



MIX AND MATCH

Actor Vaani Kapoor says one can be a great actor and do glamorous roles at the same time

LEISURE P2



SL PREZ POLL TODAY

For the first time in 44 years, Sri Lanka's Parliament will directly elect a president in a three-way contest

INTERNATIONAL P10



BRONZE FOR SHOOTERS

Anish Bhanwala and Rhythm Sangwan win bronze in 25m Rapid Fire Pistol mixed team event at ISSF WC

SPORTS P12

SHORT TAKES

Rupee recovers from all-time record low

MUMBAI: The rupee recovered from its all-time low of 80.05 to close 6 paise higher at 79.92 against the US dollar Tuesday following forex inflows and suspected RBI intervention. A positive trend in domestic equities and losses in the US dollar in overseas markets also boosted the local unit while a rise in crude oil prices restricted gains. At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened lower at 80.00 against the greenback and fell further to its all-time low of 80.05 to a dollar due to overnight gains in crude oil prices. The local unit finally settled at 79.92, registering a rise of 6 paise over its previous close. **MORE P11**

Pollution level high in Mahanadi, Brahmani

BHUBANESWAR: The Odisha government said Tuesday the water of Mahanadi and Brahmani rivers are found to have higher levels of BOD (Biochemical oxygen demand) and TC (total coliform) than the specified levels. Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister PK Amat said this in Assembly while replying to a query from BJD Member Amar Prasad Satpathy. Amat in a written reply said that the Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) tests water quality of 11 main rivers flowing through the state at 129 places. The reason for high BOD and TC level may be due to the discharge of urban wastewater. Efforts are on to make river water pollution free, Amat said. **P3**

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Stop delivering. Raddiwallas don't buy them as they are full of photos of PM and CM

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	54767.62 ↑ 246.47
NIFTY	16340.50 ↑ 62.00
DOLLAR	80.48 ↓ ₹0.02
EURO	82.10 ↑ ₹0.77
GOLD	₹50,327 ↓ ₹34
SILVER	₹55,763 ↓ ₹328

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	34.0°C	34.5°C
TEMP. MIN	25.4°C	25.2°C
Humidity	84%	78%
Rainfall	20.8mm	16.8mm
Forecast	Generally cloudy sky	

LEAP OF FAITH



A group of runners jumps over a hurdle during the 3,000 metres steeplechase final at the World Athletics Championships at Eugene in the US

AP PHOTO

New IT policy to attract investments

■ Many sops have been offered by the state government to generate jobs and put Odisha on the global IT map

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 19: The Odisha government Tuesday announced its new 'IT Policy, 2022', with the aim to transform the state into a leading destination of investment for information technology and propel employment. The new policy was among the 17 new proposals that were approved by the government after the state cabinet meeting presided over by CM Naveen Patnaik, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Niranjan Pujari said.

The new policy is aimed at generating employment and investment in the IT sector. It will be in operation for five years from the date of its gazette notification or till it is substituted by another policy, Pujari informed.

The policy has been drafted by the Electronics and Information Technology department and envisions transforming Odisha into a leading destination of investment for information technology in India. The policy also aims to position Odisha prominently on the global map as a preferred IT outsourcing destination which will propel employment opportunities and inclusive growth, Pujari said.

In the new IT policy, provisions have been made for incentive for IT parks. Twenty five per cent of the



PIPED WATER FOR 4 DISTRICTS

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha government approved Tuesday proposals for execution of mega piped water supply projects to benefit nearly 8.50 lakh people in four districts - Koraput, Rayagada, Jagatsinghpur and Angul. The proposals of the Panchayatiraj and Drinking Water department were approved at the Cabinet meeting chaired by CM Naveen Patnaik. The mega piped water supply projects to provide safe drinking water will be executed under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) funding and will benefit 8,49,531 people in 1,395 villages under 10 blocks in the four districts. The projects are to be completed in 24 months. **P3**

fixed capital investment will be provided as capital subsidy limited to ₹20 crore, while 15 per cent of the cost of developing solar power plant, subject to maximum of ₹25 lakh, will be reimbursed.

CBI unearths NEET scam

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 19: A multi-state racket offering 'confirmed' seats in medical courses have been detected with the arrest of eight people Monday by the CBI. The scam worked in the same manner as depicted in the Hindi movie 'Munnabhai MBBS' and was spread across Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Haryana. Expert paper solvers impersonated students and wrote answer sheets in exchange of huge sums.

Each seat cost ₹20 lakh, of which ₹5 lakh was given to the person who sat in the test instead of the student and solved the NEET (the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test) question paper, said sources in the agency. The rest was shared

by the middlemen and others.

The CBI arrested the people from Delhi. Out of the eight, six were used for solving the test papers, sources informed. The mastermind of the scam was Sushil Ranjan from Safdarjung, who deputed 'paper solvers' and accepted payments. Eleven people have been named in the case and the hunt is on for the rest. The role of coaching institutions in this will also come under the scanner, officials said.

The people involved in the scam managed to tweak NEET ID cards using morphed photographs so paper solvers could gain entrance in the exam hall. The accused also collected user IDs and passwords of the candidates and made the necessary changes to enter the desired examination centres.

Padma Shri Parida breathes his last

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 19: Padma Shri and Director of Institute of Life Sciences (ILS), Ajay Parida breathed his last in the wee hours of Tuesday. Parida, 58, was on a visit to Guwahati to attend a conference where he suffered a massive heart attack while sleeping at night. A native of Bhagabanpur village in Jajpur district, Parida was conferred with the Padma Shri in 2014.

Parida will be remembered for his research on mangrove forest, Chilika bio-diversity and declining agriculture productivity due to climate change. The great Odia scientist brought fame to ILS through pioneering researches in the field of Genomics.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik paid rich tributes to Parida while condoling the latter's death. "Deeply saddened to learn about the passing away of Padma Shri awardee scientist and Director of Institute of Life Sciences (ILS), Bhubaneswar Ajay Parida. My thoughts and prayers are with the bereaved family members and friends in this hour of grief. Om Shanti," Patnaik said on Twitter.

Among others who paid rich tributes to Parida were Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and state Science and Technology Minister Ashok Chandra Panda.

Meanwhile the government announced that Parida will be cremated with full state honours



Road turns deathtrap for critical patient

Villagers had to carry Dehury on a cot for more than five kilometres to reach the ambulance which failed to reach the village

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, July 19: A critically ill patient of Badabil village under Nakatideula block in Sambalpur district breathed his last Tuesday as the ambulance could not reach him in time due to the lack of a proper motorable road. The deceased has been identified as Biranchi Dehuri. This incident once more throws light on the poor road connectivity that still exists in many interior parts of Odisha.

According to sources, Dehuri's family had immediately called the 108 Ambulance Service after he fainted while working at his agricultural land. However, despite best efforts of the driver, the vehicle could not reach Dehuri's village. With no option left, other vil-



lagers had to carry Dehury on a cot for a distance of over five kilometres to reach the ambulance, sources said. He was then rushed to Rairakhole hospital where the doctors declared him brought dead.

Dehuri's wife Sukanti alleged that due to lack of road connectivity in the village, her husband died. She said that if the ambu-

lance had reached their village, he could have been saved. "A lot of time was lost carrying him to the ambulance," she lamented. His life could have been saved if our village had road connectivity," she added. Nakatideula BDO Bibekananda Sahu said necessary steps will be taken to address the lack of a motorable road.

SC RELIEF FOR NUPUR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 19: Even as controversies continue to brew over suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma's comments on Prophet Mohammed, the Supreme Court granted Tuesday interim protection from coercive action against her in connection with the FIRs/complaints filed against her in several states.

It also protected her from coercive action in the FIRs/complaints which may be registered or entertained in the future about the May 26 telecast.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and JB Pardiwala, which had earlier refused to club the FIRs lodged against Sharma after coming down heavily on her for her controversial comments on the Prophet, took note of the alleged threats to life extended to her after its July 1 order.

Meanwhile in a separate development a 24-year-old Pakistani who was arrested by the BSF last week, has confessed that he wanted to harm Sharma for her controversial comments, officials said Tuesday. Two knives and some literature were recovered from him.

Jumbos kill 322 in Odisha in 3 years

THE DEATH TOLL AMPLY DEMONSTRATES THAT HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT IS ON THE RISE DUE TO THE REDUCTION OF HABITATS FOR THE ANIMAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 19: A total of 1,578 people have died in elephant attacks in India in the last three years, with Odisha recording 322 such deaths, according to data shared Tuesday by the Union Environment Ministry in Lok Sabha.

The ministry said 585 deaths occurred 'due to elephant attacks' in 16 states in 2019-20; 461 fatalities took place in 2020-21 and 532 peo-

ple died in 2021-22. Many of the attacks occurred during conflict between the pachyderms and human beings or when the animals strayed into heavily populated areas.

Odisha reported the maximum number of deaths in elephant attacks in the last three years. It was 117 in 2019, 93 in 2020 and 112 in 2021, Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said in the Lok Sabha.

He also said a total of 291 people died in elephant attacks in Jharkhand,



240 in West Bengal, 229 in Assam, 183 in Chhattisgarh and 132 in Tamil Nadu. Karnataka, Kerala, Meghalaya and Andhra Pradesh saw 69, 57, 12 and 10 such deaths, respectively during the period.

The ministry pointed out that the management of wildlife, including mitigation and management of human-elephant conflict (HEC), is primarily the responsibility of states and Union Territories (UTs). **Contd...P4**

leisure



BIEBER SET TO PERFORM IN INDIA OCTOBER 18

After he was diagnosed with Ramsay Hunt Syndrome leading to partial face paralysis, the *Baby* hitmaker Justin Bieber had earlier postponed his shows. But, the singer has now announced that he will resume them with a show is scheduled to be held at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium October 18.

JAK KNIGHT'S CAUSE OF DEATH CONFIRMED

Late comedian Jak Knight's death has been ruled a suicide in a report by the Los Angeles County Medical Examiner-Coroner. The 28-year-old star was found dead on a Los Angeles embankment Thursday suffering from a gunshot wound.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
If your heart wishes to be alone, honour the mood. No friends, no music. Drive away and connect to nature if you must. There is a bit of money jingling in if you're dealing in finances, says Ganesh.

TAURUS
Today, you will probably achieve your short term goals, says Ganesh. There will be no dip in the amount of work pressure you will be facing but you will find yourself ready for every challenge. It is time to shift gears and set your eyes on your long-term goals now. Due time and money will be spent on leisure activities in the company of loved ones.

GEMINI
You will keep others under the spell of your magnetic personality, predicts Ganesh. Your long-term goals will start taking shape by the end of the day. You may also expect some good news, generally related to a wedding. You will succeed in all your romantic endeavours.

CANCER
Today, you will accomplish most of your short-term goals and may shift your focus to long-term plans, foretells Ganesh. Now that you have achieved some of your goals, you may spare some time for leisure activities. Family will get its due place in your scheme of things in the evening.

LEO
Being by oneself is perhaps the best company one can ever keep. So, indulge in your own companionship today, says Ganesh. After all, you know yourself the best. Take forward this introspective experience into the evening, and sit back and listen to your inner voice. Silence speaks volumes if only one would listen. On a different note, today does seem to be a good day for those in the business of money-lending, as they rake in the moolah some time during the day, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Your focus levels will reach their highest point today, says Ganesh. Working will be fun and you shall finish your jobs quickly and efficiently. A twist of tale may crop up its head; worry not, as physical intimacy will take your love affair to the next level, says Ganesh.

LIBRA
It's like a finishing job for you today, says Ganesh, as you complete pending jobs. It was about time things got wrapped up, anyway. But with your high level of energy and vigour, you may also have an inclination to begin a new business. Keep at it, and you may find some satisfaction in business dealings towards the evening, feels Ganesh.

SCORPIO
Your spouse will shower you with love and warmth today. The afternoon sun may bring good news from distant relatives. On the home front, family members will get special attention, predicts Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
You may just strike the notes of your beloved's heart today. Your presence and presents will make them realise how much you do indeed love them. Expect a trip to posh showrooms and designer shops to buy them expensive gifts. But don't neglect work or your long-term goals, advises Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
Faced with an unrelenting boss? Give him that million-dollar smile you flash to woo others, it might just work today. The first half of the day will be good for those looking to start a new venture, says Ganesh. But don't expect miracles to happen; you will not achieve success overnight and certainly not if you don't have your actions well planned.

AQUARIUS
Your family will dote on you today and God knows you deserve it. Just go along with their plans for once, and you'll be surprised by how blessed and cheerful you feel. In business dealings, your forthrightness and charm will win people over, say Ganesh.

PISCES
A day of hectic socialising awaits you, not that you mind it. But you may also catch yourself wishing for some time alone for yourself, says Ganesh. The evening will probably see you deck up and head for a happening party, with lots of members of the opposite sex to woo.

Vaani wants to build diverse filmography

Mumbai: One can be great actor and do glamorous roles, says Vaani Kapoor, who aims to bring diversity in her work. She recently earned acclaim for her performance as a transgender woman in *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui*. "I want to have diversity in my work. When I look back, I feel that as an actor I have contributed and have been able to pull off many strings," Vaani told in an interview.

Her characters in films like *Befikre* and *War* have often been perceived as glamorous but for Vaani it is just part of the acting process. "Glamorous parts require a certain amount of effort and conviction. It is not that if a part is glamorous, you cannot perform or you cannot be credited for the act. You can be a great actor and do glamorous roles. Basically, it is not that de-glamorised parts have acting and performance, and others are just coming, dancing around and going back," she added.

With certain characters, there is a 'great marriage' of looks and performance, the actor said. "It is a great marriage between just being able to perform and (being glamorous). And I want to pull off anything," she further said. With her upcoming release *Shamshera*, a high-octane entertainer, Vaani said she has made an attempt to explore a layered character. AGENCIES



Story sells, not violence: Shweta

Mumbai: Be it portraying Golu Gupta in *Mirzapur*, Sikha in *Yeh Kaali Kaali Ankhein*, or Amara Gujral in *The Gone Game*, Shweta Tripathi has breathed life into each character she has played onscreen. Irrespective of the media, the actress very well knows what the audience wants to see onscreen.

In a recent interview with a portal, she shared, "I think the story sells, not violence. Because, the audience wants to be entertained. So as long as the story is

good, it will be appreciated. The biggest examples of films that did well without violence are *3 Idiots*, *Dil Chahta Hai* or *Lagaan*. None of the films had violence but still, they did wonders at the box office. So the audience is coming to theatres to watch the characters, not to see which guns they are going to handle this time."

Shweta is on Instagram by the handle name 'Battata Wada', and the actress feels it's a unique name and won't change it. AGENCIES



Elnaaz surprises friends with her singing prowess

Mumbai: Elnaaz Norouzi has worn several caps throughout her career. From dancing to modeling and acting, she has done it all. However, one thing she has managed to keep a secret from her fans is her singing prowess.

With her debut single slated to release soon, Elnaaz took to Instagram with a fun reel where she is seen surprising her friends with her, as she proceeds to sing for the first time on social media.

Sharing the video she wrote, Just when my friends thought they knew me in and out The reel video shows them having fun on a long drive when Norouzi breaks into the chorus of Adele's All I Ask, much to the surprise of her friends. We see their initially confused faces beam with enthusiasm once they figure what's up! She carries the tune effortlessly and watches her friends break into affectionate wholesome smiles.

With the release of her debut single, Norouzi has expressed how special this project is to her and how she hopes that her singing will be accepted with warmth within her fanbase. AGENCIES

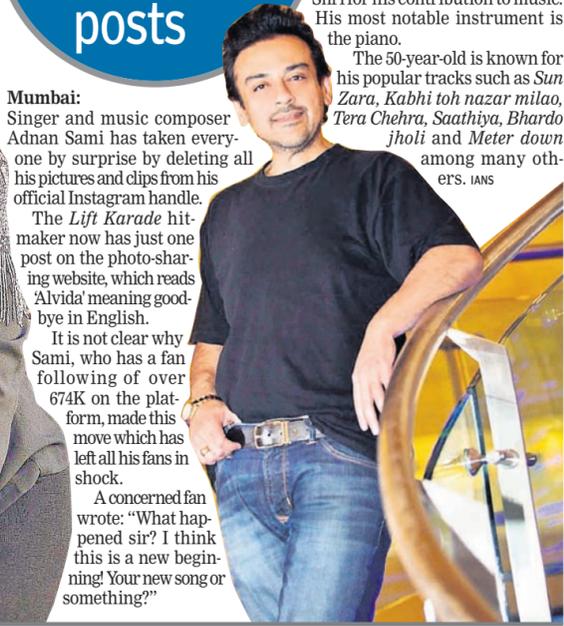


Adnan deletes all Instagram posts

One asked: "Why?" "A new start," questioned a user. One simply said: "Nooooo." Sami hails from Pakistan but was raised and educated in the UK. It was in 2016 that he acquired Indian citizenship.

He has been awarded the Padma Shri for his contribution to music. His most notable instrument is the piano.

The 50-year-old is known for his popular tracks such as *Sun Zara*, *Kabhi toh nazar milao*, *Tera Chehra*, *Saathiya*, *Bhardo jholi* and *Meter down* among many others. IANS

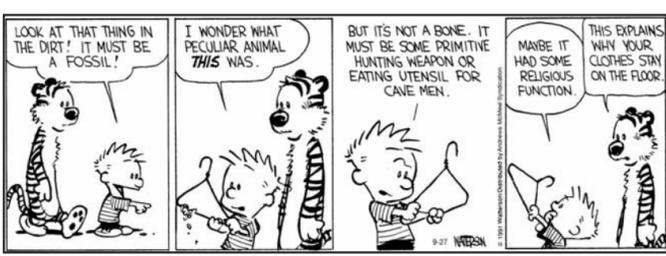


FUN post

PEANUTS



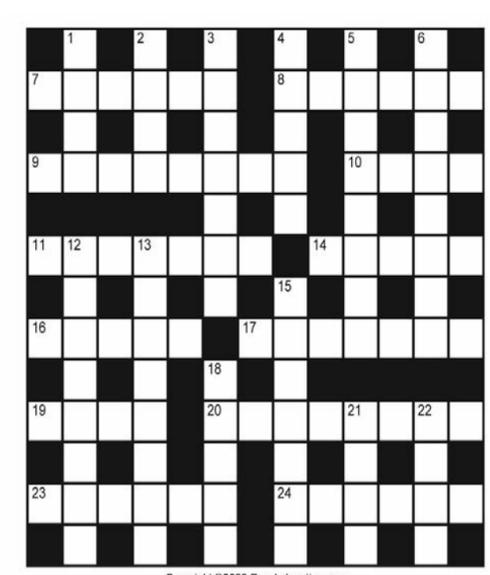
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



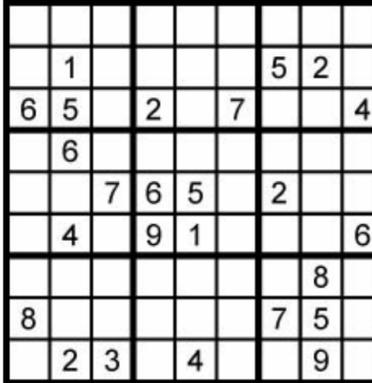
CROSSWORD



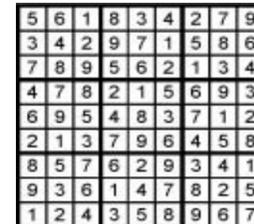
- Across**
- 7 Abatement
 - 8 Root vegetable
 - 9 French endive
 - 10 Exigency
 - 11 Sweet liqueur (4,3)
 - 14 Tunic
 - 16 Hard wood
 - 17 Shellfish
 - 19 Family member
 - 20 Salad ingredient (5,3)
 - 23 Italian port
 - 24 Promised land
- Down**
- 1 Overlook
 - 2 Ancient Greek portico
 - 3 Baltic republic
 - 4 Precipitous
 - 5 Skin problems
 - 6 Terrier type
 - 12 Construction worker, e.g.
 - 13 Brainiac
 - 15 Toxic
 - 18 Muffin topper, at times
 - 21 Cupid's counterpart
 - 22 Nile wader

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



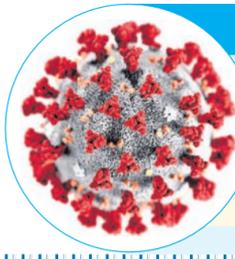
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



STIR OVER CNG PRICE

Auto-rickshaw drivers stage a demonstration at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday, to protest against the hike in CNG price



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	56,89,86,143	54,01,97,226	63,89,968
India	4,37,83,062	4,31,13,623	5,25,785
Odisha	13,00,873	12,86,111	9,130

Cabinet nod to ₹1,165 cr drinking water projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 19: The state Cabinet headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday approved tenders for mega water supply projects worth ₹1,165 crore in four districts.

