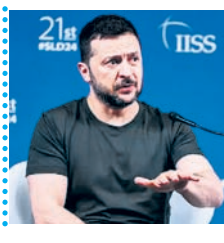




Ignorance is bliss
Actor Urvashi Rautela, frequently trolled on social media, believes ignoring trolls is the best approach

LEISURE | P2



Asia security conference
Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's unscheduled appearance at Asia's biggest security conference dominates proceedings

INTERNATIONAL | P10



FDI inflows drop
Foreign direct investment inflows into India in 2023-24 contracts by about 3.5 per cent due to global economic uncertainties

BUSINESS | P11



Impressive victory
Continuing his rich vein of form R Praggnanandhaa defeats World No. 2 Fabiano Caruana at the Norway Chess tournament

SPORTS | P12

SHORT TAKES

Cracker explosion toll mounts to 13

Bhubaneswar: With the death of two more patients while undergoing treatment Sunday, the death toll in the explosion of a stockpile of firecrackers in Puri rose to 13, a senior official said. Seventeen people are currently undergoing treatment in various hospitals in Puri, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. Altogether 30 people were injured in the explosion that happened during Lord Jagannath's 'Chandan Yatra', a ritual, on the night of May 29. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had ordered an inquiry into the accident and announced an ex gratia of ₹4 lakh to the next of kin of each deceased.

P3

Red rebels abduct doc in Malkangiri

Malkangiri/Kalimela: A doctor posted at Kalimela CHC in Malkangiri district was allegedly kidnapped by Maoists from his official residence, late Saturday night. The physician identified as Amlan Kumar Bhoi is a native of Kandhamal district who joined the hospital five months back. The matter came to the fore after the authorities of Kalimela CHC lodged a complaint at the Kalimela police station. Some handwritten posters highlighting various problems of the hospital with CPI (Maoist) written on it were found inside his official quarters, leading to the suspicion.

P5

ECI to hold press conference today

New Delhi: The Election Commission of India will hold a press conference Monday, a day before the counting of votes polled in the Lok Sabha polls. This is perhaps for the first time the poll panel has convened a presser on the conclusion of polls. "Press conference by Election Commission of India on General Elections 2024," the media invite by the EC said. Till the 2019 parliamentary polls, deputy election commissioners used to hold media briefings after each phase of polls, but the practice has been done away with.

Girl raped, killed as parents visit booth

Baripada: A man allegedly raped a seven-year-old girl and killed her when she was alone at home as her parents went to cast their votes, police said Sunday. The incident happened at a village in Kulliana police station area in Mayurbhanj district Saturday, they said. The 23-year-old man went to the girl's house, and took her to near a river where he allegedly raped her and then strangled her to death, they added. Villagers found the body of the girl and caught the accused. They later handed him to the police.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Please wait for a couple of hours more, sir. You can't stake the claim on the basis of exit poll results

WEATHER

BBSR	CTC
Max Temp 38.3°C	36.0°C
Min Temp 29.3°C	28.4°C
Humidity 84%	84%
Rainfall Nil	Nil

FORECAST
Partly cloudy sky with possibility of lightning



WATER WOES: People collect drinking water from a tanker of Delhi Jal Board at a slum in East Delhi Sunday as the national capital reels under severe water shortage.

NHAI hikes tolls across NHs by 5%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, June 2: Motorists using expressways will have to shell out more from Monday as the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has decided to hike tolls across the country by an average of 5 per cent. The annual revision of highway user fee, which is expected to be in the range of average 5 per cent, was earlier to come into effect April 1. But the hike was deferred due to the Lok Sabha elections. "The new user fee will come into effect from June 3, 2024," a senior NHAI official said Sunday. The change in toll fee is part of an annual exercise to revise the rates that are linked to the changes in the wholesale price index (CPI)-based inflation. There are around 855 user fee plazas on the national highway network on which user fee is levied as per the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008. Out of these, around 675 are public-funded fee plazas and 180 are operated by concessionaires.

SKM sweeps Sikkim; BJP retains Arunachal

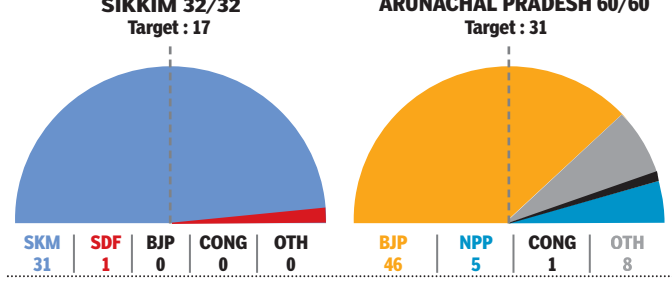
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gangtok/Itanagar, June 2: Both the Himalayan states -- Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh -- which went to Assembly polls April 19, re-elected incumbents to their Houses with landslide wins as votes were counted Sunday.

Led by its president and CM Prem Singh Tamang, the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) Sunday returned to power in Sikkim for the second consecutive term by a sweeping victory, winning 31 seats in the 32-member assembly. Tamang won from two seats, and his party bagged 58.38 per cent of the votes polled. The SKM had won 17 seats in the 2019 assembly polls.

The opposition Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF), which ruled the state for 25 years in a row till 2019, could manage to secure only one seat, while its president and former CM Pawan Kumar Chamling, who is Tamang's mentor-turned-adversary, lost in the two seats he contested. The 73-year-old eight-term legislator will not be seen in the assembly for the first time since 1985.

ASSEMBLY POLLS



The BJP contested in 31 assembly seats but failed to win even a single one in Sikkim where it had 12 members in the outgoing House. The BJP could secure only 5.18 per cent of the votes in the Himalayan state. Like the BJP, the Congress also failed to open its account and secured a paltry vote share of 0.32 per cent which is even less than that of NOTA (0.99 per cent).

PM Narendra Modi hailed Tamang and the SKM for the victory. "Congratulations to SKM and CM @PSTamangGolya for their victory in the Sikkim Assembly Elections 2024. I look forward to working with the State Government to further the progress of Sikkim in the coming

times," Modi said in a post on X. Responding to the Prime Minister's post, Tamang thanked him. "Your unwavering support has been a driving force for us, and we look forward to your continued guidance and blessings," Tamang replied on X.

In Arunachal Pradesh, the BJP won for the third time in a row and bettered its tally in the House bagging four more seats compared to 2019 as it secured 46 seats in the 60-member assembly.

In sweeping the assembly elections, the BJP decimated the Opposition parties, especially the Congress which was relegated to the fifth position with only one seat after NPP (5), NCP (3) and PPA (2). Three seats went

to Independent candidates.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu asserted that the momentum of what happened in the 'Land of the rising sun', a sobriquet for Arunachal Pradesh, will spread to other parts of the country June 4 when votes for the Lok Sabha elections will be counted. "This is a historic occasion for the BJP and entire Arunachal Pradesh. The people of Arunachal Pradesh have declared that they want BJP to stay in power for the next five years. This time, the mandate is more than what we got in 2019. In the 2019 Assembly polls, BJP won 41 seats, while we have won 46 seats this time," Khandu told PTI Video.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the people of Arunachal Pradesh for the landslide win.

"Thank you Arunachal Pradesh! The people of this wonderful state have given an unequivocal mandate to politics of development. My gratitude to them for reposing their faith in @BJP4Arunachal yet again. Our Party will keep working with even greater vigour for the state's growth," Modi said in a post on X.

Kejriwal surrenders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 2: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Sunday surrendered at the Bihar jail here after his interim bail granted by the Supreme Court in the excise policy-linked money laundering case ended June 1.

He was granted the relief by the top court for campaigning in the Lok Sabha elections.

Before surrendering, Kejriwal paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi at the Raj Ghat, offered prayers at the Hanuman temple in Connaught Place and addressed AAP leaders and workers at the party office.

During his address, Kejriwal said, "I am going back to jail not because I was involved in corruption but because I raised voice against dictatorship."

"I was given a 21-day (relief) by the Supreme Court. These 21 days were unforgettable. I did not waste even a minute. I campaigned for saving the country. The AAP is not important, it is secondary. The country comes first," he said.

Kejriwal also asserted that all exit polls predicting a third term for the BJP-led NDA at the Centre were "fake".

Exit polls Saturday predicted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will retain power for a third straight term, with the NDA expected to win a big majority in the polls. "They are not forming gov-



ernment on June 4. These exit polls are mind games to drive you into depression," Kejriwal told AAP workers and leaders.

Meanwhile, a court here sent Kejriwal to judicial custody till June 5.

Duty judge Sanjeev Aggarwal passed the order after the chief minister was produced before the court through video conference after surrendering at Tihar jail.

The judge passed the order on an application filed by the Enforcement Directorate, seeking extension of judicial custody by 14 days.

The application was moved by the ED May 20 while Kejriwal was out on interim bail. The court sent Kejriwal to judicial custody till June 5, noting that the judge concerned was scheduled to pass an order on his interim bail plea on health grounds on that day.

Dragon lands on moon's far side to fly back samples

THE SUCCESSFUL MISSION IS CHINA'S SECOND ON THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON, A REGION NO OTHER COUNTRY HAS REACHED

REUTERS

Beijing, June 2: China landed an uncrewed spacecraft on the far side of the moon Sunday, overcoming a key hurdle in its landmark mission to retrieve the world's first rock and soil samples from the dark lunar hemisphere.

The landing elevates China's space power status in a global rush to the moon, where coun-

tries including the United States are hoping to exploit lunar minerals to sustain long-term astronaut missions and moon bases within the next decade.

The Chang'e-6 craft, equipped with an array of tools and its own launcher, touched down in a gigantic impact crater called the South Pole-Aitken Basin on the moon's space-facing side at 6:23am Beijing time (2223 GMT), the China National Space Administration said.

The mission involves many engineering innovations, high risks and great difficulty, the agency said in a statement on its website. The payloads carried by the Chang'e-6 lander will work as planned and carry out scientific exploration missions.

The successful mission is China's second on the far side of the moon, a region no other



country has reached. The side of the moon perpetually facing away from the Earth is dotted with deep and dark craters, making communications and robotic landing operations more challenging.

Given these challenges, lunar and space experts involved in

reaching the lunar vicinity roughly a week later before tightening its orbit in preparation for a landing.

Chang'e-6 marks the world's third lunar landing this year: Japan's SLIM lander touched down in January, followed the next month by a lander from US startup Intuitive Machines.

The other countries that have sent spacecraft to Earth's nearest neighbour are the then-Soviet Union and India. The United States is the only country to have landed humans on the moon, starting in 1969.

SAMPLING THE MOON

Using a scoop and drill, the Chang'e-6 lander will aim to collect 2 kg of lunar material over two days and bring it back to Earth.

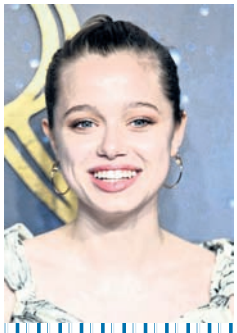
The samples will be trans-

ferred to a rocket booster atop the lander, which will launch back into space, tag up with another spacecraft in lunar orbit and return, with a landing in China's Inner Mongolia region expected around June 25.

If all goes as planned, the mission will provide China with a pristine record of the moon's 4.5 billion-year history and yield new clues on the solar system's formation. It will also allow for an unprecedented comparison between the dark, unexplored region with the moon's better understood Earth-facing side.

China's lunar strategy includes its first astronaut landing around 2030 in a programme that counts Russia as a partner. In 2020 China conducted its first lunar sample return mission with Chang'e-5, retrieving samples from the moon's nearer side.

leisure



SHILOH HIRED HER OWN LAWYER TO DROP FATHER'S SURNAME

Actors Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt's daughter Shiloh took it upon herself to change her last name. A source close to the matter said that the 18-year-old filed to drop Pitt from her surname, which would make her legal name Shiloh Jolie, and hired her own attorney for the process, reports *People magazine*.

JESSICA MADSEN REVEALS SHE'S IN LOVE WITH A WOMAN

Actress Jessica Madsen, who is known for her work in the streaming series *Bridgerton*, has opened up about her identity and her love life. In a heartfelt post celebrating the start of Pride Month, the actress shared that she is 'in love with a woman, loud about it, and proud about it.'



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL \$5181

ARIES
If you are aiming to marry soon, you can start making preparations today. However, before you take the final decision, it would be better to look at both sides of the coin, advises Ganesh.

TAURUS
This is one of those dreadful days when you could be unduly touchy and short tempered, fears Ganesh. Don't go around getting into fights and quarrels with anyone who seems unfriendly or ill mannered. You will only end up in spoiling some healthy relationships.

GEMINI
It will not be hard for you to complete your tasks successfully and without any delays or obstacles in your path, only if you first seek to fully understand and acquire the learning required to perform it. The fruits of your labour will keep you happy and satisfied, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Dame Luck will patronise you today. You will gain from land, house or building trade. You will get total support and co-operation from bosses and colleagues in the office. Ganesh indicates it as a very profitable day for you.

LEO
You will be very emotional and sentimental today. Your ego prevents you from expressing your true feelings at times. You need to keep this in mind when attempting to communicate with your beloved. It is a good day for romance, and for those seeking love, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Ganesh foretells that you will start off on a long, arduous path to success. Some tough work will play a vital role in your progress. Don't cut corners, and your labours will pay rich dividends and you will reap due rewards. Some opportunities are best left alone as they involve too much risk.

LIBRA
Lady Luck smiles on you today. With all the good fortune on your side, it's assured to be a day when financial gains come your way, especially if you are in the banking business. Agreed everything is going your way today, but be careful not to let your emotions cloud your reasoning and slow you down. Don your rational hat and lower your expectations a little. It never hurts to want less, especially since it is saves you from disappointments later on, advises Ganesh.

SCORPIO
There are strong indications that today you will be receptive and sensitive towards the needs of other people. Negative vibes will disrupt your thinking, and you will rely on the company of close friends to keep you in good cheer. Do not succumb to the pessimism that might cloud your thought today as it is only a passing phase, advises Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
The rewards of hard labour will be sweet, so start off by unwinding with some fun today. Ganesh sees quality time being spent with friends and family. All in all, a fun day.

CAPRICORN
Despite repeated failures, very few realise that the key to success is in having the patience of a saint. Vexation invariably leads to an outburst which, in turn, can ruin your reputation and future prospects in innumerable ways. Today, Ganesh advises you to keep your calm and smile back even if faced with an adverse situation. Doing as directed may help you overcome troubles and take the right decisions.

AQUARIUS
Be sure of your strengths and decisions, and Ganesh guarantees you success. You don't care what others think about you, but don't be so indifferent that you ignore their choices, preferences and comforts completely. The smile of your sweetheart will work like a charm and you will forget all your worries, feels Ganesh.

PISCES
Ganesh warns that your expenses could be twice as much as your income or profit. You need to be more careful in money matters. It is not an auspicious day for any new work, new deal or any new beginnings. Ganesh indicates that things will look up after two days or so.



Mumbai: Actress Urvashi Rautela, who has often been heavily trolled on social media, says the best way to handle it is by not dealing with it at all.

Urvashi's mantra to deal with trolls

"Well, the best way to deal with trolling is to not deal with it at all. That's what I feel," Urvashi told *IANS* when asked how she deals with all the trolling.

The actress added, "Also, given the kind of busy, hectic schedule that I have, I genuinely have no time to waste and ponder over things that's not relevant or constructive to me. So, there's no question of feeling trolled when you aren't even paying attention to it. So yes, that's how I deal with it."

Urvashi, who was in the national capital for a fashion show where she walked as the showstopper, will next be seen in the film *JNU: Jahangir National University*. Talking about her upcoming film, she said, "I play a JNU student in the film. Actually, in real life, my father, since my school days, has wanted me to attend JNU. So it's like a dream coming true, though on screen."

On the work front, Urvashi has Telugu film *NBK109* in her kitty. *IANS*



Rajkumar shares his difficult days

Mumbai: Actor Rajkumar Rao, in a recent interview, shared that breaking into the Hindi film industry wasn't easy, and the actor is happy he gets to do films for a living as he had no plan B.

The FTII graduate made his debut in 2010 with a small appearance in Ram Gopal Varma's *Rann* and later appeared as a leading man in Dibakar Banerjee's *Love Sex Aur Dhokha* the same year.

