



## FLIP SIDE

Actor Mallika Sherawat claims that female actors are expected to be at the male actors' beck in Hindi film industry

LEISURE P2



## HEAVY RAINS IN KERALA

IMD declares red alert in 10 districts of Kerala that has been hit by incessant rains

TWO STATES P8



## MEN PADDLERS SHINE

Indian men's table tennis team retain their Commonwealth Games gold medal after beating Singapore 3-1 in final

SPORTS P12

## SHORT TAKES

### Odisha MLAs to meet Prez Murmu today

**BHUBANESWAR:** An all-party delegation of Odisha MLAs Tuesday left for New Delhi to meet President Droupadi Murmu Wednesday. The delegation, led by Speaker BK Arukha, comprises members from BJD, BJP and Congress. The team is scheduled to meet the President at Rashtrapati Bhavan at 11:30am. "Her election is a source of great pride for the people of Odisha. We'll congratulate the President, who was a member of the Odisha Assembly and was also a minister," Arukha said, adding that they will seek cooperation from the President for the overall development of the state.

### PM's brother protests against price hike

**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi's brother Prahlad Modi, who is also the vice president of All India Fair Price Shop Dealers' Federation (AIFPSDF), Tuesday sat in protest at Delhi's Jantar Mantar over various demands of the organisation. "A delegation of AIFPSDF will submit a memorandum to PM Narendra Modi, listing our long-standing demands for the sake of our survival. With the current situation of hike in the cost of living and overhead expenditures for running shops, a raise of mere 20 paise per kg in our margin is a cruel joke. We request the Union government to grant us relief and end our financial miseries," Prahlad Modi said.

### Loan app fraud: EOW nabs CA from Delhi

**BHUBANESWAR:** The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Odisha Police has arrested Neerav Gupta, a chartered accountant (CA), for his alleged involvement in an illegal loan app case. Gupta, a resident of Gurugram, was arrested from Paschim Vihar in New Delhi July 30 this year. After producing him before the court of chief metropolitan magistrate, Tis Hazari court, New Delhi, Gupta was brought to Bhubaneswar on transit remand.

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



If anybody complains about prices, I just make him listen to the finance minister's speech

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	58136.36 ↑ 20.86
NIFTY	17345.45 ↑ 5.40
DOLLAR	78.71 ↓ ₹0.30
EURO	80.07 ↓ ₹0.94
GOLD	₹51,584 ↑ ₹321
SILVER	₹57,849 ↓ ₹477

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	35.6°C	36.2°C
TEMP. MIN	25.2°C	26.5°C
Humidity	84%	79%
Rainfall	Nil	2.2mm
	Partly cloudy	sky

# HISTORIC GOLD FOR INDIA



Indian women's lawn bowls fours team members Lovely Choubey, Pinki, Nayanmoni Saikia and Rupa Rani Tirkey pose with their historic gold medals during the presentation ceremony at the Commonwealth Games 2022 in Birmingham (UK), Tuesday

### CUET for PG courses to start September 1

**NEW DELHI, August 2:** The Common University Entrance Test (CUET) for postgraduate (PG) courses will be held from September 1 to 11, UGC chairman Mamidala Jagadeesh Kumar said Tuesday. CUET-PG will provide a single window opportunity to students to seek admission in participating universities across the country, Kumar said in a tweet. "The National Testing Agency (NTA) has been entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the Postgraduate Entrance Test for 66 Central and participating universities for the academic session 2022-2023," he said in a series of tweets. Kumar said the exam will be conducted in computer-based test (CBT) mode for 3.57 lakh candidates in approximately 500 cities across India and 13 cities outside the country. The chairman tweeted, "The dates for CUET (PG) are: 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 09, 10, 11 September 2022." The dates of advance city intimation and release of admit card will be announced later on, he said.

### Clean chit to Papu in casting couch case

**Bhubaneswar, August 2:** A special POCSCO court here Tuesday acquitted Odia comedian Tatwa Prakash Satpathy alias Papu Pom Pom and his associate Gittu of sexual harassment charges levelled by a minor girl in 2016. The girl had accused the actor of sexually harassing her on the pretext of helping her to get role in movies. The secretary of a city-based NGO lodged a complaint against the actor at the Mahila police station here June 25, 2016. Based on the complaint, the Commissionerate Police registered a case (150/16) under Sections 341, 323 and 354, 506, 509 of IPC and Sections 8 and 12 of the POCSCO Act. Later police arrested Satpathy and his aide from an apartment in Puri June 30, 2016. While speaking to media after the court judgment, the actor claimed that he had to spend 43 days in the jail despite being innocent. "My family was served a seven-day notice after the FIR but I was arrested just a day after. When I sought an answer from the DGP, he said that they were under pressure," said the actor.

# Al-Qaeda chief Zawahiri killed in US drone strike

**Now, justice has been delivered and this terrorist leader (Ayman al-Zawahiri) is no more. People around the world no longer need to fear the vicious and determined killer**

JOE BIDEN | US PRESIDENT



Ayman al-Zawahiri (L) at a news conference with Osama bin Laden (FILE AP)

**Washington, August 2:** Al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri, who played central role in 9/11 attacks and later created the terror group's regional affiliate in the Indian sub-continent, has been killed in a US 'precision strike' in Afghanistan's capital Kabul, in the biggest blow to the global terror network since killing of its founder Osama bin Laden in 2011 in Pakistan. Zawahiri, who assumed the leadership of al-Qaeda after the death of bin Laden, was killed in a drone strike carried out by CIA Saturday evening at a house in Kabul where he was sheltering to reunite with his family, US President Joe Biden said Monday, declaring that "justice has been delivered and this terrorist is no more". The 71-year-old Egyptian surgeon, who had a USD 25 million bounty on his head, was bin Laden's second-in-command during 9/11 attacks and took over as the head of al-Qaeda after his death. He remained a visible international

symbol of the terror group, 11 years after the US killed bin Laden during a raid in Pakistan's Abbottabad in May 2011. "I authorised a precision strike that would remove him from the battlefield, once and for all," Biden said Monday in a speech from the White House. According to officials, Zawahiri was on the balcony of a safe house when the drone fired two missiles at him. Other family members were present, but they were unharmed and only Zawahiri was killed. "He was deeply involved in the planning of 9/11, one of the most responsible for the attacks that murdered 2,977 people on American soil. For decades, he was the mastermind of attacks against Americans," said Biden. The US president was kept abreast of the strike against Zawahiri as he was isolated with

# State urges Centre for testing at City's RMRC

**Bhubaneswar, August 2:** The state government Tuesday urged the Centre to designate Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) here as monkeypox testing lab and provide kits for the purpose. Health and Family Welfare Minister Naba Kishore Das has written to Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya in this regard. The World Health Organisation has declared monkeypox as a public health emergency of international concern. This means the virus has the potential to grow out of control if it is not carefully managed. Although a few cases have been reported from the country, Odisha has so far not reported a single monkeypox case. It is imperative to ensure laboratory preparedness for detection of the pathogen. Keeping the monkeypox scare in mind, the state government has made necessary preparations to tackle the situation, Das said. The state government has also instructed doctors to report any patient with likely monkeypox symptoms so that their samples are collected and sent for testing. Das said the regional VRDL at RMRC in Bhubaneswar has provided considerable support to state's public health system during the Covid-19 pandemic and the recent outbreaks of hand, foot and mouth disease in the state. It is therefore requested that the laboratory (RMRC in Bhubaneswar) be designated as the monkeypox testing lab and provided with the kits for screening of orthopoxvirus to ensure preparedness so as to handle the looming public health threat posed by monkeypox, the Health Minister said.

# Land allotted for 13 projects worth ₹766cr

**Bhubaneswar, August 2:** The state government Tuesday allotted land for 13 investment proposals worth ₹766 crore. The Land Allotment Committee headed by Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra approved the proposal for allotment of land parcels for the projects. These industrial units would provide direct employment to around 8,600 youths. Besides, grounding and commissioning of these units would generate more than double the number of indirect employment opportunities for supply chain, small businesses, transportation & communication and other sectors relating to the industries, sources said. Mahapatra directed Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (Idco) to follow up on early grounding and timely completion of the construction works. He also said that these units should employ more and more Odia youths. The units were mostly from employment intensive sectors like garment and apparel making.

# Pelosi lands in Taiwan; Chinese warplanes take to skies

**China claims Taiwan as part of its territory, to be annexed by force if necessary, and views visits by foreign government officials as recognition of the island's sovereignty**

est-ranking American official to visit the self-ruled island claimed by China in 25 years. Pelosi's visit has triggered increased tension between China and the United States. China claims Taiwan as part of its territory, and views visits by foreign government officials as recognition of the island's sovereignty. China had warned of "resolute and strong measures" if Pelosi went ahead with the trip, but has given no details on what they might be. Speculation has centered on threatening military exercises and possible

**More than 20 Chinese military planes entered Taiwan's airspace shortly after US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi landed in Taipei**

incursions by Chinese planes and ships into areas under Taiwanese control. The Biden administration did not explicitly urge Pelosi to call off the visit, while seeking to assure Beijing it would not signal any change in US Policy on Taiwan. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Washington's betrayal "on the Taiwan issue is bankrupting its



national credibility." "Some American politicians are playing with fire on the issue of Taiwan," Wang said in a statement. "This will definitely not have a good outcome... The exposure of America's bully-

ing face again shows it as the world's biggest saboteur of peace." The plane carrying Pelosi and her delegation left Malaysia earlier Tuesday after a brief stop that included a working lunch with Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob. Taiwan's Foreign Ministry had declined to comment on whether Pelosi would visit. The trip was not officially announced ahead of time. Two buildings in the capital lit up LED displays with words of welcome, including the iconic Taipei 101 building, which said "Welcome to Taiwan, Speaker Pelosi." Contd...P4

# leisure

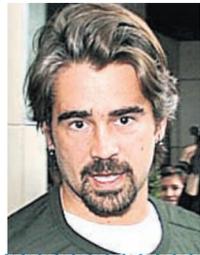


## WITHERSPOON HOPEFUL ABOUT LEGALLY BLONDE 3

Hollywood star Reese Witherspoon says she remains optimistic about making the third part of *Legally Blonde* movie series and her confidence was recently bolstered by the success of Tom Cruise's *Top Gun: Maverick*.

## COLLIN FARRELL WANTS TO BE PART OF THE BATMAN SEQUEL

Hollywood actor Collin Farrell, in a recent interview said he hopes HBO max begins the filming of his spinoff series of *The Batman* in 2023. Farrell portrayed the role of Penguin in the Robert Pattinson starrer *The Batman* and gathered positive feedback from the netizens for his performance in the film.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
You feel lost and thoroughly depressed today. This will make you turn towards spirituality, says Ganesh. You will devote more time to meditation and will pray a lot. Despite the adverse circumstances, Ganesh says you will make a good deal of material headway.

**TAURUS**  
This is a bright, rosy day for students and scholars, particular who are engaged in, or are looking forward to higher studies, specializing in a particular professional stream. This a great day for making plans for higher studies abroad. Do not miss this opportunity. Plans made today are likely to materialize.

**GEMINI**  
A long and hectic day awaits you. You will be in the mood to finish off long-pending projects at work or at home. There is a chance that your personal life may get affected due to the extra attention you pay towards work.

**CANCER**  
Today, you will shift your entire focus on the problems plaguing your personal life, feels Ganesh. Your ability to nip a problem in the bud has helped you to have a good personal life so far. And today, you will have to use your skills to mend the strain in your relationship with your loved ones.

**LEO**  
You will need to work hard to achieve your goals today. Those who are serious about their work will be easily able to tide over the day. You need to be cautious today. Not only at work, but even in personal relationships, you need to be on guard.

**VIRGO**  
Issues regarding religious beliefs and spirituality will surface today. Pursue your goals single-mindedly to attain success in the field of your choice, and exploit your abilities and talents to the hilt, advises Ganesh.

**LIBRA**  
The clock ticks on, but chances are it can hardly beat you in the race, thanks to your prompt and sincere efforts. Today, you shall be a paragon of excellence. However, Ganesh waves the red flag of caution: it always pays to be safe rather than sorry. Keep your eyes open and pay attention to the fine print before signing any contract or paper.

**SCORPIO**  
A creative thought or an innovative idea may spice up your routine work. Apparently, you may seem all worked up and disorganised, but actually you may be quite systematic when it comes to your work. Keep the enthusiasm in you alive to make life happier, tips Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Today, find yourself driving all your thoughts and actions towards your family. You will also spend some superb time with your dearie and discuss intimate matters. A relaxing day today as you spend time with your friends and family, chilling out and having a good laugh or two.

**CAPRICORN**  
Whether you're an artist, performer, professional or an entrepreneur, career issues will take the foreground today, while personal matters will wait in queue for your attention, says Ganesh. Your performance will be at its all-time high, and your efforts will be duly rewarded, but credit for this must go to your loved ones who will lend their unceasing support for all your endeavours.

**AQUARIUS**  
You may rave and rant, but all you'll get from colleagues or juniors are wishy-washy excuses for a job not done. Ganesh advises that you take care to finish your own work before you help others. The stars say that your beloved will smoothen your creased brow.

**PISCES**  
While you will need loads of moral support to keep your spirits up, you are also likely to be blessed with the company of a person who is equipped to provide just that. Positive results will come your way as long as you do not give up.



## Alia wants to work till she's 100

**Mumbai:** Proud producer Alia Bhatt is going all out with the promotions of her upcoming OTT release *Darlings*, which she has been juggling with her multiple

shoots. The mom-to-be refuses to slow down and is enjoying her busy schedule. "If you are fit and fine, there is no need to take rest. I get sukoon while I am working. It is my passion. It keeps my heart and soul alive and charged. I will work till I am 100," Alia said at a recent press conference.

Recently, she had thoughtfully reflected on her journey of 10 years in films. The actress had shared, "When people ask me, would you go back and change anything about your life, I always say I genuinely have no regrets. I have nothing that I would change in the past because the person I am today is because of all the steps I took in the past. I feel very grateful that I have a voice that can put content together. I can fuel ideas that come to me from young directors and writers and that's a beautiful position to be in. It's a position of responsibility too. I have worked really hard to get where I am today."

AGENCIES

## Amy furious over dolphin killings

**Mumbai:** British actress Amy Jackson, who has acted in several Hindi and Tamil films, has expressed her anguish at the brutal killing of 100 Bottle Nose dolphins on the Faroe Islands.

