastically.

While addressing the gathering, Dinesh Kumar Yadav, IPS, inspector general Guwahati Frontier stated that Mission LiFE is an initiative of the government of India for environmental protection. He appealed to everyone to take responsibility by keeping the changes of environment in mind.

## AJYCP appeals to ban the selling of fish with formalin at Nagaon

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, June 1:** District body of Asom Jatiyabadi Yuva Chatra Parishad has expressed their resentment on Thursday here for not taking lawful action against the fish traders who are being involved in selling fish with formalin in the local markets across the district.

While addressing a press conference at the district office of the youth organisation here at Nagaon Natoon Bazar Chariiali, the president and secretary of the organisation - Pragjyotish Bonia and Debashish Das respectively criticised the chief minister and the state minister for fisheries for remaining silent about the entire issue.

The organisation asserted that in a recent study initiated by the Food Security department, government of Assam, Biology, Chemistry and Physics departments of Gauhati University and Raha Fisheries College, it was found that formalin was present in fishes imported to local fish markets from outside the state. But adequate measures

against the selling of those formalin mixed fishes in the local markets are yet to be taken.

Pointing out larger syndicate in trading of imported fish in local fish markets here, the leadership of the organisation urged the state government to ban the selling of fish mixed with formalin or to take strict action to curb the prevailing syndicate in fish markets across the district failing which the organisation would carry out massive democratic movement against the government as well as the department concerned in the days to come. Besides, during the press conference, the leadership of the organisation also appealed to the people of the district not to purchase fish imported from outside the state.

Central executive Diganta Das, joint secretary Dibyajyoti Hazarika, publicity secretary Chandan Phukon, finance secretary Dipankar Sarma were also present in the press conference here, a release added.

## AWW passes away

**HT Correspondent**

**MORIGAO, June 1:** One anganwadi worker (AWW) Rubi Sarma, under Bhurbandha ICDS project passed away on Thursday. She was 56. She was admitted to GMCH on Wednesday as she got sick while returning from her duty.

A condolence meeting in presence of DSWO, officers of SPMU (Poshan Abhiyaan) under Directorate of Women and Child Development department, Assam was held at the training hall of AWW of Muhila Mehfil, Morigaon.

## Motorcycle of senior scribe stolen from weekly bazar at Mikirbhet

**HT Correspondent**

**NAGAON, June 1:** The personal motorcycle of senior scribe of Nagaon Birinchi Kr Deka bearing registration number AS 02M 2464 was stolen from Choraibhali local weekly bazar under Mikirbhet PS a couple of days back while the motorcycle was parked near an outlet there.

The scribe immediately lodged an FIR at Mikirbhet PS in this regard. It has been alleged by some locals here that an increasing number of motorcycle theft cases have been registered over a couple of months at the PS. But police administration is yet to trace anybody in connection to those theft cases till the time of filing this report.

## All members of AASAA Demow Regional Committee resigns

**HT Correspondent**

**DEMOW, June 1:** In a press release issued on Thursday, Binanda Chaura, president and Lalit Tanti, secretary of All Adivasi Students Association of Assam (AASAA), Demow Regional Committee stated that the AASAA, Sivasagar District Committee president Naren Tanti and the District Committee under his leadership, the president/secretary and all members of AASAA, Demow Regional Committee has resigned from their posts.

## DHARA to showcase India's rich agricultural heritage at Tezpur University

**HT Correspondent**

**TEZPUR, June 1:** Tezpur University is gearing to host a national conference on 'DHARA: Bharatiya Paramparik Krishi Mela' to be organised during June 4 to 6, 2023. The event, which is a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations, is aimed at creating awareness about the enriched knowledge-based traditions that existed in this land by introducing citizens to the intellectual wealth of ancient Bharatiya Paramparik Krishi.

The conference is supported by Indian Knowledge System (IKS), an innovative cell under ministry of Education and ministry of Culture, government of India. Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat and Cotton University, Guwahati are partnering in the event.

"This Dhara Meet is a platform to showcase India's rich agricultural heritage bringing together farmers, scientists, policymakers, industry experts, and agricultural enthusiasts to exchange ideas, knowledge, and experiences. The event aims to address the challenges faced by the agriculture sector and explore possibilities to become self-reliant in agriculture (Atmanirbhar Krishi)," Prof Shambhu Nath Singh, vice chancellor, Tezpur Uni-



versity said. The three-day meet will feature a diverse range of activities, such as, panel discussions, interactive workshops, exhibitions, field demonstrations, student contests, etc. Dignitaries from, IKS division, ministry

of Education, ministry of Culture, New Delhi, will attend and deliberate in the event. The minister of Agriculture, government of Assam, has also consented to participate in the event. The event will also be attended by

## ASTC retrenched workers urge govt to consider their case on humanitarian ground

**HT Correspondent**

**SIVASAGAR, June 1:** Protesting the alleged arbitrary decision of the ASTC management in sacking 65 employees of Sivasagar out of a total of 771 in Assam, the ASTC employees and workers continued their protest demonstration in the ASTC office for a second day on Thursday. They refused to accept their letters of discharge from the superintendent, ASTC Sivasagar. The sacked employees were appointed during the tenure of MD Anand Prakash Tiwari and Khagendranath Chetia. Mustak Nasir Ahmed, a sacked employee, told this correspondent that some of them were engaged as trainee apprentices in 2011 and later more numbers were engaged on many occasions. The majority of them, he said, were ap-



pointed after the BJP came to power in 2014 with monthly salaries ranging between ₹ 11,000 to ₹ 5,000 per month. Another em-

ployee said that they had been contributing to the EPF at 10 pc of their salaries also and were demanding an increase in their monthly

emoluments since 2015. They said that the sudden sacking is like dumping them in the rivers with their hands tied behind them.

Earlier, they were engaged on a contractual basis under an agency for a period of only one year for a monthly stipend of ₹ 2000 only. The engagement letters the workers have are only copies with terms and conditions of engagement which were purely temporary in nature and the Corporation reserved the right to dismiss them as and when necessary. It was also written that the ASTC would engage them in further works only when it was necessary and their apprenticeship satisfactory. They urged the government to consider their case on humanitarian grounds as no other option is open to them to get an engagement to support their families.

## LGBI Airport adds new direct connectivity to Mumbai & Bengaluru



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, June 1:** Guwahati's Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport has noticed a sharp rise in the number of passengers and air traffic movements.

The International Airport in its recent press release stated about their latest addition - Akasa Airline, in terms of flights. The airline has introduced a new connectivity from Guwahati to Mumbai and Bengaluru from Thursday onwards on all week days. The passengers from Guwahati to Mumbai and

Bengaluru expressed their satisfaction over the enhancement of flights connecting to Mumbai and Bengaluru. Akasa is deploying a narrow-body Boeing aircraft with single class configuration offering 189 seats in economy class.

The inward sector Flight QP-1504 departs Guwahati at 17:45 hours in the evening to Mumbai and arrives at 21:15 hours at night. On the other hand, QP-1503 departs Mumbai at 14:00 hours and arrives at Guwahati at 17:05 in the evening. Similarly, the inward sector Flight

QP-1135 departs Guwahati at 19:25 hours in the evening and arrives in Bengaluru at 22:15 hours at night. On the other hand, QP-1134 departs Bengaluru at 15:35 hours and arrives Guwahati at 18:50 in the evening, stated the release.

The release also added that Akasa has decided to operate the route effective from June 1 onwards and will be operational till October 28, 2023. Notably, the Mumbai flight will be operated till June 30 and the Bengaluru flight will be operated till October 28.

## NHRCCB urges full body in Assam State Human Rights Commission to function

**HT Correspondent**

**BISWANATH CHARIALI, June 1:** The National Human Rights and Crime Control Bureau (NHRCCB), Assam has expressed concern over the non-appointment of the chairperson as well as the full body, who are the main enablers of protecting human rights.

The state chairman of NHRCCB Nishant Thard, in a statement sent to the newspaper through state media officer Mrinmay Kumar Nath residing in Jamugurihat said that the organisation has written a letter to the Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court seeking necessary step in this regard. The NHRCCB, Assam in the press release said that when the organisation decided to contact chairperson of the Assam Human Rights Commission to attend its State Conversion held recently in Guwahati as

the chief guest, it was confirmed that the Commission is running without the chairperson and its full body at present.

Nishant Thard, chairman of the NHRCCB, expressed his astonishment when he came to know about the matter. Without a permanent chairperson, how have the Assam State Human Rights Commission's actions been implemented? Thard raised the important question. He also mentioned that the appointment of a chairperson and constitution of the full body is necessary not only for the smooth functioning of the Commission but also to rectify the current situation. So, it is considered very important to take immediate action in this regard. The National Human Rights and Criminal Control Bureau has urged the Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court to take appro-

priate measures to ensure the early appointment of a suitable person in the respected post along with the full body of the Commission.

The NHRCCB feels that the absence of the chairman non-formation of the full body severely hampers the commission's ability to carry out its orders with efficiency, which is a noticeable aspect of the Assam Human Rights Commission. This will not only erode the credibility of the commission but also deprive the victim of access to justice. The appointment of a chairperson and formation of its body will not only protect the rights of the people of Assam but will also be considered as an appropriate mechanism for restoring the integrity and functioning of the Assam State Human Rights Commission, said the press release.



Minister Jayanta Mallbaruah flagged off the second FlyBig Flight services between Guwahati-Silchar-Guwahati with 63 passengers onboard at LGBI Airport, Azara in Guwahati on Thursday. UB Photo

## College of Community Science hosts national symposium to encourage social entrepreneurship

**HT Correspondent**

**JORHAT, June 1:** A two-day long national symposium-cum-workshop on 'Fostering Innovations to Address Social Challenges' was organised by College of Community Science, Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat on Tuesday and Wednesday. The symposium was in connection with the year-long golden jubilee celebrations of the college.

The main objective of the programme was to foster innovations for community development and sustainability and idea seeding and idea nurturing for entrepreneurship development.

Addressing the gathering during the inaugural programme, vice chancellor of the university, Dr Bidyut Chandan Deka urged for the quickest transfer of innovations for resolving social challenges in different dimensions of social life. He also emphasised on the need for addressing the social issues including psychological corruption, hygiene-sanitation and economic challenges.

Dr Mamoni Das, dean, College of Community Science, in her inaugural address, highlighted the importance of scientific and technological innovations in a wide range of target areas to promote innovative social entrepreneurship and to tackle the social challenges using knowledge, technology and talent as efficiently as possible.

Dr Kishore Kumar Sharma, principal investigator, National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP); emeritus scientist Dr Sharada Devi Anne, former dean, College of Home Science, ANGRAU, Hyderabad

and Dr Anirban Choudhury, associate professor, Symbiosis International Deemed University, Pune also addressed the gathering.

Dr Nandita Bhattachayya, professor and organising secretary of the Golden Jubilee Celebration Committee offered the vote of thanks. Former deans of the college and retired professors also graced the occasion. In the technical sessions, Dr Sharada Devi had delivered her lecture on 'Nano Science and Community Innovation for Sustainability' focusing on application of nano-technology in textile, food and agriculture while Dr Anirban Choudhury enlightened the participants on 'Technological Innovations for Persons with Special Needs'. On the second day, resource person Dr Pradip Kr Das, professor, department of Computer Science and Engineering, IIT, Guwahati spoke on 'Application of Artificial Intelligence to Address Social Challenges'. Dr Das had thrown insight on use of artificial intelligence in different contexts including disaster awareness and prediction, agriculture epidemics and outbreaks, etc.

He also enlightened the participants on start-up ideas in artificial intelligence. Dr Mahalaxmi V Reddy, retired associate dean of College of Home Science, Prof Jayashankar, State Agricultural University, Telangana delivered her speech on 'Fostering Innovations for Entrepreneurship Development' with special reference to frozen flowers. Around 200 students of the university and faculty members participated in the symposium.

## ATASU Panidehing Regional Committee formed

**HT Correspondent**

**DEMOW, June 1:** A meeting of the All Tai Ahom Students (ATASU), Panidehing Regional Committee was held in 63 No Bahuwabari Primary School on Wednesday.

Madhab Jyoti Dowerah, president of All Tai Ahom Students (ATASU), Panidehing Regional Committee presided over the meeting. Dharmen Gogoi, assistant secretary of ATASU, Central Committee, Sumeet Kumar Handique, secretary of ATASU, Sivasagar Sub-division Committee along with other ATASU leaders spoke about the ethics and ideals of the organisation. Madhab Dowerah was selected as president, Kamal Dowerah was selected as vice president, Manakh Borgohain was selected as working president, Ritusmin Buragohain and Subrata Kumar Borah were selected as joint secretaries of the 21-member of the ATASU Panidehing Regional Committee.

## Two drug peddlers held at Itakhola



**HT Correspondent**

**BISWANATH CHARIALI, June 1:** In a joint operation, conducted by Sootea police and headed by Shyamal Jyoti Saikia, officer-in-charge of Sootea PS and Itakhola police which was headed by Bhaskar Jyoti Saikia, officer-in-charge of Itakhola PS managed to apprehend two drug peddlers from Itakhola weekly market on Thursday evening at around 4:00 pm.

Based on a confidential information, the police team managed to apprehend Babul Ali (30) and Rafikul Islam (28), both from Kekukali village, Khanamukh along with 14 grams of brown sugar brought in a motorcycle bearing registration number AS 12 A F 3158 to sell it at Itakhola. They were caught red handed while waiting for customers to sell the brown sugar, said the police sources.



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

Whatever you are, be a good one.  
- Abraham Lincoln

## Econ scenario under Modi regime

India's economic growth rate for the fiscal year 2022-23 has exceeded expectations, reaching 7.2 percent instead of the predicted 7 percent. The strong performance in the fourth quarter, with a GDP rise of 6.1 percent, contributed to this positive outcome. However, economists are warning that this upward revision of data from the previous year does not alleviate concerns about the current fiscal year's decelerating trend. Projections for the current year range from 5.9 percent to 6.8 percent, indicating a potential slowdown for the Indian economy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to Twitter to highlight the resilience of the Indian economy amidst global challenges and express optimism about the country's trajectory. However, critics argue that the government should focus on addressing the challenges faced in the current fiscal year, rather than merely celebrating past achievements. Various organizations, including the Reserve Bank of India, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, have all projected lower growth rates, reflecting concerns about the potential deceleration of the Indian economy. To overcome the deceleration, India needs to analyze the data from the previous year more deeply. Two notable aspects are the increased share of gross fixed capital formation, which reached its highest level since 2014-15 at 34 percent of GDP, and private consumption, which accounted for 58.5 percent of GDP, the highest since 2006-07. Despite these positive indicators, the ground reality of joblessness, high prices, and inflation has led to human suffering.

The Indian economy contracted by 5.8 percent in the pandemic year of 2020-21 but rebounded to 9.1 percent growth in 2021-22 before achieving 7.2 percent growth in 2022-23. If the current fiscal year experiences a deceleration below 5.9 percent, it could worsen the cost-of-living crisis, which would be the most severe in the past three years. This could pose a significant challenge for the Modi government, particularly ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha General election. Consequently, critics argue that Modi's tweet praising economic growth has little economic value. The unexpected growth in the fourth quarter of 2022-23 needs careful analysis. Manufacturing gross value added (GVA) reversed its contraction in the preceding two quarters, registering a 4.5 percent growth. Sustaining this momentum will be crucial for the manufacturing sector. Gross fixed capital formation increased by 8.9 percent, reaching an all-time high of 35.3 percent, driven by government capital spending. However, it will be challenging for the government to sustain this level of spending in a decelerating economy. Private consumption remained sluggish, growing by only 2.9 percent, reflecting the financial constraints faced by individuals. This inequality, masked by the overall growth rate, indicates the challenges in stimulating consumption and demand, which could further impede the economy. The farm sector saw a growth of 5.5 percent in the January-March period, but bad weather conditions and the potential impact of El Nino starting in July may disrupt agricultural output.

Overall, the Gross Value Added (GVA) grew by 6.5 percent in the fourth quarter, with positive growth seen in sectors such as construction, the financial sector, and trade, hotels, and transportation. However, experts warn of potential risks from domestic and global factors, including the Ukraine war, developments in the US financial market, rising borrowing costs, slower income growth, low investment inflow, public health threats, and jobless growth. In conclusion, while India's GDP growth rate for 2022-23 exceeded expectations, concerns about the decelerating trend in the current fiscal year persist.

## Building bridges: India-EU connectivity conference explores opportunities for regional integration

The India-EU Connectivity Conference, scheduled to take place in Meghalaya from June 1 to June 2, marks a significant milestone in the collaborative efforts between India and the European Union (EU) to enhance connectivity and foster regional integration. This conference, jointly organized by the Ministry of External Affairs, the EU Delegation to India, and the Asian Confluence, aims to explore avenues for expanding connectivity investments in India's North Eastern States and its neighboring countries, including Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. With a focus on digital, energy, and transport connectivity, the event brings together key stakeholders from the public and private sectors to shape concrete projects for joint implementation.

The inauguration of the conference will be graced by Conrad Sangma, the Chief Minister of Meghalaya, and Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, the Minister of State for External Affairs. Their presence highlights the significance of this event and underscores the commitment of both India and the EU to strengthening connectivity and promoting regional development. The participation of senior officials from the Indian government, the EU Commission, North Eastern states, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and representatives from the private sector ensures a diverse range of perspectives and expertise that will contribute to the identification of tangible projects.

The conference focuses on three crucial pillars of connectivity: digital, energy, and transport. These areas have been identified as key drivers for collaboration and development, providing opportunities to enhance connectivity in the region. By investing in digital infrastructure, energy networks, and transport systems, India and the EU seek to create robust connectivity that supports economic growth and regional integration.

At the heart of this conference lies the objective of boosting connectivity investments in India's North Eastern States and neighbouring countries. The unique geographical location of the North Eastern region presents immense potential for increased connectivity, trade, and economic cooperation. By leveraging this potential, the conference aims to identify specific projects that facilitate seamless connectivity within the region and beyond, ultimately fostering economic growth and integration.

Recognizing the importance of engaging with neighbouring countries, the India-EU Connectivity Conference emphasizes the need to promote cross-border connectivity with nations such as Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. Strengthening connectivity be-



tween India and its neighbors not only enhances trade but also facilitates people-to-people exchanges and overall regional development. The participation of stakeholders from these countries will provide valuable insights, foster collaboration, and contribute to mutual growth.

Understanding the European Union (EU) and its objectives is essential to grasp the significance of this partnership. The EU is a political and economic union of 27 member states primarily located in Europe. Established with the signing of the Maasticht Treaty in 1992, the EU's primary goals are to promote peace, stability, and economic prosperity among its member states. This is achieved through economic integration, the establishment of common policies, and the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people.

Key achievements of the EU include the creation of a single market, which allows for the free movement of goods, services, capital, and labor, eliminating trade barriers and fostering economic growth. Additionally, the Eurozone, consisting of 19 EU member states that have adopted the euro as their official currency, promotes economic integration and facilitates cross-border trade and investment.

With its institutions, such as the European Commission, European Council, European Parliament, and the Court of Justice of the European Union, the EU ensures effective decision-making and governance. It formulates policies and regulations in various do-

mains, including trade, agriculture, environment, justice and home affairs, and foreign policy, to ensure harmonization and cooperation among member states.

The EU has expanded over time through a process of enlargement, welcoming new member states, particularly from Eastern and Central Europe. However, it faced a significant development in its history with the withdrawal of the United Kingdom, known as Brexit. In 2016, the UK held a referendum in which a majority voted to leave the EU. This decision triggered a complex and unprecedented process of disentangling

the UK from the EU, which culminated in the official withdrawal on January 31, 2020. Despite this setback, the EU remains committed to its objectives and continues to pursue cooperation and integration among its member states.

Against this backdrop, the India-EU Connectivity Conference assumes even greater significance. It not only showcases the commitment of both India and the EU to strengthening bilateral ties but also highlights the potential for broader regional integration. By focusing on connectivity investments in India's North Eastern States and neighbouring countries, the conference recognizes the transformative power of enhanced connectivity in driving economic growth, fostering trade, and promoting people-to-people exchanges.

