



## DREAM RUN

Actor Shruti Haasan says she never thought cinema will become the greatest source of joy in her life

LEISURE | P2



## CALLED FOR QUESTIONING

The twin city police asks actors Babushaan and Prakruti Mishra to appear before it for questioning in two separate cases

DOWNTOWN | P3



## FRESH ATTEMPT

Ukraine presses ahead Sunday with efforts to restart grain exports from its Black Sea ports

INTERNATIONAL | P10

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 115 | www.orissapost.com

BHUBANESWAR | MONDAY, JULY 25 | 2022

12 PAGES | ₹5.00

**99.52% clear CISCE Class XII exam**

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 24: Eighteen candidates have shared the top rank in CISCE Class XII examination with a score of 99.75 per cent, according to results announced Sunday.

### PRAGNYA MISHRA IS STATE TOPPER

Bhubaneswar: Pragnya Mishra of Berhampur got 99.25% and was the state topper in ISC exam. Pragnya Mishra is a student of De Paul School, Berhampur. Around 1871 students wrote the exam from the state. Out of them 949 are boys and 922 are girls. The pass percentage in the state stood at 99.47%. Girls have done better than boys with 99.67% while boys' pass percentage is 99.26.

The second rank has been shared by 58 candidates who scored 99.50 per cent while 78 candidates scored 99.25 per cent to share the third rank. The pass percentage in the exams stood at 99.52 per cent with girls outshining boys by a very small margin, officials said.

In a first, the board had conducted the exams in two terms.

### Monkeypox: Centre holds high-level meet as tally climbs

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 24: The Centre Sunday held a high-level review meeting after a 34-year-old man from the national capital with no history of foreign travel tested positive for the monkeypox virus, making it the fourth case of the disease reported in India.

Sources said the meeting was chaired by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and attended by officials from the Health ministry, National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and ICMR among others.

The new patient who is presently recovering at a designated isolation centre at the Lok Nayak Hospital had attended a stag party in Manali in Himachal Pradesh recently, official sources told PTI.

A resident of West Delhi, the patient was isolated at the hospital around three days ago after he showed symptoms of the disease.

His samples were sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV) Pune on Saturday which came out positive, Union Health Ministry officials said.

The close contacts of the case have been identified and are under quarantine as per the Ministry of Health's guidelines, the Health Ministry said in a statement.

Three cases of monkeypox had earlier been reported from Kerala. The World Health Organisation Saturday declared monkeypox a global public health emergency of international concern.

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Thanks to our leadership, you all became aware of corona, nipa & monkeypox... first time in the past 70 years

### WEATHER

BHUB	CTK
MAX 30.3°C	30.0°C
MIN 24.2°C	23.0°C
Humidity 100%	95%
Rainfall 34.7mm	29.6mm

Forecast Cloudy sky

# Neeraj scripts history again

## 19-YEAR WAIT ENDS

— INDIA'S SPORTS COMMUNITY HAILS NEERAJ CHOPRA AFTER THE OLYMPIC JAVELIN CHAMPION WON THE COUNTRY'S FIRST SILVER MEDAL AT THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

— CHOPRA'S THROW OF 88.13 METRES WAS NOT ENOUGH TO BEAT GRENADIAN ANDERSON PETERS' EFFORT OF 90.54M BUT IT WAS ENOUGH TO END INDIA'S 19-YEAR WAIT FOR ANOTHER MEDAL AT THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

— ANJU BOBBY GEORGE TOOK BRONZE IN THE WOMEN'S LONG JUMP IN PARIS IN 2003 TO WIN INDIA'S FIRST MEDAL

AGENCIES

throw of 88.13m, which came in the fourth round, to finish second behind defending champion Anderson Peters of Grenada (90.54m).

Legendary long jumper Anju Bobby

George was the first Indian to win a medal — bronze — in the World Championships in the 2003 edition in Paris.

It was a nervy and unusual start for Chopra, as he opened with a foul throw and had 82.39m and 86.37m to be at fourth after three rounds.

But, to the big relief of the Indian contingent, and the legions of his fans back home, he got his rhythm back as he came up with a big fourth round throw of 88.13m, his fourth career-best effort, to jump to second place, which he held on to till the end. His fifth and sixth throws were fouls.

Chopra had won gold in Tokyo Olympics last year with a second round throw of 87.58m and had just

Athlete Neeraj Chopra competes in the men's javelin throw event at the World Athletics Championships, in Eugene, USA. Chopra won the silver medal with his best throw of 88.13m.

PTI PHOTO



needed a first round effort of 88.39m to qualify for the finals at second place here. His silver saw India featuring in the medal table of the Worlds for the first time in nearly two decades. India were placed at joint 28th in the standings.

The usual big smile was as Chopra, the son of a farmer from Khandra village near Panipat in Haryana, did the 'calm-down' gesture and showed the victory sign with his right hand.

Chopra was, however, no match for Grenada's gold winner Anderson Peters, who produced a massive 90.54m throw to defend the title he had won in the last edition in 2019 in Doha.

Peters, also 24, became only the second man in

Man burns minor girl alive for spurning his advances

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khaira, July 24: In a shocking incident, a girl studying in Class IX was burnt alive by a man after she spurned his advances at Baringia village under Khaira police limits in Balasore district, Sunday.

After committing the grisly crime, the accused Dayanidhi Jena attempted suicide by consuming pesticide.

According to reports, the girl was being tutored by Tilottama, the wife of the accused. Dayanidhi wanted to establish physical relationship with the girl, but the latter spurned his advances.

However, the family members of the deceased came to know about the matter and stopped her tuition classes at Tilottama's place about a month ago.

Sunday morning, the girl was on her way to a grocery shop when the accused abducted her and took her into a toilet where he cut her hair. Then doused kerosene on her and set her ablaze. By the time local people came to her rescue, the girl had died.

On being informed, Nilagiri SDPO Ritesh Mohapatra and Khaira IIC Ganeshwar Pradhan rushed to the spot and arrested the accused.

Police registered a case following a complaint filed by the mother of the deceased.

A delegation of BJP leaders met the bereaved family members and sought stern action against the accused.

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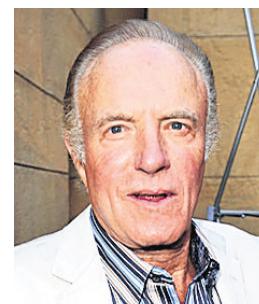
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# leisure



## JAMES CAAN'S CAUSE OF DEATH REVEALED

The cause of *God Father* actor James Caan's death has now been revealed to be a heart attack and coronary artery disease. The actor died July 6 at the age of 82. The Los Angeles County Coroner revealed the information in Caan's death certificate.

## ELLIE CREDITS MOTHERHOOD FOR HER STRONGER VOICE

Singer Ellie Goulding says her voice has gotten stronger since becoming a mother. After welcoming her first child, Arthur, with husband Caspar Jopling last April, the *Easy Lover* hitmaker admits she felt like her whole brain changed after she gave birth, while her vocals are better than ever.



### FORTUNE FORECAST



accuracy • reliability • trust

FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181\*

#### ARIES

You will make a great deal of progress which will help you set aside quite a chunk of money for lean times. There are yet more deals to be signed which will turn out to be landmarks in your business. Ganesha says that your current labours will bear fruits in the future.

#### TAURUS

In the more morning you are due to be gripped by an urge to acquire a fresh look, a complete make over. You will probably visit a beauty parlour for necessary treatment. Ganesha says that you will be desperate to make an impression on the people around you. In the evening you are likely to be vexed and puzzled by some particular issue.

#### GEMINI

You will be able to improve your social standing and status tremendously today. You will spend all your energies in making your heart's desires come true. You may end up proposing to that special someone and will find your life partner. You may finally decide to take the decision to tie the knot and settle down, says Ganesha.

#### CANCER

It is highly probable that you will be highly pious and dutiful today, foretells Ganesha. You will spend sparingly in the afternoon. You will stay in excellent health condition. Romantic dinner with sweetheart is likely, hopes Ganesha.

#### LEO

It is fine to make hay while the sun shines, but do not forget to put aside some for a rainy day as well, says Ganesha. Today is one such day when you can do fantastically well by putting aside some money for your family's future. At work, pending tasks may have piled up, but today you shall do well to try and clear the backlog.

#### VIRGO

Your position of strength will be shaken badly today. All chances are, this may invite unwanted troubles and furrow deeper lines of worry. But you may yet do good if you shift out of the usual and throw it into something new.

#### LIBRA

Remember the joint account you were going to open one of these days? Well, today is the day best suited for such decisions. Make the most of this propitious day and make well-informed plans concerning your future career growth. Ganesha gives his nod.

#### SCORPIO

In all probability, backlog is the last word you may like to hear. Professionally, you will remain workaholic for most part of the day. You shall polish off all those files in your 'In' tray. The romantic bee will buzz around in the evening and gladden your heart, says Ganesha.

#### SAGITTARIUS

High-octane action might be in the offing at work today. The day will be highly highlighted by your workaholic and tireless nature. Your bosses may be lenient with you today on certain issues. Love, affection and devotion of your loved ones will keep you preoccupied otherwise.

#### CAPRICORN

Striking a perfect balance between work and passion, you are likely to inspire people and leave them in awe with all that multitasking, says Ganesha. Of course, as the day progresses, work will gain more prominence and demand more attention, but for the time being, you will enjoy the break you may get from work. Amid all the happenings, your social life may take a back-seat, but you wouldn't as much as even realise it.

#### AQUARIUS

Your ideas may be excellent, says Ganesha, but it's your diplomacy and charm which will oil the wheels. You are a silver-tongued smoothie, and can even talk people into eating soap! Family and friends will revel in your company. If you are a student, you may get As in all your tests!

#### PISCES

You will be in the mood to splurge today. You are likely to find yourself throwing a party or entertaining guests in the afternoon. You might just indulge in some uncalculated extravagance and give your spouse a pleasant, albeit expensive, surprise, says Ganesha.

### NSD'S 22ND BHARAT RANG MAHOTSAV

## Phulaguri Dhewa tells poppy growers' sacrifice during freedom movement



A scene from Assamese play *Phulaguri Dhewa* staged at KIIT Auditorium, Bhubaneswar

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar:** Members of Abhineswar Gosthi, a theatre troupe from Assam, presented Assamese play *Phulaguri Dhewa* here at KIIT Auditorium, Thursday, on the fourth day of 22nd Bharat Rang Mahotsav (Azadi segment). The event

is being organised by National School of Drama(NSD) under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav in five cities of the country.

Written by Sarada Kanta Bordoloi and directed by Deepak Bora, the play told the story of a peasant's revolt in the year 1861 in Phulaguri region of Assam when British administration de-

clared opium cultivation illegal and increased the land debt more than 30 per cent. Three revolutionaries - Lakan Singh, Rongabor and Changbor - were hanged by the British in order to crush the revolt.

Among the artistes Utpal Kalita, Mintu Kalita, Ranjan Tamuli, Mousam Bora, Sumitra Saikia, Depen Chandra Das performed on stage while Guna Kanta Das and Ranjan Kumar Borah scored the music.

Odia play *Gandhinka Odisha*, written by Shankar Tripathy and directed by Nalini Nihar Nayak, will be staged on the last day of the festival Monday. It will be presented by Rourkela-based theatre troupe New Quest Repertory.

### Tara says male actors are given more respect

**Mumbai:** Tara Sutaria says male actors are often addressed as 'sir' by paparazzi whereas female actors are just called by their first names.

The *Tadap* actress, who is gearing up for the release of her upcoming film, *Ek Villain Returns*, recently spoke about male actors being given more respect by the paparazzi than female actors.

The actress also mentioned how male actors are often addressed as 'sir' by the paparazzi whereas the female actors are just called by their first names. Tara also clarified that she is not asking the photographers to address her as 'ma'am'. According to her, all this comes from a general sense that 'man is greater'.

During a promotional interview, the actress was asked about pay parity in the industry and if male and female celebrities are not given an equal platform in a movie. Talking about the same, Tara told a news portal that it can be small things. It doesn't need to be some huge conversation about the big things that we are doing wrong. It can be about the small things and the small differences we can make.

IANS



**Akshay named highest taxpayer again**

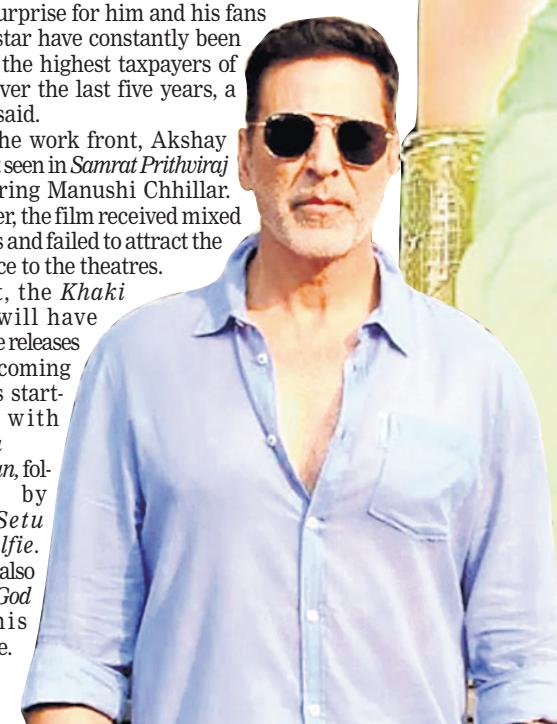
**Mumbai:** Akshay Kumar has once again been termed the highest taxpayer from the entertainment industry. The *Khiladi* star has also received a 'samman patra' from the Income Tax department.

Akshay is currently shooting in the UK for his upcoming film with Timu Desai. The honour certificate was received by his team on his behalf. This has come as no surprise for him and his fans as the star have constantly been among the highest taxpayers of India over the last five years, a report said.

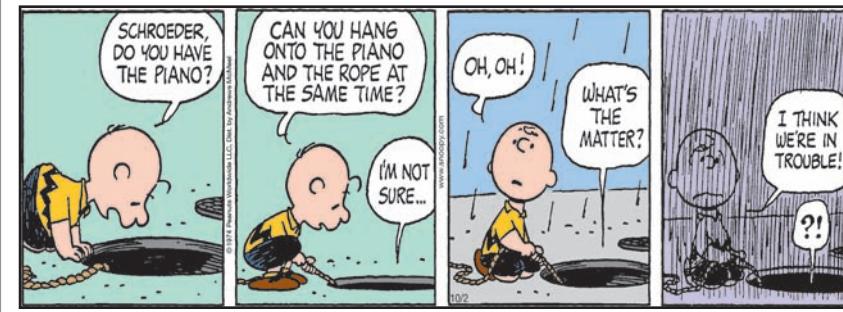
On the work front, Akshay was last seen in *Samrat Prithviraj* co-starring Manushi Chhillar. However, the film received mixed reviews and failed to attract the audience to the theatres.

Next, the *Khaki* actor will have multiple releases in the coming months starting with *Raksha Bandhan*, followed by *Ram Setu* and *Selfie*. There's also *Oh My God 2* in his pipeline.

