

Rush begins for Darshan

Puri(KCN): A large number of devotees started arriving at the pilgrim town of Puri to

ritual.

However, in an aim to ensure timely completion of all rituals of the deities, the temple administration has announced that devotees can be allowed to have darshan of Lords till 4 PM on Friday. This decision has brought sadness in the face of devotees as many want to have darshan of the deities in the evening till Aarati. Puri SP KV Singh said all arrangements related to security and traffic has been made in and around the town for the Sandhya Darshan and Bahuda.

Barricades have been put in various places, forces have been deployed near the Gundicha Temple and other places, he said.

Meanwhile, preparation for the Bahuda Jatra of Mahaprabhu is going on. The three chariots were given 'dakhina moda' (turning towards the south) on Wednesday. The chariots were pulled to the exit gate called Nakachana dwara and parked facing towards the main temple. Devotees in large numbers were seen visiting Shree Gundicha temple every day to offer prayers to the deities and consume the Adap abadha (Mahaprasad). As per belief, anyone offering prayers to the deities on Adap Mandap (in the sanctum sanctorum of Shree Gundicha temple atop the Ratnasimhasan) gets freed from the cycle of rebirth.



get a glimpse of Lord Jagannath and his sibling deities Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra during Sandhya Darshan on 8 July. Before boarding at the chariots for Bahuda Jatra, Trinity will give their last darshan to the devotees in the Adapa Mandapa of the Shree Gundicha Gruha on Ashada Shukla Navami. This darshan is known as Sandhya Darshan because a special Aarati is performed during the Sandhya Dhupa ritual. It is believed that by getting a Darshan of Trinity during the day hours one gathers blessings but the same increases by ten times if the darshan is done during the Sandhya Dhupa

British education system meant to create 'servant class' in India, changes still needed: PM

Varanasi (KCN): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the

Policy (NEP), Modi said the system should not just produce degree-holders

class for themselves to meet their needs. "After Independence there were some

now cite Google to counter others. "We should create a system in our campuses



British gave the country an education system to create a servant class for meeting their own needs and a lot of it still remained unchanged.

Addressing a summit here on the implementation of the National Education

but provide human resources needed to take the country forward.

He said the purpose of the education system created in the country was only to provide jobs. The British provided this education system to prepare a servant

changes in it but a lot remained," he said at the inauguration of a three-day meeting organised by the Union Education Ministry with the University Grants Commission and the Banaras Hindu University.

Modi said children

that when these students arrive there in the next few years they get what they want," he said.

"We have to delve into the details of the challenges and problems and find solutions. The NEP is opening doors for
CONTINUED ON: P-7



Dr. Pradeep Kumar Panda presenting his book titled "Maritime History of Ancient Odisha" to His Excellency Governor of Odisha Prof. Ganeshi Lal.

Russia taking 'operational pause' in Ukraine, says analysts

KYIV: Foreign analysts say Russia may be temporarily easing its offensive in Ukraine as the Russian military attempts to reassemble its forces for a renewed assault.

On Wednesday, Russian forces made no claimed or assessed territorial gains in Ukraine "for the first time in 133 days of war," according to the Institute for the Study of War. The think tank based in Washington suggested that Moscow may be taking an "operational pause" that does not entail "the complete cessation of active hostilities."

"Russian forces will likely confine themselves to relatively small-scale offensive ac-



tions as they attempt to set conditions for more significant offensive operations and rebuild the combat power
CONTINUED ON: P-7

Murmu as President will be a matter of pride for country: Maha CM Shinde



Thane (KCN): Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has said it is a matter of pride that Droupadi Murmu, a tribal community member, has been nominated for the post of the country's President.

Shinde was talking to reporters here on Wednesday after holding a couple of meetings at the Thane district collectorate. Some media persons asked him about his view on Shiv Sena

Lok Sabha member Rahul Shewale urging former CM Uddhav Thackeray to ask party MPs to support NDA's nominee Murmu, considering her tribal roots and contribution to the social sector.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given an opportunity to Murmu to become the country's President. It is a matter of pride and honour. I am also proud that a tribal community member has been

nominated for the post," he said. The presidential election will be held on July 18.

Asked about a photograph of him with NCP chief Sharad Pawar going viral on social media platforms, Shinde said he had not met the veteran politician recently and the picture was not a recent one. Shinde said after becoming the CM, he had not met Pawar. The CM further said Pawar is a big leader

in the state and the country, and wondered what is wrong in meeting him.

"I have met him on earlier occasions. As the chief minister, I can meet him anytime," he added. Shinde had also said rumours were spread that he had met Pawar on Tuesday. "My photo with NCP chief Sharad Pawar is being made viral. There was no such meeting. Please don't believe in rumours," Shinde tweeted on Wednesday.

Online Odia Poetry Reading Session was organized by Mo Lekha Mo Dunia Sahitya Sansad, Kalahandi

Bhawanipatna (KCN): On the occasion of the holy Rathayatra of the world-famous Mahaprabhu Sri Jagannath, an evening online poetry reading session was organized by **Mo Lekha Mo Dunia Sahitya Sansad**, Kalahandi under the leadership of youth poet Khusiram Sahu. Dr. Ravi Narayan Panda, Professor, Shri Ram chandra Bhanj College of Medical Sciences, Cuttack, was invited

Tikemani Buddhia, Urmila Goud, Dillip Kumar Nandi from Kalahandi, Bijay Kumar Swain, Sasmita Behera, Raj Kishore Mundi from Cuttack, Ashok Kumar Nayak from Nayagarh, Govind Behera, Prashant Kumar from Kendrapada. Benudhar Behera, Subhas Chandra Bishwal, Saroj Kumar Behera from Bhadrak, Ranjita Sahu from Jagatsinghpur, Jagadish Shatapathi, Anasuya Mallik,



as the chief guest.. In his speech, he greeted all the poets and expressed his views on the Odia language in the field of broadcast, dissemination and literary pursuit of the Odia language.. Mr. Sanatan Mahakud, a Yoga Guru from Kolkata, joined as the guest of honor and greeted everyone and pray before Lord Jagannath for the development of the institution. The event was chaired by Chandrakant Biswal, Director of the Institute, Adviser & International Poet Dr. Bhawani Shankar Nial, Bharati Rath, Rajkishore Mundi, Manmath Swain, Sushant Rana, Kamalini Chandi were the dignitaries.. Participation of poets includes Bijay Kumar Thandi from Balangir, Priyadarshini Mishra, Chaitanya Bag,

Jagmohanpradhan, Surendra Kumar Behera, Suryakant Jena from Jajpur, Sarang Dhar Sahu from Dhenkanal, Pinku Ranbida from Sambalpur, Kumar swai, Subrat kumar Pradhan from Anugol, Chittaranjan Prusti, Rupali Priyadarshini Samantaraya from Puri, Ratinarayana Raut, Debabrata Nayak from Kendujhar, Surath Paika from Gajapati, Pramila Pani, Prasanna Kumar Sahu, Madhusmita Sahu from Ganjam, Nikunj Kumar Ghosh from Baleswar, Balaji Sethi from Malkangiri, Subash Chandra Sahu from Rayagada, Jayashri khatua from Mayurbhanj, Chandan Soni, Ankita Priyadarshini Sahu from Bargarh who presented their poems with active participation.