The Cabinet has taken a decision for execution of a mega piped water supply project worth ₹261.97 crore in Koraput district out of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) funding. With the execution of the project, around 1,61,902 people of 167 villages under 31 gram panchayats of Jeypore and Kundra blocks of the district will be benefited, officials said.

The Cabinet has approved another tender worth ₹114.68 crore for execution of a piped water supply project in Rayagada district. The project would be financed from the JJM funding. The project will benefit around 35,404 people of 129 villages under 15 panchayats of Ramanguda and Kolnara blocks of the district, they added.

A drinking water project worth ₹431.10 crore has been approved by the Cabinet for 4,32,916 people of 544 villages under 85 panchayats of four blocks in Jagatsinghpur district. The four blocks are Raghunathpur, Tirtol, Kujang and Ersama.

Besides, the Cabinet has given its seal of approval to a drinking water project worth ₹356.68 crore in Angul district out of the JJM funding. Altogether 2,19,309 people of 555 villages under 47 panchayats of Kishore Nagar and Athamallik blocks of the district will be benefited by the project.

The Cabinet has approved the tender for construction of Kansariganda in-stream storage structure across river Rushikulya near Barada in Ganjam district at an expenditure of ₹149.60 crore. The project is expected to be completed in 36 months.

This storage structure will enhance the water availability in the river and fulfill the drinking water and domestic requirements of the people of 16 villages of Chhatrapur and Ganjam blocks, Chhatrapur NAC, Ganjam NAC and Berhampur city



The state Cabinet headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik approved mega drinking water projects for Koraput, Rayagada, Jagatsinghpur and Angul district

The Cabinet also gave its nod for construction of Kansariganda in-stream storage structure across river Rushikulya near Barada in Ganjam district

This storage structure will enhance the water availability in the river and fulfill the drinking water and domestic requirements of the people of 16 villages of Chhatrapur and Ganjam blocks, Chhatrapur NAC, Ganjam NAC and Berhampur city

ing water and domestic requirements of the people of 16 villages of Chhatrapur and Ganjam blocks, Chhatrapur NAC, Ganjam NAC and Berhampur city, sources said.

Besides, the storage will be utilised for fishery development and recreational purposes. It will also boost irrigation in Ganjam district and meet the requirements of industries, said an official.

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Besides, the storage will be utilised for fishery development and recreational purposes. It will also boost irrigation in Ganjam district and meet the requirements of industries, said an official.

State logs 945 new Cov cases, one death

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 19: The state recorded 945 fresh Covid-19 cases Tuesday, pushing the tally to 13,00,873, while the death toll mounted to 9,130 with one more fatality, the health department said.

The single-day infections include 110 children, it said in a bulletin. The state now has 6,316 active cases while 12,85,374 people have recovered from the disease.

The test positivity rate was 5.28 per cent, as the new cases were detected out of 17,906 samples.

Khurda district, where state capital Bhubaneswar is located, reported the highest number of daily cases at 371, followed by 103 in Sundargarh and 71 in Cuttack. Odisha had logged 816 new cases Wednesday.



NHRC seeks ATR over 4 minors' drowning

POST NEWS NETWORK



deep. The pit got filled to the brim following heavy downpour in the area June 22.

The four minors were playing near the pit when they accidentally slipped into it and drowned. Two kids died on the spot while the other two perished in the hospital.

Complainant Himanshu Sekhar Nayak urged the apex rights panel to direct the authorities concerned to pay compensation and take action against the local officials for callousness and criminal negligence that resulted in the death of the innocent children.

According to the results of the tests conducted in 2021 (January to December) and in 2022 (January to April) by the OSPCB, the two parameters of BOD and TC were found to be higher than the specified limits in the waters of Mahanadi and Brahmani rivers.

The reason for high BOD and TC level may be due to the discharge of urban wastewater into the rivers and in-stream use of river water, Amat informed.

The minister said that the OSPCB has regularly apprised the concerned municipal officers about the pollution of river water and suggested them to take steps for making river water pollutants free.

The minister said the authorities of the Housing and Urban Development department, Public Health Department, and Odisha Water Supply and Sewerage Board (OWSSB) are requested to take measures to purify water drawn for the supply to people.

Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister PK Amat said that the Odisha State Pollution Control Board tests water quality of 11 main rivers flowing through the state at 129 places

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quality of 11 main rivers flowing through the state at 129 places.

Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister PK Amat said this in Assembly while replying to a query from BJD Member Amar Prasad Satpathy.

Amat in a written reply said that the Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) tests water

Proposals worth ₹131.73 cr approved under Mo School

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 19: Proposals worth ₹131.73 crore from 26 districts have been approved in the 35th Executive Council meeting of Mo School Abhiyan recently.

The projects would be implemented for the development of 1,557 primary, upper primary and high schools, sources said.

As many as 10,672 alumni have joined hands with the Mo School Abhiyan and contributed ₹5.06 crore for the development of their alma maters within a month. The Abhiyan has received grants worth ₹38.85 crore from various CSR funds. Coupled with the donors' contribution, CSR funds and a two-time matching grant from the state government, the Executive Council has approved projects worth ₹131.73 crore for the development of infrastructure in schools.

The alumni have contributed ₹1.12 crore in Balasore, ₹42 lakh in Cuttack, ₹25.22 lakh in Bhadrak, ₹24.27 lakh in Sambalpur and ₹18.94 lakh in Mayurbhanj district recently. Till date, 6.85 lakh alumni have been connected with the Mo School Abhiyan. The scheme has received ₹644 crore in the 2022-23 financial year for the third phase of high school transformation and implementation of the Mo School projects.

Chairing the Mo School Executive Council meeting through virtual mode, School and Mass Education department Principal Secretary Bishupada Sethi laid emphasis on the infrastructural development of the government schools. It is learnt that the Mo School Abhiyan has joined hands with the Institute of Mathematics and Applications, Bhubaneswar, to help students develop interest in mathematics. 'Mathematics Mela' will soon be organised for students of high school and upper primary schools, said a source.

Two BJD MPs in fray for MPEDA election

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, July 19: Two Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MPs Chandrasekhar Sahu and Rajshree Mallick are in the fray for election as members of Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA).

According to the Lok Sabha secretariat, a notice was issued for election of two members of Lok Sabha to the MPEDA. The election process has been completed up to the stage of withdrawal of candidature during the Budget Session.

A total of five MPs—two from BJD and one each from YSRCP, BJP and BSP—are in the fray for the MPEDA election. BJD MPs Chandrasekhar Sahu and Rajshree Mallick are contesting the poll

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Notably, the MPEDA was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1972. It is the nodal agency for the holistic development of the seafood industry in India to realise its full export potential. It promotes the marine products industry with special reference to exports from the country.

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HC nixes plea against acquisition of college land for temple facelift

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, July 19: The Orissa High Court (HC) Tuesday turned down a plea objecting the acquisition of around 3,000 sqft of land (playground) belonging to Shailabala Women's Autonomous College for beautification of Cuttack Chandi temple here.

In its PIL, the alumni association of the institution had informed the HC that the college established in 1913 is going to lose a major portion of its playground if the temple development plan has its way.

Utkal Gourab Madhusudan Das' daughter had donated the land for promotion of women's education. Diverting the land for religious purpose is illegal and immoral, said the petition.

The state government, on the other hand, informed the HC that the land belongs to the government and it has been following due process for beautification of Cuttack Chandi temple.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Govt to allot land free of cost for Paika Rebellion memorial

The state government had long been demanding that 'Paika Bidroha' of 1817 be declared as the first war of Independence against the British as it occurred 40 years before the Sepoy Mutiny

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 19: The Odisha government has decided to provide 9.6 acres of land free of cost to the Ministry of Culture for the purpose of setting up of a Paika

Rebellion Memorial near Khurda town, state minister Niranjan Pujari told the Assembly Tuesday.

Pujari, the parliamentary affairs minister, said that the proposal has received the state cabinet's approval at a meeting presided over by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. "The state government has decided to provide 9.685 acre land for free in Khurda Mouza to the Ministry of Culture for construction of Paika Memorial to honour the warriors who led the rebellion," the minister stated.

An official statement here said that the value of the land stood at ₹31.97 crore. The Odisha government had long been demanding

that 'Paika Bidroha' of 1817 be declared as the first war of Independence against the British as it occurred 40 years before the Sepoy Mutiny.

Meanwhile, senior BJP leader and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan took to Twitter to thank Patnaik for the move. "The memorial will be seen as an epitome of Odisha's valour and serve as a source of inspiration for future generations," Pradhan wrote, adding that he had recently visited the site.

Pradhan, in 2017, had requested the Culture Ministry to identify a suitable place at Barunei, which was the epicentre of Paika rebellion, for the proposed memorial.

High level of BOD in Mahanadi, Brahmani: Amat



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 19: The Odisha government Tuesday said the water of Mahanadi and Brahmani rivers are found to have higher levels of BOD (Biochemical oxygen demand) and TC (total coliform) than the specified levels.

Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister PK Amat said this in Assembly while replying to a query from BJD Member Amar Prasad Satpathy.

Amat in a written reply said that the Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) tests water

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Cong slams Centre, state over skyrocketing prices



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 19: The state Assembly Tuesday witnessed opposition Congress MLAs slamming the state and the central governments over skyrocketing prices of essential commodities.

Participating in a debate on an adjournment motion on price rise, Congress Legislature Party Leader Narasingha Mishra said hike in prices of essential commodities and food items have dealt a blow to the lower middle-class in the state. "Never in history has inflation affected people so much like now," he remarked.

Mishra said the value of the rupee has depreciated against the dollar. In the international market, crude oil prices have fallen sharply in recent months. Despite that, the price of fuels is not decreasing in the state and the country as well, he said.

The Congress leader said hike in fuel prices and GST contributed to the rise in prices of essential commodities.

Informing that the gap between the poor and the rich has been growing, he said 5 per cent GST on food items like puffed rice and flattened rice will impact the poor and

oil bond signed by the Congress for which the government has to pay a huge amount. Majhi said prices will come down if petroleum products come under the GST purview.

Majhi said the state government has a big role in controlling price rise. He said eggs, fish, flowers and fruits are being imported to the state. The state has no sufficient cold storages for storing fruits and vegetables.

If the state government reduces VAT on petrol and diesel and the petroleum products come under GST purview, the prices of fuel can be controlled, added Majhi.

BJP legislators Bishnu Sethi and Mukesh Mahaling said the responsibility of reducing the prices of oil does not lie with the central government alone. The state governments, he said, should demand at the GST Council meeting to include petroleum products under GST.

Replying to the debate, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak attributed the globalisation of economy, devaluation of money and hike in GST and oil prices to the rise in prices of essential commodities

the middle class.

The government should step in to reduce the price, he said, adding that it is the responsibility of both the state and Centre to provide nutritious food to the people.

Congress member Tara Prasad Bahinipati said the price of petrol has risen from Rs 71 per litre in 2014 to 105 in 2022. Similarly, diesel which was Rs 56 in 2014 now costs Rs 102, he said.

The central government is levying Rs 39.80 as tax on a litre of petrol, while the state government is levying Rs 26 as VAT on it, he pointed out.

BJP Chief Whip Mohan Majhi attributed the oil price hike to the

oil bond signed by the Congress for which the government has to pay a huge amount. Majhi said prices will come down if petroleum products come under the GST purview.

Majhi said the state government has a big role in controlling price rise. He said eggs, fish, flowers and fruits are being imported to the state. The state has no sufficient cold storages for storing fruits and vegetables.

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Replying to the debate, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak attributed the globalisation of economy, devaluation of money and hike in GST and oil prices to the rise in prices of essential commodities.

Nayak said the central government has a greater role to play in controlling prices.

The state government has also reduced VAT on petrol and diesel. VAT on diesel has been reduced from 32 per cent to 28 per cent and from 28 per cent to 24 per cent on petrol. As a result, prices for consumer goods have dropped, the Minister informed.

District collectors have been asked to hold meetings with traders to make available essential commodities at affordable prices to the consumers.



Students of Maharishi College of Natural Law in Saheed Nagar area of Bhubaneswar, Tuesday, burn tyres during the dawn to dusk Odisha Bandh demanding justice for Ruchika Mohanty, the BJB Autonomous College student who committed suicide alleging ragging

RUCHIKA DEATH Odisha Bandh passes off peacefully

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 19: A 12-hour bandh was observed in Odisha Tuesday against alleged police inaction on abettors in the reported death by suicide of a girl student of BJB Autonomous College here after ragging.

The bandh, which commenced at 6 am, was held by Naba Nirman Krushak Sanghathan (NNKS) and passed off peacefully with no report of any untoward incident from anywhere in the state.

The police tightened security in different parts of Bhubaneswar, including at government offices and educational institutions.

The bandh was supported by

The first year college student, Ruchika Mohanty died by suicide July 2. A purported suicide note said that she took the extreme step after failing to cope with the ragging by three senior students

The first year college student, Ruchika Mohanty reportedly died by suicide July 2. Her body was found hanging in her hostel room.

A purported suicide note said that she took the extreme step after failing to cope with the ragging by three senior students.

She did not, however, mention any names.

The Bhubaneswar police after an investigation said that it has not found any link of ragging with the death, but the girl's parents and several student organizations alleged police inaction in identifying the abettors who prompted her to commit suicide.

The police took into custody a group of agitators who were picketing in front of the official residence of V K Pandian, the private secretary to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. It also picked up several

youth and student activists of NNKS, including its state convener Akshya Kumar.

With the Odisha assembly in session, security had been tightened around the secretariat as well as the state legislative Assembly for Odisha Bandh. Bhubaneswar deputy commissioner of police Prateek Singh said the bandh did not impact life in the capital city.

Vehicular traffic and rail movements were normal in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, and other district headquarters, police said.

The bandh supporters blocked roads in Bhadrak and Cuttack districts and were removed by the police from the agitation sites, the police said.

New IT policy to attract investments

Continued from P1

In the policy, the government has also announced 100 per cent exemption of stamp duty on first transaction and 50 per cent exemption on second transaction on lease/sale agreement of land or built-up space allotted by government.

Reimbursement of 100 per cent SGST for a period of 5 years in Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) area and for a period of 7 years in non-BDA area will be provided to the IT firms subject to 100 per cent of their FCI. The IT Policy will be in operation for 5 years from the date of its Gazette Notification or till it is substituted by another policy.

The Cabinet has approved amendment to Odisha Mobile Towers, OFC and related Telecom Infrastructure Policy, 2017 to include "deemed approval" clause. In order to arrest distress migration in the 20 migration prone blocks of Balangir, Bargarh, Kalahandi & Nuapada districts, the Cabinet approved a new State Sector Scheme named as State Support to MGNREGS.

The differential amount (i.e. Notified minimum wages for the unskilled workers in the state - notified wage rate under MGNREGA) per person per day will be borne by the state government under the new scheme.

Elephants kill 322 in Odisha in 3 yrs



Continued from P1

In addition, the ministry also provides financial and technical assistance to states and UTs through the centrally-sponsored 'Project Elephant' scheme for protection and conservation of elephants and their habitats in India.

To reduce man-elephant conflict and to avoid retaliatory killing of elephants, compensation is provided to local communities for loss of their property and life, the ministry said in its report.

Various other schemes being implemented by the ministry contribute to the improvement in the natural habitat of elephants by augmenting water sources, planting of fodder trees, regeneration of bamboo etc.

The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act 2016 and the Rules made thereunder also provide for the use of the funds for the development of wildlife habitats, including for elephants, establishment of animal rescue centres, etc. It also contributes to the reduction in human-elephant conflicts.

The ministry has issued guidelines for the 'Management of Human Elephant Conflict' in 2017. In April this year, it had released a field manual for frontline staff to manage such cases.

Critical elephant habitats are notified as 'elephant reserves' for focus and synergy in elephant conservation and to reduce conflict. So far, 32 elephant reserves have been established in the country.

Man gets life term for killing wife

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, July 19: A court here sentenced a man to life imprisonment for burning his wife to death a decade back over dowry.

District and Sessions Judge Gopal Chandra Behera found Braja Kishore Das guilty Monday and imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 on him. The convict had poured kerosene on his wife and set her ablaze in February 2012 at a village under Patkura police station.

The woman was tortured by her husband over dowry-related demands.

The man was found guilty by the court after cross-examination of 11 witnesses.



Aakash BYJU'S launches AudiPREP audiobook for NEET aspirants

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 19: Upholding its reputation of leveraging cutting-edge technologies and innovation to deliver the best, Aakash BYJU'S introduced the Aakash AudiPREP-India's first comprehensive audiobook for NEET aspirants here Tuesday.

Aakash AudiPREP is an innovative web and app-based audiobook containing podcasts of scientifically designed study materials designed by experts. The audiobook lends detailed insight into Physics, Chemistry, Botany and Zoology curriculum which will be incredibly useful for Class XI and XII students to crack the medical entrance examination.

Anurag Tiwari, National Academic director, Akash BYJU'S said the audiobook offers some exciting features such as high-quality audio content with proper modulation and clear pronunciation



curated by Aakash experts and a compilation of subject-wise previous year questionnaires called Neety Gritty.