The conference serves as a platform for diverse stakeholders to come together, exchange ideas, and shape concrete projects in

the areas of digital, energy, and transport connectivity. The digital sector, with its rapid advancements and potential for innovation, holds immense promise in bridging gaps and connecting remote regions. Strengthening digital infrastructure can facilitate access to essential services, promote e-commerce, and empower communities with new opportunities. Similarly, investments in energy networks can unlock the vast renewable energy potential of the region, leading to sustainable development and reduced reliance on fossil fuels. Lastly, robust transport systems, including road, rail, and air connectivity, can facilitate the seamless movement of goods, services, and people, fostering economic integration and regional cooperation.

The India-EU Connectivity Conference exemplifies the power of partnerships and collaboration in addressing the challenges of connectivity. By bringing together government officials, private sector representatives, and stakeholders from India and the EU, as well as neighboring countries, the conference creates a conducive environment for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and joint planning. It is an opportunity to leverage the expertise, resources, and experiences of all participants to develop innovative solutions and implement transformative projects.

As the conference unfolds in Meghalaya, the outcomes and commitments made will shape the future trajectory of connectivity in the region. Concrete projects identified during the event will pave the way for increased investments, improved infrastructure, and enhanced cooperation between India, the EU, and neighboring countries. The focus on the North Eastern States underscores the importance of inclusive and balanced development, ensuring that no region is left behind in the journey towards connectivity and economic prosperity.

The India-EU Connectivity Conference is not merely a two-day event but a stepping stone towards a stronger, more interconnected future. It sets the stage for continued collaboration, knowledge sharing, and joint initiatives that will further deepen the partnership between India and the EU. By harnessing the potential of connectivity, both regions can unlock new opportunities, create sustainable growth, and build bridges that transcend geographical boundaries. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, partnerships like this conference become crucial in shaping a future where connectivity is a catalyst for progress and shared prosperity. *(The writer is a journalist & commentator based in Guwahati, can be reached at dipaknews1@gmail.com)*

## Cold war-end 'peace dividend' set to go with new 'war tax' after Ukraine war

By: Girish Linganna

Since the conclusion of the cold war in 1991, when the erstwhile Soviet Union collapsed ending the global rivalry between it and the United States, a 'peace dividend' has been seen, allowing many countries to shift their resources from defence spending to other areas. However, this is set to change with the new 'war tax'. Research indicates that, around the world, defence expenditure is likely to increase by as much as \$700 billion annually, a rise of between 9% and 32%. This is largely due to the present geopolitical tensions, such as Russia's aggression in Ukraine and China's aggressive posturing towards Taiwan.

Competition for military pre-eminence in Asia between the US and China has caused European nations to hastily work towards meeting NATO's goal of 2% GDP on defence outlay. Poland is aiming to even exceed this target, with plans to double the size (4% GDP) of their armed forces. Japan has declared a two-thirds rise in defence expenditure by 2027, potentially making it third in the world in defence spending. Australia, on its part, is collaborating with the US and Britain to create expensive nuclear-powered submarines.

For the western countries, funding arms purchases will be a challenge. They have to contend with the debt's interest and face fiscal stresses that were not present in the 1980s, such as looking after an increasing population of senior citizens and reducing global warming.

In the same way as during the Cold War, there is the potential for money to be wasted on overly expensive equipment due to bureaucracy and favouritism. What is the best way to maximize the value of defence spending in the 2020s?

The conflict in Ukraine serves as an example. Western governments should prioritize restocking their depleted arms caches and expanding production of shells and missiles. A massive quantity of ammunition is expended in war situations. Ukraine has fired nearly as many 155-mm artillery shells in a month as the US can produce in a year. In a hypothetical war with China over Taiwan, the US could exhaust its stock of essential anti-ship missiles in a matter of just days. To increase output, industry

needs to be provided with long-term contracts and any production obstacles need to be identified and eliminated.

Governments must then modify their acquisition procedures in order to break up the comfortable arrangement of the defence sector. Weapons from the West have been demonstrated to be useful in Ukraine and that conflict has the potential of becoming a laboratory for new innovations. In spite of this, purchases remain slow and expensive. Newcomers, particularly innovative tech firms, have the potential to break up the hold of the major contractors.

SpaceX has dramatically decreased the cost of sending items into space. Their Starlink satellite system has been a great help to the Ukrainian forces. Silicon Valley companies are now aiding in the combination and examination of data in order to devise a 'kill web' network of scattered 'sensors' and 'shooters' which is more potent than any single weapon. Governments should be open to the influx of venture capital into experimental defence startups and understand that some failures are just part of the process.

To conclude, the West should strive to create a unified defence market that increases economic efficiency and competition. NATO may be of help in forming common standards. Ukraine is a prime example of the discrepancies between Western arms. For instance, British tanks are equipped with rifled guns which prohibit the use of ammunition made for smooth-bored German and American tanks. Furthermore, American tanks are powered by gasoline, while European tanks work on diesel. Taking into consideration the increased reliance on data for weapons, open-architecture software that allows equipment to be 'plug-and-play' is essential.

In order to create a unified market, it is necessary to stand up against protectionism. For instance, the European Union (EU) encountered issues due to France's attempts at keeping foreign companies from taking part in the programme for delivery of one million artillery shells to Ukraine. Even the US could gain from more collaboration, as it currently relies on a single supplier for many of its missiles, which could lead to a more secure supply chain if they

sourced from trusted allies.

In a tumultuous world, open democracies need to identify how to reinforce their security while managing other monetary obligations. The most effective way to achieve this is to be open to innovation and pursue cost-effective and large-scale production.

India is prepared for geopolitical upheaval by bolstering its military, establishing economic links with other countries and seeking to create a more stable regional order. The country has increased its defence spending in recent years and is now one of the world's top spenders on defence. It is also working to develop its own indigenous weapons and defence systems.

India is also expanding its economic ties with other countries, including the US, Japan and Australia. These countries have formed a new security alliance called the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), which is aimed at countering China's growing influence in the region.

Finally, India is working to build a more stable regional order. It is a member of several regional organizations, including the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). These organizations are working to promote cooperation and reduce tensions in the region.

Overall, India is prepared for the difficulties of a more volatile geopolitical environment by taking these steps. *(IPA Service)*

By: Dr Arun Mitra

Much was expected from the recently concluded summit of group of seven countries the G7 which included USA, UK, France, Canada, Italy, Germany and Japan. Since the world is faced with serious threat of use of nuclear weapons during the ongoing Russia Ukraine war, there was a feeling that the G7 will come out with a clear cut commitment and time bound strategy for nuclear disarmament. The summit had special importance as it was held at Hiroshima, a city which faced the catastrophic impact of the first ever use of atomic bomb on human population. The final communiqué released after the summit, the 'Leaders' Declaration', as it is called, however does not cite their explicit commitment to take steps to abolish nuclear weapons as a matter of urgency. The summit declaration says 'Together with the G7 Leaders' Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament, we express our commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all, through taking a realistic, pragmatic, and responsible approach. We reaffirm the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation efforts to create a more stable and safer world. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy'. The declaration thus talks about achieving a world without nuclear weapons through taking a 'realistic, pragmatic, and responsible approach'. This is no serious commitment and amounts to evade any commitment at a time we already have the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) passed by the United Nations General Assembly with an overwhelming vote on 7th July 2017. The TPNW is a multilateral treaty which represents the desire and voice of the people of the world. The G7 summit was an appropriate occasion to advance discussion on

joining the TPNW. It is pertinent to point out here that the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has been hanging in fire since the time it entered into force in 1970. The countries who have signed the treaty have not kept their commitment 'to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date'. Failure of the NPT review conference (NPT Revcon 2022) was a big setback. The declaration rightly condemns Russia's invasion of Ukraine which constitutes a serious violation of international law, including the UN Charter. The declaration however has not a single mention of NATO's designs to expand its area of influence. This gave an excuse to Russia to invade Ukraine as it says it does not like NATO to be right at its doorsteps. The declaration does not in clear terms stress on the need to end the war through diplomatic efforts. On the other hand the voice to continue to supply modern weapons including missiles to Ukraine is loud and clear. Such an approach will not end the war. No wonder the Military Industrial Complex is making huge profits at the cost of human sufferings. Declaration's call to Iran to 'must never develop a nuclear weapon' is hypocritical. Out of the G7, three are major nuclear weapons countries. They have to take lead in abolishing nuclear weapons if they have to ask others not to develop them. On the question of dumping nuclear waste released by the Daiichi nuclear power plant at Fukushima, the declaration 'welcomes the steady progress of decommissioning work at Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, and Japan's transparent efforts with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) based on scientific evidence'.

However, the most authoritative independent scientific assessment of the planned discharge has been conducted by a five-member independent international scientific panel appointed by the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). Based on

their recommendations the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) at its world congress held at Mombasa has appealed to the Japanese government to abandon the planned release of over 1.3 million tons of radioactively contaminated water from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant disaster into the Pacific Ocean.

The IPPNW resolution says 'As physicians with professional responsibility to promote and protect long-term human and planetary health, we urge the Govt of Japan to stop the planned release of large amounts of radioactively contaminated water from the damaged Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant into the Pacific Ocean. ... Instead we urge full, evidence-based and transparent consideration of several viable alternative approaches, including storage in purpose-built seismically safe tanks, possibly after initial purification, subsequent use in concrete for structural applications with little or no potential for contact with humans and other organisms, and bioremediation for some important isotopes such as strontium-90. All the proposed alternatives would have orders of magnitude less impact and avoid trans-boundary impacts'. The G20 Summit is not too far. The G7 would carry powerful impact on decision making at the G20. Therefore under the circumstances we have to view with scepticism the outcome of the G20 on the issue of nuclear disarmament and global peace. India as President of the G20 has lot of responsibility. At one time when Non Aligned Movement (NAM) was founded by the statesmen like Jawahar Lal Nehru- first Prime Minister of India, Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia and Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, it represented the voice of developing nations of the world with nuclear disarmament at its focus. Later Rajiv Gandhi during his tenure as Prime Minister of India in his speech in June 1988 at the U.N. General Assembly, proposed a world free of nuclear weapons, an end to be achieved through an 'Action Plan for Ushering in a Nuclear-Weapon Free and Non-Violent World Order'. *(IPA Service)*

## Phase out old Maruti gypsies from NPs and wildlife sanctuaries

Sir/Ma'am

In a few days' time, the world will celebrate World Environment Day on the 5th of June. The BCCI has taken a very good initiative of planning to plant 500 saplings for each dot ball bowled in the playoffs and final of the recently concluded IPL. Barring a few such good initiatives we only see spears of cruelty hurled toward our dear Earth every other day. Trees are being chopped down to make way for roads and flyovers, and wetlands are being filled up for high-rise buildings to name a few. I think our experienced and forward-looking engineers can chalk out plans to include the trees in the design which would save them from being chopped off. Another grave concern for the en-

vironment is the old Maruti gypsies from the 90's make which are being rolled out in the national parks and wildlife sanctuaries that are only polluting the pristine forests and posing a danger for the wild animals too. It is a humble request to the MoEFCC to phase out these old cars and roll out new cars which conform to the prevalent pollution norms of the country.

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## Erdogan a tough nut to crack

Sir/Ma'am

Tayyip Erdogan's authoritarian rule has entered its third decade with his palm in Turkey's runoff presidential election. The US and its abettors were hoping

that the drift would turn in their favour, but now they've no choice but to deal with Erdogan, who has proved to be a tough nut to crack for the West. Amid the Ukraine war, Erdogan's been brazenly engaging with Russia. Erdogan's has indicted Stockholm of being soft on terror groups hostile to Ankara.

Political durability in Turkey doesn't help India as well since Erdogan has maintained good relations with China as well as Pakistan. Turkey was among the notable absentees from the G20 Tourism Working Group meeting held lately in Kashmir. Before this time, India had hit out at Turkey for combing up the Kashmir issue at the UN Human Rights Council; weeks after New Delhi commenced Operation Dost to give philanthropic aid to the earthquake hit nation. Both India and Turkey are aspiring global powers that have Russia as their common supporter. They've a lot to gain from each other in profitable and strategic terms. Their participated interests should goad them to reset their ties.

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# Not by nukes alone: Why India cannot be complacent about 'deterrence' against China

By: Pravin Sawhney

Unversed with the correlation between conventional and nuclear deterrence as it evolved during the Cold War and after, the Indian military and Indian strategic community have yet to come to grips with how the concept of deterrence has expanded and now includes new-age useable technologies unlike nuclear weapons.

This is alarming for two reasons. China has emerged as India's primary threat. And China not only understands deterrence in totality but is building it against the US. This will ensure that while the US military is not tempted to go to war with it over Taiwan, India will be exceptionally vulnerable to Chinese aggression.

Recently, India's former envoy for disarmament and non-proliferation, Rakesh Sodhi wrote in the Hindustan Times that "India's doctrine is intended to deter the threat and use of nuclear weapons." Hence, he argues, the Kargil war of 1999 and the Mumbai terrorist attacks of 2008 were not failures of nuclear deterrence. Similarly, India's former national security advisor, Shivshankar Menon wrote in his book India and Asian Geopolitics, "Since India became an overt nuclear state in 1998, there has been no credible threat of using nuclear weapons against India, no attempt to use nuclear blackmail to change its behaviour. To that extent, India's nuclear weapons have served their declared purpose." Both diplomats have had long experience dealing with nuclear issues but is their optimism justified when one looks at the broader spectrum of conflict?

## What deterrence really means

Let us first clarify what is meant by deterrence. Nations go to war to accomplish their core objectives which are unachievable by peaceful means. This requires the war-initiating nation to be confident of adequate war control to achieve its military objectives, as otherwise, the use of force becomes meaningless. Thus, deterrence means denying war control and control over the war escalation ladder to an adversary across the spectrum of conflict which, at present, is not limited to combat space but involves the whole-of-nation.

Let's now revisit the Cold War from this perspective. In the 1950s, the Soviets had an overwhelming advantage — in terms of conventional forces — over the US military. Though the Soviets were not as technologically advanced as the US, their quantity had a quality of its own. Hence, instead of matching the Soviets' quantity — tank for tank and gun for gun — US President Dwight Eisenhower introduced battlefield atomic or tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs) to thwart any Soviet conventional offensive in the European theatre.

TNWs worked because the US had superiority in strategic nuclear weapons (big yield bombs). Called the New Look strategy, the belief was that if the Soviets retaliated with strategic nukes in response to the US's TNWs, the latter could counter with a bigger nuclear arsenal. Since the Soviets did not put this US assumption to test, the New Look strategy, which came to be known as the US's first offset (to undo enemy's advantage) strategy, worked.

However, in the 1970s, two things happened. While retaining large quantities of conventional weapons, the Soviets managed to match the US in some key conventional technologies. And their strategic nukes inventory matched the US's nukes in range and yields, making an early use of TNWs extremely risky. A nuclear war without a superior strategic nuclear arsenal became too risky since the US's control over the nuclear escalation ladder was no longer credible. This led to the US's second offset strategy, where the reliance on nukes was abandoned. Instead, the US military sought highly accurate and long-range guided conven-

tional munitions, called Precision Guided Munitions (PGMs), that could stop the Soviet conventional forces before they arrayed for an assault. Making use of battle networks (software systems) and outer space for precision and stand-off attacks, conventional munitions that could achieve battlefield effects comparable with TNWs were fielded. The US used elements of this second offset strategy in the 1991 Gulf War (Operation Desert Storm) against Iraq with spectacular success.

## Lessons from the US offset strategies

There were two big take-aways from these offset strategies. One, in state-on-state warfare, strong conventional forces are a must for deterrence and for desired war control in combat if deterrence fails. The US's first and second offset strategies were meant to meet the challenge of huge Soviet conventional forces. And two, nuclear forces do not replace conventional forces, but limit an enemy's war control and ability to regulate the escalation ladder for ending a war on his terms. Thus, two major powers — for instance, US-Russia or US-China — need credible and separate conventional and nuclear deterrence for war avoidance. This logic will work between two medium powers (India-Pakistan) too. However, this will not work between a major (China) and a medium power (India), where China's superior conventional forces will be enough for attainment of its military objectives in war.

To take this argument forward, nuclear weapons with India and Pakistan have had no role in crises, conflicts, and wars between the two nations, as both sides since independence have matched conventional capability at campaign level (sum-total of all battles fought) where the war outcome is determined. This explains why the Indian military has been unable to eliminate the military line — established in January 1949 as a ceasefire line, it was re-named with give and take of territory as the line of control after the 1971 war — in the west between India and Pakistan. In the 1971 war, the Indian military offensive was in east Pakistan which became Bangladesh. The then army chief, Gen. Sam Manekshaw gave clear orders to the Indian army's western army commander, Lt Gen. K.P. Candeth, to firmly hold the western front, which he did by a 'strategic defence' posture. Manekshaw had sought six months preparatory time from Prime Minister Indira Gandhi for his offensive campaign in the eastern sector.

The army's readiness for war with Pakistan dipped further after 1990 when it got involved in counter terror operations in Jammu and Kashmir which continue unabated. Consequently, the army leadership neglected the building of conventional deterrence against Pakistan which emboldened the latter to do Kargil in 1999, Mumbai in 2008 and so on. Moreover, the Vajpayee government engaged in a 10-month-long military stand-off (Operation Parakram) in December 2001 against Pakistan but failed to militarily coerce it to end its proxy war into Kashmir. Hence, the claim that India's nuclear deterrence has 'worked' is incorrect, since India lacks conventional deterrence to prevent Pakistan from initiating crises and conflicts.

## China is deterring India, that too by conventional means

China's case is different. Without a shot being fired, India's prime minister was deterred by the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) conventional capabilities when it reportedly occupied 2,000 sq km of Indian territory in east Ladakh in May 2020. While declaring that the PLA had not occupied Indian land which the Indian army had been patrolling since 1993, India signed the unfavourable joint statement for peace with China on September 10, 2020 in Moscow to avoid an escalation.

Not only does China not take India's nuclear deterrence seriously, it also doesn't recognise India



as a state with nuclear weapons. In case of a war between India and China, if India was to threaten the use of nuclear weapons or attempt to assemble them, the PLA could use any or all three options: destroy Indian nukes' kill chain with its cyber, electronic, or long-range precision hypersonic glide vehicles; use lower yield nukes in the campaign as a warning signal; or resort to a Launch on Warning (LOW) nuclear posture. This refers to initiating a nuclear strike on detection of an incoming hostile missile. The early detection system comprising ground and space-based components, control centre, and data processing system has been provided to China by Russia. This strategic early warning, command and control, and rapid reaction system is only available with three nations — the US, Russia and China.

China, however, takes deterrence against the US military over Taiwan seriously. The PLA has built a robust conventional deterrence in the shape of an Anti-Access Area Denial (A2/AD) firewall on its mainland which covers the 177 km distance till Taiwan across the strait. The A2/AD is the US military term for what the PLA calls its 'counter intervention strategy' and comprises its long and medium range ballistic missiles, hypersonic and supercruise missiles, early warning and long-range radars, Integrated Air and Missile Defence System (IAMDS), long range reconnaissance satellites and aircraft, cyber, electronic, and counter space capabilities.

In addition to IAMDS, another defence layer could be provided by the PLA's terrestrial and airborne electronic warfare systems capable of jamming hostile aircraft and drone communication. Directed energy weapons with 100kw solid state laser will be used to shoot down drones. With a massive landmass to defend, the PLA had traditionally been obsessed with good IAMDS. The latter is supported by Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) which help to extend its range. These include China's most advanced AWACS KJ-500, with aerial refuelling capability to improve the aircraft's persistent air coverage. The PLA's AEW&C (airborne early warning and communication) aircraft are supported by special mission aircraft like the Y-9 for communication jamming and electronic countermeasures designed to disrupt the enemy's battlespace awareness at long ranges. Thus, the counter intervention strategy or A2/AD firewall is meant to disallow the US military access to its bases, and to deny the force operational freedom of action once there.