Canberra hosted lord Jagannath's Car Festival

Canberra(KCN): The Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Canberra hosted 11th Car Festival of Lord Jagannath with unusual Pomp



and utmost Splendour. The Ceremony organised by Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre in association with Vishnu Shiva Temple witnessed the performance of religious rituals from the dawn by Temple priest before the



four Deities stationed at Hindu Temple. To mark the auspicious occasion the Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre situated at 81, Ratchliffe Crescent in Florey was aesthetically decorated and was wearing an ethnic and el-

egant look. This year's Rath Yatra witnessed tremendous enthusiasm and unprecedented enchantments among the spectators gathered at Jagannath Dham to participate in the holy ceremony. Apart from residents of ACT



Canberra around 300 Odia and Non - Odia devotees from far off cities like Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and other parts of Australia also descended at the Festival venue



during the occasion. At 10.00 a.m. the Deities were taken in Pahandi Bije procession to the 4 meter high colourfully decked up chariot. First Lord Sudarshan, then Elder Brother Balabhadra followed by Devi Subhadra and at the end Lord

Webinar on Swami Vivekananda's Punyatithi

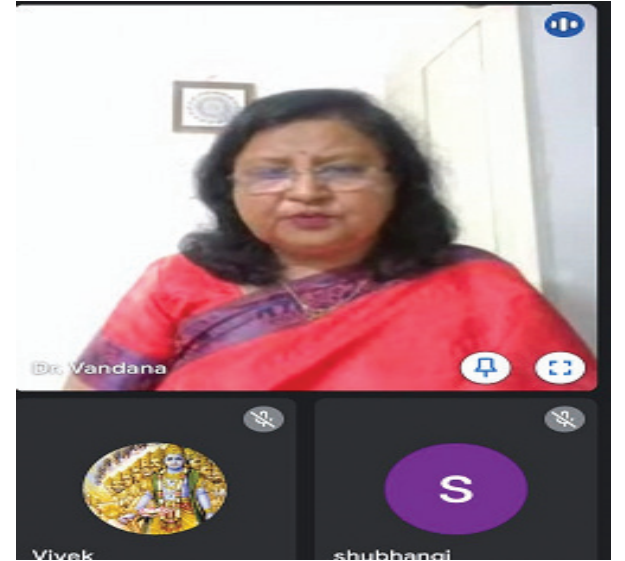
Cuttack (KCN): Anandam Foundation organised a webinar on 120th Punyatithi of Swami Vivekananda on 4th July 2022, Monday from 7:30 PM to 8:30 PM through Google Meet platform.

It started with 3 Omkar & Shanti Path followed by Sanskrit Geet by Shubhangi Upadhyay.

Honorable Speaker Dr. Vandana Mahajani (Past Pro-

fessor, Dr.D.Y.Patil University, Navi

Swami Vivekananda's teachings in



Mumbai) gave a talk on "Relevance of contemporary times." She said that

today's society needs to imbibe the concept of Universal Brotherhood of Swami Vivekananda. This is the only way to avoid the poison that is being mixed by the anti-social forces in the name of religion. It was concluded with Shanti Mantra. Overall 52 people from various regions of the country participated in the program. The whole program was conducted by Dr. Vivek Sharma.

Inter GC/BN (ADM/OPS) badminton tournament - 2022 of Manipur & Nagland sector concluded today at G.C. CRPF Imphal

Imphal (KCN): Group Centre CRPF, Langjing, Imphal hosted Inter GC/BN (Adm/Ops) Badminton Tournament-2022 of Manipur & Nagland, Sector. The closing ceremony of Inter GC/BN (Adm/Ops) Badminton Tournament-2022 of Manipur & Nagland, Sector was held at GC CRPF, Langjing, Imphal today i.e on 06/07/2022. Total 12 teams of Sector i.e Manipur & Nagland, Range Imphal, CH, Imphal, GC, Imphal, 32 BN, 69 BN, 86 BN, 87 BN, 109 BN, 143 BN and 173 BN participated in this tournament.

Shri Manish Kumar Agrawal, IPS, IG, Manipur & Nagland Sector was the Chief Guest and Shri Madan Kumar, DIGP, GC CRPF Imphal was the Co-Guest of the Closing Ceremony. All senior officers, SOs and jawans were also present on the occasion.

The final match double was played between 87 V/S 143 BN. 143 BN secured first position and 87 Bn secured second position. Single Match was played between GC Imphal V/S 32 Bn and GC Imphal secured first position and 32 Bn secured second position.

Shri Manish Kumar Agrawal, IPS, IG and Shri Madan Kumar, DIGP distributed trophy and medals to runner and winner teams. Shri H. Premjit Meetei Commandant, 87 Bn was declared "The Best Player of the Tournament-2022". This tournament was started from 04/07/2022 on knock out basis and concluded

today. The Chief Guest Shri Manish Kumar Agrawal, IPS, IG, M&N Sector and Co-Guest Shri



Madan Kumar, DIGP, GC, Imphal congratulated to the winner and runner up teams. Also they congratulated all the participating teams of Sector for making this tournament grand success. They also asserted that the team of 143 BN and 87 Bn played in a very professional manner that they would bring laurel to the organization at the inter force level like all India Police meet and national level. The Chief Guest declared Inter GC/BN (Adm/Ops) Badminton Tournament-2022 closed. Shri Satyendra Singh, AC(OL) welcomed the Chief Guest and also presented vote of thanks.

Jagannath were taken to the chariot stationed in front of the temple in a grand procession. Australia Hindu Council's President Prakash Mehta conducted the traditional sweeping of the chariot called Chherra Pahanra. With the recitals of hymns, roaring slogans like Hari Bol and Jai Jagannath, sounding of Hulahuli and playing of musical instruments like

Former Presidents of Orioz Inc. Rajendra Padhee and Sujeet Jena and current Joint Treasurer of Orioz Inc. Mumtaz Lenka. As announced by Organisers, the Soul motto of Car Festival and accompanying Peace March is to unite all humanity irrespective of their caste, creed, colour, belief and race for the betterment of mankind.



The special attraction of the Mega Event was the mesmerising Odissi Dance presented by noted classical Nandini Medici and recitals of soul soothing Hari Naam Sankirtana by Renowned Canberra Kirtan Troupe.

The entire arrangement of Ghosha Yatra was well managed and neatly executed by the main organising team consisting of the President of Hindu Temple and cultural centre Prakash Mehta, Secretary Tarun Agasti,

Ghanta, Kartala, Mardala, Jhanja and Mrudanga, the chariot pulling started around 11.00 a.m. The chariot having regal and royal appearance with Four Deities on board had a majestic sojourn on the street of Florey for 2 KM and was pulled back to the Hindu temple premises at the end of the journey.