The audiobook also entails a Content Builder feature which covers relevant NEET concepts even beyond the NCERT syllabus and has interactive quick quizzes for self-assessment aiding in practising and preparing in a fun way.

Commenting on the launch of AudiPREP, Ajay Bahadur Singh, Regional Director East, Aakash

BYJU'S, said, "We are constantly innovating to bring in the best technologies that provide a conducive learning environment. AudiPREP is yet another path breaking tool giving NEET aspirants the extra edge. The comprehensive audiobooks offer high-quality study materials curated by experienced teachers and engage students by appealing to their multisensory learning."

AudiPREP will be available free of cost to Aakash+BYJU'S Class XI and XII students preparing for NEET.

Vitamin B6 supplements may reduce anxiety, depression: Study

THE RESEARCHERS NOTED THAT VITAMIN B6 HELPS THE BODY PRODUCE A SPECIFIC CHEMICAL MESSENGER THAT INHIBITS IMPULSES IN THE BRAIN, AND THE STUDY LINKS THIS CALMING EFFECT WITH REDUCED ANXIETY AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS

Taking high-dose Vitamin B6 supplements may reduce the feelings of anxiety and depression, according to a study.

Scientists at the University of Reading in the UK measured the impact of high doses of Vitamin B6 on young adults and found that they reported feeling less anxious and depressed after taking the tablets every day for a month.

The study, published in the journal Human Psychopharmacology: Clinical and Experimental, provides valuable evidence to support the use of supplements thought to modify levels of activity in the brain for preventing or treating mood disorders.

"The functioning of the brain relies on a delicate balance between the excitatory neurons that carry information around and inhibitory ones, which prevent runaway activity," said study lead author David Field, from the University of Reading. "Recent theories have connected



mood disorders and some other neuropsychiatric conditions with a disturbance of this balance, often in the direction of raised levels of brain activity," Field said.

The researchers noted that vitamin B6 helps the body produce a specific chemical messenger that in-

hibits impulses in the brain, and the study links this calming effect with reduced anxiety among the participants. While previous studies have produced evidence that multivitamins can reduce stress levels, few studies have been carried out into which particular vi-

tamins contained within them drive this effect.

The latest study focused on the potential role of Vitamins B6, which is known to increase the body's production of GABA (Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid), a chemical that blocks impulses between nerve cells in the brain. In the study, more than 300 participants were randomly assigned either vitamin B6 or B12 supplement approximately 50 times the recommended daily allowance or a placebo, and took one a day with food for a month.

The study showed that Vitamin B12 had little effect compared to placebo over the trial period, but Vitamin B6 made a statistically reliable difference. Raised levels of GABA among participants who had taken vitamin B6 supplements were confirmed by visual tests carried out at the end of the trial, supporting

the hypothesis that B6 was responsible for the reduction in anxiety. Subtle but harmless changes in visual performance were detected, consistent with controlled levels of brain activity, the researchers said. "Many foods, including tuna, chickpeas and many fruits and vegetables, contain vitamin B6. However, the high doses used in this trial suggest that supplements would be necessary to have a positive effect on mood," Field said.

"It is important to acknowledge that this research is at an early stage and the effect of vitamin B6 on anxiety in our study was quite small compared to what you would expect from medication. "However, nutrition-based interventions produce far fewer unpleasant side effects than drugs, and so in the future people might prefer them as an intervention," he added.

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SHORT TAKES

UTPs escape from Pallahara sub-jail

Angul: Two undertrial prisoners (UTPs) managed to escape from Pallahara sub-jail in Angul district by jumping the boundary wall late Monday night. The duo has been identified as Basant Mahakul of Dimiria and Nentu Naik of Odasha. Sources said all the prisoners had returned to their cells after dinner last night. Taking advantage of rain, the UTPs jumped off the boundary wall and fled the jail. Police started conducting raids at various places after a complaint was lodged in this regard.

Mao camp busted in Kandhamal dist

Baliguda: The Special Operations Group (SOG) and District Voluntary Force (DVF) during a joint operation recovered a huge cache of Maoist articles from Tilaki village under Baliguda police limits in Kandhamal district, police said Tuesday. The operation started based on specific inputs from reliable sources. During the operation, the team found a Maoist camp while combing the area and recovered the cache of Maoist articles including contraceptives, handmade magazine pouch, solar plate, solar light and rifle sling. The search operation is currently underway, said the police.

Villagers assault cops over woman's 'suicide'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dabugaon, July 19: Tension ran high at Jhariguda under this police limits in Nabarangpur district Tuesday as irate people beat up a police team when it was rescuing the husband of a suicide victim and bringing him to the police station.

The villagers were so incensed that they assaulted Sunil Nag, the husband of deceased Bhadrika Panka, 24. They even did not spare the cops when they tried to stop them. They ran after the police team and assaulted them when they tried to bring Nag in the police van. Reports said the woman allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself inside her in-laws' house Monday night. The deceased woman had married Nag three years ago after an affair.

Her father Lachmi Panka lodged a police complaint alleging murder of his daughter.

A police team led by IIC Abhimanyu Durga reached the village Tuesday to recover the body for post-mortem. However, her kin didn't allow the police personnel to do so demanding Nag's arrest. Police later apprehended Nag, who was hiding in the house, and were bringing him to police station when irate villagers attacked Nag.

A case was registered in this connection with Dabugaon police.

Scam alleged in MGNREGS projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, July 19: A lot of projects are being executed under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in Sadar block of Keonjhar district, but irregularities have defeated the purpose of some of the projects, it was alleged.

Social audit of some of these projects are not carried out regularly, resulting in substandard work under the scheme.

As per reports, ₹10 lakh has been allocated in financial year 2021-22 for laying a new road from Hanuman Ghati to Kadagad. Out of the sanctioned fund, ₹7.85 lakh was earmarked for the project work while ₹2.15 lakh was set aside for wages to job card holders.

However, the project has not yet been started. Surprisingly, it was officially announced that 635 workdays have been created for the job card holders with Rs 1,36, 525 having been paid as wages. Locals questioned how the wages were credited to the labourers' bank accounts when the project itself has not yet started.

They have demanded an investigation into the alleged irregularities. "The matter will be investigated and steps will be taken accordingly," said BDO Bhagabat Nayak.

NMC reviews MKCG infra over enhancing PG seats



The Orthopaedic department has also applied for an increase in PG seats at the MKCG Medical

POST NEWS NETWORK

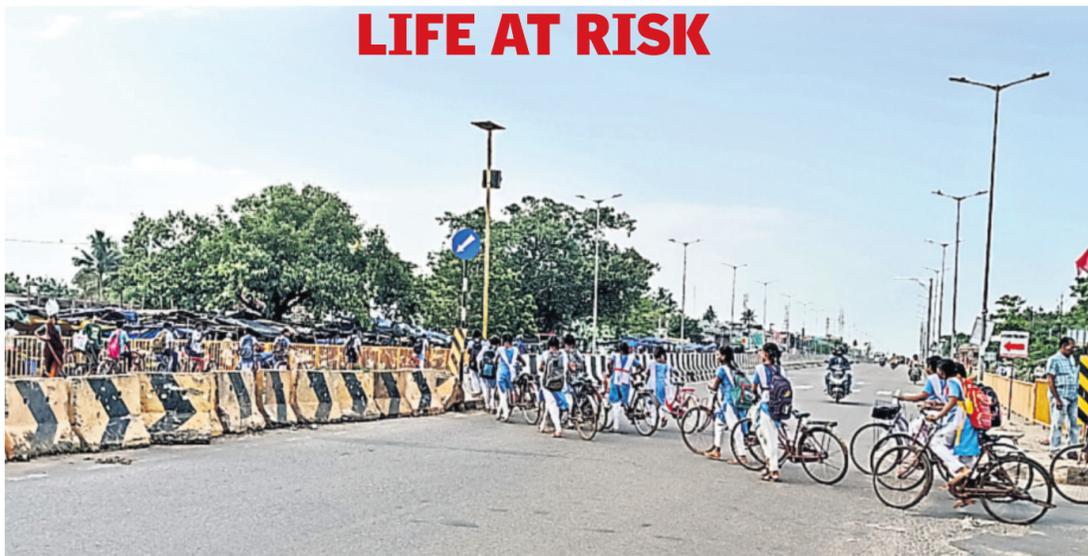
Berhampur, July 19: Hope for enhancing PG seats in Surgery department of MKCG Medical College and Hospital here is rising high as a representative from National Medical Council (NMC) Tuesday visited the hospital and took stock of the infrastructure there.

The Surgery department of MKCG currently has 19 PG seats. The department has necessary infrastructure and facilities for augmentation of PG seats, said sources. The MKCG authorities had applied before the NMC for raising the

seats from 19 to 25. The NMC representative, Prof Nilay Mandal from West Bengal, reached the medical college, Tuesday and inspected the available infrastructure in the Surgery department. However, the admission of the students will take place from next year if the NMC permits an increase in PG seats.

Meanwhile, Orthopaedic department has also applied for an increase in PG seats for which a representative of NMC is expected to visit the hospital soon.

Orthopaedic department currently has only three PG seats which it plans to increase to 11.



Girl students risk their lives while crossing National Highway-16 at Kanishi Haat Square in Ganjam district. Locals have been demanding a foot over-bridge at the spot, which has turned into a deathtrap

Housing schemes in state falter

3.47 LAKH PEOPLE IN URBAN AREAS STILL LIVE IN KUTCHA HOUSES

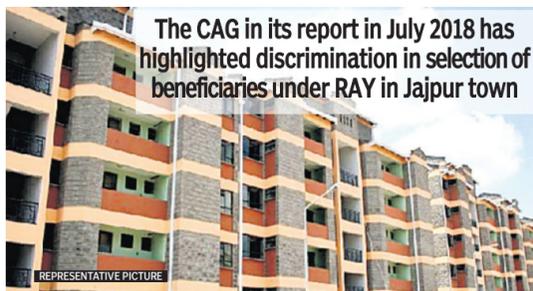
POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, July 19: Housing schemes of both the Union and the state governments have gone haywire in urban areas of the state with over a reported 3.47 lakh denizens still living in kutcha houses.

As per reports, 4, 51,493 people in urban areas are either living without pucca houses or don't have houses of their own.

The reports said over 1, 03,647 houses have been built for these families living in urban areas. These houses include 1,778 houses for people under Basic Service to Urban Poor (BSUP), 11,296 houses for people under Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP), 5,241 houses under Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY), 85,332 houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). As a result, over 3, 47,846 denizens in urban areas are still living in kutcha houses.

This was revealed by the state Housing and Urban Development department in a reply to the questions posed by MLAs Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy, Tara Prasad Bahinipati and Mukesh Mahaling during the current Assembly session. The reply of the state government highlights the fact that the



The CAG in its report in July 2018 has highlighted discrimination in selection of beneficiaries under RAY in Jajpur town

government's plan to provide affordable housing to economically weaker sections in urban areas has faltered.

The promise to provide pucca houses to all slum dwellers in urban areas by 2021 has remained unfulfilled. Moreover, allegations of irregularities and demand for bribe in allotment of houses are galore. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in its report in July 2018 has highlighted discrimination in selection of beneficiaries under RAY in Jajpur town and sanctioned funds have been used without any purpose.

This apart, encroachment of government land has become rampant in urban areas due to lack of

proper implementation of state sponsored Jaga Mission. Encroachment of government and educational institutions' land in Vyasanagar town of Jajpur district is a case in point.

More than 1.75 lakh slum dwellers have received land pattas under Jaga Mission while only 45,000 have received houses under PMAY.

However, Jaga Mission is yet to be implemented in many urban areas. The state government and Centre have launched several housing projects since 2009 as part of their move to give a facelift to urban areas, help slum dwellers adopt city lifestyles, and provide ease of living to urban migrants and poor. Under BSUP, 1,778 houses have

been provided in Bhubaneswar and Puri areas by spending over ₹46.71 crore.

Likewise, 11,296 houses have been provided in Angul, Talcher, Balasore, Bargarh, Bhadrak, Bolangir, Patnagarh, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Paralakhemundi, Berhampur, Jajpur, Vyasanagar, Brajarajnagar, Jharsuguda, Bhawanipatna, Kendrapara, Jatni, Khurda, Joda, Jeypore, Malkangiri, Baripada, Nayagarh, Nabarangpur, Khariar Road, Phulbani, Sambalpur, Kuchinda, Sonapur, Biramitrapur, Rourkela, Boudhgarh and Jagatsinghpur towns in between 2009 to 2015 with an expenditure of ₹171.72 crore under IHSDP.

Similarly, 5,241 houses have been built between 2013 and 2022 at an investment of over ₹359 crore in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Berhampur and Jajpur districts under RAY. In PMAY, 85,332 low-cost houses were provided in 30 districts between 2015 and 2022 by spending over Rs 1,500 crore.

The department informed the House that over 2, 15, 757 houses have been sanctioned for construction under all these schemes while the rest of the families will be given houses as per the eligibility of the beneficiaries by 2023-24 fiscal.

Show-cause notices served on 9 teachers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, July 19: Allegations are flying thick and fast that teachers in various schools of Bhanjanagar area in Ganjam district have been playing truant. Many teachers fail to properly discharge their duties, it was alleged.

The School and Mass Education department has taken the issue seriously and started inspecting the schools. Recent official visits have exposed the chinks in the system. Bhanjanagar block education officer has issued show-cause notices to two headmasters and seven assistant teachers, said sources.

Nine teachers were found absent in some schools and served show-cause notices while one of them has been suspended. Besides, a day's salary of each of these teachers has been held up.

DGCA to take stock of Jeypore airport work



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jeypore, July 19: Koraput Collector Mohammed Abdaal Akhtar Tuesday reviewed the progress of several works being undertaken at Jeypore airport, ahead of the visit of a delegation of Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) July 22.

The district administration is reportedly trying to ensure that all works of the airport are completed by July 21.

Notably, Jeypore airport has been selected under UDAN scheme to facilitate flight services of IndiaOne Air from the airport. Infrastructure for booking counters has been ready.

The Collector stated that the DGCA will take stock of the airport's infrastructure and then will issue commercial licence for flight services.

Commercial flight services will be launched for Bhubaneswar-Jeypore-Visakhapatnam and Visakhapatnam-Jeypore-Bhubaneswar routes in the first phase.

Initially, nine-seater planes will be pressed into service on these routes, it was learnt. Readiness of all necessary infrastructure for nine-seater flight service was reviewed by the district administration.

The Collector and officials took stock of installation of CCTVs, HHMD, DFMD, X-ray baggage scanner, parking lots, entry and exit points, boundary wall, lighting, traffic control system and gates.

The Collector was accompanied by SP Varun Gunthpalli, executive engineer of Roads and

Commercial flight services will be launched for Bhubaneswar-Jeypore-Visakhapatnam and Jeypore-Bhubaneswar routes in the first phase

Buildings department Bhaskar Samantray sub-collector Bedabar Pradhan and SDPO Arup Abhisekh.

Notably, the state Commerce and Transport department in June this year has sought ₹287 crore from the Centre under Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (CAPEX) for upgradation of the airports at Jeypore, and Utkela in Kalahandi district.

The fund is meant to upgrade the airports' infrastructure so as to avail of licence for 3-C category, which will enable 72-seater aircraft to land on it.

Only 40-seater aircraft are allowed to land in airports with 2-C category licence.

MALKANGIRI FLOODS

Cattle, wild animals die; communication disrupts

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, July 19: Hundreds of cattle and wild animals have died and many more have been trapped in the floods after incessant rain battered several areas of Malkangiri district.

Torrential rains for the last one week has pummeled Malkangiri district causing floods and mud-slides that swallowed stretches of highways and forced the evacuation of hundreds of people. Motu is among the worst-hit areas in the district.

Aerial footage showed several houses submerged under flood-



water while farmers and residents are scrambling to save their animals from rising water levels.

Shocking videos are also doing the rounds on social media where cows are seen struggling to reach safer places while many have been

swept away in the floodwaters. Reports said over 50 cows, bullocks, stray dogs and other domestic animals were washed away in the floods.

Even as the ODRAF team is continuing its rescue operation, the situation appears to be gloomy, a local said. Thousands of chicken died while many were seen taking shelter on trees. "Efforts are on to rescue as many animals as possible," a member of the ODRAF team said.

Even as water level has receded in Saberi and Sileru rivers, many areas are still cut off from the rest of the world. Rivers and creeks in the district are in spate.

Bhitarkanika sees rise in croc nesting sites



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kendrapara, July 19: As many as 122 nesting sites of estuarine crocodiles were spotted by enumerators at the marshy wetland sites of Bhitarkanika National Park in Kendrapara district, officials said Tuesday.

The tidal surge during Cyclone Yaas had led to the croc nests being washed away last year. The sight of nesting sites has reestab-

Bhitarkanika National Park is said to house 70% of India's estuarine or saltwater crocodiles, conservation of which was started in 1975

the hatchlings usually emerge from the nests after 70-80 days of incubation period.

Bhitarkanika National Park is said to house 70 per cent of India's estuarine or saltwater crocodiles, conservation of which was started way back in 1975.

Saltwater crocodile population in Bhitarkanika has increased manifold from 96 in 1975 to 1,784 so far. Bhitarkanika, a Ramsar international wetland site, is one of the richest storehouses of mangrove genes.

Researchers have come across 11 of the 70 mangrove species, which were facing threat of extinction in the world, in the national park.

Adequate conservation measures by the Forest department have led to a systematic rise in the number of these reptiles over the years, according to officials.

Every year, the sanctuary remains shut for three months - May 1 to July 31 - to ensure disturbance-free nesting of crocodiles.

