

## CAKEWALK FOR MURMU

Odisha's Droupadi creates history by becoming the youngest President-elect and the first tribal woman to become the first citizen of India as she defeats Opposition candidate Yashwant Sinha quite comprehensively

PNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 21: Droupadi Murmu scripted history Thursday by becoming India's first tribal President-elect in the one-sided contest, defeating Opposition candidate Yashwant Sinha comprehensively. Murmu, 64, won by an overwhelming margin against Sinha after receiving over 64 per cent valid votes in a day-long counting of ballots of MPs and MLAs comprising the Electoral College. She will succeed Ram Nath Kovind to become India's 15th President and take oath July 25.

After the end of the counting process that continued for more than 10 hours, returning officer PC Mody declared Murmu as the winner and said that she got 6,76,803 votes against Sinha's 3,80,177 votes.

Murmu will be the first president to be born after independence and is the youngest to occupy the top post. She will be the second woman to become the President after Pratibha Patil.

Murmu's victory was sealed after the third round when the Returning Officer announced that she had already received over 53 per cent of the total valid votes even as ballots from 10 states and Union Territories were still being counted.

Conceding defeat after the third round of counting, Sinha congratulated Murmu and said every Indian hopes that as the 15th President she will function as the 'custodian of the Constitution' without fear or favour.

In a statement, Sinha thanked the leaders of the Opposition parties for choosing him as their consensus candidate in this election. "I also thank all members of the Electoral College who voted for me," he said. "I have performed my duty conscientiously out of my

- Murmu is the youngest president-elect in India
- 17 MPs have cross-voted in favour of Murmu
- 137 MLAs from Odisha voted for Murmu, 9 against
- 53 votes declared invalid
- Murmu got 6,76,803 votes against Sinha's 3,80,177
- 2nd woman after Pratibha Patil will become the president

love for my country. The issues I had raised during my campaign remain pertinent," he added.

Meanwhile sources in the Election Commission said that a total of 146 MLAs of the Odisha Assembly voted in the Presidential polls out of which 137 voted for Murmu while nine voted for Sinha.

A total of 53 votes were declared invalid, out of which 15 were of MPs and the remaining were of MLAs from different states. Five votes each from Madhya Pradesh and Punjab were cancelled while Karnataka, Delhi, West Bengal and Maharashtra registered four cancellations each. Three votes from the Uttar Pradesh Assembly were also declared invalid.

Immediately after the announcement of the NDA presidential nominee crossing the half-way mark, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP president JP Nadda visited Murmu at her residence here to congratulate her.

"India scripts history. At a time when 1.3 billion Indians are marking Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, a daughter of India hailing from a

tribal community born in a remote part of eastern India has been elected our President!," Modi tweeted

"Droupadi Murmu Ji's life, her early struggles, her rich service and her exemplary success motivates each and every Indian. She has emerged as a ray of hope for our citizens, especially the poor, marginalised and the downtrodden," Modi said in another tweet.

Being a tribal also helped Murmu get the support of a number of independent parties including BJD, YSRCP, AIADMK, TDP, BSP, JDS and SAD, besides Opposition's JMM, Shiv Sena and Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party in her victory run.

MORE P5



MURMU  
64%  
VOTES RECEIVED BY MURMU OF THE TOTAL POLLED

SINHA  
36%  
FINISHED A POOR SECOND WITH JUST OVER 3 LAKH VOTES

I am sure that 10 crore tribals from over 700 communities are very delighted. I know the struggle that I had to go through to come up in life. I want to thank all the NDA MPs and PM Narendra Modi for nominating and supporting me. I will work with honesty and integrity for the country

DROUPADI MURMU

People of India will hope that as the 15th President, Murmu functions as the 'custodian of the Constitution' without fear or favour. I have performed my duty conscientiously out of my love for my country. The issues I had raised during my campaign remain pertinent

YASHWANT SINHA



### FROM RAIRANGPUR TO RAISINA HILLS

- **JUNE 20, 1958:** Born at Baidaposi in Mayurbhanj district
- **JANUARY 1997:** Joined the Bharatiya Janata Party
- **2000:** Elected councillor and made Chairperson of Rairangpur Nagar Panchayat
- **2000, 2004:** Elected to the Odisha Legislative Assembly on BJP ticket
- **6TH MARCH, 2000 - 6TH AUG 2002:** Minister of State, Commerce & Transport Dept, Govt of Odisha
- **6 AUG 2002 - 16 MAY 2004:** Minister of State, Fisheries & Animal Husbandry Department, Govt of Odisha
- **2007:** Awarded the Nilkantha Award for Best MLA of 2007 by the Odisha Legislative Assembly.
- **2014:** Lost to BJD candidate in the Assembly elections from Rairangpur
- **MAY 18, 2015 - JULY 12, 2021:** Governor of Jharkhand
- **JUNE 21, 2022:** Nominated as NDA's presidential candidate
- **JULY 21, 2022:** Creates history by being the first tribal woman to become the 15th President of India

I congratulate the daughter of Odisha, Smt Droupadi Murmu on being elected as 15th President of India. It is indeed a very proud moment for everyone in Odisha that she has been elected for the highest office in the country. I wish her the very best fulfilling tenure

NAVEEN PATNAIK  
CHIEF MINISTER, ODISHA

### SHORT TAKES

#### 2 OTDC staff held for fraud

Bhubaneswar: Commissionerate Police arrested Wednesday two employees of Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) for misappropriation of funds to the tune of Rs 17.47 lakhs in the last few months. The accused, Sunil Kumar Ghadei of Kantilo in Nayagarh district and Ardhendu Sekhar Mohanty of Tirtol locality in Jagatsinghpur district were working at the 'Nimantran' restaurant of the OTDC. Allegedly the duo used to siphon away 50% of the daily amount and deposited the rest in the bank. P4

#### Lightning kills 14 in Uttar Pradesh

Lucknow: Lightning strikes left 14 people dead and 16 injured in various parts of Uttar Pradesh, officials said here Thursday. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has announced a financial assistance of ₹4 lakh each to the families of those who were killed in the lightning strikes Wednesday, they added.

#### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



## MLAs demand hike in LAD fund

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: Cutting across party lines, legislators from BJD, BJP and the Congress demanded Thursday in the Assembly for enhancement of the MLA Local Area Development (LAD) fund.

Currently the MLA LAD fund stands at ₹3 crore of which ₹2 crore is provided for overall development while ₹50 lakh is utilised for road construction and the remaining ₹50 lakh for education-related infra development.

Raising the issue during Question Hour, BJD MLA from Bhadrak, Sanjib Kumar Mallick said the development and renovation work of big temples in the state are being carried out. However, the MLA LAD fund is not sufficient enough for the development of small tem-



ples in rural pockets of Odisha. He said that ₹3 crore is inadequate to meet the requirement of the people as costs of all materials have increased substantially.

BJP chief whip Mohan Charan Majhi said as the MLA LAD fund is ₹5 crore or more in the neighbouring states, it should be hiked to ₹10 crore in Odisha. Majhi also said that funds should be provided

to 'Saraswati Sishu Vidya Mandir' from the MLA LAD fund.

Similarly Congress MLA Santosh Singh Saluja said the budget for road construction, Covid-19 and higher education should be raised and the general expenditure should be hiked to ₹3 crore.

Saluja demanded that instead of allocating ₹50 lakh for road construction and ₹50 lakh for educa-

tion-related infrastructure development, the amount of the MLA LAD fund should be increased to ₹3 crore from the ₹2 crore at present.

Responding to the issue, Planning and Convergence Minister Rajendra Dholakia said that currently, there is no proposal to enhance the MLA LAD fund and it will be taken into consideration at the right time.

The fund was increased threefold to ₹3 crore from the previous ₹1 crore in the financial year 2020-21. The MLA LAD fund currently is ₹5 crore in Maharashtra, UP and Telangana while it is ₹4 crore in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

Speaker Bikram Keshari Arukha directed Dholakia to hold discussions with the concerned officials and apprise the House if the size of the fund could be raised to ₹3 crore.

## ADANI UNLOCKS GATES, NOW WORLD'S 4TH RICHEST

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 21: Industrialist Gautam Adani has left behind Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates to become the world's fourth richest person, according to the 'Forbes' Real-Time Billionaires' list. The 60-year-old business tycoon's net worth reached \$115.5 billion Thursday eclipsing Gates whose fortunes stands at \$104.6 billion. Mukesh Ambani is 10th in the list with net worth of \$90 billion. 'Tesla' and 'SpaceX' founder Elon Musk continues to top the list with \$235.8 billion.

The Adani Group chairman is famous for turning a small commodities trading business into a conglomerate spanning ports, mines and green energy. "Some of Adani Group's listed

stocks increased more than 600 per cent in the last two years as it has invested a lot in green energy and infrastructure," a 'Bloomberg' report recently said. In the same report, it said that Adani had replaced Ambani as India's richest person.

"In barely three years, Adani has gained control of seven airports and almost a quarter of India's air traffic. His group is India's largest airport operator, power generator and city gas retailer in the non-state sector," the report said.

Earlier in the day Adani told the media that his group has bagged the tender for the privatisation of a port in Israel in partnership with 'Gadot'. The Port of Haifa is the largest of Israel's three major international seaports.

## 210 aircraft staff fail breath analyser test, suspended

IN THE RECENT PAST, TECHNICAL SNAGS AND EMERGENCY LANDINGS BY AIRCRAFT HAVE RAISED QUESTIONS ON SAFETY OF PASSENGERS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERIES

New Delhi, July 21: At a time when safety of fliers has become a cause for concern with flights being grounded on a regular basis or are being forced to make emergency landings due to technical snags mid-air, another interesting fact has come to light. This will certainly cause apprehensions among passengers who travel via air.

A total of 60 pilots and 150 cabin crew members have tested positive following the breath analyser (BA) tests in the last two-and-a-half-years. Breath Analyser tests are conducted to ensure aviation safety

is not compromised due to the consumption of alcohol by pilots and cabin crews.

During the period from January 1, 2020 to June 30, 2022, as per the provision of Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) Section-5, Series-F, Part-III, no license has been cancelled. However, a total of 210 pilots and crew members have been suspended.

According to reply made Thursday in the Parliament, there is a systematic safety oversight process in place for monitoring the compliance of Rules and Civil Aviation Requirements by the airlines. "This is a continuing process



and includes surveillance, spot checks and regulatory audits embodied in Annual Surveillance Plan (ASP) of DGCA. The findings

of safety oversight exercises are followed up with the concerned operator for compliance and the observations are closed only after

due verification," said the reply.

The compliance of the action taken by the operator is verified during the next audit and surveillance. In case of any violations or non-compliance to regulations detected during audit and surveillance, enforcement action including financial penalty is imposed by the DGCA.

DGCA in its guidelines had earlier said that airlines must ensure that 50 per cent of their cockpit and cabin-crew members are subjected to pre-flight alcohol tests on a daily basis. While conducting the tests, a large number of pilots and cabin crew has been found on the wrong side of the rule.

As per DGCA advisory, even 12 hours after a bout of drink, when blood alcohol level remained zero, there could be a decrease in performance. "Alcohol present in body even in small quantities jeopardises flight safety on several counts and is likely to adversely affect an aviator well into the hangover period," informed a DGCA official.

It should also be stated here that a few days back, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia had met the heads of various private airline companies and stressed on the need for passenger safety. He had said that no compromise can be made on the safety issue.

# leisure



## DEMI MOORE'S DETERMINED TO STAY 'SEXY' AS SHE TURNS 60

Hollywood icon Demi Moore is gearing up to celebrate her 60th birthday in November. Sharing her thoughts on ageing the *Disclosure* actress said she is determined to remain 'desirable' and 'sexy' as she grows older, reports *mirror.co.uk*.

## BRAD PITT ON PLAYING A PHILOSOPHICAL ASSASSIN

Hollywood star Brad Pitt says he found the most fun role of his career in *Ladybug*, a chump of an assassin, in the upcoming action film *Bullet Train*. The Oscar-winning actor headlines the Sony project directed by *Deadpool 2* filmmaker David Leitch.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Positive thinking can change the world, and you could do with some today. No matter how tough the going gets, take it in your stride, says Ganesh. If you think you can do it, you will. You have the magic touch today to initiate a new business strategy.

**TAURUS**  
The time you previously spent on certain activities may not yield results as expected, predicts Ganesh. You will be reluctant to travel today. You may find yourself wanting more space and freedom of expression. A stroll with your sweetheart, hand in hand, may be the highlight of your day, says Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
Today, it's time to meet those who are close to you, and maybe even those who were close to you at some point of time. Also, it's time to revive old friendships, old memories and sink into nostalgia. You may want to buy a valuable historic artefact, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
Your strange and unconventional behaviour doesn't always go down well with many people. If you think you are different, and maybe even better than others, it is advisable that you keep it under the wraps. The reason being that most people may not be able to understand you. Some may even feel intimidated by you. It would be a good idea for you to share your uniqueness only with 'liberal' friends, says Ganesh.

**LEO**  
Some people have the world at their feet. And today, you are one of them, says Ganesh. With your gorgeous appearance and gregarious attitude, it is easy for you to open all doors with just a touch. So, you have the luxury to choose – either you entertain yourself through multiple avenues such as movies, theatre and music, or you be the entertainer with your superior performing skills.

**VIRGO**  
A shadow grows large in your mind today. An unknown fear will haunt your day, warns Ganesh. But be ready to take a hike. You are most likely to end up spending on your foreign associates. Be careful of those expenses, says Ganesh.

**LIBRA**  
Nothing comes for free – keep this in mind as you may have to pay your dues for the success you desire today, especially if it is a new project that you have undertaken. Be prepared to invest a considerable amount of time and effort in your endeavours. Spare money can be used to purchase new assets that may pay dividends in the future. Either that, or put it in a bank.

**SCORPIO**  
Ganesh asks you to practice caution today. There are strong possibilities that an evil eye may attack you in some or other way. So, keep a watchful eye. And remember, every day brings along an experience and a lesson with it. Learn and move on.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Lady luck is all smiles for you today, predicts Ganesh. Suddenly, you feel like multi-tasking and becoming a jack of all. This is likely to keep you busy, almost throughout the day. If need be, your colleagues and peers will lend a helping hand.

**CAPRICORN**  
Patience is tested when one is in trouble; your patience could be tried today. The trick is in keeping your composure, says Ganesh. Avoid getting into an argument or scuffle with those around you, as luck may not be on your side.

**AQUARIUS**  
Things barely move today. But just like the proverbial tortoise, you seem to be winning the race, for many opportunities will come your way. There won't be any cash crunch, so you needn't lose sleep over that, says Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
The focus will be on children today, says Ganesh. While they will be the cause of an unfair share of your headache, you will be surprised at their ability to step up to the occasion, with just a little amount of coaching.

## Guv unveils anthology of science plays

**Bhubaneswar:** Governor Prof. Ganeshi Lal released a collection of science plays at the Raj Bhavan here, Thursday. The compilation titled *Srishi* is based on three science plays - *Chashma*, *Hope* and *Srishi* written by playwright and director Dinesh Das. Presented by the students of Panchayatraj High School of Kanpura, Kamakhyanagar of Dhenkanal district, the plays bagged top honours for three years in a row at the National Science Drama Festivals held at New Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata starting from 2017-18. The event was attended by eminent writer and the Governor's Public Relations Officer Rakshak Nayak, litterateur Shankar



Parida, Alternative Rhythm Theater Chairperson Pushpalata Rath and Panchayatraj High School Headmaster Sreeram Rout. Governor Lal wished great success for the book as well as the playwright Das for his future work. Published by Vijayini Publications of Cuttack, the book has its cover designed by Samarendra Nayak. PNN

## Bharat Rang Mahotsav-22 kicks off with Maha Sangramara Maha Nayak



A scene from the Odia play *Maha Sangramara Maha Nayak*

**Bhubaneswar:** The 22nd Bharat Rang Mahotsav, organised by National School of Drama (NSD), began in Odisha with the staging of Odia play *Maha Sangramara Maha Nayak* here at KIIT Auditorium, Thursday.

Written by Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan and directed by Dhira Mallick, the play was presented by Satabdita Kalakar, one of the oldest theatre troupes of Bhubaneswar.

The plot revolved around Buxi Jagabandhu, the Supreme Commander of the Paika Revolution of 1817 and highlighted the difficult conditions Buxi and his men faced during their fight against the British.

Apart from playwright Harichandan, KIIT Vice-Chancellor Sasmitarani Samanta IIT and NSD director Ramesh Chandra Gaur were present at the event. One more Odia play, two Assamese and a Bengali play will be staged over the next four days.

Rourkela-based theatre troupe Newquest Repertory will present *Gandhinka Odisha*, written by Shankar Tripathy and directed by Nalini Nihar Nayak, on the last day of the festival.