The distinguished dignitaries, who attended the Festival include Deepak Raj Gupta, the representative of the ACT Canberra's Chief Minister Andrew Barr, Indian Deputy High Commissioner Suneet Mehta, Industrialists Srikant Tripathy and Aditya Jhunjhunwala,

President of Australia's Odia Society (ORIOZ INC.) Dr. Nalini Pati and Santosh Gupta. The long cherished and much talked massive religious carnival attained historic success due to the all out support and overwhelming co-operation extended by the Prime Odia Organisation in Australia; Orioz Inc., Hindu council, Hindu Community in ACT Canberra and local Odia and non - Odia inhabitants. The goodwill messages wishing the Car Festival grand success were received from Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Chief Minister of ACT Canberra Andrew Barr, Senator Katherine Ruth Gallagher and MLA Patrick Cain.

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Maara Movie Review: A grounded remake of Charlie with quite a bit of heart

If you didn't know that Maara is the remake of the Malayalam film, Charlie, the opening shot of fireflies fluttering about is a strong hint of the magic contained within the universe of this film. Shortly, you see little Paaru in rapt attention, as a nun narrates to her the story of a soldier who's travelling across seas and jungles in a quest to find his soul. This is pretty much the story of this film as well, as Paaru (Shraddha Srinath) grows up to find herself in a similar quest for her soul, well, soulmate, in Maara (Madhavan). There's another quest for a soulmate in this film, one undertaken by Vellaiyan (a wonderful Mouli), one that is later taken over by Maara. The film is a reinforcement of the power of stories, of the stories each of our lives are. This is why there are multiple characters with their own short stories, including those of Selvi (Abhirami), the sex worker, and Kani (Sshivada), the guilt-ridden doctor. The implication is that no one story is necessarily more important than another. I got the sense that Maara doesn't think of himself as a hero or a saviour, even if those around him seem to believe that. He's merely a tool, a person who breezes through life hoping to repay the extraordinary help that Vellaiyan has done to him. I loved this touch because shorn of it, Maara, the character, could have felt idealistic and

unrelatable—which would have gone against the point of the film itself. This way, there's a reason for why Maara is the way he is, why he can't afford to stay at one place for too long. I quite enjoyed that Madhavan plays this character without

kites, in the sketch-book and its pencil illustrations... hell, even in the blotches of Maara's acid-wash hoodies. There's a call through this film, through its characters, to refuse to fall into the trap of mundanity and indif-

ferent, into routine and repetition. Maara is pretty much the film equivalent of 'Follow the white rabbit'. That's perhaps why during a conversation between Maara and a thief (Alexander Babu), you can see a neon sign in the background that reads 'White Rabbit'. The usual response to such a call is to cite a lack of financial security, and while that is a reason to be empathetic about—especially given the enviably cushy work-free existence Paaru seems to be leading in this film—we could also note how Maara, who's hardly a wealthy man (as a thief realises), makes the choice to get by, winning and returning favours in his

small community. Maara, the film, suggests that perhaps, just perhaps, his way of life could also come down to the courage to choose to step away from the norm. Realise the magic of life in you, it seems to be saying... notice the al-

speaking about Maara says, "destiny". Another likens him to a mythical character, Santa Claus, while commenting on Maara's habit of sudden appearances that usually result in joy to whoever he meets. Maara himself, as he about Meenakshi; watch his eyes grow wide in surprise, and almost well up under the weight of decades of mourning. Ghibran's background music and Thamarai's evocative lyrics add so much to such scenes as well. It's wonderful that films like Maara are able to offer elderly characters like Mouli's as much purpose and are able to see them for the individuals that they are, instead of simply as a crutch for a lead character. Of course, much of this credit must go to the original film, Charlie. In a world that is in a tearing hurry, at a time when films and stories are designed to be rapid for fear of making audiences impatient, films like Maara come as a welcome relief. In this film, at least two important exchanges—between Vellaiya and Paaru, and later, between Maara and Kani—happen as wood slowly burns to ember, as tender faces are lit by the warm glow of a fireplace. It's for such moments that I'll remember this film, even if some inconsistent performances and some synthetic moments stop it from being truly great. Nevertheless, it's a film that has heart and that encourages empathy towards those around us, and if possible, to note that magicity doesn't need to be thought of an otherworldly trait, if only we cared to pay more attention to the beauty around us.



a sanctimonious flavour—and more importantly, in a way that shows that Maara isn't above vulnerability. There's no moral superiority in that ascetic laughter of his—which probably can be thought of as even the desperate attempt of an unhappy man to be happy, chained as he is to his lifelong quest.

Director: Dhilip Kumar
Cast: Madhavan, Shraddha Srinath, Mouli

The film is almost a homage to art—and the dreaminess inherent in it. This can be spotted throughout the film: In the pretty wall murals, in the art plastered across and drawn all over the walls of Maara's home, in the designer

most mystical beauty of existence. It's also likely that this is why the film's many shots are lit as they are, with many faces often aglow, as though in the presence of a halo. This is why the coincidences in this film become palatable. The central idea at the heart of this film is of two lonely souls in search of each other. Take note of that inexplicable attraction little Paaru feels as she sees a speeding train from within her bus. Or take note of that instinctive smile from Maara as he steps into his room, a room that Paaru has lived in briefly. In such a film, coincidences are to be thought of as divine providence, or as one character, when

does many times in this film, underplays this notion that he's a mystical being. It's his understanding—and you will see it from his eyes when he's engaged in conversation with every single character—that each of us is magical, as are our stories. In this film with performances that range from great to over-the-top, I loved Mouli in particular, who plays Vellaiya, an old man consumed by his unrequited love. Watch him in that scene with Paaru as he brings to her an old photo of his beloved, Meenakshi, but hesitates after seeing her be so charmed by photos of Maara instead. Watch him in another scene with Paaru as she tells him

Shooting for third season of 'Four More Shots Please' to begin soon: Kirti Kulhari

MUMBAI(KCN): Bollywood actor Kirti Kulhari on Thursday said shoot for her series "Four More Shots Please!" is set to commence in coming days. The Amazon Prime

Taking to Instagram, Kulhari shared her excitement to team up with her co-actors again for the new season. "And we are back #fourmoreshotsplease #season3 shoot begins su-

tions, the show was recently nominated in the best comedy series category at the 48th International Emmy Awards. On the film front, Kulhari is currently awaiting the release



Video series, which also features Sayani Gupta, Maanvi Gupta and Bani J, follows a quartet of friends who deal with their relationships, work-life conflicts, ambitions and anxieties in a male-dominated society.

per soon. Lovely to be back with the crazy 3," Kulhari wrote alongside a series of candid photos with Gupta, Gagroo and Bani. Created by Rangita Pritish Nandy and produced by Pritish Nandy Communica-

of the Hindi remake of Hollywood blockbuster "The Girl on the Train", starring Parineeti Chopra. The movie, which premiere on streamer Netflix on February 26, will feature Kulhari as a British cop.

Vijay Sethupathi, Katrina Kaif in Sriram Raghavan's next?

It was recently revealed that Sriram Raghavan's upcoming film, Ekkis, has been put on hold. A big-budget military drama starring Varun

Santosh Sivan, is a Hindi remake of Maanagaram (2017). He is also rumoured to star in an upcoming web series directed by Raj and

Sriram Raghavan's last film was Andhadhun (2018) with Ayushmann Khurrana and Tabu. The film is getting a Tamil and Telugu re-



Dhawan, the film was delayed due to Covid-19. Now, rumour has it that Sriram has signed Katrina Kaif and Vijay Sethupathi for his next. If true, this is the latest Hindi project Vijay Sethupathi is attached to — the others being Laal Singh Chaddha and Mumbaikar. The latter, directed by

DK. The unrevealed series will also star Shahid Kapoor.

make with Prashanth and Nithiin, respectively, in the lead.