Odisha is the only state in the country where three species of crocodiles - saltwater, gharial and mugger - are found inhabiting the river systems.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
e-Tender Notice No. ETCPMGSUBBS 2022067 Dtd: 14.07.2022
Name of work: CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD OVER BRIDGE (ROB) NO.5 OF SPAN 1X24.0M COMPOSITE GIRDER AT CH.3197.49 IN CONNECTION WITH DOUBLING OF LINGARAJ SILO CONNECTIVITY OF NTPC LINE & AUGMENTATION OF NTPC EXCHANGE YARD & NTPC BLOCK CABIN YARD AT TALCHER COALFIELD OF MAHANADI COALFIELDS LIMITED (MCL).
Approx cost of the work: ₹ 1858.70 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 10,79,400/-, Completion period of the work: 15 Months.
Tender closing date & time: at 1200 hrs. of 16.08.2022.
No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders.
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>. The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS portal. Only registered tenderer/bidder can participate on e-tendering.
The tenderers should read all instructions to the tenderers carefully and ensure compliance of all instructions including check lists, para 3.1 (additional check-list) of tender form (Second sheet) Annexure-I of chapter 2 of Tender documents, submission of Annexure-B duly verified and signed by Chartered Accountant.
Chief Administrative Officer (Con)/PR-57/CF/22-23 Bhubaneswar

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, BARGARH
E-mail: rd_bgh@yahoo.co.in, Gmail: rwd.bgh@gmail.com
No.O-686: e-Procurement Notice No.ONLINE-BGH-10 OF 2022-23
1 Name of the Work : Road work during 2022-23 in the district of Bargarh.
2 EMD : Bid Security Declaration
3 Other Details : As per DTCN

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender online for bidding		Last Date & Time of Seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of Opening of tender
		From	To		
1 Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Bargarh	2 ONLINE-BGH-10 OF 2022-23	3 28.07.2022 at 11.00 A.M.	4 08.08.2022 upto 5.00 P.M.	5 08.08.2022 upto 04.00 P.M.	6 12.08.2022 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
Sd./- Executive Engineer, R.W.Division, Bargarh OIPR-25062/11/0016/2223

FOCUS VP POLL

ALVA: CANDID & AMBITIOUS



Indeed Margaret Alva, with her legal background and her experience as a politician and Governor, is a perfect choice for Vice-President

she has spilled the beans on the relations between Sonia and former PM Narasimha Rao on how the Congress president was peeved with him for handling the Bofors case. "Before my efforts could yield results, the decision of the government (the PMO to be precise) to appeal against the Delhi High Court decision to quash complaints in the Bofors case was announced. Soniaji was doubly upset with him. I clarified to her that while I was in charge of the CBI, I had neither been asked nor told about this development and all instructions had gone directly through A N Verma when the Prime Minister was abroad."

She goes on to say in the book, "I conveyed her response to the Prime Minister. Like Soniaji, he snapped at me, "What does she want from me? I cannot close the Bofors case, which is before the courts. It will go on." Surely, Sonia wouldn't have preferred to let this fact come out publicly.

In fact, Alva also comes out openly against the manner in which Rao was treated after his death with the gun carriage carrying his body parked outside the pavements of the AICC gates. She writes in her book, "I was shocked to see this when I arrived. Ever since, I have regretted not protesting and walking away. Why was he humiliated in this manner? Was it because he was a South Indian?" Surely, Sonia wouldn't have preferred to let these secrets come out in the public domain. In subsequent interviews, she talks about Sanjay Gandhi's links with alleged Agusta Westland middleman Christian Michel's father and their involvement in illegal arms deal involving sale of old tanks to South Africa.

The innings of Alva is virtually over. Had she been discreet enough, she would have got a chance to occupy the high office. Both, her mother-in-law and father-in-law, Violent Alva and Joachim Alva, were elected to RS and LS, respectively, from the then Bombay State. After going through her autobiography, one wonders if it was better to name her book as 'Candid & Ambitious' instead of 'Courage & Commitment.'

The writer is a Delhi-based senior journalist and political commentator. Views are personal.

"Sir, please consider me for the post of Vice-President." This is what Margaret Alva told the then Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, in 1992. "Even your hair has not turned grey yet, how can you become Vice-President?" asked Rao. The VP post then went to KR Narayanan, a Dalit, with Shankar Dayal Sharma, a Brahmin, decorating the post of President.

Now, finally at the age of 80, the grey-haired Alva has been unanimously chosen as the Opposition candidate for VP, though her victory remains elusive. If, by any chance, she wins, Alva will be the first Christian to become the VP of India, a post which was normally given to Muslims from among the minorities, right from Dr Zakir Hussain to Hamid Ansari.

This time, Alva is not excited to contest the election, as the results are a foregone conclusion, with numbers loaded on the side of the NDA. However, she could not refuse, with leaders like Sharad Pawar and Sitaram Yechury insisting on her name. She still has stakes in Congress, as her youngest son Nivedith Alva is active in Karnataka politics.

Indeed Alva, with her legal background and her experience as a politician and Governor, is a perfect choice for VP, who has been pitted against NDA's Jagdeep Dhankhar. She is a heavy-weight politician, who served the country in various capacities, holding important ministries. She was the favourite of Sonia Gandhi. With Sonia as Congress president, Alva served as AICC General Secretary for several states, including Maharashtra, Punjab, Haryana, Meghalaya and Nagaland between 2004 and 2009. However, in 2008, she stoked a controversy, alleging Lok Sabha tickets were open to bidders, rather than subject to meritocratic consideration. She was agitated, as she failed to get a ticket for her son in Karnataka, while the kith and kin of several leaders managed to get tickets in MP, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan. In her autobiography, 'Courage & Commitment,' Alva, herself, admits of accusing the party leadership to journalists, saying, "Different rules exist for different people. This is how we lost Karnataka. We have complaints that tickets were sold at the local level. As for

sons and daughters, Jaffer Sharief's grandson and my son are not smugglers or terrorists - why were they kept out?" For her outspokenness, she was forced to quit from the party post. However, in 2009, she patched up with Sonia, to become the first female Governor of Uttarakhand. Ever since her critical remarks against the functioning of the party, Alva has been sharing an estranged relationship with Sonia.

While Nivedith is active in Karnataka, her elder son Nikhil Alva was in Rahul Gandhi's team of advisors, assisting him in his image-makeover, when he was Congress president before 2019 elections. Perhaps, it is due to her sons, both of whom are engaged with party work that Alva could not refuse to contest, even though she is not excited, aware of the outcome of the results. "I have enough publicity, don't need more," she remarked, when asked why she chose to contest.

Alva was similarly not enthused when she was offered the gubernatorial post after being in active politics for decades, but she accepted it unwillingly. "I had already experienced the consequences of defiance, especially when helpless and alone. I could not appear ungrateful and proud."

Indeed, she has been active for decades, having been nominated to Rajya Sabha four times and having won the Uttara Kannada Lok Sabha seat in 1999. She is a lawyer well-versed with the Constitution, with understand-

ing of politics and belongs to a minority community. All these plus points work in her favour, except the arithmetic in Parliament, which goes against her.

The Opposition led by Pawar was looking for a woman candidate this time to contest against Dhankhar. Since the latter belongs to the Jat community, a candidate from minority was preferred. Though Christians constitute only 3% of the population, the Opposition preferred Alva as against any Muslim candidate, which would have given the opportunity to the ruling dispensation to accuse them of Muslim appeasement. The selection of a minority candidate for the much-coveted post is in itself a signal of giving a stamp to the secular ideology of the Opposition. In addition to the 17 political parties, which have endorsed the candidature of Alva, TMC and AAP are expected to bat for her.

More than Sonia, Alva happens to be the choice of Pawar and Yechury. For Alva, who has been lying low ever since she demitted office as Rajasthan Governor, the winning of election as VP would have been an historic occasion. But she has been deceived most of the time. Earlier Sitaram Kesri had promised to nominate her as VP during IK Gujral's tenure but they went for Krishan Kant, she discloses in her autobiography.

Partly, the fault also lies on her candid attitude that Alva fell from the good books of her bosses. In her autobiography, published in 2016,



Anita Saluja

EVER SINCE HER CRITICAL REMARKS AGAINST THE FUNCTIONING OF THE PARTY, MARGARET ALVA HAS BEEN SHARING AN ESTRANGED RELATIONSHIP WITH SONIA GANDHI



If you can always smile at life, life will always smile at you.

THE MOTHER

The Unworthy

Unearthing of a racket involving National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET) recently may not come as a surprise to many. CBI has arrested the supposed mastermind and eight others who were involved in impersonating real candidates to secure seats in the most sought after entrance test in the country which serves as a gateway to medical seats. The method of the scam was that expert paper solvers appeared in the examinations in place of real candidates in exchange for huge sums of money, to the tune of ₹2 million. The multi-state scam supposedly spread across Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar and Maharashtra is under investigation for more leads and the role of coaching institutes is being seriously looked at. While the CBI has informed about these four states, a deep network involving many more states cannot be ruled out. The scam was busted a day after 18 lakh candidates across the country appeared for the test July 17.

This reminds one of the Vyapam Scam which had rocked the country a decade earlier. Irregularities were discovered in 13 different examinations conducted by the Madhya Pradesh government for recruitment to government jobs and educational institutions including medical seats. In fact, the very first instance of irregularities under Vyapam came to light with the leakage of medical papers way back in 2009. During the course of the Vyapam investigation, 23 people related to the scam are supposed to have died due to 'unnatural causes'.

The hunger for government jobs and medical seats in India has always been high. Securing a seat in medicine is seen as a badge of pride as well as a gateway to sure shot success by students as well as parents, irrespective of whether the candidate is worthy or not. The scanner put by the CBI seems limited to only a few states. In reality, medical colleges have mushroomed across the length and breadth of this country in the past two decades. Privatisation of education has been a subject of heated debate for quite some time now. Undoubtedly, in the field of medical education, government run institutions fell drastically short of the need for doctors in a country with a burgeoning population. With demand came the supply. Unfortunately, as is extremely usual in India, the suppliers were mostly businessmen who were focused on profits rather than high quality education that would eventually lead to better health facilities. Once the target is crystal clear to everyone, the methodology to achieve it becomes very simple. These great big scams can only take place if the students involved are unworthy with unscrupulous parents. One may wonder how many of the 18 plus lakh candidates who appeared for the recently concluded NEET are truly worthy. There is a saying that goes - One bad apple spoils the whole bunch. While many candidates would be capable and honest yet the doubt has been cast on their abilities. It has to be understood that a multimillion rupee racket cannot have such deep and massive trails unless and until the number of candidates willing to walk the dishonest path is substantial. It is at this juncture that the role of coaching centres becomes important. Right at the outset, these fraudulent coaching centres assure candidates of bagging a medical seat. To keep their market steady, they prefer to part with the portion of their huge tutorial fee in creating an evil network that makes their enrolled students come out victorious.

Admittedly, this scam could also be taking place in a place like Orissa. Just because no investigation has taken place does not mean no forgery is happening. When seen in this background, one is compelled to wonder what kind of parents encourage their children to consciously adopt devious methods to eventually become doctors who will be expected to serve and save the sick and the weak.

WISDOM CORNER

- Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young. HENRY FORD
- Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago. WARREN BUFFETT
- Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick. Don't lose faith. STEVE JOBS

WORDSWORTH

Unconference

To hold an unconference sounds like a contradiction. In fact, it's practical anarchy applied to a discussion meeting. A participant was quoted in the Guardian in September 2007 as saying that unconferees are "coffee breaks that last all day". Putting it more formally, an unconference has an open-ended agenda in which the topics discussed are driven by the participants, who are all encouraged to contribute. As the writer of the Guardian article described it, "You join an informal group on a particular theme that interests you, listen, discuss and then, if you find something boring, move on to another group." In Podcasting for Profit (2007), Allan Hunkin notes another feature: "What makes the unconference model different from a conference is that attendees don't pay to register, speakers aren't paid to speak, and expenses are covered by sponsors." The term is originally from the US and goes back a long way. The first example I know of appeared, appropriately, in a list of anarchist summer events on Usenet in April 1993. It has remained a niche term until recently, but is becoming more common, especially in the computing and IT worlds. So how does an unconference work? It's designed to perpetuate the buzz arising during the traditional breaks for coffee, lunch and tea when people communicate informally. -- Guardian, 18 Sep. 2007. There is no set program for BarCamp Orlando, which is billed as an "unconference" because of its loose structure. The agenda will be determined the day of the event by those who post on a sign-up board at the door, notes co-organizer Larry Diehl, 20, an information-systems student at UCF. -- Orlando Sentinel, 11 Sep. 2007.

Understand

The most common sense of the prefix under- in Old English was just the same as our modern word under - of being below or beneath something (as in underground). Very early in its history, though, it already had several subsidiary figurative senses. One was very much like the Latin prefix sub-, such as something lower or subordinate in type (as in understudy or undersecretary), or something of lesser degree (as in underdeveloped or underweight). There were several other figurative senses of under-, too, whose meanings are hard to sort out. These appeared in a number of Old English verbs that have now vanished from the language. An example is undersecan, to investigate, from secan, to seek. Another came along rather later, in the Middle English period, and has survived: undertake. Understand has had our modern sense right from the time it was first recorded, in the ninth century. It seems to have originated in one of these subsidiary senses which is now lost to us. After rather more than 1100 years, it's very hard to be sure exactly what was in people's minds.

Monkey in the bar

A man walks into a bar and orders a beer. He takes his first sip and sets it down. While he is looking around the bar, a monkey swings down and steals the pint of beer from him before he is able to stop the



barman who owns the monkey. The barman replies the piano player. The man walks over to the piano player and says: "Do you know your monkey stole my beer." The pianist replies: "No, but if you hum it, I'll play it."

IN JEST THIS

No health benefits of drinking - until you're 40!



Melvin Durai

YES, DRINKING ALCOHOL CAN OFFER SOME HEALTH BENEFITS, A NEW GLOBAL STUDY CONFIRMS, AS LONG AS YOU'RE THE RIGHT AGE AND DON'T OVERDO IT

There are many ways to improve your health, such as running regularly, doing yoga every morning, and hitting the bar every night.

Yes, drinking alcohol can offer some health benefits, a new global study confirms, as long as you're the right age and don't overdo it. What is the right age? Well, apparently it's 40 or older: If you're this age, feel free to pour yourself a glass of wine and celebrate the study's findings. If you're 39 or younger, you may also pour yourself some wine, but just two tablespoons please. That's how much you can safely drink, according to the study.

Two tablespoons may not seem like much, but if you take tiny sips, you can make it last an entire minute. And tomorrow, you can have two more tablespoons.

If you're under 40 and angry about these findings, please don't blame me. The people who deserve all the blame are at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at University of

Washington's School of Medicine in the US. "Our message is simple: young people should not drink, but older people may benefit from drinking small amounts," said senior author Dr. Emmanuela Gakidou, Professor of Health Metrics Sciences at IHME, who is undoubtedly over the age of 40.

But before you send an angry email to Gakidou, it's important to realise that she isn't just trying to spoil your Friday nights. She's trying to spoil your Saturday nights, too. No, seriously, she and her co-researchers just want you to know all the facts.

"While it may not be realistic to think young adults will abstain from drinking, we do think it's important to communicate the latest evidence so that everyone can make informed decisions about their health," she said.

Printed copies of the study will soon be available at every drinking establishment, and by "soon," I mean "soon as libraries start serving beer."

The study, published in The

Lancet and funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is based on an analysis of 2020 Global Burden of Disease data for 204 countries and territories. Exploring the connection between alcohol consumption and 22 health outcomes, including injuries, cardiovascular diseases, and cancers, researchers determined how much alcohol a person can drink before putting themselves at greater health risk than a non-drinker.

For people aged 15 to 39, this amounts to one-tenth of a standard drink per day, though females may consume one-quarter of a standard drink per day.

If you're in this age bracket, you may find yourself asking an important question: What is a standard drink and can I drink more if I have high standards?

Well, a standard drink is defined as 10 grams of pure alcohol. If you have high standards, this is equivalent to a small glass of red wine (100ml or 3.4 fluid ounces). If you have low standards, it's equivalent to a can or bottle of beer (375

ml or 12 fluid ounces) at 3.5% alcohol by volume, or a shot of whiskey or other spirits (30 ml or 1.0 fluid ounces) at 40% alcohol by volume.

If you're under 40, you can consume one-tenth of a standard drink without taking on any additional health risk. But unlike people 40 or older, you get no health benefits from drinking.

Once you hit 40, you can be a little naughty. But not too naughty! As long as you have no underlying health conditions, drinking a small amount of alcohol at this age may provide some health benefits, such as reducing the risk of ischemic heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.

At age 40 to 64, a person can safely drink between half a standard drink per day to two standard drinks per day. At age 65 or older, a person can safely drink about three standard drinks per day, but please don't tell grandpa and grandma. They don't need alcohol.

They feel naughty when they drink something that's not tea.

Forests as public health tool

Sir, Globally, around 10 million hectares (2.5 million acres) of forest were lost every year between 2015 and 2020, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Between 2019 and 2020, India lost over 38.5 thousand hectares (Kha) of tropical forest, or almost 14 per cent of its total tree cover. Forests are indispensable to human health. According to a 2020 report by the World Economic Forum, 1 in every 3 or 31 per cent of outbreaks of new and emerging diseases, such as Zika, Ebola, and Nipah, are linked to deforestation. A new report from the WWF (World Wildlife Fund) lays out the evidence for how forests directly impact public health. In addition to filtering air and water pollution that would otherwise cause diseases like cancer and diabetes, forests also assist in reducing hunger and malnutrition and enhancing mental health. In the new report The Vitality of Forests, the WWF examined five categories of interactions between forests and human health: non-communicable diseases, environmental exposure (pollution), food and nutrition, physical hazards, and infectious diseases. The report also highlights the important role forests play in the resilience of human health to climate change. There is scientific evidence that shows that exposure to forests can actually reduce human stress levels, help us recover from attention fatigue and generally improve overall mood. Therefore, the WWF urges people to protect forests for the sake of their own individual health and calls on public health experts to work more closely and view forests as a public health tool.

Prez poll

Sir, It is heartening to note that around 99 per cent of legislators cast their vote Monday to elect the 15th President of India. The counting will take place Thursday, and the next President (NDA nominee Droupadi Murmu is tipped to win) will take oath Monday. Though the result appeared to be a foregone conclusion, there was an element of political excitement over cross-voting in favour of the NDA nominee in several states, including Odisha, Assam, Gujarat, West Bengal, and Maharashtra.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

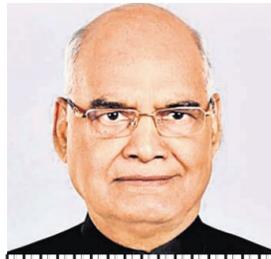
Letters

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

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Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

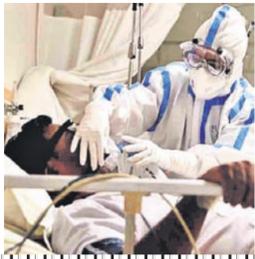


The first thing is to take pride in what the country has achieved. The second thing is to maintain brotherhood. And the third thing is the capability to work together

RAM NATH KOVIND | PRESIDENT

WHO METHODOLOGY UNSCIENTIFIC: GOVT

The mathematical modeling approach adopted by the WHO to project excess mortality estimates related to COVID-19 suffers from erroneous assumptions and is unscientific and India had registered its strong objection to this methodology, the government informed Parliament Tuesday



'ILLEGAL' SALE OF ENEMY PROPERTIES GOVT ORDERS CBI PROBE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 19: The Union home ministry has ordered a CBI probe against some of its own officials and those working with the Uttar Pradesh government and office of the Custodian of Enemy Property for India (CEPI) for alleged illegal sale and lease of enemy properties.

This was disclosed by Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Kumar Mishra in Lok Sabha on Tuesday. Mishra said according to information received from CEPI, no enemy property is being utilised by the government for any purpose.