Taking to Instagram, the actress wrote, "Every summer on the Faroe Islands, somewhere around 800 whales and dolphins lose their lives, through a brutal and barbaric ritual of mass slaughter. Once upon a time the tradition was that their meat was used and eaten, but nowadays, they choose to leave the meat rotting in the sun, just taking the lives of sea creatures for some kind of sick satisfaction justified by a cultural tradition."

"Sea shepherd, the conservationist group who are trying hard to fight the annual massacre, recorded 63 pilot whales were killed by Faroese hunters, including 10 pregnant mothers and their unborn calves," added the actress.

"Whole families are slaughtered, and some whales and dolphins swim around in their family members' blood for hours," she further said.

Expressing frustration at not being able to do anything else but sign petitions and repost to raise awareness, she urged her followers to help Sea Shepherd gain political clout in order to put serious pressure on Faroe Islands.

IANS



## Couldn't subject myself to someone's whims: Mallika

**Mumbai:** Actor Mallika Sherawat claims that female actors are expected to be at the male actors' beck and call in the Hindi film industry.

Elaborating further, she adds, "It's very simple—they like actresses who they can control and who will compromise with them. I am not that, my personality isn't that. I couldn't subject myself to someone's whims and fancies," says the 45-year-old, most recently seen in the film *RK/RKay*.

Probed further to learn what she means by compromise, and she replies, "Sit, stand, anything. If the hero calls you at 3am and says, 'Come to my house', you have to go, if you are in that circle and if you are doing that film. If you don't go, then you are out of the film."

Sherawat is best known for her breakout role in *Murder* (2004), but over the years, she cut down on the number of Hindi films. When we ask her the reason, she says, "I tried to do my best. I tried to find good roles. I made some mistakes, like all of us do. Some roles were good, some not so good. It is part of an actor's journey, but overall, it's been fantastic."

AGENCIES

## Kriti hits new high on Instagram

**Mumbai:** Actress Kriti Sanon Tuesday expressed gratitude as she became the latest filmy celebrity to cross 50 million followers on Instagram.

Taking to her social media, the *Mimi* actor dropped a reel video which she captioned, "As Mimi says 'Fan following hai meri yahan par, haan! 50 MILLION Love and counting.. Love you guys!! #50MillionOnInsta.'"

In the video, the actor shared various BTS videos of her previous characters from *Bareilly Ki Barfi*, and *Mimi* to *Raabta*. In the video, she wrote, "Thank you for giving me so much love.. for loving me on screen and off screen too! Keep Holding my hand. We have a long way to go."

Soon after the *Dilwale* actor shared the reel video, fans swamped the comment section with heart and fire emoticons.

With this, the *Heropanti* actor became the latest celeb to cross the 50 million followers margin on Instagram after Alia Bhatt, Shradha Kapoor, Anushka Sharma, Deepika Padukone, Jacqueline Fernandez and Priyanka Chopra.

On the work front, Kriti has a massive and one of the best lineups of films ahead including the much awaited Pan India film, *Adipurush* opposite Prabhas and Saif Ali Khan, *Ganapath* alongside Tiger Shroff, which is slated to release on the occasion of Christmas 2022.

AGENCIES



### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

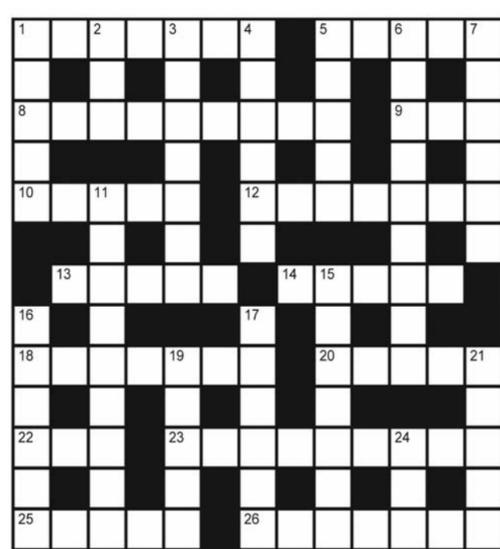


### BREVITY



### FUN post

### CROSSWORD

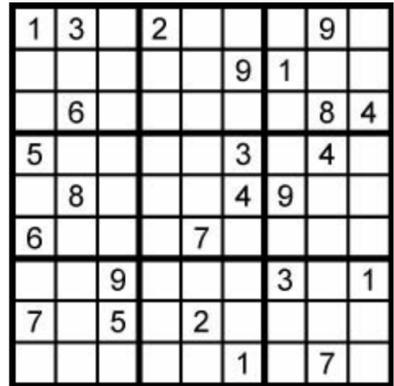


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- |                     |                        |                          |
|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Across</b>       | 22 Egg cells           | 4 Desk item              |
| 1 Huge              | 23 Formerly (2,3,4)    | 5 Nymph chaser           |
| 5 Rope fibre        | 25 Underground chamber | 6 Hat part               |
| 8 Employment seeker | 26 Bicycle seats       | 7 Set in motion          |
| 9 ___ de vie        |                        | 11 River feeder          |
| 10 Surpass          |                        | 15 London district (4,3) |
| 12 Unpredictable    | <b>Down</b>            | 16 Brave                 |
| 13 Hopping mad      | 1 Adult insect         | 17 Army units            |
| 14 Promise          | 2 Navigator's need     | 19 Plot of land          |
| 18 Big belt         | 3 Kenya's capital      | 21 Exigencies            |
| 20 Roomy vehicle    |                        | 24 In poor health        |

### 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.

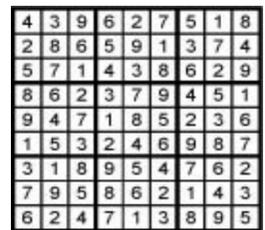


### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD



#### SUDOKU



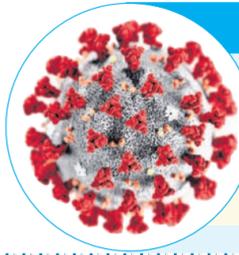
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## WRITER'S DELIGHT

Young writer from Krushnaprasad block in Puri Lalit Kumar Swain handing over his work 'Papulirekha' at Raj Bhawan in Bhubaneswar



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	58,33,50,683	55,39,05,358	64,22,580
India	4,40,50,009	4,33,83,787	5,26,430
Odisha	13,14,683	13,00,023	9,142

# ₹23,540cr revenue pending till March

OF THE TOTAL AMOUNT, ₹14,440 CRORE HAS BEEN LOCKED UP DUE TO CASES IN DIFFERENT COURTS INCLUDING SUPREME COURT & HIGH COURT

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 2:** The state government is yet to collect pending taxes and duties to the tune of ₹23,540.51 crore till March 2022 of which ₹14,440.58 crore has not been realised due to litigations, Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari said in a written reply in the Assembly recently.

He said the total outstanding commercial tax stands at ₹11,592.83 crore, electricity duty ₹4,187.61 crore, stamp duty ₹217.57 crore, agricultural water tax ₹22.57 crore, motor vehicle (MV) tax ₹311.75 crore, industrial water tax ₹4,914.56 crore and forest development tax ₹131.39 crore.

While cases related to arrears worth ₹614.90 crore are pending in the Supreme Court, similar cases to the tune of ₹8,678.44 crore and ₹5,147.23 crore are to be decided by the Orissa High Court and other courts respectively.

The cases of revenue arrears are in different categories – commercial tax (Rs 6,779.68 crore), electricity duty (Rs 1,534.90 crore), mining royalty (Rs 2070.03 crore), excise duty (Rs 92.20 crore), MV tax (Rs 81.12 crore), industrial



HEADS	ARREARS
Commercial tax	₹11,592.83cr
Electricity duty	₹4,187.61cr
Stamp duty	₹217.57cr
Agricultural water tax	₹22.57cr
Motor vehicle tax	₹311.75cr
Industrial water tax	₹4,914.56cr
Forest development tax	₹131.39cr

water rate (₹3,830.36 crore) and forest development tax (₹52.29 crore).

For speedy trial of revenue arrear cases, the government has been appointing advocate

generals, public prosecutors, assistant public prosecutors and standing counsels. For some important cases, the government also hires special counsels, he said.

For collection of revenue dues, the minister said, the state government has taken some important measures including appointment of special counsel, high-level review meeting by Chief Secretary, out-of-court one-time settlement among others.

The appellate authorities have been asked to complete the adjudication of pending commercial tax related cases within a specified timeline, he added.

## Youth can be harbinger of transformation: Min

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 2:** Odisha Skill Development Authority (OSDA) launched Odisha Skills-2023 at World Skill Centre (WSC) Tuesday.

The event was inaugurated by Chairman of OSDA Subroto Bagchi. On this occasion, the Odisha Skills-2023 registration portal was launched by Skill Development and Technical Education Minister Pritiranjan Gharai.

Hailing Odisha as a great state for modern skill development, Bagchi said, "Skills that touch the bottom of the pyramid are important and we should focus on them. Our collective job is to bring 10,000 boys and girls under Odisha Skills-2023 from the bottom of the pyramid to represent in non-glamorous trades".

Minister Gharai said, "Let the Odisha Skills-2023 be the podium for the youth of Odisha to showcase their inner potential to the entire country." He also stated, "Converting knowledge into wealth is the need of the hour. I am sure with right training our youth can be the harbinger of transformation in Odisha".

Speaking on the occasion, the CEO of WSC stated that this time Odisha Skills-2023 will encourage the youth of Odisha to get involved in non-engineering trades like health, jewellery design, cabinet making through education in addition to engineering-based trades. Online registration for the programme started Tuesday and the last date of registration is August 31.

It will showcase 52 skills ranging from construction and building technology, creative arts and fashion, information & communication technology, manufacturing & engineering technology, social & personal care, and transportation and logistics.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## Justice still eludes chit fund scam victims

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 2:** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), following the directions of the Supreme Court, took over the investigations into multi-crore chit fund scam in West Bengal and Odisha in 2013. However, it seems justice still eludes the victims as the central agency is yet to complete the probe in many cases even after nine years.

The CBI sleuths of Kolkata and Bhubaneswar launched investigations into 118 and 29 chit fund scam cases in West Bengal and Odisha respectively.

While replying to a Right to Information (RTI) query by activist Akhand, the Economic Offence Branch of CBI in Bhubaneswar revealed that investigation is completed in 16 cases while investigations are going on in 12 cases after submission of chargesheets. Meanwhile, trial has been completed in only one case so far.

The accused firms against whom CBI continued probe after submission of chargesheets include Seashore Group of Companies, Artha Tatwa, Samruddha Jeevan Multi



Chit Fund

Investigation has been completed in 16 cases in Odisha while the same is going on in 12 other cases

Purpose Cooperative Society and Swastik India Multi State Credit Cooperative.

Similarly, the Kolkata Economic Offence Branch of CBI revealed that investigation in 72 cases out of 118 cases has been completed and trial is on in the court against accused firms. The sleuths have been continuing further probe into 43 cases after submitting the chargesheets before the court.

The CBI has so far arrested 142 persons out of the total 798 accused who duped the victims of thousands of crores in West Bengal through various ponzi schemes.

## 2 commit suicide in Capital city

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 2:** Two persons including a young girl committed suicide in the Capital city here, Tuesday.

According to sources, Gangadhara Swain, 59, ended his life in Nayapalli area while Jayanti Sutar killed herself in Khandagiri area of the Capital city.

Sources said Swain committed suicide by hanging himself from the ceiling of his room with a rope while his family members were busy in household chores. On being informed, police reached the spot and sent the body to Capital Hospital for post-mortem.

Swain, who worked in a private company, was reportedly under severe stress due to financial difficulties.

In the second case, Jayanti alias Juli was a resident of Banki in Cuttack but was staying with her uncle and aunt in Khandagiri area here. Her uncle and aunt are doctors.

Tuesday morning, Jayanti ended her life by hanging from the ceiling fan after her aunt left for hospital. Police reached the spot and sent the body to a hospital for post-mortem.

Police have started investigation after registering an unnatural death case in this regard.

## Biography of Prez Murmu to hit the stands this year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 2:** A biography of Droupadi Murmu, India's youngest President and the first to be born after Independence, will be released later this year, Penguin Random House India (PRHI) announced Tuesday.

Touted to be the first authentic and definitive account of India's 15th President, "Madam President: A Biography of Draupadi Murmu" claims to unpack the many trials and tribulations, and early years of struggle that elevated the 64-year-old to the highest office in the country.

It is written by Bhubaneswar-based senior journalist Sandeep Sahu.

"What made the prospect of doing the book when Penguin India reached out to me was the fact that the book would be on the first tribal woman to become the President of India, which is truly historic," Sahu said in a statement.

"That she belongs to the predominantly tribal Mayurbhanj district of Odisha, where I spent my entire adolescent period, was also another tempting factor to take it on," he added.

## EOW arrests CA over loan fraud

There might be lakhs of duped people from across the country, including Odisha, if all the 10 applications are accounted for, says the probe agency



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, August 2:** The Economic Offence Wing (EOW) of Odisha Police has arrested a chartered accountant (CA) in connection with a case pertaining to an online loan scam allegedly run by Chinese fraudsters.

Based on a complaint, the EOW nabbed Neerav Gupta alias Raman, a resident of Gurgaon, in Paschim Vihar area of Delhi July 30 and booked him under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and IT Act, 2000.

He was brought to Odisha on transit remand Tuesday after being produced before Tis Hazari Court in New Delhi.

Gupta was traced while an investigating officer was probing an allegation of harassment and extortion by recovery agents of digital loan

Accused Neerav Gupta was brought to Odisha on transit remand Tuesday after being produced before Tis Hazari Court in New Delhi

application 'Kredit Gold' who had allegedly sent abusing messages and morphed photographs, EOW said in a statement.

Complainant Sakti Prasad Dash, after downloading the loan application, received ₹9,000 as instant loan but only after four days, got WhatsApp messages and calls asking him to pay back ₹15,627, it said.

He then received several calls and messages from different mobile phone numbers which were traced to a firm, whose director Nitin Malik

was arrested and is presently in jail. Based on interrogation of Malik, Gupta was nabbed.

"Gupta opened several shell companies for use by Chinese nationals to facilitate cash transactions related to digital lending applications. In return, he received huge sums of money as commission from the Chinese via Malik," EOW said.

Gupta also opened one-person companies for use by the Chinese for duping people.

"The accused, Neerav Gupta, had received ₹30 lakh from the Chinese for the operations that included not only registering the shell companies but also arranging directors of these firms at a nominal salary. It is suspected that at least 10 such companies have been set up," the statement said.

The EOW said that the 'Kredit Gold' application alone has been downloaded over 1 lakh times.