Banita Sandhu clarifies on COVID-19 diagnosis, says she 'continues to test negative'
MUMBAI(KCN): "October" actor Banita Sandhu on Thursday said she has continued to test negative for COVID-19 since her arrival to the country in January 3, contrary to what is being reported in media. According to health department sources, Sandhu had tested positive for COVID-19 on January 4 in Kolkata after flying from United Kingdom and was admitted to a private hospital after she refused to be treated in a government facility.

What connects Neeraj Chopra and Rishabh Pant?

The Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra and the miraculous cricketer Rishabh Pant represent an young India that is full of hope and promise. They want to soar to the greatest heights in the sky. Both belong to the reborn India that knows how to give a tough competition to the players of their opposing team.

Since childhood, Rishabh has studied on 100% scholarship from the Indian Public School, Dehradun established by me and he has dreamed of becoming



Letter to Editor

Now Plastics can be made from waste biomass

Scientists from Switzerland have created a brand-new plastic that is similar to Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) and can be readily produced from inedible plant parts. The plastic is a promising contender for the food packaging sectors since it is robust, heat-resistant, and effective at blocking gases like oxygen. The new plastic can be chemically recycled because of its structure and can break down in the environment into harmless carbohydrates. Now it is becoming increasingly clear that moving away from fossil fuels and avoiding the accumulation of plastic in the environment is essential to meet the challenge of climate change. In this direction, considerable efforts are being made to develop compostable or recyclable polymers made from non-edible plant material called lignocellulosic biomass. Of course, producing competitive plastics from biomass is not easy. There's a reason conventional plastics are so popular, because they combine low cost, thermal stability, mechanical strength, processability and compatibility - characteristics that any alternative plastic which must match or pass. And so far, the task remains fraught with difficulty. So far, scientists from the School of Basic Sciences at EPFL, Switzerland, have successfully developed a biomass-derived plastic, similar to PET, that meets the criteria to replace certain plastics. are now more environmentally friendly. We just 'cook' wood or other inedible plant material, such as agricultural waste, in cheap chemicals to create a precursor to plastic in a single plant, the Swiss scientists has explained. By keeping the sugars in the plastic's molecular structure, the chemistry is much simpler than current alternatives. The technique is based on a discovery published by Swiss scientists in 2021, according to which the addition of an aldehyde can stabilize certain portions of plant material and prevent their destruction. during mining. By repositioning this chemistry, the researchers were able to reconstruct a new bio-based chemical useful as a precursor to plastic. One of the scientists, the study's first author, interprets the sugar molecules, then allows them to act as plastic building blocks. Using this simple technique, one can convert up to 25% by weight of agricultural waste, or 95% of pure sugar, into plastic. The well-balanced properties of these plastics may allow they are used in applications ranging from packaging and textiles to medicine and electronics. Researchers have produced packaging films, yarns that can be spun into clothing or other textiles, and fibers for 3D printing. Plastics have very interesting properties, especially for applications like food packaging and what makes the plastic unique is the presence of an intact road structure. This makes it extremely easy to obtain since you don't have to modify what nature has given to you and is simple to break down as it can be reverted back to a molecule that is already abundant in nature.

Vijaykumar H K Raichur

a Test cricketer during his childhood schooling. Neeraj Chopra, who won the gold medal in the javelin throw event of the Tokyo Olympic Games last year, is quite sure that he will cover 90 meters mark in javelin throw by the end of this year. His practice continues to improve day by day.

On the other hand, Rishabh Pant, who was born in Roorkee as a poor primary teacher's son and studied at the Indian Public School in Dehradun on 100% scholarship, scored his 5th Test century on the very first day of the ongoing India-England series. He thrashed the bowlers of the host team fiercely. He continued to bat as fearlessly as ever. That has been his style since the nascent stages of his

R.K. Sinha

private sector as well. Neeraj Chopra and Pant prove that talent is not a slave to big cities. The youth of small towns and cities also have indomitable willpower to move forward. If given the opportunity, he can do the world in his fist. Neeraj Chopra's claim of throwing the javelin throw up to a distance of 90 meters needs to be seen in the right perspective. 90 meters is considered an important standard in javelin throw, and the number of players who consistently throw javelins for this distance is very few in the world. It is said that if you have dream you many fulfill dream, Your dream if you have conviction and dedication with your hard work. Yes, you must work hard to achieve that goal. Neeraj Chopra and Rishabh Pant

been any spectacular success in the Olympic Games champions on India's part. We used to rejoice to remember the fine performances of Milkha Singh, PT Usha, GS Randhawa, and Shri Ram Singh in the Olympic Games.

But India still needs hundreds of such confident players like Neeraj Chopra and Pant. This is just the beginning. This cycle should continue to thrive. The development of any country is proved by what kind of achievements are being made there in the world of sports. The recent historical creation of India's men's badminton team should not go in front of the achievements of Neeraj Chopra and Rishabh Pant. You are aware that India achieved this feat by defeating 14-time champions Indonesia by a margin of 3-0 in the final of the Thomas Cup.



career. Many seasoned cricket critics explain to him various tactics and techniques from time to time. But, Pant has engineered and mastered his own style.

He plays with his heart, not with his mind. He can hit sixes off even the best of the biggest bowlers. It is his self-confidence that he has developed by drinking the pure milk of indigenous cows and early morning practices at Dhyana Chand Ground of his Dehradun school.

Actually, Neeraj Chopra and Pant both are rooted to small semi rural towns of growing India. Neeraj Chopra comes from a simple village in Rohtak, Haryana. There is not even a playground in that village. He got the opportunity to move forward when he travelled beyond his village. He was given all possible help by the government and the private sector. On the other hand, Pant is from Roorkee and a product of under-13 SP. Sinha tournament who came to my Dehradun school campus to participate in the tournament and was kept here by the school with a 100% scholarship. After schooling he started spending nights in temples and gurudwaras to play in Delhi. See that if India is slowly making its place on the playing field, then some credit must be given to the

starts making dreams come true only after dreaming them.

Pant has basically emerged as a Big Match player. Bolt, Diego Maradona, Pele, Lara, Rahul Dravid, and Sachin Tendulkar have been so far known as the Big Match Players. They are covered in those matches which are special in their own right. Such matches can also be the final of a championship.

Pant proved time and again that he is a Big Match player. Maradona was a fantastic big match player. He used to dominate big and important matches. Back then his flair was visible. This is the biggest quality of a big match player that he is covered in the whole match even in special matches or adverse situations. Maradona could not display his talent against small and weak teams. If we talk about Neeraj Chopra again, then after seeing all his body language, it is understood that he is not a part of the crowd. Just recall when he took the javelin in the final of his event in Tokyo, his facial expressions could be read. It was clear that he would definitely put some medals in the country's bag. But he had made the country proudest by winning us the gold.