"Complaints are received from time-to-time which are addressed as per existing procedure. Based on examination of cases, the government has initiated departmental enquiry and CBI enquiry against officials of state government of Uttar Pradesh, CEPI and MHA and other private persons," he said in a written reply to a question.

The minister said the leasing or sale of enemy property is provided under the Enemy Property Rules, 2015 and the Enemy Property (Amendment & Validation) Act, 2017.

Mishra said a total of 12,611 establishments, called enemy property, were left behind by people who have taken citizenship of Pakistan and China.

He said out of the 12,611 properties vested with the CEPI, 12,485 were related to Pakistani nationals and rest 126 to Chinese citizens.

Pak man who came to kill Nupur held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 19: A Pakistani man, who had crossed the border to kill former BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma for her remarks against Prophet Mohammad, was apprehended by the Border Security Force (BSF) last week in Rajasthan, officials said Tuesday.

Rizwan Ashraf (22), a resident of Mandi Bahauddin district in Pakistan's Punjab province, was nabbed from near the India-Pakistan International Border fence in the Sriganaganagar sector; they said. Two knives, including a cleaver, three religious books, a comb, hair oil, electric tester, map, food, clothes and a national identity card of Pakistan issued in 2019 along with some other items were recovered from him, officials said.

"The Pakistani national was arrested on intervening night of July 16-17. During preliminary interrogation, the Pakistani man has revealed that he planned to kill Nupur Sharma. He seems to be religiously motivated," said Anand Sharma, Superintendent of Police, Sriganaganagar.

The Pakistani was produced before a local court which sent him to police custody till July 24. The man is currently

The Pakistani national was arrested on intervening night of July 16-17. During preliminary interrogation, the Pakistani man has revealed that he planned to kill Nupur Sharma. He seems to be religiously motivated

ANAND SHARMA | SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE, SRIGANGANAGAR



being interrogated by a joint interrogation committee (JIC) comprising BSF, state police and intelligence agencies officials, a senior officer said.

The man had initially told officials that he came to the border as he wanted to visit Ajmer Sharif dargah but later told them that he also wanted to kill Sharma for her remarks on the Prophet,

senior officials claimed. Sharma said the man is presently being interrogated to ascertain his links.

An FIR has been registered against the accused under sections of the Foreigners Act, Indian Passport Act and Arms Act, officials said. Police sources said the accused had taken part in a religious meeting in Pakistan and after being motivated, he had planned to kill the BJP leader. The arrests of the Pakistani man comes in the backdrop of now-suspended Sharma's remark on Prophet which had led to protests at many places across the country.

Five women arrested, NTA constitutes panel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, July 19: With protests intensifying, five women were arrested in Kerala for allegedly forcing girl students, who appeared for medical entrance exam NEET, to remove their bra during frisking even as a fact-finding committee was constituted to look into the allegations.

Earlier, the National Testing Agency (NTA) rubbished the claims of a 17-year-old student that she was asked to remove her innerwear Sunday saying the exam centre superintendent has informed that the complaint is "fictitious" and filed with wrong intentions. While three of the arrested women worked for an agency hired by the NTA, two worked for the private educational institution at Ayur in Kollam where the incident happened.

The state police registered a case based on the complaint of the girl, who alleged that she was asked to remove her bra before she could be permitted to appear for the eligibility test. The NTA, which conducts the test, set up the panel after the Kerala government took up the issue with the Centre seeking strong action.

The arrest followed protests that began July 18. The protests intensified and turned violent Tuesday in Kerala's southern



NEET FRISKING INCIDENT

The arrest followed protests that began July 18. The protests intensified and turned violent Tuesday in Kerala's southern region of Kollam

The panel will visit Kollam to ascertain the facts. The Kerala Women's Commission, on its part, also registered a case based on complaints it received

based on the report of the fact-finding committee which will visit Kollam," a senior MoE official said. The panel will visit Kollam to ascertain the facts. The Kerala Women's Commission, on its part, also registered a case based on complaints it received. An agency hired by NTA, in Kollam, for purposes including carrying out frisking, allegedly asked the girl students to remove their innerwear.

The panel reportedly objected to the metallic hook in the innerwear.

Taking note of the allegation, the Union Ministry of Education (MoE) said that it has been brought to its notice through various media reports that an incident allegedly happened in one of the centres of NEET (UG)-2022 in Kerala. Accordingly, the Ministry said, a fact-finding committee was constituted by the NTA to ascertain the facts in detail. "Further action will be taken

The complainant was the 17-year old girl. Several other girl students made similar allegations, though they have not separately filed police complaints. A section of agitators, who took out protest marches, vandalised the education institution at Ayur. Student activists allegedly entered the college premises breaking the police cordon, leading to vandalism. Some student activists suffered injuries in police action.

12 MPs join Shinde camp

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Mumbai, July 19: After the Maharashtra assembly, Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena Tuesday suffered a fresh jolt with 12 of its 19 Lok Sabha members shifting allegiance to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and declaring two-term member Rahul Shewale as their leader in the lower house.

Shewale, the leader of the rebel faction of the Shiv Sena, claimed that they have aligned with the BJP as per the wishes of Thackeray, who was himself making similar efforts in June last year but backtracked later. The Thackeray faction of the Shiv Sena, however, rubbished claims made by Shewale.

The 12 Lok Sabha members also wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla identifying Shewale as their leader, expressing no confidence in incumbent Vinayak Raut and retaining five-term member Bhawna Gawli as the chief whip.

The letter came a day after the Thackeray camp had written to the Speaker asserting that Vinayak Raut is the leader of the party in the Lok Sabha and Rajan Vichare is the chief whip. It also



urged the Speaker not to entertain any representation from the rival faction.

Addressing a press conference flanked by the 12 Lok Sabha members, Shinde claimed that the Lok Sabha Speaker had recognised Shewale as the Shiv Sena leader in the lower house.

Shinde asserted that the 12 Lok Sabha members were following the

ideals of Balasaheb Thackeray and were the original Shiv Sena.

The faction is also learnt to have staked a claim on the parliamentary party office in Parliament. Shewale, a two-term member from Mumbai South Central, said Shiv Sena MPs had asked Thackeray in June last year to realign with the BJP as it would be difficult for them to win the 2024 parliamentary elections if the alliance with Congress and NCP continued.

RLYS TO USE GOOGLE MAPS TO ALLOT TEST CENTRES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 19: In a first, the Railways will now use Google Maps to link the location of candidates appearing for its exams to test centres within a 300-km radius in order to cut their travel time.

For decades, candidates appearing for the Railway Recruitment Board (RRB) exams have complained about test centres being far away from their domicile, resulting in not only long-distance travel but also expenses on account of lodging and food which they have to bear.

"With this, we are linking the pin codes of each candidate to an exam centre within 300 km of their residences through Google Maps.

Also, we are ensuring that the centres have easy access to different modes of transport like buses and trains. If this works, we will be able to solve one of the most frequent and perennial complaints of candidates," a senior official said.

The process will be rolled out in the Level 6 and Level 4 computer-based tests to be held on July 30. Around 60,000 candidates will be appearing for the test at approximately 90 centres for 7,026 posts.

"As of now, we have been able to accommodate around 99 per cent of candidates who have been provided centres within a 300-km range, while 100 per cent of female candidates have been accommodated within 400 km," the official said.



ED arrests Soren's aide

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, July 19: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested Pankaj Mishra, a political aide of Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, Tuesday in connection with a money-laundering probe linked to alleged illegal mining in the state, officials said.

They said Mishra was arrested under the criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), adding that he was "evasive in his replies" during questioning. Mishra is expected to be produced before a Ranchi court on Wednesday, where the ED will seek his custody.

The federal probe agency had raided at least 19 locations in Sahibganj, Barhet, Rajmahal, Mirza Chauki and Barharwa in Jharkhand on July 8 as part of the probe against Mishra linked to alleged irregularities in the operation of toll plaza tenders and instances of illegal mining in the state.

After the raids, the ED had frozen deposits of Rs 11.88 crore lying in 37 bank accounts belonging to Mishra and Dahoo Yadav, a person linked to him.

SKM rejects govt's MSP panel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 19: The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella body of farmer unions, Tuesday rejected the government's committee on minimum support price, saying "so-called farmer leaders" who supported the now-repealed farm laws are its members.

Senior SKM member Darshan Pal alleged the Centre's committee looks "bogus" as it does not talk about ensuring the legal rights of farmers. The government Monday formed a committee on Minimum Support Price (MSP), eight months after it promised to set up such a panel while withdrawing the three contentious farm laws.

Former agriculture secretary Sanjay Agrawal will be the chairman of the committee. The government has made a provision to include three members from the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) in the panel. "Today, we held a meeting of non-political leaders of Samyukta Kisan Morcha. All leaders rejected the government's panel. The government has inducted so-called farmer leaders in the panel who didn't have anything to do with our agitation against the three farm laws at the Delhi bor-



Former agriculture secretary Sanjay Agrawal will be the chairman of the committee. The government has made a provision to include three members from the Samyukta Kisan Morcha in the panel

Under the umbrella of SKM, thousands of farmers had held a year-long agitation at Delhi borders and forced the government to withdraw the farm laws

members of the MSP panel. Farmer leader Darshan Pal said they don't have any belief in this committee as its terms and references are not clear. "There is no representation from Punjab in the committee. This committee formed by the Centre does not talk about ensuring the legal rights of farmers. In SKM's July 3 meeting, we had decided that we would provide names of our representatives for any panel only when the terms of references of the Centre's committee would be made clear to us. This committee lacks this virtue and looks bogus," Pal said.

Kohar said the government has also made some corporate people

COVID PRECAUTION



Pilgrims receive face masks from a policewoman as they wait in a queue to get themselves registered for the Amarnath Yatra, at Ram Mandir base camp, in Jammu

PTI PHOTO

Over 1.63L Indians gave up citizenship

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 19: Over 1.63 lakh Indian nationals renounced their Indian citizenship during 2021, the highest during the last three years, the Parliament was told Tuesday.

Data provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs in Lok Sabha disclosed that the US was the top choice with almost half of Indians - 78,284 - preferring to become US citizens. In 2021, as many as 1,63,370 Indians gave up their Indian passports.

The corresponding number in the year 2019 and 2020 was 1,44,017 and 85,256, respectively.

Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai, in a written reply, said that the reason for these Indians renouncing their citizenship, which also means they have to surrender their Indian passport, was "personal to them".

As per the data, shared in response to a query by Bahujan Samaj Party member Haji Fazlur Rehman, showed that that after the US, Australia (23,533), Canada (21,597), the UK (14,637), Italy (5,986), New Zealand (2,643) and Singapore (2,516) were where Indians preferred to get citizenship.

Filmmaker held for sharing Shah's photo with arrested IAS officer

The FIR against 46-year-old Avinash Das was registered after he shared a photo showing Pooja Singhal, who had been arrested by the ED in a money laundering case, whispering something to Amit Shah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, July 19: The Gujarat police detained filmmaker Avinash Das from Mumbai Tuesday in a case related to sharing on Twitter a photo of Union Home Minister Amit Shah with arrested IAS officer Pooja Singhal, an official said. He was being brought to Ahmedabad for further action, the official said.

"We detained Das from Mumbai Tuesday. He is being brought to Ahmedabad by our team for further legal process," the city crime branch's Assistant Commissioner of Police DP Chudasama said.

The Ahmedabad crime branch had registered an FIR against the Mumbai-based filmmaker under Section 469 (forgery) of the Indian Penal Code as well as provisions of the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act and the Information Technology Act, as he had also

posted on his Instagram and Facebook accounts another photo of a woman wearing the national flag.

The FIR against 46-year-old Das was registered in June after he shared a photo showing Singhal, who had been arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case, whispering something to Shah.

As per the FIR, in a caption to the photo Das had claimed the picture was taken a few days before Singhal's arrest, while it was actually taken in 2017.

The crime branch had alleged this was done with an intention to tarnish Shah's image.

The filmmaker was also booked for insulting national honour by sharing on his Instagram and Facebook accounts a photo of a woman wearing the national flag.

A sessions court here in June rejected Das' plea for anticipatory bail, observing that he had delib-



erately claimed the photo of Shah with Singhal was taken a few days before the latter's arrest, with the intention to "tarnish the image of the Home Minister".

The photo of a woman wrapped in the national flag showed Das' "mental perverseness", the court had said in its order.

Later, the Gujarat High Court had also rejected his anticipatory bail application while observing that Das had violated provisions of the Prevention of Insults to the

National Honour Act by circulating a painting showing a person wearing a dress made of the tricolour. The Bombay High Court had also rejected Das' transit anticipatory bail application.

Das directed the 2017 film 'Anaarkali of Aarah', starring Swara Bhaskar, Sanjay Mishra and Pankaj Tripathi, and 'Raar Baaki Hai', which was released in 2021.

He had also helmed a Netflix series called 'She'.

Infighting escalates in Karna Cong

BOTH STATE UNIT PRESIDENT DK SHIVAKUMAR AND SENIOR LEADER SIDDARAMAIAH EYE CM POST

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, July 19: The infighting in Congress in Karnataka has come out in open with both party's state unit president DK Shivakumar and senior leader Siddaramaiah staking their claim to the post of the Chief Minister, if the Congress is elected to power in the state.

Tuesday, Shivakumar reiterated his earlier appeal that the Vokkaliga community should support his candidature for the post of the Chief Minister.

On the other hand, Siddaramaiah has stated that party MLAs and high command will take a call on who will become the Chief Minister, adding he is "very much" in the race for the coveted post.

"I have requested the Vokkaliga community to stand behind me as after former chief minister S.M. Krishna, I have been made the president of the party," Shivakumar stated.

Earlier, he had urged the Vokkaliga community to support him as there is a chance of the community members getting the CM post - referring to himself.

When asked if he is interested (in the CM post), Shivakumar said he is not a sage. "I have worn khadi



Shivakumar reiterated his earlier appeal that the Vokkaliga community should support his candidature for the post of the Chief Minister

not kaavi (cloth worn by religious seers). If the Congress party attains majority, the post of CM will be available... the high command will decide on who will become the CM," he said.

Shivakumar further claimed that the internal survey of the Congress suggested a clear majority for the party in Karnataka.

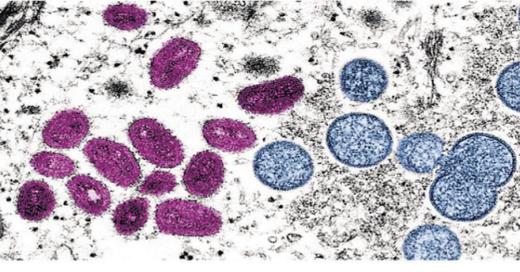
"The report says we will get more than 130 seats. We are ready if the elections are held immedi-

ately," he said. Meanwhile, Siddaramaiah maintained that he is an aspirant for the post of Chief Minister.

"The MLAs and party high command will ultimately take a decision in this regard," he said.

When asked about Shivakumar's appeal to the Vokkaliga community, he said "there is nothing wrong with the appeal, and eventually, the high command and MLAs are going to take the call."

Monkeypox alert in Karnataka



AGENCIES

Bangalore, July 19: The Dakshina Kannada district health department has sounded an alert after a man who travelled to Kerala via Mangaluru International Airport (MIA) was found to be infected with the monkeypox disease.

The 31-year-old man had arrived at Mangaluru from Dubai on July 13. He is now being treated at the government medical college at Pariyaram in Kannur district.

Health department sources said 35 people who had contact with him have been advised to remain isolated. The doctors have asked the airport officials and the passengers who had travelled with him to remain isolated and be under ob-

servation. There were 191 passengers in the flight in which the youth had arrived. Of them, 15 passengers were from Dakshina Kannada, six from Udupi district and 13 from Kasaragod, besides the passenger from Kannur.

The passengers from Mangaluru have been traced and are being isolated. They have been asked to contact the department in case they develop symptoms, district surveillance officer Dr Jagadish said.

A separate isolation ward for the treatment of suspected monkeypox infected patients have been opened at the government Wenlock hospital here. Passengers arriving from foreign countries are being screened at the airport for

temperature and rashes, he said.

A senior official in Bangalore said the officials at district level have been apprised about the measures taken to check monkeypox cases.

The districts such as Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, Kodagu, Mangaluru and Udupi have been asked to be on the high alert.

"Already, the central government's guidelines have arrived. Shortly, the state government will also release its own set of guidelines," an officer said requesting anonymity.

The officer was confident that monkeypox will not be another COVID-19 like pandemic and will affect only those in close contact with the infected person.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), monkeypox is a viral zoonosis (a virus transmitted to humans from animals) with symptoms similar to those seen in the past in smallpox patients, although it is clinically less severe.

Monkeypox typically presents with fever, rash and swollen lymph nodes and may lead to a range of medical complications.

It is usually a self-limited disease with symptoms lasting from 2 to 4 weeks.

MONSOON FUN



Children play on a flooded road after heavy monsoon rain in Ahmedabad, Tuesday.

PTI PHOTO

Family announces a reward of ₹50K for finding missing parrot



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Tumakuru, July 19: A family that rears parrots at home here has announced ₹50,000 cash for those who can find their favourite bird which went missing.

According to Ravi, an animal activist and the owner of the bird, their family nursed two African grey parrots at their home in Jayanagar locality of Tumakuru district. One of the parrots named 'Rustum' had gone missing since July 16.

The family had made posters, and launched hunts in the surrounding areas. "By mistake it has

flown away. I request the people here to observe their surroundings in balconies, terraces and on the branches of trees. It cannot go far," he said.

The family members are closely attached to 'Rustum'. "We have not been able to take the pain. I request everyone to give information or if anyone returns the bird they will be given ₹50,000 cash on the spot," he said.

"I have been associated with animal rights organisations. Me and my family share a special bond with the parrot," he said.

"We have been missing it very much. We have spent wonderful times with the bird," he added.

The family celebrated the birthday of the two parrots every year grandly. The bonding of the family with the parrot and their endeavour to discover and get back the lost parrot has moved people and animal lovers in the state.

I have been associated with animal rights organisations. Me and my family share a special bond with the parrot... We have been missing it very much. We have spent wonderful times with the bird

RAVI | ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

HAR GHAR TIRANGA

Tricolour to be flown atop one crore houses in Gujarat

THE CENTRE HAS COME UP WITH THIS IDEA OF 'HAR GHAR TIRANGA' TO INSTILL A SENSE OF PATRIOTISM AMONG CITIZENS ON THE OCCASION OF 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE

AGENCIES

Ahmedabad, July 19: The tricolour will be hoisted atop one crore houses across Gujarat from August 13 to 15 under the Central government's "Har Ghar Tiranga" campaign to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Independence, state Minister Jitu Vaghani said Tuesday. Speaking to reporters after a cabinet meeting in Gandhinagar, the state education minister and government spokesperson said the state government has made elaborate plans to ensure that the national flag is hoisted atop one crore houses from August 13 to 15.

Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel was among the chief ministers of



different states who had attended a virtual meeting chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah Sunday to review the preparations for the campaign to be carried out under the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Vaghani said.