"My obstacle was to get that first film and that first job, and it took around two years. Every day I would go out looking for work, and it wasn't easy. But there was no plan B. This was the only thing I was meant to do and supposed to do. And I'm doing it every day," said the *Newton* actor.

"Today, we are fortunate that we are getting to do the kind of films we want to do and work with these makers. The only obstacles would be for these films (mid-budget content-driven) to reach out there and for people to come to theatres, so that we can make many more films like this and tell these beautiful stories again and again," he said.

On the work front, Rajkumar will be seen next in *Stree 2*. *AGENCIES*

Janhvi on her foray into South cinema

Mumbai: Working in the south film industry makes her feel closer to her late superstar mother Sridevi, said actor Janhvi Kapoor, who is set to make her Telugu cinema debut with Jr. NTR in *Devvara*. She will also star in another Telugu film with Ram Charan in his 16th movie.

"Somehow it makes me feel closer to my mom to be in that environment, as well as to hear and speak in that language. It just felt like the right time. I felt I was gravitating towards it. Mom has such a history with the families of NTR sir and Ram Charan sir, it's my honour that I'm able to work with both of these extremely talented actors," the actress, whose latest release is *Mr & Mrs Mahi*, told *PTI*.

"I've always been a fan of their cinema. I love the conviction with which they make films and the charisma that the actors hold. Not that we don't have charisma here, but there's a swagger in the way they portray their heroes, they romanticise their heroines. There's a specific flavour to Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam cinema; they are all so individual," she said.

"Dad has made so many re-makes, so a big activity at home would be to watch Tamil and Telugu films. He was obsessed with buying their rights. It's been a big part of my upbringing to watch these films," she said, referring to her producer-father Boney Kapoor's filmography. *PTI*

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Ridhima: I want to be in news for right reasons

Mumbai: Reacting to the buzz that she is getting married to cricketer Shubman Gill in December 2024, TV actress Ridhima Pandit made it clear that the claim is untrue in a recent video she shared. Saturday, she once again took to Instagram Stories to reflect on the recent wedding rumours.

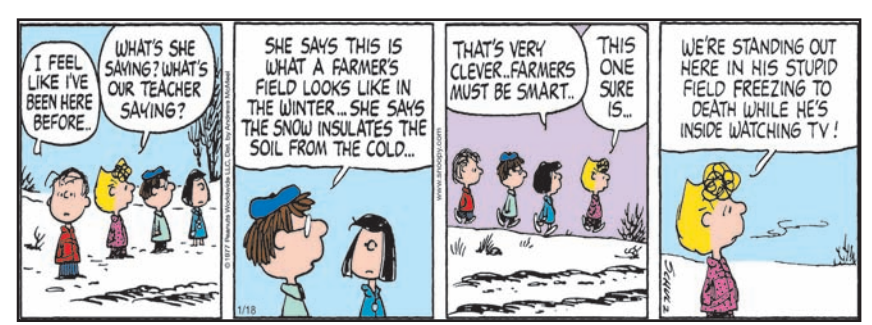
Resharing an Instagram post, she wrote, "After yesterday (Friday) and the whole of this morning (Saturday), I am not sure if it is a wise idea to confirm the same, but yes, I might not look like a private person, but I am." The original post that she shared read, "Private people know how to post on social media regularly and still live a life you don't know anything about."

Further reflecting on the recent Shubman Gill wedding rumours, she wrote, "My milestones are something that I will always, always share with you all. I would never hide it because, why? Rumours are essentially someone's figment of imagination. I don't wish to entertain them. I always want to be in the news for the right reasons, and my audiences know that. So, thank you for all the love. Ted talk over and out."

Her recent Instagram posts come after reports claimed that the actress would marry Shubman Gill in December. *AGENCIES*



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

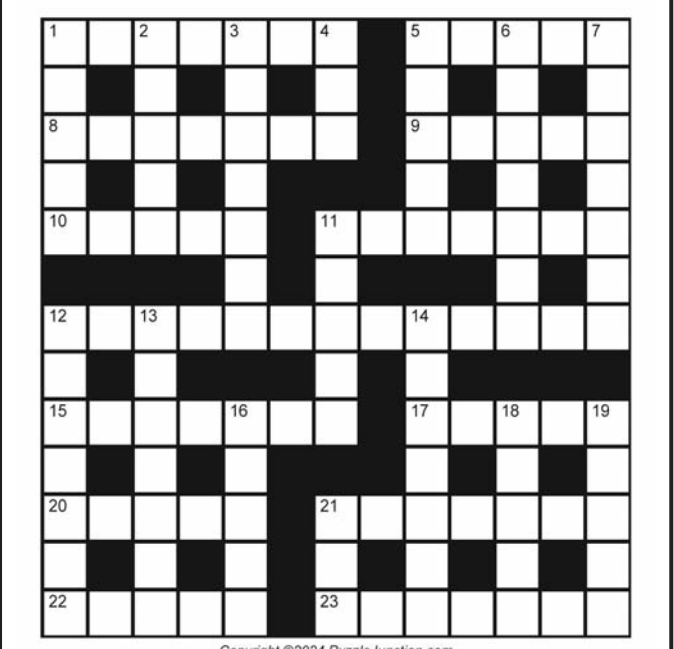


BREVITY



FUN post

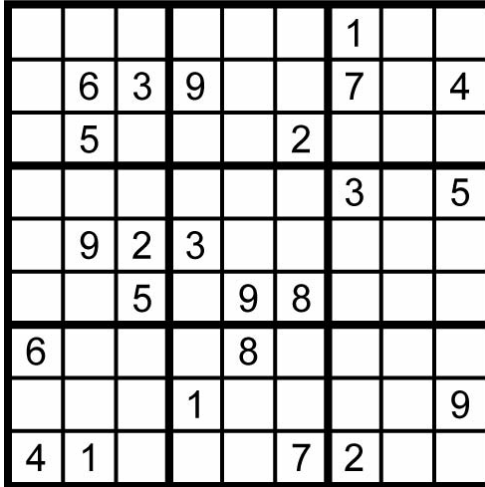
CROSSWORD



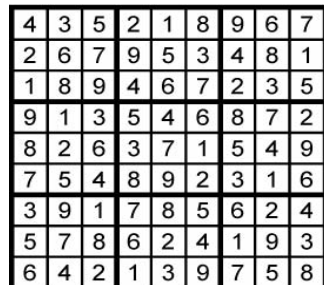
- Across**
- 1 Good manners
 - 5 Hotel employees
 - 8 Degeneration, as of muscles
 - 9 Compadre
 - 10 Fine fiddle
 - 11 Simple wind instrument
 - 12 Anthony Quinn's big hit (5,3,5)
 - 15 Oath
 - 17 Like some relationships
 - 20 Decennium parts
 - 21 Friendly
 - 22 Lustrous fabric
 - 23 Beryl variety
- Down**
- 1 Literary genre
 - 2 Around that date
 - 3 Copy
 - 4 Word of possibility
 - 5 Coffee shop order
 - 6 Put on a pedestal
 - 7 High-flying singer
 - 11 Earthy colour
 - 12 Gentle breezes
 - 13 Strong reprimand (4,3)
 - 14 African ruminant
 - 16 "Peer Gynt" dramatist
 - 18 Deadly snake
 - 19 Give way
 - 21 Fire truck item

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



Officials from the Department of Odia Language and Culture pay tributes to Dr Prana Krushna Parija on his 46th death anniversary by garlanding a statue of the former Vice Chancellor in Utkal University campus, Sunday

downtown

Will win at least 12 LS, 110 Assly seats: Patra



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 2: The ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Sunday asserted that the party would form the government in Odisha with a two-thirds majority by winning at least 110 of the 147 Assembly constituencies in the state.

The party said it would bag at least 12 of the 21 Lok Sabha seats in the eastern state.

Rejecting exit polls that predicted that the BJP would win 15 Lok Sabha seats in Odisha, the BJD said that exit polls for the state have proved to be wrong in 2014 and 2019 elections and the trend would continue this time as well.

"We are well poised to retain power in the state with a two-thirds majority in the Assembly. Like in 2014 and 2019, this time as well the exit polls will be proved wrong," BJD spokesper-

Exit polls for the state have proved to be wrong in 2014 and 2019 elections and the trend would continue this time as well

SASMIT PATRA | BJD LEADER

son Sasmit Patra said.

"Based on our surveys, analysis and feedback from the ground level, we expect to win at least 12 Lok Sabha seats and 110 seats in the Assembly... we will form a strong and stable government in the state," he said.

Exit polls have awarded 15 seats to BJP and five to BJD in Odisha.

BJD MLA Padmanabh Behera said, "Exit polls are not exact results. We will perform very well and form the government in the state. Naveen Patnaik will take oath as the chief minister June

9." BJD MP Manas Mangaraj said in an X post, "No matter what exit polls are, I am confident that the public has approved our honesty, hard work and dedication."

Senior Congress leader and MLA Taraprasad Bahinipati said that the party will improve its performance and is likely to win four to five Lok Sabha seats in the state.

Congress had won nine Assembly seats and one Lok Sabha seat in 2019.

Senior BJP leader and Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan claimed that the exit polls have reflected the reality and that the BJP will win 15 Lok Sabha seats in the state.

BJP state president Manmohan Samal said, "People of Odisha want a change and there will be a change in the government."

In 2019, exit polls had predicted 12-15 Lok Sabha seats for the BJP and 6-8 for BJD, whereas the saffron party had won eight seats and the ruling party in the state had bagged 12.

In 2014, while exit polls had predicted 13 seats for BJD and five for BJP, the saffron party had bagged only one while the ruling party in the state had won 30 seats.



MEN AT WORK: Maharana servitors busy making the axle of chariots ahead of the Rath Yatra in Puri, Sunday.

OP PHOTO

SUMMER SOLACE

Umbrellas for needy in City

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 2: In an attempt to provide some relief to the needy people from the sweltering heatwave conditions, Odia Film and Television Directors' Association in association with Art of Giving distributed umbrellas among them here, Sunday.

The novel initiative of distributing umbrellas began at 10am and culminated at 2pm. Association members and film directors including Sabyasachi Mohapatra, Himanshu Khatua, Sudhanshu Mohan Sahoo, Bobby Islam, Dilip Panda, Sailendra Parida, Jyoti Das, Shakti Baral, Pradeep Das, Jyoti Das, Ajay Singh and others distributed around 1,000 umbrellas to



the people. "Apart from entertaining the audience, we also have the responsibility to help those who are in need and in this hot weather an umbrella will help people to

stay safe from the scorching heat," said director Sabyasachi Mohapatra.

The association will continue to organise such events in coming days and provide 'jala chha-

tra' (water kiosk) facilities in Puri during Rath Yatra.

Meanwhile, despite the advancement of Southwest Monsoon into some more parts of south India, heatwave condition is very likely to prevail at one or two places over some districts in Odisha during the next three days, India Meteorological Department's regional centre predicted Sunday.

The state government had earlier directed health facilities at different levels to stay in total readiness for dealing with heat-related cases. The state recorded several sunstroke deaths recently due to the extreme heatwave conditions.

Later in the evening, the Capital city received heavy rain.

Exit polls have no value: Mamata Banerjee

AGENCIES

Kolkata, June 2: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Sunday said the exit poll predictions were not consistent with the ground reality as they were "manufactured at home" two months back.

She claimed that such exit polls have no value, and criticised the press for showing them.

"We had seen how the exit

polls were conducted in 2016, 2019 and 2021. None of the predictions had turned out to be true," she said during an interview to a news channel.

"These exit polls were manufactured at home by some people two months back for the media consumption. They have no value," she added.

Banerjee said the response of the people at her rallies didn't corroborate the exit polls pre-

dictions. "The way BJP tried polarisation and spread false information that Muslims were taking away quotas of SC, ST and OBCs, I don't think Muslims will vote for BJP. And, I think the CPI(M) and Congress helped the BJP in West Bengal," she said.

Most of the exit polls have predicted that the BJP will get more seats than the TMC in the state.

4 detained in Puri cracker explosion; toll 13

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 2: The Puri police Sunday detained four persons in connection with the May 29 fire cracker explosion incident here, even as the death toll in the tragedy climbed to 13.

Superintendent of Police (SP), Puri, Pinak Mishra told Orissa POST that two injured persons succumbed during treatment Sunday, while 17 more are undergoing treatment. As per reports, the injured are receiving treatment at various hospitals in Puri, Cuttack and Bhubaneswar.

He said the police have detained four persons for questioning in connection with the case. They are mainly from a



godown in Chari Chhak area near Nimapara from where the crackers had been sourced.

"From their questioning, we are trying to ascertain the reason behind the accident," he said. The detainees are being questioned if the godown had the license to store and supply crackers, if the crackers were certified safe and did not cross their expiry date. Moreover, the police are questioning them over the safety protocols deemed to be followed during their transport and bursting.

"Also, we are trying to ascertain if the person who was bursting the crackers was trained enough to carry out the task," Mishra added.

A total of 30 people were injured in the explosion that occurred during Lord Jagannath's 'Chandan Yatra', a ritual, on

the night of May 29.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and BJP Puri Lok Sabha candidate Sambit Patra met family members of the deceased, Saturday evening.

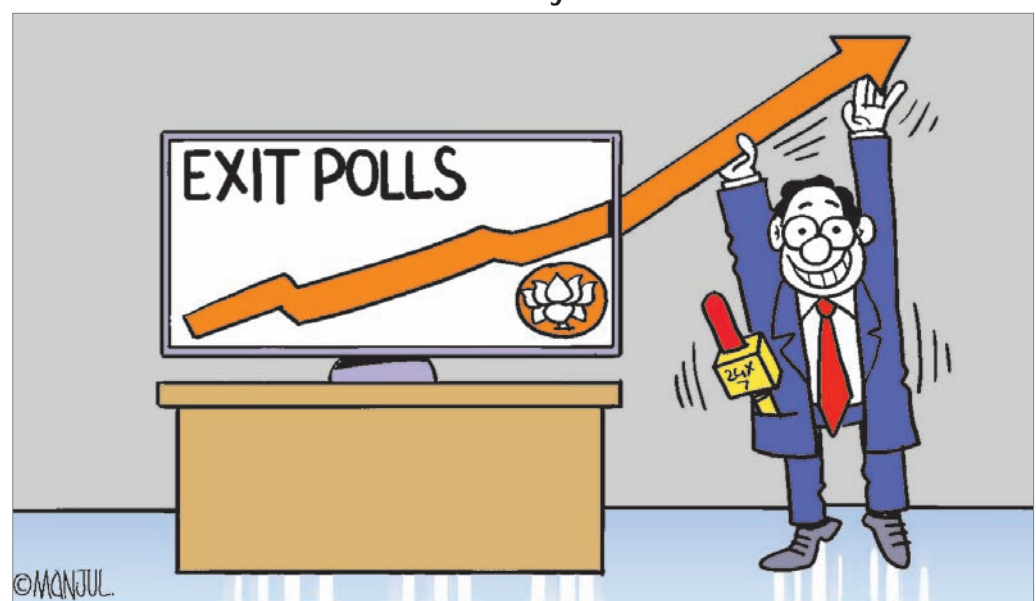
Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had ordered an inquiry into the accident and announced an ex-gratia of ₹4 lakh to the next of kin of each deceased.

The Puri collector has taken steps for the payment of ex-gratia, the official said.

The administrative-level probe by Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Satyabrata Sahu into the accident is presently underway.

The Puri police have registered a suo motu criminal case and are investigating the matter.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Delhi could become a barren desert, says High Court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 2: Taking note of the recent temperature spike to 52.3 degrees Celsius in the city, the Delhi High Court has observed that the national capital could become a barren desert if the present generation continues an apathetic view on deforestation.

Delhi's Mungeshpur area Wednesday logged a maximum temperature of 52.3 degrees Celsius, the highest ever recorded in the city.

"Judicial notice is taken of the fact that as recent as May 30, the official temperature recorded in Delhi was 52.3 degrees Celsius. It is not far to see the day when this city may be only a barren desert, in case the present generation continues an apathetic view on deforestation," Justice Tushar Rao Gedela said.