Athletics is considered the mother of all sports. Before this, there has never

Lakshya Sen, Kidambi Srikanth, Satwik Sairaj, and Chirag Shetty helped India win the Thomas Cup. It is considered to be the world championship of badminton. India's badminton sensation Lakshya Sen reached the final of the All England Open Badminton Championship before winning the Thomas Cup. And finally, the talk of Indian boxer Nikhat Zareen. She became world champion sometime back by defeating Jitpong Jutamas of Thailand 5-0 in the one-sided final of the flyweight (52kg) category of the Women's World Championships in Istanbul. Telangana boxer Zareen dominated her rivals throughout the tournament and defeated the Thailand player in the final by a unanimous decision. With this win, 2019 Asian Championships bronze medallist Zareen became just the fifth Indian female boxer to become a world champion. Six-time champions MC Mary Kom (2002, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2018), Sarita Devi (2006), Jenny RL (2006), and Lekha KC have previously won world titles. The point is that Indian players are making India proud in many singles and team sports. They have finally started relishing the taste of victory. Now no one can stop them.

(The author is a senior editor, columnist, and former MP)

Rath Yatra 2022: Trinity chariots in Puri given 'Dakhina Moda' for Bahuda Yatra



PURI: As an integral part of the Trinity's Bahuda Yatra (return journey) on July 9, the three chariots were given 'dakhina moda' (turning towards the south) on Wednesday. After Sakala Dhupa was offered to the deities, servitors brought ajnamallyas and served to the Biswakarmas. All the three chariots were pulled from the parking site and given a turn to the south. Soon, they were again pulled to the exit gate called Nakachana dwara and parked facing towards the main temple. The event was conducted by police personnel, servitors and a few devotees. During this exercise Darpadalan of Devi Subhadra was pulled first followed by Taladhwaaja of Lord Balabhadra and then in the end Nandighosha of Lord Jagannath was given the southward turn. The event was held after 'Herapanchami' rituals were conducted on Tuesday. Devotees in large numbers were seen visiting Gundicha temple every day to offer prayers to the deities and consume the Adap abadha (mahaprasad). As per belief, anyone offering prayers to the deities on Adap Mandap (in the sanctum sanctorum of Gundicha temple atop the Ratnasimhasan) gets freed from cycle of rebirth. During Dakhina Moda ritual, vehicular traffic was disrupted leaving no space for pedestrian pilgrims. Most of the arterial roads of the city also remained jammed for hours.

Gas prices can't be looked at in isolation: Oil Minister Puri on Rs 50 LPG price hike

NEW DELHI: A day after cooking gas LPG prices were hiked by Rs 50 per cylinder, Oil Minister Common households pay non-subsidised rates for the cooking gas they buy after the government re-invaded Ukraine in February on fears of supply disruptions. Rates have fallen in recent days on talk of subsidised cooking gas was the one that consumers used to buy after exhausting their quota of 12 cyl-



Hardeep Singh Puri on Thursday said gas prices cannot be looked at in isolation and that fuel prices have been held steady despite volatility in international oil markets. At a media conference, when he was asked about the steep increase in LPG prices, Puri first said that the government has been constantly striving to increase domestic production of gas and that there has been no shortage of fuel supplies anywhere in the country. "You cannot look at gas prices in isolation," he said in reference to soaring global energy rates that have led to the price increase. Non-subsidised LPG rates have gone up by Rs 244 or 30 per cent, in a span of one year and it now costs Rs 1,053 per 14.2 kg-cylinder in the national capital. Hardeep Singh Puri said subsidies are meant to specific target beneficiaries and for specific durations. "Subsidies have to be regressive," he said. The minister said that while some nations faced a fuel supply crisis, India did not face any shortage of any fuel in any corner of the country including the North East. "Nowhere in India, there has been a shortage." "We have been able to hold prices steady," he said. While cooking gas prices have risen on eight occasions in the last one year, they have not been in sync with the cost. International oil and gas prices have soared after Russia recession in the world's largest oil consumer, the US. Petrol and diesel prices have been on a freeze for over three months now. The pause followed rates being hiked by a record Rs 10 per litre in a matter of 16 days beginning March 22. In May, the government cut excise duty on petrol by Rs 8 per litre and diesel by Rs 6 per litre to cool soaring inflation. At that time, the government also stated that Rs 200 per cylinder subsidy on cooking gas will be limited to only 9 crore poor women and other beneficiaries who got free connections under the Ujjwala scheme and the remaining users, including households, will pay the market price (also known as non-subsidised rate). Originally, non-

US jobless claims rise to 235,000, highest in nearly six months

WASHINGTON: More Americans applied for unemployment benefits last week and while layoffs remain low, it was the fifth consecutive week that claims topped the 230,000 mark and the most in almost six months. Applications for jobless aid for the week ending July 2 rose to 235,000, up 4,000 from the previous week and the most since mid-January, the Labor Department reported Thursday. First-time applications generally track with the number of layoffs. Until early June, claims hadn't eclipsed 220,000 since January and have often been below 200,000 this year. ing household budgets, forcing consumers to pull back on spending, and growth is weakening, heightening fears the economy could fall into recession. Yet companies are still scrambling to add workers. Demand has been particularly strong in travel- and entertainment-related services. The Labor Department releases its May jobs report on Friday and analysts expect that employers filled more than 276,000 jobs. Though not an unhealthy number, it would be the lowest monthly figure in more than a year.



The four-week average for claims, which evens out some of the week-to-week volatility, inched up by 750 from the previous week, to 232,500. The total number of Americans collecting jobless benefits for the week ending June 25 rose by 51,000 from the previous week, to 1,375,000. That figure has hovered near 50-year lows for months. On Wednesday, the Labor Department reported that U.S. employers advertised fewer jobs in May amid signs that the economy is weakening, though the overall demand for workers remained strong. Employers posted 11.3 million job openings at the end of May, down from nearly 11.7 million in April. Job openings reached 11.9 million in March, the highest level on records dating back more than 20 years. There are nearly two job openings for every unemployed person. The figures reflect the unusual nature of the post-pandemic economy: Inflation is hammer-

'Dalai Lama an honoured guest': MEA as China slams Modi for greeting Tibetan spiritual leader on birthday