IANS



### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBES

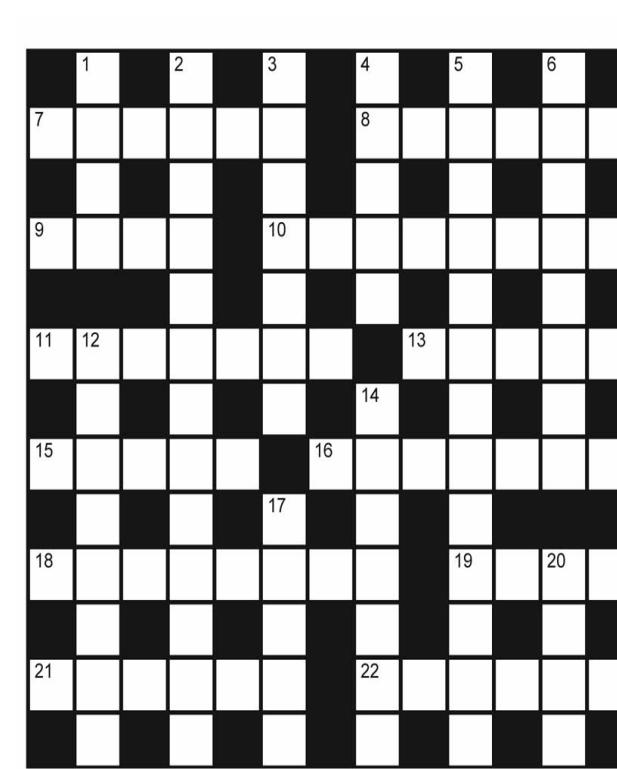


### BREVITY



### FUN POST

### CROSSWORD



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#### Across

- 7 Watch out!
- 8 On the train
- 9 Pasta choice
- 10 Bless
- 11 Cordial
- 13 Escargot
- 15 Dish
- 16 Promotional item

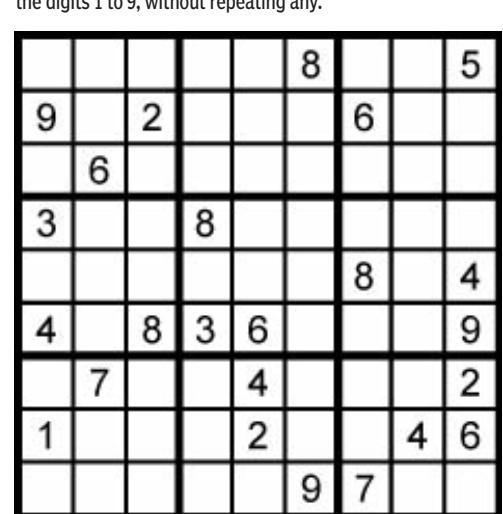
#### Down

- 19 Kind of cow
- 21 Moon of Neptune
- 22 Macaque
- 18 Untidy
- 19 Persian spirit
- 20 Geiger counter finder
- 3 Ships, et al.
- 4 Clever
- 5 Back-up plans
- 6 Writing on the wall
- 12 Traditional knowledge
- 14 Swiss cheese
- 17 Foolish
- 20 Shantytown

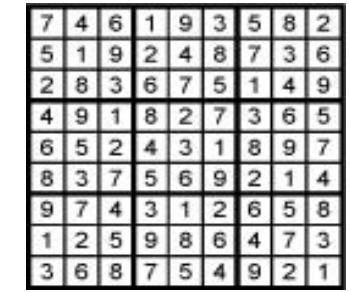
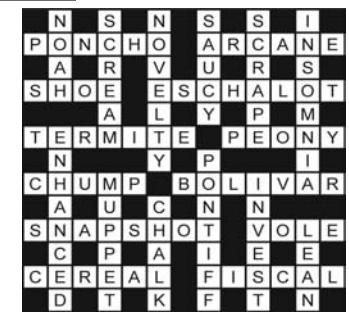
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

### 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



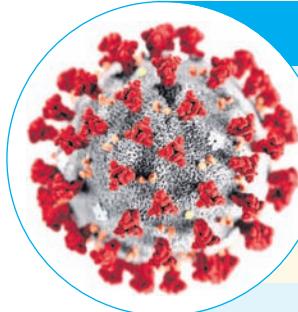
### CROSSWORD

### SUDOKU



## RELIGIOUS CEREMONY

Devotees participate in the Mahashivratri festival at Tulasipur in Cuttack, Sunday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	57,48,37,209	54,44,12,515	64,02,672
India	4,38,88,755	4,32,10,522	5,26,033
Odisha	13,06,510	12,90,663	9,132

# Cops ask Babushaan, Prakruti to appear for questioning

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** The Commissionerate Police has asked actors Tanmay Mohanty alias Babushaan and Prakruti Mishra through their respective families to appear before it for questioning in connection with the assault on Mishra and alleged marital dispute between Mohanty and his wife Trupti Satpathy.

The marital dispute between Mohanty and his wife spilled on to the streets Saturday. Satpathy had a brawl with Mohanty and Prakruti in the full public glare near a guest house at Satya Nagar here over alleged extramarital affair.

The locals present at the spot made videos of the high drama that soon went viral on social media.

Subsequently, two separate cases were filed by Prakruti's mother and Satpathy at Kharvela Nagar police station.

Prakruti's mother alleged that some people blocked her daughter's car and assaulted her mentally and physically.

On the other hand, Satpathy alleged that Prakruti was using Mohanty to boost her career. She also alleged that Prakruti was providing alcohol and ganja to her husband.

The police Sunday started an investigation into the cases and visited the spot where Mohanty and his wife were engaged in a brawl Saturday.

The police have so far recorded



File photo of the incident

### THE MARITAL DISPUTE BETWEEN BABUSHAN AND HIS WIFE TRUPTI SATPATHY SPILLED ON TO THE STREETS SATURDAY

SATPATHY HAD A BRAWL WITH BABUSHAN AND PRAKRUTI IN THE FULL PUBLIC GLARE AT SATYA NAGAR OVER ALLEGED EXTRAMARITAL AFFAIR

THE LOCALS PRESENT AT THE SPOT MADE VIDEOS OF THE HIGH DRAMA THAT SOON WENT VIRAL ON SOCIAL MEDIA

SUBSEQUENTLY, TWO SEPARATE CASES WERE FILED BY PRAKRUTI'S MOTHER AND SATPATHY AT KHARVELA NAGAR POLICE STATION

pandemic.

Prakruti, meanwhile, shared a video on Instagram and pleaded her innocence in the controversy.

"A woman assaulted and harassed another in full public view with the help of eight goons. The people who were present at the spot were making fun of it. Nobody was trying to help me when she (Babushaan's wife) was assaulting me. I remained silent at that time. I am still strong despite what happened to me. I will soon begin my work," Prakruti said in the video.

Aparajita also claimed that Mohanty loves his family very much. But, his behaviour changed a lot after he got into bad company during the Covid-19

1,011 fresh Covid cases, 1 fatality

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

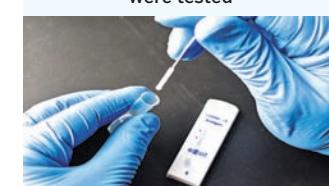
**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** Odisha's Covid-19 tally rose to 13,06,510 Sunday as 1,011 more people, including 130 children, tested positive for the infection, a Health bulletin said.

The toll rose to 9,132 as a 53-year-old man succumbed to the disease in Bhadrak district. Fifty-three other patients have died due to comorbidities so far.

The state had logged 1,130 cases and one fatality on the previous day.

Khurda, of which state capital Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the highest number of new infections at 239, followed by 180 in Sundargarh and 105 in Sambalpur

The daily positivity rate was 4.67 per cent as the infections were detected from 21,666 samples that were tested



Odisha now has 7,440 active cases, while 12,89,885 people have recovered from the disease, including 995 in the last 24 hours, it said.

Khurda district, of which state capital Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the highest number of new infections at 239, followed by 180 in Sundargarh and 105 in Sambalpur

The daily positivity rate was 4.67 per cent as the infections were detected from 21,666 samples that were tested.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



# Kalinga Stadium, India's new launchpad for mega events

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** Bhubaneswar, the city of temples which was nowhere in the sports map of India, has now become a favourable destination for Indian athletes to prepare for national and international sporting events.

Apart from hosting several mega sporting events like the men's Hockey World Cup in 2018 and the Asian Athletics Championships in 2017, the iconic Kalinga Stadium is playing a pivotal role in preparing athletes for mega sporting events.

The Kalinga Stadium located in the heart of Bhubaneswar is nowadays known as one of the best sports hubs in India for its world-class infrastructure and facilities. The City has successfully organised nearly a dozen of international hockey tournaments and several other sporting events in past five years and it is all set to host the 2023 men's hockey World Cup.

People's love for hockey and world-class infrastructure has made the City the home of the game. However, it is not only restricted to hockey alone, as rugby, swimming and football are also the key disciplines that are nurtured here.

Owing to this model, Odisha has grown and evolved into a sports hub and is the preferred destination for different federations. National and international athletes have been vocal about Odisha's sports ecosystem.

In 2018, right before the men's hockey World Cup, Odisha took the step to support and sponsor the national men's and women's hockey teams for five years, and the result was seen at the Tokyo Olympics. After four decades, Indian men's team brought home a medal (bronze), while the women's team made a historic fourth place finish.

There was euphoria in the country and it was a matter of pride that Odisha played a significant role in the revival of Indian hockey. After the Olympics, Odisha extended its support for Indian hockey by another 10 years.



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ing months. In addition, work on the centre of excellence in sports management is also going on in full swing.

As part of the Kalinga Stadium expansion plan, five projects are under construction, which include a Davis Cup standard tennis court, hockey high-performance centre, aquatic centre, India's first indoor athletic centre and staff accommodation.

The Biju Patnaik swimming pool complex at the Kalinga Stadium successfully hosted the Junior Aquatic Nationals. It also hosted the national camp for water polo wherein the Serbian national team engaged in friendlies. Once the aquatic centre is operational later this year, it will be a hub for grooming swimming champions for India.

Asmita Barla, captain of Odisha senior women's hockey team, said, "Odisha government has created a wonderful sports environment both at the state and district level. We get to reside at the sports hostel at Kalinga Stadium and train under the guidance of expert coaches."

"With new infrastructure for hockey coming up, particularly at Sundargarh and Bhubaneswar, we're sure to have larger number of players from the state representing the country."

## MATTER OF FAITH



Kanwariyas of Bidanasi Kumbha Sahi in Cuttack carry milk and holy water for offerings at Sarveswar Mahadev temple at Athagarh on the second Monday of Shrawan

OP PHOTO

## Union IT Min visits IIT-Bhubaneswar

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** Union electronics and information technology minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Sunday visited the IIT-Bhubaneswar. On this occasion he threw a challenge to the students to identify ten application areas and uses of 5G.

Speaking to the gathering, Vaishnaw said presently India has 74,000 startups which were nearly 400 in 2014-15. If the students provide the techniques, a Centre of Excellence will be opened in the institute. Earlier, Vaishnaw visited the laboratories of IIT-Bhubaneswar and suggested students to look for new ideas and innovation in the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav period.

Vaishnaw also handed over the approval letter of government of India to IIT-Bhubaneswar for inclusion in startup programme for chips. IIT-Bhubaneswar will be the 31st institution of the country for preparing semiconductors.

be on equal terms with the President," he said, taking a break from his field work.

Talking more about Murmu, he said, "Her family had landed property, which did not generate revenue. She was a simple and amicable girl who wore the same frock to school."

Another friend, Govind Majhi, said that he had last met Murmu when she was the governor of Jharkhand.

"She had visited my home as the governor of Jharkhand. Back then, we conversed like we always did. She is a very down-to-earth person. There was no formality involved. Now, however, I am not so sure. I don't know if I could talk informally with the country's President," he said.

Majhi also looked back on their school days with fondness, and said, "She was among the brightest students in school. I had to drop out due to poverty. She would often invite me to her home for lunch. I remember having 'pakhali bhaat' at

her place."

Born to a Santhal family in 1958, Murmu studied in Government Upper Primary School in Uparbeda till Class 7 and then moved to Bhubaneswar Government Girl's

High School. She graduated from Ramadevi Women's College. Her college mate, Suchitra Samal, said the president-elect was the same person that she was when they met the first time.



"I was pleasantly surprised when she called me two days ago. I wasn't expecting a call from her amid her busy schedule. I had wished her earlier on her success," Samal said.

Samal along with Dangi Murmu had visited Droupadi at Jharkhand Raj Bhavan some years ago.

"We had a fun time reminiscing old days. We talked a lot, teased each other and shared updates from our lives. Droupadi was her usual, cool and composed self," said Dangi.

Samal hopes to get an invitation from the Rashtrapati Bhawan soon. "Let her settle down, we will go and meet her there," she added.

# Not sure if we could still address Murmu informally, say friends

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Rairangpur July 24:** With Droupadi Murmu set to take oath as the first tribal President of the country Monday, her neighbours and friends back home are confused over how to address their amigo the next time they meet her.

Ramachandra Murmu, a farmer of Uparbeda village in Mayurbhanj district, said, "Everyone in the president-elect's hometown is proud of her achievements, but I am not sure if I should use 'tu' (informal address) or 'aap' (address with respect) when we talk next."

Ramachandra, who was her classmate in Government Upper Primary School in Uparbeda, recalled that the two would often share food from the same plate on the school campus.

"We all took part in sporting activities together. All these years, I have used 'tu' to address her. Things have changed now. I am not sure if I can use 'tu' for the first citizen of India. How can a farmer



File photo of Murmu sweeping a temple premises in Mayurbhanj

She had visited my home as the governor of Jharkhand. Back then, we conversed like we always did. She is a very down-to-earth person. There was no formality involved. Now, however, I am not so sure. I don't know if I could talk informally with the country's President

GOVIND MAJHI | DROUPADI MURMU'S FRIEND

# CM lauds health workers for administering 7cr vax doses



POST NEWS NETWORK

**T**he Health and Family Welfare department had written to the Centre to supply 1.72 crore Covishield and 18.73 lakh Covaxin doses to cover the target population by the end of August

The Health and Family Welfare department also took to Twitter Sunday to share the achievement with the people of Odisha and praised the healthcare workers for their persistent efforts.

"We salute the people of Odisha for their support & our Healthcare workers for their relentless efforts for making this #COVID19 vaccination drive a great success in our State," the H&FW Department's tweet read.

Earlier in February 2022, Odisha had crossed the milestone in Covid vaccination by administering more

**Glad to share that #Odisha has achieved yet another significant milestone in the fight against #COVID19 by administering 7.0 crore vaccine doses. Commend the hard work & commitment of our healthcare workers in ensuring a swift immunisation to save precious lives (sic)**

NAVEEN PATNAIK, CHIEF MINISTER

than six crore doses of vaccines. Odisha was the 10th State to cross the mark in 13 months.

The Odisha government recently had urged the Centre to supply 1.9 crore vaccine doses in phases for the free booster drive that commenced in the state July 15 as the stock is expected to last only a couple of days.

While over 26 lakh beneficiaries are due for second dose, 2.65 crore people aged 18 to 59 years will take the precaution dose.

The Health and Family Welfare department had written to the Centre to supply 1.72 crore Covishield and 18.73 lakh Covaxin doses to cover the target population by the end of August.

Director of Family Welfare and nodal officer of Covid vaccination Bijay Panigrahi said, the indent has been submitted to the Union Ministry of Health and the officials have assured us to provide the vaccine doses as and when required.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** Odisha Parents' Federation (OPF) Sunday wrote to Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) chairperson voicing grievances of its members over the exam Term-I and Term-II weightage issue for both class X and XII students.

Basudev Bhatt, chairman of OPF, said they have received many calls and emails from students and parents regarding the Term-I and Term-II weightage allocation, which the CBSE implemented for the first time with two terms for the year 2021-2022.

The CBSE in its circular dated

5 July 2021 had stated that in its scoring it would give equal weightage, 50 per cent each, to both the terms I and II. As scheduled, Term-I examinations were conducted in the month of November-December 2021. But days after the publication of Term-I results in

## CLASS X, XII EVALUATION

March-2022, news circulated on social media that the board has decided to give weightage of 30-70 instead of 50-50 to Term-I and Term-II respectively. When that news spread and students sought clarification, CBSE through its official twitter handle declared that news to be fake, essentially confirming the 50-50 equal

weightage regime.

Term-II board examination was held in May-June 2022. After the declaration of results, in one circular the board stated that majority of its committee members recommended that the weightage for Term-I (theory) should be 30 per cent and

Term-II (theory) should be 70 per cent. As far as practical was concerned, it was decided that equal weightage would be given to both Term I and Term-II.