"All the plays, based on the lives of freedom fighters and the struggle of Independence, will offer a platform to pay tribute to the great sons of India and rediscover the magic of theatre which has been affected by the pandemic," said festival controller Suman Vaidya. PNN

## Odia actress Rajeswari no more

**Bhubaneswar:** Well-known Odia TV and film actress Rajeswari Ray Mahapatra's battle with cancer came to an end here at a private hospital Wednesday night. She was 37.



sources, Rajeswari was rushed to hospital after her health condition worsened Wednesday night.

However, she passed while administered emergency treatment. In 2019, Rajeswari had tweeted that she was diagnosed with cancer and said she would overcome the dreaded illness. She started her journey in Odia entertainment industry as an anchor but went on to win millions of hearts playing memorable roles in TV shows and films. PNN

## Shalini calls debut film as big ticket to B-town

Though Yash Raj Films' *Jayeshbhai Jordaar*, headlined by Ranveer Singh, struggled at the box office, its heroine Shalini Pandey who made her Hindi film debut delivered a powerful performance as pregnant girl in the movie.

Shalini says, "It is amazing to see the love that Jayeshbhai Jordaar is getting from audiences post its OTT release! What's also heartening is that people are loving my work and are appreciating how I have sensitively played the role of a pregnant woman fighting patriarchy in the film."

Shalini admits that everyone advised her to not play a pregnant girl in her Hindi big screen debut but the artist in her made her choose otherwise. She says, "I didn't pay attention to such comments because for me what mattered was the role allowing me to express myself as an artist. I look up to actresses who have broken the mould by choosing daring films and roles and I want to be one of them."

She adds, "I want the movie to be my calling card to the industry, audiences and media. So, the attention that I'm getting for my debut is reason enough for me to smile and choose more such different roles in the future." IANS



## Tanushree claims to be 'targeted', 'harassed'

**Mumbai:** Tanushree Dutta, who had taken a sabbatical from B-town, returned to the industry with a bang when she accused some renowned names from the industry of sexual misconduct. Recently after being in the news for escaping an accident, the actress has once again sparked a conversation on social media where she accused some unnamed people of sabotaging, targeting and harassing her.

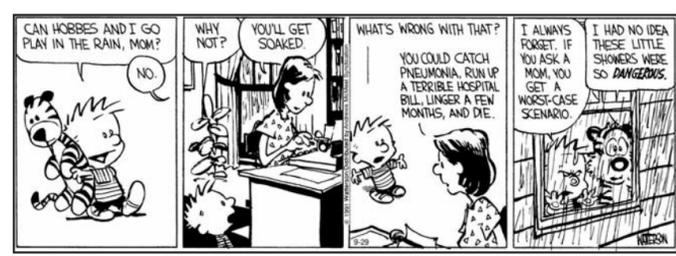
The *Chocolate* actress claims to be 'targeted' and 'harassed' by old mafia, political circuit, and anti-national criminal elements.

In a recent post, Tanushree claimed that she is being pushed to commit suicide as someone is trying to sabotage her career while she is attempting to find work. She wrote, "I'm being harassed & targeted very badly. Please someone do something! First it was my Bollywood work being sabotaged in last one year, then a maid was planted to douse my drinking water with medications & steroids which caused all kinds of severe health problems, then when I escaped to Ujjain in May my vehicle brakes tampered twice & accident. I barely escaped death & returned Mumbai after 40 days to resume normal life & work. Now strange disgusting stuff in my building outside my flat." IANS

### PEANUTS



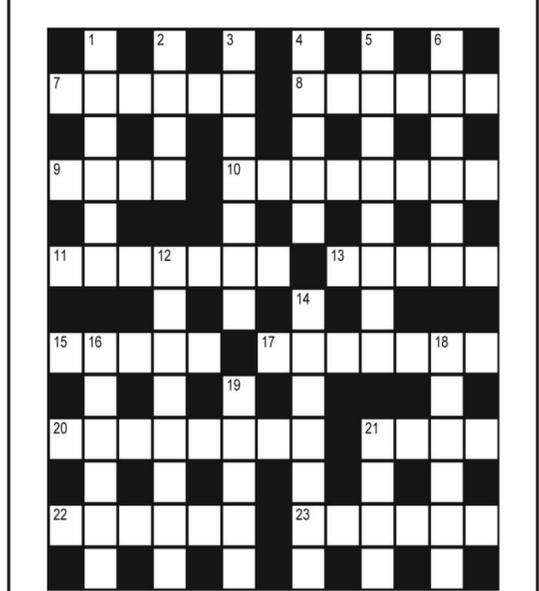
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



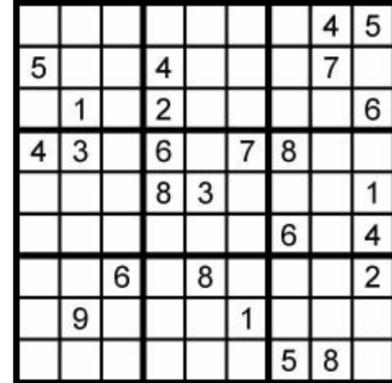
### FUN post CROSSWORD



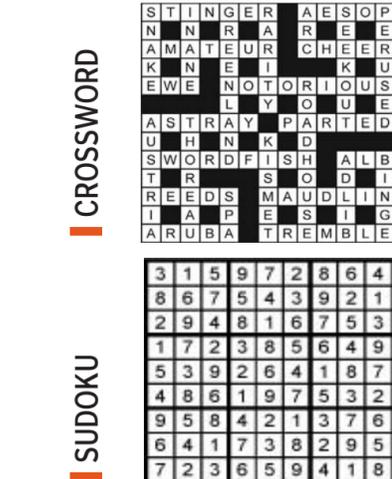
- Across**
- 7 Wine and dine
  - 8 Shred (4,2)
  - 9 Catcall
  - 10 Stunt doubles (5-3)
  - 11 Serious infection
  - 13 Mesh fabric
  - 15 Suffering
  - 17 Affirm
  - 20 Alluvial deposit
  - 21 Garret
  - 22 Anxious
  - 23 Acquire
- Down**
- 1 Strain
  - 2 Savoir faire
  - 3 Diver's apparel (3,4)
  - 4 Rein, e.g.
  - 5 Scalp condition
  - 6 Rabbit warren
  - 12 Type of horse race
  - 14 Speech
  - 16 Leafy vegetables
  - 18 Under the eave
  - 19 Aquamarine
  - 21 Former

### 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

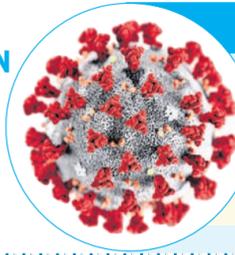


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



**DRAWING COMPETITION**

Children participate in a drawing competition organised by the Ramakrishna Mission in Puri to celebrate Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Thursday



**COVID-19 TRACKER**

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	57,19,24,175	54,21,57,963	63,96,666
India	4,38,25,185	4,31,50,434	5,25,870
Odisha	13,03,191	12,87,941	9,130

# CM: Food processing can be driver of state's growth story



Patnaik inaugurated the Odisha FoodPro 2022, a unique interface of investors, manufacturers, producers, food processors, startups, policy makers, and organisations from across the Indian food ecosystem

addition and enhancing farmers' income, he said, adding that Odisha is naturally blessed with a vast geographic, climatic and crop diversity and presents a unique opportunity for exploring its potential for an inclusive and exemplary economic growth.

Joining the programme on a virtual platform, Patnaik called upon all to work together in making Odisha a favoured destination for investment in the food processing sector.

The Chief Minister said the event was conceptualised not only to enable the investors to understand the investment environment in the food processing sector in the state but also to provide exposure to the micro and small food processing entrepreneurs to access financing as well as newer skills and technologies.

Announcing that Odisha FoodPro will be made an annual event, he said that it will be organised by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) department each year so as to put Odisha on the food processing map of India and the world. Highlighting the con-

tribution of the Self Help Groups (SHGs) in the transformation of the socioeconomic canvas of Odisha, the CM stated that it will witness further escalation by making them partners in a modern supply chain.

He expressed happiness over the participation of the Women SHGs in this event and hoped that they will engage themselves more in the food processing activities and will prosper further.

The state government is implementing a favourable policy framework through Industrial Policy Resolution 2015, MSME policy 2016 and Odisha Food Processing Policy 2016.

Odisha is also among the leading states in the implementation of the Prime Minister's formalisation of micro food processing enterprises scheme, he added. State MSME minister Pratap Deb said that it's a first of its kind in Odisha. He outlined the efforts made by his department and growth opportunities in this sector, especially for small investors and entrepreneurs.

## ORANGE ALERT OF VERY HEAVY RAIN IN 7 DISTRICTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, July 21:** Odisha is staring at another spell of intense rain as the Met office Thursday warned of very heavy showers over the next three days.

The Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre issued an orange warning of heavy to very heavy rain at a few places in Boudh, Bolangir, Bargarh, Gajapati, Ganjam, Kandhamal and Kalahandi districts Friday.

It predicted downpour Saturday at some areas of Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Angul and Subarnapur.

Heavy to very heavy rain is also likely to occur in Sambalpur Deogarh, Bargarh, Jharsuguda and Sundargarh on Sunday, according to a bulletin.

Rainfall between 115.6-204.5 mm in a day is categorised as 'very heavy'. It may trigger landslides



or mudslides in vulnerable hilly areas, temporary waterlogging of low-lying areas, and some damage to roads and vulnerable houses, according to the weather office.

A yellow warning of heavy rain has also been issued for some places in Koraput, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Nuapada and Cuttack districts on Friday.

Downpour over the next three days is expected in some parts of Malkangiri, Kendrapara, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



# BJD for nat'l maritime fest status to Bali Yatra

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, July 21:** The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Thursday urged Union Minister of State for Culture Meenakshi Lekhi to accord 'National Maritime Heritage Festival' status to Cuttack's Bali Yatra.

A delegation of BJD MPs met Lekhi and submitted a memorandum seeking central recognition to the annual festival that has been representing the glorious maritime history of Odisha.

Highlighting the socio-cultural significance of the annual event considered to be one of the largest



open trade fairs in Asia, the legislators said Bali Yatra begins in the month of November on the full-moon day of Kartika (Purnima) and continues for seven to ten days on Mahanadi riverbank in Cuttack.

"Bali Yatra marks the days when ancient Sadhavas (Odia sailors) would set their voyage to distant lands of Bali, Java, Sumatra and Borneo for trade and cultural expansion. They sailed in large vessels called Boitas," said the memorandum.

The BJD MPs claimed that Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has already urged the Centre to accord the 'National Maritime Heritage Festival' status to Bali Yatra. "We're sure that it (National Maritime Heritage Festival status) would be a befitting tribute to our heritage and an inspiration for our future," the BJD MPs said.

# Andhra DM reviews developmental works in Kotia

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Pottangi, July 21:** With no concerted efforts being made by the state government to keep its hold intact on Kotia panchayat under this block in Koraput district, the neighbouring Andhra Pradesh is leaving no stone unturned to wean away the residents from their emotional connect they have with Odisha by luring them with freebies and various developmental initiatives.

The neighbouring state has refused to withdraw from its overtures despite its move coming under severe criticism and the Kotia issue remaining sub-judice in Supreme Court.

In the latest move, Nishant Kumar, the district Collector of Parbatipuram Manyam in Andhra Pradesh, visited Neredibalsa and Tadibalsa village in Kotia panchayat and reviewed the implementation of various projects while interacting with the residents.

He wanted to know whether various welfare schemes of Andhra Pradesh are reaching the intended beneficiaries and its officials are cooperating with them or not. He also said there is a need to raise the standard of living of Kotia residents.

On being directed by Koraput district administration, local sarpanch Liu gemel, Pottangi tehsildar Debendra Bahadur Singh Dharua, Sunabeda SDPO Manoj Kumar Behera, Kotia IIC Aswini Kumar Pattnaik rushed to the Neredibalsa village but by then the Andhra Collector and the officials accompanying him had returned back to their official headquarters in AP.

The neighbouring state has recently carved out Parbatipuram Manyam district comprising Kotia panchayat which belongs to Koraput district in Odisha. This is the first time that a Collector of AP strayed into Kotia panchayat and reviewed the development projects implemented in



Nishant Kumar, the district Collector of Parbatipuram Manyam in Andhra Pradesh, visited Neredibalsa and Tadibalsa village under Kotia panchayat and reviewed the implementation of various projects while interacting with the residents

Kumar also enquired about the reach of AP's welfare schemes like Jaganna, Ashra, Jaganna Todu

the area by the government of neighbouring state.

The Parbatipuram Manyam Collector also enquired about the

reach of the welfare schemes like Jaganna, Ashra, Jaganna Todu of AP. The villagers informed the Collector that they have been deprived

of getting timely supply of rice due to internet connectivity issues. The Collector assured them that their problems will be resolved very soon. The villagers also demanded work orders under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), forest land pattas provided by the Andhra government and sanction of houses under Jaganna Colony scheme.

The Collector directed Salur BDO G Parbati to prepare a list of applicants for houses under Jaganna Colony scheme. Later, the Collector reviewed the implementation of water supply scheme by the rural works department for an Anganwadi centre at Tadibalsa village. Salur tehsildar V Rama Swami, circle inspector Rohini Pathy posted for Kotia panchayat and other government officials of the neighbouring state were present during the Collector's visit.

# Dismal show by Odisha in Innovation Index 2021

POST NEWS NETWORK/ AGENCY

**New Delhi, July 21:** Odisha has ranked 16th among the 17 major states in the NITI Aayog's India Innovation Index 2021. The index revealed that the state has failed miserably in the field of innovation. This apart, the flow of foreign direct investment (FDI) to Odisha is very low.

The Innovation Index 2021 stated that the FDI in Odisha was just 0.07 per cent of the state's GDP. Besides, the state spends a meagre amount on research and development, which is very important for innovation.

The index also highlighted a dismal show by Odisha in the parameter of knowledge intensive employment.

However, the state scored comparatively better in the fields of human capital and business environment.

Karnataka, Telangana and Haryana have been ranked as the top three states among 17 major states in the Innovation Index. The index, released by Niti Aayog's Vice Chairman Suman Bery in the presence of Chief Executive Officer Parameswaran Iyer Thursday, has been developed on the lines of the Global Innovation Index.

States and Union Territories were divided into '17 Major States', '10 North-East and Hill States', and '9 Union Territories and City States', for effectively comparing their performance.



Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Bihar have been ranked at the bottom of the index among major states. Karnataka topped the index for the third year in a row.

Among Union Territories, Chandigarh topped the chart, while in the North-East and Hill States category Manipur occupied the top spot. "Among the 17 major states, Karnataka, with a score of 18.01, is the top performer, followed by Telangana and Haryana. Chhattisgarh has scored the least, 10.97. And the average score for the major states' category is 14.02," said the index.

According to the index, Karnataka's high score can be attributed to its peak performance in attracting FDI and a large number of venture capital deals.

Uttar Pradesh and Haryana have registered significant gains in promoting an innovative business environment with a large base of internet subscribers and a safe ecosystem for further investment in the region, it added.

The average score of North-East and Hill States' category was 14.41, the index

said, adding that Manipur with a score of 19.37 was at the top and Nagaland with a score of 11 was at the bottom.

While Manipur scored best in the knowledge workers and safety and legal environment pillars, Uttarakhand had the second highest score due to the state government's high R&D investment.

The average innovation score of the 9 Union Territories and City States was 15.74, higher than the national average.

Speaking at the event, Niti Aayog CEO Parameswaran Iyer said he would like to reaffirm the Aayog's continued commitment to monitoring the state of innovation in India through the India Innovation Index. "We strive to improve the innovation ecosystem across the nation in partnership with states and other stakeholders," he said.

Niti Aayog member V K Saraswat said innovation is the key to sustainable and inclusive growth. "It can help us solve the biggest challenges of our times, bringing millions out of poverty, generating livelihood opportunities, and paving the way for an Aatmanirbhar Bharat," he added.

The first and second editions of India Innovation Index were launched in October 2019 and January 2021, respectively. According to an official statement, the third edition strengthens the scope of innovation analysis in the country by drawing on the framework of the Global Innovation Index (GI).

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**NOTICE OF RELOCATION OF THE MANIPALCIGNA HEALTH INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED BHUBANESWAR MICRO BRANCH OFFICE**

**Please note that with effect from 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022 our Bhubaneswar Micro Branch Office is shifting:**

**From:** Room No. 13, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Deendayal Bhavan, Ashok Nagar, Unit-II, Bhubaneswar, Dist- Khurda-751 009, Odisha, India

**To:** Ground floor, Plot no 357/3473 & 358/3474, Besides Reliance 4G Office, Jayadev Vihar, Bhubaneswar-751022, Odisha, India

**Place : Bhubaneswar**  
**Date : 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022**

**75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**

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**HIRING OF EXPERIENCED AND REPUTED CONSULTANCY FIRMS FOR PROVIDING "PROJECT MONITORING UNIT" (PMU) AT TRIFED**

Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd. (TRIFED), under the administrative control of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, is inviting proposal for the hiring of experienced & reputed Consultancy Firm for providing a "Project Monitoring Unit (PMU)" at TRIFED which will provide support and expertise in carrying out the various activities and initiatives as per the broad objectives of TRIFED.

The detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) and Scope of Work for hiring of Consultancy Firm may be downloaded from the website of TRIFED (under Opportunities (Careers Section) i.e. <https://trifed.tribal.gov.in/careers-list>, or from the CPP Portal (<https://eprocure.gov.in/cppp/>). The same may also be collected in physical/hard copy form from the Personnel Division, TRIFED Head Office, NSIC Business Park, NSIC Estate, Okhla Phase-III, Okhla Industrial Area, New Delhi.

The last date for receiving Technical & Financial Proposals from interested parties is 22nd August, 2022 (1800 hrs IST).

CBC 43104/12/0006/2223

**General Manager (P&A)**

# Odisha logs 1,196 new Covid cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 21: Odisha's COVID-19 tally rose to 13,03,191 Thursday as 1,196 more people, including 169 children, tested positive for the infection, 74 more than the previous day, a health bulletin said.

With the fresh infections, the state registered the highest single-day spike since February 12, when 1,539 cases were recorded.

The daily positivity rate was at 5.18 per cent as 23,078 samples were tested for COVID-19.

Khurda district, where the state capital Bhubaneswar is located, reported the highest number of fresh cases at 312, followed by Sundargarh (174) and Cuttack (109).

The number of active cases climbed to 7,093, of which 2,218 are in Khurda.

The toll remained unchanged at 9,130 as no fresh fatality was recorded. Fifty-three other patients have died due to comorbidities so far.

A total of 12,86,915 people have recovered from the disease thus far, including 804 in the last 24 hours, it added.

# 2 held for OTDC fund bungling

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: The twin city Commissionerate Police has arrested two employees of Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) on charges of misappropriating ₹17.47 lakh of the corporation's Nimantran restaurant, an official said Thursday.

Saheed Nagar police identified the accused as Ardhendu Sekhar Mohanty of Tirtol in Jagatsinghpur, a manager at Nimantran restaurant, and Sunil Kumar Ghadei of Kantilo in Nayagath, an assistant manager at the restaurant.

The fraud came to the fore after OTDC divisional manager Prasant Panda approached the Saheed Nagar police July 19 alleging ₹17.47 lakh fraud by the duo.

"Ardhendu and Sunil used to

divert at least 50 per cent of the restaurant's daily earning to their personal account and deposited the rest amount in the restaurant's bank account," said a senior police officer.

The issue came to the light when a restaurant worker approached Panda for ₹5 lakh to buy grocery. Upon reaching the bank to withdraw money, Panda was taken aback to find that the bank account has only ₹320 despite a handsome daily earning. Following verification, Panda claimed to have stumbled upon the fraud by the duo, said the police official quoting the case (328/22) registered on the basis of Panda's complaint.

"The two were arrested and produced before a local court that sent them to judicial custody. Ardhendu had lost around ₹10 lakh to online gambling," said the official.

THE FRAUD CAME TO THE FORE AFTER OTDC DIVISIONAL MANAGER PRASANT PANDA APPROACHED THE SAHEED NAGAR POLICE JULY 19 ALLEGING ₹17.47 LAKH FRAUD BY NIMANTRAN'S MANAGER AND ASSISTANT MANAGER



Women under the banner of AIDWA stage a demonstration near Master Canteen Square in Bhubaneswar, Thursday, demanding withdrawal of GST on food items

# Madhavan meets CM, hails state's sports infra

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: Actor R Madhavan Thursday met Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and hailed the state government's work towards developing the sports infrastructure of Odisha.

In his social media account Madhavan said, "Such a pleasure to meet with honorable CM & very dynamic Shri Naveen Patnaik Ji. Thank you so much for the kind hospitality & the most fantastic endeavor of putting Odisha firmly on one of the Best Sports Venue map of India-Your commitment for the future of sports is invigorating."

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik also thanked the actor for the courtesy visit and appreciation for Odisha's acclaimed sporting ecosystem. He also invited him for a



longer visit to Odisha to explore the treasure-trove of natural beauty, monuments and rich heritage.

Congratulating his son Vedaant, who is an ace swimmer and broke the national record of 1500m

freestyle at the 48th Junior National Aquatic Championships in Odisha, CM presented him Odisha swim t-shirt as a memento.

Earlier, during his visit to the Kalinga Stadium at the 48th Junior National Aquatic Championship, Madhavan said that Odisha is no longer India's best kept secret, it's known to all.

Madhavan is currently enjoying the massive success of his first directorial debut film Rocketry: The Nambi Effect. The 51-year-old actor not only directed the movie but also acted, wrote and produced the biography, which is about Nambi Narayanan, a former scientist and aerospace engineer with ISRO.

Apart from this, the Rehnaa Hai Tere Dil Mein actor is also savouring the impeccable success and is a proud dad of his son Vedaant.

# Naveen praise for Rourkela

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday congratulated the city of Rourkela for being selected among a group of ten cities set to attend the Urban 95 Academy Residency Week at the London School of Economics. Rourkela was selected on the basis of a proposed plan to make the city friendly for infants, toddlers and caregivers, and accommodating to slums and tribal communities.

From his official Twitter account, the CM said, "Congratulations Smart City Rourkela on being selected among 10 global cities to attend Urban 95 Academy Residency Week at the London School of Economics-Cohort 2. Rourkela is selected for its proposal of infant, toddler and caregivers' friendly city for slums



& tribal communities." Earlier, Rourkela had shared the news from their own Twitter account, which the CMO quote-tweeted.

The Urban95 Academy Residency Week, designed for municipal leaders, was developed by the Bernard van Leer Foundation and LSE Cities at London School of Economics. The programme has attracted local governments from

around the world who seek to improve the quality of their cities focusing both on early childhood development and urban design. The curriculum prioritises urban strategies and systems that help improve the lives of babies, toddlers and caregivers. The course includes online learning modules and live virtual meetings with LSE faculty, Bernard van Leer Foundation leadership, and global knowledge partners.

Before this accomplishment, Rourkela was one of 10 Indian cities that won the 'Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge' under the aegis of the Smart Cities Mission of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA). Now the city aims to ensure safety for infants and toddlers, and provide educational infrastructure to support early childhood development.

# 'Barsha' turns one-year old, NZP celebrates birthday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: Barsha the hand-reared lion cub of Nandankanan turns one year Thursday. On the occasion, a special treat for her and the keepers was organised by zoo authority. She was given chicken ball. A cake was also cut and all the managers and keepers were felicitated and

given umbrellas as tokens of appreciation.

Barsha was born July 21 last year when the second wave of Covid swept across Odisha and shut-downs were the order of the day. Bijli a lioness gave birth to two cubs and a stillborn. A first-time mother, the lioness was unable to tend to the cubs. She stopped paying attention to the cubs because

of the stillborn.

Poor health of the cubs due to insufficient colostrum was the biggest concern for the zoo management. After waiting for eight hours, the authorities decided to tranquilise Bijli and collect the colostrum to feed the newborns.

However, they could collect only around 30 ml colostrum from the lioness.

# AIIMS-Bhub gets new exe director

Bhubaneswar: Ashutosh Biswas has assumed charge as new Executive Director (ED) of AIIMS Bhubaneswar Thursday. On this occasion, a special meeting was organized at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to welcome the new ED. Biswas emphasized on improving the quality of patient care.



Congress leaders demonstrate near Rajmahal Square in Bhubaneswar, Thursday, condemning ED grilling of party supremo

OP PHOTO

# In 12 years, compensation paid in only 18% cases: RTI

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 21: Five circles — Balasore, Bhadrak, Baripada, Jajpur and Keonjhar, which come under the TP Northern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPNODL), have witnessed at least 588 electrical accidents between 2010 and May 2022. However, compensation has been provided in only 18 per cent of the cases.

This was revealed by TPNODL, which took over the management and operations from North Eastern Electricity Supply Company of Odisha (NESCO) in April 2021, while responding to an RTI query filed by rights activist Biswapriya Kanungo.

"As many as 333 humans and 280 animals died while at least 159

# ELECTRICAL MISHAPS

persons suffered critical injuries in 588 electrical accidents, especially involving dangling wires and charged poles, between 2010 and May 2022," TPNODL's CIOcum-Manager (Legal) said, adding that compensation has been given in 103 cases, around 18 per cent, during the period.

In most of the cases, compensation has been received following intervention of the courts or rights body like OHRC and NHRC, Kanungo said.

The Energy department, however, was clueless about inspection of transformers, poles and wires in the Capital city of Bhubaneswar undertaken by the electrical inspectors.

"The Energy department's clue-

lessness on inspections shows how indifferent the state government as well as the power distributing companies are towards the safety of public in general," the rights activist pointed out.

According to the state government's policy on compensation to victims of electrical accidents, in case of death due to electrocution, the next of kin of the deceased will be entitled to get an ex-gratia of Rs 4 lakh whereas persons with 60 per cent and 40 per cent to 60 per cent disability will get a compensation of Rs 2 lakh and Rs 59,100 respectively.

Similarly, a compensation of Rs 30,000 for death of cow and buffalo, Rs 25,000 for draught animals including bullocks, camel and horse and Rs 50 per poultry bird will be paid, it was learnt.

# 9-yr-old hostel inmate's death sparks row

Dasamantpur: A nine-year-old hostel inmate of an upper primary school here died due to alleged negligence of school and hostel authorities at Lulla panchayat under this block in Koraput district, Thursday. The deceased was identified as Krushna Naik, 9, son of Manik Naik of Maligaon village under Chandragiri panchayat of Kashipur block in Rayagada district. Krushna was suffering from fever for the last eight days and an ANM Haribala Nayak gave him some medicines instead of taking him to a hospital. Later, the school authorities informed the family members who reached the school and were rushing him to Dasamantpur health centre when he succumbed on the way.

# High BP may double Omicron risk, even after booster dose

Having high blood pressure more than doubled a person's risk for hospitalisation from an Omicron-variant -- despite full vaccination, including a booster dose of the Covid vaccines, according to new research.

The findings showed that individuals with high BP were 2.6 times more likely to require hospital care for severe Covid illness, even when the person had no other serious chronic health condition, the researchers noted in the paper published in the journal Hypertension.

Further, older age, high BP, chronic kidney disease, heart at-

tack, heart failure and the time between the last vaccination and Covid infection were all associated with greater risks of hospitalisation.

"Our data found that it is not just older adults with other underlying health conditions who are vulnerable," said lead author Joseph E. Ebinger, Assistant Professor of cardiology at the Centre's Smidt Heart Institute.

"Breakthrough Omicron infection severe enough to cause hospitalisation can happen to an adult of any age, especially if a person has high blood pressure, even if they have no other major chronic disease. The peo-



ple who are most at risk are not necessarily who we think they are. They are not the sickest of the sick, and this was a surprising finding," he added.

Researchers conducted a retrospective cohort study of 912 adults who had received at least three doses of an mRNA Covid vaccine (either the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) and were treated for Covid-19 during an Omicron surge, between December 2021 and April 2022.

The analysis found that of the 912 adults who received three doses of an mRNA Covid vaccine, nearly 16 per cent required hospitalisation. Of the 145 patients hospitalised, 125

of them (86.2 per cent) had high BP.

"We need to raise awareness and understanding that receiving three doses of a vaccine may not prevent severe Covid-19 in everyone, especially among people with high blood pressure. We also need more research to understand why there is this link between high blood pressure and an excess risk for more severe Covid-19 illness," Ebinger said.

Researchers said further study is warranted on how to reduce risks for serious Covid infection, whether through more tailored vaccine regimens, new therapeutics or a combination approach.

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# REJOICING THE HISTORIC MOMENT

The entire Odisha erupted into a frenzy when Droupadi Murmu won the Presidential election Thursday. Celebrations began earlier in the day when the trends started coming in. Murmu became the 15th President-elect of India but first from Odisha as well as from the tribal community. Ecstatic people celebrated the proud moment as Murmu became the second woman to be elected to the highest Constitutional post, amid distribution of sweets and bursting of crackers. **Orissa POST** made an attempt to capture the rapturous moments of the day...



Celebrations at Baripada BJD party office after Droupadi Murmu's win in the Presidential election, Thursday



A BJP worker offering sweets to a woman traffic constable at Badambadi Traffic Square in Cuttack, Thursday



Rairangpur MLA Naba Charan Majhi along with his supporters at Baripada



BJD leaders assembled at the party office in Bhubaneswar on the momentous occasion



Triabals in Mahakalpara area of Kendrapara district



BJD workers from Choudwar-Cuttack Assembly segment take out a procession at College Square in Cuttack



BJD workers of Barabati-Cuttack Assembly segment during a motorcycle and scooter rally at Dolamundai Square in Cuttack



BJP women leaders at the party office in Bhubaneswar, Thursday



BJP workers play with colours in Angul



BJP workers bursting crackers at Badambadi Traffic Square in Cuttack, Thursday

**“** The world is deafened with useless words. **”**  
THE MOTHER



## Why Lanka Imploded

As Sri Lanka's economy unravels before our eyes, one must ask how this could happen in a country that is historically known for its high standard of living and stable economy. Sri Lanka's achievements go back decades, giving it a per capita GDP that is 70% higher than India's, and a life expectancy at birth of 77 years, compared to 73, 70, and 67, in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, respectively.

But now, Sri Lanka's economy is in free fall. The proximate causes of the crisis are clear enough. Problems stemming from international factors such as COVID-19 and Russia's war in Ukraine were exacerbated by Sri Lanka's own policy mistakes. In 2019, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa (who has now fled the country) announced a round of mindless tax cuts, depriving the state of sorely needed revenue. Then, in 2021, his government abruptly banned imports of chemical fertilizer and pesticides. While the aim of the policy was to stall foreign-exchange outflows, the main result was a dramatic reduction in domestic food production, leading to acute food shortages this year.

The coup de grace was the government's ongoing effort to keep the Sri Lankan rupee artificially strong. Technically, Sri Lanka uses a "soft peg": Rather than being fixed by government diktat, the rupee-to-dollar exchange rate is allowed to float, albeit with occasional interventions by the central bank (buying and selling dollars) to prevent excessive fluctuations.

But charting the rupee-to-dollar exchange rate shows that the country's soft peg is a misnomer: For years, the exchange rate remained flat, roughly between 175 to 200 rupees to the dollar because, as economist Noah Smith explains, the Sri Lankan central bank was regularly selling dollars to prop up the rupee's value. Eventually, this longstanding intervention ended the only way that it could: starting around April of this year, the rupee began depreciating sharply. Within months, the exchange rate had fallen to 350 rupees to the dollar, and the central bank's dollar reserves had all but vanished.

Sri Lanka defaulted on its foreign debt in May. We now know that, rather than turning to the International Monetary Fund, whose rescue programmes are conditional on tough policy reforms, it approached China for a fresh loan when its coffers were approaching empty. But this merely increased its debt by another \$3 billion and ensured that its inevitable crisis would be even bigger when it eventually arrived.

China's strategy vis-à-vis Sri Lanka (and other developing countries, like Ethiopia) echoes the approach taken both by earlier colonial powers and by rural moneylenders in developing countries. As Amit Bhaduri showed in a classic 1977 paper in the Cambridge Journal of Economics, rural informal moneylenders typically do not worry about the borrower defaulting; rather, they worry about the borrower not defaulting, because then they cannot turn a bigger profit by confiscating his collateral (usually his land).

Consider Hambantota Port, the pet project of Mahinda Rajapaksa, Sri Lanka's president between 2005 and 2015 (and Gotabaya Rajapaksa's brother). Funded largely with Chinese money, the port opened in 2010 on Mahinda's birthday. But when Sri Lanka later failed to repay the debt, this "gift" became collateral to be confiscated. China now has a 99-year lease on the port.

How did a country with a longstanding reputation for maturity make so many mistakes? The short answer is that Sri Lanka's politics sowed the seeds for today's economic crisis. The Rajapaksa-led government became increasingly authoritarian after defeating the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and ending Sri Lanka's decades-long civil war in 2009. It eroded the country's democratic institutions, persecuted minorities, and waved away accusations of war crimes.

Although authoritarianism typically ends up destroying an economy, some authoritarian governments have managed to deliver economic growth and stability. For a short while, it seemed possible that the Rajapaksa government could fall into this category. But as it embraced populism, it soon became clear that crony capitalism would be Sri Lanka's fate.

When the Rajapaksa government returned to power in 2019, it was riding a wave of support that it sought to sustain with ill-advised economic handouts. But the public's patience can be bought for only so long. Eventually, unsustainable policies run into a wall.

If not for its hubris, the latest Rajapaksa government could have corrected course. When it came to power and immediately announced big tax cuts, it met with strong, sensible criticism. On October 30, 2019, for example, former Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera warned, on Twitter, that, "Gota's tax plan wants to set Sri Lanka on an express train to bankruptcy." But Rajapaksa doubled down. When the government suddenly banned chemical-fertilizer imports, the implications of the policy were all too predictable.