"The Centre has come up with this idea of 'Har Ghar Tiranga' to instill a sense of patriotism among citizens on the occasion of 75th anniversary of Independence. Our aim is to ensure that the tricolour is flown atop 50 lakh urban and 50 lakh rural homes on August 13, 14 and 15," the minister said.

The national flag will also be hoisted on nearly 2.5 lakh government and private buildings, such as schools, colleges, government offices, factories, and other public places, he said.

The state government will make elaborate arrangements for adequate supply of flags, he said.

"The state government will buy nearly 50 lakh flags from approved agencies through the GEM portal. These flags will be sole across the state at khadi centres, Garvi Gurjari Emporiums, shopping malls and bus stations," Vaghani said.

Int'l child pornography racket busted in Gujarat

AGENCIES

Jamnagar, July 19: The Gujarat police have arrested a 24-year-old man for allegedly creating mobile phone applications, websites and WhatsApp groups to upload and share child pornography, an official said Tuesday.

The police have claimed that the accused was a part of an international child pornography network.

Kishan Parmar was arrested from Dehgam in Gandhinagar district for creating two child pornography applications and circulating obscene videos of children on WhatsApp groups with members from India and abroad, deputy superintendent of police (DySP) Jayvirsinh Zala said.

The police have found over 1,600 child pornographic contents, two mobile phone applications and a blog with 224 videos after analysing his mobile phone and interrogating him, he said.

Parmar had also created a WhatsApp group for selling such content to members from India and abroad, he said.

The accused, who is a Class 10 pass-out employed as a truck driver, learnt to make mobile applications and operate blogs through YouTube, Zala said.

The Jamnagar cyber crime officials came across a suspicious link during a browser analysis carried out after receiving information that some persons were



Accused Kishan Parmar

involved in developing mobile applications and websites to share pornographic material, he said.

A WhatsApp group opened through the link and a surveillance of the group, revealed that the admin was a resident of Gandhinagar district, the DySP said.

With the help of local police, Jamnagar cyber crime sleuths arrested Parmar on the basis of preliminary police inquiry and device analysis, he said.

"The accused has also allegedly developed two website pornographic applications. A porn app's APK file was also recovered from his mobile phone," the officer said, adding that Parmar also operated a blog, from which 224 pornographic videos were allegedly uploaded.

of the day quote

Modi govt on privatisation spree, Congress will oppose 'bank sale bill'

JAIRAM RAMESH
CONGRESS LEADER

Mining activities will resume in the state in six months after the auctioning of leases

PRAMOD SAWANT
GOA CHIEF MINISTER

The Kerala government along with the Centre has introduced a strict monitoring system to prevent human trafficking through illegal recruitment and visa fraud

PINARAYI VIJAYAN
KERALA CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Toddler drowns

Pune: A two-year-old boy drowned in the swimming pool of a bungalow in Maharashtra's Lonavala, where his family had gathered to celebrate his birthday, police said Tuesday. The incident took place July 13 at the bungalow, which the Nashik-based family had booked to celebrate the child's second birthday the next day, an official from Lonavala police station said. "The parents and other family members were busy on the first floor of the bungalow, when the toddler fell in the swimming pool outside the bungalow," he said. It took the family members 10 to 15 minutes to realise that the boy was missing, and after a frantic search, they found him in the pool, the official said, adding that a case of accidental death has been registered in this regard.

Six injured

Thane: At least six persons were injured after a single-storey building collapsed on another structure in Bhiwandi town of Maharashtra's Thane district on Tuesday, an official from the fire brigade said. The incident took place around 7 am when a building in Panjrapole locality, which was unoccupied, collapsed on an adjacent structure, in which the victims were asleep, the official said. The building, which was 35 years old, had been declared dangerous and occupants had vacated it, he said.

ED arrests Pandey

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Tuesday arrested former Mumbai Police commissioner Sanjay Pandey in connection with a money laundering case linked to the alleged illegal phone tapping of NSE employees, officials said. The retired 1986-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer was taken into custody by the federal probe agency after more than seven hours of questioning in the case. Tuesday was his second consecutive day of questioning. The ED had last week arrested former NSE CEO Chitra Ramkrishna in the case. Pandey retired from service on June 30. Before his four-month stint as Mumbai's commissioner of police, Pandey served as the acting Maharashtra director general of police.

Ganja seized

Ramgarh: Seven quintals of ganja were seized from a truck in Jharkhand's Ramgarh district, and two people were arrested, police said Tuesday. Acting on a tip-off, the truck was intercepted on National Highway 33, which connects Ranchi to Patna, near Hasagarha village in Mandu police station area on Monday, they said.



The Rupee crossed ₹80. The gas cylinder man is asking for ₹1,000. There are 1.3 crore unemployed people in June. Now GST burden on food grains too. No one can stop us from raising public issues, the government will have to answer

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

819 SUICIDES IN LAST 5 YRS

A total of 819 armed forces personnel committed suicide in the last five years, with the Army reporting a maximum of 642 such cases, according to details provided by the government



BHIMA KOREGAON CASE

SC extends interim protection for Rao

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 19: The Supreme Court Tuesday extended the interim protection granted to Bhima Koregaon case accused P. Varavara Rao and scheduled his bail plea for final hearing on August 10. A bench headed by justice U.U. Lalit issued notice and sought response from National Investigation Authority (NIA). The bench, also comprising Justices Ravindra Bhat and Sudhanshu Dhulia, said considering the nature of controversy of the matter, it would be disposed of on the next occasion. "Since we had not issued notice earlier, issue notice, returnable on August 10," said the bench. The top court also extended the interim protection earlier granted to Rao on medical grounds. "Interim protection granted earlier on medical grounds extended till further orders", said the bench. Senior advocate Anand Grover, representing Rao, contended that the latest Bombay High Court order said conditions in jail ought to be improved. "Let's not go into that", the bench replied. The top court directed the Additional Solicitor General to place all material on record by August 2 and to file the rejoinder applications by August 8.

RAIN FURY



Water cuts across a damaged section of a road after monsoon rains in Manali

DSP probing illegal mining killed

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar promised strict action while the Opposition slammed the BJP government over illegal mining in the state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gurugram, July 19: A deputy superintendent of police investigating illegal stone-mining was killed Tuesday when a truck he signalled to stop in Haryana's Nuh district drove into him, officials said. Hours after the officer's death, police said the truck's cleaner was arrested after being shot at and injured during an encounter with them. Tauru DSP Surendra Singh had signalled the truck to stop. As the officer approached the truck to check documents, it ran over him. His gunman and driver jumped aside to safety. Singh was rushed to hospital where doctors declared him dead.



police said. The DSP had gone to Pachgaon area near Tauru to conduct raids to stop illegal mining in Aravalli hills when he spotted the truck at 11.50 am. Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar announced financial assistance of ₹1 crore and a government job for the DSP's family. The opposition slammed the BJP government over illegal mining in the state. "In the murder case of Tauru DSP Surendra Singh, orders have been given to take strict action. Not a single culprit will be spared," Khattar tweeted in Hindi. Haryana's Director General of Police P. K. Agrawal visited the spot in Nuh and told reporters that a case of murder has been registered. "I am told one suspect has been arrested after an encounter with police. The suspect has sustained a bullet injury in his leg and has been nabbed," he said. Police later identified the arrested man as Ikkar, the

truck's cleaner who was admitted at Nuh's Nalhar Medical College. Initial reports had suggested that the man caught was the driver. "Other accused will be nabbed soon. All culprits involved in this will be dealt with strictly as per the law. The Haryana police will not spare any culprit," the DGP said. He said police teams are conducting raids to track down others involved in the killing. DSP Singh was recruited as an assistant sub-inspector in Haryana Police in 1994 and was to retire in a few months. He lived with his family in Kurukshetra and hailed from Sarangpur village in Hisar district. Haryana Home Minister Anil

Vij talked tough. "All the accused will be caught and not spared even if the police of the entire Nuh district and surrounding districts has to be engaged in this task," he said. The state government said it has been taking stringent steps to check illegal mining, and set up district-level task forces. A spokesperson said 138 FIRs have been registered in the state for illegal mining so far in the financial year 2022-23. In Nuh district alone, 23 FIRs were registered and 68 vehicles seized. Both sand and stone are illegally quarried at places in the state. Senior Congress leader Randeep Singh Surjewala demanded a judicial inquiry into the incident.

The DSP had gone to Pachgaon area near Tauru to conduct raids to stop illegal mining in Aravalli hills when he spotted the truck at 11:50 am



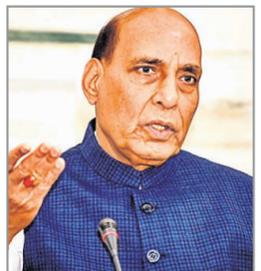
Rao had moved the top court challenging the Bombay High Court's order of April 13, which declined his request to stay at his home in Telangana. However, the high court extended the period of temporary bail for three months against the backdrop of medical reasons. Only July 12, the top court has scheduled the matter for further hearing on July 19. In the plea, Rao submitted before the top court that any further incarceration would ring the death knell for him against the backdrop of his advancing age and deteriorating health, which is a fatal combination.

No change made in Agnipath scheme: Rajnath

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 19: Several opposition leaders and a BJP ally alleged Tuesday that the army was using caste as a factor for recruitment under the Agnipath scheme, a charge swiftly rejected by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh as a "rumour". RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav and AAP's Sanjay Singh launched a sharp attack on the government while JD(U) leader Upendra Kushwaha and BJP MP Varun Gandhi also tweeted a purported document linked to the recruitment exercise to question the need for a caste certificate and raised concerns. The ruling BJP accused the critics of "belittling and insulting" the army and alleged that they were trying to instigate youngsters for street protests. "I want to make it clear that this is a rumour. The (recruitment) system which was in place before Independence is being continued and there is no change to this," Singh said in Parliament complex.

BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra asserted that the army's recruitment process dates back to pre-Independence. This was formalised by a "Special Army Order" after 1947, and the practice remains the same, he said. The army had submitted an affidavit in response to a PIL in the Supreme Court in 2013 when the Congress-led UPA government was in power, that caste or religion has no role in its recruitment, and applicants are asked about this for administrative reasons, Patra said. Earlier, the Rashtriya Janata Dal leader alleged that the "extremely casteist government of the Sangh (RSS) at the Centre" will now look at Agnipath recruits' caste and religion while discharging 75 per cent of them. The short-term recruitment scheme envisages that 75 per cent of the recruits will be discharged after four years and the remaining 25 per cent will be absorbed for the long term. "When there is no reservation in the army, then what is the need



I want to make it clear that this is a rumour. The (recruitment) system which was in place before Independence is being continued and there is no change to this

RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

for a caste certificate," the former Bihar deputy chief minister asked, tagging the purported army document which sought caste and religious certificates among other documents from applicants.

Alva files papers

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 19: Joint opposition candidate Margaret Alva filed her nomination on Tuesday for the Vice-Presidential candidate accompanied by other leaders from opposition parties. After filing her papers, she issued a statement, saying that she is not afraid of fight, and winning and losing is part of life. She said, "I believe this nomination is an acknowledgement, by the united opposition, of the over 50 years I have spent in public life, as a member of both Houses of Parliament, a Union minister, a Governor, a proud representative of India at the United Nations and on other global platforms, and as a fearless champion of women's rights and the rights of underprivileged and marginalised groups and communities across the length and breadth of our great nation." "The coming together of the opposition to support my candidature for the post of Vice President of India, is a metaphor of the reality that is India. We come from various corners of this great country and follow different religions and customs. Our unity, in our diversity, is our strength," she stated.

New images of Chinese village in Doklam plateau emerge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 19: New satellite images emerged Tuesday indicating the construction of a Chinese village East of the Doklam plateau on the Bhutanese side, a region that is considered important for India's strategic interest. The Indian and Chinese armies were locked in a 73-day stand-off at the Doklam tri-junction after China tried to extend a road in the area that Bhutan claimed belonged to it. The NDTV came out with the images captured by MAXAR, a company that focuses on space technology and intelligence, and said the village is fully inhabited with cars parked at the doorstep of virtually every home. It said alongside the village is a neatly marked all-weather carriageway, which is part of China's "extensive land grab" in Bhutan. The road could give China access to a strategic ridge in the Doklam plateau. There was no immediate comment from the Army on the new images. "The new satellite images, sourced from Maxar, indicate that a second village in the

Amo Chu river valley is now virtually complete while China has stepped up construction of a third village or habitation further South," the NDTV said in its report. The government had said previously that it keeps an eye on all the activities along its border. China has been ramping up border infrastructure in several sensitive locations, including along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh where the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) has been locked in an over two-year stand-off with the Indian Army. In October last year, Bhutan and China signed an agreement on a "three-step roadmap" to expedite negotiations to resolve their festering boundary dispute. Bhutan shares an over 400-km-long border with China and the two countries have held over 24 rounds of boundary talks in a bid to resolve the dispute. The two countries also held 10 rounds of negotiations at the 'Expert Group' level. The Doklam tri-junction is considered important from the point of view of India's security interests.

36.29L cyber security incidents since 2019 till June this year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 19: A whopping 36.29 lakh cyber security incidents were observed in the country since 2019 till last month and the government has taken a number of steps to check such designs, Union minister Ajay Kumar Mishra said Tuesday. "As per information reported to and tracked by Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), a total of 3,94,499,

11,58,208, 14,02,809 and 67,40,21 cyber security incidents were observed during 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 (upto June), respectively," he said in Lok Sabha while replying to a written question. The minister said the government has taken a number of measures to enhance the cyber security posture and prevent cyber attacks that include issuing alerts and advisories regarding latest cyber threats and vulnerabilities and counter measures to protect



computers and networks on a regular basis. The government is operating an automated cyber threat exchange platform for proactively collecting, analysing and sharing tailored alerts with organisations across sectors for proactive threat mitigation actions by them, he said. The minister of state for home said the government has issued guidelines for Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs) regarding their key roles and responsibilities for securing applications and infrastructure and compliance. All the government websites and applications are audited with respect to cyber security prior to their hosting, the auditing of the websites and the applications is conducted on a regular basis after hosting, he said. The government has also empanelled 97 security auditing organisations to support and audit implementation of Information Security Best Practices, he said.

international

of the day quote

On the 43 per cent emission cut target, we made a promise to the Australian people. We're going to keep the promise we made to the Australian people

I want to stress that China always conducts normal activities in the border areas in accordance with relevant agreements signed between China and India. In the meantime, we always ask the Indian side to abide by these agreements

I'm not the same, people know that...I came here to handle the economy. The previous government was lying...covering up facts about the fact that Sri Lanka was bankrupt and we need to go to the IMF

SHORT TAKES

Musk-Twitter trial set for Oct

Wilmington: An epic legal fight between Elon Musk and Twitter began in earnest in a Delaware court Tuesday as lawyers for both sides fought over how soon the trial should begin. Twitter is trying to force the billionaire to make good on his April promise to buy the social media giant for USD 44 billion — and the company wants it to happen quickly because it says the ongoing dispute is harming its business.

Pak searches for 29 missing

Multan: Pakistani rescuers on Tuesday resumed a search for 29 people who went missing after a passenger boat carrying nearly 100 members of a wedding party capsized in the fast-flowing Indus river. Twenty-one women and children were killed in the disaster a day earlier, a senior government official said. Divers from Pakistan's army were expected to join the rescue operation in Sadiqabad, a district in the eastern Punjab province, government official Saleem Assi said. He said the bodies of 21 people had so far been recovered and handed over to their relatives.

EU kicks off expansion talks

Brussels: The European Union Tuesday is starting the long enlargement process that aims to lead to the membership of Albania and North Macedonia in the bloc. Any expansion beyond the 27 EU member states is likely to be years off, and both nations were already considered potential candidates 19 years ago. Despite the stalling, the Western Balkan nations have persevered in their ambition to become part of the world's most important trade bloc.

3 missing in gas explosion

Beijing: Three people were reported missing and 11 others injured following a gas explosion in an apartment building in north China's Tianjin city Tuesday, local authorities said. The explosion occurred at around 7:15 am. Three floors of the six-story building collapsed due to the blast, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported. The injuries sustained by the victims are not life-threatening, it said, adding that rescue efforts were underway.



This government has fought some of the hardest yards in modern political history. We've had to take some of the bleakest decisions since the war, and I believe that we got the big calls right

BORIS JOHNSON | OUTGOING BRITISH PM

COVID COUNT TRIPLES ACROSS EUROPE: WHO

The World Health Organisation said Tuesday that coronavirus cases have tripled across Europe in the past six weeks, accounting for nearly half of all infections globally. Hospitalisation rates have also doubled



Sunak tops new vote, closes in on PM post

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, July 19: Rishi Sunak topped another round of voting Tuesday to edge even closer to his place as one of two candidates who will go head-to-head to be elected the new Conservative Party leader and British Prime Minister, as Kemi Badenoch became the latest candidate to be out of the running.

The British Indian former Chancellor received 118 votes in the fourth round of voting by his party colleagues, just shy of the 120-mark — or one-third of Conservative Party MPs — needed to confirm his place as one of the final contenders in the race to replace Boris Johnson.

The 42-year-old leader increased his tally from Monday's 115, while Trade Minister Penny Mordaunt got 92 votes and Foreign Secretary Liz Truss 86 votes leaving the race to clinch second place still open. Though Mordaunt holds on to her position with 10 more votes than

Monday, Truss in third place has picked up the most votes since her last tally of 71.

The elimination of former equalities minister Badenoch with 59 votes will now turn the focus on where her considerable support within the Tory members of Parliament will go, as those MPs are wooed by both Mordaunt and Truss to shore up their chances of grabbing that all-important second spot.

The final two candidates will be known after a fifth round of voting on Wednesday, at the end of which the race will be taken over by the Conservative Party headquarters to organise hustings in different parts of the UK. The focus will then be on convincing the Tory party membership base, estimated at around 160,000 voters, to cast their ballots in favour of one of the two remaining candidates.

Those votes will be counted towards the end of August for the winner to be announced by September 5.



BRITAIN BAKED

People crowd the beach in Bournemouth as England swelters in unprecedented heat. Britain shattered its record for highest temperature ever registered Tuesday

Heatwave scorches Europe

FRANCE FIGHTS MASSIVE WILDFIRES; UK SEES HOTTEST DAY EVER

REUTERS

London/Paris, July 19: Firefighters in southwestern France battled Tuesday to contain massive forest wildfires and Britain recorded its highest ever temperature as a heatwave rising from the south settled over western Europe.

Southern and western Germany and Belgium were also braced for potentially record-breaking temperatures as the heatwave, which scientists attribute to climate change, edged north and east.

A temperature of more than 40C was provisionally recorded Tuesday for the first time ever in Britain, the Met Office said.

Authorities have put Britain, which often struggles to maintain key transport services when hit by unexpected weather such as heavy snow or high winds, on a state of national emergency over the unprecedented temperatures.