This caught the students and parents in surprise as they were expecting an equal weightage scoring system. The students, who had

eight months to prepare for Term-I and only 2-3 months for Term-II, had generally secured more percentage in Term-I than II. Seeing Term-I get significantly lesser weightage than Term-II broke their hearts.

Bhatt said that what the board did with the students should be considered injustice as it has left many of the students and their parents in anxiety and stress.

That's why OPF is requesting the board to allow those students who are asking for it an equal weightage 50-50 scoring system. They have also made the same request to education minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

# OPF asks CBSE to allow 50-50 weightage

POST NEWS NETWORK

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## STF recovers skeletal remains of 2 tuskers

**Continued from P1**

**L**arge pieces of bones and ashes have been recovered from the spot while forest officials have burnt down the carcasses to destroy the evidence. Mallick said the poachers abandon the carcass after taking away the ivories.

However, the forest officials often burn the carcass or bury it on the spot without conducting a post-mortem, Mallick alleged.

The forest department also committed the same mistake here while there is a need to initiate legal action in the incident, Mallick added.

The recovery of the half-burnt remains of the two tuskers is indicative that forest officials are allegedly trying to suppress the poaching of elephants.

The half-burnt remains have been sent for examination to the laboratory of the Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) in Bhubaneswar and the truth will be revealed after availability of the post-mortem report.

Notably, **Orissa POST** had published a report about recovery of the charred remains of a tusker carcass from Dumberchuan inside Munder reserve forest under Sadar forest range, October 19, 2021.

The forest officials recovered the burnt remains of elephant skeleton and sent them for examination to the OUAT laboratory. However, forest officials have been telling since then that the report is yet to be available to them.

## EDU-MEET 2022

### 'BHUBANESWAR IS EMERGING AS A KNOWLEDGE HUB'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** The first edition of Education Summit - Edu-Meet 2022 was organised for the first time in Bhubaneswar, Sunday. The summit was held at the KIIT Campus-7, Bhubaneswar.

The event was inaugurated by Yemi Odanye of British Deputy High Commission, Kolkata, Rohit Pujari, Minister of Higher Education, Odisha, Arun Lal, former Indian Cricketer and commentator; Mona Lisa Bal, Chairperson, KIIT International School, Laxmi Narayan Tripathi, Transgender Rights Activist and others.

The Education Summit, instituted by Candid Communication in collaboration with the Association of Leaders in Education, British Council, BOPTER and NASSCOM.

Speaking on this occasion, Minister of Higher Education, Rohit Pujari said that Bhubaneswar is emerging as a knowledge hub in India with several new public and private universities, including the establishment of an Indian Institute of Technology. Odisha has fared reasonably well in terms of literacy rates.

## CLASSIFIED

### LOST

I, Sri Satyasaib Guin, S/o Late Girish Prasad Guin, resident of At-Nathapada, PO/PS- Jajpur road, Dist- Jajpur-755019 have unfortunately lost the land ROR on dtd.12.06.22 measuring A 0.24 dec. which is in name of my mother late Kunjalata Guin, vide Khata No.102/140, Plot No. 224/540 Kisam- Gharabari-2 under mouza Jagannathpur, Unit-17, Keonjhar Dist. lost in jajpur road bazar on 12.06.22. If any one found it please contact me on my cell no. 6370508150.

**M**ammals and birds produce their own body heat and control their body temperature. This process is known as endothermy, or warm-bloodedness, and it's considered to be one of the factors that helps them dominate every global ecosystem.

Warm-blooded animals are more active during both days and nights than their cold-blooded counterparts and they reproduce faster. But until now it hasn't been known exactly when endothermy originated in mammalian ancestry. A new study published in *Nature*, by Julien Benoit of University of the Witwatersrand, Kenneth D. Angielczyk of University of Chicago, Ricardo Miguel Nóbrega Araújo of Universidade de Lisboa, and Romain David of the Natural History Museum, changes that status quo.

A combination of scientists' intuition, fossils from South Africa's Karoo region and cutting-edge technology has provided the answer: endothermy developed in mammalian ancestors about 233 million years ago during the Late Triassic period.

The origin of mammalian endothermy has been one of the great unsolved mysteries of palaeontology. Many different approaches have been used to try to pinpoint the answer, but they have often given vague or conflicting results. These scientists think their method

shows real promise because it has been validated using a very large number of modern species.

It suggests that endothermy evolved at a time when many other features of the mammalian body plan were also falling into place. Warm-bloodedness is the key to what makes mammals what they are today. Endothermy was likely the starting point where mammalness evolved: the acquisition of an insulating fur coat; the evolution of a larger brain, supplied with warmer blood; a faster reproduction rate; and a more active life are all defining mammalian traits that evolved because of warm-bloodedness. Until now, most scientists had speculated that the transition to endothermy was a gradual, slow process over tens of millions of years beginning near the Permo-Triassic boundary, although some suggested it happened closer to the origin of mammals, about 200 million years ago.

In contrast, the study results suggest that it appeared in mammalian ancestors some 33 million years prior to the origin of mammals. The new date is consistent with recent findings that many of the traits usually associated with "mammalness", such as whiskers and fur, also evolved earlier than previously expected.

And according to study results, endothermy evolved very quickly



# Mammals became warm-blooded 233mn years ago: Study

**T**he origin of mammalian endothermy has been one of the great unsolved mysteries of palaeontology. Many different approaches have been used to try to pinpoint the answer, but they have often given vague or conflicting results.

In mammals, the canals in the inner ear adapt to higher body temperature by changing their geometry. The researchers realised that this change in the semicircular canals' shape would be easy to trace through geological time using fossils.

The three semicircular canals of the inner ear are oriented in the three dimensions of space. They're filled with a fluid that flows in the canals as the head moves and activates receptors to tell the brain the exact three-dimensional position of the head and body.

The viscosity, or runniness, of this fluid (called the endolymph) is critical to the balance organ's ability

to efficiently detect head rotation and aid balance. In the same way as a piece of butter turns from solid to liquid in a warm pan, or honey becomes thicker when it is cold, the viscosity of the endolymph changes with body temperature.

That means the endolymph's viscosity would normally be altered by the evolution of a higher body temperature. But the body has to adapt because changing viscosity would prevent the semicircular canals from working properly. In mammals, the canals adapt to higher body temperature by changing their geometry. The researchers realised that this change in the semicircular canals' shape would be easy to trace through geological time using fossils.

Pinpointing the species in which the change of geometry occurred would, they reasoned, provide an accurate guide to when endothermy evolved. They needed fossils to test their hypothesis – and that's where South Africa's wealth of fossils from the Karoo region came in.

The arid Karoo region preserves a treasure trove of fossils, many of them belonging to mammalian ancestors. These fossils offer an unbroken record of the evolution of life over a period of almost 100 million years. They document the transformation from reptilian-like animals (therapsids) to mammals in exquisite detail.

Using cutting edge CT-scanning techniques and 3D modelling, we were able to reconstruct the inner ear of dozens of mammalian ancestors from the South African Karoo and elsewhere in the world. From there we could point out exactly which species had an inner ear anatomy consistent with a warmer body temperature, and which ones did not.

One thing we had to take into consideration was the geographical position of the Karoo at the time when these animals lived. It was situated closer to the South Pole than it is now as a result of continental drift. That means the warmer body temperature suggested by the geometry of the inner ear cannot be due to an overall warmer climate. As the South African climate was colder on average, the change in inner ear fluid viscosity can only have been caused by a generally warmer body temperature in mammalian ancestors.

This is an exciting time for the field. Until now, to reconstruct the evolution of endothermy, scientists only had access to skeletal features that questionably correlated with warm-bloodedness. Every attempt was a long shot to get any accurate results. The inner ear, as this research shows, changes this. We believe it may be the key to unlocking more knowledge about mammalian ancestors in future.

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# Teacher suspended for beating up 14 students



REPRESENTATIVE PIC

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Basudevpur, July 24:** The Bhadrak district education department Sunday suspended Kalpataru Mallick, the Mathematics teacher of Sunamuhu Government Upper Primary (UP) School under Bideipur cluster of Basudevpur block for allegedly beating up 14 girl students after they failed to answer a question.

The action comes a day after the 14 students of Class-VIII were mercilessly beaten up by Mallick for not being able to answer a question, Saturday. The matter came to the

fore after the victim students informed their parents about the incident. The block education officer suspended him from service following a directive by the district education department. The suspension notice was served to the cluster resources centre coordinator (CRCC) who in turn will inform Mallick, BEO Jagabandhu Sahu said.

Notably, Mallick works as a Mathematics and Science teacher in the school. The incident occurred when Mallick was taking classes, Saturday. He allegedly beat up 14 girls in the class out of which four were injured. The four in-

A student alleged that Mallick was angry from the beginning. He was so angry that he started asking questions as soon as he entered the classroom and did not even give them time to answer. He started beating the girls before they could answer, she added.

When contacted, CRCC Sarat Ojha confirmed the development stating that the Mathematics teacher Kalpataru Mallick has been suspended by the BEO.

## Girl jumps into river after tiff with lover

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, July 24:** A girl tried to commit suicide by jumping into Saida Bheden river after a heated brawl with his boyfriend in Kuchinda area of Sambalpur district, Sunday.

However, Kuchinda police acted in time and rescued her in critical condition from the river. She was rushed to Kuchinda hospital where she is presently undergoing treatment.

## Curious Cubs' new centre in Sambalpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, July 24:** Curious Cubs Pre-school has opened a new center at Sambalpur. The new Sambalpur centre of Curious Cubs preschool was inaugurated July 24 2022 by chief guest Raseshwari Panigrahi at Cherupada. This is the second centre in Sambalpur and the fifth centre in Odisha after Rourkela, Bhubaneswar and Jharsuguda with over 600 students.

Co-founder and Chairperson Debashri Debnani in her speech told about the journey of the school from 7 students to 600+ students and 5 centres. She also feels proud to say that it is an "all women" organization with over 80 women working staff. Curious Cubs is selected in top 25 inspiring schools amongst over 1500+ Xseed schools in India, this was published in the recent book "25 stories about a million children". Co-founder Saransh Pansari told in his speech that Curious Cubs Preschool is the leading and one of the premium preschools in the western Odisha and has its presence in Sambalpur; Rourkela, Bhubaneswar and Jharsuguda.

### CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Injured girls were administered primary treatment at Basudevpur community health centre (CHC) and later discharged.

The incident sparked tension in the area after the news spread. Angry parents and guardians stormed into the school premises and created a ruckus opposing the alleged assault of their wards. They detained the teacher and handed him over to police at Kashia Marine Police Station. The corporal punishment to girl students has drawn flak from various quarters.

A student alleged that Mallick was angry from the beginning. He was so angry that he started asking questions as soon as he entered the classroom and did not even give them time to answer. He started beating the girls before they could answer, she added.

When contacted, CRCC Sarat Ojha confirmed the development stating that the Mathematics teacher Kalpataru Mallick has been suspended by the BEO.



Women from the Santhal community perform dance wearing traditional Santhal sarees in Rairangpur of Mayurbhanj district

PTI PHOTO

## ₹1cr sanctioned for landslide-hit villages

JANGARITUL AND BANGADISINGH VILLAGES UNDER GUMMA BLOCK IN GAJAPATI SUFFERED MASSIVE DAMAGE DUE TO LANDSLIDES FOLLOWING TORRENTIAL RAINS A FEW DAYS AGO

POST NEWS NETWORK



₹20 lakh each has been allocated for land development under MGNREGS, two protection walls; three culverts; a check dam to be constructed by the minor irrigation department and roads and drains

crore as soon as possible.

The PD said that ₹20 lakh has

been allocated for land development under MGNREGS; ₹20 lakh

for two protection walls; ₹20 lakh

for a check dam to be constructed by the minor irrigation department and ₹20 lakh for roads and drains.

The zilla parishad chairperson has assured that compensation will be provided to the affected people and farmers.

Notably, landslides had occurred in Mandeni village in Keredanga panchayat, Nauripadar in Anuguru panchayat, Udayapur and Nuapalli villages in Parimala panchayat under Nuapalli block.

Similarly, Jangiditul village in Badakalakot panchayat and Maranda village in Dumbada panchayat under Gumma block were hit by landslides. An abandoned thatched house at Jangiditul in Gumma block was damaged. Several bikes were buried under debris at Nuapalli village.

Later, the administration had evacuated people in some hillside villages in the same block as precautionary measures.



They were shocked to see 48 students of Class-VII, 40 of Class-II and 25 of Class-III sitting under trees amid slight drizzle. They also found Class-I kids attending the classes on the balcony of the school.

Sources said that there are 328 students in the school from Classes I to VIII. The school has four classrooms, out of which two are functional while the remaining ones are being repaired. Teachers said that accommodating all the students in two classrooms is impossible. Students of some of the classes are taught on the school verandah while others have to study under trees.

Following complaints from local people, a group of mediapersons visited the school a couple of days back to take stock of the situation. Guardians have expressed their displeasure over the situation which has cropped up due to shortage of classrooms. They sought to know why classrooms are being repaired during the monsoons.

When contacted, cluster resources centre coordinator (CRCC) Gorachand Majhi said that once the classrooms are repaired, things will be sorted out.

## Kids study under trees as school lacks classrooms

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Padmapur, July 24:** The government spends a lot of funds to improve infrastructure in schools. However, the Karanpalli primary school in Chandbali block of Bhadrak district is plagued by shortage of infrastructure. As a result, children have been forced to study under trees, sources said Friday. The suffering of the kids has triggered resentment among the local people.

Sources said that there are 328 students in the school from Classes I to VIII. The school has four classrooms, out of which two are functional while the remaining ones are being repaired. Teachers said that accommodating all the students in two classrooms is impossible. Students of some of the classes are taught on the school verandah while others have to study under trees.

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Later, the administration had evacuated people in some hillside villages in the same block as precautionary measures.



brim due to heavy rainfall, she added.

Another guardian Bharat Kumar Dhara said the river was raging Tuesday for which the children were unable to attend their schools

and got a holiday. The river was overflowing with water up to the chest for which they were unable to carry their children to drop them at school, he said.

He said that the villagers ap-

prised the state higher education minister and local MLA Rohit Pujari of their plight during the rainy season when he had visited their area while campaigning for election. Pujari had then assured them to resolve their problems but they are yet to see any steps being taken for building a bridge on the river, he said.

He lamented that despite presence of a plethora of government welfare schemes the benefits still elude the needy.

When contacted, district Collector Ananya Das said a probe will be undertaken to ascertain the reality behind the problem. She has directed the Sub-Collector to visit the spot and submit a report to her and action will be taken once the report is available to the district administration, she added.

## Children cross river on parents' shoulders to reach schools

The incident comes close on the heels of a similar incident in Ganjam where students were forced to cross a flooded stream with the help of a rope in absence of a proper road

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, July 24:** School-going children in Debaiali village under Badmali panchayat of Redhakhole block in this district face a tough obstacle during the rainy season every year as they have to cross a swelling river to reach their school.

The Harihara river flowing near their village swells during the rainy season and disrupts all communication to the other side. As a result, guardians have to carry their kids on their shoulders and wade through the flooded river to drop

them at an Anganwadi centre and a primary school which are on the other side. Rolling up their trousers or lungis, the parents slowly cross the river in spite.

The incident comes close on the heels of a similar incident where students in a village under Patrapur block of Ganjam district were forced to cross a flooded stream with the help of a rope in absence of a proper road to reach their respective homes. The incident has exposed the sorry state of development in remote parts of the state.

A guardian Debaki Bhoi alleged that their village has no Anganwadi centre or primary school. Budhikhamar village in Bhaliakata panchayat has an Anganwadi centre and a primary school but is on the other side of the river.

Our children have no other way than crossing the river to reach their school, she said. They do not face any problem during summer season but their problem aggravates once the rainy season starts.