There might be lakhs of duped people from across the country, including Odisha, if all the 10 applications are accounted for, it said.

A laptop, two mobile phones, 11 seals of shell companies, five digital signature certificate tokens, four cheque books of shell companies were among the incriminating materials seized from Gupta's possession, the EOW statement said.

## In a first, state releases ranking of polytechnics



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 2:** In a first, Skill Development and Technical Education (SD&TE) department Tuesday released the ranking for polytechnic institutions in the state in which five government and as many private institutions figure in the top 10 list.

As per the ranking, KIIT Polytechnic bagged the No-1 spot while Government Polytechnic, Jajpur stood second in the list.

The ranks have been released by SD&TE Minister Pritiranjan Gharai during a function held at State

Council of Technical Education & Vocational Training (SCTE&VT), Odisha.

The Gandhi Institute for Education and Technology, Khurda (Pvt) secured the third rank while Uma Charan Patnaik Engineering School, Berhampur (Govt) got fourth rank and Utkalmani Gopabandhu Institute of Engineering, Rourkela (Govt) got fifth rank.

The minister said that ranking of polytechnics in the state has been done by the department to ensure quality of diploma level education. Quality Council of India (QCI), New Delhi has undertaken the evalua-

tion work in multiple stages including field visits to all the 102 polytechnics across the state.

The state government is putting emphasis on 5T initiatives. This activity comes under 5T programme of the SD&TE department. The ranks obtained by different Institutions are meant for indicating academic status of the institutions. He said the ranking process will create healthy competition among the polytechnics.

The polytechnics that have not participated this time shall definitely participate next time. Environmental activities will also be considered as one of the parameters for ranking of polytechnics in the coming year.

Principal secretary Hemant Sharma outlined the need for ranking of polytechnics and provided detailed analysis of ranks obtained by different parameters. He also explained the seven parameters chosen for attaching the ranks.

"There exists a provision at national level for ranking of ITIs and degree engineering colleges, but there is no such provision for preparing rankings of polytechnics at national level," Sharma

## KIIT Polytechnic ranks No-1 in state

**Bhubaneswar:** KIIT Polytechnic has been ranked as the best polytechnic in Odisha among all the state and private-run polytechnics by National Accreditation Board for Education and Training (NABET), a constituent Board of Quality Council of India (QCI). This is the first time that the rankings of the polytechnics in Odisha were carried out. The results spread jubilation among the students, teachers and staffers of KIIT Polytechnic. KIIT Founder Achyuta Samanta lauded the efforts of KIIT Polytechnic Principal, Tanmay Mohanty, the teachers and staffers, saying, the ranking is a big achievement as the institute has been adjudged the best among all government and private polytechnics. He especially extended his greeting to the students for their success.

said. SD&TE department has taken such an initiative at the state level, he added.

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# College student accuses physics reader of rape, sexual harassment



The girl had drawn the attention of the college authority July 25. Instead of taking help of police, the authorities formed an Internal Complaints Committee for an inquiry

The girl had drawn the attention of the college authority July 25. Instead of taking help of police, the college authorities formed an Internal Complaints Committee for an inquiry and submitted a report to College Management Council Head, who happens to be Khurda district Sub-Collector.

This allegation needs to be thoroughly enquired into as per the procedure laid down in Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, the Higher Education department additional secretary Surendra Kumar Panda wrote to college authorities. Sources said the Internal Committee of the College did not find any evidence of the allegations made by the girl student.

Meanwhile, the Higher Education Department has transferred the reader to Kuchinda college in Sambalpur district. "Yes, a physics reader has joined our college August 1 and gone on leave for two days," said Srikant Patel, the principal of Kuchinda College.

reader rank of the institute. It is also alleged that she was sexually harassed by the accused lecturer for months. The matter came to fore after the Higher Education Department directed the college Principal to conduct a thorough probe into the incident and submit a report forthwith.

The allegation is made against a physics reader who also served as NCC Officer (Naval Wing). The accused reader was accused of torturing the girl both mentally and physically for the last few months.

## CREATIVE TOUCH



An artisan at Kumbhar Sahi in Cuttack gives touches to the earthen idols of Lord Ganesha, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

**Bhubaneswar, August 2:** The state government has asked the authorities of the Jayadev College of Education and Technology at Naharkanta, in outskirts of the state capital, to further investigate into the alleged rape and sexual harassment of a Plus-III girl student of the institute.

Though the matter is not reported with the police, a Plus-III girl student of the college has alleged of being raped by a teacher of

## Al-Qaeda chief Zawahiri killed in US drone strike

Continued from P1

"Our intelligence community located Zawahiri earlier this year - he moved to downtown Kabul to reunite with members of his immediate family," Biden said.

His killing will bring closure to families of the victims of the 2001 attacks, Biden said, adding that Zawahiri had also masterminded other acts of violence, including the suicide bombing of the USS Cole naval destroyer in Aden in October 2000 which killed 17 US sailors. The strike comes one year after Biden ordered the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, prompting Taliban forces to rapidly seize control of the war-torn nation. Zawahiri comes from a distinguished Egyptian family according to the New York Times. His grandfather, Rabi'a al-Zawahiri, was an imam at the prestigious al-Azhar University in Cairo. His great-uncle, Abdel Rahman Azzam, was the first secretary of the Arab League.

He played central role in the attacks on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, and eventually helped to mastermind the deadliest terror attack on American soil, when hijackers turned US airliners into missiles.

## Pelosi lands in Taiwan...

Continued from P1

China, which regards Taiwan as a renegade province to be annexed by force if necessary, has repeatedly warned of retaliation for Pelosi's visit, saying its military will "never sit idly by."

"The US and Taiwan have colluded to make provocations first, and China has only been compelled to act out of self-defense," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying told reporters Tuesday in Beijing.

Hua said China has been in constant communication with the US and made clear "how dangerous it would be if the visit actually happens." Any countermeasures China take will be "justified and necessary" in the face of Washington's "unscrupulous behavior," she said.

Shortly before Pelosi was due to arrive, Chinese state media said Chinese Su-35 fighter jets were "crossing" the Taiwan Strait, the body of water that separates mainland China and Taiwan. It wasn't immediately clear where they were headed or what they planned to do.

Unspecified hackers launched a cyberattack on the Taiwanese Presidential Office's website, making it temporarily unavailable Tuesday evening. The Presidential Office said the website was restored shortly after the attack, which overwhelmed it with traffic.

"China thinks by launching a multi-domain pressure campaign against Taiwan, the people of Taiwan will be intimidated. But they are wrong," Wang Ting-yu, a legislator with the Democratic Progressive Party, said on Twitter in response to the attack.

## 50 youths to lead reproductive rights movement in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 2:** For the first time in Odisha, 50 youths, under the banner of the 'Baatein Unlocked' movement, will take leadership in their villages in mapping issues that are of importance to them, in terms of their aspirations, livelihood needs, marriage and more. This will act as a stepping stone for mutual dialogue with a broader goal of developing a blueprint for the future and come up with appropriate solutions.

Kickstarting in August, the social impact initiative will put young people at the forefront of a conversation that directly concerns them and the communities they belong to. Using innovative and participatory methods such as body mapping, issue mapping, and card sorting, they will facilitate sessions and interactions across 50 villages from five selected districts including Kalahandi, Bargarh, Naupada, Sundargarh, and Rayagada.

This one-of-a-kind youth initiative is being supported by several community-led organisations (CLOs) of the state. Young people will begin by forming groups, establishing safe spaces

and facilitating dialogues and subsequently, they will also engage with parents, as well as last mile community service providers such as ASHA, ANM and Aanganwadi workers to cover all the aspects of sexual and reproductive health related issues.

Gurpriya Singh from 'Baatein Unlocked' said, when the young are given leadership roles to access and process information, they are also learning about marital and sexual relationships, consent and bodily agency. This is important because many of these young people hail from milieus where men have the upper hand and where women are shamed for menstruating, are eve-teased, subjected to sexual and domestic violence, forced into unwanted pregnancies and relegated to domestic roles. It is important for the youth to learn that they can be change makers rather than participants in a toxic cycle.

She added that it will be educational for the participants to learn about their own bodies, and explore themes such as sex, contraception, pregnancy, marriage related decision making, household chores, mobility, safety, education, health, gender norms, among others.



## 30 in-stream storage structures in progress, 16 more in pipeline: CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 2:** The Water Resources Department has taken up construction of 30 in-stream storage structures and 16 more are on the way located across different rivers, said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik here Tuesday.

These structures will not only help in the conservation of surface water for different purposes including rural water supply, but also enhance the ground water level, he said.

Patnaik said this during an orientation programme of 106 newly recruited junior engineers (mechanical) of the department. Stating that Odisha is primarily an agrarian state, he said this department has a major responsibility of providing irrigation facilities to the

farmers. Apart from this, it is also responsible for protection of the life and property of people from natural calamities like floods with scientific management of reservoir water, said the CM.

"We have more than 2500 dams and construction of some more dams like Lower Suktel, Deo, Kanpur and Ghatkeswar are in progress," he further stated.

Focusing on the value of water resources, he said that with an ever-growing population, water is increasingly becoming a scarce resource. In this context, engineers of Water Resources department have to play a major role in conservation of water for different purposes like drinking, irrigation, hydro-electric power, industry, pisciculture and ecological balance, he added.

Highlighting the role of me-

chanical engineers, Patnaik said that though the civil construction works are done by civil engineers, mechanical engineers have a greater role for installation of one of the important components of the hydraulic structures such as gate works including their operation and maintenance.

Water Resources minister Tukuni Sahu said the Chief Minister has always given priority to the empowerment of women. The newly recruited engineers must try their best to bring the benefits of state's initiatives to people's doorsteps, she advised.

Interacting with the new recruits, secretary to the CM, VK Pandian, advised the engineers to have complete trust on their own merit and work without any fear or favour.

## Vedanta Aluminium observes World Breastfeeding Week

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 2:** Vedanta Aluminium is undertaking a series of awareness sessions on breastfeeding practices for pregnant and lactating mothers in Jharsuguda and Kalahandi districts of Odisha during World Breastfeeding Week. Themed on "Step up for Breastfeeding", the sessions will be held in partnership with National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Vedanta Hospital (Lanjigarh) and MAMTA Health Institute for Mother and Child.



The company seeks to build awareness on the importance of exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of an infant's life, provide access to improved caregiving practices for pregnant and lactating mothers in Lanjigarh and peripheral areas, increased level of awareness on nutrition during breastfeeding.

At Jharsuguda, the company will conduct awareness sessions at 125 Nand Ghars, which are modernised anganwadis. At each of the Nand Ghars, ANM and ASHA workers and medical officers will impart knowledge on importance and best practices of breastfeeding to new mothers.

Similarly, in Lanjigarh (Kalahandi), the session will see doctors from the Vedanta Hospital at Lanjigarh and officials from NRHM share the benefits of breastfeeding.

## ECoR set to resume all its Express Trains

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, August 2:** The East Coast Railway (ECoR) announced Tuesday that it would restore the services of another four pairs of express trains originating from its jurisdiction.

Barring the Bhubaneswar-Dhanbad Garib Rath Express, all the originating trains from the ECoR jurisdiction that were suspended during the coronavirus-induced lockdowns have been resumed, it said in a release.

The Puri-Digha Express will be restored from Saturday, while the Visakhapatnam-Paradeep Express will resume from Sunday. The Visakhapatnam-Durg Express will be restored from August 13. The Puri-Howrah Shatabdi Express will resume from October 2.

## Apollo launches blood test for breast cancer

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 2:** Apollo Cancer Centre, Bhubaneswar launched a revolutionary blood test for early detection of breast cancer as part of its women and cancer initiative. The test can detect breast cancers at early stages in asymptomatic individuals with high accuracy, thus enabling timely diagnosis and treatment to save lives. The initiative was taken in association with Datar Cancer Genetics.

With an easy draw of a small quantity of blood, now, EasyCheck-Breast can help in the detection of breast cancer even before the first stage. The EasyCheck is now available across all major Apollo Cancer Centres including Bhubaneswar.

This is a drive to make women aware that cancer, if detected early



is curable and at Apollo Cancer Centres we have all advanced facilities for early detection and comprehensive treatment of all cancers, Alok Srivastava, COO and DMS Apollo Hospitals, Bhubaneswar, said.

Shruti Das, consultant, Radiation Oncology at Apollo Cancer Centres, Bhubaneswar said, "At our centre we will also be dedicating two days in a month for a free consultation and screening test for women related cancers. We are committed towards advising women for prevention, early detection and complete cancer care under one roof."

## Smartphone use may help improve memory skills: Study

Contrary to popular belief, a new study has found that smartphones and other digital devices could help improve memory skills rather than causing people to become lazy or forgetful.

The findings, published in the Journal of Experimental Psychology, showed that digital devices help people store and remember important information. This, in turn, frees up their memory to recall additional less important things.

"We wanted to explore how storing information in a digital device could influence memory abilities," said researcher Sam Gilbert from

the University College London.

"We found that when people were allowed to use external memory, the device helped them to remember the information they had saved into it. This was hardly surprising, but we also found that the device improved people's memory for unsaved information as well," he added.

Neuroscientists have previously expressed concerns that the overuse of technology could result in the breakdown of cognitive abilities and cause "digital dementia".

However, the findings show that using a digital device as external memory not only helps people to re-



member the information saved on the device, but it also helps them to remember unsaved information too.

For the study, researchers developed a memory task to be played on a touchscreen digital tablet or

computer. The test was undertaken by 158 volunteers aged between 18 and 71

■ The findings show that using a digital device as external memory not only helps people to remember the information saved on the device, but it also helps them to remember unsaved information

■ For the study, researchers developed a memory task to be played on a touchscreen digital tablet or computer. The test was undertaken by 158 volunteers aged between 18 and 71

some to the right.

The number of circles they remembered dragging to the correct side determined their pay at the end of the experiment. One side was designated 'high value', meaning that remembering to drag a circle to this side was worth 10 times as much money as remembering to drag a circle to the other 'low value' side.

Participants performed this task 16 times. They had to use their own memory to remember half of the trials and they were allowed to set reminders on the digital device for the other half.

The results found that partici-

pants tended to use digital devices to store the details of the high-value circles. And, when they did so, their memory for those circles was improved by 18 per cent.

Their memory for low-value circles was also improved by 27 per cent, even in people who had never set any reminders for low-value circles. However, results also showed a potential cost of using reminders.

When they were taken away, the participants remembered the low-value circles better than the high-value ones, indicating that they had entrusted the high-value circles to their devices and then forgotten about them.