BEIJING: India on Thursday said it has a consistent policy to treat Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama as an honoured guest and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday greetings to him should be seen from the overall context. The comments by External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi came when asked about China's reaction to Modi's phone conversation with the Dalai Lama. In the phone conversation, Modi extended birthday greetings to the Dalai Lama on Wednesday. "The prime minister did speak to the Dalai Lama last year also. It has been a consistent policy of the government to treat the Dalai Lama as an honoured guest in India," Bagchi said. He said the Dalai Lama's birthday is celebrated in India and abroad by his followers. "Birthday greetings by the prime minister to the Dalai Lama should be seen in the overall context," Bagchi said. China on Thursday criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for greeting the Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama on his 87th birthday, saying India should stop using Tibet-related issues to interfere in China's internal affairs. Modi greeted the Dalai Lama over the phone as he turned 87 on Wednesday. "Conveyed 87th birthday greetings to His Holiness the Dalai Lama over the phone earlier today. We pray for his long life and good health," Modi tweeted on Wednesday. The prime minister wished him on his birthday last year as well. The Dalai Lama's supporters celebrated his birthday at Dharamshala where the Dalai Lama lives in exile. Reacting to a question on Modi's greetings, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing that "the Indian side should fully recognise the anti-China separatist nature of the 14th Dalai Lama." It should abide by its "commitment to China, speak and act prudently and stop using Tibet-related issues to interfere in China's internal affairs," Zhao said. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) reacted to China's statements by saying that birthday greetings to the Dalai Lama have been a consistent policy of the government to treat the Dalai Lama as an honoured guest in India. Birthday greetings by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Dalai Lama should be seen in the overall context. Dalai Lama's birthday is celebrated by his followers in India and abroad, the MEA added. He also lashed out at US Secretary of State Antony Blinken for greeting the Dalai Lama. In his greetings, Blinken said, "His Holiness brings light to his fellow Tibetans and so many around the world by promoting peace, encouraging inter-faith harmony, and advocating for the preservation of Tibetan language and culture". "I admire His Holiness's ongoing commitment to non-violence to resolve the grievances of the Tibetan community. I am also grateful for his dedication and service to humanity," Blinken said in his message posted on the US State Department website.

Drive for Kisan Card

New Delhi(KCN): Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman chaired a meeting with heads of Public Sector Banks and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs).

time bound manner to further strengthen the RRBs and support the post pandemic economic recovery. Smt. Sitharaman further advised IBA and sponsor banks to play a lead role in technological advancements

and RRBs. Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Parshottam Rupala also attended the session. Union Minister of State Finance Bhagwat Kisanrao Karad was also present during both the sessions.

With an aim to provide the benefits of KCC loans to maximum number of farmers, a special KCC saturation drive was launched under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan to cover 2.5 crore farmers under KCC with a credit boost of Rs. 2 lakh crore. It is noteworthy that as on July 1st, 2022, 3.26 crore farmers (including 19.56 lakh Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Fisheries farmers) have been covered under the KCC scheme, with sanctioned credit limit of Rs. 3.70 lakh crore. During the detailed review of performance, while highlighting the role of

animal husbandry and fisheries in the economy, the Finance Minister directed banks for ensuring time bound disposal of pending KCC applications. FM also instructed banks to hold camps for saturating all those engaged in cattle rearing and fishing with KCC.

Shri Rupala lauded the efforts of banks in providing KCC to animal husbandry and fisheries farmer and urged them to take into account the special needs of small fishermen and those engaged in cattle rearing, while sanctioning loans under the KCC scheme.

Smt. Sitharaman instructed the officials to hold periodic review of the performance of the KCC scheme with all stakeholders so that the scheme benefits can reach to the maximum number of eligible beneficiaries.



She reviewed to review Operational & Governance reforms in RRBs and performance of Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme for Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries. Finance Minister underlined the important role being played by RRBs in financial inclusion and serving the credit needs of rural economy. The Finance Minister urged the Sponsor Banks to formulate a clear roadmap in a

in the RRBs. The Finance Minister suggested to conduct a workshop of RRBs so that they can share the best practices with each other. Smt. Sitharaman instructed all the Public Sector Banks to onboard on account aggregator system by end of July. In the second session, Smt. Sitharaman reviewed the progress in issuance of KCC to Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries Sector with Banks

Chinese companies operating in India need to follow law of land: MEA

NEW DELHI: Chinese companies operating in India need to follow the law of the land, the

with the law of the land. "Chinese companies which operate here need to follow

The Enforcement Directorate is carrying out the investigation against Vivo under the pro-

Wednesday that the frequent investigations by Indian authorities into Chinese enterprises



Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday, a day after China reacted to the ongoing probe into alleged irregularities by Chinese smartphone maker Vivo.

External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said Indian authorities are taking steps in the case in accordance

the law of the land and I think our legal authorities are taking steps as per the law of the land," he said at a media briefing. Bagchi was asked to comment on remarks on the probe by a spokesman of the Chinese embassy. "I do not see the need to make such comments," Bagchi said.

visions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

The agency on Thursday said that a whopping Rs 62,476 crore has been "illegally" transferred by the smartphone maker to China in order to avoid payment of taxes in India.

The Chinese embassy spokesperson said on

not only disrupt their normal business activities and damage their goodwill but also impede the business environment in India.

"The essence of China-India economic and trade cooperation is for mutual benefit and win-win results," Spokesman and Counsellor Wang Xiaojian said in a statement.

GST e-invoices for B2B transactions to be mandatory for companies with over Rs 5 cr annual turnover

NEW DELHI: GST-registered businesses with an annual turnover of more than Rs 5 crore will soon have to generate electronic invoices for B2B transactions, a top official said on Thursday. Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) Chairman Vivek Johri said the GST Council, comprising finance ministers of the Centre and states, had decided to implement it in a phased manner and with e-invoices being generated, for every B2B (Business-to-Business) transaction, invoice matching by tax authorities would not be required under Goods and Services Tax (GST).

"We started with a very high threshold and soon we are going to have all taxpayers with an annual turnover of more than Rs 5 crore having to generate e-invoices for their B2B part of the business. With the launch of e-invoice, we don't need invoice matching," Johri said at an event organised by industry body PHDCCI here.

Currently, businesses with a turnover of over Rs 20 crore will have to generate e-invoices for B2B transactions.

"E-invoicing is revolution and there is

no other country that has adopted this. The phasing has been very gradual. We didn't want to burden the taxpayer community with e-invoices. We (Council) knew it cannot be done in one stroke, we started in a phased manner and gradually brought it down," Johri said. Under GST, e-invoicing for B2B transactions was made mandatory for companies with turnover of over Rs 500 crore from October 1, 2020, which was then extended to those with turnover of over Rs 100 crore from January 1, 2021. From April 1 last year, companies with turnover over Rs 50 crore were generating B2B e-invoices, and the threshold was brought down to Rs 20 crore from April 1, 2022.

Johri also said that in the future, the GST system would be developed in such a way that there would be a complete auto-population of tax return forms.

"Not too far out in future. I can assure you we may have a system where we can give you all returns auto-populated, you just have to look at them and click the button and say yes it's right and your return filing is over," he added.



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SpiceJet going through turbulent phase amid safety scares, share slumps over 40 per cent in 2022

NEW DELHI: Indian airline company SpiceJet is going through a highly turbu-

lence phase in recent times on account of several glitches and a non-adherence to mandated guidelines in regards to the training of some pilots.



lence phase in recent times on account of several glitches and a non-adherence to mandated guidelines in regards to the training of some pilots. The share price of the airline slumped around 42-43 per cent so far in 2022. On Wednesday, it closed at Rs 39, as against Rs 68 at the start of the year 2022. Following is a sequence of events which attracted negative press for the airline.

It all started in April 2022 when the aviation watchdog the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) restrained 90 pilots of the airline from operating Boeing 737 Max aircraft, after finding they

were not properly trained. Those pilots were trained on a faulty simulator, and the aviation regulator asked the airline to retrain the pilots, besides slapping a fine of Rs 10 lakh.