The High Court, which had earlier appointed its former judge Najmi Waziri as the chairperson of an internal departmental committee of city officials dealing with the protection



of forests in Delhi, was informed that Waziri was unable to perform his duties due to a lack of infrastructure.

"This court cannot countenance a situation where the chairperson (Justice Waziri) is unable to discharge the responsibilities on account of lack of an office space or a secretarial and support staff or even transportation. However, rather than directing the de-

partment (of Forest and Wildlife) to provide staff in a diverted capacity, it is considered appropriate to direct the department to pursue the matter in all earnest and in no case shall the approval be delayed beyond June 15," the court said.

As per a report of the chairperson of the committee filed through advocate R Arunadhri Iyer, the Delhi government was informed of the requirement

Delhi's Mungeshpur area Wednesday logged a maximum temperature of 52.3 degrees Celsius, the highest ever recorded in the city

of infrastructure, along with secretarial support staff and transportation which would be required for the chairperson to efficiently discharge his responsibilities.

The chief conservator of forests submitted that the approval for the requirements has already been put up to the minister concerned and thereafter, it is to be placed before the Cabinet and then to the lieutenant governor for final approval.

The amicus curiae appointed in the case submitted that once a judicial order was passed, the infrastructure and other facilities required for efficient administration and discharge of responsibilities by the chair-

person of the committee have to be complied with at the earliest.

The High Court said after the approval was granted by the competent authority, the infrastructure development should be completed within the next 15 days.

"Since the next date of hearing is already fixed for July 29, it is expected that all things and requirements of the chairperson and the committee shall be put in place and in full working condition, prior thereto," the court directed.

The court also accepted the suggestion of another amicus curiae to rename the committee and said that now, it should be referred to as the 'Special Empowered Committee' instead of the 'Internal Departmental Committee'.

"It is made clear once again that all the concerned officers of the concerned departments are directed to attend all the meetings as and when called for, except in special circumstances in which they are unable to attend so. However, the chair-

person be given prior intimation as to their inability to attend the particular meeting," the court said.

The court said the strict measures are only to ensure that the committee completes its responsibilities and references made to it, "keeping in view the worsening situation of climatic conditions in Delhi".

On December 21 last year, the HC directed the constitution of the committee consisting of the chief conservator of forests, the conservator of forests, the deputy conservator of forests (protecting and monitoring) and the DCF concerned for the preservation of deemed forests.

It had said that the committee would ensure that concrete steps are taken for the protection, preservation, reclamation and enhancement of forests, both protected and deemed.

It had directed the Delhi government to provide suitable and adequate office accommodation for the committee and to bear all the expenses of its functioning, including suitable remuneration.

Decomposed body found from drain

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 2: A 38-year-old man's decomposed body was found inside an under-construction drain near Naka Gate here, Bharatpur police said Sunday. Bharatpur inspector in-charge (IIC) Dinakrushna Mishra said the deceased was identified as Tutul Singh, a resident of Khandagiri area here. Singh, who worked as a daily wage, had left home two days ago following an argument with his family members.

His face had several injury marks when the body was recovered. "Preliminary investigations revealed that Singh died 48 hours ago," Mishra added. Locals noticed putrid smell emanating from drain in the early hours of Sunday following which they informed the police who reached the spot and recovered the body. Meanwhile, the IIC said the post-mortem report is awaited to ascertain the exact cause of death. The body was handed over to the family members in the evening after the autopsy was conducted, said Mishra.

Eight places record day temp at 40°C or above

Titilagarh town recorded the highest maximum temperature at 42.5 degrees Celsius



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 2: At least eight places in the state recorded maximum day temperatures at 40 degrees Celsius or above Sunday.

Titilagarh town recorded the highest maximum temperature at 42.5 degrees Celsius. It was followed by Bolangir and Sonepur each (42.3), Boudh (42.1) Bhawanipatna and Nuapada

each (40.5), Jharsuguda (40.4) and Sambalpur (40.0).

The highest maximum temperature of 46 degrees Celsius was recorded Saturday at Titilagarh. The lowest minimum temperature of 22 degrees Celsius was recorded at Nabarangpur in the plains of Odisha.

Odisha Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Sunday stated that as many as 42 sunstroke deaths were reported

May 30 and six out of them have been confirmed. Another six deaths were not due to sunstroke.

Meanwhile, an official communiqué issued by the SRC Sunday said that 99 alleged sunstroke death cases have been reported by the District Collectors in the last 72 hours. Of these 99 alleged cases, 20 cases have been confirmed by the District Collectors taking into account the post-mortem and joint probe. At the same time, it has been confirmed that two of the alleged reports were not due to sunstroke.

"As cumulative, during this summer a total of 141 alleged sunstroke death cases have been reported by the District Collectors of which it was confirmed that 26 cases were due to sunstroke, while eight deaths were due to other reasons," the release read.

Currently, 107 alleged cases are pending with the District Collectors for inquiry.



VIGILANT: Security personnel guarding strongroom at Ravenshaw University Mahanadi campus in Cuttack, Sunday, ahead of June 4 counting OP PHOTO

WORLD BICYCLE DAY

'Dedicated bicycle lanes need of the hour'

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 2: Dedicated bicycle lanes, well-maintained paths, and secure parking facilities are necessary in the Capital to encourage more people to choose cycling as a viable mode of transport, cyclists opine on the World Cycling Day to be observed June 3.

The cycling enthusiasts also said that cycling is a great means of transportation as it helps in reaching places without adding to air pollution.

"Bicycles are a sustainable mode of transportation. They are eco-friendly and great for exercise. Cycling every day can



improve heart health and muscle strength," Piyush Ranjan Rout, an avid cyclist who has been nominated by Amsterdam-based social enterprise, BYCS, as a Bicycle Mayor, said.

"As other cycling cities look to make it easier for people to pedal

bicycle, for commuting or just for fun, Bhubaneswar offers lessons in re-thinking transportation infrastructure beyond the hegemony of the car," he added.

Expressing his resentment, Santosh Kumar Rout, cyclist and executive member of

Bhubaneswar Cycling and Adventure Club (BCAC) said, "The increasing number of two-wheelers and four-wheelers in City leaves little space for cycles to move. Precious little was done to lay dedicated cycle tracks; no serious move was made to make marked cycling space on roads free from bikers."

Another cyclist, Asrujit Mohanty pointed out that lanes dedicated for cycling essential to promote this method of transportation among people. This, in turn, can lead to reduced dependence on private vehicles, resulting in less fuel consumption and lower carbon emissions.

OCSC holds Cosmetic 2024

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 2: Orissa Cosmetic Surgery Clinic (OCSC) hosted Cosmetic 2024, an event that served as a pivotal platform for discussions and workshops on various topics related to beauty and aesthetics here Sunday.

The gathering brought to-



gether experts, industry leaders, and enthusiasts from across different spectrum of dermatology, medicine, and beauty, all convened to delve into the evolving landscape of beauty industry in Odisha.

Director of Health Services Bijay Kumar Mohapatra graced the occasion as the chief guest. OCSC managing director Chidatmika Khatua extended a warm welcome to the attendees. Distinguished panelists included chairman of OCSC Akshaya Kumar Rout, cosmetology in-charge at OCSC Ruchi Gupta, plastic and cosmetic surgeon Jayant Kumar Dash and Laxmikant Mishra.

Enlightening presentations and engaging discussions by the panelists significantly contributed to the success of the event. Cosmetologist Pallishree Dalei and Monalisa Mohapatra, delivered the concluding note. A course on cosmetology approved by Skill India has also been launched.

'Stargazing' at Debrigarh Sanctuary creating buzz

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 2: Recently launched, Stargazing initiative by the Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary (DWS) is creating buzz among the Astrophiles and astronomy enthusiasts in and around the state. Community members at the DWS have been trained to identify stars and the constellations visible from the sanctuary, daily between 7pm to 7:30pm sessions for the Ecotourism visitors.

"In some of the places like in Ladakh and Uttarakhand, stargazing for public has already been started. This is for the first time such elaborate and systematic stargazing has been started in the state at Debrigarh Wildlife sanctuary," Anshu Prayagn Das, DFO Hirakud Wildlife Division said.

The visibility list includes Sirius - the brightest star in sky, Dhruv Tara or North Star, 'Saptarshi Mandal' constellation which is placed above Hirakud Reservoir and 'Ursa Major' constellation are some of the clearly visible stars and constellations from DWS. These stars have been photographed and framed with marked directions for easy identification by visitors.

"Since, most part of the sanctuary is covered with dense forest (around 353sqkm of DWS and 700sqkm of Hirakud Wetland) area without any human habitation, a big patch of the dark sky, away from city lights and free from light pollution helps for clear visibility



and easy identification of stars and constellations," Das added.

"Few planets like Jupiter can also be directly seen from the Sanctuary. Milky Way can be seen here during summers but cannot be viewed during winters whereas Mars and Venus can be visible during winters. Comets are seen round the year depending specific timeline. As horizon of sky is clearly visible from Hirakud, sunset and moonrise offer some of the picturesque view," Das said.

Soft lights without any reflection towards sky have been put in the whole campus around Debrigarh Ecotourism for easy sighting of stars.

We have made six new stargazing rooms, with glass roofs for viewing star movements at night in Debrigarh Nature Camp. Booking for same has started from May. Visitors have already started coming in and experiencing the new initiative. The photo frames displayed on the walls inside the rooms and at different places, have been photographed by a few astro-photographers from the state. We have also placed books related to stargazing in our library for generating curiosity among children and adults. A telescope is also placed for use by experts, said Das.

CDS Gen Chauhan visits INS Chilka

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 2: Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan visited INS Chilka here recently. INS Chilka is the premier ab-initio training establishment of Indian Navy for Agniveers.

Chauhan was briefed on the pivotal role by INS Chilka in shaping future sea warriors. In addition, he was given an overview of the training activities and analysis of the Agniveer



batches who received training at INS Chilka.

During his visit, Chauhan interacted with the Agniveers and answered their queries. Speaking on the occasion, he said, "The implementation of 'Agnipath Scheme' has been one of the major reforms towards maintaining a youthful profile in the services and nation-building by providing skilled, disciplined and motivated youth."

He exhorted the Agniveers to focus on training and to become technologically proficient sea warriors.

Chauhan took a short tour of the training infrastructure for Agniveers and commented the efforts by the faculties for imparting high standards of training and shaping the next generation of sea warriors.



REGALING POSE: Artistes perform on the occasion of 32th Nrutyanjali Mahotsav at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Sunday OP PHOTO

Psychotherapy better treatment for depression than drugs

Antidepressants, known as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), and popular anti-anxiety medication benzodiazepines can offer a sense of hope to those suffering with debilitating mental health issues.

They can also help patients to foster a sense of confidence, optimism and belief in their own ability to recover. Some patients feel that the medication functions as a "stepping-stone" to improved health.

Other patients complain that the side effects of the medication, which can include nausea, headaches, drowsiness, dizziness, fatigue, agitation, nervousness and weakness, can be worse than the symptoms of depression and anxiety. Many of these adverse effects are well

documented by the pharmaceutical industry and written in small print in medication guidelines. But they are often not communicated by the doctor prescribing them.

Some of the less common - but more extreme - side effects, for example, have attracted controversy and criticism. Patients have reported insomnia, sexual dysfunction, anorexia, hallucinations and suicidal thoughts. Some antidepressant drugs carry a "black box warning" about increased risk of suicide while using the medication.

It's imperative that patients are fully informed of potential risks and side effects and closely monitored for behavioural changes. Research shows that less than one per cent of the patients studied "had been told



anything about withdrawal effects or dependence" by the person prescribing the medication.

In most cases, it's not beneficial for patients to be on antidepressants indefinitely so a plan to manage the body's withdrawal from the drug is essential. Withdrawal side effects from anti-depressants can include dizziness, vertigo, flu-like symptoms, lethargy and sleep disturbances.

Doctors can interpret the ef-

fects of withdrawal from anti-depressant medication as returning depression symptoms, and put clients back on medication - and, in some cases, even increase it. The patient, then, can feel caught in a cycle of symptoms, side effects, sickness, and medication adjustments.

Joanna Moncrieff, a professor of critical and social psychiatry, argues that depression diagnoses are designed to not only monitor and control behaviour but also legitimise pharmacological treatment.

Consultant psychiatrist Stephen Stahl suggests that it is not possible for some of these drugs to act on particular neurotransmitters, arguing that they "must act everywhere". Stahl suggests that side effects

are the "cost of doing business."

This chemical imbalance theory of depression was once considered the gold standard reason for why people take antidepressants but is heavily criticised now. For example, there's a renewed interest in research on the use of psilocybin, a naturally occurring compound found in magic mushrooms. A recent study has shown psilocybin to be more effective than anti-depressant medication for major depression with side effects considered minor and transient.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence also recommends psychotherapy for the treatment of symptoms of depression and anxiety. Psychotherapy is an evidenced-based listening and talking method of addressing psycho-

logical and psychosomatic problems and change.

The clinical reality for many patients is that they are not always consulted about their treatment preference and are not always offered psychotherapy. Fewer psychiatrists are providing psychotherapy in part due to increased financial incentives for providing pharmacotherapy. Treatment with medication alone is to miss out on vital aspects of considering the person as the locus of control or the agent of change, and fails to emphasise their role in the own recovery.


The psychotherapist, with the client, can collaboratively distinguish between symptoms of illness and side effects of medication; of what is a 'cure' and what is the 'poison'. PTI

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“ The whole world yearns after freedom, yet each creature is in love with his chains; this is the first paradox and inextricable knot of our nature.

SRI AUROBINDO



Victim Card

Projecting oneself as a political martyr for being dragged into legal cases is a trick that top politicians the world over often play. In some cases, it pays rich dividends while in others it does not. However when former US President Donald Trump plays the victim card, it becomes an entirely different ball game altogether. He has successfully been using legal cases against him only to strengthen his support base further and raise even greater funds for electoral campaigns. The New York jury's unanimous verdicts on 34 counts, according to experts, had similar results wherein Trump not only raised a few million dollars for his campaign but also garnered some support, though the task is much harder this time than before.

To keep the record straight, Trump is not only the first sitting or former US president to be prosecuted in a criminal trial, but the first to be convicted of felony after a New York state jury returned a guilty verdict for all 34 charges in the case relating to hush money he had paid to adult movie actor Stormy Daniels in 2016. Trump was found to have falsified business records to hide \$130,000 of hush money paid to cover up a sex scandal he feared might adversely affect his run in 2016. In the case of anyone else it would have been easily assumed that the verdict would do incalculable harm to the politician's campaign. But, the inescapable truth is Trump is running for the White House as a convicted criminal. This seemingly does not cause any shame to Trump. On the contrary, such a sentence only spurs him on to contest the presidential poll with greater vigour.

It is no wonder that Trump's detractors say no scandal or shame seems to cause any dip in his ratings among his core voters or Republican politicians. The trials and rulings in multiple cases against him inexplicably seem to have reinforced his aura of invulnerability to political controversies.

This trial too appears to be proving, in some ways providing grist to his mill, raising funds and enthusing his supporters. As part of his strategy to turn such reverses into gains, Trump has once again played the martyr and said: "Our whole country is being rigged right now." He even says he will appeal against his "scam" conviction. He is still facing three more criminal cases - over the alleged mishandling of classified documents and attempts to overturn the 2020 election. These are graver charges by far, but are not expected to be heard before election day. This makes him even bolder to go to town with his plea of innocence. All the same it shows how Trump has turned breaking the law for political advantage into a fine art.

What will happen next is anyone's guess. The former businessman, who sought to bully his judges as soon as the verdict was announced, has long been convincing his fans that he is a victim of a plot to bring him down, hatched by a "deep state" intent on purging him if he returns to power. The Republican Party he represents has long deviated from its core principle of being "the party of law and order." This is clear from the fact that most of his colleagues in the party do not dare condemn him for making a mockery of the rule of law.

Nonetheless, the New York trial is ample testimony to the fact that the US has a justice system that can make every citizen, no matter the standing, accountable. It has the guts to publicly dissect the behaviour of a man who had tried to make disregarding the law a virtue. Herein lies the importance of the verdict. It may not lead to any change in the stand of Trump's hard core supporters, but it may make the floating voters have a rethink about whether the country should have a felon as President.

This is something that most other democracies across the world could learn from the US. The so called System can only be strong if the people behind it are strong, just and righteous.