Transport minister Grant Shapps said it would take many years to fully upgrade Britain's infrastructure to cope with higher temperatures, after at least two airport runways showed signs of damage and some train tracks buckled.



- WILDFIRES BURN FORESTS IN GIRONDE, SOUTHWEST FRANCE
- UK TEMPERATURES EXCEED 40C FOR THE FIRST TIME
- GERMANY, BELGIUM BRACE FOR POSSIBLE RECORD-BREAKING HEAT
- MORE THAN 30 WILDFIRES RAVAGE PARTS OF SPAIN

"We've seen a considerable amount of travel disruption," he told the BBC. Infrastructure, much of which was built from the Victorian times, just wasn't built to withstand this type of temperature.

In southwestern France, the wine-growing Gironde region saw its biggest wildfires in over 30 years and authorities said a man

had been detained on suspicion of arson. The fires have spread across 19,300 hectares in the countryside surrounding Bordeaux since July 12, forcing a total of 34,000 people to evacuate their homes.

About 2,000 firefighters, supported by eight water-bomber aircraft, were battling the blazes. Despite attacks from the ground

and from the air, the situation has still not stabilised, the state prefecture said in a statement, adding there had been no reports of death or injury.

A study published by climate scientists in June in the journal Environmental Research Climate concluded it was highly probable that climate change was making heatwaves worse.

With human-caused climate change triggering droughts, the number of extreme wildfires is expected to increase 30% within the next 28 years, according to a February 2022 UN report.

"We are seeing more frequent heat waves, and the heat waves are hotter than they would have been without climate change," Friederike Otto, Senior Lecturer in Climate Science at Imperial College London, told Reuters.

FLAMES AND SMOKE

Although the mercury dipped back towards more normal summer levels in Spain and Portugal, firefighters in both countries were still battling multiple blazes.

More than 30 wildfires continued to ravage parts of Spain, with authorities paying special attention to four blazes in Castile and Leon and Galicia.

POST UKRAINE INVASION

Putin visits Iran on his 1st trip outside former Soviet

REUTERS

London/Dubai, July 19: Russian President Vladimir Putin held talks with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Iran Tuesday, the Kremlin leader's first trip outside the former Soviet Union since Moscow's February 24 invasion of Ukraine.

During his visit to Tehran, Putin will also hold his first face-to-face meeting since the invasion with a NATO leader, Turkey's Tayyip Erdogan, to discuss a deal that would resume Ukraine's Black Sea grain exports as well as peace in Syria.

Putin's trip, which comes just days after US President Joe Biden visited Israel and Saudi Arabia, sends a strong message to the West about Moscow's plans to forge closer strategic ties with Iran, China and India in the face of Western sanctions.

Footage of Putin's meeting with Khamenei showed the Russian leader and the Iranian president sat together a few metres from the Supreme Leader, in a spartan white room. Only an Iranian flag and a portrait of revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini could be seen in the background.

"The contact with Khamenei is very important," Yuri Ushakov, Putin's foreign policy adviser, told reporters in Moscow. "A trusting dialogue has developed between them on the most important issues on the bilateral and international agenda. On most issues, our positions are close or identical," he added. For Iran, also chafing under Western economic sanctions and at loggerheads with the United States over Tehran's nuclear programme and a range of other issues, Putin's visit is timely.



Bus rams into truck killing 23 people

AGENCIES

Cairo, July 19: A passenger bus slammed into a parked trailer truck on a highway in southern Egypt early Tuesday, killing 23 people and injuring at least 30, authorities said.

The crash took place in the province of Minya, on the main highway linking the capital, Cairo, with the country's south. The bus was heading to Cairo, according to a local government statement.

The truck driver was changing tires on the roadside when the town bus crashed into it, near the town of Malawi, about 220 km (137 miles)



south of Cairo. Footage from the scene posted by local authorities showed the bus, heavily damaged in the front half. Ambulances rushed to the scene to transfer the injured to hospitals in Minya. The Health Ministry said at least 16 of the injured were discharged

from hospitals after receiving treatment. Traffic accidents kill thousands every year in Egypt, which has a poor transportation safety record. Crashes are mostly caused by speeding, careless driving, bad roads or poor enforcement of traffic laws.

Methanol found in teens' blood

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Johannesburg, July 19: The toxic chemical methanol has been identified as a possible cause of the deaths of 21 teenagers at a bar in the South African city of East London last month.

Methanol was found in all of their bodies and investigations are continuing to determine whether the levels of the toxic chemical were enough to have killed them.

"Methanol has been detected in all the 21 individuals that were there, however there is still pro-

gressive analysis of the quantitative levels of methanol and whether it could have been the final cause of death," Dr Litha Matiwane, Eastern Cape provincial deputy director for clinical service, said at press conference in East London.

Authorities are still awaiting the SA PUB DEATHS although traces of both were detected in the bodies of all 21 victims, said Matiwane. The teenagers died at the Enyobeni tavern in East London's Scenery Park township in the early hours of June 26, shocking the country and resulting in several investigations by the police and liquor licence authorities.

production of alcohol sold for human consumption.

It is yet not known how the youngsters ingested the methanol.

Alcohol poisoning and inhalation of carbon monoxide have both been ruled out as possible causes of death

After 44 yrs, Lankan Parl to directly elect Prez today

Although analysts here believe that 73-year-old Wickremesinghe is in the lead, the evidence of numbers in the 225-assembly don't necessarily suggest it would be plain sailing



tween acting President Ranil Wickremesinghe and Dullas Alahapperuma, a rebel leader of the ruling party who is backed by the opposition as well as a majority of lawmakers from his parent party Wickremesinghe, Alahapperuma

and leftist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake were proposed by lawmakers Tuesday as the three candidates for the July 20 presidential election to pick the successor to Gotabaya Rajapaksa

after he resigned following a popular uprising against his government for mismanaging the economy that forced him to flee the country.

A majority of members of the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) party was in favour of nominating Alahapperuma, a leader of its breakaway faction, for the post of the President and principal Opposition leader Sajith Premadasa as the Prime Minister, Chairman of the SLPP, G.L. Peiris, said Tuesday, ahead of Wednesday's presidential election.

Although analysts here believe that 73-year-old Wickremesinghe is in the lead, the evidence of numbers in the 225-assembly don't necessarily suggest it would be plain sailing. Without the ruling SLPP's backing, Wickremesinghe would be a non-starter as he only

has his seat in Parliament to be in the reckoning.

Going back to the original parliamentary composition in August 2020, the SLPP number of 145 had seen reversals with 52 of the lawmakers breaking away. The total of 93 later became 97 with 4 lawmakers returning.

Wickremesinghe needs 16 more votes to cross the magical figure of 113 in the 225-member house. He relies on at least 9 of the 12 Tamil party votes plus enough defectors from the main opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), most of whom are his followers having been introduced to politics by him.

In a politically significant move, Premadasa, the leader of the principal opposition party SJB, Tuesday backed out in favour of Alahapperuma.

The SJB's original 54 was re-

cently down to 48 and later swelled to 50 after two lawmakers returned. With the SJB bag of 50, plus Alahapperuma's own 10 lawmakers and 28 from other SLPP breakaways his final tally could reach about 90. So he needs about 25 from the SLPP.

However, the most decisive factor which could swing it towards Wickremesinghe is the personal insecurity of the SLPP MPs. Over 70 of them suffered arson attacks with one murdered.

Never in the history of the presidency since 1978, Parliament had voted to elect a president.

Presidential elections in 1982, 1988, 1994, 1999, 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2019 had elected them by popular vote.

The new President will serve the remaining tenure of Rajapaksa till November 2024.

of the day quote

Solar energy, infrastructure, military cooperation and startup ecosystem are four critical areas where India can be a valuable partner to African nations

PIYUSH GOVAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

As per record, eighty-one multi-state cooperative societies are under liquidation in which process of winding up has been initiated

AMIT SHAH | UNION MINISTER

Auto-sector in India represents a huge opportunity in the next 5-6 years. It is expected that we will create not less than 1 crore jobs for youth in another 5-6 years. It is a very fast-growing segment for our manufacturing economy

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR | MINISTER OF STATE FOR SKILLS AND DEVELOPMENT

SHORT TAKES

Investment via P-notes plunges

New Delhi: Investment in the Indian capital markets through participatory notes (P-notes) declined to Rs 80,092 crore till June-end, making it the lowest level in 20 months, on aggressive rate hike by the US Federal Reserve. With the continued global uncertainty and volatility, experts believe that investment through P-notes will be volatile in the near future. P-notes are issued by registered FPIs to overseas investors who wish to be a part of the Indian stock market without registering themselves directly.

Oilmeals export jumps over 2-fold

New Delhi: India's oilmeals export jumped over two-fold in June to 4,31,840 tonne on record shipment of rapeseed meal, according to industry data. The exports stood at 2,03,868 tonne in the same month last year, according to Solvent Extractors' Association (SEA) of India. "Export of oilmeals for the month of June 2022 provisionally reported at 4,31,840 tonne, compared to 203,868 tonne in June 2021," the association said.

HUL net profit rises 14% in Q1

New Delhi: FMCG major Hindustan Unilever Ltd Tuesday reported an increase of 13.85 per cent in its consolidated net profit to Rs 2,391 crore for the first quarter ended June 2022. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 2,100 crore in the April-June quarter of the previous fiscal. The total income was up 20.36 per cent during the quarter under review at Rs 14,757 crore. It stood at Rs 12,260 crore in the corresponding period a year ago, Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) said.

Ather launches 3rd Gen 450X

New Delhi: Hero MotoCorp-backed electric two-wheeler maker Ather Energy Tuesday launched the third generation of its premium scooter 450X priced at Rs 1.39 lakh (ex-showroom Delhi), targeting leadership in the segment by the end of this fiscal. The company expects the Indian electric two-wheeler segment to cross sales of 1 lakh units a month by the end of the ongoing financial year and it is targeting to have over 30 per cent market share.

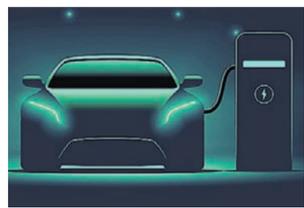


We are going to reduce prices of palm oil, sunflower oil and soyabean oil by Rs 10-15 per litre each in a day or two. But in the last 45 days, the total reduction will be Rs 30-35 per litre

SANJEEV ASTHANA | CEO, PATANJALI FOODS

ISRAELI BOOST TO INDIAN EVS

Aditya Birla Group's metal flagship, Hindalco, has signed an MoU with Phinergy, a leading Israel-based pioneer in metal-air battery technology, and IOC Phinergy Private Limited - a joint venture between Phinergy and Indian Oil Corporation, to create aluminium-air batteries for electric vehicles (EVs), a joint press release by the companies said



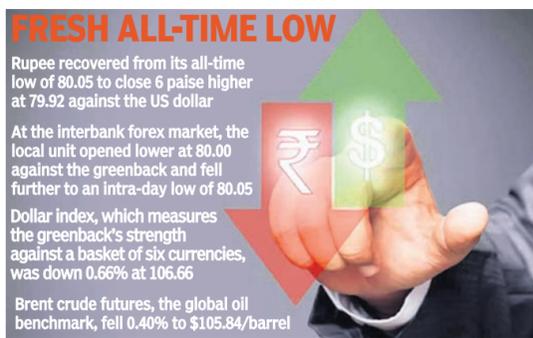
Falling ₹ makes importers feel the heat

On Tuesday, RBI intervened in the currency market to help the rupee steady slightly after the unit weakened to 80.05 per dollar in early trade, a record low for a seventh successive session

REUTERS

New Delhi, July 19: India's importers including of crude oil, commodities, chemicals and electrical machinery, besides business travellers and students studying abroad have been hit hard following a sharp depreciation of rupee against the dollar this year. The rupee has depreciated over 7% against dollar this year. On Monday, the rupee for the first time declined to the low level of 80 against the US dollar in intra-day spot trading before ending the session 16 paise lower at 79.98 amid a surge in crude oil prices and unrelenting foreign fund outflows. Following are key facts about the rupees depreciation:

WHY IS THE RUPEE FALLING? Like most Asian currencies, the partially convertible Indian rupee, fell in recent months as risk aversion rose on expectations of the US Federal Reserve raising rates to curb inflation, prompting investors to flee riskier assets.



Global factors such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, soaring crude oil prices and tightening of global financial conditions are the major reasons for the weakening of the Indian Rupee against the US Dollar

PANKAJ CHAUDHARY | MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE

A severe dollar shortage ensued after foreign investors made net sales of Indian shares - amounting to more than \$30 billion so far in 2022. Fears of widening current and trade account deficits have further hit the rupee.

WIDENING TRADE DEFICIT India's overall trade deficit is expected to widen to over \$130 billion this fiscal year; driven by global crude oil prices, from \$87 billion a year earlier.

RISING ENERGY COSTS India meets 85% of its crude oil needs through imports, so the rupee's depreciation has added to

the retail cost of petrol, diesel and cooking gas.

The weaker currency has also hit earnings of power generation companies - forced to resort to costlier coal imports amid a shortfall in domestic coal production.

India's energy imports, including crude oil, petroleum products and coal, are expected to rise sharply this year from nearly \$194 billion in the fiscal year ending in March 2022, constituting near one-third of total merchandise imports.

GOLD IMPORTS Buying gold jewellery has become costlier for millions of Indians due to currency depreciation and

a recent hike in import duty. India's gold imports, the third biggest item after crude oil and electronic imports, crossed \$46 billion in 2021/22.

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS Hundreds of imported household items including edible oil, dry fruits, medicines, cosmetics, garments, electric appliances, mobiles, kitchenware as well as business travel and foreign education for nearly 1.1 million Indian students have become costlier.

MANUFACTURING COSTS RISE The rupee's fall has increased input costs for manufacturers including auto companies, telecom, engineering goods, consumer electronics, food processing and civil aviation. India is a major importer of industrial chemicals, steel, rubber, wooden, glassware and other machinery.

WINDFALL FOR IT COMPANIES, GOODS EXPORTERS The currency depreciation could prove a windfall for goods and services exporters including IT companies Infosys, TCS, TECH Mahindra as their billings are largely in dollars.

India's services exports touched nearly \$250 billion in 2021/22 fiscal year ending in March, while goods exports touched nearly \$420 billion. Pharmaceutical exporters, with over \$25 billion annual exports and one-third of sales in the US market, are major beneficiaries, analysts said, while warning about the impact of global slowdown on Indian exporters. India's goods exports grew by nearly 25% to nearly \$119 billion during April-June period, from a year period.

PV exports jump 26% in Apr-June

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 19: India's passenger vehicle exports rose by 26 per cent in April-June 2022 aided by enhanced shipments to Latin America and Africa and a low base of the year-ago quarter that was hit by the second wave of Covid-19.

As per the latest data released by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), passenger vehicle shipments rose to 1,60,263 units in the April-June period of this fiscal as compared with 1,27,083 units in the same quarter of 2021-22. Passenger car shipments saw an 88 per cent year-on-year growth at 1,04,400 units while utility vehicle exports rose 18 per cent to 55,547 units during the period under review, SIAM data showed.

Export of vans declined to 316 units in April-June as compared with 588 units in the same period of the last fiscal.

"In the recent past, there has been a higher penetration of India manufactured passenger vehicles in Latin America and Africa as the economies of these regions improve," SIAM Director General Rajesh Menon told PTI.

Indian manufactured vehicles meet the consumer requirement of these regions as the brands are global, have good build quality and are cost competitive, he added.

MSI led the exports during the first quarter, followed by Hyundai India and Kia India at the second and third positions

Maruti Suzuki (MSI) exported 68,987 PVs in the period under review, up 53 per cent from 45,056 units in the same period of the previous fiscal year.

MSI's top PV export markets include Latin America, ASEAN, Africa, the Middle East and neighbouring regions while its top five export models comprise Baleno, Dzire, Swift, S-Presso and Brezza.

Hyundai Motor India's international dispatches stood at 34,520 units during the June quarter, up 15 per cent from the year-ago period.

Similarly, Kia India exported 21,459 units across global markets in the period under review as compared with 12,448 units in the same period of last fiscal year. Nissan Motor India shipped 11,419 units, while Volkswagen exported 7,146 units during the June quarter.

Renault and Honda Cars also chipped in with 6,658 units and 6,533 units respectively during the period under review.

Russia wants India to pay for oil in dirhams

The Moscow currency exchange is preparing to launch trading in the Uzbek sum and the dirham

REUTERS

New Delhi, July 19: Russia is seeking payment in United Arab Emirates dirhams for oil exports to some Indian customers, three sources said and a document showed, as Moscow moves away from the US dollar to insulate itself from the effects of Western sanctions.

An invoice seen by Reuters shows the bill for supplying oil to one refiner is calculated in dollars while payment is requested in dirhams.

At least two Indian refiners have already settled some payments in dirhams, the sources said, adding more would make such payments in coming days. The invoice showed payments to be made to Gazprombank via Mashreq Bank, its correspondent bank in Dubai.

The United Arab Emirates, seeking to maintain what it says is a neutral position, has not imposed sanctions on Moscow, and the payments could add to the frustration of some in the West, who privately say the UAE's position is untenable and siding with Russia.

The trading firms used by Rosneft have started asking for the dollar equivalent payment in dirhams from this month, the sources said.

Russia wants to increase its use of non-Western currencies for trade with countries such as India, its foreign minister Sergei Lavrov said in April. The country's finance minister last month also said Moscow may start buying currencies



RUSSIA DEFAULTS ON LNG SUPPLIES

New Delhi: Russia has defaulted on the supply of at least 5 cargoes or shiploads of LNG to India after its retaliatory sanctions hit one of the companies that supply gas to India, sources said. India's largest gas firm GAIL has a long-term deal to import 2.85 million tonne of liquefied natural gas (LNG) per annum from a Singapore-based unit of Russian gas producer Gazprom. The company has since June defaulted on the supply of 5 cargoes of LNG under that contract citing difficulty in sourcing gas due to sanctions, two sources briefed on the matter said. Sources said Gazprom has told GAIL that it will from here on supply LNG on a best endeavour basis. GAIL is now scouting for alternatives including tying up supplies from other sources in the US and the Middle East.

such of "friendly" countries, using such holdings to influence the exchange rate of the dollar and euro as a means of countering sharp gains in the rouble.

India's central bank last week introduced a new mechanism for international trade settlements in rupees, which many experts see as a way to promote trade with countries that are under Western sanctions, such as Russia and Iran.

GST ON DAILY USE ITEMS

'Decision taken to curb tax leakage'

Amid vociferous protests by Oppn, FM clarifies that the decision was taken with all states onboard and listed the products which will not attract GST when sold loose

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 19: Facing criticism over GST on daily use items, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said the 5 per cent tax is being levied on wheat flour and other items after nod from all states, including non-BJP ruled states.

Non-BJP ruled states of Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Kerala had agreed to imposing the 5 per cent levy, she said.