In early May, 11 passengers on board its flight from Mumbai to Durgapur in West Bengal were injured in severe turbulence and were hospitalised. Two of them were put into intensive care units (ICU). The airline had then maintained that the seat belt sign was on when the aircraft encountered turbulence and several announcements for the same were also made.

Post the incident, the DGCA immediately ordered a probe and a team was formed to investigate and submit a report

at the earliest. A preliminary report by the regulator DGCA said the pilots were in "autopilot

mode" when the aircraft faced turbulence. In the later part of May, SpiceJet systems had faced an attempted ransomware attack that impacted and slowed down morning flight departures, while several passengers had complained about the poor services.

On May 28, the pilots on a SpiceJet flight from Mumbai to Gorakhpur decided to fly back to Mumbai after a windshield crack was observed mid-air. The incident which grabbed much of the eyeballs was when a Delhi-bound SpiceJet aircraft made an emergency landing at Patna airport on June 19, after there were reports of a

technical glitch which ignited fire on the plane. On the same day itself, a Jabalpur-bound

DGCA has issued a show-cause notice to SpiceJet over failure to establish safe, efficient

and reliable air services. "The reported incidents on aircraft operated by SpiceJet Ltd. from April 1, 2022, till date have been reviewed and it has been observed that on a number of occasions, the aircraft either turned

back to its originating station or continued landing to the destination with degraded safety margins." DGCA's show-cause notice reads.

Union Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Wednesday showed his concerns over recent incidents related to SpiceJet and said, "Passenger safety is paramount. Even the smallest error hindering safety will be thoroughly investigated and course-corrected."

Facing the show-cause notice, SpiceJet Chairman and Managing Director Ajay Singh said that they are running "a safe airline for the past 15 years" and that "one or two incidents being highlighted in media doesn't mean any airline is unsafe".

Singh told ANI that the kind of incidents being talked about are "trivial and happen on a daily basis in airlines". On average, he said, 30 such incidents happen in airlines every day.

British education system meant to create 'servant class' in India, changes still needed: PM

Continued from page-1

education in Indian languages. I have confidence that India could emerge as a world education destination, he said.

The Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Samagam will adopt a Varanasi Declaration on Higher Education, highlighting India's commitment to achieving higher education goals. The PM said "innovative thoughts and new ideas" should be discussed at the summit.

He urged partnerships between the government and the universities, asking them to identify areas of their expertise and offer advice. You should identify problems, resources and solutions to them within a 50-100 km radius of the university, he said, also suggesting that students could study the impact of government schemes in these areas.

He said the education system should keep pace with a changing world and prepare the youth for it.

In the coming 15-20 years, India will be in the hands of these children and we should think about how we are preparing them. This is our great responsibility.

Modi said the system should prepare children for the future at the age when they are curious.

The era that imposed anything without understanding has gone. We have a blueprint for education, institutions and human resources, keeping this in mind. The children should be made skilled according to their talent. The education policy is preparing the ground for this.

"In a country of so many diversities, the NEP should be welcomed, he said, adding that usually governments just draft a document, and leave the matter at that.

We didn't let that happen. We have kept this National Education Policy alive every moment," he said.

Modi talked about the entry of private players in areas like space technology, saying earlier only the government was involved in them. Sectors once closed to women are now showcasing their talent, he said.

"Many new colleges, universities, IITs and IIMs are opening in the country. There has been an increase of 55 per cent in the number of medical colleges after 2014," he said, referring to the year his first government came to power.

The prime minister stressed the importance of fieldwork, urging evidence-based research. He also asked for research on utilising India's demographic dividend and called for finding solutions for ageing societies elsewhere in the world. Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan also attended the summit.

Russia taking 'operational pause' in Ukraine, says analysts

Continued from page-1

needed to attempt those more ambitious undertakings," the institute said.

A Thursday statement from Russia's Defense Ministry seemed to confirm that assessment. It said Russian military units involved in combat in Ukraine were given time to rest.

European Union chief warns danger of complete cut-off of Russian gas

"The units that performed combat missions during the special military operation are taking measures to recover their combat capabilities. The servicemen are given the opportunity to rest, receive letters and parcels from home," read the statement, quoted by Russian state news agency Tass.

Shelling continued in Ukraine's east, where at least nine civilians were killed and six wounded in 24 hours, Ukrainian officials said. Ukraine's presidential office said in its Thursday morning update that cities and villages in seven Ukrainian regions were shelled in the past day. Most of the civilian deaths occurred in Donetsk province, where fighting is ongoing. Seven civilians were killed there, including a child, the presidential office said.

Ten cities and villages came under shelling in Donetsk, and 35 buildings were destroyed, including a school, a vocational college and a hospital, officials said.

Donetsk is part of the Donbas, a mostly Russian-speaking industrial area where Ukraine's most experienced soldiers are concentrated. Pro-Russian separatists have fought Ukrainian forces and controlled much of the Donbas for eight years. Russian President Vladimir Putin recognized the independence of two self-proclaimed republics there just before Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Putin on Monday claimed victory in Luhansk, the other province constituting the Donbas, after Ukrainian forces withdrew from the last city they controlled there. The governor of Luhansk, Serhiy Haidai, denied Wednesday that the Russians had completely captured the province.

Germany to kickstart expansion of renewable energy amid sharply cutting imports from Russia

In Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, a boarding school was hit, but no one was injured. The Kharkiv region, which lies along the border with Russia, is under daily shelling, and two civilians were killed there over the past 24 hours.

The Ukrainian military said Thursday that Russian forces also carried out shelling and helicopter strikes in the Sumy region in the northeast.

Even as the fighting continued, the British Defense Ministry said it thinks Russia's military is "reconstituting" its forces. A ministry intelligence assessment issued Thursday said the heavy shelling along the front line in Donetsk is likely intended to secure previous Russian gains.

The British ministry noted a new law under consideration by the Russian parliament to give the government special economic powers amid the war.

The law would allow Russia "to avoid acknowledging it is engaged in a war or its failure to overcome Ukraine's military that was outnumbered and outgunned," the ministry said.

As fighting continued in the east, Ukraine's Foreign Ministry said it summoned the Turkish ambassador in Kyiv Thursday over what it described as the theft of Ukrainian grain by a Russian ship.

The Russian ship Zhibek Zholy was allowed to leave Turkey's Black Sea coast after Turkish authorities briefly detained it at Ukraine's request. Ukraine summoned the ambassador to complain about the "unacceptable situation."

Turkey, with its Bosphorus Strait, is a key transit route for shipping out of the Black Sea. Ukraine has sought to pressure Ankara to stop Russian shipments of its grain, a vital source of revenue.

FM Sitharaman to meet heads of banks; to review performance, governance reforms in RRBs



NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is going to hold a review meeting with the heads of public sector lenders later on Thursday to discuss various issues and to review the progress of various government schemes related to agriculture and allied sectors.

According to sources, the meeting is expected to review governance reforms in Regional Rural Banks (RRBs).

RRBs, which play an important role in agriculture credit, is

sponsored by Public Sector Banks (PSBs). Currently, the Centre holds 50 per cent in RRBs, while 35 per cent and 15 per cent are with the concerned sponsor banks and state governments, respectively. Of the 43 RRBs, about one-third RRBs, especially from north-eastern and eastern regions, are in losses and they need funds to meet regulatory capital requirements of 9 per cent, sources said.