FOCUS CONFLICT

AMERICAN SHOCK THERAPY

The NATO-led, imperialist-imposed Russia-Ukraine war is not only creating a daily human catastrophe but also reshaping the present and future of Western Europe through American shock therapy. This unjust war has led to deaths, destitution, significant civilian sufferings, with countless lives disrupted, communities devastated, and families ruined. This completely avoidable war is pushing the entire European continent into a state of turmoil. The ripple effects of this war are being felt in countries far removed from the front lines.



Ukraine has transformed the welfare policies and energy dependencies in Western Europe and removed significant barriers for American corporations to expand their market presence in the region with the help of war shock.

American imperialism has effectively employed its doctrine of shock therapy across various regions including post-communist Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and even within its own borders over its own people, all in the pursuit of corporate profit. Yankee imperialism led by USA, supported by its European allies, continues to fund the Ukrainian war, driven by strategic corporate objectives of making super profits at the cost of their people. Meanwhile, the Russian government persists in its aggressive actions, prolonging a senseless war that brings suffering to countless people.

The challenge facing the European people is clear: to unequivocally oppose warfare both within and beyond Europe's borders, and to dismantle the imperialist and military apparatus known as NATO to cultivate enduring peace and stability in the region. The pursuit of a world free from conflict cannot entertain the racist notions of European and American exceptionalism and supremacy. The struggle against war, capitalism, and imperialism is a shared endeavour, transcending borders, and ideologies. Peace and prosperity are not mere aspirations but essential and inherent rights for all humanity, irrespective of nationality or creed. This vision of peace is universal and indivisible, requiring collective action and solidarity to confront the forces that perpetuate the shock therapy of war, violence, and injustice.

For American imperialism, wars and conflicts serve as long terms tools of shock therapy, rapidly and drastically transforming societies, states, and governments in defence of its corporate interests



Bhabani Shankar Nayak

WHO CARES ABOUT HUMAN LIVES AND FAMILIES WHEN WAR IS A PROFITABLE BUSINESS?

Who cares about human lives and families when war is a profitable business? The grim reality is that the war economy benefits a select few, with European and America defence contractors, arms manufacturers, and other industries profiting immensely from this war. This profit-driven aspect of war often overshadows the human cost, with policy-makers and corporations prioritising financial gains over the well-being of individuals and families caught in the crossfire.

The war in Ukraine is more than just a profitable war; it aims to fundamentally transform the nature of the welfare state, society, and social democracy in Western Europe. Despite the capitalist framework, Western Europe remains a relatively prosperous society that offers healthcare, education, unemployment, housing and childcare benefits, old age care, and other welfare benefits to its population, extending beyond the profit-driven logic of the market. This war-led strategic transformation is not merely about economic gain but about reshaping the very fabric of society.

Western European countries have long been characterised by their robust welfare systems, which provide a safety net for all citizens and ensure a higher quality of life. These systems are designed to mitigate the harsher aspects of capitalism, ensuring

that even the most vulnerable members of society are cared for. The Russian war in Ukraine disrupts this balance. The redirection of resources towards military efforts and defence spending leads to austerity measures, which weakens these social safety nets. Additionally, the influx of refugees and the broader geopolitical instability strain public services and social cohesion. So, the implications of the war in Ukraine extend far beyond its borders, potentially impacting the welfare states and social democracies of Western Europe. It is a pivotal moment that may redefine the relationship between the state, the market, and the individual in Europe.

driven health and educational alternatives that dominate the American market.

Similarly, the availability of relatively cheaper Russian oil and natural gas has been instrumental in maintaining the high quality of life in Western Europe. This affordability in energy costs is a key factor in sustaining the economic stability and prosperity of the region. Such a situation creates problems for American oil and gas companies, as it limits their ability to penetrate and profit from European markets. The reliance on Russian energy sources reduces the demand for more expensive American alternatives. The geopolitical and economic dynamics surrounding the war in Ukraine could potentially alter these circumstances.

As Western Europe has reduced its dependence on Russian energy, American oil and gas companies find new opportunities to enter the market and profiting hugely. However, this shift led to rising cost of living due to the cost of higher energy prices and economic strain for European consumers and industries, potentially impacting the overall quality of life. In this way, the Russian war in

The writer teaches at the University of Glasgow, UK. Views are personal.

WISDOM CORNER

“ In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit.

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

“ It is better wither to be silent, or to say things of more value than silence. Sooner throw a pearl at hazard than an idle or useless word; and do not say a little in many words, but a great deal in a few.

PYTHAGORAS

“ Since boredom advances and boredom is the root of all evil, no wonder, then, that the world goes backwards, that evil spreads. This can be traced back to the very beginning of the world. The gods were bored; therefore they created human beings.

SOREN KIERKEGAARD

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- **1492:** Martin Behaim presents the world's first globe. The German geographer called his terrestrial globe Erdapfel, or Earth Apple. It is kept in a darkened room at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg, Germany.
- **1844:** Great auks became extinct as the last two known specimens were killed by fishermen on Eldey island, Iceland (some sources give July 3, 1844, as the date of extinction).
- **1904:** American physician and surgeon Charles Richard Drew, a pioneer in the preservation of blood plasma and a lifelong critic of official decisions to separate the blood of whites and Blacks in blood banks, was born in Washington, D.C.
- **1937:** Some six months after abdicating the British throne, Prince Edward, duke of Windsor (formerly Edward VIII), married American socialite Wallis Simpson (who became duchess of Windsor).
- **1943:** In Los Angeles, clashes erupted between U.S. servicemen and Mexican American youth wearing zoot suits; the Zoot Suit Riots, as they became known, occurred during a period of heightened racial tensions in the country.
- **1982:** The Israeli ambassador to the U.K. is shot. Shlomo Argov survived the assassination attempt by a Palestinian terrorist group, but he was permanently paralyzed. The event triggered the 1982 Lebanon War.
- **1992:** A lawsuit brought before the High Court of Australia by activist Eddie Koiki Mabo was decided in favour of Torres Strait Islander peoples and Aboriginal peoples. The Mabo case established land rights for all Indigenous peoples in Australia.

LOL

Calming the baby

In the supermarket there was a man pushing a cart which contained a screaming, bellowing baby. The gentleman kept repeating softly, "Don't get excited, Albert; don't scream, Albert; don't yell, Albert; keep calm, Albert." A woman standing next to him said, "You certainly are to be commended for trying to soothe your son, Albert." The man looked at her and said, "Lady, I'm Albert."

SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

To fight climate change, protect soil

Beneath our feet lies humanity's most powerful ally in the fight against climate change and environmental degradation. While it may look like dirt to some, soil is the foundation of life on Earth. Healthy soil hosts an astonishing variety of species that offer crucial benefits to living beings, including humans. It plays a key role in cycling nutrients necessary for both natural ecosystems and for 95% of our calorie intake. It also stores water, building resilience against droughts.



Juan Lucas Restrepo & Barron Joseph Orr

HEALTHY SOIL HOSTS AN ASTONISHING VARIETY OF SPECIES THAT OFFER CRUCIAL BENEFITS TO LIVING BEINGS, INCLUDING HUMANS

From bacteria to earthworms, soil teems with diverse life forms, all working together to maintain its structure, fertility, and productivity. This vibrant ecosystem not only nourishes humanity but also acts as a massive carbon sink. Healthy soil, enriched with organic matter, traps carbon in the ground, preventing it from being released into the atmosphere, storing three times more carbon dioxide than all terrestrial vegetation combined.

But soils around the world are being eroded and degraded by human activities like agricultural expansion, deforestation, and urbanisation, undermining the planet's ability to sustain us and regulate the climate. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the

United Nations (FAO), up to 40% of the planet's land surface has already been degraded. The situation is especially dire in Africa, where 65% of productive land is degraded and desertification affects 45% of the continent's land area. The need to support Africa's rapid population growth fuels natural-habitat conversion, deforestation, biodiversity loss, and soil erosion.

Recognising the vital role that healthy soil plays in mitigating climate change, reversing biodiversity loss, and eradicating hunger and poverty, the African Union recently held its Fertilizer and Soil Health Summit in Nairobi. Leaders adopted a ten-year action plan to promote organic fertilizers and help African countries meet the ambitious goals set by the 1992 Rio Conventions on biodiversity, climate change, and desertification.

Aligning the AU's action plan with national commitments is crucial to combating soil erosion. By harmonising these measures with their national emissions-reduction goals, targets for land-degradation neutrality, and biodiversity strategies, African countries can ensure that efforts to restore degraded land also bolster climate mitigation and protect biodiversity,

thereby maximising synergies and minimising trade-offs.

Successful implementation of the AU's action plan also requires fostering cross-sector collaboration and stakeholder engagement to ensure coherence and effectiveness. Boosting investments in land restoration across the continent is vital, as research shows that every dollar invested in restoring degraded land can generate up to \$30 in economic benefits. But preventing degradation altogether is far more cost-effective. Given that agriculture currently accounts for roughly 23% of Africa's GDP and supports 60% of its population, governments and private investors must consider the economic trade-offs involved in expanding land-conservation efforts on the continent. While such investments can help reverse biodiversity loss by mid-century, land-restoration initiatives must be complemented by measures like sustainable intensification to prevent spikes in food prices.

Science plays a crucial role in transforming these trade-offs into opportunities. Researchers have extensively explored the possibility of replenishing soil organic carbon in tropical soils using deep-rooted forage grasses, particularly a type called

Urochloa humidicola. Native to East and Southeast Africa, this grass, when integrated with rotational grazing strategies, boosts soil fertility, and its root exudates can reduce nitrous oxide emissions and improve carbon capture in deeper soil layers. Recent studies show that farms adopting such grasses can thus offset methane emissions from livestock and even achieve a negative carbon footprint.

While farmers are the custodians of our soil, it is important to remember that they are also businesspeople. Many, especially smallholder farmers, lack the economic capacity to shift to more sustainable production models. But by treating them like any other startup and providing the right public and private incentives, we can facilitate this transition, thus empowering millions of farmers worldwide to spearhead land restoration efforts and transform our food systems.

Juan Lucas Restrepo is Director General of the Alliance of Biodiversity International. Barron Joseph Orr is Chief Scientist at the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

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Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

OrissaPOST
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Scorching summer

Sir, In the last few days, the people of the country have witnessed a severe heatwave. In some cities, the mercury has crossed 50 degrees Celsius for consecutive days. The government has also confirmed the number of deaths due to heatwaves in the last three months. Regular works have been stalled due to this scorching summer. In a recent study, it was revealed that the cities are warmer as compared to the villages. The main reason cities get boiled in such a manner is the rapid and unplanned urbanisation. Our buildings and architecture are planned to cause more heating. Cutting trees and increasing vehicular moment are adding up to the problem. The government needs to develop sustainable city planning and adopt less harmful methods of building construction. India needs to shift to non-fossil fuel aggressively looking at the long-term effects. Urban forests and planned plantations in cities are also necessary to increase green cover or else our cities will slowly be turned into concrete forests. For the next year, the administration needs to plan beforehand and prepare accordingly for the heatwave, and try to lessen the deaths due to this. The economic and agricultural impacts of heatwaves also need to be checked.

Deba Prasad Nayak, DELHI

Poll predictions

Sir, According to exit polls from several media outlets and political analysts, it undoubtedly seems that the BJP will secure a third consecutive term achieving a thumping majority with its allies. However, their goal of reaching 400 plus seats is falling short. The Opposition coalition, the INDIA bloc, is expected to gain seats compare to its 2019 electoral performance. There might be some twists and turns in number of seats gained or lost from both sides and the final picture will be clear on 4 June. Hopefully, in this term, the government will focus on addressing key issues that are predominately affecting the country's socio-economic development which will be decisive for India's future growth journey.

Bishal Kumar Saha, MURSHIDABAD



6L affected in Assam flood New IIM in Assam gets Centre's nod

HEAVY RAINS IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE STATE LED TO THE SWELLING OF RIVER WATER LEVEL, FORCING AFFECTED PEOPLE IN MANY AREAS TO EVACUATE TO SAFETY

AGENCIES

Guwahati, June 2: The flood situation in Assam remained unchanged with more than six lakh people in 10 districts reeling under waters, officials said Sunday. Heavy rains in different parts of the state led to the swelling of river water level, forcing affected people in many areas to evacuate to safety, they said. Kopili, Barak and Kushiara rivers were flowing over the danger level. Altogether 6,01,642 people in Hailakandi Hojai, Morigaon, Karimganj, Nagaon, Cachar, Dibrugarh, Golaghat, Karbi Anglong West and Dima Hasao districts remained affected due to the floods. The death toll in floods and storm since May 28 is at 15, the officials said. Nagaon remained the worst-hit district with over 2.79 affected population, followed by Hojai (1,26,813 affected population) and Cachar (1,12,265). More than 40,000 displaced people were taking shelter in relief camps across various districts.



Rescue and relief operations were being carried out by multiple agencies, including NDRF, SDRF, local administration and people. In view of damage to track between New Haflong's Chandranathpur section and water logging at Silchar station of Lumding division, at least 10 trains scheduled for commencing journey from Saturday to Monday were cancelled, a Northeast Frontier Railway spokesperson said. Assam Police, in a post on X, said that a total of 966 people and 89 animals have been rescued till Saturday. Road and rail communication in several parts of the state remained disrupted following incessant rain in the aftermath of cyclone 'Remal', officials said. In view of damage of track

between New Haflong's Chandranathpur section and water logging at Silchar station of Lumding division, at least 10 trains scheduled for commencing journey from Saturday to Monday were cancelled, a Northeast Frontier Railway spokesperson said. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a meeting to review the post-cyclone situation, especially in relation to the northeastern states. The first meeting is one among a series of meetings that the PM will hold later in the day. PM Modi will also chair a meeting to review the heat-wave situation across the country. Most states in north and central India have been reeling under an intense heat-wave, with temperatures exceeding 45 degrees Celsius in many cities.

More than 40,000 displaced people were taking shelter in relief camps across various districts. Rescue and relief operations were being carried out by multiple agencies, including NDRF, SDRF, local administration and people.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, June 2: The Centre has approved an Indian Institute of Management (IIM) for Assam, and it would come up near Guwahati, making it among the few cities in the country housing top educational institutions, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said Sunday. He said the state government had been pursuing the matter with the Centre for last 18 months, and the new institute will be a "game changer" for higher education in the state. "Sharing a BIG NEWS! Following our request in 2023, Hon PM Shri @narendramodiji has given a spl gift to the people of Assam by approving an Indian Institute of Management near Guwahati, making it among the few cities to house an IIT, AIIMS, Nat'l Law Univ & now IIM," Sarma posted on X. He said the state government had presented its case before Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and his ministry, besides writing to PM Modi. Sarma said the state government has offered land and logistical support for the new institute, which will be mentored



by IIM Ahmedabad. "As evident from the letters, the swift transformation from idea to execution illustrates the power of a Double Engine government," he added, sharing the letters written by him to Modi and Pradhan, and another from the Education Ministry. As per the letter written by

joint secretary in the Education Ministry PK Banerjee to the director of IIM-Ahmedabad, the new institute will come up on a plot of land measuring 76.8332 hectares at Marabhita in Kamrup district near Guwahati. With IIM-Ahmedabad to be the mentor institute, it has been asked to initiate the preparation of a detailed project report, in consultation with the Higher Education Department and the Assam government, and submit it to the Education Ministry for further necessary action.

This will be game changer for Assam, making the State an education hub in Eastern India and also help fulfill our economic aspirations

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | CHIEF MINISTER

Ban on tobacco products in Katra

Katra, where cave shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi, has been witnessing a daily footfall of 30,000-40,000 pilgrims. The administration has already banned the sale, possession, and consumption of meat and liquor in Katra and adjoining areas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, June 2: The Jammu and Kashmir administration Saturday banned the sale, possession and consumption of cigarettes and other tobacco products in the holy town of Katra, which houses the cave shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi, officials said.