Where it will end is unclear. Even if the Rajapaksas do not regain control by proxy, there are other risks. The IMF cannot offer a rescue programme until there is a viable government with which to negotiate. But both the Fund and the Paris Club of sovereign creditors also will need to be proactive, suspending some of their bureaucratic rules to help Sri Lanka through this acute phase of the crisis. Failing that, a spiraling humanitarian disaster is the likeliest outcome.

*The writer, a former Chief Economist of the World Bank and Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India, is Professor of Economics at Cornell University. @PROJECTSYNDICATE*

### WISDOM CORNER

- “One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.” VIRGINIA WOOLF
- “Be less curious about people and more curious about ideas.” MARIE CURIE
- “There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.” MAYA ANGELOU

### WORDSWORTH

#### Unfriend

It's a verb, meaning to remove a person as a "friend" on a social networking site such as Facebook. I have Facebook friends who — subsequent to my accepting their offers of Facebook friendship — accepted jobs as publicists for elected officials. Must I "unfriend" them now to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest? -- Chicago Sun-Times, 5 Sep. 2009. It was chosen as Word of the Year 2009 by the New Oxford American Dictionary. Christine Lindberg, senior lexicographer for Oxford's US dictionary programme, was quoted as saying "Unfriend has real lex-appeal." She wrote in the Dictionary's blog: "It has both currency and potential longevity. In the online social networking context, its meaning is understood, so its adoption as a modern verb form makes this an interesting choice for Word of the Year." It is presumably modelled on terms such as unsubscribe. What makes it odd is that few verbs are created using the un- prefix and that the verb sense of friend is itself rare.

# CAPACITY & CONSTRAINTS

FOCUS INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

All policies of all governments anywhere in the world require periodic review and evaluation. Foreign policy, in particular, needs regular review and re-evaluation in the context of ever-changing, dynamics in the external environment of any country. In this piece, we attempt to briefly examine the capacities and the constraints of India's foreign policy. This has been necessitated by two strategies currently pursued by the present regime. They could be contradictory and complementary at the same time. They also draw the lineage from the previous regimes.



DK Giri

**INCREASE IN HORIZONTAL CONSULTATION WOULD DIMINISH THE CENTRALISED DECISION MAKING AND HIERARCHICAL NATURE OF THE MEA**

The strategies in reference are strategic autonomy and multi-alignment. India's approach to and understanding of the concept of strategic autonomy is captured in External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's presentation in the Raisina Dialogues (2021). He explained, "We have to be confident in who we are. It is better to engage with the world as to who we are rather than pleasing the world by being a pale imitation of what they are, the idea that we need to get approval from other quarters has to be put behind."

As said before, this is not an entirely new concept. But the government supporters will contend that the country was done with the Congress style of limiting its strategic moves, for fear of attracting Western displeasure or disapproval. Today, India is confident enough to secure her aims and interests without worrying too much about what others thought.

On the second strategy, in this dynamic world of multiple and changing alliances, India's strategy of making partnership is articulated by Jaishankar in his book, *The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World* (2020). He argues that India should spread its risks and not place all its eggs in one basket. The essence of Jaishankar's argument is that with the changing global balance of power and faced with major security and economic challenges, India would have to advance its national interests by identifying and exploiting opportunities wherever they exist in the global community.

Yet, the third strategy, or rather an aspiration is, India becoming a



**The MEA should not remain an exclusive and elite club. It needs to improve communication with the other two sectors -- business and civil society -- both at home and abroad**

great power. This is self-consciously expressed at times by top leadership and is endorsed or encouraged by world leaders. Citing some statements, PM Modi immediately after taking over the office in 2014 expressed his government's intention as, "India taking a leading role" in global affairs.

Unarguably, India is being recognised as a rising power. Jim O'Neil, the former head of Goldman Sachs, famously coined the term BRICS to refer to four rising powers — Brazil, Russia, India and China. India could well become a permanent member of the UNSC. Every major power has endorsed India's candidature for this position alongside the current P-5. India's trajectory towards becoming a big power consists of the following capacities: India's GDP in nominal terms is about 2.7 trillion USD, making it the sixth biggest economy in the world. There are some projections that suggest in purchasing power parity terms, India could be the second largest economy after China by 2050. If India achieves the 5 trillion USD target in near future, it could jump to third position in economic capacity.

India's military consists of 1.5 million active personnel, the third largest after China and the US. India is a major nuclear power with 130-140 nuclear weapons which can be placed on a range of delivery systems including Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles. The question to ask is, does

India have the capacity commensurate with its rising power aspirations and to maintain the two strategies mentioned above. From the economy and military potential, the aspiration sounds credible. But on a reality check, it is a tall order especially when India is compared and faced with China. Curiously, the constraints lie in actualising the capacities.

Let us talk a bit about the structural capacity of Indian foreign policy in carrying out the strategies and the big-power objective. A detailed discussion, a 'grand capacity analysis' is beyond the scope of this piece. The limited objective is to briefly and critically look at the foreign policy capacity from a structural point of view. Former Foreign Secretary and the National Security Advisor, Shivshankar Menon had said, "India has serious capacity issues in the implementation of foreign policy and lacks the institutional depth to see a policy through."

Studies done to assess India's foreign policy capacity suggest that the MEA has strengths in terms of individual level competences of its officers, but suffers from organisational and systemic weaknesses. The experts helpfully comment that these weaknesses can be alleviated by reducing the hierarchical nature of the leadership in South Block, decreasing the centralisation of decision-making, enlarging the power of the policy-planning unit by seeking support from outside the MEA.

Furthermore, the MEA needs to develop stronger and more active ties to other ministries, especially the Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and above all, the Defence Ministry.

More importantly, the MEA should not remain an exclusive and elite club. It needs to improve communication with the other two sectors, business and civil society — both at home and abroad. Thus, the increase in such horizontal consultation would diminish the centralised decision making and hierarchical nature of the MEA.

Another pressing reform suggested by experts is to increase the recruitment to the MEA. Through the IFS, only about 30 or so are offered the service out of half-a-million candidates applying for examination. This is far too less. The suggestion is to recruit on the model of the private sector, like many developed countries do, from the top undergraduate and graduate programme through a rigorous process of interviews and group discussion. Understandably, while many small or big reforms are needed, what is pressing at any time is the need to increase policy capacity. This is not necessarily based on numbers. It is about competencies at least three levels — individual officials, government organisations and the resources existing in the country. The gap between conceptualisation of policy and its implementation can be bridged by increasing the organisational and systemic capacities in order to absorb and reflect the individual competences existing in the ministry.

In parenthesis, may we add that India's democracy and demography should drive India's foreign policy in making strategic alliances, be it multi-alignment or with single power bloc. This is the choice India has to make. Taiwan would have been invaded by now if it was not aligned with the United States. No NATO member has been attacked so far. This should give some indication, as normally has not been restored with China on border despite 17 rounds of negotiations. Something to think about!

*The writer is Professor, International Politics, JIMMC. @INFPA*

### SPECTRUM SOCIETY

## Are Indians giving up on marriage?

According to a recent report of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the proportion of unmarried youths is on the rise in the country with Jammu and Kashmir topping the list. Its findings say, "The percentage share of the youth population (15-29 years) who are 'never married' has shown an increasing trend in the male population from 20.8 per cent in 2011 to 26.1 per cent in 2019 and a similar trend has been observed in the case of the female population."



Bijayani Mishra

**THE PERCENTAGE SHARE OF THE YOUTH WHO ARE NEVER MARRIED HAS SHOWN AN INCREASING TREND**

Another government report which was published in 2019 states that Jammu & Kashmir (29.1%), Punjab (25%), Uttar Pradesh (26.7%) and Delhi (26.5%) record the highest share of youngsters not getting married. On the other hand, the same report reveals that Kerala (18.3%), Himachal Pradesh (20.8%) and Tamil Nadu (20.2%) and Andhra Pradesh (20.7%) have the lowest percentage share. In the case of adolescent women within the age bracket of 15-19 years; 11.9 per cent have been married (by the age of 15) during 2005-06. And this was only 1.7 per cent in 2019-21.

Apparently, the age bar at the marriage seems to have increased

over the passage of time. It is noteworthy to mention that, "a significant reduction has been observed in the level of age at first marriage for women in the 25-29 years age cohort as only 52.8 per cent of women have been first married by the age of 20 years during 2019-2021 as compared to 72.4 per cent in 2005-06." "Males in the age bracket of 25-29 were first getting married at the 25 years of age during the year 2019-21."

The recent survey report has not detailed any factor(s) to understand the burgeoning percentage of unmarried youth but the government officials have attributed this to "lifestyle and influence of celebrities." However, it has been found out from the survey that the cases of child marriages are getting reduced over the years. The population pyramid also will undergo a change due to the declining fertility rates and increasing life expectancy. The youth under 15 years are presumably going to decline and the responsibility of the country is going to increase towards aged people, the report further stated.

The following reasons can be taken into consideration to understand the increasing propor-

tion of 'unmarried youth' in our country.

First and foremost could be economic instability which is haunting most of the youth. And this specific issue got more aggravated because of the pandemic. Those with less than ₹10,000 monthly income are completely unwilling to get married. In the case of affluent households, only 20 per cent of people are reluctant for marriage, according to a survey done in 2020 (Mar-April).

Marital preference comes in the second position. In the era of online dating and social networking platforms the frustration felt at not being able to find a match can be daunting. Fritzi-Marie Titzmann, in her book 'Changing Patterns of Matchmaking in India' has also mentioned that "the upcoming matrimonial media allows youth a much wider range of choices now."

In the Indian context, how can we ignore the significant role of caste and class? Among youth those who are willing to get married want a life partner from a similar income background, class, status and educational bracket.

Then comes the "shift in the attitude" on the significance of mar-

riage. The youth with higher education don't aspire to get married early. These days becoming a single father/mother is a luxury. People consider this lifestyle as woke and modern. The best of the best couples committed for years together are thinking of getting separated in no time. And this might be connected with the issues pertaining to emotional and physical compatibility.

In considering or choosing a life partner a higher percentage of young men give primacy to looks and education. On the other hand, young women prefer men who are handsomely paid. Hence most of the couples get entangled within the circle of expectation and reality and at the end it paves the way for nothing productive. To conclude, the 21st century generation easily defines what should be the 'marriageable age' for them. As of now our country still continues to be very young. And the way the young choose to marry or build families will have a far reaching impact on tomorrow's economy.

*The writer is Assistant Professor, University of Delhi. Views are personal.*

## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

**OrissaPOST**  
B-15, Russagarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

#### Institutional ranking

Sir, Institutional ranking is a common practice to assess the overall quality of centres of excellence through different yardsticks. In India, the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) put in place in September, 2015, ranks institutions through a pre-determined methodology. Total sum of marks given to each of the five predetermined parameters determine the final rankings. Faculty : student ratio, total budget and utilisation, entrepreneurship, combined percentage for placement, percentage of students from other states and countries, median salary, regional diversity, percentage of women, peer perception are inherent in these broad headings. Rankings are accorded to institutions in different educational streams. Also, overall rankings of colleges and universities are in place in NIRF Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) and the Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) spread across the country, and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), to name a few, are centres of excellence that have kept pace with the changing times. No educational institution is without blemishes though there are some centres that can consistently hold their head high. The 2022 rankings are no different than the earlier ones. The IITs have been crowned with glory in the engineering field, and the institutes that topped various disciplines in the previous years have more or less done an encore. Besides, IISc is now the numero-uno in research.

*Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA*

#### Outrageous act

Sir, Complaints that several female candidates who took National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) were forced to remove their innerwear before entering an exam centre have caused great uproar in Kerala. Charges have been brought against those involved in the offence. Similar incidents have occurred in the state in the past too. A few teachers involved in the offence were suspended following complaints at that time. True, the NEET stipulates certain dress code. Light clothes with long sleeves are not allowed. Likewise, slippers and sandals with low heels can be used but shoes are not allowed. Texts, several stationery materials and devices are not allowed in the exam hall. Similarly, several accessories that candidates usually use are not allowed. Further, ornaments or metallic items are also not allowed. However, the NEET advisory does not specify whether garments with metallic hooks are allowed or not. Given that scoring prescribed marks in the NEET is not a cakewalk, how will candidates feel at ease during the exam if they are troubled like this?

*Venu GS, KOLLAM*

## of the day quote

The BJP will be swept away from power by the people's mandate in 2024

The ISRO is in the process of developing indigenous capabilities towards space tourism through the demonstration of human space flight capability to Low Earth Orbit (LEO)

The LG has advised Kejriwal to not attend the conference since it is a conference of mayors. The Chief Ministers of other states have attended this conference in the past. Even the Prime Minister goes for state-related issues. This is mean politics at work. We will now approach the Ministry of External Affairs directly for political clearance and hope that they will accept our request

## SHORT TAKES

### Central team in Hyderabad

**Hyderabad:** A Central team arrived in Telangana Thursday to assess the damages caused by recent heavy rains and floods in some parts of the state. The six-member Central team is headed by Sourav Rai, Joint Secretary, Union Home Ministry. Telangana's Secretary for Disaster Management Rahul Bojja met the team soon after its arrival in Hyderabad and briefed it on the floods in Godavari river. He submitted a note about the initial estimates of losses caused by the natural calamity.

### Loss of ₹10cr for TN school

**Chennai:** The mob violence that led to extensive torching and vandalising of Shakthi International School has led to an approximate loss of around Rs 10 crore. The school was vandalised and torched Sunday following the suicide of a Class 12 girl student from the third floor of the school hostel. While the student committed suicide July 13, the vandalising and arson took place Sunday from 9.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.

### Narrow escape for TDP leaders

**Amaravati:** Senior leaders of Telugu Desam Party (TDP) had a narrow escape when a boat dock collapsed near Sompalli village in Konaseema district of Andhra Pradesh Thursday. Former ministers Devineni Umamaheshwara Rao, Pithani Satyanarayana, Payavula Keshav, and former MLA V. Sivarama Raju were among those who fell into the Godavari river. Fishermen and security personnel pulled out the leaders and some media persons to safety.



We will continue to stand by the people of Sri Lanka

ARINDAM BAGCHI | MEA SPOKESPERSON

### BARSHASHREE GRANTED BAIL

A college student in Assam, Barshashree Buragohain, who was arrested and jailed for writing a poem allegedly in support of the banned outfit United Liberation Front of Asom-Independent (ULFA-I), was granted bail Thursday by the Gauhati High Court. She was arrested May 18, and later sent to judicial custody. The 19-year-old was booked under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Preventions) Act



# SC to await Varanasi court decision

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud, Surya Kant and PS Narasimha also declined to entertain a fresh plea to offer water to the 'Shivling' — said to be found in the Gyanvapi mosque

## AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 21:** The Supreme Court Thursday said that it will await the Varanasi district judge's decision on the Gyanvapi mosque committee's application raising objections to the maintainability of the civil suit filed by Hindu devotees.

The top court also refused to entertain two writ petitions that sought its permission to worship the 'Shivling', which is claimed to be found in the Gyanvapi mosque premises during a court-ordered survey and carbon dating of the 'Shivling' to ascertain its age.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud, Surya Kant, and PS Narasimha said that it is posting for October 20 hearing on the appeal of the Gyanvapi mosque committee's plea against the Allahabad High Court order upholding the appointment of a court commissioner to survey the site. The bench said that it has been apprised of the fact that proceedings before the District Judge are still underway and it would be appropriate if the appeal of the mosque committee is kept

## AGENCIES

pending till the outcome of the application filed under Order 7 Rule 11 questioning the maintainability of the suit. "The Court has been apprised of the fact that the application under Order VII Rule 11 of the Code of Civil Procedure 1908 is being argued before the District Judge, Varanasi, and the proceedings on the application are pending. In the above situation, further hearing of these proceedings shall await the outcome of the proceedings before the District Judge. List the Special Leave Petition October 20, 2022", the bench said.

During the hearing, the bench told senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi appearing for the Committee of Management of Anujman Intezamia Masjid, Varanasi, that it will keep the proceedings on the appeal filed by it pending till the District Judge adjudicate upon the objections filed by the mosque committee on the maintainability of the suit under Order 7 Rule 11 of CPC. It said, "You see everything depends on the application under Order 7 Rule 11 of CPC which has been filed before the district judge, Varanasi. If the district judge up-

## GYANVAPI MOSQUE CASE



holds the objections then nothing remains but if it rejects the objections then parties can avail the remedies provided under the law. As regard to the commission's report, you can very well raise it before the court that it should not be read in evidence". Ahmadi accepted that there is a remedy under law but said that the High Court order upholding the appointment of a court commissioner cannot be passed. "It is like a fruit from a poisonous tree. The order of commission survey was ex-facie beyond juris-

## AGENCIES

Senior advocate CS Vaidyanathan objected to the submission of Ahmadi and said that he is arguing on a civil suit and not a PIL, and he should focus his arguments on the subject matter of the suit.