## China's strategy-based military planning offers lessons

Learning lessons from US offset strategies, the PLA is building nuclear deterrence independent of its conventional deterrence. It has built hundreds of new Inter Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), ICBM silos, long range cruise missiles

and has, theoretically, moved beyond the triad vectors of land, air, and sea to include space as a new vector with its August 2021 Fractional Orbital Bombardment System (FOBS) test. The test involved PLA's Long March 3C rocket armed with a hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV) which was lobbed at a 150 km altitude in low earth orbit. Once it started orbiting, its re-entry into the atmosphere was planned at a point where the US's North America Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) radars that face north were evaded. Moreover, once inside the atmosphere, the HGV, with a 2,000 km range, took over with its three unique characteristics of speed higher than Mach 5, high manoeuvrability, and gliding at the higher reaches of the atmosphere to evade terrestrial radars for most of its flight towards the target.

Perhaps, the most important announcement on deterrence, which was not understood by the Indian media, was made by Chinese President Xi Jinping at the 20th Party Congress in November 2022. He exhorted the PLA to create a powerful strategic deterrence system. The new concept extends deterrence beyond nuclear weapons to cyber and space warfare, two domains where the PLA more than matches the US military. Cyberspace, which refers to virtual space between computers and internet and everything in between which connects the two, is where multi-media data as text, graphics, audio, and video for communication travels at the speed of light. Once malware (malicious software) in the form of a virus is inserted in cyberspace, it destroys data leading to paralysis, disruption or destruction of commercial and financial facilities, telecommunications, power, hospitals and other essential services networks to create widespread chaos and panic amongst civilians. To be the first responder in peacetime, crisis, pre-war and initial stages of war, cyberwar can make Sun Tzu's words — 'victorious warriors win first and then go to war' — true.

Building sophisticated software cyber weapons requires supercomputers, expertise in nanotechnology and cyber warriors who can write complicated algorithms; China has all three. Through regular cyberattacks, China has acquired knowledge of Indian cyber vulnerabilities which will be used in planning its cyberwar campaign at the highest level. The PLA's cyberwar campaign will be planned by its Strategic Support Force which reports directly to the highest operational headquarters, the Joint Staff Department, under commander-in-chief Xi Jinping.

## From cyber to space

Three exceptional characteristics of cyber weapons which make them an ideal strategic deterrent and warfighting element are: its convergence of virtual domain and physical domain (to destroy physical assets with software weapons, remember the 2010 Stuxnet attack on Iran's nuclear

centrifuges); its non-attributable nature; and its deep cognitive assault on the political leadership by cyber-attacks in whole-of-nation. For this reason, the Pentagon has sought US\$ 58.5 billion in the 2024 defence allocation for cyber security of its software networks and communication system against China.

Offensive cyber capabilities are a different game, especially with Artificial Intelligence (AI) since they will be more precise, persistent and make cyber campaigns more effective on a larger scale. With the arrival of 5G networks which will facilitate billions of Internet-of-Things (IoT), cyber defence will become ever more challenging. The main game in cyber will be attacks and more attacks — with humans 'out of the loop'.

Moreover, China is vigorously pursuing a broad range of counter-space capabilities which include direct-ascent anti-satellite (ASAT) missions, co-orbital ASAT missions, micro satellites, ground-based satellite jammers, directed energy weapons (DEWs), and computer network operations. As I have explained elsewhere, a co-orbital ASAT, placed in space, can remain dormant for years before being activated.

Among the PLA's non-kinetic capabilities which bothers the US most is its cyber offence, wherein cyber weapons passing through cyberspace could damage, incapacitate, and destroy satellites in all orbits. The other silent killers are DEWs and micro-satellites.

DEWs comprise high powered lasers (HPL) and high-powered microwave (HPM) weapons meant to disrupt and disable satellites by damaging their electronics. The PLA has made strides in microsatellites. Any object (man-made or natural satellite) with mass greater than 10kg and less than 100kg qualifies as microsatellite. These could be debris or weaponized satellites. The latter, with the advantage of being cheap, harder to track, and having good manoeuvrability, can move at high velocity. They could collide with the targeted satellite and destroy it or could lock on the targeted satellite as parasite and destroy its electronics. A form of microsatellite, co-orbital satellites with robotics arms, being developed by the PLA could displace a satellite from its orbit by mechanical means and render it ineffective. India's intelligence gathering, earth observation, and scientific spacecraft are most susceptible to these co-orbital threats.

Since space is no longer simply militarised (i.e. used passively for Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (ISR), missiles' guidance and so on), but weaponised (with non-kinetic and kinetic fires) and provides strategic deterrence, the US military, in 2019, raised its fifth service, the 'space force', in addition to army, air force, navy, and marines. This is to meet the Russian, and especially the Chinese, challenge.

## Challenge for India

What should the Indian military do? It needs to understand deterrence in its entirety and abandon its capacity-based or threat-based modernisation approach which it has half-heartedly pursued against Pakistan since independence.

It should instead adopt strategy-based modernisation, which the PLA has successfully done against the US military. The strategy-based approach which Indian military leaders are unaware of came about from the US's Operation Desert Storm in 1990-91. Since the US's software networks and space-based capabilities were its unique strengths, the PLA decided on 'systems destruction warfare' strategy: the ability to destroy US networks with cyber weapons and focus on space and counter space capabilities. Thus, with less financial resources, the PLA created credible conventional deterrence which now has been elevated to strategic deterrence. A model worth emulation. (Courtesy: The Wire)

## A confident India is taking on the world

By: Harsh V. Pant

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi's recently concluded three-nation tour was a testament to New Delhi's growing weight in a rapidly evolving global order. PM Modi's presence at the G7, his meeting with Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy, emphasising the Quad connect, outreach to the South Pacific, and consolidation of ties with Australia — all serve as a useful reminder that New Delhi has managed the turbulence of global politics effectively and positioned itself well for the future. The fact that India successfully concluded a G20 meeting in Srinagar last week with great fanfare, and with hardly a murmur abroad, is a sign of the government's growing confidence in its ability to navigate even the trickiest of policy issues. This is also an apposite moment to reflect on the last nine years of the Modi government's foreign policy. Next year will be an election year, when, predictably, political partisanship would make dispassionate engagement with a serious subject almost impossible. From the beginning of his term in 2014, there was a debate if PM Modi would try to be a revolutionary leader when it came to external engagements. Revolutionary changes in foreign policy are rare, and when they do happen, they are largely an imposition due to some sudden change in the structural environment facing a nation. But for a long time, some sections argued that for all the talk of a break from the past, PM Modi had not really changed any aspect of foreign policy fundamentally. But as we look at Indian foreign policy close to a decade after PM Modi took over in 2014, it should be clear to all, except the hyper partisans, that a singular transformation is underway in India's engagement with the wider world. It is a function of a changing world, of course, but also of a changing India. New Delhi today is articulating a new voice on the global stage and is confidently able to steer through some of the evident contradictions in its approach. That a more powerful self-confident India would be looked at differently by the world is a given. Gradual accre-

tion of economic capabilities has given the country a singular heft in global diplomacy that was missing in the past. Beyond that, it was the way India managed the Covid-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, and Chinese aggression that has left an imprint on global consciousness. India has succeeded in conveying a message that while it doesn't want to disrupt the extant order, despite its visible dysfunctions, New Delhi will not shy away from standing up for its interests and priorities. India's Pakistan obsession has given way to strategic management of China clarifying strategic priorities for a nation that has often been accused of strategic drift.

At an ideological level, the logic of non-alignment has been turned on its head with strong partnerships — from Europe to the Indo-Pacific, and from Eurasia to Africa — being viewed today as essential to furthering Indian interests. India was one of the first nations to underscore the centrality of issues-based coalitions in a world order defined by fluidity and flux.

Ordinarily, for a power such as India, stable ties among major powers is a sine qua non for continued focus on economic growth. But going against conventional wisdom, Indian diplomacy has thrived even among these tumultuous times. The Ukraine crisis, instead of shrinking Indian options, has further amplified New Delhi's voice on the global stage. And as the West has soured on China, New Delhi has moved quickly to offer itself as a credible economic alternative, disavowing some of its old diffidence on global trade issues.

What started off as a fairly dynamic approach to global diplomacy is today yielding significant dividends for India. PM Modi and his team deserve credit for steering India effectively through some of the most difficult times in recent history and giving India a voice on the global stage that is distinct, rooted in Indian ethos and effective in articulating the concerns of those who are rarely, if at all, heard in the international system. And despite his critics, PM Modi remains the most visible and important symbol of this transformation in Indian diplomatic culture. (Courtesy: ORF)

## May, PMs & 2014: How Modi's rise to power marked the end of 'Nehruvian India'

By: Yashwant Deshmukh & Sutanu Guru

On 27 May 1964, the great freedom fighter, charismatic leader, a man of letters, Bon Vivant, global statesman, and the winner of three consecutive Lok Sabha elections, Jawaharlal Nehru, died in harness. The entire nation mourned and even his critics agreed his loss was irreparable. Nehru might have passed on. But the "ecosystem" that he and his admirers built, which is also called the "Nehruvian India", dominated Indian politics, society, economy, and imagination for decades. Yet, almost to the day, 50 years after his death, the disintegration and destruction of Nehruvian India began on 26 May 2014. That was the day Narendra Modi was sworn in as the Prime Minister of India in a glittering and star-studded ceremony at the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan. In attendance were leaders of all South Asian countries, including the prime minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif.

Narendra Modi is such a polarising figure that it is virtually impossible to have a dispassionate debate about him and his deeds. His legion of critics in India and beyond are convinced that Modi has already sneaked into pernicious fascism in such a manner that Indian democracy and secular values espoused since the times of Nehru have become a sham. His legion of fans in India and beyond are convinced Modi is doing what Nehru should have done since 1947: liberate India civilisation from the servitude of colonialism and lead a ground-up transformation of society and economy. The authors are not equipped to join this debate. The limited purpose of this feature is to highlight fundamental changes nudged by Modi that have shaken the foundations of "Nehruvian India".

## Breaking the Modi myth using electoral data

First, the authors would like to use electoral data to dispel a myth revolving around Narendra Modi both among his critics and fans: that he is a towering colossus in the Indian political landscape the way Nehru and Indira Gandhi were. Sure, he is currently the most popular political leader in India with jaw-dropping

approval ratings. Yet, his electoral track record is not too great compared to that of India's first prime minister. The Congress under Nehru never lost a Lok Sabha or Assembly (Except Kerala in 1957) election till he was alive. His daughter Indira does not have a similar near 100% strike rate. Yet, barring Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, she led her party to victory in every corner of India. What about Modi? No doubt he has won two consecutive Lok Sabha mandates and looks a good bet for 2024. But his performance in assembly elections is quite underwhelming. Under him, the BJP has lost Delhi twice, lost Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan, lost Bihar once, barely eeked out a victory in 2020, won fewer seats than Congress in Goa in 2017, almost lost Gujarat in 2017, failed to win West Bengal and Odisha and lost Himachal Pradesh. Barring Karnataka and perhaps Telangana to some extent, the BJP remains a marginal player in the South. If you believe the data, you will be compelled to point out to hysterical fans of Modi that he, at least electorally, is no match for Nehru and Indira.

Yet, he has taken steps that are demolishing "Nehruvian India". The authors would like to clarify what Nehruvian India is. What Nehru started was indeed noble and with the best of intentions. A secular ethos where all religions were respected, a truly democratic approach, a free hand to constitutional bodies, an open approach to science and technology, an emphasis on merit and excellence, and an effort to build world-class institutions. But even admirers of Nehru (the authors are not) would agree that the Congress had made a mockery of such Nehruvian values by the 1980s. His daughter Indira Gandhi not only imposed the Emergency but also completely subverted the Supreme Court. She used Article 356 ruthlessly and frequently to dismiss elected state governments she didn't like. Her son Rajiv passed an act in Parliament that revoked a progressive and liberal Supreme Court verdict that stated that divorced Muslim women like Shah Bano were entitled to alimony.

By then, academic, cultural, intellectual, and a host of other institutions were com-

pletely dominated by Left-leaning demagogues who have an unexplained dislike of all Hindu beliefs and practices. The rhetoric of secularism was intact, but it had become a hollow slogan. A backlash was inevitable, and it manifested in the form of the movement to "restore" the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. L K Advani merely rode the backlash; some other leader would have done it if he were not there.

## The fatal errors of the UPA

When Atal Bihari Vajpayee became Prime Minister of a majority NDA government in 1998, there were patchy and half-hearted efforts to change the "ecosystem". Vajpayee couldn't do much because his allies like Mamata Banerjee, M Karunanidhi, Farooq Abdullah, N Chandrababu Naidu, Nitish Kumar, and Ram Vilas Paswan among others wouldn't allow him to. In any case, most left the NDA in the aftermath of the 2002 Gujarat riots. The UPA ruled for 10 years and actually implemented many good policies, including the RTI and MREGA with Sonia Gandhi as the head of the NAC. But the regime also made fatal political errors. The main one was the effort led by the likes of Digvijaya Singh to link Hindutva outfits with terrorism. The peak levels of travesty were reached when Singh participated in a book launch function in the aftermath of 26/11 in which the book claimed the 2008 terror attacks that convulsed India were possibly an RSS conspiracy. It simply baffled ordinary Hindus (voters) who saw Pakistan-sponsored Islamist terrorists wreak repeated havoc in Indian cities.

The authors think the Congress-led UPA won a bigger mandate in 2009 because the average voter was convinced Dr Manmohan Singh offered a better vision than L K Advani. Mistaking this to be an endorsement of "anti-Hindu" policies, "secular" members of the NAC went overboard. A classic example was the Communal Violence Bill (mercifully junked) which stipulated that essentially the majority (Hindus) would always be blamed for a riot. Add the Anna movement against corruption, the economic crisis after 2011, and India was ready for a "strongman" and "Hindu Hriday Samrat" like Narendra

Modi. Again, Modi is but a manifestation of structural changes in Indian politics and society. If not for him, someone else would have stepped up to the plate.

## Flaunting Hindu credentials

To that extent, the arrival of Modi did mean the beginning of the dismantling of "Nehruvian India" which had become a decayed feudal relic of once noble intentions. The most powerful symbol of this is the manner in which Padma awards are given now. They are no longer the preserve of elites close to "Lutyens' Delhi". They have become truly "Indian".

The second thing Modi has done is to flaunt his Hindu credentials like no prime minister had done before. Nehru had no time for Hindu rituals or even assertiveness; he had requested the then President Rajendra Prasad to not attend the grand reopening of the Somnath Temple. Modi actually presided over the inauguration rituals of the Ram Temple in 2020.

Ordinary Indians were already fed up with the condescending and feudal behaviour of the ruling elites. The arrival of social media "exposed" the double standards of the elites even more cruelly. The smart politician that he is, Modi rode even this wave. Remember demonetisation when tens of thousands of ordinary Indians suffered and spent days and weeks outside bank branches? Far from losing political capital, Modi became even more popular because the poor celebrated that the rich suffered along with them.

Changing road names like Aurangzeb to Abdul Kalam, Nehru Memorial to prime minister memorial, installing the statue of Subhash Chandra Bose in India Gate, and the massive investments in building the Central Vista are more symbolic acts of dismantling "Nehruvian India". Not to forget the abrogation of Article 370 that was brought about by Nehru. When fundamental changes happen, it is usually accompanied by some ugliness. There is no space here for the authors to dwell at length on them. One example would suffice: Sadvi Praga, by any standards a bigoted person, defeated Digvijay Singh with a massive margin in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. (Courtesy: The Quint)



# Zelenskyy called for a continuation of Western military aid to Ukraine, saying it was saving lives and “literally accelerating peace”

## European summit in Moldova tackles Ukraine war, regional conflicts

**BULBOACA (MOLDOVA), June 1 (AP):** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy took his quest for more arms and support to a sprawling summit of some 50 European leaders in Moldova on Thursday, becoming the focal point of an event that seeks to quell regional conflicts and shore up unity in the face of Russia's war.

The meeting of the pan-continental European Political Community, which embraces all European nations other than Russia and Belarus, gathered the heads of state and government from 47 countries but its attention was on the continent's south and east — a region pushed to a turning point in its relationship with Moscow because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year.

The 27-nation EU wants to use the summit to reach out to many Eastern European countries that spent decades either within the Soviet Union or under its immediate sphere of influence, and to bolster the continent's unified response to Russian aggression.

The choice to hold the summit in Moldova, a former Soviet republic of around 2.6 million people, is seen as a message to the Kremlin both from the EU and the pro-Western Moldovan government, which received EU candidate status in June of last year at the same time as Ukraine.

As he addressed the gathered leaders at an opening ceremony, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte noted the significance of the summit's location, only around 20 kilometers (12 miles) from Ukraine's border.

“Our meeting today in Moldova speaks volumes. The country borders on Ukraine and here, the Russian threat is palpable,” Rutte said.

Moldova, Europe's poorest country which is cradled by Ukraine on three sides, aspires to join the EU by the end of the decade, and has consistently signalled its support for Ukraine and taken in refugees fleeing the war.

Zelenskyy was the first foreign leader to arrive at Thursday's summit venue, a



19th-century castle and vineyard around 35 kilometers (21 miles) from the capital, Chisinau.

Dressed in his trademark olive green shirt and cargo pants, he sought to dispel doubts about his country's accession to the EU and NATO, and told the assembled leaders that such doubts would be exploited by Moscow.

Since the start of the invasion, he said,

“the limits of security in Europe have in fact been the limits of our determination, our ability to act together for the sake of the interests of our peoples and the whole of Europe. As much as we can reject doubt, we can reject the evil of aggression”.

Zelenskyy called for a continuation of Western military aid to Ukraine, saying it was saving lives and “literally acceler-

ating peace”.

He insisted that all countries that border Russia should be full members of the EU and NATO, since Moscow “tries to swallow only those who are outside of the common security space.”

“When there are no security guarantees, there are only war guarantees,” he said.

Other summit participants include German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, French President Emmanuel Macron and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

Scholz and Macron will join European Council President Michel for one of the summit's major meetings: discussions with the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan, two former Soviet Caucasian neighbour nations that have fought wars over a contested territory.

That territory, Nagorno-Karabakh, was the site of a conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020 that killed more than 6,000 people. The war ended in a Russia-brokered armistice under which Armenia relinquished territories sur-

rounding the region.

Nagorno-Karabakh lies within Azerbaijan, but ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia had controlled the region and surrounding territories since 1994. Recent negotiations between the two nations over the territory have raised hopes that a breakthrough could come at the Moldova summit.

Another lighting rod will be the recent flareup in ethnic tensions between neighbouring Serbia and Kosovo, whose leaders arrived at the summit on Thursday morning.

NATO has announced it will send 700 more troops to northern Kosovo to help quell violent protests after clashes with ethnic Serbs there left 30 international soldiers wounded this week.

The latest violence in the region has stirred fear of a renewal of the 1998-99 conflict in Kosovo that claimed more than 10,000 lives, left more than 1 million people homeless and resulted in a NATO peacekeeping mission that has lasted nearly a quarter of a century.

## Russian bombardment of Ukraine's capital kills at least 3 people, wounds others

**KYIV, June 1 (AP):** Russia launched yet another aerial bombardment of Kyiv on Thursday, killing at least three people and wounding others, authorities said.

Following a reported 17 drone and missile attacks on the Ukrainian capital in May, Russian forces hit the capital in the early morning with ground-launched missiles.

The Kyiv City Administration reported one child was among the dead, and 10 people were wounded. The casualty toll was the most from one attack on Kyiv in the past month.

The attack also damaged apartment buildings, a medical clinic, a water pipeline and cars. Earlier, the city government had said that two children were killed before revising the number to one.

Ukraine's General Staff reported that the Air Forces intercepted all 10 missiles, which it identified as short-range Iskander cruise and ballistic missiles.

One explosion sent missile fragments ripping into an apartment building in a leafy neighbourhood. In the morning light, paramedics escorted an elderly woman gingerly away from the building as the bare feet of a person killed in the attack poked out from underneath a plastic tarpaulin in a roped-off



area between the trees.

“Around 3 am there was a strike over there. I woke up and saw the fire. My door was smashed. I woke up my mom and ran to the corridor,” said resident Nikita Maslun, peering through a broken window.