The river swells with floodwater

during monsoons but due to lack of any alternative route or bridge on the river, the elders risk their lives and carry their children to drop them at the Anganwadi centre and the primary school and also bring them back home after the school hours, she said.

The children get an undeclared

holiday if the river is swollen to the

brim due to heavy rainfall, she added.

Another guardian Bharat Kumar

Dhara said the river was raging

Tuesday for which the children

were unable to attend their schools

and got a holiday. The river was overflowing with water up to the chest for which they were unable to carry their children to drop them at school, he said.

He said that the villagers ap-

## STIR FOR ROADS



Demanding upgradation and expansion of national highways passing through Angul district, people led by local BJD leaders staging a road blockade on NH-149 at Burukuna under Kaniha block, Sunday

prised the state higher education minister and local MLA Rohit Pujari of their plight during the rainy season when he had visited their area while campaigning for election. Pujari had then assured them to resolve their problems but they are yet to see any steps being taken for building a bridge on the river, he said.

He lamented that despite presence of a plethora of government welfare schemes the benefits still elude the needy.

When contacted, district Collector Ananya Das said a probe will be undertaken to ascertain the reality behind the problem. She has directed the Sub-Collector to visit the spot and submit a report to her and action will be taken once the report is available to the district administration, she added.

## Lecturer pledges to donate her body

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sundargarh, July 24:** A woman college teacher in Sundargarh took a pledge on her birthday to donate her whole body for use in academic, medical research and related purpose after her death.

Snigdharani Patel, wife of Santosh Kumar Patel and a lecturer in Education department of Jashodabishnu Degree College at Jogimali in Tangarpalli block of Sundargarh district made this pledge while celebrating her birthday, July 19. Snigdha's husband Santosh works in OMDFED at Bhanupatna. The couple has a daughter studying in Class-1.

Snigdha accompanied by her mother and brother visited VSS

Institute of Medical Sciences and

Research (VIMSAR) at Burla to

her birthday and submitted the

pledge form and an affidavit

wherein she pledged that her mortal body will be donated to the Department of Anatomy, SCB Medical College and Hospital at Cuttack or VIMSAR, Burla to be utilised for academic research and related purpose. She has also declared that in case of brain death, the body will be handed over at the disposal of either of the colleges for proper utilisation. After the pledge, the acknowledgement slip was handed over to her by Professor Mamata Sar, HOD, Department of Anatomy, VIMSAR, Burla.

Snigdha accompanied by her mother and brother visited VSS Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) at Burla on her birthday and submitted the pledge form and an affidavit

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website <http://www.reps.gov.in>. The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/ corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS portal. Only registered tenderer/bidder can participate on e-tendering.

The tenderers should read all instructions to the tenderers carefully and ensure compliance of all instructions including check lists, para 3.1 (additional check-list) of tender form (Second sheet) Annexure-I of chapter 2 of Tender documents, submission of Annexure-BIG & G1 duly verified and signed by Chartered Accountant. Chief Administrative Officer (Con) Bhubaneswar PR-61/CF/22-23

e-Tender Notice No. ETCPMGGSUBBS 222071 Dtd : 18.07.2022 Name of work : EXECUTION OF MAJOR BRIDGE OF SPAN 1X12.2 M PLATE GIRDER, MINOR BRIDGES, EARTHWORK IN FORMATION AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS WORK LIKE DRAIN, PROTECTION WORKS ETC. IN CONNECTION WITH DOUBLING OF LINGARAJ SILO CONNECTIVITY OF NTPC LINE OF MAHANADI COALFIELD LIMITED. Approx cost of the work ₹ 4027.54 Lakhs, EMD ₹ 21,63,800/- Completion period of the work : 18 Months. Tender closing date & time : at 1200 hrs. of 18.08.2022. No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tender. Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website <http://www.reps.gov.in>. The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/ corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS portal. Only registered tenderer/bidder can participate on e-tendering. The tenderers should read all instructions to the tenderers carefully and ensure compliance of all instructions including check lists, para 3.1 (additional check-list) of tender form (Second sheet) Annexure-I of chapter 2 of Tender documents, submission of Annexure-BIG & G1 duly verified and signed by Chartered Accountant.

Chief Administrative Officer (Con) Bhubaneswar PR-61/CF/22-23

# MURMU SYMBOL OF MODI'S COMMITMENT TOWARDS TRIBAL EMPOWERMENT

Turn all things to honey; this is the law of divine living.

SRI AUROBINDO



## Lanka's Next Test

In a win for democracy, mass protests in Sri Lanka recently led to the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa. A strongman who won popularity for overseeing the end of Sri Lanka's civil war in 2009 (while his older brother, Mahinda, was president), Gotabaya was elected in November 2019 and promised to safeguard national security and deliver prosperity. He failed miserably.

Despite allegations of corruption, war crimes, and attacks on journalists, the Rajapaksa government had a powerful mandate, which was reinforced nine months later when the brothers' party, Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (the Sri Lanka People's Front), won a two-thirds majority in Parliament. Yet during his short tenure, the Rajapaksas drove the country into bankruptcy, food insecurity, and spiraling inflation.

Gotabaya announced his candidacy just days after the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings, promising a strong response to terrorism. In the months that followed, newspapers' and radio stations' frenzied coverage heightened people's fear of Muslims (who comprise 10% of the population), and attacks on them increased. Gotabaya capitalised on this environment, portraying himself as a defender of the Sinhala-Buddhist majority who would transform Sri Lanka into a Singapore of the Indian Ocean. The clergy, media, military, political elites, and local business tycoons all adopted the same rhetoric, tying their fortunes to his.

The Buddhist clergy, for example, continuously reaffirmed their trust in Gotabaya throughout his presidency. In return, he established a Buddhist Advisory Council of notable monks to help guide his policy decisions. Even in January of this year, as families began rationing food, and as the central bank sold its remaining gold reserves to pay back an international bond, the Buddhist establishment spoke up for Gotabaya, arguing that he was still the only leader who could save the country.

By March, hospitals were reporting shortages of essential medicines, and two elderly men died while queuing for gasoline. Unable to pay for fuel to produce electricity, the government instituted rolling blackouts that culminated in 13-hour power cuts at the height of a suffocating heat wave. That was the final straw. Protesters stormed the streets and demanded the Rajapaksas' resignations.

The political class responded by playing musical chairs within the Cabinet of Ministers, while demonstrators occupied the area surrounding the Presidential Secretariat. The space that Rajapaksa had set aside as an "agitation area" – a move heavily criticized for limiting people's freedom of assembly – was renamed "GotaGoGama" ("Gota Go Village"). The GGG became the home of the Aragalaya (struggle) against the government, which has now raided the site and arrested protest leaders.

The Aragalaya has been unusual in that it welcomed Sri Lankans from all ethnic backgrounds. In April, protesters outside the Presidential Secretariat included activists from the Muslim community – a direct rejection of the chauvinist sentiment Gotabaya had stoked. Demonstrators also cooked a mixture of water and rice (kanji) to commemorate Tamil civilians who died during the last stages of the war, when indiscriminate shelling made it impossible for them to secure other food.

The Aragalaya thus became a place where people lived out the alternative to the Rajapaksas brand of politics. The protesters celebrated unity amid diversity, demonstrating that hope comes not from leaders but from the power of people.

But does this solidarity reflect a mere marriage of convenience? Just two and a half years ago, many of the current anti-government protesters endorsed the Rajapaksas' brand of majoritarian politics. Today, they complain that Parliament is full of cheats and liars. Yet it is they who voted for the charlatans in free and fair elections.

The Rajapaksas were given a mandate despite their well-known record of corruption, authoritarianism, and violence. The protests began not when the family stole public funds or trampled on minority rights, but when Sinhalese were called "extremists and terrorists" just for demanding food.

The institutions that underwrote Gotabaya's power have now lost credibility. Businesses and others who aligned with the Rajapaksas are being shamed on social media, and any elite Buddhist clergy who dare to show up at protests are lambasted. The military and the police, once praised for their service, are now seen as vehicles of state repression, and major media organisations have been condemned for whipping up anti-minority sentiment.

The question now is what will fill the vacuum. Sri Lankans have a rare opportunity to build a new identity based on this struggle for dignity. After being tear-gassed and battered by the police, Sinhalese protesters have caught a glimpse of the violence and mistreatment that Tamils have suffered. After watching their businesses collapse from lack of electricity, they now have a sense of what Muslims feel when their businesses are torched by angry mobs. And after feeling the effects of sharply rising inflation, all households now recognise that plantation workers cannot live on \$3 per day.

In each case, the Sinhala-Buddhist majority has been given a window onto the decades of deprivation suffered by minorities. Sinhala Buddhists are connecting with their inner Tamils and Muslims. But only by building on this shared trauma can Sri Lankans transform resentment against the Rajapaksas into a new social contract. By renegotiating our communal bonds and relationships, we can construct a new collective identity. That means rejecting majoritarianism and corruption, and embracing our shared struggle for a free and prosperous future.

*The writer is a former research analyst for Sri Lanka's Ministry of Finance.*

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## WISDOM CORNER

**What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.**

ZIG ZIGLAR

**Great things are done by a series of small things brought together.**

VINCENT VAN GOGH

**The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance.**

ALAN WATTS

## WORDSWORTH

### Upper crust

In trying to get to the root of this dismissive way to describe the upper classes, aristocracy or social elite, we have to start by clearing away the obscuring undergrowth of supposition. Many sources say it's from the US. That's because the OED says it is and cites as its first two examples works by Thomas Chandler Haliburton, with a third from John Bartlett's Dictionary of Americanisms. The earliest example isn't from America, but Britain. More disinformation comes from that splendid body of people, the guides who herd tourists around the ancient buildings of Britain. In kitchens, they explain the old method of baking bread in an oven. This was heated by burning dry twigs in it. Ashes were then raked out and bread dough was put in to bake. The bottom of the loaf was over-baked because it was sitting on the hot oven floor and ashes stuck to it. The upper crust was properly baked, however, and was obviously more desirable.

The election of Droupadi Murmu ji as the President of India is historic for Indian democracy. Her remarkable journey from Odisha's extremely poor tribal background, that too from the most backward Santhali community, to the highest constitutional position is marked by her struggles, grit and determination. Her elevation as First Citizen is the matter of great joy and contentment from the entire country, more so for the tribal community. The nation had to wait for 70 long years to see a tribal woman reaching the highest office of the land. It marks yet another victory for our democracy and our Constitution.

India's tribal population comprises 9% of our demography. Their struggles and sacrifices in our freedom struggle are invaluable and unforgettable. But the sad truth is that post-Independence no government took concrete steps for the development and upliftment of our tribal communities. No efforts were made to bring them to the national mainstream by ensuring their social and economic growth, while they also remained devoid of proper political representation.

It was under the leadership of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee that the first serious steps were taken to fulfil the aspirations of our tribal society. In 1999 Atal ji created a separate Ministry of Tribal Affairs for empowerment and development of our tribal society which was followed by the formation of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes through 89th Constitutional Amendment in 2003. The transformation of our tribal communities started by Atal Bihari Vajpayee has been taken forward by PM Shri Narendra Modi.

Guided by its oath of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas', the Narendra Modi government has taken umpteen initiatives to fulfil the aspirations and hopes of the tribal population. In the past eight years, there has been a massive increase in budget allocation for projects



The nation had to wait for 70 long years to see a tribal woman reaching the highest office of the land. It marks yet another victory for our democracy and our Constitution

linked to welfare and progress of tribal communities. The budget for Tribal Sub-Plan has been increased four-fold in 2021-22, from ₹21,000 crores to ₹86,000 crores.

Today piped water is being supplied to 1.28 crore tribal homes under the Jal Jeevan Mission, 38 lakh houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna and 1.45 crore toilets have been constructed while 82 lakh Ayushman Bharat health cards have been distributed to tribal people. Similarly, the budget of Ekavaya Model Schools specially developed for tribal students has been increased from ₹278 crores to ₹1,418 crores, while fund allocation for scholarships for tribal students has also been hiked from ₹978 crores to ₹2,546 crores. As part of entrepreneurship development initiative, 3,110 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras and 53,000 Van Dhan self-help groups have been established with an expenditure of ₹327 crores.

Our tribal areas are most-affected by mining activities, but the financial gains from these mining activities were never shared with our tribal population. To address this lacuna, the Narendra Modi government created a District Mineral Fund so that 30% earnings

from the mining activities could be spent in the development of tribal areas. So far ₹57,000 crore has been accumulated and being used in various development works. Similarly, the number of Tribes India outlets, run by TRIFED which takes care of the marketing and sale of products made by our tribal communities, has been increased from 29 to 116.

PM Shri Narendra Modi has also brought rich tribal culture and heritage to the national lime-light. Tribal arts, literature, traditional knowledge and skills have been included in various curricula. As part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', a nationwide series of programmes are being organised to highlight the contributions of our great tribal leaders in our freedom struggle.

The nation now celebrates the birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda, which falls on November 15, as Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas. The Narendra Modi government is developing Tribal Freedom Fighter Museums across the country with an expenditure of ₹200 crores. In his speeches PM Shri Narendra Modi remembers our great tribal leaders and highlights their contributions to in-

spire today's generation. All this underlines how the Narendra Modi government is tirelessly working for the honour and empowerment of our tribal society.

From Kashmir to the Northeast, a large chunk of our tribal population dominates our rural landscape in Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Gujarat. Post-Independence the Congress party exploited them as its vote-bank and ignored the tribal-dominated Northeast. It was PM Shri Narendra Modi who immediately after taking over as the Prime Minister began the transformation of our tribal areas at the right earnest. To kickstart the growth and development of the tribal-dominated Northeast, he formulated the Act East Policy. In the past eight years our North-eastern states have been successfully integrated into the national mainstream to become partners in growth and progress.

For decades poverty and social insecurity has been the biggest challenge for our tribal communities. This fear and uncertainty was tapped by the Left extremism in some states which led to tribal youth getting radicalised. This resulted in total disruption of growth and development in some of our tribal areas. The Narendra Modi government's 'zero tolerance' policy towards terrorism has led to near complete elimination of Naxalism. Today violence and unrest in our tribal areas has been replaced by development and peace.

The socio-economic development and empowerment of our tribal society, their political representation has always been an integral part of the BJP's philosophy. And, today under the leadership of PM Shri Narendra Modi India has chosen Droupadi Murmu as its first tribal woman President. It is also the shining example of PM Shri Narendra Modi's resolute commitment towards empowerment of our tribal society.

*The writer is Union Home Minister.*

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT OF OUR TRIBAL SOCIETY, THEIR POLITICAL REPRESENTATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE BJP'S PHILOSOPHY

Amit Shah

Priyanka Krishnamoorthy

The Rajapaksas were given a mandate despite their well-known record of corruption, authoritarianism, and violence

## SPECTRUM DIGITALISATION

# Time to build a digital lifeline

Riccardo Puliti

AGILE REGULATIONS HAVE HELPED DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES OFFER CRITICAL SUPPORT TO PEOPLE IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT SITUATIONS

In periods of crisis, digital technologies provide a lifeline that keeps people, communities, and businesses functioning. From COVID-19 to violent conflicts and natural disasters, being connected has allowed us to continue working, learning, and communicating.

How policymakers have responded to these emergencies has played a large part. In particular, as a new paper by the World Bank Group's Development Committee shows, more agile regulation has accelerated digitalisation and unleashed innovation. In today's global context of several overlapping crises, this needs to become the norm. Secure and resilient internet infrastructure is a fundamental necessity.

During the pandemic, as more and more of our lives went online, internet usage spiked worldwide. In 2020, 800 million people went online for the first time, and 58 low- and middle-income countries used digital payments to deliver COVID-19 relief. To manage that surge, governments and regulators in more than 80 countries moved quickly to change rules, including those governing the allocation of radio spectrum – the electromagnetic waves used for wireless communica-

tions. In Ghana, regulators assigned temporary radio spectrum to networks in high demand, and all mobile-service providers were granted permission to expand coverage. This resulted in better-quality service for more than 30 million mobile subscribers, letting them "go" to work, learn online, and access essential services.