Justice Surya Kant said that the court can direct the trial court to not rely on the commission report while deciding their objections. Ahmadi said that the order of the High Court upholding the appointment of a court commissioner should be set aside. The bench then posted the matter for further hearing on October 20 and said that it would await the outcome of the proceedings before the district judge on the application filed by the mosque committee challenging the maintainability of the civil suit filed by Hindu devotees.

## AGENCIES

On May 20, the top court transferred the civil suit filed by Hindu devotees on Gyanvapi mosque from civil judge (senior division) to district judge, Varanasi saying looking at the "complexities" and "sensitivity" of the issue, it is better if a senior judicial officer having an experience of over 25-30 years handles this case.

### SCHOOL BUS CATCHES FIRE

## Narrow escape for 21 children



## AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Jul 21:** Twenty one children had a narrow escape after their school bus caught fire in northwest Delhi's Rohini Thursday, officials said.

According to fire officials, they received information about the incident at 2.14 pm following which three fire tenders were rushed to the spot. Delhi Fire Services director Atul Garg said the vehicle caught fire near a dispensary at Sai Baba Mandir T-point in Rohini Sector 7.

"The bus (tempo traveller) of Bal Bharati Public School carrying 21 children caught fire. All the kids and the driver escaped unhurt," he said. Police said that there was a fire in a bus at Rohini Sector 7 which comes under North Rohini police station.

"During inquiry, it was found that the mini bus was ferrying 21 students of Bal Bharati Public School, who were evacuated safe by its driver Sanjay Solanki, a resident of Pooth village," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini) Pranav Tayal said. There was no casualty in the incident, the DCP said.

The bus driver said he noticed some foul smell coming from the engine of the bus. "Around 2.15 pm, when we reached Rohini Sector 7, I noticed that some foul smell was coming from the engine of the bus. I immediately took all the kids from the bus. After the children got down from the vehicle, it caught fire."

"One of my known persons was coming with his bus and I asked him to drop all the kids to their homes. I was alone today as the helper of the bus was unwell. All the students are safe and sound. The school authorities have asked me to meet them tomorrow morning," Solanki said.

## K'taka: College students hold lip-lock challenge

## INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Dakshina Kannada, July 21:** The video of students of a reputed college kissing in the presence of other students at a private residence has gone viral on social media stirring a hornet's nest in Mangalore city in the coastal district of Dakshina Kannada in Karnataka.

N Shashikumar, Mangalore Commissioner of Police, stated Thursday that the incident had taken place 6 months ago in a flat in Mangalore. The students were playing a truth and dare game during the lip-lock competition.

One of the boys who was present had put the video on WhatsApp a week ago. It came to the notice of the school administration and the



Representational image

authorities warned the students and suspended them, he said. The boy who made the video has been detained for questioning. No complaint has been filed by the school authorities or the parents in connection with the incident, Shashikumar stated. The video shows a college boy and a girl coming together and smooching passionately as others in the room cheer them on. Sources said that the group of students held a lip-lock competition among themselves.

## FESTIVE FERVOUR



Members of Kesariya Rajput Women Group celebrate 'Hariyali Teej' festival during the month of 'Shravan' in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

## 747 websites, 94 YT channels blocked in '21-22

## INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 21:** Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur said Thursday that in 2021-22, the ministry took strong action against YouTube channels working against the interest of the country.

Responding to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Thakur said the ministry acted against 94 YouTube channels, 19 social media accounts and 747 URLs and got them blocked. "These actions were taken under Section 69A of Information Technology Act," he said.

The minister added that the government acted strongly against



agencies working against the sovereignty of the country by spreading fake news and propaganda on the internet.

Referring to Alt News co-founder Mohammad Zubair, who was granted bail by the Supreme Court Wednesday, Thakur said that it is

The government acted strongly against agencies working against the sovereignty of the country by spreading fake news and propaganda on the internet

ANURAG THAKUR

essential to know the difference between a 'fact-checker' and someone who is trying to create tension in the society by staying behind the fact check. "If someone complains against them, action will be taken according to the law," he said.

## 'Can't deny abortion if woman is unmarried'

## INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 21:** In a significant decision, the Supreme Court Thursday allowed the examination of a 24-week pregnant unmarried woman by an AIIMS medical board to determine whether the pregnancy can be safely terminated without endangering her life.

A bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud said letting an unmarried woman suffer an unwanted pregnancy will be contrary to the object and spirit of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act.

The top court asked the director AIIMS to constitute a medical board in terms of provisions of the MTP Act and in the event the board concludes that the foetus can be aborted without any danger to the life of petitioner, then AIIMS should carry out the abortion. The woman challenged Rule 3B of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Rules, 2003, which allows only some categories of women to seek termination of pregnancy between 20 and 24 weeks.

The top court observed that it would be a restrictive interpretation of the MTP Act and Rules, to limit right of abortion of pregnancy exceeding 20 weeks only to married women. The bench said the petitioner should not be denied the benefit merely on the ground that she is an unmarried woman.

The bench said prima facie, quite apart from the issue of constitu-



The top court noted that after the 2021 amendment, the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act uses the word "partner" instead of "husband" in the explanation to Section 3

It added that it shows legislative intent to cover unmarried women under the Act

tionality, it appears that the Delhi High Court has taken an unduly restrictive view. The top court allowed the unmarried woman's plea, who challenged the Delhi High Court order declining to grant permission to the woman to abort the 23-week foetus.

On July 16, the Delhi High Court, while refusing to entertain a plea seeking termination of a 23-week pregnancy, observed that the petitioner, a 25-year-old unmarried Manipuri woman, whose pregnancy arises out of a consensual relationship, is clearly not covered by any of the clauses under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Rules, 2003. The woman stated in her plea that she cannot give birth to the child as she is an unmarried woman and her partner has refused to marry her.

# Migrants play vital role in nation building: SC

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 21:** Migrants play a very vital role in building the nation and their rights cannot be ignored at all, the Supreme Court said Thursday while asking the Centre to devise a mechanism so that they receive food grains without ration cards.

The top court said the welfare schemes devised by the Centre should reach a maximum number of workers and the state governments will have to cooperate and assist the Union of India.

"As far as our country is concerned, two people are very important. First is the farmer i.e the agriculturist and the second is migrant workers. Migrants also play a very important role in building the nation. Their rights cannot be ignored at all."



Representational image

"Therefore you have to reach them. They may be illiterate and may not know how to avail benefits of government schemes. Concerned states will have to ensure benefits of the scheme reaches them," a bench of Justices M R Shah and B V Nagarathna said. Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for

apex court that an e-Shram portal has been launched aimed to help people like migrant workers, construction workers, etc.

She said that a National Career Service portal has been created which is a one-stop solution that provides a wide array of employment and career-related services to the citizens of India. The ASG also apprised the court that the Government of India has introduced a pension scheme for unorganised workers namely Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) to ensure old age protection for unorganised workers.

Bhati submitted that additional allocation of foodgrains as demanded by states is being looked into and Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana has been extended till September. She said additional grains can be procured by states

## 'CITIZENS DYING DUE TO HUNGER'

**New Delhi:** Citizens are dying due to hunger despite our development, the Supreme Court said Thursday while asking the state governments to work out modalities to ensure that maximum migrant workers are given rations. A bench of Justices M R Shah and B V Nagarathna was hearing a case in which the top court in May 2020 had taken cognisance of the problems and miseries of migrant labourers.

at the Food Corporation of India. At this point, advocate Prashant Bhusan, appearing for three activists, Anjali Bharadwaj, Harsh Mander, and Jagdeep Chhokar, alleged that the Centre is asking states to buy ration at market rates.

GOLD SMUGGLING CASE

# Vijayan rejects Oppn's demand for CBI probe

Trouble has been brewing in this case after Suresh gave a confession statement for the ED which included an explosive one where in she said that Vijayan, his wife and their daughter indulged in smuggling gold and currency



wants the present case registered in Kerala be shifted to Bangalore. The ED as all know is an agency which lacks credibility as it works on the directives of the government." Kerala on account of the gold smuggling case has lost crores of rupees by way of taxes and hence the only way out of this is a court-monitored CBI probe and the Kerala government should take it up with the Centre for this, said Satheesan.

Responding to it, Vijayan after thanking Satheesan for raising the issue of credibility of the ED, pointed out that AICC president is appearing before the ED.

The State government has no role in all these as all these probes are decided by the Centre, said Vijayan.

Soon, the opposition benches were up on their feet and started sloganeering forcing the Speaker MB Rajesh to rush through the listed business of the day and wound up the day's session in a flash and thus the present session came to a close.

Trouble has been brewing in

this case after Suresh gave a confession statement for the ED under 164 (5) of the Criminal Procedure Code before a magistrate and she herself revealed bits and pieces of it, which included an explosive one where in she said that Vijayan, his wife and their daughter indulged in smuggling gold and currency.

Following this the Congress and the BJP have been demanding Vijayan to either answer the questions she has posed, if not quit and face a probe, which has both been dismissed by Vijayan and the entire party is behind him organising a series of rallies and public meetings and the state has been flooded with huge posters giving him a clean chit.

But Wednesday things turned sour after the ED approached the Supreme Court seeking a transfer of the gold smuggling cases from Kerala to Bangalore and Thursday the ED informed the court that if they are allowed, they will file her confession statement in a sealed cover before the court.

ANCHORED



Cargo vessel African Piper anchored off Vizhinjam coast for change of crew, in Thiruvananthapuram, Thursday

PTI PHOTO

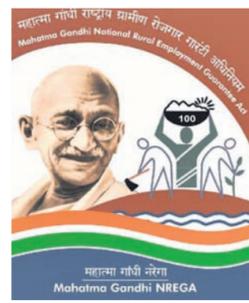
# Schoolchildren given jobs under MGNREGS

GUJ GOVT CRACKS DOWN ON LOCAL OFFICIALS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chhotaudepur (Gujarat), July 21:** In a shocking incident, four school-going children were issued job cards, and bank accounts were opened in their names, under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in Gujarat's Chhotaudepur district.

As the district administration learned about this, the District Development Officer has dismissed



the Gram Rozgar Sevak (GRS), issued notice to village sarpanch, and village's executive wing head Talati, of Kukarda village.

District Development Officer Ganga Singh told to IANS that GRS Lalji Dungarbhil had issued four job cards in the names of school children, a departmental inquiry was conducted and now he has been dismissed from service.

"Notices were issued to the village Sarpanch and Talati and both asked to give explanation... if they fail to give satisfactory explanation, action will be taken against them."

Talking to IANS, Ambalal, the husband of Kukarda village's sarpanch Gaunaben Ambalal Dungarbhil, said: "My wife is illiterate, so she signed the employment list prepared by GRS Lalji without verification.... Lalji

did not show the jobs cards with photos though she had so demanded, while signing documents... it is not her fault."

"I have learned from other villages about three job cards issued in the name of school going children, a boy studying in class X and two girl students studying in class IX, and their bank accounts were opened with Bank of Baroda's Tanakhla village branch. At the most they were paid for a 25 to 26 days job."

After withdrawing the money, Lalji had even bought school stationery for children from the payment, and there is a possibility that children's parents might be involved in it, he alleged.

# Students to run Gujarat Assembly for a day

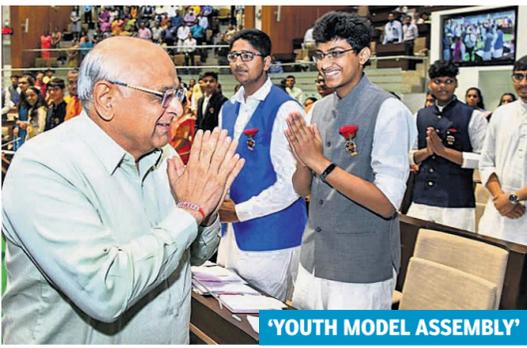
CHIEF MINISTER BHUPENDRA PATEL INAUGURATED THE SPECIAL EVENT IN THE STATE ASSEMBLY IN GANDHINAGAR THURSDAY MORNING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ahmedabad, July 21:** A special one-day event was organised Thursday in the Gujarat Assembly where students will play the roles of speaker, chief minister, leader of opposition and ministers in the House.

The aim of the 'Youth Model Assembly' is to make the younger generation aware of various parliamentary, legislative procedures and to instil leadership qualities in them, Assembly Speaker Nimaben Acharya told reporters.

Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel inaugurated the special event in the



state Assembly in Gandhinagar Thursday morning.

For the mock session, 182 school and college-going students, equivalent to the number of seats in the Gujarat Assembly, were selected from across the state to play the roles of speaker, CM, LoP and legislators in the

House, Acharya said. The selected students include 70 girls. The programme is being organised under the aegis of GV Mavlankar Parliamentary Studies and Training Bureau of the state legislature and The School Post magazine, she said.

The model Assembly will inculcate leadership qualities among the youth and also make them aware of various parliamentary and legislative procedures. "We also want the children to think from the common person's perspective and how pro-people schemes are devised by the government," the Speaker said.

A girl has been selected to play the Speaker's role, she said. During the session, the students will engage in debate on a bill about the establishment of a sports university and on a government resolution on climate change. "The students will also take part in Question Hour, just like we do during the real Assembly sessions. We have also allotted time for a debate on the Budget," Acharya said.

# Kerala news anchor fears he might end up the Zubair way

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Thiruvananthapuram, July 21:** Close on the heels of what happened to Alt News editor Mohammed Zubair, Kerala's news anchor Vinu V John of Asianet News feels that he too might end up the way Zubair did as he was surprised to know that a case has been registered against him.

John said, "Kerala is now ruled by 'fascists' and no one knows if I will be able to appear before you tomorrow."

"I do not know if I will be able to get bail like Sabarinadhan (Youth Congress vice president) got bail a few hours after he was arrested Tuesday All this has taken place because of Pinarayi Vijayan and I offer a 100 crore salutations to him," said John, in the course of anchoring a prime news bulletin. John said he came to know about the case after he was told by a po-



lice official when he had given his passport for renewal, that there was a criminal case against him.

"It was then I found out that a criminal case was registered based on a complaint filed by CPI-M Rajya sabbha member Elamaram Kareem. The incident occurred when I was anchoring the news bulletin March 28 and the case was filed April 28 and the FIR against me under various Sections of the IPC," said John.

John, who is known for his sharp and cryptic comments against wrongdoers, expressed his ire as

Kerala witnessed a total bandh and workers taking part in the protests literally took over the streets of the state with citizens running for shelter.

John was peeved when a patient who was being moved in an auto-rickshaw drew the ire of the protesters in north Kerala.

In the news hour debate, he made a statement that if anyone did such a thing to the state with citizens running for shelter.

The cyber wing of the CPI-M soon latched on to it and it turned out to be a free for all with John coming under attack. Kareem said he will register a complaint with the police chief and also before the chairperson of the Rajya Sabha.

Soon after this incident in March, the local CITU unit pasted posters at the house of John calling for protests against John and to isolate him.

# 'Free, uninterrupted power supply in Gujarat if AAP comes to power'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Surat, July 21:** Aam Aadmi Party's national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Thursday promised that his party will provide free electricity up to 300 units per month if voted to power in Gujarat.

"If AAP comes to power in the state within three months of the formation of government, it will give free electricity up to 300 units per billing cycle, but if the consumer is using even one unit more than 300 units, one has to pay full bill. The idea is to encourage consumers to reduce power consumption. 24x7 power supply without disruption or power cut."

Kejriwal arrived here Wednesday late evening for a day's trip.

While addressing mediapersons, he said this is the first guarantee to the people of Gujarat and the party will roll out other guarantees in phases.

Kejriwal has also promised that if any consumer's old bill is pending, it will be exempted. "So far agriculture electricity charges are concerned," Kejriwal said, "the farmers' issue is highly technical and they are right now discussing the issue internally and are work-



ing to find a solution."

He said if the AAP can give free power in Delhi and Punjab, it can give in Gujarat too. "The problem is that the national party either doesn't know and or doesn't intend to give free power to the common man," he said.

Kejriwal appealed to all the BJP leaders and workers to give in writing that they don't want free electricity. "The government will see

that power consumed by them will be charged, but they should stop making baseless accusations."

The AAP government will strictly implement the prohibition policy, and appealed to the people to question BJP state unit chief CR Patil that "even after prohibition policy in place, how liquor is easily available in the market. Who is benefitting from the poor implementation of policy?"

**'POWER PLAY'**  
If the AAP can give free power in Delhi and Punjab, it can give in Gujarat too. The problem is that the national party either doesn't know and or doesn't intend to give free power to the common man

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | NAT'L CONVENER, AAP

# Kerala students 'lap up' opportunity to give fitting reply to moral policing

Appreciating the stand taken by the students, Thiruvananthapuram city Mayor said a responsive generation is the hope for the future and the local authorities were with the students in the matter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thiruvananthapuram, July 21:** A bus stop bench reduced to three separate seats as an alleged moral policing measure to prevent girls and boys from sitting together prompted students of both sexes from a nearby engineering college to sit on each other's laps and post pictures of the same online, resulting in the city mayor Thursday promising a modern gender neutral waiting facility there.