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### Rape of minor: Man awarded 25-year RI

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Phulbani, August 2:** A fast track special POCSO court in Phulbani of Kandhamal district Tuesday awarded 25 years of rigorous imprisonment to a man for raping a minor girl in Daringbadi area.

The court also slapped a penalty of ₹20,000 and ordered that in case of default, the convict has to undergo an additional jail term for one year. The convict was identified as Jirima Pradhan of Daringbadi.

The crime was reported in 2019 when the girl, a student of Class VII was on her way to school. Pradhan lured her to his house by offering her chocolate and had sexual relationship with her. Pradhan continued with his activities till the minor was found to be pregnant one day. A meeting was held in the village over the issue where the accused admitted to his crime.

Later, the victim's mother filed a complaint against Pradhan and a case was registered against him under sections under the POCSO Act.

## Lokayukta plaint for probe into 5K ghost ration cards

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nayagarh, August 2:** As many as 5,000 ghost beneficiaries are reaping the benefits of subsidised food stocks under National Food Security Act (NFSA) in Nayagarh district, sources claimed.



This has allegedly promoted corruption to the tune of ₹37,50,000 per month and ₹4.50 crore in a year in this district. The matter came to the fore after a case was filed in the court of state Lokayukta asking for a probe into siphoning of rice and wheat meant for the actual beneficiaries. The petitioner, advocate Ranjit Das, said that a probe will only reveal for how long subsidised rice and wheat is being siphoned by these ghost beneficiaries.

In his petition, Das has made the state Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare minister, state

**Corruption to the tune of ₹37,50,000 per month and ₹4.50 crore in a year has taken place in garb of ghost beneficiaries in Nayagarh district**

Civil Supplies secretary, the district Collector of Nayagarh, the district civil supplies officer and all the marketing inspectors of blocks and NACs as party to the case.

Das alleged that the state government had provided financial assistance of ₹1,000 to each of the ration card holders during Covid pandemic. After all the beneficiaries received their financial assistance, the number of ghost beneficiaries now exceeds 5,000 including the ghost ration card holders of Ranpur block and NAC, he alleged.

The beneficiaries are now receiving 5-kg rice and wheat at ₹1 per kg after the National Food Security Act-2013 came into force. He alleged that 20 to 25 kg of food stocks amounting to ₹750 are being siphoned off monthly in the name of these 5,000 ghost beneficiaries. This takes the total amount siphoned off to ₹37,50,000 per month and ₹4.50 crore every year, he alleged.



ASHA workers and healthcare personnel took out an awareness rally on eradication of malaria and dengue fever in Khairaput area of Malkangiri district, Tuesday

## Keep cordial relations with locals, BSF ADG tells troops

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, August 2:** BSF's Assistant Director General (ADG) Ashish Gupta called upon the personnel of the force to maintain cordial relations with locals and be updated about the presence of Naxals in the areas of deployment for effective operations.

ADG Gupta was on a three-day visit to Koraput and Malkangiri districts where he assessed the security situation and operational preparedness of the forces against Maoist activities.

Accompanied by senior officers, he first visited the Company Operating Base (COB) at Kartanpalli in Malkangiri along the Odisha-Chhattisgarh border.

He interacted with the troops and asked them to maintain cordial relations with the local population. He also told them to be aware about the presence of Naxals in the areas of deployment for effective operations, an



**On a 3-day visit to Koraput and Malkangiri, ADG Ashish Gupta assessed the security situation and operational preparedness of the forces against Maoist activities**

official statement said. Gupta also visited the Swabhiman Anchal in Malkangiri district.

Interacting with the personnel at the Vantalguda COB, he praised the troops for establishing a base in the inaccessible and sensitive Swabhiman Anchal, an erstwhile Maoist stronghold.

He also interacted with civilians and distributed sweets among

the local children.

The ADG also took a ride on a patrol boat on the Balimela reservoir and an aerial tour of the Bejjangewarha Reserve Forest to assess the Naxal situation at the junction of Odisha-Chhattisgarh-Andhra Pradesh.

He also complimented the proactive approach of BSF in undertaking humanitarian assistance to locals.

## Woman, daughter commit suicide; grandson critical

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Khaprakhol, August 2:** In a shocking incident, a woman and her daughter committed suicide by drinking poison at Patimal village under Khaprakhol block of Bolangir district, Tuesday. Besides, the woman's six-year-old grandson was rendered critical after the suicide bid. What prompted them to commit suicide was not known till the report came in.

The deceased were identified as Kalabati Sahu (70) and Santoshini Sahu (40). Reports said Santoshini came to her mother Kalabati after her husband, a native of Chhattisgarh, died. She has four children. Three of her children are studying at an Ashram school in Bolangir.

IIC Jayshankar Acharya said that the two had drunk poison and made the child drink it.

The bodies were sent for post mortem while the rescued child was hospitalised.

## Two killed in lightning strike

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Anandapur/Rupsa, August 2:** Two persons including a minor boy was killed in two separate incidents of lightning in Keonjhar and Balasore districts, Monday.

A minor boy studying in Class-II was killed after lightning struck him while returning home from school at Jalsarpur village under Nandipada police limits under Anandapur sub-division of

Keonjhar district. The deceased was identified as Rajesh Behera, son of Manguli Behera in the village. One of his classmates accompanying him sustained minor injuries in the calamity.

In the second incident, a farm labourer was killed in lightning strike at Rahimpada village under Sadar block in Balasore district, Monday.

The deceased was identified as Akrura Das, 48, of the village. After

lightning struck him while he was working on a farmland, locals rescued him in critical condition and rushed him to Basta community health centre.

The doctors there pronounced him dead on arrival. Basta police registered a case of unnatural death and sent the body for post-mortem. Locals have demanded financial assistance for the bereaved family members as they are poor.

## PREVENTIVE MEASURE



Health officials collected water samples from Mankadamundi village under Dasamantapur block of Koraput district, Monday after diarrhoea claimed the life of a person and left seven others afflicted, Tuesday

## Kidney disease haunts Nayagarh villages

AS MANY AS 13 HAVE DIED OF THE DISEASE IN A SPAN OF FIVE YEARS WHILE THREE AFFECTED ARE PRESENTLY BATTLING FOR LIFE

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nayagarh, August 2:** Kidney disease has been taking a heavy toll in Chadheiyapalli, Osamaska and Pokharigochha under Dasapalla block of Nayagarh district. Three people afflicted by the disease in these villages have been fighting the disease which has already claimed life of 13 people in the last five years.

Though the exact cause behind the disease is yet to be ascertained, fluoride-content in the area's groundwater is suspected to be the factor behind the lethal disease, reports said.

The spread of the disease has left the residents of Chadheiyapalli and Dalit Sahi of Osamaska village panicked. The locals have demanded intervention of Health department and free treatment facility for the patients.

At least four more villagers



from Chadheiyapalli panchayat, who suffer from kidney disease, have been battling for life. Panic has gripped the residents in the area as the number of patients and deaths are rising steadily.

Around 111 people of 15 families reside at Dalit sahi, 89 people belonging to nine families live in Osamaska village.

People of these localities say the water available from tube wells

here are not fit for consumption. The water is brownish and a thin layer is visible on the surface when the water is left still in a container for a few minutes.

The residents had drawn the attention of both block and district administrations towards the issue, but their demands have fallen on deaf ears, it was alleged.

Locals said, Banchhanidhi Nayak (50), Chintamani Nayak

(50) and Kanhucharan Nayak (45) of Chadheiyapalli and Chaturbhuja Nayak (50) of Osamaska have died of kidney-related ailments some months ago. Karunakar Nayak (40) of Osamaska, Krushna Barik (68) of Kainadiha and Purnachandra Patra (60) of Chadheiyapalli have been suffering from the fatal disease.

"The water has fluoride-content and that is why such disease is spreading in our locality. The water samples need testing. There is a dire need for alternative sources for safe drinking water," said villagers. "If we are forced to drink this water, we will lose our lives one by one," they lamented.

ADM Bidhan Chandra Ray said that it is not clear if the disease is caused by fluoride-content in water or not. It will be confirmed only after testing. CDMO Makarand Beura said that testing of water is being done.

## Six held for minor's gangrape inside car

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, August 2:** A day after the gangrape of a minor girl near a roadside dhaba at Godbhaga area under Burla police station limits in Sambalpur district, police arrested six persons including a woman on the charge, Tuesday.

The six accused identified as Akash Dash, 28, Manoj Kata, 27, Sanyasi Pradhan, 27, Binod Jhara, 20, the dhaba owner Jagdish Mahananda, 54, and a woman Shrita Das, 35, had been detained since Monday. They were arrested after a police probe revealed that the accused youths raped the minor in turns inside a car in tacit support and assistance of the dhaba owner and the woman.

The woman met the minor near Hirakud railway station July 30 night and lured her for dinner to Samaleswari Dhaba at Godbhaga as per her plan. The youths arrived there in a car and picked the minor inside and took turns to rape her, police said.

## Juang village reels under poverty, poor healthcare

POST NEWS NETWORK

**MORE THAN 12 TRIBALS DIED IN A YEAR; RESIDENTS LEAD MISERABLE LIFE AMID PROBLEMS GALORE**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, August 2:** Unhealthy living conditions, consumption of spurious and toxic liquor, lack of safe drinking water and poor healthcare facility among other factors are taking a toll on primitive Juang tribals living in Bansapal block of Keonjhar district, which have resulted in premature deaths of some tribals, a report said.

Death of two Juang tribals in a span of two days in the first week of July in Bayapandadhar village under Bansapal block is a case in point. The deceased were identified as Madha Juang, 35, and Babula

Juang, 25. The deaths have sparked panic and concern among the tribals.

This year, over 12 Juangs have died prematurely for various reasons in the village. Some conscious villagers held unhealthy living conditions, consumption of spurious liquor, contaminated water and lack of healthcare facility responsible for their deaths.

Deceased Madha is survived by his wife and three children while Babula is survived by his wife and a differently-abled child. They are now reeling under gruelling poverty after the deaths of their sole bread winners with no help or financial assistance from the administration, even though crores of rupees are said to be spent for their development. Their deplorable condition stands in contrast to the government claims.

They have been given job cards, but are yet to get work under any livelihood scheme or poverty alleviation scheme like the Mahatma



Gandhi Nation Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). As a result, they have often had to migrate for works or live in hunger at their home when they do not get any work.

Villagers voiced concern over lack of any assistance to these bereaved families despite the government having provision to provide financial assistance to poor families under social security schemes in the event of death of the

lone bread winner of a family. The premature deaths have become a matter of concern for the tribals.

Many of them are dying after developing a swollen stomach while the rest are dying after being discharged from the hospital, local social activist Anand Charan Sethi and Birabar Nayak said. They demanded the district administration to intervene and rush in a medical team and conduct a probe to ascertain the actual reason be-

**VILLAGERS OF BAYAPANDADHAR EKE OUT THEIR LIVING BY WORKING AS CASUAL LABOURERS DUE TO LACK OF ANY LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES**

**THEY LIVE A LIFE OF DRUDGERY WITHOUT DECENT SOURCES OF LIVELIHOOD. AVAILING TIMELY HEALTHCARE SERVICES IS A DREAM FOR THEM**

hind the premature deaths of the tribals.

Suryamani Sahu, an Anganwadi worker, said that Madha had a swollen stomach and was admitted to a hospital, but died after he returned home from the hospital. Babula died after being afflicted with jaundice.

Sources said the villagers eke out their living by working as casual labourers due to lack of any livelihood opportunities. They live a life of drudgery without decent

sources of livelihood. Availing timely healthcare is a dream for them.

Many of them often go hungry in the absence of livelihood, the two social activists said. The sanitary condition or cleanliness is worst in the village while many of them are suffering from malnutrition due to lack of nutritious food.

Many of them live in shanties or ramshackle houses where their life becomes miserable when rain-water leaks in monsoon.

"I have covered the house with polythene sheets," said Punia Juang, a villager. He said that his co-villagers like Nanda Juang, Rathia Juang and Sana Juang are living in such polythene covered houses. Hence, housing schemes are a dream for them.

A solar pump has been installed in the village, but it fails to deliver water because of technical snag. Left with no option, they often fetch water from a nearby stream to meet their daily water needs.

FOCUS ECONOMY

# THE INFLATION SAGA



**The real evil of inflation is that it wantonly redistributes wealth and income, often unrelated to the contribution of different groups and individuals to production. All those who gain through inflation on net balance necessarily do so at the expense of others who lose through it on net balance**

Third: when a rich group has access to subsidised loans whose nominal interest rates may fail to reflect inflationary pressures fully, the low-income group does not have access to subsidised loans. Finally, high inflation reduces the real tax proceeds collected by a country, ultimately reducing the real value of transfer payments targeted for the poor population (Tanzi-Olivera effect).

The recent inflation would strongly influence the poor and middle class in India through its effects on real wages. Inflation never affects everybody simultaneously and equally. It begins at a specific point, with a specific group. The real evil of inflation is that it wantonly redistributes wealth and income, often unrelated to the contribution of different groups and individuals to production. All those who gain through inflation on net balance necessarily do so at the expense of others who lose through it on net balance.

In India, the income of the majority remains so low that they can only meet their basic needs. If an economy has prolonged high inflation, then the purchasing power of most low-income people declines and brings down their consumption demand over time. Thus it negatively affects economic growth. It is because the marginal propensity to consume of the rich is very low, and that of the poor is very high, whatever the poor earn, they consume, and their saving is minimal. If their income erodes due to inflation, their consumption declines. India is a consumption-driven economy, where private final consumption expenditure shares around 60 per cent of the GDP. High inflation could negatively hamper economic growth by shrinking aggregate consumption demand as most people's purchasing power declines. Therefore, controlling inflation is the need of the hour to maintain the high economic growth in the long run.

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rise in the CPI index in June are fuel and electricity prices (10.39 per cent), followed by clothing and footwear prices (9.52 per cent), food prices (7.75 per cent), and housing prices (3.93 per cent). The rising fuel and crude oil prices are due to disruption in the global supply chain in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war. Further, food inflation spurred rising prices of essential food items such as edible oils, vegetables, meat and fish. In connection with this, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman hopes that a good monsoon will bring good products and keep rural demand intact.

The recent decision by the government to increase GST rates and bring essential items such as curd, lassi, puffed rice, LED lamps, solar water heaters under the GST ambit could multiply the financial burden on the poor. This GST hike further strengthens the grip of inflation in India. Apart from this, the recent outbreak of monkeypox in the US and Europe and its gradual spread to Asia, including India, may disrupt economic activities or aggravate the global supply chain disruptions. Such disruption may further increase inflation in the future and cut the purchasing power of consumers.