Reasi District Magistrate Vishesh Mahajan said the initiative, launched on the World No-Tobacco Day, aims to maintain the sanctity of the religious place visited by lakhs of pilgrim every year. The administration has already banned the sale, possession, and consumption of meat and liquor in Katra and adjoining areas. "Under Section 144, we have imposed a ban on the stocking, sale, and consumption of cigarettes, gutka and other forms of tobacco in the area starting from Numaaee and Panthal check posts via Tara Court track up to Bhavan," Mahajan told reporters. "The ban is an extension of the existing prohibition on the sale and consumption of liquor

and meat," he said. Mahajan said the move aims to keep the Katra base camp, the track and the entire area tobacco free. Katra has been witnessing a rush of more than 30,000-40,000 pilgrims on a daily basis these days. The cave shrine in Trikuta hills in Jammu's Reasi district was visited by more than 93.50 lakh pilgrims in 2023 - the highest footfall in a decade. According to the shrine officials, it surpassed the 2013 figure of 93.24 lakh.



People who kept 'hisab-kitab' for Pak, voted this time: DGP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, June 2: People who kept "hisab-kitab" (accounts) and acted as eyes and ears of the "enemy" in the past took part in the electoral process this time as the Jammu and Kashmir administration and the police ensured a safe space free from external threats, DGP Rashmi Ranjan Swain said.



This year's Lok Sabha election saw a remarkable voter turnout in Jammu and Kashmir which signalled towards a shift in the region's political landscape, Swain told PTI, highlighting a newfound sense of freedom from fear among the people. In the first major electoral battle in Jammu and Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370 and the bifurcation of the erstwhile state into Union territories in August 2019, the three Lok

Sabha seats in the Valley -- Srinagar, Baramulla and Anantnag-Rajouri -- recorded their highest-ever voter turnouts in the last three decades. Director General of Police (DGP) Swain commended the security forces for their efforts in monitoring potential threats from external elements particularly "proxies of Pakistan" who intended to disrupt the democratic process. Speaking to PTI after the completion of the poll process, Swain stressed the positive impact of the high voter turnout and said "I, my colleagues in J&K Police and the wider administration of J&K's UT government, see it as an enabling environment where you have freed the people from fear." He also drew attention to the campaigning activities that were held in the middle of night, besides roadshows and door-to-door campaigns conducted "without the lurking threat of the Pakistani gun". Swain, noted a potential shift within the outfit, saying some of its members publicly participated in the recent elections which indicated a possible change in their approach.



Assam Agriculture Minister Atul Bora prepares a paddy field for planting at Borahi village in Golaghat district

GIBBON WILDLIFE SANCTUARY NFR to set up canopy bridges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, June 2: The NFR will set up canopy bridges over railway tracks in Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary in Assam's Jorhat district to facilitate safe movement of arboreal species in the forest, an official Friday. The decision was taken in consultation with the state forest department, Wildlife Institute of India and all stakeholders, a railway spokesperson said. The canopy bridges will be installed at several identified points to facilitate easy access and movement of the endangered Hoolock Gibbon from one part of the railway tracks to the other in the forest, he said. The state forest department has submitted a design with estimates for the installation of such bridges over the railway tracks, the official said. The design was prepared by the Wildlife Institute of India in consultation with the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR). The railway authorities have already deposited the estimated amount in February for the installation of bridges by the forest department of Assam.

Nine counting centres set up for five LS seats in J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, June 2: With two days left for the declaration of results of the Lok Sabha polls, nine centres have been set up counting of votes in five Lok Sabha constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said Sunday. In addition, one counting centre has also been set up in Delhi for the counting of Kashmiri migrant votes which were polled by the displaced community at specially set up polling stations in Srinagar, Baramulla and Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seats, they said. The counting of votes, scheduled for Tuesday, also covering Udhampur and Jammu parliamentary seats in J-K, will decide the fate of 100 candidates, including senior BJP leader and Union minister Jitendra Singh, two former chief ministers -- Omar Abdullah of National Conference (NC) and Mehbooba Mufti of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). The other bigwigs include former ministers Raman Bhalla and Choudhary Lal Singh of Congress, GM Saroori of DPAP, Aga Ruhullah Mehdi and Mian Altaf of NC, Ashraf Mir of Apni

Party, Sajjad Lone of Peoples Conference. Former MLA Engineer Rashid is fighting from Tihar Jail. Officials said all arrangements including security and deployment of staff have been made at all the 10 counting centres. The Combined Voter Turnout (VTR) at the polling stations for the entire Union territory (five Lok Sabha seats) was 58.46 per cent -- the highest poll participation in the last 35 years. The voter turnout of 50.86 per cent from the three parliamentary constituencies in the Kashmir Valley witnessed a jump of 30 percentage points from the 2019 general elections when it was 19.16 per cent. Srinagar, Baramulla and Anantnag-Rajouri in the valley recorded VTR of 38.49 per cent, 59.1 per cent and 54.84 per cent respectively, which has been highest in the last three decades. The other two constituencies in the UT, namely Udhampur and Jammu in the Jammu region, recorded 68.27 per cent and 72.22 per cent voter turnout respectively. The counting of votes in Udhampur constituency where Union minister Jitendra Singh is



The Combined Voter Turnout (VTR) at the polling stations for the entire Union territory (five Lok Sabha seats) was 58.46 per cent -- the highest poll participation in the last 35 years. The voter turnout of 50.86 per cent from the three parliamentary constituencies in the Kashmir Valley witnessed a jump of 30 percentage points from the 2019 general elections when it was 19.16 per cent

seeking his third consecutive term will be held at government degree college, Kathua. Apart from Singh, there are 11 other candidates that includes Lal Singh, also a two-time former MP, and GM Saroori in the fray. Seven of the candidates are independents. The counting of votes in Baramulla constituency will be held in Government Degree College (Boys), Baramulla. Omar Abdullah is pitted against 21 candidates in the constituency, prominent among them being Lone and Rashid. Among the 14 independents who are contesting in the seat, two are women. In Anantnag-Rajouri constituency, divided by the mighty Pir Panjal range, officials said the counting of votes will be held at Government Degree College (Boys) Anantnag and Government PG College Rajouri. Mehbooba Mufti is seeking a victory from this constituency and is facing a major challenge from NC's Mian Altaf. There are also 10 independents and eight other candidates, including the BJP-supported Apni Party's Zaffar Manhas. The counting of votes in Srinagar parliamentary con-

stituency, which has the highest number of 24 candidates, including 16 independents, will take place at Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Cent (SKICC) along the banks of Dal Lake. NC's Ruhullah, Mir of Apni Party and PDP youth leader Waheed Para are the strong candidates from the constituency. Officials said counting of the Jammu constituency, where BJP's Jugal Kishore is eyeing a hat-trick of wins, will be carried out at the premises comprising Government Polytechnic College and Government MAM college. Raman Bhalla, the working president of the J&K unit of Congress, is among the 21 other candidates in the fray from the seat. Officials said counting of Kashmiri migrant votes will take place at Government College for Women Gandhi Nagar, Jammu, Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Udhampur and J&K House, New Delhi. J-K Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Pandurang K Pole had a comprehensive review of preparedness of the districts ahead of the final counting of votes at Nirvachan Bhawan here Saturday, they said.

Kashmir tourist footfall may surpass all peaks

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, June 2: Tourist arrivals in Kashmir are set to break all previous records as more than 1.25 million tourists have already come here to date. Officials of the local tourism department have said that over 12.5 lakh tourists have so far visited Kashmir and going by the present trend, the year 2024 is likely to break all previous records. At present, all local hotels in Srinagar city, in the ski resort of Gulmarg and the hill stations of Pahalgam and Sonamarg are completely sold out till the middle of June. "What is true of hotels in these places is also true of guest houses, homestays, houseboats on the Dal and the Nigeen Lakes and other such lodging facilities in Kashmir at the moment," said a member of the Hoteliers Club of Kashmir. Normally the tourist arrivals start coming down with the beginning of the annual Amarnath Yatra due to the heavy rush of pilgrims who come for 'Darshan' at the cave shrine situated 3888 metres above sea level in Kashmir Himalayas. This year, Amarnath Yatra starts June 29 and will conclude after 52 days August 19.



"We earn foreign exchange once the foreign tourists start coming to Kashmir. In addition to this, most of the foreign tourists are high-end tourists whose average spending during their stay is more than the average domestic tourists. Not that the domestic tourists do not include high-end guests. The few 5-star hotels we have in the Valley are also completely sold out these days and the majority of their guests are domestic spenders," said a member of the Hoteliers Club of Kashmir. Normally the tourist arrivals start coming down with the beginning of the annual Amarnath Yatra due to the heavy rush of pilgrims who come for 'Darshan' at the cave shrine situated 3888 metres above sea level in Kashmir Himalayas. This year, Amarnath Yatra starts June 29 and will conclude after 52 days August 19.

of the day quote

With temperature touching almost 50 degrees Celsius, Delhi is stretched out to the maximum as far as its water resources are concerned. To tackle the existing crises, we urgently need Haryana to release additional water into the Yamuna River at the earliest

ATISHI MARLENA | DELHI WATER MINISTER

Winning the MLC seat in the Chief Minister's home district is a moment of pride for us. This victory not only brings joy but also significantly increases our responsibilities. We are confident that this victory is just the beginning and will pave the way for many more successes in the future

KT RAMA RAO | BRS WORKING PRESIDENT

Telangana people have given her a lot of love and respect during the past 10 years

SONIA GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Arunachal Guv dissolves Assembly

Itanagar: Arunachal Pradesh Governor KT Parnaik dissolved the seventh Assembly Sunday, paving the way for the constitution of the eighth Assembly following the declaration of results, a statement said. Under Article 174 (2) (b) of the Constitution, the governor has accepted the cabinet's advise and signed the order to dissolve the seventh state Assembly with immediate effect, the statement issued by the Raj Bhavan said. Parnaik has also accepted the resignation of Chief Minister Pema Khandu and his council of ministers. He requested Khandu and his ministers to continue until the new government is sworn in.

Raveena Tandon assaulted by crowd

Mumbai: Bollywood actor Raveena Tandon and her driver were allegedly attacked by a mob in Mumbai amid rash driving claims against the driver, police said Sunday. A viral video shows a group of locals accusing Raveena and her driver of assaulting three women. The incident took place on Carter Road in Bandra Saturday night, police said. While no FIR has been registered, a station diary entry has been made at the Khar police station, the official added.

BJP worker killed in post-poll violence

Kolkata: A BJP worker was killed by a group of men in West Bengal's Nadia district in post-poll violence, with the saffron party pointing fingers at the ruling Trinamool Congress. The TMC, however, claimed that the killing was a fallout of a family feud. Police sources said the incident happened at Kaliganj in the northern part of the district when BJP worker, Hafijur Sheikh, was playing carrom with others Saturday night. It is alleged that 10-12 people came on motorbikes and first shot Sheikh and then hacked him, killing him on the spot.

3 of family killed in road accident

Lakhimpur Kheri (UP): An elderly woman and her two sons were killed when their car collided with a speeding container truck on the Lucknow-Bareilly national highway here Sunday, police said. Two other members of the family were injured in the accident that occurred near Uchauli police station area.



These exit polls were manufactured at home by some people two months back for the media consumption. They have no value

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

METRO RAILWAY ROLLS OUT UPI IN ALL STATIONS

After the Howrah Maidan-Esplanade and Sector V-Sealdah corridors of the East-West Metro, UPI payment-based ticketing system has been introduced in all automatic smart card recharge machines (ASCRM) at all stations of the North-South corridor connecting the two outskirts of the city



New Sankalps from the Sadhana in Kanniyakumari

NARENDRA MODI

My fellow Indians,

The biggest festival of democracy, the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections, are concluding today in our nation, the Mother of Democracy. After a three-day spiritual journey in Kanniyakumari, I have just boarded the plane for Delhi. Through the day, Kashi and numerous other seats have been in the midst of voting.

My mind is filled with so many experiences and emotions... I feel a boundless flow of energy within myself. The 2024 Lok Sabha elections are the first in the Amrit Kaal. I began my campaign a few months ago from Meerut, the land of the First War of Independence of 1857. Since then, I have traversed across the length and breadth of our great nation. The final rally of these elections took me to Hoshiarpur in Punjab, the land of the great Gurus and a land associated with Sant Ravidas Ji. After that, I came to Kanniyakumari, at the feet of Maa Bharti.

It is natural that the fervour of the elections was echoing in my heart and mind. The multitude of faces seen in rallies and road shows came in front of my eyes. The blessings from our Nari Shakti... the trust, the affection, all of this was a very humbling experience. My eyes were getting moist... I entered into a 'sadhana' (meditative state). And then, the heated political debates, the attacks and counter-attacks, the voices and words of accusations which are so characteristic of an election... they all vanished into a void. A sense of detachment came to grow within me... my mind became completely detached from the external world.

Meditation becomes challenging amidst such huge responsibilities, but the land of Kanniyakumari and the inspiration of Swami Vivekananda made it effortless. As a candidate myself, I left my campaign in the hands of my beloved people of Kashi and came here.

I am also grateful God for instilling me with these values from birth which I have cherished and tried to live up to. I was also thinking about what Swami Vivekananda must have experienced during his meditation at

this very place in Kanniyakumari! A part of my meditation was spent in a similar stream of thoughts.

Amidst this detachment, amidst the peace and silence, my mind was constantly thinking about the bright future of Bharat, the goals of Bharat. The rising sun at Kanniyakumari gave new heights to my thoughts, the vastness of the ocean expanded my ideas, and the expanse of the horizon continuously made me realize the unity, the Oneness, embedded in the depths of the universe. It seemed as if the observations and experiences undertaken in the lap of the Himalayas decades ago were being revived.

Friends, Kanniyakumari has always been very close to my heart. The Vivekananda Rock Memorial in Kanniyakumari was built under the leadership of Shri Eknath Ranade ji. I had the opportunity to travel extensively with Eknath ji. During the construction of this Memorial, I had the opportunity to spend some time in Kanniyakumari as well.

From Kashmir to Kanniyakumari... this is a common identity that is deeply ingrained in the heart of every citizen of the country. This is the 'Shakti Peeth' (seat of Shakti) where Maa Shakti incarnated as Kanya Kumari. At this Southern tip, Maa Shakti performed penance and waited for Bhagwan Shiva, who was residing in the Himalayas at the northernmost parts of Bharat.

Kanniyakumari is the land of confluences. The sacred rivers of our country flow into different seas, and here, those very seas converge. And here, we witness another great confluence—the ideological confluence of Bharat! Here, we find the Vivekananda Rock Memorial, a grand statue of Saint Thiruvalluvar, Gandhi Mandapam, and Kamarajar Mani Mandapam. These streams of thought from these stalwarts converge here to form a confluence of national thought. This gives rise to great inspirations for nation-building. This land of Kanniyakumari gives an indelible message of unity, especially to any person who doubts Bharat's nationhood and the sense of unity.

The grand statue of Saint



Thiruvalluvar in Kanniyakumari seems to be looking at the expanse of Maa Bharati from the sea. His work Thirukkural is one of the crown jewels of the beautiful Tamil language. It covers every aspect of life, inspiring us to give our best for ourselves and for the nation. It was my great fortune to pay my respects to such a great figure.

Friends, Swami Vivekananda once said, 'Every nation has a message to deliver, a mission to fulfill, a destiny to reach.'

For thousands of years, Bharat has been moving forward with this sense of meaningful purpose. Bharat has been a cradle of ideas for thousands of years. We have never considered what we have acquired as our personal wealth or measured it purely by economic or material parameters. Therefore, 'Idam na-mama' (this is not mine) has become an inherent and natural part of the character of Bharat.

Bharat's welfare benefits our planet's journey to progress as well. Take the freedom movement as an example. Bharat gained independence on August 15, 1947. At that time, many countries around the world were under colonial rule. Bharat's independence journey inspired and empowered many of those countries to achieve their own freedom. That same spirit was seen decades later when the world came face to face with the

once in a century COVID-19 pandemic. When concerns were raised about the poor and developing countries, Bharat's successful efforts provided courage and assistance to many nations.

Today, Bharat's governance model has become an example for many countries around the world. Empowering 25 crore people to rise above poverty in just 10 years is unprecedented. Innovative practices such as Pro-People Good Governance, aspirational districts, and aspirational blocks are being discussed globally today. Our efforts, from empowering the poor to last-mile delivery, have inspired the world by prioritizing individuals standing at the last rung of society. Bharat's Digital India campaign is now an example for the entire world, showing how we can use technology to empower the poor, bring transparency, and ensure their rights.