These banks were formed under the RRB Act, 1976 with

an objective to provide credit and other facilities to small farmers, agricultural labourers and artisans in rural areas.

The Act was amended in 2015, whereby such banks were permitted to raise capital from sources other than the Centre, states and sponsor banks.

Currently, the Centre holds 50 per cent in RRBs, while 35 per cent and 15 per cent are with the concerned sponsor banks and state governments, respectively.

Last month, the Fi-

nance Ministry had a full-day meeting with CEOs of public sector banks.

Bankers were urged to sanction loans for productive sectors to accelerate the revival of the economy facing headwinds including from the Russia-Ukraine war.

Banks were also asked to expedite non-performing assets (NPAs) resolution and focus on recovery of bad loans. The meeting on June 20 also took stock of credit growth, asset quality, and business growth plans of banks.

Opportunity for me to be a good ambassador for Indian women's football, says Dangmei Grace

NEW DELHI: The livewire of the Blue Tigresses, one of the biggest stars of Indian

international career in 2013 and has won the South Asian Games (2016, 2019) and

against the Uzbekistan National team, and they are very tough," the 26-

during India's tour of Brazil in 2021. "We are all extremely thankful for the expo-



Football, Dangmei Grace has fulfilled her first dream of playing abroad by signing a professional contract with an overseas club - FC Nasaf from Uzbekistan. "I am extremely excited. It's a dream come true for me," Grace told www.the-aiff.com.

"It was not an overnight dream for me. In fact, playing abroad has been a dream for a long. I used to daydream a lot about this day. It's an opportunity for me to show my skills, and be a good ambassador for Indian women's football," she added. Grace started her In-

SAFF Women's Championships in 2016, and 2019. On the domestic front, she joined KRYPHSA FC and moved to Sethu FC in 2018-19 before switching to Gokulam Kerala FC in the Indian Women's League.

In the process, she has two HIWL triumphs under her belt, and a bronze in the AFC Women's Club Championship last year.

"I want to share my experience as I have played with the National Team for many years. I want to explore myself here. I have played three international matches

year-old forward maintained.

Grace is always known for her electric pace, and exceptional dribbling skills. "I know everything will be different in Uzbekistan -- their playing style, the culture. I will need to adapt fast, make new friends. But I am extremely excited to bring on this new challenge and share my experiences," she expressed.

The AIFF Emerging Player of the Year in 2019 had scored a brace against Indonesia in the 2020 AFC Women's Olympic Qualifiers, and more recently scored against Venezuela

sure tours that have made us confident as players, and also facilitated the popularity and growth of women's football in India. Experience in international football is paramount, and the exposure tours over the last few years have helped me immensely in my individual growth," she stated.

"My message to the young girls will be, keep trying -- anything can happen if you keep believing in yourself. Whatever challenges you face please don't give up, keep trying until you reach your goal," Grace concluded.

Wimbledon: Jabeur first woman from Africa in pro Slam final

WIMBLEDON: Ons Jabeur's steady progress from year to year — up the tennis rankings, through the draws of various tournaments and, now, at Wimbledon — has carried her to a Grand Slam singles final, the first woman from Africa to make it that far in the professional era.

The No. 3-seeded Jabeur, a 27-year-old from Tunisia, got past her good friend Tatjana Maria 6-2,



3-6, 6-1 in an up-and-down semifinal at a sun-splashed Centre Court on Thursday.

Jabeur is on quite a run right now: She has won 11 consecutive matches and 22 of her past 24. Since pro players were first admitted to major tennis tournaments in 1968, never had an African been to a final. She also is the first Arab woman to get that far.

"I'm a proud Tunisian woman standing here today. I know in Tunisia, they're going crazy right now. I just try to inspire, really, as much as I can," she said. "I want to see more and more — not just Tunisian — Arab, African players on tour. I just love the game and I want to share this experience with them."

Jabeur will face 2019 champion Simona Halep or No. 17 seed Elena Rybakina for the championship on Saturday. Halep and Rybakina were scheduled to play their semifinal at the All England Club later Thursday.

The men's semifinals are Friday, with three-time defending champion and No. 1 seed Novak Djokovic facing No. 9 Cameron Norrie of Britain, and 22-time Grand Slam winner Rafael Nadal against unseeded Nick Kyrgios. Nadal shed doubt on whether he'd even be able to show up for his semifinal after struggling through a five-set victory over Taylor Fritz on Wednesday.

Nadal held a limited practice session Thursday, mostly sticking to forehands and backhands. When he did try serving, which was a real problem a day earlier, he did so without using full force or throwing his body behind his deliveries.

Jabeur has been rising in the tennis world in recent seasons. In 2020, at the Australian Open, she became the first Arab woman to reach the quarterfinals at a major. Last year produced all sorts of milestones: first Arab player to break into the top 10 of the men's or women's rankings, first Arab to win a WTA title and a quarterfinal appearance at Wimbledon.

Now she's done that two steps better. "I really don't know what to say. It's a dream coming true from years and years of work and sacrifice. I'm really happy it's paying off," Jabeur said through a wide smile. "One more match now."

When she closed out the biggest victory of her career, she and Maria — a 34-year-old mother of two from Germany who is ranked 103th — met at the net for an extended hug. Jabeur whispered something in her pal's ear. Then, after depositing her racket on the sideline, Jabeur returned to the middle of the court for the usual victor's wave to the crowd — except, instead of going alone, she playfully tugged Maria along with her, an uncommon gesture.

"I definitely wanted to share the moment with her at the end, because she's such an inspiration for so many players, including me," Jabeur said. "Coming back after having two babies — I still can't believe how she did it."

Before their semifinal, Jabeur and Maria stood beside each other, waiting to take the walk through the halls of the stadium that lead to the court. Close as they are, the pair avoided exchanged any glances or chatter.

Close friends, yes. On this day, opponents, too, with quite the setting, stage and stakes. Neither had been to a Grand Slam semifinal previously. Maria never had been past the third round in any of her 34 prior appearances at major tournaments — and she only got that far once, at Wimbledon in 2015.

The two hang out together frequently. They are, to use Jabeur's term, "barbecue buddies." Jabeur knows Maria's two daughters so well that the German referred to her as "Aunt Ons."

Nadal suffers 'seven millimetre' tear to abdomen: Report



MADRID: Rafael Nadal has suffered a "seven millimetre" tear to his abdomen but still intends to play his Wimbledon semi-final against Nick Kyrgios on Friday, sports daily Marca reported. Nadal, the 2008 and

2010 champion, underwent scans on the injury on Thursday following his grueling 3-6, 7-5, 3-6, 7-5, 7-6 (10/4) victory over Taylor Fritz in Wednesday's quarterfinals. The 36-year-old said he was unsure over

his ongoing participation in the tournament as he targets the third leg of a rare calendar Grand Slam. "I can't give you a clear answer because if I gave you a clear answer and tomorrow another thing happens, I will be a liar,"

he said after beating Fritz. Nadal played under similar circumstances at the 2009 US Open when he had a two-centimetre tear. He went on to make the semi-finals, losing to eventual champion Juan Martin del Potro.



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