As we know theoretically that price increases because of an increase in the supply of money relative to goods and services or a general increase in demand for commodities relative to the supply of commodities. The former is a certain relative price change, changing the price of money itself. The latter is more macro-determined and could be caused by several factors, for instance, a population increase, a natural disaster, a pandemic, a war, or any other disruption.

Inflation has far-reaching consequences on the livelihoods of middle-class and poor people. It acts as a tax for an economy's lower and middle-income categories. It aggravates income inequality. Inflation can affect income distribution through at least four channels. First: when the high-income class gets access to anti-inflation hedging tools such as foreign-currency denominated or interest-bearing assets, whereas the low-income class cannot think of investing their money in anti-inflation hedging tools instead of spending on necessities. Second: high inflation redistributes income from the poor, who suffer real wage erosion due to the differential bargaining strength or access to indexed wages to the rich.

India's liberalisation or deregulation policies in the 1980s led to the deterioration of its income, consumption, and wealth distributions. The policies were a blessing for the wealthy. The wealthy reaped the benefits from the opportunities created by reforms, while the poor and marginalised sections were left behind. Statistically, income shares of the top 1 per cent of the population increased from 11 per cent to 21.7 per cent. While the income shares of the bottom 50 per cent drastically plummeted from 23 per cent to 13.1 per cent between 1980 and 2021 in India. The top 10 per cent held 57 per cent, and the middle 40 per cent shared only 29.7 per cent of total income. India is the second most unequal nation in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), just after South Africa, where the bottom 50 per cent population hold only 5.3 per cent while the top 10 per cent hold 66.5 per cent of the total income.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to control it added fuel to the fire aborting economic activities that severely affected the earnings and livelihood of the poor and the marginalised. They were compelled to stay home without work and income. In contrast, educated/high skilled workers worked from home and continued to earn. Capitalists were involved with the stock market, which recovered within a few months. This contrasting picture of earnings worsened the income distribution during the pandemic.

In a statement, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) said that India's retail inflation was 7.01 per cent in June, while it was at 7.04 per cent in May. The wholesale inflation rate is double-digit. It's worth noting that inflation is not only knocking on India's door but also knocking on the door of global economies. In May, the retail inflation rates in the US, the UK, Germany, Japan, France, and the Euro Zone increased to 8.6 per cent, 9.1 per cent, 7.9 per cent, 2.5 per cent, 5.2 per cent, and 8.1 per cent, respectively. The inflation rates in developing countries such as China and Brazil witnessed spikes of 2.1 per cent and 11.73 per cent, respectively, in May 2022. The major contributors to the



**Dillip Kumar Muduli & Sanjay Kumar Rout**

**THE RECENT INFLATION WOULD STRONGLY INFLUENCE THE POOR AND MIDDLE CLASS IN INDIA THROUGH ITS EFFECTS ON REAL WAGES**

## Beleaguered Indian

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and the Opposition are busy trading charges against each other and scoring political brownie points in Parliament over the soaring prices and rising inflation. But, a six-year-old girl from Uttar Pradesh has spoken the unvarnished truth. She has proven that the economic mismanagement is of such proportions that even children are not spared in these trying times. As always, it is the child who has the guts and honesty to point out the emperor has no clothes on, while sycophantic courtiers and petrified grown-ups dare not utter the truth. Kriti Dubey, a student of Class 1 has written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi complaining about price rise and the "hardship" she is going through in buying "pencils and rubber". She got annoyed recently when her mother scolded her when she had lost her pencil in school. In the letter, which has gone viral on social media, the little girl has accused the Prime Minister of having "caused a steep price rise" making "even my pencil and rubber (eraser)" and a popular product of easy-to-cook noodles children are fond of "costlier". She has complained her mother beat her for asking for a pencil. Making an impassioned plea to the Prime Minister, she has asked him to tell her what she should do as other children steal her pencil. Her father Vishal Dubey, an advocate, reacted to her letter by terming it his daughter's "Mann Ki Baat" — in imitation of the Prime Minister's periodic addresses or monologues to the nation speaking his mind on various issues facing the country without caring to listen to the voice of the people.

The Union Finance Minister claimed India's economy is much better than most countries and that it is still the fastest growing economy. She even cited "global agencies' high ranking" during a debate over price rise in the Lok Sabha. Her self-congratulatory remark that "everybody — MPs and State Governments — has played their role," only adds insult to the injury inflicted on the people by the government's poor handling of the economy buffeted by runaway fuel prices, soaring inflation and their cascading effects on edibles. As a result, the Indian kitchens are bearing the brunt of the price rise. Besides the fuel and edible oil costs, domestic cooking gas prices have also shot up recently. The high fuel prices have had a spillover effect on transportation. The record increase of around Rs 480 in just one year, in the price of a 14.2 kg cooking gas cylinder to over Rs 1,000 per cylinder, makes a mockery of the government's claim of providing direct subsidy to the consumers. In fact, subsidies for gas cylinders have been virtually stopped by the government for the last two years. In the Special Tribal Component (STC) in budget 2022-2023, the subsidy for provision of gas cylinders to tribal households is slashed from Rs 1,064 crore to just Rs 172 crore. This is how the government is cushioning rural women against the hard work of fuel collection. The question is how many can afford gas cylinders at such a high price.

Recent findings of the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy reveal the alarming reality that 17 per cent of households have an average monthly income of a meagre Rs 8,600 and 62 per cent of households earn just Rs 14,400 a month. With such low incomes, the impact of price rise of essential commodities is bound to be devastating.

The need of the hour is that the government should fix the problems the country is facing. It can do so simply by not interfering in the common citizens' economic activities, as it has been prone to do, in multiple instances, since Demonetization of 2016. It could show some sensitivity to the common man's sufferings by refraining from juggling with statistics and spreading untruths. It should stop helping a few superrich families, close to the powers that be, to make windfall profits at the cost of the already beleaguered Indian.

### WISDOM CORNER

- Either you run the day or the day runs you. **JIM ROHN**
- You cannot have a positive life and a negative mind. **JOYCE MEYER**
- If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door. **MILTON BERLE**

### WORDSWORTH

#### ■ Virosphere

The virosphere is all those places where viruses are found or in which they interact with their hosts. It has also been spelled as virosphere, though this is less common and seems to have been supplanted by the other form. Its appearance shows how scientists are coming to realise that the viruses are not mere causes of disease and parasitic nuisances on the fringes of life but a key part of the living world. Vastly more virus species exist than previously thought (100 million or more, outnumbering any other type of organism) and they are to be found in pretty much every environment on the planet. They contain more genetic material than the rest of life, so much of it unique that it's no longer possible to dismiss them as an irrelevant aside but a separate class of biological existence that may be even older than bacteria. A significant part of the human genome turns out to consist of viral genes and it is beginning to look as though the ability of viruses to transfer genes to and from their hosts and each other — so spreading genes throughout the biological world — may have been an important factor in the evolution of species. The term appeared no later than 1997 in a poster issued by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses, in the slightly different sense of the diversity of virus types. Professor Curtis Suttle of the University of British Columbia used it in the current sense (but spelled virosphere) in the journal *Environmental Microbiology* in 2005 and its current usage dates from that. It remains uncommon, even in scientific literature, but a few straws in the wind suggest it is becoming a standard term. The need to periodically update the classification schemes testifies to the dynamic nature of the "virosphere" (*Animal Viruses*, by Thomas C Mettenleiter and Francisco Sobrino, 2008). Only three of these systems survive to this day in the form of the three domains of cellular life; much of the rest lives on the virosphere (*New Scientist*, 30 Aug. 2008).

#### ■ Virotherapist

This term is currently very rare. The name for the field of study, virotherapy, has been known for a decade but has only occasionally strayed outside specialist or academic publications. The magazine *Scientific American* explained its meaning succinctly in a headline to an article in October 2003: "virotherapy harnesses viruses, those banes of humankind, to stop another scourge — cancer". Anecdotal reports have appeared for more than a century that certain viruses can counter tumours, but it has only been in the past couple of decades that a growing understanding of genetics has enabled medical researchers to begin developing treatments using oncolytic (cancer-attacking) viruses. The then state of the art was summed up in a report two years ago: Research has shown that virotherapy, in which viruses are programmed to attack cancer cells, leaving healthy cells undamaged, could be beneficial, but this treatment is at present experimental (*Daily Telegraph*, 21 Mar. 2011). The field has moved on since then. A viral therapy to treat prostate cancers and one to help treat cancers of the head and neck are currently working their way towards approval in the US. Others are stymied for lack of funding.

### IN JEST THIS

## Don't live your life on 'single use'



**Melvin Durai**

**IN GENERAL, IT'S A GOOD RULE TO AVOID 'SINGLE-USE' AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, WHETHER YOU'RE DEALING WITH PRODUCTS OR PEOPLE**

Licypriya Kangujam, an 11-year-old environmental activist from Manipur, recently tweeted a photo of herself standing on the trash-strewn beach of the Yamuna River, with the Taj Mahal in the background. She held a sign that said, "Behind the beauty of Taj Mahal is plastic pollution."

Her tweet went viral and, the very next day, a group of workers were cleaning the beach. "Happy to see my one tweet forced (the authorities) to clean garbage around Taj Mahal," Licypriya tweeted. "But I want a permanent solution. Ban single use plastic completely in and around all heritage sites of India under a law. Anyway change is coming whether you like it or not."

She was right. Change is coming, not just in India but around the world.

India recently banned a number of single-use plastic items, including straws, cutlery, packaging films, and plastic sticks for balloons, candy and ice-cream.

Canada announced a ban, by the end of 2022, of plastic bags, styrofoam takeout containers, plastic straws, cutlery, stir sticks and six-pack rings that hold cans and bottles.

The European Union has banned 10 plastic products, including plastic bottle caps, cutlery, straws and plates.

What about the United States? Well, the US is banning the sale of single-use plastic products in national parks and other public lands by 2022. Actually, it's not as bad as that. The US is banning the sale of single-use plastic products in national parks by 2032. That's only 10 years away and there's a fairly good chance that a few of the animals will still be alive then.

The US needs to do more, of course, considering it's the No. 1 producer of plastic waste in the world (India is No. 2). I'm in favour of a new law that states: "You may bring as much plastic into your home as you want. But once you bring it home, you must keep it." The average American family

uses so much plastic that if they were required to keep it in their homes, they'd run out of space in just a month. But many families would get creative. They'd build additions to their homes for plastic storage. They'd insulate their attics with plastic. And they'd glue plastic containers together to make furniture for their pets.

It makes sense to ban single-use plastic products. Consumers use such products only once, then toss them in the garbage or try to recycle them. Some of this plastic is recycled, but the bulk of it ends up in the oceans, endangering marine life, or in various other places, including beaches and river banks and city streets. The problem with piles of plastic waste on city streets is that most people who come across this waste have a strong preference for addition rather than subtraction.

Plastic waste is not just an eyesore, but terrible for the environment because it takes hundreds of years to decompose. If you throw away a plastic bag today,

it may enter the stomach of a whale in the year 2322.

In general, it's a good rule to avoid "single-use" as much as possible, whether you're dealing with products or people. Long-term relationships can be far more rewarding than one-night stands. Don't treat people as disposable items: each one of them is special in their own way.

It's almost impossible to avoid disposable products completely, but each of us can try to minimise our use of such products and do our best to recycle or reuse them.

Houseplants can be grown in plastic yogurt tubs, pencils and pens can be stored in plastic food containers, and leg holes can be cut out of plastic bags to turn them into shorts.

I haven't actually tried to make clothing out of plastic bags, but if more people walked around in plastic clothing, the fashion industry would soon force governments everywhere to ban plastic bags.

## 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)

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#### True friendship

Sir, Few relations on earth never die, and friendship is one among them. The willingness to accept the good and the bad of the other person is essentially 'true friendship'. Inter-personal friendship, and friendship between societies and nations, are keys to foster global goodwill and peace. These unique characters are, of course, fraught with roadblocks. The harmonious relation between the people of the world is threatened by many factors, some negotiable, some not. People-to-people understanding and peer support, which usually cement friendships at all levels, stand to be broken by poverty, violence, prejudice and hatred. Terror has gripped the world with one human being yearning to smother another. Global conflicts, and ill-will, would be things of the past if people and communities of the world stand as one. Mutual respect is a special virtue which goes a long way in holding together men and women. Friendship doubles the joy and halves the misery, but unfortunately the equations between the countries of the world are never so simple. War-ravaged nations are struggling to come to terms with the fact that their cities and towns are reduced to bits and pieces. Though the world has come a long way from the World War days, the proneness of some countries to be attacked, and some of them to be aggressors, is worrying. The only consoling factor is friends of these nations are contributing their mite to infuse sanity among countries hell-bent on destroying one another. Exchange of people between countries, through tourism, education and employment, has tremendously buffered friendship between various countries dissimilar in culture and traditions but held firmly by the glue of friendship. The language of friendship is not words but the meaning **Ganapati Bhat, AKOLA**

#### Baseless charges

Sir, Delhi High Court has found that there are no documents on record to show that Union Minister Smriti Irani or her daughter were ever issued any license for the restaurant, Silly Souls Café and Bar in Goa or that they even applied for it. In their zeal to tarnish the image of Irani, Congress leaders Jairam Ramesh, Pawan Khara and Netta D'souza have tarnished their own images by levelling baseless charges. The allegations made by the Congress leaders in a press conference July 23 were vehemently refuted by Irani. Criticism is not bad. But the criticisms should have substance and be irrefutable.

**KV Seetharamaiah, BANGALORE**

# national



**The state government must provide immediate assistance to farmers from Marathwada and Vidarbha whose land has been damaged due to heavy rains**  
**AIT PAWAR |**  
MAHARASHTRA LEADER OF OPPOSITION

## FLYING OBJECT REPULSED

The Border Security Force troops in the Kanachak sector at the International Border in Jammu fired at and repulsed an unidentified flying object, officials said Tuesday



## of the day quote

The Maharashtra government is working efficiently even though there is no full-fledged cabinet in place  
**EKNATH SHINDE |** MAHARASHTRA CM

No matter how much the central government tries to defame the Congress through the ED, in the end truth will win  
**ASHOK GEHLOT |** RAJASTHAN CM

Despite less rain in the state, the situation is under control and farmers will not be allowed to incur losses  
**YOGI ADITYANATH |** UP CM

## SHORT TAKES

### Girl raped, killed

**Nagaon:** A girl has been allegedly raped and killed in Assam's Hojai district, police said Tuesday. The Class 10 student had gone missing after her tuition class in her hometown Lumding on Monday evening. "The minor's body was found in Krishna Basti area of Lumding on Tuesday. Prima facie, it seems to rape and murder case but the cause of death will be known after post-mortem examination," a senior officer said. No arrests have been made so far, he added.