Thiruvananthapuram city Mayor Arya S Rajendran visited the area Thursday after the photographs posted on social media by the students of College of Engineering Trivandrum (CET) went viral.

However, the residents denied that the seats were deliberately separated into three to dissuade the students. The bench was converted into three seats as part of renovating the dilapidated structure

and keeping in mind Covid-19 guidelines to maintain social distancing, they claimed.

After visiting the area, the Mayor, in a Facebook post, said the manner in which the bench was cut into three seats was not only "inappropriate", but also "unbecoming of a progressive society" like that of Kerala.

She said that there is no ban on girls and boys sitting together in our state and those who still believe there should be such a prohibition are still living in ancient times. "One can only sympathise with those who do not understand that times have changed," she added.

Engineering students from CET, who were present when the mayor visited, told scribes that this was not the first time they were faced with such a situation.

They face moral policing on a regular basis whenever they are walking around in that area with a



friend of the opposite sex.

"We have been suffering this for a long time and therefore, we decided it was about time we reacted to it. We, of course, never expected the photographs to go viral. We were just attempting to ensure that such moral policing does not occur in future," they said.

They should understand there is nothing wrong with a boy and girl sitting together, the students said.

The residents of the area, on the other hand, said that none of them approve of the girls and boys sitting together at the bus stand starting from early morning hours to even late at night.

"This is a bus shelter we built for

people to wait for the bus. If they want to sit together, let them do so inside the college campus. We do not approve of their behaviour," some of the local residents told reporters.

Appreciating the stand taken by the CET students, Rajendran said a responsive generation is the hope for the future and the local authorities were with the students in the matter.

She further said the bus stand was dilapidated, unauthorised and lacking clearance from the Public Works Department and therefore, a new gender neutral one with modern facilities will be built there by the municipality.

of the day quote

It is my guarantee to the people that we will not allow anyone to disturb hard-earned peace in the state and every effort will be made to maintain peace and communal harmony in Punjab by making it free from gangsters and drug smugglers

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER

Hindustan Unilever India will invest ₹700 crore by 2025 in Uttar Pradesh and create employment opportunities in Bundelkhand

YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CM

Just a month before Janmashtami, the BJP government has hurt Krishna devotees by imposing GST on milk, curd, buttermilk

AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

AI flight diverts to Mumbai

New Delhi: Air India's Dubai-Kochi flight was diverted to Mumbai Thursday after the pilot-in-command reported a loss in cabin pressure, officials of aviation regulator DGCA said.

Innerwear row: 7 released on bail

Thiruvananthapuram: All seven persons, arrested by the Kerala Police in connection with the NEET girl aspirants innerwear removal row in the state, Thursday got bail from a lower court in Kollam district.

27-yr-old woman 'raped' by tantrik

Barmar: A 27-year-old married woman was allegedly raped and blackmailed by a tantrik on the pretext of landing her a job using witchcraft, police said Thursday.



Heartiest congratulations to Smt Droupadi Murmu ji on being elected as the 15th President of India! Her wide experience in public life, spirit of selfless service and deep understanding of people's issues will greatly benefit the nation.

M VENKAIHAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

GOOD NEWS FOR AIR TRAVELLERS

The Civil Aviation Ministry said Thursday that airlines can't charge any additional fee for issuing boarding pass at check-in counters in airports.



MOMENTOUS OCCASION



Celebrations erupt across the country as Droupadi Murmu declared winner in Presidential poll

PTI PHOTOS

Droupadi Murmu: From councillor to first tribal Prez-elect

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 21: President-elect Droupadi Murmu. The arc of triumph forged through personal tragedy is complete for the unassuming politician who started public life as a councillor in Odisha and will be written into history as India's first tribal president and the second woman in the post.

At 64, the woman who will be India's 15th president, taking over from Ram Nath Kovind, will also be the youngest and India's first President to be born after Independence. She will be sworn in July 25.

The low-profile politician is believed to be deeply spiritual and a keen practitioner of the meditation techniques of the Brahma Kumaris, a movement she embraced after she lost her husband,

two sons, mother and brother in the just six years between 2009-2015.

"She is deeply spiritual and soft-spoken person," said Basant Kumar Panda, BJP leader and Lok Sabha member from Kalahandi. In an interview in February 2016 to Doordarshan, Murmu gave a glimpse into the tumultuous period of her life when she lost her son in 2009.

"I was devastated and suffered from depression. I spent sleepless nights after my son's death. It was when I visited Brahma Kumaris, I realised I had to move on and live for my two sons and daughter," Murmu had said.

In the month since she was nominated as the NDA's presidential candidate June 21, she has made no public statement.

The victory run seemed certain and her numbers were boosted

with support from a section of opposition parties such as the BJD, Shiv Sena, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, YSR Congress, BSP, TDP. Some of these parties had earlier supported the candidature of the joint opposition candidate Yashwant Sinha.

Murmu travelled throughout the

country campaigning for the presidential election and was received warmly across state capitals.

Her first steps in politics were taken in Rairangpur where she was elected as BJP councillor in the Rairangpur Notified Area Council in 1997 and rose to being a minister in Odisha's BJD-BJP coalition government from 2000 to 2004. In 2015, she was appointed governor of Jharkhand and stayed in the post till 2021.

Murmu had contested the 2014 assembly election from Rairangpur, but lost to the BJD candidate. After completing her tenure as Jharkhand governor, Murmu de-

voted her time to meditation and social work in Rairangpur.

"I am surprised as well as delighted. As a tribal woman from remote Mayurbhanj district, I had not thought about becoming the candidate for the top post," Murmu had said after her selection as the presidential candidate.

The hurdles were several and the achievements many. Belonging to Mayurbhanj, one of the most remote and underdeveloped districts of the country, Murmu earned her Bachelor's degree in Arts from Bhubaneswar's Ramadevi Women's College in Bhubaneswar and served as a junior assistant in the irrigation and power department in the Odisha government. She also served as an honorary assistant teacher in the Shri Aurobindo Integral Education Centre in Rairangpur.

Murmu was awarded the Best Nilkanth Award for the Best MLA of the year in 2007 by the Odisha Legislative assembly.

She has diverse administrative experience having handled ministries such as transport, commerce, fisheries and animal husbandry in the Odisha government.

In the BJP, Murmu was vice president and later president of the Scheduled Tribe Morcha in Odisha. She was elected the district president of Mayurbhanj (West) unit of the BJP in 2010 and re-elected in 2013. She was also named member of the BJP National Executive (ST Morcha) the same year. She held the post of district president till April 2015 when she was appointed as the Governor of Jharkhand. Murmu's daughter Itishree works in a bank in Odisha.

Congress stages protest against ED across country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 21: The Enforcement Directorate Thursday questioned Congress chief Sonia Gandhi for over two hours in a money laundering case related to the National Herald newspaper. The day was a show of strength for the party with street protests and leaders courting arrest across the country.

She has been summoned again July 25.

Thursday's session of questioning the 75-year-old, who is recovering from Covid, ended on her request after two hours and 15 minutes, officials said. However, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said the ED told Sonia Gandhi that they had no further questions and she could leave.

Sonia Gandhi said she would be willing to respond to any other questions they might have and was ready to stay on till 8 pm or 9 pm if necessary, Ramesh tweeted.

She also said she was a Covid patient and needed to take her medicines so she should be informed about what time she should appear next. Sonia Gandhi replied to about 27 top 28 questions Thursday. Following this, she told the officials that she needs to take her medicines at home owing to her recent Covid recovery and the agency allowed ending the day's session.



Police use water cannons to disperse agitators in Chandigarh

PTI

According to sources, while the Congress chief was leaving, the ED asked her to depose July 26 but she suggested that she can come July 25, to which both sides agreed.

"The agency wants to take its probe forward in the best way possible and we do not want her to feel uncomfortable given her age and recent health issues," an ED official said.

According to Ramesh, the ED said it had nothing to ask of her either Thursday or Friday. After which Sonia Gandhi said she was willing to appear Monday, Ramesh added. The questioning was conducted keeping in mind Covid protocol with everyone participating equipped with a Covid-negative certificate. An ambulance and two doctors from AIIMS were also stationed inside the ED office premises. Sonia Gandhi was ques-

tioned by the same assistant director-level investigation officer who interrogated her son Rahul Gandhi in the case related to alleged financial irregularities in the Congress-promoted Young Indian Private Limited, which owns National Herald. A woman officer was part of the questioning team.

The questioning began around 12:30 pm. Sonia Gandhi left the ED office along with her daughter around 2.30 pm. It is understood that Sonia Gandhi has been responding to ED's questions quickly compared to her son Rahul's sessions that went on for over 50 hours in five days.

The summons to the Congress chief took political centrastage in Parliament, where opposition leaders raised the issue, and on the streets with party workers staging massive protests.

CHINESE VILLAGE IN DOKLAM PLATEAU

India keeping a close vigil: MEA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 21: India Thursday said it keeps a constant watch on all developments having bearing on national security, three days after new satellite images indicated the construction of a Chinese village east of the Doklam plateau on the Bhutanese side.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi, responding to questions at a media briefing on the images, also said that India takes all necessary measures to safeguard its security interests.

"I do not want to get into commenting on media reports. Let me make a broader point, particularly in the context of Doklam that please be assured that the government keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's security and takes all necessary measures to safeguard the same," he said.

The images of the village emerged on Tuesday that showed the new settlement is fully inhabited with cars parked at the doorstep of virtually every home.

The Doklam plateau is considered an important area 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.

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 PLA has been locked in an over two-year standoff 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. The India-China stand-off in the Doklam plateau in 2017 even triggered fears of a war between the two nuclear-armed neighbours. Bhutan said the area belonged to it and India supported the Bhutanese claim.

India had strongly opposed the construction of the road at the Doklam tri-junction as it would have impacted its overall security interests. The India-China face-off was resolved following several rounds of talks.

LS adjourned for the day

New Delhi: Lok Sabha proceedings were adjourned for the day Thursday following a request from the government that the Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022 be taken up for consideration when Opposition members are also present in the House. After the House reassembled at 2:15 PM following a routine adjournment, Union minister Jitendra Singh said his request is that the bill be taken up for consideration only when Opposition members are present as it is an important legislation.

EAST COAST RAILWAY tender notice with details of work, cost, and contact information.

India's ties with Arab countries not affected

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 21: India's friendly relations with the Arab countries were not affected in view of the controversial comments made against Prophet Mohammad, the government informed the Rajya Sabha Thursday.

Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan also said that India continues to attach high priority to further strengthen relations with the Arab world and that it understands the outlook and views of New Delhi on the issue.

He was responding to questions on whether "hate speeches and defamatory" comments made by spokespersons of political parties in India have affected its relations with Arab countries and the government's response to the statement made against the Prophet.

"No. India shares historic and friendly relations with Arab countries which have strengthened significantly in the past few years in different domains, including political, trade and investment, defence, security, sci-

ence and technology, culture and people-to-people ties," Muraleedharan said.

He further added: "With regard to recent remarks the relevant political organisation has clarified its position. This has been duly recognised by Arab governments."

Last month, the BJP suspended its national spokesperson Nupur Sharma and expelled from the party its Delhi unit media head Naveen Jindal for allegedly making derogatory comments against

the Prophet.

To a separate question, Muraleedharan said Qatar, Kuwait, Pakistan, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia and Azerbaijan summoned the Indian ambassadors in connection with the remarks on the Prophet.

"Our ambassadors conveyed that the remarks were made by individuals and do not, in any manner, reflect the view of the government of India. In line with our civilizational heritage and cultural traditions, India accords highest respect to all religions," the minister said.

Govt rejects World Press Freedom Index findings

New Delhi: The government Thursday told Parliament that it does not agree with the conclusions drawn by 'Reporters Without Borders' in the World Press Freedom Index that ranked India 150th among 180 nations.

PROPHET ROW



Launching a new military operation into northern Syria is on Turkiye's agenda as long as its security concerns are not met  
RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN | TURKISH PRESIDENT

## OLDEST MALE GIANT PANDA DIES

The oldest-ever male giant panda in captivity has died at age 35 at a Hong Kong theme park after his health deteriorated. An An, lived most of his life at Ocean Park after he and a female panda were gifted to Hong Kong by China in 1999



## of the day quote

The green economy is diverse globally, but concentrated in a few countries and is bound to find new and emerging markets like India  
TARANJIT SINGH SANDHU | INDIA'S AMBASSADOR TO THE US

Let me be clear: Climate change is an emergency  
JOE BIDEN | US PRESIDENT

We have repeatedly expressed serious concerns about a series of changes in Mexico's energy policies and their consistency with Mexico's commitments  
KATHERINE TAI | US TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

## SHORT TAKES

### Joe Biden tests positive for Covid

Washington: President Joe Biden tested positive for COVID-19 Thursday, underscoring the persistence of the highly contagious virus as new variants challenge the nation's efforts to resume normalcy after two and a half years of pandemic disruptions. White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said that Biden was experiencing "mild symptoms" and has begun taking Paxlovid, an antiviral drug designed to reduce the severity of the disease.

### Floyd case: Ex-cop jailed for 2-1/2 yrs

St. Paul (Minnesota): A former Minneapolis officer was sentenced to 2-1/2 years in prison on federal charges stemming from his role in the killing of George Floyd, a Black man whose death sparked protests around the world against racial injustice, a court spokesperson said. US District Judge Paul Magnuson sentenced Thomas Lane in a federal courtroom in St. Paul on charges that he had deprived Floyd of his civil rights and caused Floyd's death during an attempt to arrest him. Magnuson also ordered Lane to be placed on supervised release for two years after he serves his time in prison, a public information officer said.

### Pak court extends Imran's interim bail

Islamabad: A district and sessions court Thursday extended the interim bail of former Prime Minister and PTI chairman Imran Khan till July 30 in 11 cases related to the party's "Azadi March". The former Prime Minister had applied for pre-arrest bail in FIRs registered against him at various places of the federal capital, but he did not appear before the court as he was in Lahore, Dawn reported. District and Sessions Judge Kamran Bashaar said that it was important for Imran Khan to appear in court in case 425 registered at the Kohsar police station, in which the former prime minister has been booked under treason charges.

### Pilot dies

Jakarta: The pilot of a passenger airplane in Indonesia suffered a health emergency 15 minutes after take-off on Thursday and was forced to return to the airport before being rushed to a hospital where he later died. The Citilink Indonesia flight — an Airbus A320 carrying more than 100 passengers — had departed from Surabaya's international airport in East Java province and was headed to Ujung Pandang city in South Sulawesi province. The cause of the pilot's death was not immediately known.

## EARLY POLLS LIKELY

# Draghi quits as coalition collapses

Draghi's government of national unity imploded Wednesday after members of his uneasy coalition of right, left and populists rebuffed his appeal to band back together to finish the Italian Parliament's natural term and ensure implementation of a European Union-funded pandemic recovery program



## POLITICAL TURMOIL

in a caretaker fashion, the president's office said. Draghi's government of national unity imploded Wednesday after members of his uneasy coalition of right, left and populists rebuffed his appeal to band back together to finish the Italian Parliament's natural term and ensure implementation of a European Union-funded pandemic recovery program. Instead, the center-right Forza Italia and League parties and the populist 5-Star Movement boycotted a confidence vote in the Senate, a clear sign they were done as partners in the former European Central Bank chief's 17-month government. "Thank you for all the work done together in this period," Draghi told the lower Chamber of Deputies

Draghi resigns after key partners shun confidence vote

President asks him to stay on as caretaker

Markets fall heavily over political crisis

He and his unity government were charged with pulling the country out of the pandemic and laying the groundwork to make use of the EU's recovery funds. But the 5-Stars, the biggest vote-getter in the 2018 national election, had been chafing for months that their priorities of a basic income and minimum salary, among other agenda items, were being ignored. The movement also opposed Italy's military aid to Ukraine. Last week, the 5-Stars boycotted a confidence vote tied to a bill aimed at helping Italians endure a cost-of-living crisis, prompting Draghi's first offer to resign. Mattarella rejected the offer then and asked Draghi to return to Parliament to brief lawmakers on the situation. He did that on Wednesday, appealing to party leaders to listen to the calls for unity from ordinary Italians who signed petitions asking him to stay on. "You don't have to give the answer to me. You have to give it to all Italians," he told lawmakers. While the next steps were unclear following Draghi's second resignation, the unraveling of his governing coalition suggested Mattarella could dissolve Parliament after a period of consultations, paving the way for an early election as soon as late September or early October.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rome, July 21: Italian Premier Mario Draghi resigned Thursday after key coalition allies boycotted a confidence vote, signalling the likelihood of an early election and a renewed period of uncertainty for Italy and Europe at a critical time. Draghi tendered his resignation to President Sergio Mattarella during a morning meeting at the Quirinale Palace. Mattarella, who rejected a similar resignation offer from the premier last week, "took note" of the new one and asked Draghi's government to remain on

## TEMPERATURES DROP

### EUROPEAN WILDFIRE THREAT RECEDES

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, July 21: Europe's recent spate of wildfires abated amid cooler temperatures Thursday, with no outbreaks reported in Portugal while French firefighters started to get the upper hand over two major blazes and Spain tamed a fire that killed two people last weekend. Spanish firefighters were tackling nine blazes, with two said to be especially dangerous in northwestern Galicia. Some of the 11,000 people evacuated because of the fires in Spain began returning home, and a major highway in the northwestern Zamora province reopened after two days. Temperatures above 40 C (104 F) and a drought have worsened Spain's wildfires this year. Thursday's highest temperature in Spain was forecast to be 32 C (90 F).