“Then we went down and ran outside. We saw people running. Windows were shattered and balconies destroyed.”

Mayor Vitali Klitschko said authorities were investigating why a shelter at a medical facility was locked, preventing some people from taking shelter during the bombardment. Kyiv mayor also said that the events scheduled in the capital on June 1, which Ukraine celebrates as International Children's Day, have been cancelled.

Russia has repeatedly targeted Kyiv with waves of drone and missile attacks since the start of the invasion, but attacks against the capital have significantly intensified over the past month as Ukraine prepares for a counteroffensive. While most incoming weapons are shot down, many Kyiv residents are anxious and tired after weeks of sleepless nights listening to the sound of explosions. Ukraine's air defence has become increasingly effective at intercepting Russian drones and missiles, but the resulting debris can cause fires and injure people below.

In Desnianskyi district, debris fell on a children's hospital and a nearby multi-story building. Two schools and a police department

were damaged.

In another district, Dniprovskyi, a residential building was damaged by burning debris and heavy smoke arose, the blast wave blew out the windows, parked cars caught fire, and debris fell onto the roadway and courtyards.

In Darnytskyi neighbourhood, a water pipeline and a residential building were affected, and the explosive wave broke windows.

After a woman was killed watching an aerial attack from her balcony earlier this week, Kyiv authorities urged residents to heed warning sirens and stay in shelters or other safe locations.

“You've got to be vigilant, as ballistic missiles fly at incredible speeds. From the moment the alarm is announced to the rocket's arrival, you have only a few seconds!” they warned in a message to residents.

Ukraine also claimed last month to have downed some of Russia's hypersonic Kinzhal missiles, which Russian President Vladimir Putin has touted as providing a key competitive advantage.

On Wednesday, Russian forces carried out three aerial attacks over the south of Kherson region, along with missile and heavy artillery strikes on other parts of the region.

## North Korean leader's sister says US hypocritical for criticizing failed satellite launch

**SEOUL, June 1 (AP):** The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Thursday accused the United States of “gangster-like” hypocrisy for criticising her country's failed launch of a military spy satellite and insisted a successful launch will be made soon.

Kim Yo Jong said North Korea's efforts to acquire space-based reconnaissance capabilities were a legitimate exercise of its sovereign right and restated the country's rejection of UN Security Council resolutions that ban it from conducting any launch involving ballistic missile technology. Her comments on state media came a day after the rocket carrying the satellite failed. North Korea said the rocket lost thrust after a stage separation and crashed in waters off the Korean Peninsula's western coast.

Washington, South Korea and Japan had quickly criticized the launch. Adam Hodge, a spokesperson at the US National Security Council, said Washington strongly condemns the North Korean launch because it used banned ballistic missile technology, raised tensions and risked destabilising security in the region and beyond.

In her statement, Kim Yo Jong



briefly mentioned Hodge's comments before saying the United States “is letting loose a hackneyed gibberish prompted by its brigandish and abnormal thinking”.

“If the DPRK's satellite launch should be particularly censured, the US and all other countries, which have already launched thousands of satellites, should be denounced. This is nothing but sophism of self-contradiction,” she said, using the initials of North Korea's formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

She noted how the United States closely monitors the North through its own reconnaissance satellites and other aerial assets, calling the Americans a “group of gangsters” who would deem it as “illegal and threatening” had North Korea attempted to send a satellite into space by balloon.

“The far-fetched logic that only the DPRK should not be allowed to do so according to the (UN Security Council's) resolution” which bans the use of ballistic rocket technology irrespective of its purpose, though other countries are doing so, is clearly a gangster-like and wrong one of seriously violating the DPRK's right to use space and illegally oppressing it,” she said.

“It is certain that the DPRK's military reconnaissance satellite will be correctly put on space orbit in the near future and start its mission,” she added. Citing what she described as US hostility toward the North, Kim reiterated that Pyongyang has no intent to reengage in negotiations with Washington, which have stalemated since 2019 because of disagreements over crippling US-led sanctions imposed over the North's nuclear weapons and missiles programme.

Wednesday's launch extended a provocative run in North Korean military demonstrations, including the test-firings of around 100 missiles since the start of 2022 that underscored Kim Jong Un's attempts to acquire dual ability to conduct nuclear strikes on both the US mainland and South Korea.

## NATO presses Turkey to drop objections to Sweden's membership as summit looms

**OSLO, June 1 (AP):** NATO on Thursday ramped up pressure on its member Türkiye to drop its objections to Sweden's membership as the military organisation seeks to deal with the issue by the time US President Joe Biden and his counterparts meet next month.

Fearing that they might be targeted after Russia invaded Ukraine last year, Sweden and Finland abandoned their traditional positions of military nonalignment to seek protection under NATO's security umbrella.

Finland became NATO's 31st member country in April.

NATO must agree unanimously for countries to join. Türkiye's government accuses Sweden of being too lenient on terrorist organisations and security threats, including militant Kurdish groups and people associated with a 2016 coup attempt.

Hungary has also delayed its approval, but the reasons why have not been made publicly clear.

“It's time for Sweden to join now,” Norwegian Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt told reporters in Oslo, where she was hosting a meeting with her counterparts to prepare for NATO's July 11-12 summit in Lithuania.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said that he would travel to Ankara “in the near future to con-

tinue to address how we can ensure the fastest possible accession of Sweden.” He was unable to provide a precise date for his trip.

“I'm confident that also Hungary will ratify the accession protocol,” Stoltenberg said.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said that “it is essential that we can finally welcome Sweden as the 32nd member.” She stressed that the Swedish government has Berlin's “full support.”



Sweden's foreign minister, Tobias Billström, said that “it is time for Türkiye and Hungary to start the ratification of the Swedish membership to NATO.”

He said that “everything (that) bars Sweden joining NATO will be seen as wine for (Russian president Vladimir) Putin.”

For months Sweden, Finland and Türkiye have been holding talks to try to address Ankara's concerns. Billström said that he expects things to be made clear at a new meeting of this “permanent joint mechanism” in coming weeks.

He noted that as of Thursday Sweden had tightened its anti-terrorism laws. It is now it illegal to finance, recruit for or publicly encourage “a terrorist organisation,” or to travel abroad with the intention of joining such groups.

## 6 killed, 3 injured in explosion inside house in Pak's Punjab province

**LAHORE, June 1 (PTI):** At least six people of the same family were killed and three others injured on Thursday in a blast in Punjab province of Pakistan, police said.

The incident took place in a house in Kot Addu district, some 400kms from Lahore.

According to police, Muhammad Iqbal of Daira Deen Panah area, did a scrap business and often stored recyclable material at home.

“On Thursday morning, a powerful blast occurred in the store-room at Iqbal's house killing him, his wife Haseena, their two minor children and two women relatives on the spot. The three other people suffered injuries and have been shifted to hospital,” the police said.

They said apparently some explosive material was stored in the house that went off. “An investigation team has been constituted headed by the district police officer (DPO) to probe the matter,” the police said.

The bomb disposal squad and personnel of intelligence agencies also reached the spot and collected evidence.

## Turkish election body confirms Erdogan's victory in runoff vote

**ANKARA, June 1 (AP):** Turkey's election board certified the results of the May 28 presidential runoff election on Thursday, confirming that Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has been a dominant force in Turkish politics for the past two decades, has won a third term as president.

Ahmet Yener, the head of the Supreme Electoral Council said Erdogan won 52.18% of the votes, while main opposition party leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu garnered 47.82%.

“According to these results, it is understood that Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been elected president and the results were sent to the Official Gazette for publication,” Yener announced.

He said turnout was 85.72%. Already Turkey's longest serving leader, Erdogan, 69, can now govern until 2028.

Unconfirmed reports say he is scheduled to take the oath of office on Saturday, after which he is expected to announce the lineup of his new Cabinet.

Erdogan faces a host of do-

mestic challenges, from a battered economy to pressure for the repatriation of millions of Syrian refugees and the need to rebuild after a devastating earthquake in February that killed 50,000 and leveled cities.

Investors will be watching closely to see if Mehmet Simsek, a respected former finance minister and deputy prime minister, is reappointed to head the economy portfolio, for signs of a return by Erdogan to more conventional economic policies.

Inflation in Turkey hit a staggering 85% in October before easing to 44% last month, according to official figures, although independent experts say the true rate is much higher. Critics blame the turmoil on Erdogan's policy of keeping interest rates low to promote growth. Economists generally recommend raising rates to combat inflation.

The Turkish lira has lost around 10% of its value since the start of the year.

## Singapore PM tests positive for Covid again in rare rebound case

**SINGAPORE, June 1 (AP):** Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said on Thursday that he tested positive for Covid-19 for a second time in less than two weeks, in a rare case of a rebound.

Lee, 71, was diagnosed with Covid-19 for the first time on May 22, following work trips to Africa and Asia. He tested negative six days later. But in a Facebook post on Thursday, Lee shared a photo of a positive antigen rapid test that he took.

“I feel fine but I am afraid I have turned Covid-19 positive again. My doctors say it is a Covid rebound, which happens in 5-10 percent of cases,” he said in his post. Lee said he has been advised to self-isolate as the virus is still infectious, although the risk is lower compared to the initial infection. He said he had looked forward to attending the consecration ceremony of an Indian temple early on Thursday but has to “miss it to keep others around me safe.”

## China criticises US plan for trade deal with Taiwan

## Jordan's royal wedding day gets underway with surprise arrival of Britain's William and Kate

The kingdom declared a public holiday so crowds of people could gather after the wedding service to wave at the couple's motorcade of red Land Rover jeeps

**BEIJING, June 1 (AP):** China's government criticised the United States' plans to sign a trade treaty with Taiwan and called on Washington on Thursday to stop official contact with the self-ruled island democracy claimed by Beijing as part of its territory.

The agreement due to be signed on Thursday comes amid increased Chinese efforts to intimidate Taiwan by flying fighter jets and bombers near the island, a global centre for high-tech industry. American and European politicians have visited Taiwan in a show of support for its elected government.

The Chinese foreign ministry accused Washington of violating agreements on the status of Taiwan, which split with the mainland in 1949 after a civil war. The United States has no official relations with Taiwan but has extensive informal ties and multibillion-dollar annual trade.

“The United States should stop any form of official exchanges

with Taiwan, refrain from negotiating agreements with Taiwan that have sovereign connotations or official nature and refrain from sending wrong signals to the Taiwan independence secessionist forces,” said a ministry spokesperson, Mao Ning.

Taiwan never has been part of the People's Republic of China, but the mainland's ruling Communist Party says the island is obliged to unite with China, by force if necessary. Beijing has threatened to attack if Taiwan declares formal independence or delays talks on unification.

American and Taiwanese officials say the US-Taiwan Initiative on 21st-Century Trade will increase trade by simplifying customs, investment and other rules.

It is due to be signed by employees of the unofficial entities that represent the two governments to each other at a ceremony attended by trade officials from both sides, according to the Taiwanese government.

**AMMAN, June 1 (AP):** Jordan's highly anticipated royal wedding day got underway on Thursday with the surprise announcement that Britain's Prince William and his wife Kate had arrived to witness the nuptials of Crown Prince Hussein and his Saudi Arabian bride. The attendance of the British royals had been kept under wraps, and was only confirmed by Jordanian state media a few hours before the start of the palace ceremony.

The wedding of Jordan's 28-year-old heir to the throne and Rajwa Alseif, a 29-year-old architect linked to her own country's monarch, emphasizes continuity in an Arab state prized for its longstanding stability.

The festivities, which are to start on Thursday afternoon, also introduce Hussein to a wider global audience.

The celebration buttresses the royal family's order of succession, refreshes its image after a palace feud and may even help resource-poor Jordan forge a strategic bond



with its oil-rich neighbour, Saudi Arabia.

On Thursday morning, Saudi wedding guests and tourists — the men wearing white dishdashas and the women in brightly coloured abayas — filtered through the sleek marbled lobby of the Four Seasons Hotel in Amman.

Noura Al Sudairi, an aunt of the bride, was wearing sweatpants and sneakers on her way to breakfast.

“We are all so excited, so happy about this union,” she said. “Of course it's a beautiful thing for our families, and for the relationship between Jordan and Saudi Arabia.” Excitement over the nuptials —

queen,” she said, referring to Hussein's glamorous mother, Rania.

“I feel like all of Jordan is getting married,” Tirana gushed as she ate mansaf, Jordan's national dish of milky mutton and rice, before heading to a wedding-themed concert.

Jordan's 11 million citizens have watched the young crown prince rise in prominence in recent years, as he increasingly joined his father, King Abdullah II, in public appearances.

Hussein has graduated from Georgetown University, joined the military and gained some global recognition speaking at the UN General Assembly. His wedding, experts say, marks his next crucial rite of passage.

“It's not just a marriage, it's the presentation of the future king of Jordan,” said political analyst Amer Sabaleh. “The issue of the crown prince has been closed.”

The wedding may create a brief feel-good moment for Jordanians during tough economic times, in-

cluding persistent youth unemployment and an ailing economy. Palace officials have turned the event — a week after Jordan's 77th birthday — into something of a PR campaign.

Combining tradition and modernity, the royal family introduced a wedding hashtag (#Celebrating Al Hussein) and omnipresent logo that fuses the couple's initials into the Arabic words “We rejoice.” Photos and reels from Alseif's henna party — a traditional pre-wedding celebration featuring the bride and her female friends and relatives — and the couple's engagement ceremony in Saudi Arabia last summer have splashed across state-linked media.

The kingdom declared on Thursday a public holiday so crowds of people could gather after the wedding service to wave at the couple's motorcade of red Land Rover jeeps — a nod to the traditional procession of horse riders clad in red coats during the reign of the country's founder, King Abdullah I.



## Tipra Motha to organise first plenary session this month

AGARTALA, June 1 (PTI): The Tipra Motha will hold its first-ever plenary session in the last week of June to constitute the party's central committee and roadmap for the regional political outfit, a senior party leader said on Thursday.

The Tipra Motha, floated by Pradyot Kishore Debbarma, had won the elections to the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAACD) in 2021 and also became the main opposition party in the northeastern state in February this year by bagging 13 seats in the 60-member Assembly.

"The party has decided to hold its first-ever two-day plenary session to constitute the central committee, the highest policy-making body. It is likely that the conference will begin on June 23", opposition leader Animesh Debbarma told PTI.



sion to constitute the central committee, the highest policy-making body. It is likely that the conference will begin on June 23", opposition leader Animesh Debbarma told PTI.

Pradyot Kishore Debbarma is the chairman and B K Hrangkhaw is the president of the party. Around 1,200 delegates from all over the state will join the conference and chalk out a roadmap for the future through deliberations.

"The plenary session will be important for us as it will also decide the party's roadmap, strategy and future plan. It is expected to finalise the issues which the party will highlight in the days to come", he said. The plenary session will give the party a direction for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and by-election to the Dhanpur Assembly constituency.

## United Naga Council memo to Shah on Naga disintegration



IMPHAL, June 1 (NNN): The United Naga Council (UNC) has sent out a strong message to the Government of India that the "Nagas will not accept any disintegration of Naga areas in attempting to address any appeal or demand by any community".

In a memorandum submitted to Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday, which was made available to Newmai News Network late tonight in Imphal, the UNC cautioned that "breaking up Naga areas or adversely affecting the Nagas in any way will have serious ramifications that will provoke further senseless violence with different communities".

The memorandum to the Union Home minister by the UNC then said that the latter "submits this representation in the matter of an enduring, inclusive and honorable Indo-Naga political settlement based on Framework Agreement of August 3, 2015".

At the outset, the UNC memorandum to the Union Home minister said, "While welcoming your visit to the turbulent state of Manipur in response to the violent situation that has affected all communities in the state of Manipur in the wake of the May 3, 2023 Solidarity Rally carried out by the All Tribal Students' Union, Manipur (ATSUM), we would like to first highlight briefly on the violent and pandemonium

that have engulfed the state". The UNC said that mayhem and reign of terror have spilled into the streets right under the very nose of the men in uniform. The Naga body also said that thousands of arms and ammunition from state government armoury have gone into the hands of irate rioters and this has led to bloodshed, lawlessness and insanity overshadowing the rule of law, in spite of promulgation of article 355. The UNC also mentioned in the memorandum that more than 300 churches have been burnt down to ashes, looting and arson at the heart of the capital city, massacre of innocent lives including old people, women and children, cases of rape and molestation of women folks, dearth of life saving drugs and essential commodities in spite of heavy security deployment depict the

total collapse of the state machinery in the state that were/was never witnessed before.

The UNC memorandum to the Union Home minister then stated, "We add to the voice of the community in the state to your good office for managing the grievous situation with an iron hand for ending this madness immediately with the resources and power..."

Having described the above situation, the UNC asserted, "We would like to place the position of the Naga people that we will not accept any disintegration of Naga areas in attempting to address any appeal or demand by any community", while adding, "Breaking up Naga areas or adversely affecting the Nagas in any way will have serious ramifications that will provoke further senseless violence with the different communities". The UNC also said that it is a strong assertion of the Nagas, therefore that the Naga people should be consulted while considering any settlement to address the prevailing situation.

In the light of the above, the UNC said that the government of India must uphold the sanctity of the "historic Framework Agreement of August 3, 2015 in letter and spirit for enduring and peaceful co-existence of India and the Nagas and to expeditiously translate the same into a political reality".

## Sportspersons to return awards if Manipur's territorial integrity is compromised



IMPHAL, June 1 (PTI): International and national award-winning sportspersons from Manipur Tuesday said that they will return the prizes given to them by the government if the state's territorial integrity is compromised.

Eleven of them will submit a memorandum to Union Home Minister Amit Shah on the issue during his ongoing tour of the state.

L Anita Chanu (Dhyani Chand award), Arjuna awardees N Kunjarani Devi (Padma Shri), L Sarita Devi and W Sandhyarani Devi (Padma Shri awardees) and S Mirabai Chanu (Padma Shri and Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna awardee) are among the 11 sportspersons.

"If Amit Shah does not give us an assurance about the protection of the integrity of Manipur, we will return our awards given by the Indian government," Anita Chanu said at a press conference here.

If the demand is not met, then the sports persons will not represent India in the future nor will they train any budding talent, she added.

The 11 sportspersons went to submit a memorandum to Shah addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi but could not do so as the union home minister had left for Churachandpur to meet Kuki victims and organi-

sations.

"We have submitted a copy of the memorandum to Chief Minister N Biren Singh. He has assured us of arranging a meeting with Shah in the evening after his return from Churachandpur. We will hand over the memorandum to him then," Chanu said.

The memorandum is also signed by other Arjun awardees from the state. They are Oinam Bembem Devi (also Padma Shri), N Soniya Chanu, M Bijoit Singh, Y Sanathoi Devi, L Shushila Devi and M Suranjoy Singh.

In the memorandum, the sportspersons questioned the central security forces in controlling the violence despite "Kuki terrorists challenging the integrity of Manipur" by killing people and burning houses.

"We condemn such attacks on unarmed civilians, especially in the peripheral areas of the valley districts," they added.

The sportspersons demanded revocation of the Suspension of Operation (SoO) agreement with Kuki militant groups, restoration of peace and normalcy at the earliest and protection of unity and integrity of Manipur.

"The demand to disintegrate Manipur is not acceptable under any circumstances," the memorandum said and demanded deportation of all illegal immigrants.

The sports personalities also urged the government to lift the blockade on NH 2 as it has led to skyrocketing of prices of essential commodities.

The highway runs from Dibrugarh in Assam to Tuipang in Mizoram. It passes through Assam, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram.

"Meiteis are allowed to settle only in the valley which constitutes just about 10 per cent of the total geographical area of Manipur. Where will they settle after some years if the present system is allowed to continue? So, allow Meiteis to settle in the hills of Manipur," the memorandum added.

ber plate.

Acting on a PIL, the Meghalaya High Court had in December last year sought the district administration to take measures to ease traffic congestion particularly in and around the business centre and the entry and exit points.

## IPS officer Rajiv Singh appointed new Manipur DGP



IMPHAL, June 1 (PTI): Senior IPS officer Rajiv Singh, belonging to the neighbouring Tripura cadre, was on Thursday appointed as the new director general of police of Manipur for a period of three years "as a special case in public interest", an official order said.