### Jeweller shot at

**New Delhi:** A 46-year-old man was shot in his face by two people during a robbery bid in the national capital's Najafgarh area Tuesday. The accused, both juveniles, were apprehended during an encounter by the police within three hours of commission of the crime. During the encounter, one of the robbers was shot in his leg. In a media briefing, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) M. Harsh Wardhan said a PCR call was received around 12 p.m. at Najafgarh police station regarding the firing incident at a jewellery shop.

### 4 doctors booked

**Bhopal/Jabalpur:** The preliminary probe into the Jabalpur hospital fire tragedy has revealed several shortcomings regarding safety and it was found that the fire No Objection Certificate (NOC) of the facility had expired, Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra said Tuesday. He said police have registered a case of culpable homicide against four doctors-cum-owners of the hospital and its manager and arrested him, a day after the devastating blaze killed eight persons, including four patients.

### Man held at airport

**New Delhi:** The Customs Department at the IGI Airport Tuesday said they arrested a man who was found in possession of foreign currency worth ₹58,16,625. A senior customs official said that they recovered Saudi Riyals 2,62,500 and US Dollars 5,000 from the man. The passenger was intending to depart for Dubai from New Delhi on July 31 from Terminal No. 3 of Indira Gandhi International Airport.

### Four arrested

**Dakshina Kannada (Karnataka):** Karnataka Police investigating the murder case of Mohammad Fazil Mangalpet have arrested four persons. Police sources said Tuesday that the accused have been picked up from various places, including Uttara Kannada, Bengaluru. The police department had formed a special team to nab the killers headed by an ACP rank officer as per the request of Fazil's family.

## ED RAIDS ON HERALD ASSETS

# Congress, BJP trade barbs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 2:** The Enforcement Directorate raids at the head office of the Congress-owned National Herald newspaper here and other locations evoked a sharp reaction from the Opposition party which condemned the action as "vendetta politics", even as the ruling BJP asserted that law would take its own course.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) raided the head office of the National Herald newspaper here and 11 other locations as part of ongoing money laundering investigation, officials said, a week after it questioned Congress chief Sonia Gandhi.

The searches were carried out under the criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) to "gather additional evidence with regard to the trail of funds and they are against those entities who were involved in the National Herald-linked transactions", the officials said.

Reacting sharply, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, "The raids on Herald House, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg are a part of the continued attack against India's principal opposition - Indian National Congress."

"We strongly condemn this vendetta politics against those who speak up against the Modi Govt. You cannot silence us," he said. Reacting to Ramesh's allegation, BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla



The head office of Congress party-owned National Herald newspaper amid a raid by Enforcement Directorate officials as part of an ongoing money laundering probe in New Delhi

**The raids on Herald House, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg are a part of the continued attack against India's principal opposition -- Indian National Congress**

**JAIRAM RAMESH |** CONGRESS LEADER

asked if the denial of any relief to the Gandhi family by courts in this matter was also "vendetta".

BJP general secretary CT Ravi also responded to Ramesh's charge, saying there is nothing "Indian nor National about the INC".

"Corrupt Sonia Gandhi and her son Rahul Gandhi are facing action from the ED for the only reason that they looted the Congress in the National Herald case. Slaves can call it vendetta, but the law will take its own course," Ravi said.

At a Congress party press conference here, party spokesperson Supriya Shrinete said the raids on National Herald is a ploy to divert attention from price rise and unemployment.

"In Independent India, there is perhaps no other governmental and no other place, where politics has sunk to this rock bottom. To settle petty personal scores, to intimidate India's opposition, the Modi government is doing exactly what the British did during the freedom struggle. During the freedom struggle, the British had banned and had raided National Herald, that's exactly what the Modi government is doing," Shrinete said.

"You have questioned the Congress President for three days, you have questioned the former Congress President for 50 hours. Either the ED is completely incompetent and has not been able to gather enough (evidence) or the ED has actually become the Election Department of the BJP and that seems to be exactly what the ED has reduced itself to," she alleged.

## Over 50 women workers fall sick

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Visakhapatnam, August 2:** More than 50 women workers of an apparel manufacturing unit in the Brandix Special Economic Zone at Atchutapuram near here fell sick Tuesday due to what was suspected to be a mysterious gas leak, the second such incident in two months.

The real cause of the sickness was, however, not immediately established as medical examination was being conducted. While some of the workers were administered first aid in the medical centre in the SEZ, some others were shifted to nearby hospitals, police sources said.

Some of the workers who fell sick were said to be pregnant. On June 3 too a similar incident occurred in the same place where more than 200 women workers fell unconscious after complaining of eyesore, nausea and vomiting.

It was then suspected that ammonia gas leaked from a nearby Porus Laboratories unit. A team of experts from the Indian Institute of Chemical Technology in Hyderabad visited the lab and conducted tests to determine the cause of the leak while the AP Pollution Control Board ordered closure of the lab.

The Porus lab was shut down for a few days after the mishap but soon resumed activities. Against this backdrop, the fresh incident happened, triggering panic among the workers in the SEZ. On Tuesday too the women workers had nausea and vomiting. The Brandix SEZ employs thousands of workers, mostly women, in the garment manufacturing units.

# India, Maldives ink 6 pacts to boost ties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 2:** India and Maldives Tuesday inked six agreements to expand cooperation in several key areas with Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserting that New Delhi has been and will continue to be the "first responder" to any need or crisis facing the island nation.

After wide-ranging talks with visiting Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, Modi announced a Line of Credit of USD 100 million (one million = 10 lakh) for the neighbouring country for the completion of development projects in a time-bound manner.

"We also reviewed projects for the construction of 4000 social housing units in Greater Male today. I am happy to announce that we will additionally provide financial support for 2,000 social housing units," he said in his media statement.

"We have also decided to provide an additional line of credit of USD 100 million so that all projects can be completed in a time-bound manner," he added. The prime minister said the threat of trans-national crime, terrorism and drug trafficking is serious in the Indian Ocean and close India-Maldives ties were vital for peace in the entire region.

He said the India-Maldives partnership is not only working in the interest of citizens of both countries, but it is also becoming a source of peace and stability for the entire region. India has been and will continue to be the first re-



**In the last few years, there has been renewed vigour in the friendly ties between India and Maldives. Our closeness has increased**

**NARENDRA MODI |** PRIME MINISTER

sponder to any need or crisis of Maldives, he said.

The six pacts inked between the two sides will facilitate cooperation in capacity building, cyber security, housing, disaster management and infrastructure development in the Maldives.

"In the last few years, there has been renewed vigour in the friendly ties between India and Maldives. Our closeness has increased," Modi said. He said despite the challenges posed by the Covid pandemic, the cooperation between the two countries is taking the form of a broad partnership.

In his comments, Solih said both sides reiterated their firm commitment to deal with the threat of terrorism. "Maldives will remain a true friend of India...Our relations with India will always be of highest priority," he said.

# I was offered ₹25 crore for RS vote: Raj minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, August 2:** Rajasthan's minister of state for soldiers' welfare Rajendra Gudha has claimed he was offered ₹25 crore if he voted for a particular candidate in the recent Rajya Sabha elections.

The MLA, who switched from the Bahujan Samaj Party to the Congress earlier, claimed that he was similarly offered ₹60 crore during the rebellion against Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in 2020.

Gudha said he spurned both offers and did not mention any leader or a party while making the allegation. The minister in the state's Congress government was addressing an event at a private school in Jhunjhunu on Monday.

In a video which surfaced Tuesday, he is heard replying to a question from a student. "I had an offer of ₹25 crore to give my vote to one person. I then asked my wife," he said, adding that she told him that they would rather have "goodwill".

He also referred to the rebellion against the Gehlot government by

the then deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot. "I would also like to tell you that when the political crisis was going on, I had an offer of ₹60 crore. I talked to my family. My wife, son and daughter said that they want goodwill and not money," he said.

"When those with you think like that, everything will be fine," he told the schoolgirl. Gudha is one of the six MLAs who won the 2018 assembly elections as BSP candidates and joined the Congress in 2019. They remained in the Gehlot camp when Pilot and 18 other Congress MLAs revolted against his leadership in July 2020.

Gudha was made a minister of state, handling the department for the welfare of ex-servicemen, during the cabinet expansion in November 2021. Gehlot has repeatedly accused the BJP of trying to destabilize his government by offering crores of rupees to MLAs.

In the Rajya Sabha elections held for four seats in June, the BJP had supported independent candidate and media baron Subhash Chandra. Chandra was defeated.

## FESTIVE SPIRIT



Students dance with their teachers to celebrate Teej in the holy month of Shraavan in Amritsar

PTI PHOTO

# Eight monkeypox cases reported so far: Mandaviya

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, August 2:** Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya Tuesday said in the Rajya Sabha that a total of 8 cases of monkeypox have been reported in India so far.

The minister said this while replying in the House over the steps taken by the government to create awareness about monkeypox.

Mandaviya said in the House that out of total 8 cases reported in the country, five have the history of travelling abroad.

According to a source, Delhi Tuesday reported the third confirmed cases of monkeypox which has led the tally to 8 nationwide. A foreign national with no recent travel history has been tested positive for monkeypox in Delhi, the source said. This is the third case



of monkeypox in Delhi. Meanwhile, Kerala also reported another confirmed case of monkeypox in a UAE returnee on

Tuesday. This is the fifth case of the disease in the state so far, leading the tally to 8 in the country.

However, one patient of monkeypox was discharged from Delhi's nodal hospital for the monkeypox treatment, LNJP hospital on Monday night. A

sked on the progress of vaccines for the disease, the Health Minister said studies are still being conducted to find proper vacci-

nation for the disease.

On steps taken to create awareness about monkeypox, Mandaviya said that the government has set up a task force and steps are also being taken to increase awareness about the disease. He also urged the people to not panic as the Central government has been working in co-ordination with the state governments to control the spread of the virus.

# Mass cattle deaths trigger panic in Rajasthan

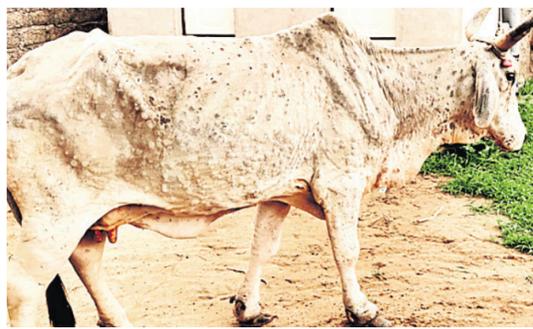
*According to a senior official in the animal husbandry department, while over 2,500 cattle heads have died due to the viral disease, around 50,000 more have been infected*

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jaipur, August 2:** Deaths of over 2,500 cattle heads due to lumpy skin disease in nine districts of Rajasthan has triggered panic across the desert state.

According to a senior official in the animal husbandry de-

partment, "While over 2,500 cattle heads have died due to the viral disease, around 50,000 more have been infected. The viral infection has already spread to nine districts, mostly adjoining Gujarat which has become the epicentre of the disease." The nine districts from where cattle



deaths have been reported are Barmer, Jalore, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Pali, Ganganagar, Nagaur, Sirohi and Jaisalmer.

"There is no vaccination available for the disease which is being treated based on symptoms. The first batch of cases were reported from Jaisalmer in May, where the situation seems to be under control now," the official said.

A team of scientists and veterinary doctors from the Centre visited Jodhpur and Nagaur on Monday to take stock of the situation. Senior officials confirmed that

the team will also visit Ganganagar, Hanumangarh, Bikaner, Jalore, Barmer, Jaisalmer, Pali and Sirohi. An alert has been issued in Dungarpur, Banswara, Udaipur, Rajasmand and the districts adjoining the Gujarat border.

The viral disease spreads through bloodsucking insects, certain species of flies and through contaminated food and water.

It causes acute fever, discharge from the eyes and nose, salivation, soft blister-like nodules all over the body, marked reduction in milk yield and difficulty in eating.

# Heavy rains continue to lash Kerala

## KERALA COOP BANK FRAUD

## High Court allows only emergency payments

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE



**Kochi, August 2:** The Kerala High Court Tuesday directed the scam-tainted coop bank to stop all payments barring the emergency ones and asked the Pinarayi Vijayan government to prepare a roadmap aimed at paying back the depositors.

The Karuvannur Cooperative bank fraud in Thrissur district has now become the cynosure of all eyes and even after an year, not much headway has been made in the police probe.

After hearing multiple petitions demanding its intervention, the court posted the case for August 10 and asked the government for its plan of action.

The CPI-M backed bank informed the court that at present they have only Rs 60 lakh in cash, while they have assets which can be sold and depositors can be paid.

It also pointed out that of the total deposit of Rs 284 crore, a sum of Rs 142 crore has matured. This fresh development comes a few days after Leader of Opposition V.D.Satheesan wrote to Vijayan demanding a CBI probe into the bank fraud. "Those who had good connections in the party were able to get back their deposits, while a majority of the hapless depositors are running from pil-

lar to post to get back their money," he alleged.

It's just not the employees alone that are involved, he added. For the past few days allegations of the role of top CPI-M leaders from the district in the scam are being aired.

On Tuesday, Satheesan told the media that Vijayan should immediately call an all-party meeting to discuss the issues of Cooperative banks as numerous banks in the cooperative sector are in dire straits. "Something has to be done by Vijayan. At the moment all that's happening is nothing but rhetoric and false promises and hopes being given to the hapless people who have deposited their hard earned money in such banks. An all-party meeting has to be convened as we have few suggestions on how the co-operative sector can be salvaged, as this is the backbone of our rural economy," he said.



Thodupuzha and Meenachil are also on the rise and therefore, people living on the banks of all these rivers should be cautious and steps are being taken to relocate them to safer locations.

He has requested everyone not to be reluctant to relocate and to follow the instructions of the authorities.