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Palestinian people play inside a swimming pool to cool down on a hot day in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip

## WHO MOVES TO ROLL OUT FIRST MALARIA VACCINE IN AFRICA

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Blantyre (Malawi), July 21: As the World Health Organisation announces the next step in its rollout of the world's first authorised malaria vaccine in three African countries, concerns about its value have come from an unlikely source: the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, arguably the vaccine's biggest backer.

WHO endorsed the vaccine last fall as a "historic" breakthrough in the fight against malaria, but the Gates Foundation told The Associated Press this week it will no longer financially support the shot.

Some scientists say they're mystified by that decision, warning it could leave millions of African children at risk of dying from

malaria as well as undermine future efforts to solve intractable problems in public health.

The vaccine, sold by GlaxoSmithKline as Mosquirix, is about 30% effective and requires four doses.

The malaria vaccine has "a much lower efficacy than we would like," Philip Welkhoff, the Gates Foundation's director of malaria programs, told the AP.

Explaining its decision to end support after spending more than \$200 million and several decades getting the vaccine to market, he said the shot is relatively expensive and logistically challenging to deliver.

"If we're trying to save as many lives with our existing funding, that cost-effectiveness matters," he said.

## MOSCOW EYES GIANT POWER PLANT

# Russia resumes gas flows to Europe



REUTERS

London/Kyiv, July 21: Russian gas began flowing to Europe via a major pipeline Thursday after a 10-day pause but fears of broader supply cuts remained and Russian forces in Ukraine were seen eyeing the capture of the country's second biggest power plant.

Russian troops shelled cities across eastern and southern Ukraine, Ukrainian officials said, and hit two schools as Moscow's forces carried out limited ground operations in preparation for what is seen as a wider offensive.

Reuters was unable to immediately verify Ukrainian assertions about Russian shelling, which they say has been intense for several weeks, and it was not immediately clear if anyone had been hurt in the strikes on the schools.

The resumption of gas flows via the Nord Stream 1 pipeline to Germany ended a nerve-jangling 10 days for Europe in which politicians expressed concern Russia might not restart them at a time when alternative energy supplies are tight and prices high.

The pipeline has traditionally carried more than one third of Russia's gas exports to Europe but was operating at only 40% of its capacity after Kremlin-controlled Gazprom cut gas exports in a row over the repair of a turbine.

"In view of the missing 60% (capacity) and the political instability, there is no reason yet to give the all-clear," Klaus Mueller, president of Germany's network regulator, wrote on Twitter. European Union

IT IS OPERATING AT REDUCED CAPACITY  
RUSSIAN MISSILES STRIKE UKRAINIAN CITIES  
CIA CHIEF SAYS PUTIN HEALTHY AMID HUGE RUSSIAN LOSSES

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has accused Russia of trying to blackmail Europe by using energy as a weapon, something Moscow, which is unable to swiftly redirect all of its gas to other markets, has denied.

Moscow has criticised EU and U.S. sanctions on Russia over its Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine and military help to Kyiv, saying it had to undertake what it calls a "special military operation" to prevent NATO using Ukraine to threaten Russia.

Ukraine says it needs the weapons to defend itself against what it and the West cast as an unprovoked imperial-style war of aggression designed to steal its land and erase its national identity.

### INTENSE SHELLING

The Ukrainian military reported heavy and sometimes fatal Russian shelling in the east and south of the country amid what it said were largely failed attempts by Russian ground forces to advance in the eastern Donetsk region.

Donetsk regional governor Pavlo Kyrylenko said Russian missile strikes had destroyed two schools in the cities of Kramatorsk and Kostiantynivka and had also hit the city of Bakhmut but there was no information yet on casualties.

## PROBE ORDERED

# Power outage stops Ranil's oath ceremony

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, July 21: A power outage in the Sri Lankan Parliament complex stopped the live broadcast of President Ranil Wickremesinghe's swearing-in ceremony, forcing authorities to launch an investigation by the Criminal Investigations Department into the incident, a media report said Thursday.

Veteran politician Ranil Wickremesinghe was Thursday sworn in as Sri Lanka's eighth President and will face the tough task of leading the country out of its unprecedented economic crisis and restoring order after months of mass anti-government protests.

Wickremesinghe, 73, was sworn in as the 8th Executive President



of Sri Lanka at the Parliament complex before Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya. The Criminal Investigations Department will investigate the power outage that took place Thursday in the Parliament complex when the swearing-in ceremony of the newly elected President Wickremesinghe was proceeding, the Colombo Page web portal reported. The swearing-in ceremony of Wickramasinghe as the 8th

Executive President was scheduled to be telecast live by state-run Rupavahini and broadcast simultaneously by other television channels. However, the live broadcast stopped after the President entered the Parliament complex on the red carpet, the report added.

It was later reported that the live broadcast was stopped due to a power outage in the Parliament complex. In the event of a power outage in the Parliament complex, the generators are usually switched on automatically within two minutes and it is reported that the power was out for about 10 minutes at the time of the swearing-in of the President. Due to this reason, TV channels could not telecast the swearing-in ceremony.

# Webb Telescope may have found most distant known galaxy

Though GLASS-z13 existed in the earliest era of the universe, its exact age remains unknown as it could have formed anytime within the first 300 million years

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

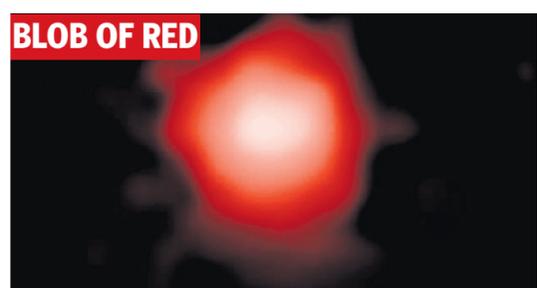
Washington, July 21: Just a week after its first images were shown to the world, the James Webb Space Telescope may have found a galaxy that existed 13.5 billion years ago, a scientist who analyzed the data said Wednesday.

Known as GLASS-z13, the galaxy dates back to 300 million years after the Big Bang, about 100 million years earlier than anything

previously identified, Rohan Naidu of the Harvard Center for Astrophysics said.

"We're potentially looking at the most distant starlight that anyone has ever seen," he said. The more distant objects are from us, the longer it takes for their light to reach us, and so to gaze back into the distant universe is to see into the deep past.

Though GLASS-z13 existed in the earliest era of the universe, its exact age remains unknown as it could have formed anytime within the first 300 million years. GLASS-z13 was spotted in so-called "early release" data from the orbiting observatory's main infrared imager, called NIRCam — but the discovery was not revealed in the first image set published by NASA last week. When translated from infrared into the visible spectrum, the galaxy



appears as a blob of red with white in its center, as part of a wider image of the distant cosmos called a "deep field."

Mr Naidu and colleagues — a team totaling 25 astronomers from across the world — have submitted their findings to a scientific journal. For now, the research is posted on a

"preprint" server, so it comes with the caveat that it has yet to be peer-reviewed — but it has already set the global astronomy community abuzz.

"Astronomy records are crumbling already, and more are shaky," tweeted NASA's chief scientist Thomas Zurbuchen. "Yes, I tend

to only cheer once science results clear peer review. But, this looks very promising," he added. Mr Naidu said another team of astronomers led by Marco Castellano that worked on the same data has achieved similar conclusions, "so that gives us confidence."

Work to be done One of the great promises of Webb is its ability to find the earliest galaxies that formed after the Big Bang, 13.8 billion years ago.

Because these are so distant from Earth, by the time their light reaches us, it has been stretched by the expansion of the universe and shifted to the infrared region of the light spectrum, which Webb is equipped to detect with unprecedented clarity.

Mr Naidu and colleagues combed through this infrared data of the distant universe, searching for a tell-

tale signature of extremely distant galaxies. Below a particular threshold of infrared wavelength, all photons — packets of energy — are absorbed by the neutral hydrogen of the universe that lies between the object and the observer.

By using data collected through different infrared filters pointed at the same region of space, they were able to detect where these drop-offs in photons occurred, from which they inferred the presence of these most distant galaxies.

"We searched all the early data for galaxies with this very striking signature, and these were the two systems that had by far the most compelling signature," said Mr Naidu. One of these is GLASS-z13, while the other, not as ancient, is GLASS-z11. "There's strong evidence, but there's still work to be done," said Mr Naidu.



The government's support to EVs is good ... to support some more green technology is even better. I believe the government will support all technologies as far as they are good and contribute to a better India

**HISASHI TAKEUCHI** | CHIEF EXECUTIVE, MARUTI SUZUKI

## TESLA SOLD 75% OF ITS BITCOIN

Tesla has sold 75 per cent of its Bitcoins, adding \$936 million in cash to its balance sheet in the second quarter (Q2) this year, as it deals with economic meltdown amid cryptocurrencies falling off the cliff. Last year, Tesla made a \$1.5 billion investment in Bitcoin and announced that it would accept Bitcoin as payment



## of the day quote

Hindustan Zinc delivered best first-quarter production for mined metal, refined metal and silver. With the exit run-rate for both mined and refined metal crossing over one million tonnes, we are fully geared to deliver another stellar performance this year

**ARUN MISRA** | CEO, HINDUSTAN ZINC

Ashok Leyland is delighted to partner with Adani Capital to offer customised financial solutions to its customers. This association will help Ashok Leyland gain an edge in the market

**RAJAT GUPTA** | HEAD-LCV, ASHOK LEYLAND

With rising disposable income, more people are getting house pets, especially dogs. They are also looking for the best treatment for common ailments faced by their pet children, especially in the form of ayurvedic and herbal remedies

**HARSHA V AGARWAL** | VC & MD, EMAMI

## SHORT TAKES

### Gold prices hit over 1-year low

**New Delhi:** Gold prices touched a more than one-year low Thursday, as the prospect of aggressive policy tightening by major central banks weighed on the non-interest-bearing metal's appeal, while investors awaited European Central Bank's policy announcement. Spot gold fell 0.8% to \$1,682.67 per ounce by 0920 GMT, after hitting its lowest level since March 2021. US gold futures fell 1.1% to \$1,681.00. The ECB was earlier signalling a 25-basis-point interest rate hike at its policy meet Thursday.

### IndusInd shares jump over 8%

**New Delhi:** Shares of IndusInd Bank climbed 8 per cent Thursday after the company reported a 60.5 per cent jump in net profit for the June quarter. The stock jumped 7.88 per cent to settle at ₹948.15 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it advanced 9.36 per cent to ₹961.20. On the NSE, it rallied 8.09 per cent to settle at ₹950.50 apiece. The company's market valuation advanced by ₹5,368.36 crore to ₹73,491.36 crore on the BSE. It was the biggest gainer on both the BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty.

### China fines Didi \$1.2bn post probe

**Beijing:** China has fined ride-hailing giant Didi 8.026 billion yuan (\$1.2 billion) for breaking its cyber security laws, the media reported. On Thursday, the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) said that it had found "conclusive evidence" against the company, the BBC reported. The regulator announced that it had started an investigation into Didi just days after the firm launched its shares in the US last year.

### Reliance, Valentino sign agreement

**Milan:** Italian fashion house Valentino will open its first mono-brand stores in India after signing a distribution agreement with the country's biggest retailer Reliance, the companies said in a joint statement Thursday. Though small for a country of its size, India's luxury market is set to be one of the fastest growing in the industry. It will nearly double in size to almost \$5 billion within five years, Euromonitor estimates. The first store is due to open in 2022 by the end of the summer, with the flagship store in Mumbai to follow in the coming months.

## COVID & WAR IMPACT

# ADB cuts growth hope to 7.2%

**MAJOR RISKS TO INDIA'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY INCLUDE RISING COMMODITY PRICES, SUPPLY-SIDE DISRUPTIONS, BLEAK GLOBAL GROWTH PROSPECTS WITH THE CONFLICT PROLONGING IN EUROPE**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 21:** Asian Development Bank (ADB) Thursday trimmed India's economic growth forecast for current fiscal year to 7.2 per cent from 7.5 per cent as pandemic and war impact is weighing down alongside inflationary pressures. "India has been hit by the omicron Covid-19 variant and the economic impact of the war in Ukraine. Consequently, GDP growth for FY2021 is revised down from 8.9 per cent to 8.7 per cent and from 7.5 per cent to 7.2 per cent for FY2022 (fiscal to be ending in March 2023). "Although consumer confidence continues to improve, higher-than-expected inflation will erode consumer purchasing power," ADB said in its supplement to the Asian Development Outlook (ADO) for 2022 released Thursday.



Some of the impacts of this may be offset by a cut in excise duties, provision of fertilizer and gas subsidies, and extension of a free food distribution programme. Private investment will soften due to higher cost of borrowing for firms as the RBI continues to raise policy rates to contain inflation. For South Asian region - which includes India - it has lowered the growth forecast from 7 per cent to 6.5 per cent for 2022 and from 7.4 per cent to 7.1 per cent for 2023, mainly due to economic crisis in Sri Lanka and high inflation and associated monetary tightening in India. South Asia's economy is expected to expand less than ADB 2022's projection. This mainly reflects a modest downward revision to India's forecast GDP growth due to higher-than anticipated inflation since April and monetary tightening, and Sri Lanka's sharp GDP contraction due to the coun-

The economic impact of the pandemic has declined across most of Asia, but we are far from a full and sustainable recovery

**ALBERT PARK** | CHIEF ECONOMIST, ADB

try's sovereign debt and balance-of-payment crises. Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan are the other countries in South Asia. For India, it said net exports will shrink due to subdued global demand and a rising real effective exchange rate eroding export competitiveness despite a depreciating rupee. On supply side, higher commodity prices will boost mining industry. But manufacturing firms will bear the brunt of higher input costs due to rising oil prices. The services sector, hit hard by Covid-19 since 2020, will do well in FY2022 and beyond as the economy opens up and travel resumes.

## India Inc inks 1,149 deals worth over \$104bn in H1

Mergers and acquisitions deal values recorded an over two times increase over H1 2021

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 21:** India Inc signed 1,149 deals valued at \$104.3 billion in the first half of this year, amid global uncertainties, and the country saw \$6 billion from 17 IPOs - the highest values raised in the first six months, a report showed Thursday.

The figures represent a significant 34 per cent increase in the overall deal volumes, while deal values more than doubled (with a 143 per cent increase) from the same period last year, according to the Grant Thornton Bharat Dealtracker report.

Driven by HDFC Bank and HDFC Ltd's \$40 billion merger, LTI and Mindtree merger (\$17.7 billion) and Adani Group-Holcim Ltd's \$10.5 billion deal. These three deals alone accounted for 86 per cent of the total M&A deal values in H1 2022.

While private equity deal activity continued to dominate total deal volumes with 3/4th share, deal values were driven by mergers and acquisitions with 76 per cent of the total deal values in H1 2022.

The M&A space witnessed a significant increase in the first half, witnessing 284 deals while representing a 27 per cent growth over H1 2021. The banking and financial sector had the highest contribution of 53 per cent in terms of over-



Startup, e-commerce & IT sectors led deal activity in H1 2022, driving 76% of all deals followed by retail, education and pharma sectors

all deal value in H1 2022, followed by IT and manufacturing sectors. The private equity and venture capital investments saw record volumes and values in the first six-month period with 865 deals at \$25.1 billion.

"The drop in the deal values is due to a fall in big-ticket investments coupled with prevailing factors including geopolitical tensions, stock market volatility, concerns about the rise in commodity prices and the impact of inflation," the report noted.

Nevertheless, large funds like Tiger Global, Westbridge, Baring PE, TPG, Brookfield, Blackstone and Warburg Pincus, among others, continued to keep pace with their activity.

The start-up space attracted the most investment at \$5.1 billion across 550 deals, recording a growth of 69 per cent in deal values.

## Rupee rises 20 paise to close at 79.85

ON WEDNESDAY, THE RUPEE FOR THE FIRST TIME SETTLED BELOW THE 80-LEVEL AGAINST THE US CURRENCY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 21:** The rupee recovered from its all-time low of 80.06 to close 20 paise higher at 79.85 against the US dollar Thursday following overall weakness in crude oil prices and fresh foreign fund inflows.