Inexpensive data in Bharat is becoming a means of social equality by ensuring the reach of information and services to the poor. The whole world is witnessing and studying the democratization of technology, and major global institutions are advising many countries to adopt elements from our model.

Today, Bharat's progress and rise are not just a significant opportunity for Bharat alone, but also a historic opportunity for all our partner countries around the world. Since the suc-

cess of the G-20, the world has been increasingly envisioning a bigger role for Bharat. Today, Bharat is being acknowledged as a strong and important voice of the Global South. The African Union has become a part of the G-20 group at the initiative of Bharat. This is going to be a crucial turning point for the future of African countries.

Friends, The development trajectory of Bharat fills us with pride and glory, but at the same time, it also reminds the 140 crore citizens of their responsibilities. Now, without wasting a single moment, we must step forward towards greater duties and larger goals. We need to dream new dreams, convert them into reality and begin living those dreams.

We must see Bharat's development in a global context, and for this, it is essential that we understand Bharat's internal capabilities. We must acknowledge Bharat's strengths, nurture them, and utilize them for the benefit of the world. In today's global scenario, Bharat's strength as a youthful nation is an opportunity from which we must not look back.

The world of the 21st century is looking towards Bharat with many hopes. And we will need to make several changes to move forward in the global scenario. We also need to change our traditional thinking regarding reform. Bharat cannot limit reform to just economic reforms. We must move forward in every aspect of life towards the direction of reform. Our reforms should also align with the aspirations of a 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India) by 2047.

We must also understand that reform can never be a unidimensional process for any country. Therefore, I have laid out the vision of reform, perform, and transform for the country. The responsibility of reform lies with leadership. Based on that, our bureaucracy performs, and when the people join in with the spirit of Jan Bhagidari, we witness a transformation taking place.

We must make excellence the fundamental principle to make our country a 'Viksit Bharat'. We need to work quickly in all four directions: Speed, Scale,

Scope, and Standards. Alongside manufacturing, we must also focus on quality and adhere to the mantra of 'zero defect-zero effect'.

Friends, We should take pride in every moment that God has blessed us with birth in the land of Bharat. God has chosen us to serve Bharat and fulfil our role in our country's journey towards excellence.

We must redefine our heritage in a modern way while embracing ancient values in a modern context.

As a nation, we also need to reassess outdated thinking and beliefs. We need to free our society from the pressure of professional pessimists. We must remember that freedom from negativity is the first step towards achieving success. Success blossoms in the lap of positivity.

My faith, devotion, and belief in the infinite and eternal power of Bharat are growing day by day. Over the past 10 years, I have seen this capability of Bharat grow even more and have experienced it firsthand.

Just as we utilized the fourth and fifth decades of the 20th century to impart a new momentum to the freedom movement, we must lay the foundation for a 'Viksit Bharat' in these 25 years of the 21st century. The freedom struggle was a time that called for great sacrifices. The present times call for great and sustained contributions from everyone.

Swami Vivekananda had said in 1897 that we must dedicate the next 50 years solely for the nation. Exactly 50 years after this call, Bharat gained independence in 1947.

Today, we have the same golden opportunity. Let's dedicate the next 25 years solely for the nation. Our efforts will create a strong foundation for the coming generations and the coming centuries, taking Bharat to new heights. Looking at the energy and enthusiasm of the country, I can say that the goal is not far away now. Let us take swift steps... let us come together and create a Viksit Bharat.

These thoughts were penned by PM Modi on 1st June between 4:15 PM and 7 PM during his return flight from Kanniyakumari to Delhi.

PM Modi asks officials to ensure fire drills in hosps, public places

In the meeting to review the heatwave conditions in parts of the country, Modi instructed officials that proper drills for preventing and handling incidents of fire must be undertaken on a regular basis, according to an official statement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 2: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday stressed the need to ensure regular fire and electrical safety audits in hospitals and other public places as he reviewed the heatwave situation in the country amid fire incidents which have claimed many lives. He chaired a host of meetings, including one on the post-Cyclone Remal situation, especially in the northeast region, and another to review the 100-day agenda of the new government to be sworn in after the Lok Sabha results are announced June 4.

Exit polls broadcast Saturday predicted a massive win for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), with Modi set to retain power for a third straight term.

In the meeting to review the heatwave conditions in parts of the country, Modi instructed officials that proper drills for preventing and handling incidents of fire must be undertaken on a regular basis, according to an official statement.

He also said that regular drills for the maintenance of fire lines in forests and productive utilisation of biomass must be planned.

Modi was briefed that as per forecasts, the heatwave is likely to continue in parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.



Monsoon this year is likely to be normal and above normal in most parts of the country and below normal in parts of peninsular India, the statement said.

In the meeting to review the post-Cyclone Remal situation, another official statement said, Modi was briefed about its impact in the affected states, including the loss of lives and damage to houses and other properties due to landslides and floods in Mizoram, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura.

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams have carried out evacuation, airlifting and road clearance operations, it said, adding the Union home ministry is in regular touch with

state governments.

PM Modi said the Union government will continue to extend full support to the states affected by the cyclone, according to the statement. Top bureaucrats were part of the meetings the prime minister chaired.

He is also chairing a meeting to review the preparations to celebrate the World Environment Day, which falls June 5. Much before the Lok Sabha polling exercise began, Modi had set in motion the exercise for different government ministries to prepare the 100-day agenda for the new government.

He had asked his Council of Ministers to prioritise programmes and initiatives for the first 100 days.

Dog undergoes non-invasive heart surgery at vet hosp

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 2: A dog with a complex heart condition successfully underwent a minimally invasive heart surgery at a hospital here with veterinarians claiming it to be the first such procedure to be carried out by private practitioners in the Indian subcontinent.

Seven-year-old beagle, Juliet, was suffering from Mitral valve disease for the last two years, Dr Bhanu Dev Sharma, an interventional cardiologist for small animals at Max PetZ Hospital in East of Kailash said Sunday.

The condition is caused by degenerative changes in mitral valve leaflets which result in back flow of blood within the left upper chamber of the heart and subsequent congestive heart failure (fluid build-up in lungs) as the disease progresses.

The surgeons performed a Transcatheter Edge-to-Edge Repair (TEER) procedure using a valve clamp May 30.

"It's called hybrid surgery as it's a combination of a micro surgery and interventional procedure. The best part about this procedure is that its minimally invasive as it's a beating heart procedure and not like an open heart surgery which needs a heart lung bypass machine," Sharma explained. As per the pet parents, they were giving heart medications to Juliet for the last one year, Sharma said.

They learnt about the procedure from their visit to the US where this surgery was introduced at Colorado state university two years ago, he said.

Hyderabad ceases to be common capital of Telangana, Andhra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, June 2: Hyderabad, one of the bustling metropolitan cities of the country, ceased to be the common capital of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh from Sunday as per the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014.

Beginning June 2, Hyderabad will be the capital city of Telangana only.

Hyderabad was made the capital city of the two states for 10 years when the bifurcation of undivided Andhra Pradesh was carried out in 2014. Telangana came into existence June 2, 2014. "On and from the appointed day (June 2), Hyderabad in the existing State of Andhra Pradesh, shall be the common capital of the State of Telangana and the State of Andhra Pradesh for such period not exceeding ten years," said the AP

Reorganisation Act.

"After expiry of the period referred to in sub-section (1), Hyderabad shall be the capital of the State of Telangana and there shall be a new capital for the State of Andhra Pradesh," it added. The formation of Telangana State was fulfilment of a decades-long demand when the statehood was realized on June 2, 2014 following the passage of AP Reorganisation bill in Parliament in February, 2014.

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy had last month told officials to take over, after June 2, buildings like the Lake View government guest house in Hyderabad which were given to Andhra Pradesh for a period of 10 years.

Despite ten long years after separation, several issues such as bifurcation of assets are still unresolved between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.



of the day quote

This is not called an exit poll but its name is 'Modi media poll'. This is Modi ji's poll, it is his fantasy poll

RAHUL GANDHI | FORMER CONGRESS PRESIDENT

Corrupt officials who are in cahoots with BJP are also not able to muster the courage to rig the elections after seeing an active Supreme Court, and they also do not want to become a victim of public anger

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT

The world order will recalibrate within the next 5-10 years... at this stage having a leader who can play this international game for the good of India will benefit us

AMISH TRIPATHI | AUTHOR AND FORMER DIPLOMAT

X POST OF THE DAY

Perhaps @narendramodi ji and many of those applauding his visit to Vivekananda Rock would benefit from a refresher course on the writings and teachings of the great sage? It might change them, and their political conduct, for the better.

@SHASHITHAROOR

SHORT TAKES

Flight gets bomb threat

Mumbai: A Mumbai-bound Vistara flight with 306 persons onboard from Paris received a bomb threat after which a full emergency was declared at the city airport prior to its arrival here, a source said. The flight landed at 10:19 am Sunday, the source said. Vistara Sunday reported that its, "flight UK 024 from Paris' Charles de Gualle airport to Mumbai received a hand written note on an airsickness bag threatening a bomb," said the source. Following this, full emergency was declared at 10:08 am, as per the source, who added that the flight landed at 10:19 am.

Fire in south Mumbai high-rise

Mumbai: A 57-year-old man was injured while 25 to 30 persons were rescued after a fire broke out in a 62-storey residential building in south Mumbai's Byculla area around midnight, officials said Sunday. The blaze erupted in a flat on the 10th floor of the Monte South building's A wing in the Khatao Mill Compound in Byculla at 11.42 pm Saturday, a fire official said, adding smoke filled the entire floor.

8 Naxalites surrender

Sukma: Eight Naxalites, four of them carrying a cumulative bounty of Rs 5 lakh, surrendered before security forces in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district Sunday, police said. The Naxalites turned themselves in before senior officials of the police and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), citing disappointment with atrocities committed by Maoists on tribals and "inhuman" and "hollow" Maoist ideology, an official said. They were also impressed by the state government's Naxal elimination policy and the Sukma police's rehabilitation drive 'Puna Narkom' (a term coined in the local Gondi dialect, which means new dawn, new beginning), he said.



During the 10 years of rule, Telangana has suffered 100 years of destruction. It was not just physical destruction but also fundamental freedom has been assaulted. Social justice was denied. The wealth of the state, which should belong to all the people, has gone into the hands of a few

A REVANTH REDDY | CM, TELANGANA

OVER 30 CARS GUTTED

Around 35 cars were gutted after a massive fire broke out in a plot at Sector-8 in Noida Sunday, a Fire Department official said. He said that the Skoda scrapped cars were kept in the vacant plot. As per the Fire Department, the call regarding a blaze was received at 3:02 pm



OPPN PARTIES TRASH EXIT POLLS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 2: The Congress and other INDIA bloc parties Sunday trashed the exit polls that have predicted a third consecutive win for Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Lok Sabha elections, claiming that these surveys were a work of "fantasy" and asserting that the opposition alliance will form the next government.

The BJP hit back, saying Gandhi has been living in a "fantasy world" since childhood and is cut off from the ground reality. "He believes everything to be a fantasy. It is his fantasy that made Congress lose the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections. This time, they are going to score a hatrick of losing Lok Sabha elections and that is why they are talking nonsense," BJP national spokesperson Prem Shukla said. "The exit poll is a reality poll and indicates that people have shown faith in the leader who has worked for them in the last 10 years," BJP leader Shaina NC said.

However, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee claimed the exit poll predictions were not consistent with the ground reality and alleged that



they were "manufactured at home" two months back.

"We had seen how the exit polls were conducted in 2016, 2019 and 2021. None of the predictions had turned out to be true... these exit polls were manufactured at home by some people two months back for media consumption. They have no value," the Trinamool Congress chief told a TV channel.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, JMM leader and Jharkhand CM Champai Soren, BJD leader V K Pandian, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut were among those who questioned the reliability of the exit polls. "Understand the chronology of the exit poll. The Opposition had already said that

pro-BJP media would show the BJP crossing 300 seats which would create the scope for fraud." "Today's pro-BJP exit poll was prepared many months ago, the channels just aired it now. People's public opinion is being deceived through this exit poll," Yadav said in a post on X.

These are political exit polls and not professional exit polls, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said and claimed it will be a repeat of 2004, when exit polls predicted BJP victory but the Congress formed the government. He alleged that the exit polls that came out Saturday evening are "completely bogus" and have been "orchestrated and masterminded by the man whose exit is inevitable and guaranteed June 4".

Questioning the credibility of the exit polls, the leaders of major Opposition parties alleged that they were conducted at the behest of the government as a "deliberate attempt to justify rigging of elections" and were part of PM Modi's "mind games" to lower the morale of the INDIA bloc workers ahead of counting of votes June 4

Asked how many seats the INDIA bloc would get, Gandhi said, "Have you heard (popular singer) Sidhu Moosewala's song '295'? So 295 (seats)"

Exit polls Saturday predicted that Prime Minister Modi will retain power for a third straight term, with the BJP-led NDA expected to win a big majority in the Lok Sabha polls.

"They are not forming a government June 4. These exit polls are mind games to drive you into depression," Kejriwal told AAP workers and leaders. The ruling BJD in Odisha, which is not part of the INDIA bloc and is also predicted to lose ground to the BJP, rejected the exit polls, saying they have proved to be wrong in the 2014 and 2019 elections and the trend would continue this time as well.

Senior BJD leader V K

Pandian said in a post on X, "Everybody has seen how inaccurate exit polls made by some national level organisations in air-conditioned rooms are. The exit polls of 2024 will just be a repeat of the previous exit polls."

However, Union minister Ramdas Athawale said the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) will get more Lok Sabha seats than predicted by the exit polls. Athawale said the exit polls have predicted the NDA will win 350 to 375 seats, but the BJP-led alliance will get more seats.

"In Maharashtra, the ruling Mahayuti win will 35 to 40 seats (out of 48), and in the country, the NDA will get more than 400 seats," said the Republican Party of India (A) chief, whose party is a constituent of the NDA. Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut decried the exit polls as a "corporate game and a fraud".

Raut also said they do not require the exit polls as they work on the field and know the "undercurrent". "There is a lot of pressure on these media companies. The exit poll exercise is a corporate game and a fraud. Do these companies conduct exit polls for free?" he said.

SANDESHKHALI POST-POLL VIOLENCE

Bengal Governor asks Mamata to intervene

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, June 2: West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose Sunday said he was worried after getting reports about post-poll violence in Sandeshkhali, and asked Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to intervene immediately and restore peace there.

Speaking to PTI, Bose said that he has written to Banerjee asking her to inform him about the action taken against those involved in the incidents of violence in Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas district.

"I am a bit worried about the situation in Sandeshkhali. From the inputs I have received, I have come to know about incidents of attacks on the women of Sandeshkhali within hours after the polling was over yesterday. I have written to the Chief Minister about the steps taken in this regard," Bose said in a statement.

He said he wants to know when it will stop and when the people of Sandeshkhali will be able to lead a "fearless life" like the other citizens of India.

Reduction in heatwave intensity in next three days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 2: A reduction in the intensity of heatwave conditions is likely in the country over the next three days, the weather office said Sunday.

Fatehpur in Uttar Pradesh was the hottest in the country with a maximum temperature of 46.2 degrees Celsius. Sirsa in Haryana and Ganganagar in Rajasthan sizzled at 45.4 degrees Celsius followed by Jhansi and Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh which recorded 45.2 degrees Celsius each, and Prithvipur in Madhya Pradesh and Bhiwani in Haryana at 45.1 degrees. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said heat wave conditions over northwest, central and east India were likely to continue with reduced intensity during the next three days.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST SHAH

ECI seeks response from Jairam Ramesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 2: The Election Commission (EC) sought factual information from Congress leader Jairam Ramesh Sunday on his claim that Home Minister Amit Shah has called up 150 district magistrates and collectors ahead of the June 4 counting of votes for the Lok Sabha polls.

In a letter to Ramesh, the poll panel has asked him to share details regarding his claim by 7 pm Sunday. The EC has referred to his post on X June 1, in which the Congress general secretary had alleged that "the outgoing Home Minister has been calling up DMs/Collectors. So far, he has spoken to 150 of them. This is blatant and brazen intimidation, showing how desperate the BJP is..."