Singh, a 1993 batch IPS officer serving as the inspector general of operations at the CRPF headquarters in Delhi, replaces P Doungel, a 1987 batch IPS officer from Manipur, for whom a post of Officer on Special Duty (Home) has been created. He is due for retirement at the end of the month.

retirement at the end of the month.

According to an official order, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet cleared inter-cadre deputation of Singh from Tripura cadre to Manipur cadre "for a period of three years from the date of joining, in relaxation of the policy as a special case in public interest".

Personnel and Administrative Reforms Department Special Secretary N Geoffrey said, in the order, that Singh will be the new DGP of Manipur and Head of the Police Force immediately upon joining the state government.

Manipur, which has been hit by ethnic conflict for nearly a month, witnessed a sudden spurt in clashes and firing between militants and security forces on Sunday, after a relative lull for over a fortnight.

The death toll from clashes since ethnic violence began on May 3 has gone up to 80, officials said.

The violence first broke out after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

It was preceded by tension over the eviction of Kuki villagers from reserve forest land, which had led to a series of smaller agitations.

Soon after the violence broke out, the central government had appointed former chief of the CRPF Kuldeep Singh as a security adviser to the Manipur government.

## Arunachal Governor urges people to adopt environment-friendly practices

ITANAGAR, June 1 (PTI): Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt Gen K T Parnaik on Thursday urged people to adopt environment-friendly practices and healthy lifestyles to save energy and water.

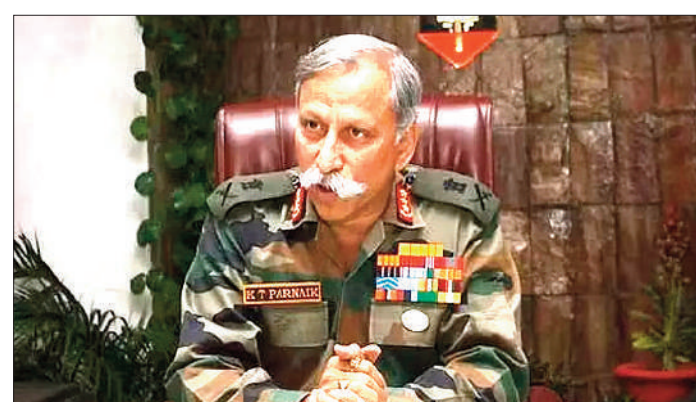
He participated in the 'Mission LIFE: Lifestyle for Environment', a mass mobilisation programme at Raj Bhawan here.

He also emphasised on the need to come together and take 'Lifestyle for Environment' forward as a campaign.

Parnaik appealed to people to reduce single-use plastic and adopt a sustainable food system.

The governor also urged them to become 'pro planet people' so that they can ensure a safe and sustainable future for the generation to come.

Parnaik also administered the



'Lifestyle for Environment' pledge to the participants on the occasion, a Raj Bhawan communiqué said.

The governor, while stressing on cleanliness, focused on 'reduce, reuse and recycle' practices by every citizen.

He also suggested the use of

public transport, CNG and electric vehicles, solar appliances and biogas to prevent air pollution.

Parnaik said that environment today is a "great concern for all", and every individual must take steps to preserve and protect natural resources.

## Heroin worth ₹1.53 crore seized



AIZAWL, June 1 (PTI): Two women were arrested after heroin worth ₹1.53 crore was seized from their possession from Vengthlang area here.

Acting on a specific input, a combined team of Assam Rifles and Special Narcotics police station in Aizawl carried out a joint operation at Republic Vengthlang area on Monday and seized 306 gm of heroin worth ₹1.53 crore from the possession of the two women peddlers aged 28 and 26 years, Assam Rifles said in a statement on Tuesday.

The seized heroin was concealed in 22 soap cases, it said.

The seized contraband and the two accused were handed over to Special Narcotic Police Station CID (Crime) the same day for further legal proceedings, the statement added.

## Meghalaya government cancels meeting

SHILLONG, June 1 (NNN): The Meghalaya government has cancelled the meeting scheduled for Wednesday to discuss the reservation roster after NGOs from Garo Hills have demanded for a separate meeting.

"I am directed to inform you that the meeting to discuss the matter relating to reservation roster scheduled to be held on May 31, 2023 at 11.30 am in the Auditorium Hall, Vojana Bhavan, Meghalaya Secretariat has been cancelled since the NGOs from Garo Hills have demanded a separate meeting in Garo Hills," Union Secretary in-charge Home (Political) J Lyngdoh said in a letter to the different stakeholders.

## Odd-even basis for vehicles in Shillong's Khyndailad area

SHILLONG, June 1 (PTI): The district administration here has issued instructions for all buses and taxis to ply on odd-even basis from Kachari point to Motphran localities here to ease congestion from next week, officials said on Thursday.

East Khasi Hills district magistrate RM Kurbah issued the order in pursuance of the High Court order to adopt measures to ease traffic congestion on the roads in the state capital here.

"All public transport vehicles (buses, maxi cabs and taxis) plying from Kachari point towards Police Bazaar and Motphran are to operate on an odd-even basis," Kurbah stated in an order.

She also said that vehicles with registration numbers ending 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9 are to ply on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays while those registration ending in



even numbers are to ply on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, adding that no restriction is applicable on Sundays.

The odd-even basis will be applicable from June 5 onwards, she said, instructing all vehicles to keep copies of the registration certificate and the high-security num-

ber plate.

Acting on a PIL, the Meghalaya High Court had in December last year sought the district administration to take measures to ease traffic congestion particularly in and around the business centre and the entry and exit points.



অসম লোকসেৱা আয়োগ  
ASSAM PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-781022.

No. 99PSC/CON/Exam-20/2020-2021

### RESULT

The Assam Public Service Commission hereby declares today, the 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2023, the result of the recruitment to the posts of Lecturer, S.C.E.R.T. under Department of School Education (Advt. No. 18/2022 Dtd. 01/09/2022).

The interviews for the said posts were conducted by the Commission in collaboration with Experts deputed by the Govt. of Assam on 30/05/2023 and 31/05/2023. The Commission recommended the following candidates for the said posts, in order of merit:

**(1) Lecturer in Assamese in Department of Language:**

No. of Post: 1 No. (OBC/MOBC)

Position	Roll No.	Name of the candidate	Category	Gender	Recommended against vacancy
1	10004	PRIYANKA BORGOHAIN	OBC	F	RESERVED

**(2) Lecturer in History in the Department of Social Science and Population Education:**

No. of Post: 1 No. (UR)

Position	Roll No.	Name of the candidate	Category	Gender	Recommended against vacancy
1	80003	BARNALI BARMAN	OBC	F	UNRESERVED

**(3) Lecturer in Sociology in the Department of Social Science and Population Education:**

No. of Post: 1 No. (OBC/MOBC)

Position	Roll No.	Name of the candidate	Category	Gender	Recommended against vacancy
1	90002	JAHNOBI BORGOHAIN	OBC	F	RESERVED

**(4) Lecturer in Statistics in the Department of Planning, Management and Leadership Academy:**

No. of Post: 1 No. (UR)

Position	Roll No.	Name of the candidate	Category	Gender	Recommended against vacancy
1	30001	SHAHINOOR ALAM	GENL	M	UNRESERVED

**(5) Lecturer in the Department of Planning, Management and Leadership Academy:**

No. of Post: 1 No. (UR)

Position	Roll No.	Name of the candidate	Category	Gender	Recommended against vacancy
1	20003	HEMSHIKHA TALUKDAR	GENL	F	UNRESERVED

**(6) Lecturer in the Department of Health and Physical Education:**

No. of Post: 1 No. (OBC/MOBC)

Position	Roll No.	Name of the candidate	Category	Gender	Recommended against vacancy
1	11001	RAJKUMAR BHARALI	OBC	M	RESERVED

NB: The Commission will not be responsible for any typing/printing mistakes.

\* Results may be accessed through the APSC's website [www.apsc.nic.in](http://www.apsc.nic.in)

Sd/-

Principal Controller of Examinations,  
Assam Public Service Commission,  
Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-22

Janasanyog /D/4151/23



# India, Nepal likely to ink number of pacts after Modi-Prachanda talks

*'Leaders of the two countries have often noted the age-old 'Roti Beti' relationship'*

**NEW DELHI, June 1 (PTI):** Boosting India-Nepal cooperation in areas of energy, connectivity and trade is set to be the focus of talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Nepalese counterpart Pushpakamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Thursday.

Hours after arriving in Delhi on Wednesday afternoon on a four-day visit to India, 'Prachanda' said at an event at the Nepalese embassy that both sides are keen to expand the overall ties and indicated that a number of agreements are likely to be signed following his talks with Modi.

Separately, national security advisor Ajit Doval called on the Nepalese leader and discussed various aspects of India-Nepal ties. Foreign secretary Vinay Kwatra was also present in the meeting.

It is Prachanda's first bilateral trip abroad after assuming the top office in December 2022.

"We are committed to strengthening ties between the two countries," the Nepalese Prime Minister said at the event at the embassy.

Nepalese foreign minister N P



Saud, who is part of Prachanda's delegation, said a wide range of matters, including trade, transit, connectivity and border issues will figure in the bilateral talks on Thursday.

Nepal is important for India in the context of its overall strategic interests in the region, and the leaders of the two countries have often noted the age-old "Roti Beti" relationship.

Transforming the civilisational ties between India and Nepal with deeper cooperation in areas of con-

nectivity, economy, energy and infrastructure is expected to be a focus area of talks between Prime Ministers Modi and Prachanda on Thursday, people familiar with the matter said.

One of the key priority areas would be to further deepen the power sector cooperation through new initiatives across the entire spectrum of cooperation, they said.

The India-Nepal joint vision statement on power sector cooperation of April last year is considered a milestone and Nepal has

been exporting over 450 MW of electricity to India. The two prime ministers are also likely to review the India-Nepal development partnership which forms the key pillar of the bilateral relations.

Strengthening the financial connectivity between the two countries would be a discussion point, said one of the people cited above.

In April last year, RuPay card was launched in Nepal during the visit of the then Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba to India.

Prachanda was received at the airport in Delhi by minister of state for external affairs Meenakshi Lekhi. Previously, he visited India in 2016 and in 2008 in his capacity as the Nepalese Prime Minister.

"PM @cmprachanda of Nepal arrives in New Delhi on his first overseas visit after assumption of office. Warmly welcomed by MoS @M\_Lekhi at the airport. The visit will impart renewed momentum to the close and unique India-Nepal relationship," external affairs ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted.

A high-level delegation is accompanying Prachanda.

He and Prime Minister Modi will hold talks on Thursday following which both sides are expected to ink a number of agreements. The Nepalese prime minister is also scheduled to call on President Droupadi Murmu and Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar.

Nepal is considered an important country for New Delhi as it shares a border of over 1,850 km with five Indian states — Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The land-locked nation relies heavily on India for the transportation of goods and services.

Nepal's access to the sea is through India, and it imports a predominant proportion of its requirements from and through India.

The India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 forms the bedrock of the special relations between the two countries.

On Friday morning, the Nepalese Prime Minister will travel to Indore and will leave for Kathmandu the next day.

## Khap 'mahapanchayat' begins in UP's Muzaffarnagar, to pass resolution on wrestlers' protest



**MUZAFFARNAGAR (UP), June 1 (PTI):** A khap 'mahapanchayat' to discuss the ongoing protest by wrestlers against WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh started in Soram village here on Thursday, Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leaders said.

The 'mahapanchayat' was called by BKU leader Naresh Tikait on Wednesday, a day after he and other farmer leaders managed to dissuade some of India's top wrestlers from throwing their medals in the Ganga river to protest police inaction against the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief in two cases of sexual harassment.

Tikait is the head of Balyan khap. The 'mahapanchayat' is being attended by khap leaders from Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi.

The 'mahapanchayat' will pass a resolution at the end of the meeting. It is likely to be passed by the evening after the khap leaders from all states have expressed their views on the issue, a BKU leader said. On Tuesday, Olympic medalists Sakshi Malik and Bajrang Punia, and Asian Games gold medalist Vinesh Phogat went to Har Ki Pauri in Haridwar along with their supporters to throw their medals in the Ganga. However, they relented after khap and farmer leaders sought five days' time to address their grievances.

The Delhi Police has filed two FIRs against Singh. While the first FIR relates to allegations by a minor wrestler and has been registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, the second is related to outraging modesty.

## Cong, BJP slam ruling left in Kerala over fire in coach of halted train



**KANNUR (KERALA), June 1 (PTI):** A coach of an express train which halted at the Kannur railway station in Kerala caught fire in the small hours of Thursday, resulting in the opposition Congress and the BJP slamming the ruling Left government in the state over the incident. The fire broke out after all the passengers had disembarked and therefore no one was injured.

While the Congress said that the government and the police were not dealing with such matters seriously, and demanded a proper probe into the reasons behind such incidents, the BJP accused the ruling Left of encouraging and supporting religious extremists and terror groups as part of their alleged vote bank politics.

BJP's Kerala unit president K Surendran in harsh criticism of the LDF government also claimed that there was peace in the state due to efforts of the Centre and its agencies as otherwise the state would have been burnt to ashes by alleged extremist and terror groups.

"Kerala (government) has sacrificed national security for vote bank," he alleged.

The train was standing stationary on a track several metres away from the platform and a Bharat Petroleum fuel depot when it caught fire at around 1.30 am, a fire rescue officer said.

On April 2 night, three people, including a baby, died and nine persons suffered burns when a passenger poured petrol on some passengers and set fire near Elathur in Kozhikode district, in an incident that shocked the country.

Chairman of Indian Railways' Passenger Amenities Committee (PAC) P K Krishnadas on Thursday said such incidents have created fear and anxiety in the general public, especially those travelling by train, and questioned why it was happening "again and again" in Kerala.

The PAC is an organisation under the Railway Ministry that checks whether passenger amenities are provided on trains and at

stations. Krishnadas, also the National Executive Member of the BJP, said that investigative agencies suspect involvement of several persons behind the latest incident. Therefore, "people need to understand that it was not a coincidence but a planned conspiracy which all points to a coup," he claimed.

Central agencies reportedly arrived at the scene of the fire for evidence collection within a few hours of the incident.

Leader of opposition in the State Assembly V D Sathesnan said that such incidents have created "insecurity" in the minds of the people, and that the state government needs to intervene and take steps to strengthen the safety and security measures. Sathesnan also blamed the police for its alleged lack of seriousness in dealing with such cases, saying it was apparent from how the Elathur train arson incident of April 2 was handled by the Kerala Police.

Stating that if the alleged "carelessness" on the part of the police continued, then things would reach a dangerous situation, he demanded a serious probe into the reasons behind recurrence of such train fire incidents.

Surendran did not mince words in his criticism of the Left government in the wake of the latest train fire incident.

The BJP state president claimed that such incidents indicated that religious extremists and terror groups are very active in Kerala, as the state government was allegedly not taking steps to root out such organisations. "The reason is the huge vote bank that such organisations have," he alleged. He also claimed that despite the ban on PFI, its sleeper cells were active in the state as the ruling Left government was not willing to take strict action against them.

Surendran also alleged that both the Left and Congress-ally Indian Union Muslim League were competing with each to induct PFI leaders and workers.

Earlier in the day, Railway police said it was yet to be determined whether sabotage was the cause of the fire or it was due to some electrical fault. A forensic investigation would determine that, it said. An officer from Kannur Fire and Rescue Station said they received information about the incident at around 1.30 am and when they reached the site, one of the coaches was completely engulfed in flames.

## Delhi excise 'scam': Sisodia claims manhandling in court premises, judge directs officials to preserve CCTV footage

**NEW DELHI, June 1 (PTI):** A Delhi court on Thursday directed officials to preserve the May 23 CCTV footage of the court premises after AAP leader Manish Sisodia alleged he was manhandled by security personnel that day during his production in a case related to the alleged excise policy scam. The police also moved an application seeking court's permission to produce Sisodia only via video conference (VC), after he levelled the allegation.

Police favoured Sisodia's virtual production contending that bringing him to court "creates chaos" due to the presence of Aam Aadmi Party supporters and media in the corridors. Special Judge M K Nagpal, after taking note of both the applications, directed Sisodia's production through video conference pending his decision on the prayers.

Sisodia was produced before the court on Thursday via video conference. The AAP leader was arrested by the ED in a money laundering case related to the alleged scam on March 9 from Tihar Jail where he is currently lodged in judicial custody. The 51-year-old Aam Aadmi Party leader was first arrested by the CBI, which is probing alleged corruption in formulation and implementation of the excise policy. In its nearly 270-page supplementary charge sheet which has annexures running into 2,000 pages, the ED has called Sisodia a "key conspirator" in the case.

## IAF's trainer aircraft crashes in Karnataka, pilots eject safely



**CHAMARAJANAGAR (KARNATAKA), June 1 (PTI):** A Kiran trainer aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) crashed in an open field at a village in the district on Thursday but the two pilots made it out safely after ejecting from the plane before the crash.

The training aircraft, which took off from the air force station in Bengaluru, crashed this morning at Bhogapura village.

It was good fortune that aircraft hit the ground on barren land and not in the nearby village, a villager said, adding it would have been catastrophic if the plane had crashed into the village.

District officials said the pilots, identified only as Tejpal and Bhumika, sustained minor injuries. No casualties were reported.

According to the IAF, the pilots were on a routine training sortie when the incident

occurred. A court of inquiry has been ordered to ascertain the cause of accident.

"A Kiran trainer aircraft of the IAF crashed near Chamrajnagar, Karnataka today, while on a routine training sortie. Both air crew ejected safely. A Court of Inquiry has been ordered to ascertain the cause of the accident," the IAF tweeted.

Senior district officials and an IAF team reached the spot along with the fire and emergency services personnel.

As soon as the plane crashed with a loud noise, villagers rushed to the spot and found the mangled aircraft engulfed in flames and billowing smoke.

Besides alerting the local police and the fire brigade, they also rushed to the spot where the two pilots were seen ejecting and coming down with the help of parachute.

Villagers noticed the two pilots lying on

the ground. Quickly, they created a temporary shed for them.

Police officials rushed to the spot, cordoned off the area and put up a makeshift tent for the injured pilots.

The district officials in turn informed the IAF authorities in Bengaluru who then rushed to the spot in a special helicopter and airlifted the two injured pilots.

According to the Additional Deputy Commissioner of the District Katayani Devi, one of the pilots sustained injuries in the spine while the other injured her mouth.

"The IAF helicopter has airlifted the two pilots to Bengaluru," she added.

Panchayat development officer Rame Gowda said he was in the office when he heard a blast.

"After hearing the sound, I came out and enquired. I got to know that an IAF aircraft had crashed. I rushed to the spot and saw the crashed aircraft in flames. I informed the police and the fire and emergency services department about the incident," Gowda told reporters.

According to the chief fire officer of Mysuru P S Jayaramaiah, a senior fire brigade officer, a man by the name Mahesh Prithvi informed them about the crash at about 12.05 pm and soon various teams were rushed to the spot.

An eyewitness said when they offered assistance to the pilots, they said they have informed the IAF station along with sharing the GPS location of the crash site to them.

Two days ago a Redbird Training Aircraft made an emergency landing in an agricultural field soon after taking off from Samba airport in Belagavi. The pilots escaped with minor injuries.

## TMC MPs walk out of par panel meeting over issue of wrestlers protest

**NEW DELHI, June 1 (PTI):** TMC MPs on Thursday walked out of a parliamentary standing committee meeting after their demand to discuss safeguards provided for women sports persons by various sports federations in the light of the allegations made by protesting wrestlers was deemed to be "outside the meeting's agenda" by its chairman BJP MP Vivek Thakur, sources said. TMC MPs Sushmita Dev and Asit Kumar Mal staged the walkout after the party raised the issue of safety of women sports persons at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, and asked if internal complaints committees were

formed at different sports federations and if they were active, they said.