Agile regulations have also helped digital technologies offer critical support to people in fragile and conflict situations. In Ukraine, the presence of a strong internet connection through satellite links, even while terrestrial infrastructure is under attack, has enabled the government to communicate with its citizens in real time. At the beginning of the war, shelling and cyberattacks were predicted to take down the internet, but innovations such as the satellite hookups have kept the country online. Here, too, the Ukrainian government moved quickly to speed up permissions and adapt rules.

But a digital lifeline is effective only if it is safeguarded from cyberattack, something that Ukraine knows well. For many years, the country has been a testing ground for strikes on infrastructure. Hackers carried out waves of attacks that hit Ukraine's

distribution centers, call centers, and power grid. And it's not just Ukraine. All countries are vulnerable to these incursions. The United States fell victim to cyberattacks last year that took down its largest fuel pipeline, leaving many Americans in long lines to fill their gas tanks. And in Africa, Kenyan internet users endured more than 14 million malware incidents in 2020.

Like cyberattacks, nature can cause damage to communications infrastructure that demands an agile reaction. A volcanic eruption in January sent the island nation of Tonga into digital darkness. The eruption cut Tonga's single undersea telecom cable and threw the country into 38 days of isolation from internet and much of the outside world. This crisis has prompted discussions about how to strengthen the network and emergency-response systems, so Tongans are not at risk of digital darkness again.

To mitigate such vulnerabilities, unleashing digitalisation needs to be a high priority even in periods of relative calm. Potentially transformative yet fast-evolving technologies require policymakers to promote financing, regulations, and institutions that make it

easier to test out new ideas in real life. Some countries are starting to make progress. Kazakhstan is using agile regulation to digitalise, decentralise, and decarbonise its vitally important energy operations.

Unlocking the potential of digitalisation for the masses through well-targeted regulation can also help close the digital divide and improve welfare. Recent research has shown that the availability of cheaper internet access increases employment among low-income households. With the world facing multiple emergencies, policymakers need to mobilise digital connectivity to improve the daily welfare of the most vulnerable populations. Right now, innovation is moving so fast that many officials, especially in developing countries, are finding it hard to keep up and ensure that the benefits of digitalisation reach the people who need them most. But we should not need a crisis to accelerate the transformation. Now is the time to build a digital lifeline – before the next disaster hits.

*The writer is Vice President for Infrastructure at World Bank.*

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## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

## Reconsider decision

Sir, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has informed the Parliament that extending concession to senior citizens of the country tantamounts to financial burden on the Ministry. Quoting the figures for the fiscal 2019-20, he has apprised the House that as much as ₹1667 crore has been spent towards concession to the elders. He has further advised through the august House that the senior citizens should not move out during the pandemic. Senior citizens have personal and social commitments and they have to discharge them by visiting their near and dear ones. As such, the Minister should reconsider the decision taken by his Ministry for the well-being of the senior citizens of the country whose contribution to the nation building process can hardly be undermined. Reversing the decision would be a fitting tribute to this section of our society in the 75th year of our Independence which is being observed as Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

*Sanjib Kumar Das, CUTTACK*

## Participative democracy

Sir, As expected, NDA's presidential candidate Droupadi Murmu was declared the winner by a huge margin of votes. This is the beauty of Indian democracy that a woman from a tribal community has been elected to the highest constitutional position. She has become the first tribal leader and the second woman (after Pratibha Patil) to be elected President of India. Her elevation to the top constitutional post is a landmark in the country's post-Independence history. May this victory mean that there should be a really big change in the lives of Dalits, deprived women and tribals of the country. Marginalised and victimised over the decades, more than 700 Scheduled Tribes with a total population of around 10 crore can now hope that their pressing issues will be highlighted and addressed at the highest level. The tribal community has been grappling with poverty, denial of rights, loss of agricultural land and traditional livelihoods, displacement triggered by industrialisation, deforestation and mining operations, and lack of access to the government's welfare schemes. It is no secret that even after seven decades of Independence, the marginalised sections have to go through various levels of struggle to gain representation and participation. Now after Droupadi Murmu was elected as the President, it can be said that the country has strengthened its democratic nature day by day and has taken concrete steps towards ensuring everyone's participation in it.

*Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR*

# national

of the day quote



The NRI Commission is collaborating with foreign countries for generating employment opportunities for the youth in the coastal state

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM



Food, clothing and housing are the basic needs of the people and so the prices should be affordable and bearable

DATTATREYA HOSABALE | RSS GENERAL SECRETARY



The Jharkhand Tourism Policy 2021 aims to revive, renew and revamp the tourism sector of the state, and to provide a different dimension and perspective as to how the world views the state

HEMANT SOORE | JHARKHAND CM

## SHORT TAKES

### 5 killed in blast

**Saran (Bihar):** At least five people, including a four-year-old child and a woman, have been killed and four others injured in a massive explosion in an illegal firecracker unit in Bihar's Saran district on Sunday, police said. The blast was so powerful that the three-storey building in Khodaibag Bazar from which it was operating collapsed, Saran Superintendent of Police Santosh Kumar said.

### 11 jawans injured

**Giridih:** As many as 11 jawans of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were injured after the vehicle carrying them fell into a pit in Jharkhand's Giridih district Sunday, police said. The incident took place on Dumri road near Latkato forest in Madhuban police station area around 3 pm when the CRPF vehicle lost its balance and fell into the pit, the police said. Madhuban police station in charge Mrityunjay Singh said the bus was heading towards Chatra from Madhuban.

### Sharp shooters held

**Lucknow:** Three sharp shooters from Bihar were injured in an encounter with the police in Lucknow Sunday. The sharp shooters belong to the Raees Khan gang of Bihar, according to police officials. They are wanted in the murder of Virendra Thakur. DCP east Prachi Singh said that the police had received a tip off about the presence of criminals in the area.

### Boy ends life

**Sultanpur:** A day after the announcement of board exam results, the body of a 15-year-old boy was found hanging from the ceiling here. The boy had locked himself in a room in his home after he failed to clear the Class 10 examinations. His family members thought he 'needed time' to overcome the 'grief' and left him alone. Saturday, his parents left for Lucknow, and then his friends came to meet him. They knocked on the door and on finding no response from inside, they called the neighbours, who broke open the door to find the boy hanging from the ceiling.

### Liquor shop robbed

**Gurugram:** A liquor shop was allegedly robbed at gunpoint at Bakhtawar Chowk in sector-47, Gurugram. CCTV footage from the liquor shop shows two men walking into the store and approaching the salesman. One of them took out a handgun while the second demanded cash from the salesman. The cashier complied and the men got away with an unknown amount of cash late Saturday night.



GST on scientific equipment needed by research institutions and universities raised from 5% to 12-18%. This unkind act is after reducing the budget allocation of the Ministry of Science by 3.9% from last year

P. CHIDAMBARAM | FORMER FINANCE MINISTER

### PARK DEDICATED TO COVID MARTYRS

A unique park to remember those who lost their lives due to Covid-19 was unveiled in Hyderabad Sunday



## FAREWELL ADDRESS

# PROTECT ENVIRONMENT: KOVIND

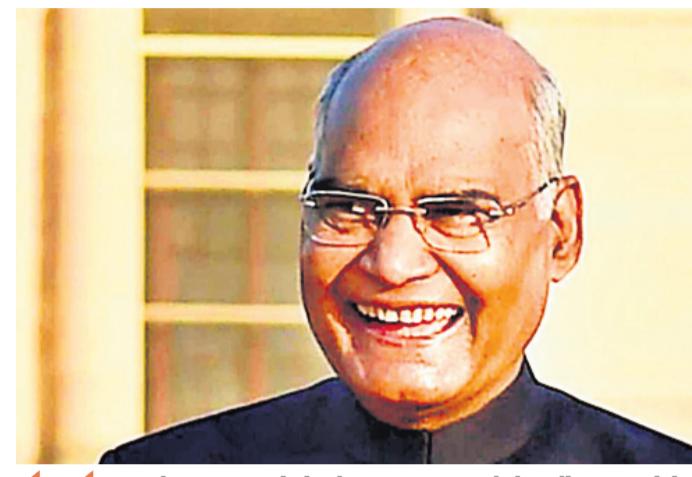
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 24: Mother Nature is in deep agony and the climate crisis can endanger the very future of this planet, outgoing President Ram Nath Kovind said in his farewell address to the nation on Sunday as he appealed to all to protect the environment for the coming generations.

Emphasising that the country is getting equipped to make the 21st century "the century of India", Kovind highlighted the importance of health-care and education and said these, along with economic reforms, would enable citizens to pursue happiness by discovering their potential. President-elect Droupadi Murmu will be sworn in as the country's 15th President on Monday.

In his last televised address to the nation, Kovind said, "The pandemic has underlined the need to further improve the public healthcare infrastructure. I am glad that the government has accorded top priority to this task." Once education and healthcare are in place, economic reforms will let citizens find the best course for their lives, he said, adding that "I firmly believe that our country is getting equipped to make the 21st century, the century of India". He said the National Education Policy will go a long way in making it possible for young Indians to connect with their heritage and also find their feet in the twenty-first century.

The President made a special



Mother Nature is in deep agony and the climate crisis can endanger the very future of this planet. We must take care of our environment, our land, air and water for the sake of our children

RAM NATH KOVIND | OUTGOING PRESIDENT

mention of the threat to the environment and asked all citizens to take care of it for future generations. "Mother Nature is in deep agony and the climate crisis can endanger the very future of this planet. We must take care of our environment, our land, air and water for the sake of our children. In our daily lives and routine choices, we must be more careful to protect our trees, rivers, seas and mountains as well as all other living beings. As the first citizen, if I have to give one advice to my fellow citizens, it has to be this," he added. President Kovind also hailed the trinity of ideals of liberty,

equality and fraternity, saying they must not be mistaken as abstractions because they "are lofty, noble and uplifting". "Our history, not only of modern times but also from ancient times, reminds us that they are real; that they can be realised, and indeed have been realised in different eras.

"Our ancestors and founders of our modern nation exemplified the meaning of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity with hard work and an attitude of service. We only have to follow in their footsteps and keep walking," he said. And what do such ideals mean for a common citi-

zen today? Kovind asked.

"I believe the chief goal is to help them discover the joy of living. For that, first of all, their basic necessities must be taken care of," the president emphasised.

During his address, the President went down memory lane to highlight the inherent power of vibrant democratic institutions. Kovind recalled his earlier days when the country had just achieved independence and said, "There was a fresh wave of energy to rebuild the country; there were new dreams. I too had a dream, that one day I would be able to participate in a meaningful way in this nation-building exercise".

"A young boy living in a mud house could not have any idea about the highest Constitutional office of the Republic. But it is a testament to the strength of India's democracy that it has created pathways to let each citizen take part in the shaping of our collective destiny." If that Ram Nath Kovind from village Parasnath is addressing you today, it is solely thanks to the inherent power of our vibrant democratic institutions," he said.

In his farewell speech on the eve of his completing five-year tenure as the President, Kovind said the founders of our modern nation exemplified the meaning of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity with hard work and an attitude of service, and "we only have to follow in their footsteps and keep walking".



schools. Crores of rupees in cash along with other items were allegedly recovered from Mukherjee's residence, sources said. Chatterjee and Mukherjee were arrested as part of ED's investigation into the scam.

After hearing pleadings in a revision application moved by the ED challenging a lower court order sending Chatterjee to state-run SSKM Hospital after his lawyers claimed he was ill, Justice Chaudhuri directed, "The investigating agency is directed to take the accused by air ambulance to AIIMS, Bhubaneswar Monday by air ambulance.

The court directed that the minister be produced before a special ED court in Kolkata through virtual mode at 4 pm Monday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, July 24: The Calcutta High Court Sunday directed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to take West Bengal minister Partha Chatterjee, arrested in connection with the school jobs scam, to AIIMS Bhubaneswar Monday by air ambulance.

The court directed that the minister be produced before a special ED court in Kolkata through virtual mode at 4 pm Monday TMC, on the other hand, demanded a time-bound probe in the ED case against Chatterjee, asserting the party will not interfere politically if any leader has done anything wrong.

ED also produced the senior TMC leader's associate Arpita Mukherjee before a court, which remanded her to one-day custody of the agency. ED personnel raided several locations in the state July 22 as part of their probe into the money trail involved in a teacher recruitment scam at government-sponsored and aided SSKM Hospital.

## Man asks cops not to urinate, thrashed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, July 24: Kerala police has suspended the three policemen who allegedly beat up a man for objecting to them urinating outside the walls of his house near Kilimanoor here.

Top officials of the state police confirmed that the three policemen were suspended, pending departmental enquiry, on Saturday itself hours after the incident was reported.

Besides the departmental enquiry, the three would also be facing criminal proceedings as an FIR was also lodged the same day against them, police said.

An officer of Kilimanoor police station said an FIR was lodged Saturday afternoon itself when the incident happened and the accused were also arrested. While refusing to give details of the FIR or the sections under which the accused

were booked, the officer said they were released on station bail after their arrest was recorded.

The victim, however, had alleged that police took no action on his complaint, delayed various procedures, like recording his statement, and repeatedly tried to settle the matter.

According to the victim-complainant, the accused are posted at Changannassery police station in Kottayam district of Kerala and were on their way to a police association meeting when the incident occurred.

The complainant told a TV channel that when he objected to the accused urinating outside the boundary wall of his home, they hit him on both sides of the head and also injured his hands.

Thereafter, they left the scene in the vehicle which he chased down and removed its key, the complainant said.

## Jt theatre commands of tri-services soon: Rajnath

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, July 24: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Sunday said the Centre has decided to set up joint theatre commands of the tri-services to enhance coordination among the armed forces.

The defence minister also said India is moving quickly from being the world's largest importer of defence equipment to an exporter.



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh felicitates family members of a martyr during a programme commemorating 'Kargil Vijay Diwas' in Jammu

He was speaking during a programme organised by the Jammu Kashmir People's Forum at Gulshan Ground near Jammu University here to pay tributes to the martyrs of the Indian Armed Forces.

"Keeping in view joint operations as seen in Operation Vijay in Kargil, we have decided to set up joint theatre commands (in the country)," Singh said. Paying tributes to the Kargil martyrs, the de-

fence minister said the country cannot forget their supreme sacrifice to safeguard the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

"It is the duty of the society and the people to give their utmost respect to the martyrs and their families," he said. "Whatever support you can offer, do it for their families. It is the responsibility of each citizen," he added.

## Major parties 'headless' in UP ahead of 2024 elections

The Congress remains in a self-demolition mode. The party has been headless since March, when it faced its worst ever drubbing in the Assembly polls

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, July 24: Even as political parties across the country have already started preparing for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, major political parties in Uttar Pradesh remain in a state of disarray after the Assembly elections held earlier this year.

Major political parties in Uttar Pradesh are 'headless' and their organisations directionless. Most parties are apparently working out caste arithmetic for the next Lok Sabha elections before they appoint a state head. Some are even waiting for rival parties to an-

"It has been four months since we had a full-time president and this

nounce their state presidents before they do so. The state's ruling BJP has been working without a full-time state president since March this year. The incumbent Swatantra Dev Singh is now a minister in the Yogi Adityanath government and is mainly preoccupied with his ministerial duties.

While the functioning of the BJP organisation has not been affected because party programmes are been efficiently carried out by the office bearers of the party, the absence of a full-time state president is impacting the party.

SP President Akhilesh Yadav has dissolved all organisational units of

does take away from the organization because Swatantra Dev Singh has his ministerial work to attend to," said a party functionary. The Samajwadi Party (SP) also seems to be in complete disarray at the moment.