The process of counting votes is a sacred duty cast upon every returning officer and such public statements "tend to put an element of doubt and thus, deserves to be addressed in larger

public interest", the EC has told Ramesh. It has also told the Congress leader that when the Model Code of Conduct is in force, all officers are under the deemed deputation of the commission and they report directly to the poll watchdog for any directions.

"However, no DM has reported any such undue influence as alleged by you..." the EC's letter to Ramesh has stated. "It is requested that details of 150 DMs to whom such calls have been allegedly made by the Home Minister along with the factual matrix/basis of your information are shared by 7 pm today -- June 2, 2024, so that appropriate action can be taken," it has told the Congress leader.

It has said that being a responsible, experienced and very senior leader of a national party, Ramesh must have made such a public statement ahead of the counting day on the basis of facts or information he believes to be true.



Restoration and relief work underway after a goods train derailed in an accident at Sirhind in Fatehgarh Sahib

Minor's parents sent to police custody till June 5

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, June 2: The parents of a 17-year-old boy allegedly involved in a Porsche car accident tampered with his blood sample by visiting the state-run Sassoon General Hospital in Pune, a court was told Sunday.

The police made this claim while seeking the remand of the couple in connection with the destruction of evidence related to the May 19 accident, which claimed the lives of two IT professionals. The couple has been remanded to police custody until

PUNE CAR CRASH



The minor's mother, Shivani Agarwal, was arrested June 1, after it emerged that the boy's blood samples were replaced with hers

Vishal Agarwal, the boy's father and a realtor, was previously taken into custody for allegedly destroying evidence related to the case

June 5. Both parents were produced before a holiday court, where police sought a seven-day remand for further investigation.

The police told the court that the parents allegedly conspired and destroyed the evidence related to the car crash. The

Heatwaves, flash floods: India's weather story so far

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jun 2: Sweltering heatwave in north India that have caused scores of deaths, floods and landslides in the northeast that have affected lakhs of people, a spring season that suggests it could soon "disappear" from the calendar — extreme weather events in the first five months of 2024 have got everyone questioning: where is all this headed?

Despite having made predictions to this effect, climate scientists acknowledge that the temperatures this summer, including the outlier 52.9 degrees Celsius in Delhi, are "alarming, though not surprising".

"This could be the worst summer in the last 120 years, at least for north India. Never have temperatures gone so high — more than 45-47 degrees Celsius — for such a vast region, which is also densely populated. This is a record in itself," Vimal Mishra,

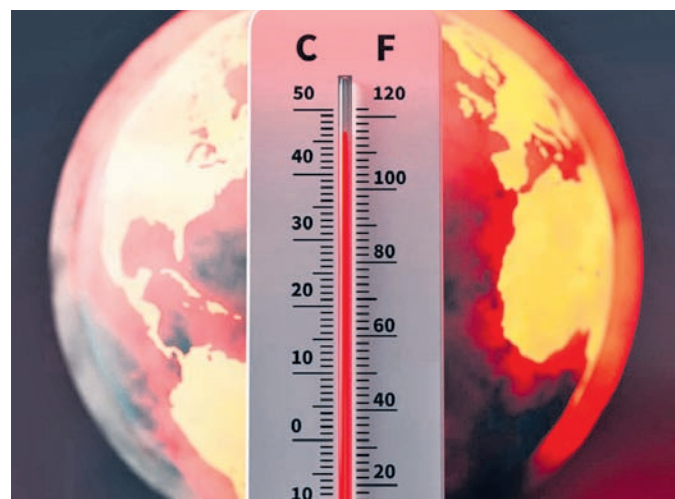
Vikram Sarabhai Chair Professor, Civil Engineering and Earth Sciences, IIT Gandhinagar, told PTI.

The temperatures, "similar to those in Africa's Sahara desert," are "far beyond expectations" by at least three or four degrees, according to Mishra.

Earth system scientist Raghu Murtugudde, professor at IIT-Bombay, told PTI this was due to the combined effect of multiple phenomena - climate change, El Nino and the water vapour released by Tonga's Hunga Tonga volcanic eruption in January 2022.

El Nino causes a warming of the sea surface temperatures, affecting the world's weather.

"The Middle East is getting hotter very fast because the desert traps the heat during global warming — warmer atmosphere is more humid and water vapour is a greenhouse gas," Murtugudde said. This warming is causing winds over



the Arabian Sea to shift northward during summer itself and also during the monsoon. These winds are also warming the Arabian Sea very fast and bringing more humid air to Delhi, thereby raising the heat index.

Studies have linked longer, intense heatwaves to a rise in hos-

pitalisations, premature births and also adverse outcomes such as miscarriages in pregnant women. Research has also projected a rise in inflation and a decline in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) across the world due to climate change.

The hottest temperatures in

the country for the day, however, registered from Haryana's Rohtak and Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj - 48.8 degrees Celsius - an all-time high of maximum temperatures in the cities for May. The previous highest maximum temperatures ever for Rohtak and Prayagraj were 47.2 degrees Celsius and 48.4 degrees Celsius, respectively, recorded June 6, 1995, and May 30, 1994, respectively.

Una in Himachal logged a 19-year high of 46 degrees Celsius, breaking its previous record of 45.2 degrees seen in June 2005, May 2013 and June 2019. Maximum temperatures in the state were firmly six to eight degrees above normal, with Shimla also registering its highest this season at 31.7 degrees Celsius May 29.

The week also saw flash floods in Assam and Manipur, and landslides in Mizoram and Meghalaya triggered by Cyclone Nargal. At least 6 lakh people have been af-

ected by it.

In many northern regions of the country, the "spring season is disappearing," the researchers said.

They also showed that increasingly more states, including Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, faced the likelihood of experiencing over 40 degrees Celsius temperatures in late March, which used to be about five per cent in the 1970s and in fewer states.

Temperatures continued to rise firmly in April, with above-normal temperatures being recorded in parts of Jodhpur and Bikaner in Rajasthan at 40-42 degrees Celsius, and in Goa at 33-35 degrees Celsius.

The heatwave, part of a larger one impacting billions across South and Southeast Asia, was made about 45 times more likely and 0.85 degrees Celsius hotter due to climate change, scientists from the World Weather Attribution group found.

international



The success of the International Health Regulations amendments demonstrates that in our divided and divisive world, countries can still come together to find common cause and common ground
TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WHO

NEW CROWN PRINCE

Kuwait's ruling emir Saturday named the small nation's new crown prince, Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al Sabah, nearly six months after he took the throne



of the day quote

These acts (genocide in Gaza) demand a firm and permanent response of the international community
GABRIEL BORIC | PRESIDENT, CHILE

We can only stay out of the war if Hungarian voters support the government. We must win the European elections in such a way that the Brussels bureaucrats in their fear will open the doors of the city to us and leave their offices in a hurry
VIKTOR ORBÁN | PM, HUNGARY

Full membership of CERN is important for Estonia since it will mean that there will no longer be any financial ceiling when it comes to us taking part in tenders and entering into employment contracts
TIT RIISALO | MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, ESTONIA

SHORT TAKES

Haiti gets new PM

Miami: A UN development specialist tasked with restoring order to Haiti arrived Saturday to the Caribbean nation to take up his new post as Prime Minister. A transitional council seeking to pave the way for an election in Haiti named Garry Conille this week. He replaces interim Prime Minister Michel Patrick Boisvert, who he met upon arrival Saturday to the capital, Port-au-Prince, according to a government statement. Conille has been UNICEF's regional director for Latin America and the Caribbean since January 2023 and previously served as Haiti's Prime Minister from October 2011 to May 2012 under the then president Michel Martelly. Gang violence is still surging in parts of Haiti's capital and beyond as Conille takes over the helm of the troubled country awaiting the UN-backed deployment of a police force from Kenya and other countries.

Pak's polio setback

Islamabad: Pakistan has reported the fourth polio case of the year, jolting the country's efforts to eradicate the crippling disease. The case was reported Saturday as the government appointed a new head of the polio eradication programme after his predecessor stepped down during the week. The Dawn newspaper reported having a document showing that the victim was a 30-month-old child hailing from the Lakhri region of the Shikarpur district of the Sindh province. This case was the first to be reported from the Sindh province, as the previous three victims belonged to Balochistan.

ASIA SECURITY CONFERENCE

Nations trade barbs

Zelenskyy dominates Shangri-La Dialogue forum as China, Taiwan, US exchange heated words

REUTERS

Singapore, June 2: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's unscheduled appearance at Asia's biggest security conference dominated proceedings Sunday after China's defence chief slammed "separatists" in Taiwan, drawing a sharp response from the government in Taipei.

Dressed in his trademark olive green T-shirt, Zelenskyy addressed the last day of the Shangri-La Dialogue forum in Singapore, asking for support and participation at a summit in Switzerland later this month aimed at bringing peace to his war-ravaged nation.

"We are convinced that our world wants to be united and be capable of acting in complete harmony," he said to a ballroom packed full of delegates in formal business wear and military uniforms.

Zelenskyy told a news conference that he was not able to meet the Chinese delegation at the conference and was disappointed that Beijing would not attend the summit.

"China, unfortunately... is working for countries not to come to the peace summit," he said.

Earlier, China's defence chief, Dong Jun, warned that prospects of a peaceful "reunification" of Taiwan were being eroded, and promised to ensure the island would never gain independence. China views democratically

governed Taiwan as its own territory, over the strong objections of the government in Taipei, and last month staged war games around the island in anger at the inauguration of President Lai Ching-te, who Beijing calls a "separatist".

"Those separatists recently made fanatical statements that show their betrayal of the Chinese nation and their ancestors. They will be nailed to the pillar of shame in history," Dong said.

He added that although China was committed to peaceful reunification with Taiwan, the People's Liberation Army "will remain a strong force for upholding national reunification".

Taiwan's China-policy making Mainland Affairs Council said in response that it deeply regretted the "provocative and irrational" comments, and reiterated that the People's Republic of China has never ruled the island.

China has repeatedly threatened force against Taiwan at international venues, and its threats violate the United Nations charter, the council said in a statement.

A US official, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter, said Dong's speech covered little new ground.

"Every year for three years, a new Chinese defence minister has come to Shangri-La," the official said. "And every year, they've given a speech at com-



US trying to build Asia-Pacific version of NATO, says China

The US is trying to build an Asia-Pacific version of NATO through its Indo-Pacific strategy to maintain its hegemony in the region, a Chinese defence official has said, stressing that Washington's attempt to serve its "selfish" geopolitical interest is "doomed to fail". The remarks by Lieutenant General Jing Jianfeng, deputy chief of staff of the Joint Staff Department of the Central Military Commission, came in response to US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin's speech during the Shangri-La Dialogue Saturday in which he spoke about strengthening alliances and partnerships across the region. Lieutenant-General Jing warned that if regional countries were to sign up for the US' Indo-Pacific strategy, they would be bound to the "US war chariot" and be lured into "taking bullets for the US". He termed Austin's remarks as "rhetoric" that "sounds good but does no good, one that serves "selfish US geopolitical interests" and which is "doomed to fail". "The real purpose is to merge the small circle into the large circle of the Asia-Pacific version of NATO so as to maintain the hegemony led by the US," Jing, a member of the Chinese delegation, said Saturday.

plete odds with the reality of the PLA's coercive activity across the region. This year was no different."

Dong's speech came a day after US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told delegates the Indo-Pacific region remained a key focus for the United States, even as it grappled with security assistance for Ukraine and the

war in Gaza. "Let me be clear: The United States can be secure only if Asia is secure," Austin said. "That's why the United States has long maintained our presence in this region."

Dong and Austin met for more than an hour Friday on the sidelines of the conference, their first face-to-face meeting.

GAZA TRUCE

Israel accepts Biden's plan: Netanyahu aide

REUTERS

Jerusalem, June 2: An aide to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed Sunday that Israel had accepted a framework deal for winding down the Gaza war now being advanced by US President Joe Biden, though he described it as flawed and in need of much more work.

In an interview with Britain's Sunday Times, Ophir Falk, chief foreign policy advisor to Netanyahu, said Biden's proposal was "a deal we agreed to, it's not a good deal but we dearly want the hostages released, all of them".

"There are a lot of details to be worked out," he said, adding that Israeli conditions, including "the release of the hostages and the destruction of Hamas as a genocidal terrorist organization" have not changed.

Biden, whose initial lockstep support for Israel's offensive has given way to open censure of the operation's high civilian death toll, Friday aired what he described as a three-phase plan submitted by the Netanyahu government to end the war.

The first phase entails a truce and the return of some hostages held by Hamas, after which the sides would negotiate on an open-ended cessation of hostilities for a second phase in which remaining live captives would go free, Biden said.

That sequencing appears to imply that Hamas would con-



tinue to play a role in incremental arrangements mediated by Egypt and Qatar - a potential clash with Israel's determination to resume the campaign to eliminate the Iranian-backed Islamist group.

Biden has hailed several ceasefire proposals over the past several months, each with similar frameworks to the one he outlined Friday, all of which collapsed. In February he said Israel had agreed to halt fighting by Ramadan, the Muslim holy month that began March 10. No such truce materialised.

The primary sticking point has been Israel's insistence that it would discuss only temporary pauses to fighting until Hamas is destroyed. Hamas, which shows no sign of stepping aside, says it will free hostages only under a path to a permanent end to the war.

In his speech, Biden said his latest proposal "creates a better 'day after' in Gaza without Hamas in power". He did not elaborate on how this would be achieved, and acknowledged that "there are a number of details to negotiate to move from phase one to phase two".

SA coalition talks hit deadlock

SOUTH AFRICA'S ANC SAYS IT WON'T DITCH RAMAPHOSA TO FORM COALITION

REUTERS

Johannesburg, June 2: South Africa's once dominant African National Congress acknowledged that it had been humbled by an election that ended its 30-year majority but vowed not to replace President Cyril Ramaphosa as a condition to forming a new governing coalition.

Official results from Wednesday's vote, due Sunday evening, will confirm the end of the ANC's unchallenged grip on political power and start the clock on a race to strike a deal with one or more opposition parties.

Political parties will then have two weeks to work out a deal before a new parliament sits to choose a president, who would



likely still emerge from the ANC as the biggest party.

Voters, angry at joblessness, inequality and rolling blackouts, slashed support for the legacy party of Nelson Mandela to 40%, down from 57.5% in the 2019 parliamentary vote.

"Did we commit mistakes? Yes, we did. In governance and everywhere else," Fikile Mbalula, the party's secretary general, said Sunday during the first

press briefing the ANC has held since the polls, adding the party had "nothing to celebrate."

The result means that the ANC must now share power, likely with a major political rival, in order to keep it - an unprecedented prospect since the democratic end of white minority rule in 1994.

"The ANC is committed to the formation of a government that reflects the will of the people, that is stable and that is able to govern effectively," Mbalula said.

The party's poor showing has fuelled speculation that Ramaphosa's days might be numbered, either due to the demands of a prospective coalition partner or as a result of an internal leadership challenge.



Italian aerobatic squad 'Frecce Tricolori' flies over Rome as part of the celebrations for Italy's Republic Day in Rome, Sunday

Iceland elects entrepreneur as new Prez

Copenhagen: Halla Tomasdottir, an entrepreneur, has won Iceland's presidential election and will take over the mostly ceremonial role from incumbent Gudni Johannesson, broadcaster RUV reported Sunday. Tomasdottir, 55, received 34% of the votes cast in Saturday's election in the North Atlantic nation, to beat former Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdottir, who stepped down as premier in April to run for president. She garnered 25% of votes, according to RUV. The president, who is elected for a four-year term, carries limited political powers but often acts as a unifying figure in the island nation of almost 400,000 people, which is a NATO member. Tomasdottir, who will be the seventh President of Iceland since the foundation of the republic in 1944, also ran for president eight years ago when she came in second behind Johannesson.



Mexico about to crown first woman Prez

Mexico City: Mexicans are voting in national elections Sunday with the ruling party candidate, Claudia Sheinbaum, commanding a hefty lead in the polls and expected to become the country's first female President. Polls have consistently placed Sheinbaum about 20 percentage points ahead of her closest challenger, Xochitl Galvez of an opposition coalition comprised of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which ruled Mexico for about seven decades until democratic elections in 2000, the right-wing PAN, and the leftist PRD party. Sheinbaum, speaking to journalists from the passenger side of a car, said it was a historic day and that she felt at ease and content on her way to vote. Galvez, a businesswoman and senator, was also seen chatting with supporters as she arrived to cast her ballot shortly after the polls opened.