Congress MP Akhilesh Singh, three others from the BJP and M Thambidurai of the AIADMK were present at the meeting attended by secretary (Sports) Sujata Chaturvedi; Sandeep Pradhan, director general, Sports Authority of India; Cadre (Retd) P K Garg, CEO, TOPS; R C Mishra, vice chancellor, National Sports University; Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports, Patiala, among others.

Sources said the Secretary, Sports informed Dev that the government has no role in the functioning of sports federations and any interference by the dispensation in

these federations will be against the spirit guiding sports administration globally.

Panel chairman Thakur is believed to have informed Dev that the issue was not on the agenda for the meeting.

"This is not part of the agenda for the meeting and the matter is anyway subjective so the committee cannot discuss it. It is clarified that today's agenda is India's preparedness for next Olympics," the BJP MP is believed to have said in response to Dev's queries.

Upon this, the duo of Dev and Mal walked out. While Congress' Singh supported Dev, he did not follow them out, sources said.

## Time not ripe for army's withdrawal from Kashmir hinterland: GOC Chinar Corps



**SRINAGAR, June 1 (PTI):** The situation in Kashmir has improved vastly over the last few years but the time is not ripe yet for the army to go back to the barracks, a senior officer said here. The number of active terrorists in the valley is at its lowest in the last 34 years, General Officer Commanding of Chinar Corps Lieutenant General A D S Aujla told PTI TV in an exclusive interview on Wednesday. "In Sha-Allah, but I think the time is not ripe at this point in time. We still have to see a lot of good things happening before we can take a call. Let it be a deliberate one. I won't comment on the timelines per se, nor would I say that it is the wrong time or the right time," Lt Gen Aujla said. The GOC said the army is just a tool in the plans of the government to ensure that Kashmir prospers, flourishes, and blossoms.

"We will work collectively with the state administration, with the

other agencies so that we can see the better Kashmir before we can take a call. It is a national call and it will be taken appropriately at the right time," he added.

Asked to compare the situation in Kashmir today with that of the time he arrived in the Valley as a young officer around 30 years ago,

Lt Gen Aujla said things have now fallen into place.

"When we look back at the situation when I first came here, things were on the boil, they had to be controlled. Today, I can say with a certain amount of honesty that in the last 30 years, and particularly in the last three, three-and-a-half

years since August 2019, things have fallen into the right place," he said. The officer said normalcy and peace in Kashmir was achieved after a lot of "sacrifices" and hard work.

"Being a soldier myself, I think this is the place where the sacrifices of the soldiers, the sacrifices of so many agencies, the administration, the people who have been involved in the daily dynamics of this place, have made a difference. You can say at this point of time, the silver lining is definitely on the horizon," he said.

It was a gradual process that went on over the last so many years and there is still a lot of ground which needs to be covered, he said.

"At least, we are on the right path... whatever the Army does or whatever the sister agencies do... the developmental work by the UT administration has changed the narrative in a big way. There is a

huge change on the ground in every domain, every segment, every sphere," he said.

Asked if the presence of militants in south Kashmir was a cause of concern, he said there was some "visibility" of militants but "the challenge is to weed them out" further lower the numbers.

"I won't specify the numbers because numbers do not give the correct picture, but it suffices to say that we have been able to control this particular aspect and we have got it down to numbers which are very very far and few."

"So, that should be an aspect of great credibility for every agency, and of course, the Army is the major role player in all this," he said. In response to a question on the ability of terrorists to strike during big events, Lt Gen Aujla said while there is an inclination among the ultras, the security forces were in great shape to control the situation.

## CM Adityanath lays foundation stone of new State Disaster Management Authority building



**LUCKNOW, June 1 (PTI):** Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath laid the foundation stone of a new building of the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) here on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, Adityanath said due to its large geographical area, Uttar Pradesh throws up numerous challenges.

"Previously, around 40 districts in the state were considered affected by floods, but we have managed to confine this danger to only four-five districts now," he said, adding that if a disaster strikes today, people have confidence that the government will provide relief.

During the foundation stone-laying ceremony of the five-storey building being constructed on 1.5 half acres of land at a cost of Rs 66.4 crore, Adityanath emphasised on disaster management and public awareness through technology.

Pointing out that Uttar Pradesh has nine different climatic zones where the threat of disasters is always present, he said, "Due to the rivers coming from the Himalayas, there is a constant risk of flooding from July to October. Lightning strikes are common in Vindhya and Bundelkhand. Western Uttar Pradesh is located in an area that is particularly vulnerable to earthquakes. The Terai region, adjacent to Nepal, is known for human-wildlife conflicts."

In order to provide relief, many areas have been brought under the purview of disaster management for the first time, the chief minister said.

"Human-wildlife conflict falls under one of these categories. Additionally, work is underway to install an early warning system for lightning strikes in all districts. Several steps are being taken, such as installing a rain gauge system in every village," he said.

Adityanath released two books, three short films and a radio jingle for public awareness on the occasion and launched the Uttar Pradesh State Disaster Management Plan 2023 and the Flood Action Plan 2023 books.

The chief minister also honoured Vinay Kumar, Jitendra Singh Yadav, Akhilesh Kumar Singh, Pushpendra and Manish Kumar from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF).



# No infiltration of Taliban fighters into Kashmir after fall of Kabul, says GOC Chinar Corps

**SRINAGAR, June 1 (PTI):** The apprehensions about the influx of Taliban fighters into Kashmir after the fall of Kabul in 2021 did not materialise and no Afghan Taliban has infiltrated into the valley, a senior Army officer has said here.

General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Chinar Corps Lieutenant General A D S Aujla also said that due to the ongoing internal crisis in Pakistan, there are no major worries regarding Kashmir but the armed forces have to remain alert to thwart any attempts to push in infiltrators, narcotics or weapons.

"As far as the apprehensions which were there post Taliban 2.0 are concerned, we could see the manifestations (of concern) on this side as well in Kashmir but it never happened," Lt Gen Aujla told PTI in an interview on Wednesday.

A certain amount of chatter and a certain amount of signature was being reported on the other side in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), but it never translated into reality onto this side, he said.

"So, there was no infiltration of



any Afghani Taliban... To that effect, we have been able to control (things)," he added.

The GOC said India has grown in stature in a number of domains, including military, foreign affairs and economy, and is counted amongst "the very best and the most powerful" countries today.

"With that stature today, I think we are in a better position to convey and convince people across borders in many terms, which augurs well for the country. So, while

the western adversary (Pakistan) which is closest to us may not agree and actually feels bad about this... the rest of the countries are now... in alignment with us on many matters," he said.

So, there is hardly a chance of something emanating from the other side and disturbing the peace and tranquillity of Kashmir, he added.

Asked about the current situation in Pakistan and its effect on Kashmir, Lt Gen Aujla said the cri-

sis in the neighbouring country was bound to happen.

"We are all aware of what is happening and the crisis is immense whether it is on the political, economic, social or military front, you name a space and there is a crisis on the other side.

"It was bound to happen the way the country was going, it was just a matter of time," he said.

However, Lt Gen Aujla said infiltration and smuggling of narcotics and ammunition through the border remain areas of concern.

"What worries us or concerns us at this point in time, majorly nothing. But other than that, when we look at what the dynamics of Kashmir are. The physical manifestation of infiltration is what worries us, the narcotics being pushed across (the border) is what worries us and the ammunition which is sent across is what worries us," said the GOC, who has served several tenures in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Army is prepared to deal with any eventuality along the Line of Control (LoC), he said.

# Nitish's opposition unity efforts aimed at hogging headlines: BJP's Sushil Modi

**NEW DELHI, June 1 (PTI):** Senior BJP leader and MP Sushil Modi took a swipe at Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar ahead of opposition parties' meeting in Patna on June 12, saying his efforts are merely aimed at keeping him in headlines as the balloon of their unity exercise has already been punctured.

Kumar, the face of the Janata Dal (United), may organise any number of meetings of opposition parties, but it is clear that his unity exercise is not working on the ground, he said.

Modi noted that West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee got the lone Congress MLA in the state inducted into her party recently and was accused by Jairam Ramesh of being a B-team of the BJP.

The Congress has been asked by its Punjab and Delhi leaders to have no truck with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), he added, pointing out that the main opposition party and the BSP also ruled out any support to the Samajwadi Party in the recent MLC polls in Uttar Pradesh.

"The balloon of opposition units efforts has been punctured by the likes of Banerjee and (Congress president) Mallikarjun Kharge. Kumar may keep trying as much as he can, it is clear that the opposition unity is impractical. He had long been out of headlines and now he is doing all this to remain in media," Modi told PTI.

Kejriwal wanted to meet Kharge and Rahul Gandhi



to seek support on the Delhi ordinance issue, but Gandhi went to the US without meeting him, the BJP leader said, highlighting the conflicts in the opposition ranks.

"Kumar may organise as many meetings as he wants, but will the Left and the Congress join hands in Kerala, or the AAP and the Congress in Delhi, or the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) and the Congress in Telangana," the former Bihar chief minister asked, asserting that no regional party will cede any space to the main opposition party as it poses existential threat to them.

Contd. from Page 1...

## M'laya Govt forms expert

with my hunger strike until I receive a notification from the government on the constitution of an expert committee," he said on Wednesday. The VPP leader had rejected the request of the state government for talks and claimed that there was massive support from people and civil society organizations demanding that the 40:40 reservation of jobs between the Khasis and the Garos be reviewed.

The VPP chief maintained the 50-year-old reservation policy is "unfair and outdated" considering that the population of the Khasis have outnumbered that of the Garos in the state. According to the 2011 census, over 14.1 lakh Khasis live in Meghalaya while the number of Garo people is a little over 8.21 lakh. The VPP leader said the party has also made it very clear that the ratio in terms of the job reservation should be proportionate as per the population structure of the state.

## Judicial probe, peace

Command will also be formed for "better coordination" among all security agencies in Manipur as multiple forces are working on the ground. Currently some 10,000 army and Assam rifles personnel have been brought into the state to keep the peace. Besides, central police forces and state police is also functioning on the ground. It was felt that a unified command was necessary to avoid confusion. "One joint secretary-level officer from the home ministry and five director-level officers from different departments will be posted here," he added.

Shah also told newsmen that he felt for a permanent solution to the Indo-Myanmar border issue, the fencing on the border between the two countries will need to be completed. There are apprehensions that the porous border is being used for drug smuggling and for movement of militants.

He said biometrics of people coming from neighbouring countries are also being collected. A large number of refugees from the violence in Myanmar have also taken refuge in the border state and the central government has been trying to keep track of this population. Talking about the origin of the clashes which rocked Manipur, he said ethnic rioting began after the Manipur High Court on April 29 "hurriedly" sought the views of the state government on granting Scheduled Tribe status to a community. Asked about the Kuki community's demand for a separate administrative unit, the Union Minister said: "The Central government had cleared its stand on Manipur's territorial integrity earlier. I don't want to make any statement to sensationalise the issue and make headlines."

He claimed that since BJP came to power in Manipur around six years ago, the northeastern state had remained free of bandhs, curfews and blockades, and reached the "peak" of peace and development. He said a relief and rehabilitation package for families who have lost members to the violence or suffered injury or damage to property will soon be announced by the government, and the money will be transferred directly to the bank accounts of the victims and their kin.

Shah also promised to expedite supplies of essential commodities to cool down prices in the land-locked state. "We will set up a temporary railway station at Khongsang within a week. This will help movement of people and transportation of goods to a large extent," he added. The Centre will also send medical teams including 20 specialised doctors to the state, besides arranging to support students appearing for competitive examinations, Shah said. "We will start temporary helicopter services to connect the Imphal airport with the hill districts. Tickets will be offered at Rs 2,000 per passenger and the gap will be borne by the state and central governments," he added. Appealing to citizens not to pay heed to rumours, the home minister said special telephone lines will be set up where people can ring and check the veracity of rumours being circulated. Speaking of militant groups, he said: "Any deviation from the Suspension of Operations agreement (pacts brokering ceasefire) will be considered as violation of the pacts they have signed. Strict action will be taken against the violators." A number of Kuki militant groups have signed such deals and currently stay in camps under the watchful eyes of the Assam Rifles.

This statement comes in the backdrop of reports of militants taking up arms and acting as vigilantes during the rioting. Shah also appealed to all to return the unlicensed arms immediately and said police will start combing operations and take action from Friday. The army and police forces are conducting state-wide search operations for hidden arms caches. Surveillance by drones and deployment of security forces also continues, said officials. Shah on Wednesday had said the government is committed to restore peace in Manipur and ensuring an early return of all internally displaced people back to their homes.

Meeting victims from both Meitei and Kuki communities a day before in relief camps in the state, he assured them of security and said the government's focus is to ensure their safe return home. Ethnic clashes broke out in the state nearly a month ago after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. After a relative lull for over a fortnight, the state witnessed a spurt in clashes and gunfights between militants and security forces on Sunday. So far, over 80 people have been killed in the violence, according to officials.

## Three police personnel

over a fortnight, the state witnessed a sudden spurt in clashes and gunfight between militants and security forces on Sunday. So far, over 80 people have been killed in the violence, according to officials. The army and police forces are conducting state-wide search operations for hidden arms caches. Surveillance by drones and deployment of security forces also continues, said officials.

## Modi, Prachanda give fresh

cultural and religious ties, PM Prachanda and I decided that projects related to Ramayana circuit should be expedited, Modi said. In his comments, Prachanda said he and Modi carried out an "extensive review" of the progress in the ties and renewed their commitment to further strengthen relations and cooperation.

The Nepalese prime minister said he appreciated Modi's "neighbourhood first policy". "The relations between Nepal and India are age-old and multi-faceted. This relationship stands on the solid foundation built on one hand by the rich tradition of civilisational, cultural and socio-economic linkage and on the other by the firm commitment of the two countries to the time-tested principle of sovereign equality, mutual respect, understanding and cooperation," he said. He said the two sides discussed ways to further strengthen cooperation in diverse areas including trade, transit, investment, hydro-power, power trade, irrigation, power transmission line, expansion of petroleum pipeline, construction of integrated check post and land and air connectivity.

"We are happy to see the remarkable transformation of India's economic and development landscape under the able leadership of PM Modi. I congratulate PM Modi on the completion this week of nine years in government with far reaching achievement in many fronts," Prachanda said.

The Nepalese leader arrived here on Wednesday on a four-day visit. Nepal is important for India in the context of its overall strategic interests in the region, and the leaders of the two countries have often noted the age-old "Roti-Beti" relationship, which refers to cross-border marriages between people of the two countries. The country shares a border of over 1,850 km with five Indian states - Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Land-locked Nepal relies heavily on India for the transportation of goods and services. Nepal's access to the sea is through India, and it imports a predominant proportion of its requirements from and through India. The India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 forms the bedrock of the special relations between the two countries.

## Space startup raises

hyperspectral imaging products. The company also announced a five-year contract with the NRO Commercial Systems Program Office (CSPO) for the Strategic Commercial Enhancements for Commercial Hyperspectral Capabilities programme.

## Journey of First 1000

available in the health sector. Stressing that convergence is much needed for all the stakeholders, he called for community efforts in achieving the targeted goal. During the launching programme, a video on the First 1000 Days was also released.

## FlyBig begins daily Guwahati-

tourism industry by improving domestic connectivity", the minister said. The initiative will help in the all-round growth of the region, Baruah added. These flights will follow a schedule of operating at 7.30 am to Silchar from Guwahati and it will have a return journey from Silchar at 8.30 am every day.

# Chhota Rajan moves HC seeking stay on release of 'Scoop'

The jailed gangster claims 'infringement of his personality rights'



**MUMBAI, June 1 (PTI):** Jailed gangster Rajendra Nikalje alias Chhota Rajan on Thursday moved the Bombay High Court against web series "Scoop", which is slated for release on Netflix on June 2, saying that the "use or misuse of the attributes of his personality" without his prior consent amounted to infringement of his "personality rights" as well as defamation.

Rajan, who is presently lodged at the Tihar jail, sought a stay on the release of the series and an order to take down the trailer.

He also sought a permanent injunction restraining the makers of the series, including Hansal Mehta and Netflix Entertainment Services India, from infringement of his personality rights.

Rajan has also sought damages of ₹ 1 to be paid to him or for the makers to deposit the money earned by them through the telecast of

the series' trailer, and for the amount to be used for "public good or upliftment of the society".

In his plea, Rajan said that in May 2023 he was informed by his wife about the trailer of the series.

The petition said the makers of the series never permitted to use/misuse Rajan's name and image, associate him to any voice and/or any events, without prior permission.

"Therefore, the use or misuse of the attributes of the plaintiff's (Rajan) personality, including his name, caricature, image, and/or any other direct/indirect reference, without receiving the prior consent of the plaintiff amounts to infringement of the plaintiff's personality rights, passing off as well as defamation," the plea said.

A vacation bench of the high court is likely to hear the plea on Friday.

In June 2011, journalist Jyotirmoy Dey was killed. Rajan and 11 others, including journalist Jigna Vora, were accused in the case. In May 2018, Rajan and eight others were convicted in the case. Vora was acquitted.

"Scoop", a six-episode Netflix series, is inspired by Vora's 2019 jail memoir "Behind Bars in Byculla: My Days in Prison".

Rajan, in his petition in the high court, claimed that the makers of the series are monopolising his name and image.

"Moreover, the defendants (makers of the series) herein are also maligning the image of the plaintiff in the public eye by linking him to a false concocted storyline, with intention to commercially benefit from the same, which amounts to defamation," it added.

# KCR focusing on presenting 'Telangana Model' to country, says son KTR

**HYDERABAD, June 1 (PTI):** Telangana chief minister and BRS supremo K Chandrasekhar Rao has given up his efforts to unite opposition parties against the ruling BJP at the centre and instead is focusing on presenting the 'Telangana development model' to the country, party working president and Minister KT Rama Rao said on Thursday.

Rama Rao's comments came amid various efforts by his father KCR to spread the wings of his party BRS at the national level.

Talking to reporters, KTR indirectly referred to the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said the country does not need opposition unity on the basis of blind hatred against one party or one man, but on a positive model of governance.

"What we are saying is after trying everything, after attempting everything, we have come to the conclusion that a new national party (will be taken to the national level), because there is a huge vacuum in this country. The principal has opposition failed miserably," he said.

KCR had earlier met several leaders including some of the chief ministers of other states such as M K Stalin (Tamil Nadu), Nitish Kumar (Bihar) and Arvind Kejriwal (Delhi) in a bid to unite non-BJP non-Congress parties, alleging that both the national parties failed to develop the country.

KCR has addressed three or four public meetings in Maharashtra since the announcement of his party's national foray (then TRS) and several leaders from the neighbouring state have joined the BRS since then.

On the Karnataka Assembly poll results, he said it was not a congress victory but the rejection of the incumbent government.

lighted in this booklet and the media. These are issues that cannot be dealt with by any one company, it has to be by a JPC probe," the Congress leader said.

In a tweet, Ramesh earlier said, "The SEBI Consultation Paper put out yesterday proposes to tighten the very rules it was forced to dilute in 2018 to allow foreign portfolio investors to invest in Indian companies without having to reveal their FULL ownership details. This was done to benefit Modani."

"We hope the Consultation paper is not an eyewash exercise and will cover investments made earlier," he said.

Ramesh claimed this seems to be a response to the findings of the Supreme Court Expert Committee.

"It also vindicates the Hum Adanike Hain Kaun-HAHK series of 100 questions that we asked of the PM - which he remains totally silent on," the Congress leader said.

On Wednesday, the SEBI said, "Such concentrated investments raise concern and possibility that promoters of such corporate groups, or other investors acting in concert, could be using the FPI route for circumventing regulatory requirements such as that of maintaining Minimum Public Shareholding."

In its consultation paper, the regulator has proposed obtaining granular information from high-risk FPIs that have concentrated equity holdings in single companies or business groups.

The Congress has been seeking a joint parliamentary committee probe into the Adani matter after Hindenburg Research in its January 24 report levelled allegations of fraud, stock manipulation, and money laundering against the Adani group.



The Congress also launched a booklet related to the 100 questions which the party asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi since February on the Adani issue.