SP President Akhilesh Yadav has

dissolved all organisational units of

the party and allies are either being shown the door or have left on their own. A section of the party leaders is speaking out against Akhilesh Yadav and Muslim MLAs and MPs are making their disillusionment with the party policies clear.

For a party that aims to make big

gains in the next Lok Sabha elec-

tions, the SP needs to build up a robust organisation, address issues being raised by the senior leaders and also mobilise cadres. The refusal of Akhilesh Yadav to pull up his socks where his party is concerned, could land the SP into a Congress-like situation, sooner than later.

The Congress, meanwhile, re-

mains in a self-demolition mode.

The party has been headless since March, when it faced its worst ever drubbing in the Assembly polls. It does not have a state presi-

dent and general secretary in charge Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has visited Lucknow only once in five months, that too barely for a few hours. The party is being run either by third and fourth rung leaders who belong to Team Priyanka or by paid employees.

"We have stopped even visiting

the party office because there is no political activity or discussion. In fact, we do not even recognise majority of the people there. The party has transformed itself into an NGO," said a former UPCC president.

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), meanwhile, remains directionless when it comes to its political direction. A former BSP MLA said: "We do not know whether we are going right or left in the next elections. Going by Mayawati's tweets, nearly 60 per cent are in BJP's favour while 40 per cent are against it. We do not know what to make of it."

He said that the cadres were confused about whether the party would position itself against the SP, as it did in Azamgarh Lok Sabha by-elections, or against BJP in the 2024 elections.



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"We have stopped even visiting



## CPI comes out against CPM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Thiruvananthapuram, July 24:** The Communist Party of India (CPI) has come out strongly against the CPM, saying that there was a deliberate attempt to brand the Left Democratic Front (LDF) in Kerala as Pinarayi Vijayan government.

Party members who were participating in the Thiruvananthapuram district committee meeting spoke about the need for internal discussions on the government. They said that there were no such attempts in the previous LDF governments led by E.K. Nayanar, P.K. Vasudevan Nair or V.S. Achuthanandan, asserting that branding an LDF government was not acceptable according to communist ideals.

The party members also blamed the home ministry under Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, and said that the state police was drawing flak from the general society for its failures and even its high-handedness including lockup torture and murders. The members that the Chief Minister travelling in a cavalcade of more than 40 vehicles was unheard of in the history of Kerala, also charged the state CPI leadership for keeping a studied silence on the matter.

The members stated that the state CPI leadership was not giving any concrete opinion on the environmental issues being mishandled by the Left government led by the CPM.

The members also said that the K-Rail was a classic example in which the government and the Left front became unacceptable to the general public.

## Delhi Police hired 100 photographers to capture Cong moves

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 24:** In a first of its kind move, the Delhi Police hired 100 private photographers to cover all happenings, including Congress protests, around the headquarters of the Enforcement Directorate when the Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi were summoned there for questioning.

The strategic move, a senior police official said, was done by the department to keep an eye on any untoward incident that may have arisen due to Congress' workers protest during this time.

Delhi Police has never hired private photographers for such situations. It hired the photographers from private event management companies through which the photographers were deployed in and around the ED headquarters.

These photographers were paid around Rs 2,000 per head to 4,000 per head based on their experience, and thus, the Delhi Police paid around Rs 2 lakh to 4 four lakh for the coverage.

These camera persons were also given a police jacket to put on so that they could be identified among the crowd.

One of the photographers, who was present at A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Road, told IANS that he was being paid Rs 2,000 per day and was asked to click photos when Sonia Gandhi came to the ED headquarters. He



refused to be named.

Akash, of Sky Global firm through which the photographers were hired/deployed, told IANS that 30 photographers were sent to the spot when Sonia Gandhi came for the questioning.

He said different amounts were paid to each camera persons.

"On the first day of questioning of Rahul Gandhi, around 30 photographers were sent. This questioning went on for five days but on the next four days we sent only 10 photographers each day. When Sonia Gandhi came to the ED headquarters, we sent 30 photographers," he said.

Senior Delhi Police officials, specially DCP Headquarters, were contacted for their response but no one was available to comment on the matter.

A senior police official only said that if the photographers were used by the department to keep an eye on any untoward incident, nothing was wrong.



**What does Modi want to prove by putting his picture in the programme of Delhi government? Who does not know your (Modi) name, face and photos. But this act of hijacking a programme has made it clear that there is a fear of Arvind Kejriwal instilled in your heart**

GOPAL RAI | DELHI ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

tion if the banners carrying pictures of PM Modi were removed. They threatened the officers involved in the preparation to step back, while the banners belonging to the AAP government were torn down, he claimed. The lieutenant governor and the chief minister were supposed to attend the event and all preparations had been made, he said.

An event of the Kejriwal government has been turned into a political event of PM Modi and he was not even going to attend it..

Following the incident, the Delhi chief minister and I have now decided not to participate in the programme," he said. Rai said that attempts are being made to malign the Delhi government and alleged that Satyendar Jain was ar-

rested on "frivolous charges", and a conspiracy is now being hatched to arrest Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

The CM had to go to Singapore but the file was blocked, he said. Saxena had on Thursday written to Kejriwal advising him not to go for the World Cities Summit to be held in Singapore from July 31, stating that it was a conference of mayors.

Rai alleged the incidents that have transpired in the last one and half months could not have happened "without the go ahead from the PMO." "Who doesn't know your face and name, PM Modi ... But sending police to put up your photos in the dark of the night shows you are extremely afraid of the rising popularity of

Kejriwal. This is not good for democracy," he said.

The minister said the police are supposed to ensure the safety and security of people and not put up banners of PM Modi. "I wonder what message they want to send out to people. This is not the first time we are conducting a tree plantation event."

Rai told reporters that the banners carrying pictures of PM Modi had been put up on an LED screen installed to show educational programmes to children. "We do not want to fight anyone. We will continue our plantation drive. So far, we have planted around 9 lakh saplings. The target is to plant 35 lakh saplings this year," he said. The minister said more than 2.10 crore saplings have been planted in Delhi since Kejriwal came to power in 2014.

He said the plantation drives have played a crucial role in curbing air pollution in the capital, reducing PM 2.5 and PM 10 concentrations by 25 per cent in the past five years.

### BOOSTING EMPLOYMENT

## Delhi govt to develop food hubs



**Delhi has various food hubs known for serving different cuisines. Some of the hubs serve all varieties of food. So, in the first phase, we will develop Majnu Ka Tila, a favourite of the Delhi University students, and Chandni Chowk food hubs. Based on the learnings from these, we will develop other areas**

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

and is also famous for Asian cuisine and similarly Chandni Chowk is also known for a variety of street food.

The Chief Minister said they will soon hold a design competition for the architecture of the food hubs.

**Light rains in some parts of national capital**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 24:** Delhi Sunday witnessed rains in some parts with the mercury settling at 27.1 degrees Celsius, the weather office said.

There was rainfall in west Delhi's Paschim Vihar area and east Delhi's Laxmi Nagar, while Shahdara and few other parts experienced some drizzle, it said. The relative humidity at 8:30 am was 79 per cent, it said.

According to the India Meteorological Department, the city will witness a generally cloudy sky with the possibility of light rain and thundershowers. The maximum temperature is likely to settle at 35 degrees Celsius.

On Saturday, the minimum temperature reached 25.5 degrees Celsius, two notches below the average while the maximum temperature settled at 34.9 degrees Celsius.

**Thiruvananthapuram, July 24:** The Kerala government has decided to hoist the national flag in all houses, educational institutions, government, semi-governmental organisations in the state as part of the 75th Independence Day celebrations.

The decision, as part of the Union government's Tricolour at

every home initiative, was announced in a district collectors' meeting called by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Saturday.

In the meeting, it was decided that state-wide celebrations would be organised as part of the Independence Day. "All houses, educational institutions, gov-

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 24:** After the detection of a monkeypox case in the capital on Sunday, which took the nation's case tally to four, city doctors have urged people to remain cautious but not to panic.

Globally, over 16,000 cases of monkeypox have been reported from 75 countries, including five deaths in Africa, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The UN health body on Saturday also declared the infection as a public health emergency of international concern.

Monkeypox is a viral disease that is typically identified with fever, rash and swollen lymph nodes along the skin lesions. However, it is a self-limiting disease and the patients recover within four weeks, health experts said.

"First of all, we have to understand that there is no need to panic. People need to be more cautious as monkeypox is a mild infection which has symptoms quite similar to smallpox," said Manisha Arora, senior consultant in internal medicine at Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute. "Monkeypox is spread among humans by respiratory

droplets and contacts with body fluids of patients. Hospital surveillance and isolation of cases re-

main the main intervention or prevention of infection spread. There is no need to panic," added Harshal

### MONKEYPOX IN DELHI



- Monkeypox is transmitted from infected animals to humans via indirect or direct contact
- Human-to-human transmission can occur through direct contact with infectious skin or lesions, including face-to-face, skin-to-skin, and respiratory droplets
- Among the reported monkeypox cases, transmission appears to be occurring primarily through close physical contact, including sexual contact
- Transmission can also occur from contaminated materials such as linens, bedding, electronics and clothing carrying infectious skin particles

**The decision, as part of the Union government's Tricolour at every home' initiative, was announced in a district collectors' meeting called by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Saturday**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**All houses, institutions in Kerala to hoist national flag on I-Day**



ernment, semi-governmental institutions in the state will hoist the national flag as part of the 75th Independence Day celebrations...

The national flag will be hoisted from August 13 to 15.

The flags need not be lowered at night during this period as necessary changes have been

made in the Flag Code," the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said in a release.

District collectors have been instructed to include the Kudumbashree units along with Khadi and handloom sectors to prepare the national flags.

The flags will be distributed through students and if there are houses without school children, then the necessary arrangement will be made through the local self government institutions, it said.

The meeting directed the local self government bodies to ensure that all houses, public spaces and libraries hoist the flag and that the clubs and libraries organise various programmes in connection with the freedom struggle.

The school students will be taken to various places relevant to the national freedom struggle in the state and a booklet containing the prominent incidents related to the movement will be distributed, the release said.

Senior government officials, including the Chief Secretary, took part in the meeting.

### HOLY JOURNEY



Lord Shiva devotees or 'Kanwariyas' hold the tricolor as they carry holy water from the Ganga river during their pilgrimage in the month of 'Shravan' in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

# national

of the day quote

You must always rise above narrow considerations of caste, gender, religion and region and work for bringing unity, harmony and peace in society



M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

Trinamool Congress -- TMC -- stands for the Mountain of Corruption



ANURAG THAKUR | INFORMATION & BROADCASTING MINISTER

A 100-day special programme will be launched once the cabinet is expanded to resolve issues of people in a time-bound manner



EKNATH SHINDE | MAHARASHTRA CM

## SHORT TAKES

### Student dies in Hyd

**Hyderabad:** A 21-year-old engineering student died after falling from the second floor of a hostel building in Hyderabad. The incident occurred late Saturday night at the Lakshmi Durga women's hostel in B.N. Reddy Nagar under Vanasthalipuram police station limits of Rachakonda Police Commissionerate. The student, who was talking to his friends while sitting on railings, lost balance and fell on the ground, police said quoting the eye-witnesses.

### 9-yr-old girl raped

**Bhopal:** A nine-year-old girl was raped by a watchman in a government-run school in Bhopal, police said. The incident took place in the school located in the state capital's Khohefiza area on Friday and the matter came to light after the victim's parents lodged a complaint on Saturday. According to the police, the victim, a student of the school, had gone to the bathroom and finding her alone there, the accused, raped her.

### 1 dead, 3 injured

**New Delhi:** A 20-year-old man was killed while three others suffered injuries after the roof of a house collapsed in northeast Delhi on Sunday morning, a Fire Department official said. The deceased was identified as Sufiyan while the injured were identified as Suleman (father of Sufiyan), Sabina and Laiba. The official informed that they received a call about the incident at around 5 a.m. at Babu Nagar, Gali number - 5, Mustafabad, in northeast Delhi after which three fire tenders were rushed to the spot.

### Three cops killed

**Amaravati:** Three Karnataka police officers were killed and three others injured in a road accident in Andhra Pradesh's Chittoor district Sunday. The accident occurred along the Tirupati-Chittoor highway when the car in which they were travelling overturned and fell off the road after hitting a road divider. The accident took place near Choutapalli village in Puthalappattu mandal early Sunday morning when the vehicle was heading to Tirupati from Chittoor.

### Hathras SP removed

**Hathras:** Vikas Kumar Vaidya, the Superintendent of Police (SP) in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district, has been removed following the death of six Kanwariyas in a road accident. Vaidya has been posted as commandant PAC in Mirzapur. He has been replaced by Devesh Kumar Pandey who takes over as the new SP. On Saturday, six kanwariyas were killed after being hit by a dumper truck near Sadabahad in Hathras.



What will be the future of thousands of 'Agniveers' retiring after 4-year contracts? With this new experiment of the Prime Minister's laboratory, both the security of the country and the future of the youth are in danger

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

## CBSE results of overseas Indian schools touch lowest level since 2019

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 24:** Overseas schools affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) could not repeat their past performance in the board examinations this year which have fallen to the lowest level since 2019.

According to the Board, there are CBSE affiliated schools in countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Bahrain, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Malaysia, Nigeria, Qatar, Oman, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Tanzania and Thailand.

Giving a detailed report, CBSE said that 18,834 students had registered themselves for Class 12 abroad. Out of these, 18,774 stu-

per cent students getting passed,

is much better than that of Class 12.

Despite this, even in Class 10, these

CBSE schools could not repeat their

past performance. CBSE had made

elaborate arrangements to conduct

of examinations in India and 26

countries.

According to the Board, there

are CBSE affiliated schools in

countries such as Afghani-

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# international

of the day quote

Russia must stop its aggression and fully implement the grain deal to which it has agreed

ANTONY BLINKEN | US SECRETARY OF STATE



The message is to the Chinese military, in the air and at sea, have become significantly more and noticeably more aggressive in this particular region

GEN MARK MILLEY | CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, US



This (attack) proves only one thing: no matter what Russia says and promises, it will find ways not to implement it. Geopolitically, with weapons, bloody or not, but it has several vectors, as it always acts

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY | UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT



## SHORT TAKES

### Israeli forces kill two in gun battle

Nablus (West Bank): Israeli troops and special forces on an arrest mission exchanged fire with Palestinians barricaded in a house in the occupied West Bank Sunday, Israeli police said. The local rescue service said two Palestinians were killed. Israeli police said a number of armed Palestinians were killed during the hours-long battle deep inside the city of Nablus, without specifying.

### Flash floods leave 9 dead

Sanaa: Heavy seasonal rains drove flash floods through Yemen and left at least nine people dead, official media reported Sunday. The casualties were reported in the capital of Sanaa and the southwestern province of Dhamar, where it began raining late last week, the Houthi-run Sanaa Radio said. Both Sanaa and Dhamar are held by the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels who have been warring since 2014 with the internationally recognized government which is aided by a Saudi-led coalition.

### Protests in Balochistan

Quetta: Protests were held in Turbat and the provincial capital Quetta in Balochistan against the alleged "fake encounter" of Baloch missing persons by the Pakistani security forces in Ziarat, media reports said. The families of the victims staged a three-day sit-in protest in front of the Governor's house in Quetta and warned that if the culprits of the Ziarat incident are not brought to justice, the protests will be expanded throughout the province indefinitely, Balochistan Post reported.

### Taiwan's jobless rate rises to new high

Taipei: Taiwan's unemployment rate rose to 3.74 per cent in June, setting a new high since November 2021, the island's statistics agency said Sunday. A total of 442,000 people on the island became unemployed in June, 8,000 or 1.87 percent, more than the last month, Xinhua news quoted the agency as saying. The unemployment rate over the past six months is 3.66 per cent on average, down 0.27 percentage points from the same period last year, it added.