Pak's 1st woman brigadier from minority community

DR HELEN MARY ROBERTS, WHO HAILS FROM THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, SCRIPTS HISTORY AFTER ACHIEVING HIGHEST MILITARY RANK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, June 2: Dr Helen Mary Roberts, serving in the Pakistan Army Medical Corps, has made history by becoming the first woman from Christian and minority community to achieve the rank of brigadier in the country's history. Brigadier Helen was among Pakistan Army officers promoted as brigadiers and full colonels by the Selection Board,

The News reported Sunday. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif congratulated Helen on her promotion as Brigadier, saying the whole nation was proud of her and thousands of hardworking women like her from minority communities who are serving the country with distinction. During a Christmas celebration at Christ Church in Rawalpindi last year, Pakistan Army chief General Asim Munir had commended the role played by the minority community in the country's development. Brigadier Dr Helen is senior pathologist and has been serving in the Pakistan Army for the

last 26 years. According to data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics in 2021, there are 96.47 per cent Muslims in the country, followed by 2.14 per cent Hindus, 1.27 per cent Christians, 0.09 per cent Ahmadi Muslims and 0.02 per cent others.

504 terrorists killed in last five months

Pakistani authorities have neutralised a total of 504 terrorists in the last five months in the country's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces, according to a report issued by the security agencies. The report, which is a compilation of inputs from country's forces on the operations against the militants, said that the terrorists killed in the last five



months includes important commanders of the banned outfits TTP and Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group. "The Security forces in their

hot pursuit against terrorism, mowed down 504 terrorists in first five months of 2024 (January-May) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan Provinces. Important commanders of the banned outfit TTP and Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group were also killed," said the report.

According to the report, over 158 militants have been arrested for allegedly being involved in money extortion, target killings, kidnapping for ransom and provision of financial assistance to the militants in the same period. The militants carried out 398 attacks against security forces in which 240 innocent civilians lost their lives and 200 security personnel embraced martyrdom while fighting in the line of duty, said the report.

The security forces and police conducted joint 479 intelligence-based operations.

South Korea pledges 'unendurable' response to North's trash balloons



REUTERS

Seoul, June 2: South Korea said Sunday it would take "unendurable" measures against North Korea for sending trash balloons over the border, which could include blaring propaganda from loudspeakers back at the North.

The announcement from President Yoon Suk Yeol's office followed a meeting by his National Security Council on a response to what Seoul said were more than 700 balloons carrying trash that Pyongyang sent over the heavily fortified border to rile its rival neighbour.

The council condemned the balloons and GPS jamming as an "irrational act of provocation". Seoul did not rule out resuming the loudspeaker blasts, which it stopped in 2018 after a rare summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, a senior official at Yoon's office told reporters.

The democratic South and the

communist North remain technically at war since the 1950-1953 Korean War ended in an armistice rather than a peace treaty. Seoul is a firm US ally whose sophisticated military regularly holds drills with the US, while Pyongyang is developing missile and nuclear technology that Seoul and Washington say violates UN resolutions.

North Korea has said its balloons were in retaliation for a propaganda campaign by North Korean defectors and activists in South Korea, who regularly send inflatables containing anti-Pyongyang leaflets, food, medicine, money and USB sticks loaded with K-pop music videos and dramas across the border.

The North Korean balloons carrying garbage such as cigarette butts, cloth, paper waste and plastic were found across the capital Seoul from 8 pm Saturday to 1 pm Sunday, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

Late Real show sinks Dortmund

15TH RECORD-EXTENDING CHAMPIONS LEAGUE TITLE FOR SPANISH GIANTS, THE MOST BY ANY EUROPEAN CLUB



NIGHT OF CHAMPIONS: Players of Real Madrid and coach Carlo Ancelotti celebrate with the trophy Saturday night in London after winning the Champions League final



Vinicius (Jr) enjoys the spotlight with a teammate on his shoulder after scoring the second goal against Dortmund

London, June 1: Jude Bellingham described it as 'the best night in his life' as Real Madrid won their 15th Champions League title at a raucous Wembley Stadium here Saturday. They delivered another late surge to claim a 2-0 victory over a Borussia Dortmund team who had threatened an upset win after dominating the first hour.

With Dortmund having made, but spurned, several good chances, Real Madrid took control when Dani Carvajal headed in from a corner after 74 minutes and Vinicius (Jr) fired home the second to break German hearts.

Victory secured the trophy for the sixth time in 11 seasons and it was Real's 11th straight triumph in a European final—their last defeat coming against Aberdeen in the Cup Winners' Cup 41 years ago. They have now won the continent's most prestigious club competition more than twice as often as the next best team.

It was a record-extending fifth success as a coach for Carlo Ancelotti, who also won the trophy twice as a player with AC Milan. "You can never get used to this, because it was difficult, more than expected. We suffered a lot in the first half. In the second half, we were better, we had fewer losses. This is a dream

You can never get used to this, because it was difficult, more than expected. We suffered a lot in the first half. In the second half, we were better

CARLO ANCELOTTI — COACH

that continues," Ancelotti said after the game.

Words bouncing around in post-match interviews Saturday included 'clinical', 'ice-cold', and 'belief', while Carvajal summed up the match perfectly after the latest turnaround as his side completed a LaLiga-Champions League double.

"After the first half we didn't even deserve to go to the changing room," Carvajal said. "But we came out of the first half alive, knowing that we would have our moment... and here it is."

Dortmund, who had shocked Paris St Germain in the semifinals, had a dream first half in every aspect other than scoring. Their first good chance came after 21 minutes when Karim Adeyemi went too wide when rounding goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

Then came a flurry of opportunities as Nicolas Fullkrug hit the post and low shots by Julian Brandt and Marcel Sabitzer were saved by Courtois.

Real were unfazed by what was happening, however, and

looked livelier from the start of the second half without really threatening.

Courtois saved a diving header from Fullkrug and Dortmund were soon ruing the misses as 5ft 8 inches full-back Carvajal rose to meet a Toni Kroos corner and steer in a glancing header.

Madrid added their second goal when Dortmund's Ian Maatsen gave the ball away on the edge of his box. La Liga player of the year and former Dortmund midfielder Bellingham fed Vinicius (Jr) in space and the Brazilian fired home unerringly.

"I can't have dreamed it much better than this," Bellingham told 'TNT Sports' on the field moments after the final whistle.

SHORT TAKES

Gambhir would love to coach Team India

Dubai: Former India batter Gautam Gambhir has said he would 'love to coach' the national team amid speculation that he is front-runner for the high-profile job. Gambhir recently guided KKR to their third IPL title as mentor and is seen as an able successor to Rahul Dravid, whose contract expires after the ongoing T20 World Cup. However, it is still not clear whether Gambhir has applied for the position. "I would love to coach the Indian team. There is no bigger honour than coaching your national team. You are representing 140 crore Indians and those across the globe as well," said the 42-year-old Saturday at an event in Abu Dhabi.

Maradona trophy auction postponed

Paris: The auction of a trophy awarded to the late Diego Maradona which was planned this week here has been postponed, French auction house 'Aguttes' said Sunday amid a judicial investigation looking into the possible resale of stolen goods. Maradona's heirs this week failed to stop the auction of the 'Golden Ball' trophy he received for being the best player at the 1986 World Cup by starting an urgent judicial motion. A French court ruled the auction could go ahead. "Maradona has always aroused passions and so our mission is to organise the auction in the best possible conditions, both for our seller and for the buyers," Maximilien Aguttes said in a statement.

Fenerbahce appoint Mourinho as coach

London: Two-time Champions League winning Jose Mourinho will be the new coach of Turkish club Fenerbahce, he announced Saturday. The Portuguese coach, who won the Champions League with Porto and Inter Milan, has not worked since he was sacked by Italian Serie A side Roma in January. He has also managed Chelsea, Manchester United, Tottenham and Real Madrid. The 61-year-old Portuguese confirmed the move at the Champions League final at Wembley. "Good evening Fenerbahce fans, see you tomorrow (Sunday) at Kadikoy (Istanbul suburb where club is based) and let's start our journey together," Mourinho said on the club's 'X' account.

Boxers Amit, Jaismine seal Paris spot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangkok, June 2: World Championships silver medallist boxer Amit Panghal and national champion Jaismine Lamboria qualified for the Paris Olympics with contrasting quarterfinal wins at the 2nd World Qualification Tournament here Sunday.

Panghal's comeback to the Indian team culminated in the fifth Olympic quota in boxing as the multiple-time Asian Championships medallist notched a 5-0 win over China's Chuang Liu for a ticket to his second Olympics.

Jaismine, who dropped down from 60kg, then reclaimed the women's 57kg quota for the country, which India had to be surrender after holder Parveen Hooda was suspended for whereabouts failure last month. Jaismine out-punched Marine Camara of Mali in a rather lop-sided quarterfinal.

Panghal and Jaismine thus join the quartet of Nishant Dev (71kg), Nikhat Zareen (50kg), Preeti Pawar (54kg) and Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) in booking Olympic berths. Panghal had only one shot at making the Paris Olympics and the 2018 Asian Games champion made



Amit Panghal



Jaismine Lamboria

the most of his opportunity.

The going has been tough for Panghal as he lost his place in the national team on the basis of Boxing Federation of India's (BF) evaluation system to World Championship bronze medallist Deepak Bhoria, who competed at the earlier two qualifying events.

Since the Tokyo Olympics, the only big-ticket event that the Haryana boxer has competed in was the Commonwealth Games in 2022, where he won the gold medal. He also emerged victorious at the prestigious Strandja Memorial tournament earlier this year.

The quarterfinal bout began on a rather sedate note with both

boxers trying to assess each other. One minute into the bout, Liu went after Panghal. At a height disadvantage, the Indian struggled to find his range, and he did manage to land a couple of scoring shots but didn't engage much.

Trailing 1-4, Panghal, a three-time Asian Championship medallist, changed his strategy. He went on the offensive, beginning the second round on a positive note. And it worked for him for the rest of the match.

In the last three minutes, Liu changed his game and moved closer to Panghal. It was an energy sapping affair as both boxers traded punches, going hammer and tongs at each other. In the end, Panghal prevailed.

HUGE GAME FOR PLAYERS: STIMAC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, June 2: Indian football team coach Igor Stimac said Sunday the upcoming FIFA World Cup Qualifier against Kuwait could 'change the careers' of his players and described it as a 'huge game'. The match will be played June 6 at the Salt Lake Stadium here.

Despite their shocking loss to lower-ranked Afghanistan in the home leg match in Guwahati in March, the hosts can still make a maiden entry into the third round of qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup.

"It's a huge game. The careers of the boys can change with this game. I want them to enjoy and do their best in the game," Stimac was quoted as saying by the All India Football Federation (AIFF).

India, who slipped to 121 in FIFA rankings after gaining just a solitary point in their two meetings with Afghanistan, will look to put up a much better display against Kuwait in what will also be talisman Sunil Chhetri's farewell from international football.

"For such an important game, we need to do a few things; in re-

Praggnan's giant-killing act continues in Norway

Indian after beating World No.1 Carlsen, now beats World No. 2 Caruana



R Praggnanandhaa contemplates his next move during the match against Fabiano Caruana

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Stavanger (Norway), June 2: Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa scored a massive, hard-earned victory over World No.2 Fabiano Caruana of the United States and enter the top-10 world rankings after the end of fifth round of Norway Chess tournament here.

Hikaru Nakamura of the United States got the better of off-colour World Champion Ding Liren of China to stretch his lead to a full point over Magnus Carlsen of Norway. Nakamura currently has 10 points in his kitty while Praggnanandhaa with 8.5 points is lying fourth. Carlsen outwitted Firouzja Alireza of France from a drawn rook and pawns endgame.

In the women's event being held simultaneously, R Vaishali continued her dream run and defeated Tingkie Lei of China in the 'Armageddon' format to keep her lead on 10 points. Anna Muzychuk is the closest to the Indian and is a full point behind after defeating Pia Cramling of Sweden in the 'Classical' format.

Praggnanandhaa played out a Carlsenque endgame to grind down Caruana. The Catalan

opening by the Indian saw exchange of pieces at regular intervals and the players reached a rook and knight endgame before the 40th move itself.

The same side pawns even with an extra pawn is known to be a theoretical draw but Praggnanandhaa kept playing till Caruana collapsed on his 66th move and blundered his last pawn. It took 11 more moves for Praggnanandhaa to convert the mistake into a full point.

Carlsen had a similar outing and his was even an easier draw that Alireza missed in the rook and pawns endgame. Carlsen had to wait for as many as 77 moves for Alireza to make a serious mistake and five moves later, the World No.1 had cruised to another victory from an equal endgame.

In the women's section, Vaishali played out a draw under the 'Classical' time control format. However, she outplayed the Chinese in the 'Armageddon' format to bag a point.

This was Vaishali's second win under 'Armageddon' in the tournament along with two wins in 'Classical'. Her lone loss came against Wenjun Ju in the first round.

Swiatek, Alcaraz advance, Djokovic survives a scare

AGENCIES

Paris, June 2: After the French Open marathon came the sprint. Defending champion Iga Swiatek swept into the quarterfinals at Roland Garros in just 40 minutes after a crushing 6-0, 6-0 win against Anastasia Potapova.

Swiatek won without even facing a game point against her. "I was just really focused and in the zone," Swiatek said. "It went pretty quickly, pretty weird."

The match started at around 11.00am. That's just eight hours after men's defending champion Novak Djokovic finished his five-set, 41/2-hour marathon against Lorenzo Musetti just after 3.00am in the latest finish in tournament history. Djokovic won 7-5, 6-7 (6/8), 2-6, 6-3, 6-0 and remained on course

Bopanna, Ebden in second round

Paris: Second seeds Rohan Bopanna and Matthew Ebden overcame fighting Brazilians Orlando Luz and Marcelo Zormann in a testing three-set opening round at the French Open here Sunday. The Brazilians made life tough for the Australian Open champions who scraped through 7-5, 4-6, 6-4 in two hours and seven minutes.

for a fourth French Open title.

Among the other winners Sunday was title-contender Carlos Alcaraz. He put up a tennis masterclass as he thrashed Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-3, 6-3, 6-1 to reach the pre-quarterfinals.

Babar asks mates to remain calm

AGENCIES

New York, June 2: The hype, the expectations and the pressure around India-Pakistan games certainly makes players nervous, according to Pakistan skipper Babar Azam who advised his side to stay calm and stick to basics during the much-awaited T20 World Cup clash, here Sunday. India have lost only once to Pakistan in the T20 World Cup in seven meetings.

"We know Pakistan-India fixture generates more discussion than any other match. Obviously, the expectations and the hype around this match cause some nervousness. It all comes down to how you handle it. It's a game of immense pressure, and if you keep your head cool, stay calm and trust your hard work and skills, things will be easier," Babar said in a PCB podcast.

Batting order not fixed: Rohit

AGENCIES

New York, June 2: The Indian team are yet to 'nail' their batting line-up for the T20 World Cup and much shouldn't be read into the think tank's decision to send Rishabh Pant at No. 3 in the warm-match against Bangladesh, skipper Rohit Sharma said after the game Saturday.

"It was just to give him (Pant) an opportunity to bat higher up the order. We have not really nailed down what the batting unit will look like. Even the bowlers did pretty well. All in all happy with how things went," Rohit stated when asked about Pant.

"Pretty much got what we wanted from the game. Like I said at the toss, it was important to get used to the conditions. New venue, new ground, drop-in pitch – important to get used to these factors. We man-



aged pretty well," Rohit added.

Rohit also praised pacer Arshdeep Singh. "He has shown us, in whatever games he has played, he has the skills up-front. He has got a very good skill-set (at the death too). We saw it today (Saturday). He bowled pretty well, swung the ball up front, and then bowled one at the back-end. We have got 15 good players.

We have to see what the conditions are and then see what combination is best for us," the Indian skipper added.

Head coach Rahul Dravid said the pitch was a bit soft and spongy, while lauding the performance of his players. "It's great to get a good hit-out. Obviously, it looks like a good facility," Dravid stated.