SEBI on Wednesday came out with a proposal mandating enhanced disclosures from high-risk FPIs to guard against possible circumvention of the Minimum Public Shareholding (MPS) requirement.

This came after the SEBI observed that some FPIs have concentrated a substantial portion of their equity portfolio in a single investee company. In some cases, these concentrated holdings have also been near static and maintained for a long time, it said.

"Why did the SEBI come out with a consultation paper? The important recommendation by the Supreme Court committee said that India has suffered because of the removal of this rule," Ramesh said.

He said this is a beginning towards transparency which ended in 2018 to help some select businesses.

"The question is whether the rule will be applicable in future or this

rule will be applicable on those investing in the country in the last 5-6 years," he asked.

On whether the party wants a probe into who were the beneficiaries of investments into shell companies coming into the country after the rule was diluted and removed, Ramesh said, "That will be one of the terms of reference of the JPC that on whose pressure on December 31, 2018 this regulation was diluted and on August 21 2019, the regulation was deleted."

On whether the party wants the rule to be applicable retrospectively, he said, "This is the question that I have raised. The big question is that will it apply retrospectively. Whatever will happen in future everyone knows, but what about the investment that has happened after 2018, will the rule apply to them."

"If you are asking our position, yes it should apply. Our position from day 1 has been that any probe by any organisation other than a JPC will have a limited value because of the nature of the probe. Only a JPC can investigate the types of issues that we have high-





## WE'RE CONSTANTLY TRYING TO FIGHT THE UNKNOWN: CHRIS MESSINA ON 'THE BOOGEYMAN'

**MUMBAI, June 1 (PTI):** Chris Messina, the star of new horror movie "The Boogeyman", doesn't believe in the existence of malevolent beings but says one has to contend with personal struggles and inner demons on daily basis.

The Rob Savage-directorial is based on celebrated author Stephen King's 1973 short story of the same title. It is set to be released in Indian theatres on Friday.

Messina, known for films and shows "Ruby Sparks", "Birds of Prey", "The Newsroom" and "The Mindy Project", said there is a certain fear that people

carry within themselves and that's what the film tries to explore through the horror genre. "I don't believe in the Boogeyman, but I believe we all have fear that we carry with us. It has been a part of our lives, where we were born and the circumstances. And so I believe that we're constantly up against that and trying to fight through the unknown that I believe in. "But I do believe that through the fear and the darkness, (there) is great light," the 48-year-old actor told PTI in a virtual interview.

Adapted by Scott Beck and Bryan

Woods of "A Quiet Place" fame, "The Boogeyman" focuses on the Harper family, where Will (Messina), a grief-struck therapist, is indifferent to his children, Sadie and Sawyer, in the wake of their mother's death.

When a desperate patient shows up unexpectedly at their house asking for help, he ends up bringing in a terrifying entity that preys on the family and their grief.

As a father of two, Messina said he identified with his character's struggles as a parent. "I related to those ups and

downs of trying to be a good parent. In this situation, this family's stuck in grief and they don't know how to move forward. So that was a really interesting thing to tackle as an actor.

"How come this pretty successful therapist is good at talking to people but can't talk to his daughters? And I found out from many therapists that they were better suited for other people's problems and not their own," the actor added.

"The Boogeyman" had a great deal of humanity to it which is why the actor said he agreed to be a part of the movie.

## Alia Bhatt's grandfather Narendranath Razdan dies at 94



**MUMBAI, June 1 (PTI):** Narendranath Razdan, father of actor Soni Razdan and maternal grandfather of actor Alia Bhatt, died on Thursday due to age-related ailments. He was 94.

Soni Razdan shared the news of her father's demise on her official Instagram account.

Calling him "an avid golfer, music lover and light of our lives", the veteran actor wrote the family is fortunate to have known a kind and loving soul like him.

"Daddy, grandpa, Nindi - our Angel here on earth. We are so thankful to have called you ours. So grateful to have lived a life basking in your incandescent glow. So blessed to have been touched by your kind, loving, gentle and always vibrant soul.

"You have taken a piece of us with you but we will never be parted with your spirit. It inhabits us all and will remind us always of what it truly means to be alive. Wherever you are - it's now a happier place because of that beautiful

laugh of yours. We love you our silly, beautiful, funny boy - until we meet again," Soni Razdan, 66, wrote.

Narendranath Razdan, an architect, died 15 days before what would have been his 95th birthday.

On her Instagram, Alia shared a throwback video of her maternal grandfather's birthday celebration with him beaming at the camera.

In her tribute, the "Brahmastra" star listed some of her grandfather's qualities.

"Played golf till 93. Worked till 93. Made the best omelette. Told the best stories. Played the violin. Played with his great granddaughter. Loved his cricket. Loved his sketching. Loved his family & till the very last moment... loved his life!" she wrote.

"My heart is full of sorrow but also full of joy.. because all my grandpa did is give us joy & for that feel blessed and grateful to have been brought up by all the light he had to give! Until we meet again," Alia added.

## Sia reveals autism spectrum diagnosis two years after 'Music' film backlash

**LOS ANGELES, June 1 (PTI):** Two years after her film "Music" courted controversy for misrepresenting people with autism, singer-songwriter Sia has revealed that she is "on the spectrum" and in "recovery mode".

The Australian musician was called out for casting a neurotypical actor -- her frequent collaborator Maddie Ziegler -- as a nonverbal autistic teenage girl in her feature directorial debut "Music" in 2021.

During a recent episode of Rob Has a Podcast, Sia said she has been able to become herself only in the last two years.

"I'm on the spectrum and I'm in recovery and whatever... For 45 years, I was like, 'I've got to go put my human suit on'. And only in the last two years have I become fully, fully myself," the "Chandelier" hitmaker said.

She also said no one can "love you when you're filled with secrets and living in shame."

"And then we finally sit in a room full of strangers and tell them our deepest, darkest, most shameful secrets, and everybody laughs along with us, and we don't feel like pieces of trash for the first time in our lives, and we feel seen for the first time in our lives for who we actually are, and then we can start going out into the world and just operating as humans and human beings with hearts and not pretending to be anything," she added.

"Music" followed a newly sober woman named



Zu, played by Kate Hudson, who becomes the guardian of her half-sister Music (Ziegler), a teenage girl on the autism spectrum.

At the time of the controversy, Sia had hit back at critics, saying the story was inspired by her "neuro atypical friend" who "found it too stressful being non verbal, and I made this movie with nothing but love for him and his mother".

She later offered an apology, adding the scenes in question in "Music" would be removed from future screenings.

## Prime Video developing Australian version of 'The Office'

**MUMBAI, June 1 (PTI):** An Australian version of classic sitcom "The Office" is in the works at Prime Video but with a gender-flipped lead character.

Comedian and actor Felicity Ward will headline the Australian show, a joint production between Prime Video, BBC Studios Australia and New Zealand, and Bunya Entertainment.

"The Office" first started in the UK with actor Ricky Gervais playing David Brent, the head of the Slough branch of the fictional Wernham Hogg paper company. It ran for two seasons from 2001 to

2003.

The sitcom's American version, which saw actor Steve Carrell as Michael Scott, became equally popular during its run on NBC from 2005 to 2013.

In the Australian take, Ward will essay the role of Hannah Howard, the managing director of packaging company Flinley Craddick.

"When she gets news from Head Office that they will be shutting down her branch and making everyone work from home, she goes into survival mode, making promises she can't keep in order to keep her 'work family' together.



"The staff of Flinley Craddick indulge her and must endure Hannah's outlandish plots as they work toward the impossible targets that have been set for them," the official plotline read.

Gervais, co-creator, co-writer and star of "The Office", said he is excited about Australia remaking the sitcom.

"Office politics have changed a bit in 20 years, so can't wait to see how they navigate a modern-day David Brent," he added. The Australian version will be the 13th adaptation of the series after similar shows in France, Canada, Chile, Israel, India, the Middle East, and Poland. Production on the eight-part Australian Amazon Original series will start in Sydney later this month with filming to take place over eight weeks. The show will also feature Edith Poor, Steen Raskopoulos, Shari Sebbens, Josh Thomson, Jonny Brugh, Pallavi Sharda, Susan Ling Young, Raj Labade, Lucy Schmit, and Firass Dirani.

## Pak actors Mahira Khan, Sarwat Gilani to read stories by famed writers in 'Yaar Julahay' series

**MUMBAI, June 1 (PTI):** "Yaar Julahay", a series of dramatic readings that bring to life stories by legendary writers from the Indian sub-continent such as Gulzar, Saadat Hasan Manto, Ismat Chughtai, and Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi, will air on Zindagi channel's DTH services on June 3.

Pakistani stars Mahira Khan, Sarwat Gilani, Nimra Bucha and Faysal Quraishi will turn storytellers for each of the stories by these four Urdu and Hindi writers, a press release stated.

The four episodes of "Yaar Julahay" will premiere over four weekends through June

on Zindagi's DTH platforms such as Tata Sky, Dish TV, D2H and Airtel.

Khan, star of "Humsafar" and "Raees", features in the first episode of the show in which she will read Qasmi's classic story, "Guriya".

"Guriya" narrates the story of two best friends -- Bano and Mehra. The former has a doll named Guriya that looks just like Mehra, but Mehra has no interest in the doll at all. Their love and contempt for the doll build up over time. An unexpected turn that occurs at the conclusion reveals the doll's mystery," read the synopsis of the episode.



The second episode, which will run through June 9 and 10, will see Bucha read "Mughal Bachcha", a short story by Padma Shri recipient Chughtai. It follows Kalay Mian, a dark-skinned guy, and his beautiful bride Gori Bi.

"Kalay Mian is unable to set aside his ego and inferiority complex for a happy married life," the makers said. Bucha, known for "Churails" and "Ms Marvel", said "Mughal Bachcha" is a fairy tale for grown-ups.

"Performing it made me feel like a child at play, with Ismat Chughtai looking on and reminding me that I was a grown up now. That I was the witch and I was the knight and all of it. It is a love story that spans ages in all its perversity. And like all love stories, it is ambitious and hopeless and timeless," she added.

For the third episode, her "Churails" co-star Gilani will read Gulzar's "Sunset Boulevard", which will be aired on June 16 and June 17.

Gilani described the short story as "one of Gulzar saab's finest works".

"When Sunset Boulevard came to me, I could resonate with it because I love stories and characters which have something to say about the common man. The classic literary pieces and the characters in this story are so beautiful," she said.

The fourth and final episode of the series will be presented by Quraishi, who will read Manto's story "Ghusal Khana", a story of a boy whose prayers get heard only when he prays in the bathroom.

"Yaar Julahay" will air at 12 noon and 5 pm on Zindagi's DTH platforms.



# Sevilla win Europa League at Mourinho's expense as Montiel clinches another penalty shootout

**BUDAPEST, June 1 (AP):** Five months after scoring the winning penalty in the World Cup final, Gonzalo Montiel converted the clinching spot kick for Sevilla in the Europa League final to beat Jose Mourinho's Roma.

It earned Sevilla a seventh title in the competition on Wednesday.

The Argentina international sent Roma goalkeeper Rui Patricio the wrong way with his retaken penalty to seal a 4-1 win in the shootout after the match finished 1-1 after extra time in Budapest, where Mourinho was aiming to maintain his record of having never lost a final in European competitions. "I've won five finals and I lost this one, but I'm

coming back home proud again," Mourinho told Sky Sport Italy. "The boys gave everything."

Gianluca Mancini and Roger Ibanez failed to convert for Roma from the spot against Sevilla goalkeeper Yassine Bounou. Montiel missed his first attempt but had another chance after Patricio was judged to have come off his line.

Sevilla has still never lost a final it has contested in the Europa League or its precursor, the UEFA Cup — the team also won the competition in 2006, '07, '14, '15, '16 and '20 — and secured a place in next season's Champions League. At one stage close to the relegation zone in the Spanish league and already eliminated



from the Champions League, it had looked like a season to forget for Sevilla. But clearly it was not over yet. A new coach, José Luis Mendilibar came in and things turned around quickly.

"I'm happy to be here, to have won for the club, which was having a hard time when we got here," Mendilibar said. "We have done something good that can have repercussions for the good of the club." Before the final, Mourinho actually had more European title wins than Mendilibar had total games managed in those same competitions. The 62-year-old Mendilibar's career is peaking since joining Sevilla just two months ago.

As Sevilla players celebrated on the field, Mourinho kept his calm and congratulated the Spanish club on the victory.

"We lost a game but not dignity. I've never gone home prouder than today," Mourinho said. "Great match, great final. Intense, vibrant." After receiving his runners-up medal, Mourinho took it off and gave it to a young fan.

Paulo Dybala had put Roma ahead in the 35th minute at Puskás Aréna in the Hungarian capital. Mancini sent a through ball for Dybala, who netted past Bounou with a low left-foot shot. The Argentina forward had recovered from an ankle injury in time to be declared fit for the final.

It was Dybala's fifth goal of the Europa League, and 17th overall this season. Sevilla was only slowly getting into the match but Ivan Rakitic came close to equalizing in first-half stoppage time with a low drive from 20 meters (yards) that bounced off the post.

Mendilibar sent on midfielder Suso and forward Erik Lamela, a former Roma player, as substitutes at the start of the second half to rejuvenate his team.

Sevilla equalized through Mancini's own-goal 10 minutes into the second half when he was under pressure from Youssef En-Nesyri. Captain Jesús Navas set up the goal with a cross from the right.

MESSI NETTED 21 GOALS AND HAD 20 ASSISTS FOR PSG

## PSG coach confirms Lionel Messi's departure from French league club



**PARIS, June 1 (AP):** Lionel Messi will leave Paris Saint-Germain at the end of the season after two years at the club, coach Christophe Galtier said Thursday.

Galtier said ahead of PSG's game against Clermont on Saturday that it would be Messi's last match at the Parc des Princes. Messi's contract expires at the end of June.

"I had the privilege of coaching the best player in the history of soccer," Galtier said. "This will be his last match at the Parc des Princes, and I hope that he will receive the warmest of welcomes." PSG recruited Messi in August 2021 with the ambition to finally win the Champions League. The team is still waiting.

Although PSG won its 11th French league title this year, it again exited Europe's top tournament in the round of 16. Messi's adventure in

France has been bitter sweet. In spite of pretty good statistics, he has been embodying the team's shortcomings in the view of many PSG fans who have repeatedly whistled and booed his name in recent weeks.

After struggling to adapt to the French league - the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner scored only six league goals in his first 26 games - Messi has improved this season as he developed an efficient understanding with forward Kylian Mbappe.

In 31 league matches, the 35-year-old Messi has scored 16 goals and delivered as many assists. In all competitions, Messi netted 21 goals and had 20 assists for PSG.

"This year, he has been an important part of the team, always available, always committed during training sessions," Galtier said. "I don't think any of the com-

ments or criticisms are justified." Despite Galtier's support, PSG's appreciation of Messi has not always been so positive. Earlier this season, the club suspended the World Cup winner following a trip to Saudi Arabia without the club's permission.

Messi has a commercial contract with Saudi Arabia to promote tourism in the Middle Eastern country and has been linked with a lucrative move there at the end of the season. There has also been talk of a return to Barcelona, where he spent the majority of his career, or to the United States to play in MLS.

Messi arrived at Barcelona at the age of 13 and left having won 35 titles. He helped the club win the Champions League four times, the Spanish league 10 times, the Copa del Rey seven times and the Spanish Super Cup eight times.

## Focus will be on finishing and maintaining structure: Harmanpreet

**LONDON, June 1 (PTI):** Captain Harmanpreet Singh on Thursday said that India can bounce despite back-to-back defeats if the team converts the goal-scoring chances and maintains structure in its coming games in the men's FIH Hockey Pro League.

India, who had come to Europe as table toppers, lost 1-2 to Olympic champions Belgium in their first match and went down 2-4 against Great Britain to drop down to second position.

They face Belgium again here on Friday before taking on table-toppers Great Britain on Saturday. Great Britain have 25 points from 10 matches while India have accumulated 19 points from 10 matches.

"We are not letting the two losses last week play on our minds. We still have six more matches to play and we know that if we play to the structure and execute good finishes, we will be able to return to the top of the pool table," Harmanpreet said ahead of the match against Belgium.

Despite the defeats, Harmanpreet said his team did have some takeaways from the two matches.

"Both opponents play very differ-

ent styles. While one (Belgium) plays zonal, the other (GB) plays man-to-man. But there were some takeaways from those two matches," said Harmanpreet, who achieved the milestone of being the most prolific goal-scorer in the history of Pro League with 35 goals.

"Though we didn't create that many field goals, we did get some good PCs. There are some areas we also worked on, in these past few days and focus will continue to be on defending well," he added.

India vice-captain Hardik Singh also highlighted the efforts of newcomers in the squad.

"I think after the Rourkela matches, there was a bit of a gap to play highly competitive matches. It will take some time particularly for the youngsters to settle in and make the right connections to score goals.

"This is a big platform for youngsters like Sukhjeet, Karthi and even Abhishek who are playing in London for the first time and Sanjay also had a good debut.

"There are a lot of positives from the first two matches here which they will be working on to carry forward in the upcoming matches," said the young mid-fielder.

## Italy, Nigeria and Brazil advance to U-20 WC quarterfinals; Argentina, England out

**BUENOS AIRES (ARGENTINA), June 1 (AP):** Italy, Nigeria, Colombia and a 10-man Brazil lineup advanced to the quarterfinals of the Under-20 World Cup. Host Argentina lost 2-0 to Nigeria in front of almost 30,000 fans in San Juan on Wednesday, ending an unlikely campaign for the home team. Italy eliminated England with a 2-1 victory thanks to a late goal from the spot. Brazil thrashed Tunisia 4-1 despite being a player down for the entire second half, and Colombia topped Slovakia 5-1 with three of its goals scored in a four-minute span.

Nigeria will take on either Ecuador or South Korea in the next round. Brazil faces Israel in the quarterfinals, and Colombia will play Italy.

Argentina did not arrive at the U-

20 World Cup as one of the favorites. The team coached by Javier Mascherano did not qualify initially and only got a spot at the tournament when it replaced Indonesia as host. Heavy home support after the senior team's World Cup title was expected to give the youngsters a boost.

But after Argentina wasted several opportunities throughout the match, the Nigerians punished them twice in the second half. A goal kick ended in a defensive mistake and a clear chance for Ibrahim Muhammad, who scored in the 61st minute.

Argentina continued to pressure, hitting the woodwork twice. A late Nigerian counter-attack ended in a header by Rilwanu Haliru Sarki just before the final whistle.

"We played a great match," Mascherano said in a post-match



TV interview. "We knew that if we made some mistakes we might have to pay. And regrettably the two mistakes we made brought them two goals." Italy started strongly against England and scored in the 8th minute after a sequence of quick passes that put Tommaso Baldanzi

in front of the goalkeeper. The English team equalized with Alfie Devine scoring from close range in the 24th. A stalemate settled in at the La Plata Stadium, one of the poorest pitches in the tournament.

But a video reviewed decision nearing fulltime gave Italy a chance

from the spot. Cesare Casadei stepped up and scored his fifth goal of the tournament to secure the win and put the Italians through.

Earlier, Marcos Leonardo opened the scoring for Brazil in the 11th minute from the spot, his fourth goal at the tournament. Andrey Santos added a second from close range in the 31st.

Defender Robert Renan was sent off shortly before the break and Tunisia had the initiative for most of the second half, but Brazil scored twice in injury time through Matheus Martins and Santos.

Colombia's Óscar Cortes opened and finished the scoring for his team, striking first in the 48th. Yaser Asprilla made it 2-0 two minutes later and Tomás Ángel added a third in the 52nd.

## Three football training centres come up in Bhubaneswar

**BHUBANESWAR, June 1 (PTI):** In a major boost to state's football infrastructure, Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday inaugurated three state-of-art training Centres in Bhubaneswar ahead of the upcoming Intercontinental Cup.

Developed at a cost of Rs 90 lakh, the three centres -- Odisha Football Academy, Bhubaneswar Football Academy and Capital Arena Football -- features a total of six FIFA certified pitches.

They also have five natural and one synthetic football ground, LED flood lights, players changing room, gallery, coach room, among other amenities.