He further said, in the post, that the State Emergency Operations Centre of the Disaster Management Authority was functioning as the state-level control room with representatives of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF),

- A red alert was declared by the IMD in 10 districts of Kerala
- The red alert was issued in all the districts of the state barring Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta and Kasaragod, where Orange alerts have been issued for August 2 and 3, according to an IMD district rainfall forecast issued for Kerala at 10 AM Tuesday
- In view of the red alerts issued by the IMD, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said people should be very careful and everyone should be prepared to strictly follow the warnings issued by the Disaster Management Authority
- The warning of very heavy rains in Kerala in the days ahead should be taken very seriously as continuous rainfall like now of more than 200 mm is likely to create a crisis, the CM said in a Facebook post

State Rescue Forces and other departments concerned and control rooms have also been set up in all

districts and taluks. Besides that nine NDRF teams have been deployed in 9 districts

of the state with two units of the Defence Security Corps stationed in Kannur and Palakkad districts and one column of the Army in Thiruvananthapuram district, he said.

As there is a possibility of strong winds along with rain, steps should be taken on a war footing to secure electric lines, posts, trees and hoardings to avoid accidents due to their collapse, he said and added that earthmovers and other machinery should be kept ready in advance in disaster-prone areas to deal with landslides and flash floods in hilly areas.

Restricting travel to hilly areas and on water bodies, avoiding night time travel and advising fishermen not to go out to sea in view of possibility of strong winds and huge waves, were some of the other directions that the state government has issued, the CM said.

The CPI(M) state secretariat, in a release, said it has asked all its workers to be part of the relief and rescue work in the state.

The Pathanamthitta Collector has been tasked with taking appropriate steps to ensure that the functions related to the Niraputhari festival, which marks the beginning of the harvest season, and Aranmula Vallasadhya at Sabarimala are not disrupted, a release said. The IMD warned of widespread and isolated heavy and very heavy rainfall in the state till August 5.

# 113 students' lives at risk in this dilapidated school

## Around 160 kms of streams revived in Ernakulam dist

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kochi, August 2:** Nearly 160 kms of streams, which had gone dry under the weight of pollutants and environmental decay in Kerala's Ernakulam district, are now throbbing back to life, thanks to efforts by the administration.

Officials said the streams, which were almost filled with the silt brought by floodwater and garbage thrown into it over the years, were revived as part of an ambitious mission launched by the administration in the year 2019. A total of 1,100 kms of streams, brooks and creeks have been revived so far through the campaign titled 'ini njan ozhukattie' roughly translated into 'let me flow', they said.

"This year alone, we have revived 159.4 kms of streams in 76 local self government bodies of the district. The waste and slush which got deposited in the streams were removed to ensure free and natural flow of water," the Ernakulam district administration said in a release.

The project which began in December 2019 revived 54 kms of streams under 45 local self government bodies till April 2020. Meanwhile, in 2020-21, 914 water bodies were cleaned to ensure normal water flow.

# UP GOVT DISMISSES 841 GOVT LAWYERS

505 State Law Officers from the Principal Bench of the Allahabad High Court and 336 Government Lawyers from the Lucknow Bench of the High Court have been discharged from their duty

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, August 2:** The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh Tuesday dismissed 841 government lawyers with immediate effect.

The services of all public prosecutors appointed in the Allahabad High Court have been terminated.

Nikunj Mittal, Special Secretary, Law and Justice Department, issued this order. According to this order, 505 State Law Officers from the Principal Bench of the Allahabad High Court and 336 Government Lawyers from the Lucknow Bench of the High Court have been discharged from their duty. The state government has also removed Additional Advocate General Vinod Kant as a part of this change.

In addition, 26 Additional Chief Permanent Advocates were removed from the Prayagraj Principal Bench, and 179 permanent advo-



# Kerala: Elephant stranded for hours in Chalakudy river

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thrissur, August 2:** A wild elephant was found stranded in the middle of Chalakudy river for several hours in this district Tuesday after heavy rainfall in the area during the night raised its water level by nearly 5 metres.

After several hours of valiant attempts, the elephant managed to get close to the safety of the forest on the other side. Forest officials monitoring the situation told media that the tusker will now be able to move into the forest safely as the water currents close to the forest were comparatively slower.

The tusker was stranded in the middle of the river on a small piece of land for several hours, as the river raged around the animal which has stymied rescue attempts by fire force and forest officials who are gathered at the spot close to the Athirappilly water falls.

Subsequently, during its attempts to cross the river, the tusker got swept several meters downstream and managed to hang on to a broken tree in the middle of the river.

Thereafter, it slowly managed to move closer to the other side of the river and then disappeared from view, raising hopes that it will soon reach the safety of the forest.

Visuals on TV channels showed the tusker periodically dipping its trunk in the river to assess the water depth as it tried to move towards the other side.

The elephant during the night had come out of the forest into the nearby habitat looking for food and while returning, got stranded in the river, locals said.



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Amroha, August 2:** The headmistress of a government primary school in Uttar Pradesh's Amroha has uploaded a video of the dilapidated school building where 113 students are studying.

The incessant rain since the past few days, pose a major threat to the lives of students, teachers and other staff.

The video is now trending across social media platforms.

Jyoti Chaudhary, the headmistress of the Sateda primary school in Amroha, uploaded the video to draw the attention of the administration towards the dilapidated school building.

The incessant rain since the past few days, pose a major threat to the lives of students, teachers and other staff

She told reporters: "I was posted here in 2018 and ever since, I have been repeatedly requesting authorities to repair and renovate the dilapidated building of my school. But no attention has been paid to my pleas. There are 113 students studying in this school that has only two classrooms." Chaudhary further said that

during monsoon, the building remains waterlogged.

In the video, a student is heard saying that: "Our toilet is adjacent to the dilapidated building. We are afraid as the building may fall anytime and we have to wait for hours to relieve ourselves." The local villagers, meanwhile, said that they have also met local officials to resolve the problem. Amroha's Basic Shiksha Adhikari, Geeta Verma said: "I have instructed my subordinate to inquire about the matter. At least 138 buildings were identified as dilapidated and their proposals were sent to higher authorities. We are trying our best to renovate buildings at the earliest."

# 'Ram' inscribed stone found floating in river

IN A VIRAL VIDEO FROM AHIMALPUR IN THANA BEWAR AREA OF MAINPURI, THE STONE CAN BE SEEN FLOATING ON THE WATER

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mainpuri, August 2:** A video of a stone, floating in the Isan river in Uttar Pradesh's Mainpuri district, has gone viral on social media. Its weight is reported to be around 5.7 kg and has the name of Lord Ram inscribed on it.

In the viral video from Ahimalpur in Thana Bewar area of Mainpuri, the stone can be seen floating on the water.

According to reports, some children had gone fishing in the river on Saturday when they saw the stone floating in the river.

The children brought the stone to the village elders. Some of the locals claim that the stone is as-



# ODOP products to be sold at rly stations in UP

The OSOP was mentioned in the 2022-23 Union Budget and as part of the initiative, all railway stations in a particular district would market ODOP products of the district

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, August 2:** Items listed under the 'One District One Product' (ODOP) scheme in Uttar Pradesh will now be available at railway stations across the state.

This scheme will be known as the 'One Station One Product' (OSOP). According to a state government spokesman, the railway stations of the districts will act as promotional hubs for ODOP products.

The OSOP was mentioned in the 2022-2023 Union Budget and as part of the initiative, all railway stations in a particular district would market ODOP products of the district.

This has been decided after the pilot OSOP project in Varanasi and Pratapgarh railway stations were successful, officials said.

"If a train is passing through Ayodhya, then all the railway stations falling in this district - from Ayodhya, Ayodhya Cantt, Bilhar Ghat, Bada Gaon, Bharatkund, Devrakot, Darshan Nagar, Gauria Mau, Masoudha, Raujagaon, Salarpur, Sohawal, Gosaiganj,



Rudauli and Acharya Narendranagar will showcase jaggery, the ODOP of this district," an official said. Additional Chief Secretary, MSME, Navneet Sehgal has discussed the project with railway officials concerned. Due to its extensive network,

railways is a symbol of the unity and integrity of the country. Uttar Pradesh being the most populous state is also one of the states with the largest number of passengers who use railways.

Uttar Pradesh has also emerged as a favourite destination of tourists in the last five years and

therefore, the OSOP scheme will further expand the scope of ODOP," he added.

Uniformity in stalls as per the standard size will be made available by the railways, he said.

As per requirement, there can be more than one stall at a rail-

According to a state govt spokesperson, the railway stations of the districts will act as promotional hubs for ODOP products

way station and the stalls will be both permanent and on mobile trolleys.

The MSME department will pay the rent; Rs 1,000 for 15 days and the list of vendors and their rotation will also be prepared by the department.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had launched the ODOP scheme in January 2018 to promote indigenous products of 75 districts at national and international platforms.

of the day quote

Over 84,600 posts are lying vacant in six paramilitary forces, including CRPF and BSF, while 1.12 lakh posts were filled up in these forces in the last three years

NITYANAND RAI | UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOME

An estimated amount of Rs 20,000 crore would be required for the second airport in Chennai, to come up at Parandur

During Second World War, Stasi was used as hatchet agency for East Germany and Schutzstaffel by Nazi Germany. When the history of this country is written, the ED will be known as the hatchet agency of the BJP

KARTI CHIDAMBARAM | CONGRESS MP

SHORT TAKES

Boy drowns

Gurugram: The body of an eight-year-old boy has been recovered from a pit filled with rainwater alongside Dwarka Expressway in Gurugram Tuesday afternoon. The boy, identified as Rishabh, a native of Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh, was residing in the Rajendra Park area. Soon after receiving information about the incident, a team from the Rajendra Park police station and Fire Department reached the spot and fished out the body after three hours of operation. It is being said that the child may have gone to this pit for a bath and drowned.

SI suspended

Muzaffarnagar: A police officer has been suspended in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar for allegedly subjecting third-degree torture to a man who happened to be a distant relative of an accused. According to reports, R. Rana, the Sub-Inspector (SI) of Chhapar police station in Muzaffarnagar, went to Khampur village with a team to arrest an accused named Zishan Ansari, who was wanted in a case related to cow slaughter. He did not find the alleged accused and picked up his distant relative Farad Hakim, 40, a resident of the same village. Hakim was taken to the police station and was subjected to third-degree torture by the SI.

Armed man held

Hyderabad: Hyderabad police Tuesday arrested a person moving with a firearm near the house of a legislator of ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS). Security personnel of A. Jeevan Reddy found the person moving under suspicious circumstances near the MLA's house in Vemuri Enclave in upscale Banjara Hills Road Number 12. Alerted by the MLA's security staff, police reached there and arrested the person. A gun and a knife were recovered from him. The person was identified as Prasad Goud, husband of a village sarpanch who was recently suspended from the TRS.

TRS MP's son robbed in Hyd

Hyderabad: The son of a TRS MP was robbed by two men, who threatened him with a knife and forced him to make an online transfer Rs 75,000, police said Tuesday. N. Prithvi Teja, son of Khammam MP N. Nageswara Rao, jumped out of the car to save himself after one of the unidentified men had taken control of the wheel. The incident occurred in Hyderabad on July 30 but came to light on Tuesday (August 2).



I've written to Members of Parliament, across parties, explaining why I think the VP election on Aug 6 is not just another election, but must be seen as a referendum on how Parliament is being run. The MPs have the power to bring about change. I've urged them to use that power

MARGARET ALVA | OPPOSITION'S VICE PRESIDENT CANDIDATE

LALU TO VISIT SINGAPORE

With the special CBI court allowing renewal of his passport Tuesday, deck is almost clear for RJD chief Lalu Prasad to go to Singapore for undergoing kidney transplant



PLEAS AGAINST ED, CBI CHIEFS' TENURE EXTENSION

SC seeks Centre, CVC's response

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 2: The Supreme Court Tuesday sought response of the Centre and the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) in 10 days on a batch of petitions challenging the extension of tenure of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) director and the amended law allowing such extensions up to five years.

A bench comprising Chief Justice N V Ramana and Justices Krishna Murari and Hima Kohli issued notices to the respondents, including the Centre, CVC and the present ED Director, based on as many as eight petitions, including the ones filed by Congress leaders Randeep Singh Surjewala and Jaya Thakur and TMC's Saket Gokhale.

Lawyer M L Sharma claimed to have filed the first petition on the issue. "Issue notice to the central law agency. List after 10 days." the bench said.

Senior advocate A M Singhvi, appearing for Surjewala, referred to the apex court judgements and said the fixed tenures are the "hallmark of independence" and the fact that an incumbent may get an extension will "demolish" the independence of the office. Surjewala's plea has challenged the amendment made by the cen-



tral government to the fundamental concept decided by the apex court in two judgements in the Vineet Narayan and the Common Cause cases which were on fixed tenure. "...This amendment basically puts the incumbent on a fiduciary kind of pattern where one year, two year and three year extension at the discretion of the executive can be achieved. The amendments provide that you can get extensions piecemeal," he said. The fact that an officer can get the extension in itself demolishes the independence, he said.

During the hearing, the bench was informed about the appointment process of the ED Director under the CVC and the FEMA laws. Singhvi said unlike the CBI, the committee, which appoints ED Director, comprised only the executive.

Senior advocate Gopal Sankar narayanan, appearing for one of the petitioners, said the present ED Director would be completing four years in the post this year, and an ordinance was promulgated a few days before his retirement on November 18 last year

extending his tenure by a year more.

Advocates Shashank Ratnoo and Varun appeared for Jaya Thakur, a Madhya Pradesh Congress leader who has filed a separate PIL in the matter. Advocate M L Sharma, who has filed the plea in his personal capacity, said the impugned ordinance was passed in violation of the constitutional scheme.

A total of eight petitions have been filed on the issue, mostly challenging the Central Vigilance Commission (Amendment) Act, 2021 which provides for extension of the term of ED's director up to five years

The Centre had on November 17, 2021 extended the tenure of ED chief Sanjay Mishra by a year till November 18, 2022, days after the Centre brought ordinances to allow the ED and CBI directors to occupy the office up to five years. Mishra is a 1984-batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer of the Income Tax (IT) cadre.

The apex court in its September 8 judgement on a petition of NGO 'Common Cause' had said a reasonable period of extension can be granted to facilitate the completion of ongoing investigations only after reasons are recorded by the Committee constituted under Section 25 (a) of the CVC Act.

'Will form bench to hear hijab ban pleas'

July 13, advocate Prashant Bhushan mentioned the matter before a bench headed by Chief Justice Ramana, saying the petitions have not been listed for a long time



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 2: The Supreme Court Tuesday agreed to set up a bench to consider a clutch of pleas against the Karnataka High Court judgment, which upheld the right of educational institutions to ban wearing of hijab in pre-university colleges in the state.

As counsel mentioned the matter before a bench headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana, he said: "I will constitute a bench. One of the judges is not well." Counsel urged the top court to fix a date in the matter, as petitions against the high court judgment were filed in March.