A recovery in domestic equities and weakness of the greenback overseas further helped the domestic currency, forex traders said.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened lower at 80.03 against the greenback and fell further to an intra-day low of 80.06. The local unit recouped losses later and settled at 79.85, registering a rise of 20 paise over its previous close.

The dollar index, which measures the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was down 0.04 per cent at 107.03.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, fell 4.46 per cent



to \$102.15 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 284.42 points or 0.51 per cent higher at 55,681.95, while the broader NSE Nifty advanced 84.40 points or 0.51 per cent to 16,605.25.

Foreign institutional investors

remained net buyers in the capital market Thursday as they purchased shares worth ₹1,799.32 crore, as per exchange data.

According to a report, the rupee, which has plumbed the 80-level against the US dollar, is unlikely to get any tailwind this fiscal and may fall further in the medium term due to higher crude prices and imports.

In the report Thursday, Swiss brokerage UBS Securities said the rupee, which has lost 7.5 per cent so far this year against the US dollar, will settle at the 80 levels by March.

## BIZ BUZZ

### VEDANTA HOSTS ODISHA SECRETARIAT TRAINEES

**Jharsuguda:** Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium and value-added products, hosted 45 Assistant Section Officers of Odisha Secretariat on a plant visit, as part of their induction programme. The visit included an interaction with the senior management, followed by a plant visit within the company's aluminium smelter complex, to understand the workings of one of the largest single location smelters in the world. The officers were given insights on the plant operations with an emphasis on the company's community-focused initiatives, smelter operations, power operations and robust safety practices, along with an overview of various other functions.



### PNB OPENS NEW BRANCH

**Sambalpur:** A Udaya Bhaskar Reddy, Zonal Manager, Bhubaneswar of Punjab National Bank, is on an official two days visit to Sambalpur Circle. He has inaugurated a new branch at Tusura in Bolangir district in presence of Arabinda Panda, Circle Head, Sambalpur. On this occasion Reddy has elaborated the role of public sector bank in nation building & in the growth and development of the areas in which the branch is located. He also emphasised on the point of financial literacy and financial inclusion of the people of the areas and advised the branch official to focus on financial upliftment of the people of the areas by providing all kinds of banking services focusing on digital banking. Reddy distributed umbrellas to SHG beneficiaries. Arabinda Panda advised the branch to focus on prompt delivery and speedy services to the customers.



### COVID BOOSTER SHOTS BY NEXUS ESPLANADE

**Bhubaneswar:** Nexus Esplanade has again put forward its hand and proven their value of caring. With the rising number of Covid cases the BMC wanted to start with a booster dose of customers. On 21st July BMC started the vaccination drive in association with Nexus Esplanade. Priyabrata Padhi (Zonal commissioner BMC) was there to inaugurate the drive and help the mall management. The inoculation drive witnessed a huge crowd and the mall management team made it a successful venture.



## FB growth woes in India: Too much nudity, not enough women

Facebook's growth began plateauing last year, when it added a few million users in the space of six months in the country of about 1.4 billion people, significantly lagging sister apps WhatsApp and Instagram

REUTERS

**New Delhi, July 21:** On Feb 2, when Meta Platforms reported Facebook's first-ever quarterly drop in daily users, its finance

chief identified higher mobile data costs as a unique obstacle slowing growth in India, its biggest market.

On the same day, the US tech group posted the findings of its own research into Facebook's business in India on an internal employee forum. The study, conducted over the two years to the end of 2021, identified different problems.

Many women have shunned the male-dominated social network because they're worried about their safety and privacy, according to the Meta research, which hasn't been previously reported.

The researchers found that 79 per cent of female Facebook users had "ex-



Meta's internal research reveals challenges in India

Many women steered clear of male-dominated Facebook

Their concerns included safety and unwanted contacts

'India contains more FB users than any other country'

pressed concern about content/photo misuse", while 20-30% of overall users were estimated to have seen nudity on the platform within the last seven days in the largely conservative country. "Concerns about content safety and unwanted contact impede

women's FB use," said the study, reviewed by Reuters, as it detailed the platform's main challenges. "Meta cannot succeed in India while leaving women behind."

Other obstacles included nudity content, the perceived complexity of its app design, local language and

literacy barriers and a lack of appeal among internet users seeking video content, according to the research, which was based on surveys of tens of thousands of people as well as internal user data.

A Meta spokesperson, contacted about the study, said the company regularly invested in internal research to better understand the value its products provide and help identify ways to improve.

Facebook's fortunes in India have broad implications for Meta, which has lost about half of its value this year amid a broader tech sell-off and faces scrutiny from investors and analysts who fear its growth in potentially high-growth developing

markets is starting to wane. "India contains more FB users than any other country," said the research, which pegged the number at almost 450 million as of November, after rapid growth over much of the past decade.

"Teams across the company should explicitly consider their strategic position and growth opportunities in India. Outcomes in India could drive global results."

India ranked highest globally on the nudity metric; around 10% of users surveyed in the United States and Brazil said they had seen nudity in the past week, for example, and under 20% in Indonesia, according to a survey conducted in August 2021.

# India poised to pile more misery on WI

The series presents an opportunity for talented and eager fringe players to make the most of the stars' absences at the expense of a team that was swept 3-0 by Bangladesh in Guyana the previous week



## PROBABLE SQUAD

### WEST INDIES

Nicholas Pooran (captain), Shai Hope (wicketkeeper), Kyle Mayers, Brandon King, Keacy Carty, Rovman Powell, Jason Holder, Alzarri Joseph, Akeal Hosein, Gudakesh Motie, Jayden Seales

### INDIA

Shikhar Dhawan (captain), Ishan Kishan (wicketkeeper), Shubman Gill, Suryakumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer, Deepak Hooda, Ravindra Jadeja, Shardul Thakur, Mohammed Siraj, Yuzvendra Chahal, Avesh Khan

of riches, not least in the bowling department where they possess the quality and variety to exploit both the conditions and a vulnerable West Indies batting line-up.

Pacer Mohammed Siraj and wrist-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal are expected to lead the effort to keep pressure on their opponents, many of whom were found wanting technically and temperamentally against Bangladesh's spin-dominated attack.

For the home team, the one bit of encouraging news in the days since the end of the Bangladesh series is the return of Jason Holder.

Having been rested for series in the Netherlands, Pakistan and the visit by Bangladesh, the all-rounder and former captain will be looked to for inspiration with bat and ball.

Pressure is very much on current skipper Pooran though to lift his team out of the doldrums into which they have appeared to sink so rapidly following comfortable 2-0 series wins in Tests and T20 Internationals against Bangladesh.

His top-score of 73 last Saturday at the Guyana National Stadium ended a succession of mediocre contributions in ODIs.

However, the West Indies will need to have all hands on deck, especially opening batsman Shai Hope, if they are to get anywhere close to posting the sort of totals which could seriously challenge their opponents.

With so many big names absent for India, the likes of batsmen Ishan Kishan, Shubman Gill and Suryakumar Yadav, together with all-rounder Deepak Hooda are expected to come to the fore.

## PAK PACE GREAT AKRAM WANTS ODIs SCRAPPED

London: Pakistan pace bowling legend Wasim Akram feels ODI cricket has become "run-of-the-mill" stuff now and wants the administrators of the game to scrap the format for good. Akram's comments came close on the heels of England all-rounder Ben Stokes' sudden retirement from ODIs, which has triggered a serious debate over the existence of 50-over cricket. "I think so (ODIs should be scrapped). In England you have full houses. In India, Pakistan especially, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, South Africa, one-day cricket you are not going to fill the stadiums," he said in Vaughany and Tuffers Cricket Club podcast. Akram said the 50-over game has no future in front of the ever-growing T20 format. "T20 is kind of easier, four hours the game is over. The leagues all around the world, there is a lot more money - I suppose this is part and parcel of the modern cricket. T20 or Test cricket. One-day cricket is kind of dying." For Akram, Test cricket remains the pinnacle of the game for a player. "There's a battle within the battle in Test cricket. I always preferred Test matches. One-day used to be fun but Test matches were where you were recognised as a player ... where people still pick you for the world XIs," he said.



## MUNICH PARA SHOOTING WC

# BEST-EVER FINISH FOR INDIA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

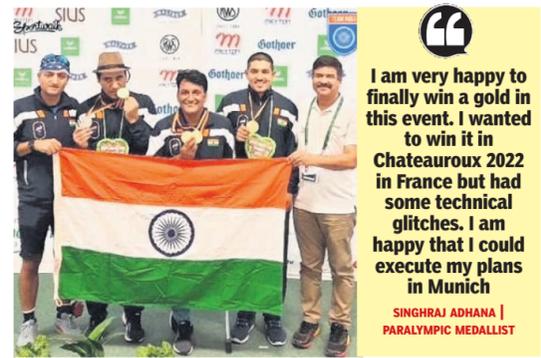
Munich, July 21: Paralympic medalist Singhraj Adhana won two gold medals on the final day as India produced their best-ever performance at the Para Shooting World Cup, finishing with 10 medals here.

Singhraj's twin medals propelled India to the top of the medal table, their best performance since taking part in the competition for the first time in 2017. In total, India won six golds, three silvers and one bronze.

On the final day of the event, Tokyo Paralympic silver medalist Singhraj, who initially qualified in the fourth place, rode on his steady rounds of shooting to score 224.1 points and eventually clinched the gold.

Ukraine's Oleksiy Denisiuk, settled for silver with 216.2 points, while Korea's Jeongdu Jo won bronze after scoring 193.9.

Before the individual event, Singhraj teamed up with compa-



I am very happy to finally win a gold in this event. I wanted to win it in Chateauroux 2022 in France but had some technical glitches. I am happy that I could execute my plans in Munich

SINGHRAJ ADHANA | PARALYMPIC MEDALLIST

triors Deepender Singh and Manish Narwal to take the team gold. The individual gold was also Singhraj's first ever in the P4 event after several silver and bronze medals.

Earlier, India started off its Para Shooting World Cup campaign on a brilliant note with Rahul Jakhar clinching gold in P3-Mixed 25m Pistol SH1 event.

Jakhar also combined with

Singhraj and Nihal to take the team gold with a total of 1695-36x ahead of Korea and the Czech Republic. Shooters Manish Narwal and Rubina Francis followed it up with another gold in P6 - Mixed Team 10m Air SH1 Pistol event.

The Indian Para Shooting team will next be in action at the World Championships in November slated to be held in Al Ain, UAE.

## WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

# Annu reaches javelin throw finals

Annu has qualified for her second consecutive World Championships finals in her third appearance in the showpiece

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Eugene, July 21: Indian javelin thrower Annu Rani qualified for the World Championships finals after coming up with a throw of 59.60m on her last attempt, here Thursday.

Annu was on the verge of an early exit after starting with a foul throw and then managing a below par 55.35m in her second attempt but managed to send her spear to 59.60m, which was well below her season's best but good enough to push her into the finals.

She finished fifth in Group B

qualification round and made it to the finals as eighth best across two groups on the fifth day of competitions.

The 29-year-old national record holder failed to touch the 60m mark but has the chance to make amends in the finals Saturday (6:50am IST). She has a season's and personal best of 63.82m.

She had finished eighth in the finals with a best throw of 61.12m in the last edition in 2019 in Doha.

She could not qualify for the finals in 2017 in London after finishing 10th in her qualification group.

Annu had broken her own national record with a throw of 63.82m while winning gold during the Indian Open Javelin Throw Competition in May

Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra will compete in the qualification round Group A of men's javelin throw Friday (5:35am IST).



## Taipei Open: Tanisha and Kashyap in quarterfinals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Taipei, July 21: Talented Indian shuttler Tanisha Crasto registered straight-game wins to enter the quarterfinals of women's and mixed doubles competition at the Taipei Open Super 300 tournament here Thursday.

Former Commonwealth Games gold medalist Parupalli Kashyap also entered the last eight round but Mithun Manjunath and Kiran George missed out after suffering narrow defeats in the men's singles second round.

Tanisha and Ishaan Bhatnagar, seeded sixth, beat Chinese Taipei's Cheng Kai Wen and Wang Yu Qiao 21-14 21-17 to enter the mixed doubles quarterfinals.

The 19-year-old Dubai-born Tanisha, who had represented Bahrain in her junior days, then combined with Shruti Mishra to get the better of local hope Jia Yin Lin and Lin Yu-Hao 21-14 21-8 in a women's doubles second round tie that lasted 22 minutes.



Tanisha and Ishaan will face Malaysia's Hoo Pang Ron and Toh Ee Wei next in mixed doubles, while either Taipei's Kuo Yu Wen and Wang Yu Qiao or Hong Kong's sixth seeded Ng Tsz Yau and Tsang Hiu Yan will be their opponent in women's doubles.

On a comeback trial, Kashyap, seeded third, prevailed 21-10 21-19 over Chinese Taipei's Chia Hao Lee to set up a clash against Malaysia's Soong Joo Ven.

In other results, Mithun and Kiran suffered heart-breaking losses, while Priyanshu Rajawat too failed to cross the second round hurdle.

## SHORT TAKES

### FIH delegation to visit India Aug 15

NEW DELHI: A three-member FIH delegation, led by newly-appointed acting president Seif Ahmed, is expected to visit India August 15 for an emergency meeting to assess progress made with regards to adoption of a new Constitution, which is a must to salvage the World Cup, the country is scheduled to host in 2023. FIH CEO Thierry Weil and Executive Board member Tayyab Ikram, who is also the CEO of Asian Hockey Federation, will be part of the International Hockey Federation (FIH) delegation. The FIH Wednesday sought a "detailed timeline" from the court-appointed Committee of Administrators (CoA) on adoption of amended Constitution and holding of fresh elections of Hockey India. If Hockey India does not adopt a Sports Code-compliant Constitution at the earliest, the country runs the risk of losing the hosting rights of World Cup, scheduled to be held from January 13 to 29.

### UAE to host Asia Cup

MUMBAI: The Asia Cup, which was scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka, has been shifted to the UAE, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly said here Thursday. "Asia Cup will be in UAE, as it is the only place where there won't be rains," Ganguly told reporters. Sri Lanka Cricket Wednesday had informed the Asian Cricket Council that the board will not be in a position to host the upcoming edition of the Asia Cup T20 because of the economic and political crisis in the country.

### Rahul tests Covid +ve

MUMBAI: Star India batter KL Rahul Thursday tested positive for Covid-19, which is likely to rule him out of the upcoming five-match T20 series against the West Indies, starting July 29 at Tarouba. BCCI president Sourav Ganguly informed about Rahul after the Board's Apex Council meeting here. Rahul Thursday itself had addressed the candidates, who attended the Level-3 coach certification course at National Cricket Academy in Bangalore. Rahul, who underwent a hernia operation in Germany recently, was rested for the ODI series against the West Indies starting Friday at Port of Spain.

## WE HAVE TO BAT 50 OVERS: WI COACH

Port of Spain: The West Indies have struggled to bat for full 50 overs in the last couple of years and head coach Phil Simmons said that is one aspect of the game they would look to improve on in the three ODIs against India. To put things into perspective, West Indies have played out 50 overs just six times in 39 innings since the 2019 World Cup, and lost nine of their 13 ODI series since the showpiece event. Simmons' side also faced a humiliating series defeat against Ireland at home earlier this year. The series against India begins Friday. "The main thing is how we bat our 50 overs...we have to bat 50 overs and put our innings together and partnerships together," Simmons told reporters in the pre-series press conference. "Somebody has to be looking to score a hundred and hold the team together. Batting-wise that is it," he added. Simmons, who has been the head coach of the West Indies side since 2019, also said that he is hopeful of "friendly" surfaces that will benefit his side more "than the opposition" team. Simmons, however, does not seem to be too worried about his fielding and bowling departments.

Ronaldo was Manchester United's top scorer last season with 24 goals and is back to being the club's poster boy for the marketing department — and Erik ten Hag manager of the team has called the striker "extremely important" along with being "not for sale"

# Stay or go? Ronaldo's future uncertain at Manchester United

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, July 21: The weekly social media posts published by Cristiano Ronaldo this offseason typically have shown the soccer superstar half-dressed, muscles bulging, either working out or promoting one of his

many brands. Remaining relevant and highly visible is clearly so important to the player who, along with Lionel Messi, is the greatest of his generation. That also extends to the final years of his career on the field, too.

It's why, for the 37-year-old Ronaldo, playing for Manchester United — still one of the world's most famous sports teams, de-

spite their recent trophy drought — just isn't enough. He wants to be competing on the biggest stage, winning the biggest trophies while he can.

Hence the current standoff with United, which is becoming more damaging and disruptive as the days go by and the new season looms.

Publicly, Ronaldo has not yet returned to preseason training with the English club because of what has been described as "personal reasons." The expectation, recently hired United manager Erik ten Hag repeats on an almost-daily basis, is that Ronaldo will be back before the Premier League begins and be a key

member of the squad.

The reality, it seems, is dif-