The three centres are situated at the heart of the city and are in

close vicinity to each other thus giving an added advantage to players and multiple teams to train simultaneously, especially during tournaments.

The three centres will be training ground for National U-16 and U-19 National team, Odisha FC's (Men, Women and Youth) and all state teams (both men and women). Training sessions of U-13, U-15, and U-18 state academies will also be held here.

The centres will also be venue for State Leagues including FAO League, Odisha Women's League, School Leagues and tournaments, local leagues thus promoting an all-round conducive environment for the growth and popularity of football.

## At French Open, Sabalenka of Belarus refuses to answer questions about war in Ukraine

**PARIS, June 1 (AP):** Aryna Sabalenka, a Belarusian tennis player seeded No. 2 at the French Open, declined to answer questions about Russia's invasion of Ukraine after she won a match on Wednesday.

After her first-round win Sunday, Sabalenka had said no Russian or Belarusian athletes support the war, but she was asked Wednesday to personally condemn Belarus' role in supporting Russia's invasion.

"I've got no comments to you," the Australian Open champion said in a press conference after her 7-5, 6-2 victory over Iryna Shymonovich in the second round at the Grand Slam tournament.

Sabalenka's first-round opponent, Marta Kostyuk of Ukraine, had urged reporters to ask the 25-year-old Sabalenka if she personally supports or opposes the war. Sabalenka was asked — in the context of potentially becoming the world's No. 1 player — about

whether she supports Belarus' authoritarian leader Alexander Lukashenko.

"I have no comments to you, so thank you for your question," she replied.

Next was the question about Belarus' role in the war.

When a third question was posed, the moderator stepped in, and Sabalenka added: "You've got enough answers from me, and I've got no comments to you." On Sunday, Kostyuk had refused to shake hands with Sabalenka after their match on Court Philippe Chatrier.

After that match, Sabalenka said: "Nobody in this world, Russian athletes or Belarusian athletes, support the war. Nobody. How can we support the war? Nobody — normal people — will never support it."

In Kostyuk's subsequent press conference, the Ukrainian said Sabalenka "never says that she personally doesn't support this war."

## Novak Djokovic tries to put issue of Kosovo comments behind him at French Open

**PARIS, June 1 (AP):** Novak Djokovic sure seemed like someone ready to move on from the latest non-tennis issue he's been involved in during a Grand Slam tournament. Criticized after his previous match for comments about clashes in northern Kosovo between ethnic Serbs and NATO-led peacekeepers, the 22-time major champion stayed away from political matters on Wednesday night. When his 7-6 (2), 6-0, 6-3 victory over Marton Fucsovics in the second round of the French Open ended, Djokovic, a 36-year-old from Serbia, wrote on the lens of a TV camera — a custom at more and more tennis tournaments — and kept it simple, with an autograph and a smiley face.

It was quite different from what happened after his win Monday, when Djokovic drew attention for writing in Serbian, "Kosovo is the heart of Serbia. Stop the violence," and then speaking out about the matter at



a news conference with reporters from his home country.

That drew rebukes from a member of France's government, French Open tournament director Amelie Mauresmo and the Kosovo tennis federation.

Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera warned

Djokovic on Wednesday morning not to waste into such international issues again at Roland Garros, saying his comments were "not appropriate." Speaking on TV station France 2, Oudea-Castera said Mauresmo encouraged Djokovic and his entourage to maintain "neutral-

ity" on the field of play.

Asked about Oudea-Castera and Mauresmo, Djokovic responded: "I have no more comment on that. I said what I needed to say."

As for the underlying topic, Djokovic said: "Of course I'm aware that a lot of people would disagree, but it is what it is. It's something that I stand for. So that's all."

This sort of thing is not exactly new for Djokovic. He did, after all, miss the Australian Open and U.S. Open in 2022 because he never received shots of the COVID-19 vaccine.

When he returned to Australia this year, he faced questions about his father appearing with a group of people waving Russian flags — at least one showing an image of Vladimir Putin — outside the main stadium.

"Drama-free Grand Slam — I don't think it can happen for me," Djokovic said Wednesday. "You know, I guess that drives me, as well."

He found plenty of tennis-related reasons to be bothered during the epic opening set against Fucsovics, which lasted 1 1/2 hours.

One issue was how hard, and how well, Fucsovics was walloping the ball early on. Another was how windy it was in the event's main stadium, rippling the players' shirts and whipping flags atop the arena until they twisted around their poles. That swirling air kicked up clay from the court, which led to another problem for Djokovic: shaky footing.

He would slip and slide and have trouble getting his feet planted properly. Djokovic asked the chair umpire for more clay to be added to the playing surface. Another complaint he had for the official was that breaks between games were being cut too short.

Still, it was Djokovic who was better when it mattered the most against Fucsovics, dominating the tiebreaker.



# Australia head into the WTC final against India wary of their dismal Oval record



**MELBOURNE, June 1 (PTI):** As Australia begin preparations for the World Test Championship final against India, the men from Down Under would be eager to put their past struggles at The Oval behind them.

In over 140 years of Test cricket in Eng-

land, Australia have had one of the worst records at The Oval, which will host the final from June 7 to 11 between the top two Test sides.

Australia, who played at The Oval in 1880 in what was the first-ever Test in England, have managed a mere seven wins from

38 Tests at the famous South London venue, putting their success rate at the venue at 18.42 per cent, their poorest across England.

Australia have won just twice in the past 50 years at The Oval. On the other hand, they have 17 wins from 29 matches at The Lord's at a success rate of 43.59 per cent,

which is better than hosts England's 39.72 per cent from 141 games and South Africa's 33.33 per cent at the same venue.

Australia have a success rate of 34.62 per cent at Headingley, 30.43 per cent at Trent Bridge, and 29.03 per cent and 26.67 per cent at Old Trafford and Edgbaston respectively.

India, on the other hand, haven't fared too well at the venue either having won two, drawn seven and lost five games. But the Rohit Sharma-led side will be boosted by the 157-run win over England here in 2021, which was its first victory at the venue in a Test match in 40 years.

According to cricket.com.au, Australia will have their first full training session in the UK on Thursday in Beckenham, which is 20km from central London.

Pat Cummins and his men will train at Kent's out-ground across the weekend as both sides will be granted access to facilities at The Oval only two days prior to the fixture. And while The Oval is likely to favour the pacers, Beckenham is known to have a batter-friendly track.

Australia finished the 2021-23 WTC cycle on top of the table, their only loss being the 2-1 away defeat to India earlier this year.

They haven't beaten the Men in Blue, both home and away, in eight years -- four successive series defeats.

## Conway has caught the Kane Williamson bug to keep learning: Bracewell



**AUCKLAND, June 1 (PTI):** Former New Zealand spinner John Bracewell believes charismatic batter Devon Conway has caught the "Kane Williamson bug" to keep learning from past mistakes and making rapid improvements in his batting technique.

Conway, a late entrant into the New Zealand setup at 29, took the cricketing world by storm by smashing a double hundred on Test debut against England in 2021 to become only the seventh batter to do so in the longest format.

Conway, now 31, also played a vital role for Chennai Super Kings in only his second IPL season, scoring six half-centuries and aggregating 672 runs with a highest of an unbeaten 92 and an average touching 52. His opening partnerships with Ruturaj Gaikwad formed the cornerstone of CSK's record-equalling fifth title. The all-format New Zealand cricketer was third on the IPL's Orange Cap list behind Shubman Gill and RCB's South African skipper Faf du Plessis.

"I think he's been an absolute magician in terms of his adaptability to all three formats, his skillset and his (growth)," Bracewell, who played 41 Tests garnering 102 wickets and 1000-plus runs, told Sen Radio.

"I like the way he's becoming a better cricketer all the time, so he's obviously caught the Kane

Williamson bug of being a learner, not a guy that actually just sits there and relies on being talented," said the 65-year-old.

Conway has so far amassed 1212 Test, 508 ODI and 632 T20I runs, and Bracewell believes the cricketer can rival the best in the business.

"His game is just continuing to progress and that's something that Kane Williamson had introduced into the New Zealand side along with (former wicketkeeper) BJ Watling.

"That's something that Devon Conway's picked up and moved forward with him taking it to another dimension."

Bracewell believes Conway will play a huge role during the ODI World Cup, scheduled to be held in India in October-November this year, given that Williamson would unlikely have recovered completely from an ACL injury he suffered in the IPL.

"He's one of a series of components, but he's certainly an important one," said Bracewell.

"One, that he knows those (Indian) conditions (and) two, that he's extremely adaptable in terms of now he's opening the batting in T20. So he has that adaptability to be able to move up and down the order and fit in, so that makes him a good replacement for somebody like Kane."

## We are used to the Dukes ball having practised with it during IPL, says Axar ahead of WTC final

**PORTSMOUTH, June 1 (PTI):** Switching from playing T20s to the longest format of the game is difficult but practising with the red ball through the IPL will help in the tough transition at the World Test Championship final against Australia, feels India all-rounder Axar Patel.

Most members of the Indian team head to the marquee event after playing T20 cricket in the IPL for over two months.

Additionally, while the SG balls are used to play the red-ball format in India, the Dukes ball will be used for the WTC final.

However, India are well prepared for the twin challenges. To familiarise themselves with the Dukes ball, which is used in English conditions, the 'Men in Blue' have been working with it.

"We knew about this before the start of the IPL. So even during the IPL, it was discussed that we will bowl with the red ball," Axar told ICC.

"We had red balls, so we were using them. You know when and how to play, how much time you have. This mental switch from white ball to red ball is obviously tough, but we have enough time," Axar added.

The left-arm spinner, however, said that the focus is on hitting the right spot irrespective of the ball used.

"We switch from white ball to red ball. It is a similar switch to go from SG to Dukes, you have to use your talent and skill. You have to execute your plan, your bowling rhythm. Irrespective of the ball, if you bowl a good ball at a good spot, it works."

"So, that's what we're doing. Since the match is in England, which is different from India, we



are planning what lines and lengths will work here. The same thing in practice, we are good to go."

The first batch of Indian players, including the likes of Virat Kohli and Axar, landed in London early last week and have been preparing for the final, scheduled to be held at The Oval from June 7 to 11.

"Those who did not qualify (for IPL Playoffs) got more time. So I don't think there will be many problems because we have had a good time to prepare."

"The difference is the Dukes ball remains shinier for longer. But during the IPL, we had ordered the ball, so we were practising with it and have gotten used to it," Axar said.

The Indian team will also have to quickly adapt to the relatively cooler conditions in England, having played the IPL in sweltering heat.

"We came after playing IPL, where it was 40-45 degrees in

India. After that it feels great here. We have taken out our winter clothes and are roaming around wearing jumpers. It's also a bit windy. Whenever we come to the UK, we enjoy the weather. It remains a little cool, there is no heat."

In stark contrast to India's spin-friendly pitches, the conditions in England are more suited to swing bowling.

"Obviously, the conditions in India and England are different. The fast bowlers have more of a role here. In India, spinners play a more important role," Axar said.

"The conditions are the same for both teams. In England, the wind assists swing bowling and offers good bounce if you bowl at the right spots."

"The team is getting together slowly, so the planning will go on. We'll leave the planning to our bowling coach."

## Sri Lanka set to unleash IPL star Pathirana ahead of World Cup qualifiers



**HAMBANTOTA (SRI LANKA), June 1 (AP):** Sri Lanka has unleashed some special bowling talents ahead of big events over the years.

In the case of Lasith Malinga, he was thrown into the deep end during a so-called Top End tour of Australia in 2004. In the case of Ajantha Mendis, he was introduced just before the Asia Cup and he started with six wickets against India in the final as Sri Lanka clinched the trophy in 2008.

The same blueprint is to be followed with 20-year-old Matheesha Pathirana, who will make his ODI debut in the three-match series against Afghanistan that gets underway on Friday.

Although Pathirana has played just one Twenty20 International, he is already a star after performing a key role for Chennai in the Super Kings' run to a record fifth Indian Premier League title.

Pathirana bowls with a unique round-arm action and Sri Lankans hope that he'll be quite a handful for batters during the World Cup qualifiers later this month in Zimbabwe. Sri Lanka, which won the 1996 World Cup title and has twice been runner-up, needs to go through qualifying because of its slide down the International Cricket Council rankings in the one-day format.

Afghanistan has no such issues after qualifying automatically for the showpiece event later this year in India.

Bowling is Afghanistan's strength, with three Afghan players featuring in the list of top 10 bowlers in official ICC rankings. Leg-spinner Rashid Khan will miss the first two games because of a lower-back injury, but off-spinners Mujeeb Ur Rahman and Mohammad Nabi will find the conditions in Hambantota to their liking.

Afghanistan also has left-arm wrist spinner Noor Ahmed, who was quite a handful for Gujarat Titans during the IPL.

Although bowling is the team's strong point, Afghanistan

also some solid batting.

Ibrahim Zadran showcased that he is a star in the making during the ICC Under-19 World Cup and since graduating to the senior side, he has smashed three centuries in just eight one-dayers. That includes a career-best 162, the highest score by an Afghan in ODIs.

Friday's series-opener will be the first international to be staged at Hambantota in more than three years.

The series was hastily arranged after Sri Lanka failed to automatically qualify for the World Cup, and will provide an opportunity for the selectors to take a final look at some of the players before they submit the squad to the ICC before the June 10 deadline.

Sri Lanka has recalled test captain Dimuth Karunaratne to the squad. Karunaratne was fired as ODI captain and dropped from the squad in 2021. However, with the batting unit not able to utilize the full quota of 50 overs often enough, the need for Karunaratne's stable presence has been felt.

The hosts also have recalled fast bowler Dushmantha Chameera, who is returning after seven months following ankle surgery.

**Squads:**  
**Sri Lanka:** Dasun Shanaka (captain), Kusal Mendis (vice-captain), Pathum Nissanka, Dimuth Karunaratne, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Angelo Mathews, Dhananjaya de Silva, Charith Asalanka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Maheesh Theekshana, Dushan Hemantha, Chamika Karunaratne, Dushmantha Chameera, Matheesha Pathirana, Lahiru Kumara, Kasun Rajitha.

**Afghanistan:** Hashmatullah Shahidi (captain), Rahmat Shah (vice-captain), Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Ibrahim Zadran, Riaz Hassan, Najibullah Zadran, Mohammad Nabi, Ikram Alikhail, Azmatullah Omarzai, Rashid Khan, Mujib ur Rahman, Noor Ahmed, Abdul Rahman, Fazal Haq Farooqi, Farid Ahmad Malik.

## Retired F1 champ Vettel to help lead new German team in Ellison's SailGP

**DUSSELDORF, June 1 (AP):** Retired four-time Formula One champion Sebastian Vettel and double Olympic sailing bronze medalist Erik Heil will help lead the new Germany SailGP Team in tech tycoon Larry Ellison's global league.

Vettel will be a co-investor alongside team owner Thomas Reidel and both will take an active role in the management and performance of the team. Heil will steer the team's 50-foot foiling catamaran.

Germany becomes the 10th team in SailGP, which begins its fourth season on June 16-17 with the Rolex United States Sail Grand Prix at Navy Pier in Chicago.

"I see a lot of potential as SailGP starts its fourth season and for the first time with a German team," Vettel said. "Parallels between sailors and Formula 1 have long existed. The boats are fascinating and the speeds on the water are incredibly high. The races are exciting and I am happy to be close to them with a motivated group of young sailors. In addition, the series not only uses wind power but also strives to set new standards in sustainability in sports."

## It's a mindset thing: Hayden on India's ICC title drought, advises them to forget about outcome in WTC final

**NEW DELHI, June 1 (PTI):** The great Matthew Hayden reckons India's title drought in ICC events in the past decade has to come down to the players' mindset as skill was never an issue and has advised them to "forget about the outcome" going into the World Test Championship final against Australia.

India's last ICC title came under the leadership of M S Dhoni back in 2013 and since then the team has fallen short in high pressure knock-out games including the 2017 Champions Trophy final against Pakistan, 2019 ODI World Cup semifinal versus New Zealand and more recently the T20 World Cup semifinal against England last year.

In the inaugural WTC final two years ago, India finished runners-up to New Zealand.

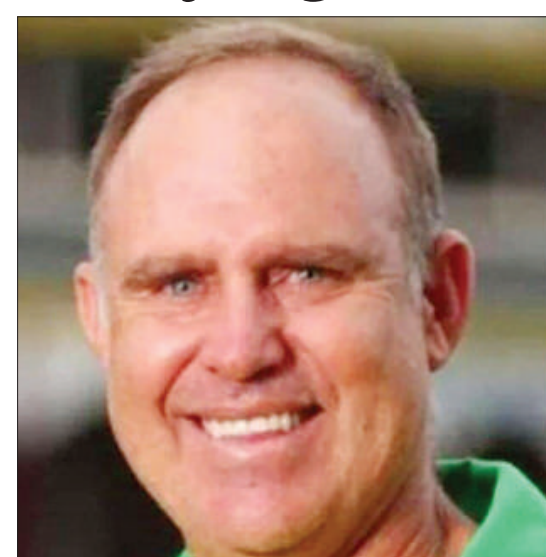
In terms of the financial and talent resources, India have been the sport's powerhouse for long but the big titles have eluded them.

Can they turn it around against Australia at The Oval in the final from June 7?

"It's certainly not a question of skill. So, it has to be a question of just the opportunity and the mindset going in. I mean, cricket is life here, it is the DNA of sport and has no other competitors," Hayden, an important member of the all-conquering Australian team of 2000s, told PTI in an interview.

Cricket's popularity in India is unmatched and therefore it creates more pressure around the players, said Hayden.

"In Australia I could walk down the street and largely be unrecognised, especially with this terrible beard and hat on (laughs). But it's also got great competitive sports besides cricket. Rugby, football, our watersports, surfing, outdoor sports, here in India it's very insular and there's a lot of pressure."



"It's the same with Pakistan cricket as well. There is one sport and it is cricket so it's a mindset thing."

"Being cautious about looking for the scoreboard and looking for the titles and just playing and being a part of process, something when you look at franchise setups, Gujarat Titans have done really well this year and CSK have done very well. Mumbai Indians as well believe in a certain process."

"So, that would be my advice to Indian cricket to forget the outcomes, but buy into the process," said one of the most destructive openers of his generation.

Hayden believes either side doesn't enjoy an advantage going into the final but the IPL players from both



teams would be well prepared. Majority of India's squad members played in the IPL while only three from Australia were part of the two month long tournament.

"The Test championship puts context to Test cricket relevance. And you've got two of the greatest nations in cricket, head to head in India and Australia. Being at The Oval, it's a good opportunity for it to be a venue which doesn't necessarily favour one particular side or the other."

"It's by tradition England's bounciest, more even surfaces. It doesn't favour the spinners, doesn't really favour the seamers so it's quite a neutral venue. It's

nice to see them playing in that venue in particular, had it been at the Lord's, Australia would have had a huge advantage there," he said.

For someone like Cameron Green, a maiden IPL season was good preparation for the high stakes WTC final, said Hayden.

"Don't pay too much mind to the preparation of either nation. I don't sense that there's a great disadvantage in playing IPL cricket as opposed to playing county cricket."

"The level is so extreme in high performance at IPL level. Take someone like a Cameron Green for example. He's had a bumper for a season for Mumbai Indians."

"It's a no brainer whether he is playing here or wherever he's actually playing in county cricket or wherever. He's exposed to the highest level of sport and if anything, I think there may be a slight advantage for the guys that have been playing that higher level (IPL)."

"The mix of playing high performance cricket at IPL now going to match specific venue training, is excellent preparation," said Hayden when asked about both teams not playing a warm-up game ahead of WTC title clash.

The absence of the dashing Rishabh Pant, who is recovering from injuries sustained in a car accident in December, leaves a big void in India's Test eleven, said Hayden, who is backing Ishan Kishan to don the wicketkeeping gloves instead of K S Bharat.

"One of the big losses to Indian cricket right now is Rishabh Pant. If I was an Indian selector, I certainly go with the more dynamic wicketkeeper batter Ishan Kishan, he also adds that bit of swagger to the batting line up and in the fielding unit as well."