### Pope in Canada

Edmonton: Pope Francis began a fraught visit to Canada Sunday to apologize to Indigenous peoples for abuses by missionaries at residential schools, a key step in the Catholic Church's efforts to reconcile with Native communities and help them heal from generations of trauma. Francis flew from Rome to Edmonton, Alberta, where his welcoming party included Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mary Simon, an Inuk who is Canada's first Indigenous governor general.



As Prime Minister, I am determined to see the Rwanda policy through to full implementation as well as exploring other countries where we can work on similar partnership. I'll make sure we have the right levels of force and protection at our borders

LIZ TRUSS | PM CANDIDATE, UK

### SAKURAJIMA VOLCANO ERUPTS

A volcano on Japan's main southern island of Kyushu erupted Sunday night, spewing ash and rocks. There were no immediate reports of damage or injuries in nearby towns but residents were advised to evacuate



## WILDFIRE NEAR YOSEMITE California Governor declares emergency

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**San Francisco, July 24:** Authorities have declared a state of emergency in part of California as a wildfire continued to rage near the Yosemite National Park.

The state of emergency has been declared in Mariposa County and in a statement, California Governor Gavin Newsom said the flames were being "driven by hot, dry weather and drought conditions".

The fast-moving wildfire, dubbed the Oak Fire, grew to 6,555 acres (about 26.5 square km) overnight, prompting mandatory evacuation orders, Xinhua news agency.

The wildfire ignited on Friday afternoon in Mariposa County and was still zero contained as of Saturday, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire).

It is about 50 km away from Yosemite Valley, near Yosemite National Park, one of the most popular national parks in the US.

The blaze had destroyed at least 10 structures and damaged another five by Saturday, threatening 2,000 other structures, Cal Fire said. "Fire activity is extreme with

frequent runs, spot fires and group torching. Emergency personnel are working to safely evacuate people and are actively engaged in protecting structures," said Cal Fire, noting that explosive fire behaviour is challenging over 400 firefighters on the spot.

It is now "one of California's largest wildfires of the year", the Los Angeles Times said in a report.

Some residents were forced to temporarily evacuate and some roads in the area, including one major highway to Yosemite, were closed.

With the Oak Fire, the streak of relatively modest and non-destructive wildfires in California so far this season appears to be over, said Daniel Swain, a climate scientist at the University of California, Los Angeles.

He added that record vegetation dryness and less stable atmospheric conditions will likely favour plume-dominated behaviour at times.

Swain estimated that the Oak Fire will very likely surpass 10,000 acres (around 40.46 square km) in less than 24 hours.



Firefighters work to keep the Oak Fire from reaching a home in the Jerseydale community of Mariposa County, California

PTI PHOTO

## RAGING INFERNO



## Ukraine working to resume grain exports

REUTERS



Firefighters work at a site of a Russian missile strike in a sea port of Odesa, as Russia's attack on Ukraine continues

## Lavrov visits Egypt, part of Africa trip amid Ukraine war

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Cairo, July 24:** Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is in Cairo for talks on Sunday with Egyptian officials as his country seeks to break diplomatic isolation and sanctions by the West over its invasion of Ukraine.

Lavrov landed in Cairo late Saturday, the first leg of his Africa trip that will also include stops in Ethiopia, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, according to Russia's state-run RT.

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry said Foreign Minister Sameh Shukry was holding talks with Lavrov Sunday morning.

The Russian chief diplomat was scheduled to meet later Sunday with the Arab League Secretary General Ahmed Aboul Gheit. He will also address the permanent representatives of the pan-Arab organisation, RT reported.

The war has disrupted shipments of Russian products because shipping and insurance companies did not want to deal with Western sanctions on the country.

African countries are among those most affected by ripples of the war. The prices of vital commodities skyrocketed and billions of dollars in aid have been directed to help those who fled the war in Europe. That has left millions of people in conflict areas in Africa and the Middle East suffering from worsening food shortages in food and other assistance.

"We know that the African colleagues does not approve of the undisguised attempts of the US and their European satellites to gain the upper hand, and to impose a unipolar world order to the international community," he wrote in the article, which also was published in four African newspapers.

Lavrov's meetings with Egyptian officials and Arab envoys in Cairo come less than two weeks after US President Joe Biden's Mideast trip.



Russia's war in Ukraine has had dire effects on the world economy, driving up oil and gas prices to unprecedented levels

Ukraine is one of the world's largest exporters of wheat, corn and sunflower oil, but Russia's invasion of the country and naval blockade of its ports have halted shipments

Some Ukrainian grain is transported through Europe by rail, road and river, but with higher transportation costs

Seeking to rally African nations on his country's side, he hailed what he called "an independent path" such nations took when they refrained from joining the West in sanctioning Russia.

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Lavrov's meetings with Egyptian officials and Arab envoys in Cairo come less than two weeks after US President Joe Biden's Mideast trip.

## 3 dead, 2 injured in Philippines varsity shooting

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Manila, July 24:** At least three people were killed and two others injured on Sunday during a shooting incident at a university in the Philippines, police said.

The Metro Manila Development Authority confirmed that the shooting took place at 2.55 p.m. at the gate of Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City, reports Xinhua news agency.

"A guard was killed," Quezon City Police District Director Remus Medina told local media.

The Philippine National Police said the shooter seized a car and attempted to escape, but was caught up by the police.

The National Bureau of Investigation agents were also dispatched to the field "to investigate and extend assistance to the victims and school authority".

The campus is "currently on lockdown", said the university.

Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Alexander Gesmundo was supposed to attend the law school's graduation ceremony on Sunday afternoon, which was cancelled in the wake of the incident. Supreme Court spokesperson Brian Hosaka said Gesmundo was "in transit when the shooting happened and was advised to turn back".

Newly elected President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. promised to have the attack swiftly investigated and those behind the killings brought to justice. He is scheduled to address a joint session of Congress at the House of Representatives on Monday also in Quezon city, where police and other law enforcers had imposed a gun ban and heightened security before the shooting.

Lavrov's meetings with Egyptian officials and Arab envoys in Cairo come less than two weeks after US President Joe Biden's Mideast trip.

In an article posted on the Russian Foreign Ministry website, Lavrov rejected the West's accusations that Russia is responsible for the global food crisis, as "another attempt to shift the blame to others".



In the next couple of hours, the Wentian will rendezvous and then dock with the Tiangong station's Tianhe core module, the CMSA said.

After that the three-member crew mission commanders - Senior Colonel Chen Dong, Senior Colonel

Liu Yang and Senior Colonel Cai Xuzhe currently building Tiangong station - will enter the lab module to check its condition and internal equipment, it said. In the coming weeks, Wentian will be repositioned by a robotic apparatus from the forward docking port to

a lateral port, where it will remain and be prepared for long-term operation, it said.

To prepare for the Wentian's arrival, a cargo spacecraft Tianzhou 3 detached from the Tiangong station on July 17 and it will be guided by ground controllers to fall back to Earth in due course, it said.

Currently, Tiangong consists of the Tianhe module, the Tianzhou 4 cargo ship and the Shenzhou XIV spacecraft.

Wentian lab features cutting-edge technologies, strong capabilities, and sophisticated design and represents a new milestone in China's space industry, state-run China Daily reported.

It consists of three major parts - a crew working compartment, an airlock cabin and an unpressurized service module.

Once ready, China's low-flying

The giant Long March-5B Y3 carrier rocket, carrying Wentian, blasted off from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site on the coast of the southern island province of Hainan, according to the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA)

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Beijing, July 24:** China Sunday successfully launched the first lab module for its under-construction space station, the latest step in the country's ambitious programme to complete it by year's end. The new module will function

both as a backup of the core module, Tianhe, and as a powerful scientific experiment platform in the space station currently being built by the country.

China is on the track to completing the construction of its space station as it successfully launched the first lab module, state-run People's Daily reported. The construction of China's space station called Tiangong is expected to be completed this year. It will then evolve from a single-module structure into a national space laboratory with three modules - the core module, Tianhe, and two lab modules, Wentian and Mengtian. The Tianhe module was launched in April 2021, and the Mengtian module is set to be launched in October this year; the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

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Once ready, China's low-flying

# business

of the day quote



**Imagine if I start selling one movie on Netflix at ₹10 in cash, it is going to crash down their servers. So to cater to this mass segment which we call Bharat. We are in talks with Netflix already**

ANAND KUMAR BAJAJ | FOUNDER MD & CEO, PAYNEARBY

## BANKING STOCKS RALLY ON RISING RATES

Helped by rising interest rates, expanding retail loan book and improved credit quality, many banking stocks have outperformed broader market indices this year and experts are hopeful of a continuing rally as long as there are no major macroeconomic headwinds



## MORE PAIN AHEAD

# ₹ faces risk of plunging to 82'



Last week, the rupee depreciated to a life-time low of 80.06 a dollar

ECB raised its benchmark deposit rate by 50 basis points

US Fed is also expected to raise policy rates by another 75 basis points

strong in the immediate term, ICRA expects the rupee may weaken to 81/USD in Q2 FY2023.

According to Nomura, the rupee may see 82 level during the July-September quarter due to multiple headwinds including weakening India BoP dynamics and Fed hikes during the year.

Trade deficit ballooned to a record \$26.18 billion in June due to costlier imports of crude oil, coal and gold. The deficit widened to \$70.80 billion in April-June this fiscal. The country's foreign exchange reserves had declined by \$7.541 billion to \$572.712 billion in the week ended July 15.



FPIs INVESTED NET ₹1,099 CRORE IN EQUITIES DURING JULY 1-22

SO FAR THIS YEAR, FPIs PULLED OUT AROUND ₹2.16 LAKH CRORE; HIGHEST-EVER

FPIs INFUSED A NET AMOUNT OF ₹792 CRORE IN THE DEBT MARKET

RUSSIA-Ukraine DEAL OF OPENING THE BORDER FOR FOOD GRAINS EXPORT IS ALSO A BIG BOOST

## Nearly \$14bn sell-off drives biggest global equity funds outflow

Global equity funds recorded their biggest weekly outflow in five weeks in the week to July 20, on investor caution ahead of crucial central bank meetings in which rate hikes are expected to be announced. According to Refinitiv Lipper, investors offloaded a net \$13.79 billion worth of global equity funds, marking the biggest weekly outflow since June 15. US and European equities funds booked withdrawals of \$8.45 billion and \$5.6 billion, respectively, although investors poured about \$740 million in Asian equity funds. Sectoral data showed financial, consumer discretionary and metals and mining funds witnessed outflows of \$995 million, \$445 million and \$416 million, respectively, but healthcare gained \$511 million in inflows.

# FPIs return to Indian equities

*Due to the headwinds in terms of rising inflation and tightening monetary policy there has been an exodus of FPIs from Indian equity markets over the last nine months, since October 2021*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 24:** The relentless selling by foreign investors appears to have taken a breather as they have turned net buyers so far this month with an investment of nearly ₹1,100 crore in the Indian equity market.

This comes following a net withdrawal of ₹50,145 crore from equities in June. This was the highest net outflow since March 2020, when they had pulled out ₹61,973 crore from equities, data with depositaries showed.

According to data with depositaries, Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) invested a net amount of ₹1,099 crore in Indian equities during July 1-22. It appears that INR depreciation is almost over for now. The dollar index which had moved above 109 is now down to 107.21. This is one of the factors that have contributed to the change in FPI strategy," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

He further said that the present trend is likely to continue for the near-term. However, a lot will depend on the news from the US, relating to the economy and markets.

According to Morningstar India's Srivastava, the current buying by FPIs cannot be construed as a change in trend, or that FPIs have made a complete comeback.

The scenario is evolving, and it

## Major FMCG firms enter plant-based meat sector

*Plant-based meat is touted to be a healthier, safer and more sustainable alternative to animal products*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 24:** Big FMCG companies are entering the plant-based meat segment, targeting non-vegetarian consumers who are looking for an animal-protein replacement, besides a large section of vegetarians.

The segment which opened up two years back is estimated to touch around \$1 billion by 2030 and now products are available at e-commerce platforms and large retail chains in leading metros.

Besides, players are also targeting institutional clients in the HoReCa (hotel, restaurant and catering) segment and several Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) chains such as Domino's and Starbucks in India have included plant-based protein in their food menus.

Last week, Tata Consumer Product Ltd (TCPL) announced its entry into the plant-based meat products category, under a new brand 'Tata Simply Better' and introduced four variants - Nuggets, Burger Patty, Awadhi Seekh Kebab and Spicy Finger.

According to the Tata group FMCG arm, plant-based meats are at the forefront of the broader plant protein landscape, aimed at replicating the sensory and cultural resonance of animal-derived meat, but without the associated implications to the environment and health.

ITC had entered the segment earlier this year and according to Edelweiss Financial Services



**In this plant-based meat alternative, several startups such as Shaka Harry and Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma-funded Blue Tribe etc have entered grabbing the attention of the big companies**

Executive Director Abneesh Roy, over the long-term more FMCG companies would enter the segment.

"I think Nestle, HUL, Marico can evaluate whether to enter over the next five years if this category becomes large," said Roy.

Blue Tribe CCO Sohil Wazir said the plant-based meat market was almost non-existent two years back and in 2021 several brands ventured into this space. "In these two years, consumer awareness levels also went up with younger generations of Millennials, Gen Z and Gen Alpha making an irreversible shift towards conscious consumerism."

ITC had entered the segment earlier this year and according to Edelweiss Financial Services

**RIL, TCS LEAD  
Mcap of nine of top-10 companies surges ₹2.98L-cr**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 24:** Nine of the 10 most valued firms added ₹2.98 lakh crore to their market valuation last week amid a bullish trend in equities, with Reliance Industries and TCS emerging as lead gainers. Last week, the 30-share BSE benchmark jumped 2,314.45 points or 4.29 per cent.

Barring Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), the top 10 firms, including HDFC Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever Limited and ICICI Bank, added a total of ₹2,98,01.01 crore to their valuation.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Reliance Industries jumped ₹68,546.65 crore to ₹16,93,245.73 crore at close Friday. The valuation of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) shot up by ₹64,929.87 crore to ₹11,60,285.19 crore. ICICI Bank added ₹34,028.7 crore to its valuation at ₹5,56,526.81 crore.

The mcap of Infosys climbed ₹31,893.77 crore to ₹6,33,793.91 crore and that of State Bank of India by ₹30,968.4 crore to ₹4,58,457.30 crore. The valuation of Bajaj Finance rose by ₹20,636.69 crore to ₹3,78,774.69 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever by ₹16,811.32 crore to ₹6,20,362.58 crore.

HDFC Bank's valuation increased by ₹16,110.37 crore to ₹7,73,770.09 crore and that of HDFC climbed ₹14,579.24 crore to ₹4,16,701.23 crore. From the laggard, LIC's valuation declined by ₹12,396.99 crore to ₹4,35,707.27 crore. In the ranking of top 10 firms, Reliance emerged as the most valued firm, followed by TCS, HDFC, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, ICICI, SBI, LIC, HDFC and Bajaj Finance.

## Poised to be on the top in incense stick mkt: Anshul

*India's leading incense stick manufacturer Mysore Deep Perfumery House (MDPH) popular for its flagship agarbatti brand Zed Black launched the Cian series and Zed Black Odia range of incense sticks at an event organised in the holy city of Puri Sunday in the presence of Anshul Agrawal, Director; MDPH; Anand Oberoi, Chairman & Managing Director, Oberoi IBC*

*and actress Varsha Priyadarshini who felicitated all the distributors. Following are some excerpts from our conversation with MDPH director Anshul Agrawal*

### ■ How has been your journey so far in Odisha?

■ We entered the Odisha market a decade ago and since then the state continues to be the leading contributor to our brand with the love of the people of Odisha have shown towards our brands Zed Black 3-in-1, Manthan, Pineapple & Arij. It's now a celebration of growth as we host a retreat for our distributor network in this territory, and mark the new era of growth by launching 4 new variants especially for the people of Odisha. We are now poised to be the No.1 player in the market by achieving bigger milestones in the near future. We have a manufacturing unit in Jagatspur, Cuttack for the last eight years where women comprise 90 per cent of our workforce. We have plans to open a new unit in other places in the state which we will decide soon.