In a series of tweets, Sitharaman said states levied sales tax or VAT on foodgrains in the pre-Goods and



Services Tax (GST) regime and the present levy on cereals, pulses, flour, curd and lassi is an exercise to curb tax leakage.

The decision, she said, was taken by the GST Council, where all states are represented, through a consensus.

"Is this the first time such food articles are being taxed? No. States were collecting significant revenue

from foodgrain in the pre-GST regime. Punjab alone collected more Rs 2,000 crore on food grain by way of purchase tax. UP collected Rs 700 crore," she said. Suppliers and industry associations asked the government to impose GST uniformly on all packaged commodities to stop such misuse, she added.

A 5 per cent GST was levied on these food items when supplied "pre-packaged and labelled".

"For example, items like pulses, cereals like rice, wheat, and flour; etc, earlier attracted GST @ 5% when branded and packed in unit container. From 18.7.2022, these items would attract GST when 'pre-packaged and labeled'," she said.

However, pulses, wheat, rye, oats, maize, rice, flour; suji, besan, puffed rice and curd/lassi when sold loose and not pre-packed or pre-labelled will not attract any GST.

UCBs to have 4-tiered regulatory framework: RBI

The move is expected to strengthen the financial resilience of the banks and enhance their ability to fund their growth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 19: The RBI Tuesday said it has decided to adopt a simple four-tiered regulatory framework for Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs) based on size of deposits, with an aim to strengthen their financial soundness.

An expert committee, headed by former RBI deputy governor N S Vishwanathan, had made a host of recommendations for strengthening the UCBs. The committee had recommended a four-tiered regulatory framework based on size of deposits of the banks and their area of operations, among other suggestions.

The differentiated regulatory approach was mainly recommended for key parameters such as net worth, Capital to Risk-weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR), branch expansion and exposure limits. Membership to an Umbrella Organisation also formed a vital part of the recommendations. The RBI has accepted several sugges-



tions of the committee.

Specifically, a minimum net worth of Rs 2 crore for Tier 1 UCBs operating in single district and Rs 5 crore for all other UCBs (of all tiers) has been stipulated.

The RBI further said the minimum CRAR requirement for Tier 1 banks is retained at the present prescription of 9 per cent under cur-

rent capital adequacy framework based on Basel I.

The RBI also decided to introduce automatic route for branch expansion for UCBs which meet certain norms, in order to boost growth opportunities in the sector.

The committee had also made certain recommendations regarding Umbrella Organisation (UO) for the UCB sector. The Reserve Bank had accorded regulatory approval for setting up of UO for UCB sector which will have a paid-up capital of Rs 300 crore.

The National Cooperative Finance and Development Corporation Limited (NCFDC) has been incorporated, which is in the process of enrolling UCBs as members.

BASED ON Q1 DATA

Economy on course to achieve 8-8.5% growth: FinMin

To rein in inflation, RBI in its June Monetary Policy Committee meeting hiked the repo rate by 50 basis points, on top of the earlier hike of 40 basis points in May 2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 19: Finance ministry Tuesday said that the economy is on course to achieve projected 8-8.5 per cent growth based on high-frequency indicators for the first quarter of the current fiscal.

The Economic Survey tabled in the Parliament January 31, 2022 projected the real GDP during 2022-23 to grow at 8.0-8.5 per cent.

"Since then, sustained growth momentum has been observed in

several High Frequency Indicators, indicating that the projected growth path is on course in the first quarter of FY 2022-23," minister of state for finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written reply to Rajya Sabha.

To ensure continued growth momentum, he said, the government has taken several steps to address high inflation imported from abroad. These include cut in excise duty on petrol and diesel and special excise duty/cess on the export of



petrol, diesel and aviation turbine fuel that are likely to alleviate inflationary pressures, he said.

On the impact of geopolitical tension on Indian economy, he said, Russia-Ukraine war has led to global supply disruptions resulting in steep increase in global com-

modity prices, including prices of crude oil, gas, edible oils and fertilizers, among others.

The government is closely monitoring the global price movements and their impact on India's economy through trade, he said. Recently, prices of various co-

DP for India at current prices stood at \$3.2 trillion in 2021-22

Real GDP growth rate for 2021-22 stood at 8.7% while gov't's fiscal deficit was Rs 15,86,537 crore, which is 6.7% of GDP

MF, in its April 2022 update of World Economic Outlook, has also projected India's real GDP growth at 8.2% in 2022-23

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at current prices for 2021-22 stood at Rs 2,36,64,637 crore, he said in another reply. Using the implied exchange rate for India for 2021-22 from World Economic Outlook (WEO) of April 2022, the GDP for India at current prices stood at \$3.2 trillion in 2021-22, he said.

In reply to another question, he said, the size of India's Current Account Deficit (CAD) depends on several factors, including exports, imports and price of crude oil, among others.

The government is carefully monitoring the CAD and has recently increased customs duty on gold from 10.75 per cent to 15 per cent to restrain gold imports that is likely to reduce CAD.



PC execution 'needs improvement'

Nottingham, July 19: Women's hockey team coach Janneke Schopman Tuesday said India's penalty corner execution requires massive improvements if they are to not repeat their World Cup debacle in the Commonwealth Games. The Commonwealth Games will be held in Birmingham from July 28 to August 8, and India will look to stage a turnaround there after finishing a lowly ninth in the World Cup, a year after their historic fourth place finish in the Tokyo Olympics. "Our performance in the World Cup was not good enough in terms of outcome. We created a lot of penalty corners which is good, but executing was not right," the

Dutchwoman said a day after the team's arrival here. "There are many reasons for that. We struggled with our injections. It's a different field than we typically train on. I don't think we adapted that well. It has to do with perfecting your execution which we will look to focus on in the next couple of weeks." India struggled badly in converting their penalty corners in the World Cup. Statistics show that India could convert only four out of the 43 opportunities they got over six games. The Janneke-coached side had Gurjit Kaur as its designated penalty corner expert, but they also experimented with players like Monika and Deep Grace Ekka which, clearly did not work out.

The worst was against group toppers New Zealand when they converted only once from 13 chances to go down 3-4, dealing a big blow to their qualifying hopes. "As with every skill, it's about a multitude of things. We did focus on these areas already, it's about fine-tuning it individually." However, the 45-year-old also remarked that their team is no more looked down upon in world hockey with the opponents often preferring to taking defensive approach against them. "You see a small transition happening when we play teams now that these teams prefer to play more defensively than in the past where we played more offensively, while other teams would attack. "If you see China, England and

Canada. These teams were happily just defending. As a team we have to get used to it mentally that we have less space to attack. "We have to learn how we can do more with the ball. Overall, the tournament has shown us that we are on the right path but now fine tune our skills in relation to how other teams approach us," she said. Asked about the omission of former skipper Rani Rampal, she said: "I don't think it's a relevant question. I cannot comment on players who are not here. I was very pleased with the team at the World Cup and they performed to the best of their ability." Promising Indian forward Sharmila Devi, who has been on a steady rise since her debut at

the age of 17, also had a lacklustre campaign in the World Cup but the coach backed the youngster. "When you start your career you can do anything. She's at a stage where she played 30-40 caps, and now everything doesn't come naturally anymore and she starts thinking about things. "She is now in that struggle where every player has been and she needs to learn how to get out of her struggle. Teammates are encouraging her. I also had a couple of productive talks with her and it's about time how quickly she turns it around. It's also very hard for the team. I think she's getting there." The Indian team will open their campaign against Ghana July 29, the first competition day.

Manjrekar backs 'responsible' Pant

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, July 19: Former India cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar has opined that though Rishabh Pant may have got out to irresponsible shots occasionally, but nobody should question his responsibility when it comes to his commitment to the India team.

The cricketer-turned-commentator also said Pant and all-rounder Hardik Pandya can form the backbone of the India middle order, provided the latter doesn't get injured.

"No, he's (Pant) always responsible. He may seem irresponsible sometimes when he gets out, when he gets out playing one of those kinds of shots, we've got to look at it as somebody getting out at slips because the game has changed and that is Rishabh Pant's primary sort of skill. He's got to sound different but when he extends himself, he tries these shots. "The winning runs for example (in the third ODI vs England), it's a part of his basic attacking, array of shots that he has. So, responsibility-wise I think this guy is just incredible because of the kind of record he has in Test cricket," Manjrekar said on SPORTS18's daily sports news.

He said it's tough to play the kind of strokes Pant plays if one is not responsible and calm by nature. "You can't play those kinds of shots if you are not responsible by nature, wanting to win the game and in this one-day (third ODI vs England at Old Trafford) as well you could see him. He was responsibility personified; he was calmness personified. I got very excited watching Rishabh Pant because there's something about this country (India), that we keep producing these kinds of batters every generation," added Manjrekar. Pant played a fantastic unbeaten innings of 125 (113 balls) as India defeated England in the third ODI by five wickets to clinch the three-match series 2-1. Pant along with Pandya left England in a daze with their batting in the middle order after the top-three batters - Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan and Virat Kohli - were dismissed cheaply. Shedding light on the future India middle order, Manjrekar said, "Yes, just hoping that Hardik can keep his fitness together. No issues about Rishabh Pant. What we saw in that last one-day (ODI), I was completely floored by the sheer talent and ability of these two guys, temperament as well, built a long partnership and how easily, in the end, India won. Thanks to Rishabh Pant for staying there till the end. "So yes, high-quality batters, and they're going to be batting mostly at number 4 and 5 whether it's T20 cricket or 50-overs cricket or Pant could be opening as well. In 2019, we had a lot of issues finding a proper middle order but now we have some quality supply," added Manjrekar.



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NINA CREATES RECORD IN 50m BUTTERFLY RACE



A participant in action during a swimming event at Kalinga Stadium, Tuesday

Bhubaneswar, July 19: Swimmer Nina Venkatesh created a new national record in the 50m butterfly group I girls event at the Junior National Aquatic Championships here Tuesday. The Karnataka-born swimmer topped the clock at 28.27 to improve her own national record of 28.51 which she had recorded last year in Bangalore. The 16-year-old finished ahead of Bengal's Nilabja Ghosh (28.85) and Punjab's Jasnoor Kaur (28.97) to clinch gold. Meanwhile, another young swimmer Dhinidhi shone for her state Karnataka as she scripted a national record in the 50m butterfly group II girls event. Dhinidhi broke Tanishi Gupta's previous record of 29.45 seconds which the latter

clocked during the heats. In the final, Dhinidhi impressed with a quick dash and clocked 28.93 to finish on top of the podium. Tanishi, on the other hand, had to settle for a silver with a timing of 29.30. The third place went to Maharashtra's Anannya Nayak, who won bronze with a time of 29.98. In the 200m backstroke for group I boys, Karnataka's Utkarsh Santhosh Patil bagged gold with a 2:06.77 to finish ahead of Gujarat's Devansh Parmar who was almost three seconds slower with a 2:09.73 seconds. Tamil Nadu's Nithik H finished third clocking 2:10.66. With just a day's action remaining, Karnataka continues to top the medal tally with as many as 62 medals including 29 gold, 20 silver, and 13 bronze.

Postponed Asiad set for Sept 23-Oct 8 2023

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kuwait/Beijing, July 19: The postponed Asian Games will be held from September 23 to October 8 next year in Hangzhou, the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) announced Tuesday. The 19th edition of the Games were originally slated to be held from September 10 to 25 this year but were suspended May 6 after a spike in COVID-19 cases in China. "The Task Force over the last two months held various discussions with the Chinese Olympic Committee, Hangzhou Asian Games Organising Committee (HAGOC) and other stakeholders to find a window for the Games which did not conflict with other major in-



ternational sporting events," the OCA said in a statement. "The recommended dates by the Task Force were duly approved by the OCA EB," the OCA statement added. While the organisers claimed that Asiad would not clash with any major sporting event, the 2023

World Wrestling Championship, which will be an Olympic Qualifying meet, overlaps the quadrennial event by one day. The World Championships is slated to be held from September 16-24 in Krasnoyarsk, Russia. It means that wrestlers will have to compete in back-to-back major events in a small gap, which is not ideal for a contact sport. The Asiad rescheduled also means that Indian wrestlers will have to fly directly from Russia to China without enough recovery time. The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) is not convinced with the revised schedule. "The World Championship will be an Olympic qualifying event so how can UWW (world governing

body for the sport) agree to this. These events should have a good gap. UWW may have to modify the dates of the World Championships," WFI Assistant Secretary Vinod Tomar told this agency. Meanwhile the Chinese Olympic Committee said, "We will make concerted efforts with the OCA and the HAGOC in advancing preparatory work to ensure the Games a success." "The HAGOC will collaborate with all related parties in preparation for the Games in an all-round manner according to the confirmed dates to stage a spectacular sporting and cultural gala with Chinese Grandeur, Zhejiang Style and Hangzhou Flavor," state-run Xinhua agency quoted a statement issued by the organisers.

SHORT TAKES

Eyes on Indo-Pak tie

NEW DELHI: As many as 1.2 million tickets have been sold for the Commonwealth Games beginning in Birmingham July 28, the organisers have said, adding that the women's cricket match between India and Pakistan has "really caught the interest" of the local public. Women's cricket is making its debut at the Commonwealth Games, and India and Pakistan will be clashing at the Edgbaston July 31. The city is home to a substantial number of Indian and Pakistani-origin people. Birmingham Games CEO Ian Reid said the semifinals and final tickets have already been taken while he expects a sellout crowd even for the India-Pakistan fixture. "The semifinals and final tickets have already been sold out probably with the expectation that India and England will be there. India and Pakistan will be close to capacity. We will see an uptick in sale of tickets much closer to the event. So I expect that India-Pakistan game to be sold out soon," said Reid.

New role for Smith

JOHANNESBURG: Cricket South Africa Tuesday appointed former captain Graeme Smith as the Commissioner of its new T20 league. The T20 league is scheduled to take place in January and February next year. The 41-year-old Smith, who remains South Africa's most successful captain across formats, will oversee both the cricketing and non-cricketing aspects of the tournament. Commenting on the role and responsibility, Smith said, "I'm deeply committed to South African cricket and happy to serve the game as best I can. I'm excited by the opportunity to deliver the new league which I believe will be an extremely competitive product."

Harshada bags gold

NEW DELHI: Fast-rising Indian lifter Harshada Garud won the women's 45kg gold at the Asian Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championship in Tashkent. The 18-year-old claimed the yellow metal with an aggregate of 157kg (69kg+88kg) Monday. The total effort was four kgs better than her junior world championship title-winning lift of 153kg (70kg+83kg), which she had recorded in May. Soumya Dalvi bagged the bronze in the 45kg youth event. The youth world championship medalist heaved 145kg (63kg+82kg) to make the podium. In the men's 49 kg youth event, L Dhanush won the bronze in the snatch section with an 85 kg effort. However, the Indian finished fourth overall with a best effort of 185kg (85kg+100kg).

ANISH-RHYTHM CLAIMS MIXED TEAM BRONZE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 19: India won a bronze on the penultimate day of competitions at the ISSF World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun stage in Changwon, Korea, consolidating at the top with a haul of 14 medals including five gold and with two clear chances to go higher, come the final day Wednesday. Anish Bhanwala and Rhythm Sangwan won bronze in the 25m Rapid Fire Pistol (RFP) Mixed Team event, getting the better of the Czech Republic 16-12 in the bronze medal match. That took India's haul to five gold, five silver and four bronze medals with Korea breathing down



their neck with one less gold, the same number of silver and two less bronze medals in their collection. Wednesday has the 25m RFP Team Men and the Skeet Mixed Team finals lined up to culminate the 10-day competition which saw over 400 athletes from over 40 nations compete. Two other Indian pairs in the 50m Rifle 3 Positions Mixed Team event-Sanjeev Rajput and Anjum Moudgil and Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar and Ashi Chouksey narrowly missed the medal matches finishing fifth and sixth respectively in stage two of qualification. Also on day nine, Vijayveer Sidhu and Simranpreet Kaur Brar finished sixth in the 25m RFP Mixed Team event.

CWG, a happy hunting ground for Indian weightlifters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 19: A new rule prevented India from rejigging the weight categories of its lifters for maximum advantage but country's 15-strong contingent, headed by Mirabai Chanu, is still expected to return with a bagful of medals from the Birmingham Commonwealth Games. The Commonwealth tournaments, be it the CWG or the Commonwealth Championships, have been a happy hunting ground for Indian weightlifters, who revel in the absence of traditional powerhouses like China and North Korea. India has finished as the best-performing nation in the sport in the 1990, 2002, and 2018 editions. They are the second most successful nation in the sport with 125 medals, including 43 golds, behind Australia (159), whose domi-

nance has taken a hit in the last few editions. Indian weightlifters reigned supreme in the 2018 Gold Coast Games, bringing home a rich haul of nine medals including five golds. And this year too, all 15 lifters are capable of podium finishes. However, only a handful of them are expected to strike gold. To increase India's chances of winning more gold medals in the women's events, the Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWLFF) and head coach Vijay Sharma planned to field Tokyo Olympic silver medalist Chanu, a sure-shot title contender, in the 55kg weight division. Jhilli Dalabehera and S Bindyarani Devi were to compete in the 49kg and 59kg respectively while Poppy Hazarika would have presented her challenge in the 64kg division. But the entries were rejected



based on a new rule that stated only the top-ranked lifter in a category will qualify for the CWG and if he/she withdraws, the next best lifter will not get the berth, as was the case before. This forced Chanu (49kg), Bindyarani (55kg), and Poppy (59kg)

to drop back a weight class each which resulted in Jhilli missing out on the quadrennial event and no Indian representation in 64kg. Other Indian weightlifters are expected to face tough competition from their Nigerian and Malaysian counterparts in the women's and men's events respectively. Youth Olympics gold medalist Jeremy Lalrinnunga's (67kg) chances of winning a gold have brightened considerably as Pakistan's Talha Taliib, the favourite to win the 67kg title, is undergoing suspension after testing positive for banned substances. Two other title contenders are debutants Achinta Sheuli (73kg) and Ajay Singh (81kg). Both won the gold at the Commonwealth Championships in December. Junior world championship silver medalist, Achinta, who has a personal best of 316kg (143kg +

173kg) will have to overcome Malaysia's Erry Hidayat, who has the same best effort as the Indian. Ajay, on the other hand, will fancy his chances against his nearest rival Kyle John Ryan Christopher Park Bruce of Australia, whose personal best is six kg less than the Indian's. Apart from Chanu, the contingent also has previous CWG medalists in P Gururaja (61kg), the seasoned Vikas Thakur (96kg), who will be vying for a third medal having won silver and bronze in the 2014 and 2018 games respectively, and Punam Yadav (76kg). It will be a tall task for 2018 bronze medalist Gururaja to win the gold as he will have to contend with Gold Coast CWG 62kg champion Muhammad Aznil bin Bidin of Malaysia, who lifted eight kgs more than the Indian at the Commonwealth Championships.