### ■ Why did you choose Puri for the event?

■ Puri is a special place for people of Odisha because of Jagannath culture and because we have completed 10 years in Odisha, we decided to organise this summit in Puri. Odisha holds important place in our business plans. We are focusing on Odisha because it's one of the highest consuming markets of agarbatti. Nine new agarbatti fragrance products were unveiled, four of them specifically for the state- Deep

Mogra, Deep Chandan, Deep Gulab and 3-in-1 Gold.

### ■ How competitive is the incense stick market?

■ We are in top 5 in every state across India. We are the second largest agarbatti market in India. We are the first agarbatti company who are not from south India. We have set a trend in the market for different fragrance including pineapple fragrance agarbatti.

### ■ What do you think is the USP of your brand?

■ The USP of all the products of MDPH group is the quality. We never compromise on the ingredients. Our other strengths are the strong network and the wide range of innovative perfumes.



## Local levies, supply woes trigger inter-state variation in inflation

**Rural inflation varies more across states and it is also generally higher than its urban counterparts in almost all states**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 24:** Even after five years of a common Goods and Services Tax (GST), retail inflation in India varies widely across states as differences in local levies and supply chain efficacy distort consumer prices.

Singh said that for transporting perishables like vegetables, vehicle owners charge a to-and-fro fare. For long-distance transportation, only one-way rates are charged.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation rate for the month

of June was as high as 10.5 per cent in Telangana and as low as 4.7 per cent in Bihar, while the national average stood at 7 per cent.

The difference in inflation, according to experts, can be attributed to factors like transport costs, tax policies of state governments, and supply chain efficiency.

Rajinder Singh, General Secretary of All India Confederation of Goods Vehicle Owners' Association said that 40-60 per cent of the transportation cost is on account of diesel which directly impacts the prices of consumer goods.

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**As per latest CPI data, states, including Andhra Pradesh and Haryana, registered inflation of over 8%. The other states which recorded inflation higher than the national average were Assam, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, and West Bengal. The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir too had inflation of 7.2%**

**On the other hand, inflation was lower than the national average in Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Karnataka, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh in June. Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, and Kerala reported retail inflation of less than 6%**

"Toll is another important factor in determining the transportation cost. More the number of toll plazas on a route, higher the cost of deliveries," Singh added.

Diesel costs more in states like Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra because of the higher incidence of local taxes.

**Some states are witnessing heightened price pressures on account of high petroleum products prices due to variation in the fuel duties across states. Variation in fuel duties among states leads to different degrees of impact on increase in fuel prices on overall states' inflation**

SP SHARMA | CHIEF ECONOMIST, PHDCCI

The National Statistical Office (NSO), which releases the monthly CPI data, collects price information from selected 1,114 urban markets and 1,181 villages in the country through personal visits by field staff of the Field Operations

Division on a weekly roster. The cost of power is also high in states with higher inflation rates like Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Sashi Sivramkrishna, Senior Professor (Economics) at NMIMS, Bangalore, said several factors are responsible for the differences in inflation rates among states. These include differences in food expenses that can be due to state-level policies like price change of food grain, pulses and edible oils as well as transport expenditure.

"Inflation is after all a consequence of friction that exists in the market and it is only obvious that there will be differences in inflation rates between states, which have some degree of autonomy in policy making," he added.

# I WILL TAKE IT: NEERAJ

**88.13m** The throw that helped the Panipat lad to become first Indian male track and field athlete to win a medal at the Worlds

JAVELIN THROWER OVERCOMES STRUGGLE, CHALLENGING CONDITIONS TO SEAL HISTORIC SILVER MEDAL AT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

An athlete cannot win a gold every time but we have to keep trying and give our best. I have learnt a lot from the challenging situation today and I will work for improvement. I will try to change the colour of medal (to gold) in the next World Championships in 2023 (in Budapest)

I had strapping (on thigh). I will know the status tomorrow morning because my body is still warm after the event. I hope there should not be any issue for the upcoming events, Commonwealth Games

NEERAJ CHOPRA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Eugene, July 24: "I will take it," said Neeraj Chopra, who felt "something" on his strapped thigh, on way to what he termed a challenging history-scripting silver at the World Championships javelin throw final here.

The reigning Olympic champion admitted that his comeback from outside medal position midway into the final was "challenging". Chopra, however, also knew that a good throw was around the corner.

He was lying at fourth position after three rounds of throws, having opened with a foul before registering 82.39m and 86.37m in his next two attempts. He got his rhythm back with a big fourth round throw of 88.13m, his fourth career-best effort, to jump to second place, which he held on to till the end.

"Conditions were challenging, there was wind coming from front. It was a tough competition with very tough competitors. It was challenging for me, but I was confident that a good throw will surely come."

"I was making the effort (in the first three throws) but it (big throw) was not coming. It was challenging but good that I made a comeback," the 24-year-old Chopra said during a virtual press conference.

"I am happy to have won a silver; the country's first medal in World Athletics Championships after 19 years, I will take it."

Chopra felt some tightness on his thigh after the fourth throw and could not do well in the last two



throws which were fouls. "I thought even the fourth throw could have gone farther. After that, I felt something on my thigh and could not do my best in next two."

"I had strapping (on thigh). I will know the status tomorrow morning because my body is still warm after the event. I hope there should not be any issue for the upcoming events, Commonwealth Games."

Defending champion Anderson Peters of Grenada won the gold with a massive throw of 90.54m. He was a class of his own in the final as he had three massive 90m-plus throws – in the first two rounds and the last attempt. Olympic silver winner Jakub Vadlejch of Czech Republic took the bronze with 88.09m.

The Indian fans are used to watching Chopra having big throws in the first two rounds but it was a different scenario in the World Championships final. Chopra had won gold in Tokyo Olympics last year with a second round throw of 87.58m and just needed a first round effort of 88.39m to qualify for the finals at second place here.

His trademark big smile was back after the fourth round throw as Chopra, the son of a farmer from Kharda village near Panipat in Haryana, the 24-year-old Chopra became only the second Indian and first male track and field athlete to win a medal at the showpiece.

Congratulatory messages poured in from various quarters including Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar; his deputy Dushyant Chautala and former CM Bhupinder Singh Hooda.

The women of his village danced and sang while family members got busy receiving guests

clinched the yellow metal in 2008 Beijing Games.

Asked if he was feeling the pressure of being an Olympic champion heading into the World Championships finals, he said, "I never felt that kind of pressure. My focus was always to give my best, improve upon my best. Of course, I was in a challenging position (after third round) but I was confident that I will have a good throw somehow. I kept trying and it came."

"An athlete cannot win a gold every time but we have to keep trying and give our best. I have learnt a lot from the challenging situation today and I will work for improvement. I will try to change the colour of medal (to gold) in the next World Championships in 2023 (in Budapest)"

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The women of his village danced and sang while family members got busy receiving guests

and distributing 'laddoos' (sweets).

"Everyone is feeling very proud. This medal is of Olympic level. So, it is a very big achievement," Chopra's uncle Bhim Chopra, who has played a key role in shaping his career, told PTI over phone.

Bhim said the whole country is happy and proud of his achievement. "He has been constantly working very hard and we are



(From L): Neeraj Chopra, gold winner Anderson Peters of Grenada and bronze medalist Jakub Vadlejch of Czech Republic pose with their national flags and medals after the medal distribution ceremony

## Praises pour in for Chopra

The country Sunday rejoiced the 24-year-old Neeraj Chopra's landmark silver medal at the World Athletics Championships, calling it a 'special moment'. Let's take a look at some of the reactions...

President of India @rashtrapati\_bhvn

Neeraj Chopra continues to bring laurels and make the country proud! Heartiest congratulations on a historic sporting accomplishment and winning silver medal in men's javelin throw at World Athletics Championships. You're a true champion!

11:27 AM · Jul 24, 2022 · Twitter Web App

ABHINAV BINDRA: Many congratulations @Neeraj\_chopra1 for your silver at the worlds! You make us proud. Well done and the best for the rest of the season

RAJNATH SINGH: India is elated by the stupendous performance by Sandeep @Neeraj\_chopra1. Congratulations to him on winning Silver Medal at the #WorldAthletics Championships in Eugene, Oregon.

His hard work, grit and determination have yielded outstanding results. We are proud of him

ANURAG THAKUR: Neeraj Chopra continues his winning streak! Wins in Men's javelin throw @WCHoregon22 with his best throw of 88.13m, becoming the 1st Indian male and 2nd Indian to win a medal at the #WorldChampionships! Neeraj has now won medal at every Global event!

ANU BOBBY GEORGE: Congratulations @Neeraj\_chopra1 for that magic moment..N welcome to the group..It was a long wait.Thanks to @afaindia @Media\_SAI

@ianuragthakur for all the support

PT USHA: Congratulations to @Neeraj\_chopra1 for winning the silver at 2022 World Athletics Championships for our country. Your best efforts have made our country proud in the world. Keep the flag flying high. Jai Hind

PR SREEJESH: Congratulation brother @Neeraj\_chopra1. You are a motivation for billions of people

SACHIN TENDULKAR: @Neeraj\_chopra1 has added another laurel to his name! India is very proud of you! Heartiest congratulations on winning the silver medal in the men's javelin throw at World Athletics Championships.

VIRENDER SEHWAG: Years from now there is going to be a generation of youngsters for whom 'Kya Fenkti Hai' is going to be a massive compliment, thanks to this champion #NeerajChopra. Once again making India proud with a Silver at the World Athletics Championship.

## Celebrations break out in Chopra's village



and distributing 'laddoos' (sweets).

"Everyone is feeling very proud. This medal is of Olympic level. So, it is a very big achievement," Chopra's uncle Bhim Chopra, who has played a key role in shaping his career, told PTI over phone.

The athlete's mother Saroj was busy distributing sweets and receiving the guests. "Entire country and the entire Haryana is proud of him," she told reporters, adding that there were some anxious moments after a subdued start.

happy that he has brought laurels for his country," he said, adding villagers had gathered at their house since morning.

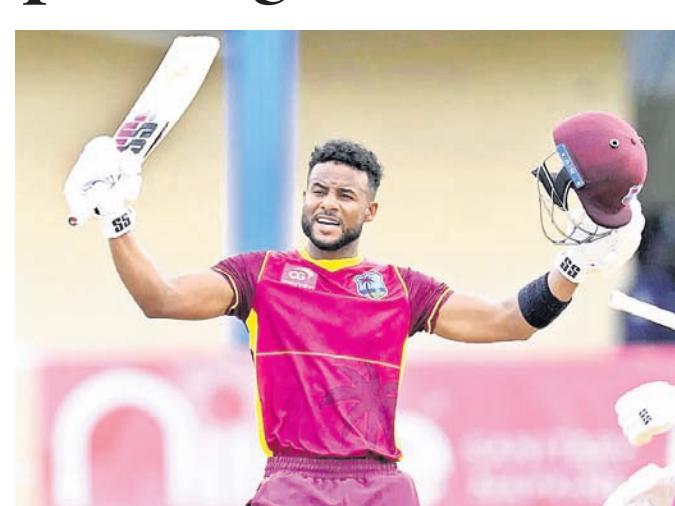
The javelin thrower's father Satish Chopra referred to long jumper Anju Bobby George being the first Indian to win a medal – bronze – in the World Championships nearly two decades ago.

"We had so far a bronze medal in World Championships and now Neeraj has won a silver, we are proud," he said.

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## Special Hope ton guides Windies to 311/6

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



hitting the first delivery straight back to the bowler.

Brooks and Hopes then looked to build a partnership with Hooda and Patel bowling in tandem, targeting the stumps. The spin duo did well to tighten things up as WI managed just 42 from the 10th to 20th over.

Chahal was taken to the cleaners in the 21st over. But Dhawan brought back Patel and he produced a wicket-maiden to get rid of Brooks with the Indian skipper taking a low catch. Chahal redeemed himself in his next over as he induced a top-edge off Brandon King.

Pooran and Hope then brought up 200 in 38th overs. Rovman Powell (13) and Romario Shepherd (14) played some lusty blows to take WI across the 300-mark. WI amassed 93 runs in last 10 overs.

BRIEF SCORES: West Indies 311/6 (Shai Hope 115, Nicolas Pooran 74, Kyle Mayers 39; Shardul Thakur 3/54) vs India.

bowlers on display while Yuzvendra Chahal (1/69) too scalped one but was expensive.

Mohammed Siraj (0/47) was decent but Avesh Khan had a forgettable ODI debut, while Shardul Thakur (3/54) made amends in the

back end with three wickets after conceding 13 in the first over.

Opting to bat, Mayers and Hopes gave West Indies a good start with the former taking the attack to the opposition. Hooda produced the first breakthrough with Mayers

back and plunged into the tyre barrier at the 11th corner; Le Beausset.

The safety car was deployed briefly but from then on Verstappen was able to do his race. Red Bull's Sergio Perez finished fourth. Carlos Sainz was fifth for Ferrari after starting on the back row due to engine penalties.

Fernando Alonso was sixth for Renault-owned Alpine, ahead of McLaren's Lando Norris. Alpine's Esteban Ocon was eighth, McLaren's Daniel Ricciardo ninth and Lance Stroll took the final point in 10th for Aston Martin.

## Raphinha helps Barca beat Real



AGENCIES

Las Vegas, July 24: Raphinha made it two goals in two matches as Barcelona defeated Real Madrid 1-0 Saturday in their Las Vegas Clasico.

Raphinha, signed from Premier League side Leeds United earlier this month for around USD 60 million, followed up his debut in a 6-0 thrashing of Inter Miami with the lone goal of the high-profile clash at Allegiant Stadium.

The Brazilian was perfectly placed to intercept an ill-advised pass from Real's Eder Militao along the top of the area. After one touch to settle he lashed a left-footed shot over Thibaut Courtois into the top right corner of the net to put Barcelona up 1-0 in the 27th minute.

Overall it was Barcelona – energized by the debut of Polish striker Robert Lewandowski after his move from Bayern Munich – who controlled the tempo in the first half against the reigning Champions League and La Liga

## Haaland's day out

WISCONSIN (US): Erling Haaland took just 12 minutes of his City debut to score his first goal for the Club which proved to be enough to give the Blues a 1-0 win. The Norwegian striker had barely touched the ball before Kevin De Bruyne picked up possession outside the Bayern Munich box, fed Jack Grealish and his pass across the six-yard box was slid home by Haaland. After almost a 45-minute delay, the players came back out, warmed up and the game resumed.

The first half ended on a testy note after Jordi Alba's sliding tackle on Militao that earned a yellow card.

Some jawing and shoving escalated, with players having to step in and separate Madrid newcomer Antonio Rudiger and Barcelona's Ronald Araujo.

Lewandowski's night ended without a goal as he was departed at the half, replaced by Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang as part of a raft of changes at the midpoint.

A back and forth between substitute Marco Asensio and defender Lucas Vazquez gave Real Madrid a golden opportunity in the 59th minute, but after Vazquez played the ball back to Asensio in front of goal he pulled his shot wide.

They pressed desperately in the closing minutes for an equalizer; but Carlo Ancelotti's side clearly missed French star Karim Benzema, who was granted an extended holiday by the club and sat out the contest after joining up with his teammates in Los Angeles just days before.

## F1: Verstappen clinches French GP title



REUTERS

Paris, July 24: Red Bull's Max Verstappen won the French Grand Prix Sunday and took a huge stride towards his second Formula One title after Ferrari's Charles Leclerc made a costly mistake and crashed out while leading.

Seven-time World Champion Lewis Hamilton finished second for Mercedes in his 300th grand prix, with teammate George Russell third to secure their first podium double of the campaign.

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