July 13, advocate Prashant Bhushan mentioned the matter before a bench headed by Chief Justice Ramana, saying the petitions have not been listed for a long time. "The girls are losing out on their studies. This matter was filed long back," he said. The Chief Justice replied that it will be listed some-

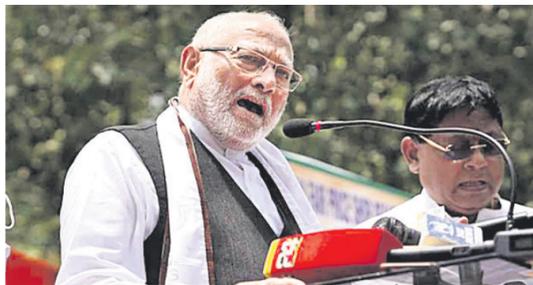
time next week. Bhushan mentioned the matter on behalf of the appellants who have challenged the high court verdict in the top court.

On March 24, the Supreme Court declined to give any specific date to hear a plea challenging the Karnataka High Court order, which dismissed all petitions seeking direction for permission to wear hijab in classrooms.

Senior advocate Devadutt Kamat mentioned one of the cases on behalf of a petitioner, a Muslim girl student, and sought urgent listing of the matter. He insisted that exams are approaching and urged the court to hold an urgent hearing on the matter.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Ramana, however, said this has nothing to do with exams, and told Kamat not to sensationalise the matter: Kamat contended that the girl students are not being allowed to enter the schools, and they will lose one year. However, the bench moved on to the next item.

PM's brother protests with fair price shop dealers in Delhi



Prahlaad Modi along with several other members of the All India Fair Price Shop Dealers' Federation gathered at Delhi's Jantar Mantar, holding banners and raising slogans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 2: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's brother Prahlaad Modi, who is also the vice president of All India Fair Price Shop Dealers' Federation, Tuesday sat in protest at Delhi's Jantar Mantar over various demands of the organisation.

Prahlaad Modi along with several other members of the All India Fair Price Shop Dealers' Federation (AIFPSDF) gathered at Delhi's Jantar Mantar, holding banners and raising slogans.

"A delegation of All India Fair

Price Shop Dealers' Federation will submit a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, listing our long-standing demands for the sake of our survival. With the current situation of hike in the cost of living and overhead expenditures for running shops, a raise of mere 20 paise per kg in our margin is a cruel joke. We request the Union government to grant us relief and end our financial miseries," Prahlaad Modi said.

He further stated that All India Fair Price Shop Dealers' Federation will hold a national executive meeting on Wednesday and based on that, their next course of action will be decided. All India Fair Price Shop Dealers' Federation national general secretary Biswambar Basu said that they also plan to meet Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla tomorrow. The All India Fair Price Shop Dealers' Federation has been demanding compensation for loss on rice, wheat and sugar, and also for edible oil and pulses to be supplied through fair price shops.

GEARING UP



A shopkeeper arranges tricoloured kites ahead of the Independence Day in Jammu

PTI PHOTO

YASIN MALIK ENDS HUNGER STRIKE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 2: Convicted Kashmiri Separatist leader Yasin Malik, who is lodged at Tihar Jail in the national capital, has ended his hunger strike, officials said Tuesday

"He (Yasin Malik) ended his hunger strike yesterday," Director General (Prisons), Sandeep Goyal, said. The jailed separatist leader, who is currently lodged at Jail No. 7 of the Tihar Prison, went on hunger strike on July 22. When



asked the reason behind his hunger strike, the official refrained from divulging any details further, however, prison sources said that Malik was protesting against the agencies

that are investigating his cases.

"Malik alleged that his case was not being investigated properly, hence went on an indefinite hunger strike but after assurance that his request has been forwarded to the senior officials, he has ended it," sources said. On July 26, Malik was hospitalised by the prison authorities after his health deteriorated due to hunger strike. He was discharged on July 29, four days after remaining admitted at the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital in Delhi.

Gujarat Assembly polls: AAP declares first list

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ahmedabad, August 2: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Tuesday announced its first list of 10 candidates for the Gujarat Assembly elections to be held later this year.

State party president Gopal Italia announced the list. Three tickets each have been given to Patidars and Other Backward Class, two to Dalits, one each to tribal and non-Gujarati Brahmin.

Party's farmer leader Sagar Barabi will contest from Becharaji (Mehsana district); Bhembhai Chaudhary (Deodar constituency- Banaskantha district); Vashram Sagathiya (Rajkot Rural); Shivlal Barasia (Rajkot South); Jagmal Vala (Somnath- Gir-Somnath); Arjun Rathwa (Chhotaudapur); Ramdhaduk (Kamrej- Surat); Rajendra Solanki (Bardoli - Surat, and Omprakash Tiwari (Naroda- Ahmedabad city). It is going to be a tough election for Sagar Barabi on the Becharaji seat because caste equations do not support the OBC candidate here. Koli Thakor community, an OBC sub caste, is influential in this constituency. As a farmer leader too, his influence is very little in the area, the seat is dominated by Kadva-Patidars, Koli Thakor and Kshatriyas.

In the last Assembly elections, Sagathiya lost the election on the Congress symbol with a margin of just 2,000 votes, that too because of internal fighting. Shivlal Barasia lost the corporation elections in 2021. In the past, he was one of the trustees of Khodaldham trust, and if the BJP denies ticket to the sitting MLA Govindbhai Patel on Rajkot South seat, and Leuva Patel unitedly support Shivlal then he can make the contest a triangular one.

Monkeypox spread unchecked in India: Experts

The monkeypox outbreak, which was first reported in May, has now spread to 78 countries with more than 18,000 cases, according to the World Health Organization's last update issued July 28

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 2: Monkeypox cases are spreading unchecked in India, and the stigma attached to the disease is likely hindering the testing process in the country, health experts have said.

The monkeypox outbreak, which was first reported in May, has now spread to 78 countries with more than 18,000 cases, according to the World Health Organization's last update issued July 28.

Many cases may be spreading unchecked in the country, Rajeev



Jayadevan, Co-chairman of IMA's national task force on Covid-19, said. "Many more cases are expected in India. Imagine that the current outbreak of monkeypox is like a large tree that is growing underneath the Earth's surface. You can't see it over the soil but it's spreading unchecked under the surface," Jayadevan said.

Jayadevan said that while spillovers to the general population, such as women and children, are "extremely rare", there's a vast

network where the virus is spreading, "which is mainly men who have sex with men and also have multiple partners".

While the chance of a super spreader event, like in Europe, is comparatively "small in India", the network "is more covert" here. According to Ishwar Gilada, an infectious disease expert, the stigma attached to the name of the disease is acting as a great barrier for people to come forward for testing.

"The moment a suspect case of

monkeypox approaches the doctors, they will ask 'have you done any monkey tricks? Where did you get this disease from?'" Gilada said. "Secondly, there's always a stigma associated with sexual transmission. We are seeing that with other sexually transmitted diseases (STD) like HIV," he added.

Although 98 per cent of monkeypox cases to date are seen among gay or bisexual men, it has not yet been classified as an STD. It is because, "technically speaking, it can be sexual contact or through any substantial physical contact like what happens during a massage", Jayadevan said.

He explained that to define monkeypox as an STD, it "has to be exclusively transmitted via the act of sex like gonorrhoea, chlamydia". And if classified so, "people will think the virus spreads only via sexual act, and might not take all the other necessary contact precautions".

Experts, however, have also argued that fear of stigmatising the

disease has set public health back. Last week, Guardian columnist Owen Jones had argued that "if we're not clear about where the risk is, it's completely self-defeating because that's who we have to prioritise talking to and protecting".

"The vast, vast majority of cases are in gay and bisexual men, and pretending that that's not the case doesn't help any of us. I really wish more attention had been paid to gay and bisexual men," added sexual health activist and researcher Will Nutland.

Jayadevan agreed and said: "But by not focusing enough on the high-risk groups and vaguely claiming instead that 'everyone is at risk', we are failing to limit whatever process that is actually pushing the virus forward."

Gilada suggested "the government to ramp up testing" like it did during the Covid-19 pandemic. "We must have our own testing kits to help people test themselves, which will also help curb the cases," he said.



TWO MISSILES, NO BLAST

Notorious Al-Qaeda head Ayman al-Zawahiri was killed by two missiles fired at his Kabul home -- but pictures showed no sign of an explosion, and US officials say no one else was harmed.

of the day quote

Sri Lanka is looking forward to settle the issue of a Chinese research vessel's visit to a strategic port in the country with an approach of friendship

It is the Joe Biden administration that is directly responsible for all rocket attacks approved by Kyiv on residential areas and civilian infrastructure facilities in settlements of Donbass and other regions that caused mass deaths of civilians

More than 1.2 million people currently remain displaced across Myanmar, including over 866,000 displaced by the conflict and insecurity since the February 2021 coup

SHORT TAKES

Moldova to cut use of Russian gas

Moscow: Moldova is set to reduce its reliance on Russian gas in anticipation of cutbacks in supply by Russian energy company Gazprom, Deputy Prime Minister Andrei Spinu said Tuesday, according to reports by Moldovan media.

Record employment in Italy in 45 years

Rome: Employment in Italy in June hit 18.1 million, the highest level since 1977, according to provisional data released by the country's National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT). In Italy, the employment rate in June rose by 0.2 percentage points to 60.1 per cent against the previous month, marking "a record value since 1977", with 86,000 more people employed, Xinhua news agency quoted ISTAT as saying.

Philippines reports 319 dengue deaths

Manila: The Philippines' Department of Health (DOH) Tuesday said it has recorded 319 deaths from dengue fever this year as cases continue to rise during the monsoon season. Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire told reporters here that the DOH has recorded 82,597 cases as of July 16, 106 per cent higher than the cases recorded in the same period last year, reports Xinhua news agency.

Heatwave hits Japan

Tokyo: The mercury across Japan skyrocketed Tuesday with sweltering heat baking wide swathes of regions from the east to west, with temperatures hitting near-record highs of around 40 degrees Celsius. Due to the sudden rise in temperature, the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) issued a warning that people should take preventative measures to avoid succumbing to heat-related illnesses, reports Xinhua news agency.

Uber revenue soars

San Francisco (US): Uber continued to build momentum in the second quarter with Americans heading back to offices and gross bookings hit an all-time high as anxiety over COVID-19 eased. Passengers took a total of 1.87 billion trips on Uber during the spring and early summer, a 24 per cent increase compared with the same time last year. That's about 21 million trips per day, on average. Monthly active platform consumers climbed 21 per cent from the prior-year period to 122 million.

ZAWAHIRI KILLING TALIBAN UNDER SCRUTINY

AGENCIES

Islamabad, August 2: The US drone strike that killed al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri on the balcony of a Kabul safe house intensified global scrutiny Tuesday of Afghanistan's Taliban rulers and further undermined their efforts to secure international recognition and desperately needed aid.

Meanwhile, rumors persist of unease in the Taliban ranks — particularly between the powerful group known as the Haqqani network, which apparently sheltered al-Zawahiri, and other Taliban figures.

"The killing of Ayman al-Zawahiri has raised many questions," said one Pakistani intelligence official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to The Associated Press as he wasn't authorised to speak publicly to reporters. Al-Zawahiri took over as al-Qaeda's leader after Osama bin Laden was killed in Pakistan in 2011, in an operation by US Navy SEALs.

The UN Security Council was informed by monitors of militant groups in July that al-Qaeda enjoys greater freedom in Afghanistan under the Taliban, but confines itself to advising and supporting the country's new rulers.

A report by the monitors said the two groups remain close and that al-Qaeda fighters, estimated to number between 180 to 400, are represented "at the individual level" among Taliban combat units.

The monitors said it's unlikely al-Qaeda will seek to mount direct

attacks outside Afghanistan, "owing to a lack of capability and restraint on the part of the Taliban, as well as an unwillingness to jeopardize their recent gains" such as having a safe haven and improved resources.

IS militants have emerged as a major threat to the Taliban over the past year, carrying out a series of deadly attacks against Taliban targets and civilians.

The Haqqani network is an Afghan Islamic insurgent group, built around the family of the same name. In the 1980s, it fought Soviet forces and over the past 20 years, it battled US-led NATO troops and the former Afghanistan government.

In the Mideast, al-Zawahiri's killing coincided with the 32nd anniversary of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, which sparked US Military presence in Saudi Arabia — the same presence that bin Laden pointed to in launching the 9/11 attacks. Anwar Gargash, a senior diplomat in the United Arab Emirates, noted the timing.



A Taliban fighter stands guard near the site where al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri was killed



The Taliban had promised in the 2020 Doha Agreement on the terms of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan that they would not harbor al-Qaeda members

Zawahiri's killing raises questions about the involvement of Taliban leaders in sheltering a mastermind of the 9/11 terror attacks and one of America's most-wanted fugitives

Zawahiri had been in hiding for years and the operation to locate and kill him was the result of "careful patient and persistent" work by the counter-terrorism and intelligence community

US officials had built a scale model of the safe house where al-Zawahiri had been located, and brought it into the White House Situation Room to show President Joe Biden

9/11 GROUPS, FAMILIES CHEER

The family members of a 9/11 survivors group have expressed gratitude to US President Joe Biden for eliminating al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri in a CIA drone strike in Afghanistan, saying it was a "significant step" in their years-long battle for justice and accountability.

Russia brands Ukrainian steel plant defenders terrorists

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv, August 2: Russia's Supreme Court Tuesday declared Ukraine's Azov Regiment a terrorist organisation, a designation that could lead to terror charges against some of the captured fighters who made their last stand inside Mariupol's shattered steel plant.

Scores of Azov fighters are being prisoner held by Moscow since their surrender in mid-May. Russian authorities have opened criminal cases against them, accusing them of killing civilians. The addition of terrorism charges could mean even longer prison sentences.

The penalties for a terrorist organisation's leaders would be 15 to 20 years in prison and five to 10 years for members of the group, Russian state media said.

In its ruling, the Supreme Court banned the Azov Regiment in Russia. That could also outlaw the regiment in areas of Ukraine occupied by Russian or Russia-backed forces, if those places go ahead with plans to become part of Russia.

In a statement, the Azov Regiment dismissed the ruling, accusing the Kremlin of "looking for new excuses and explanations for its war crimes". It urged the US and other countries to declare Russia a terrorist state.

Pak Army Lt Gen among 6 dead in helicopter crash

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, August 2: A top Pakistani army general and five senior military officials were killed when their helicopter crashed while on a flood relief operation in troubled Balochistan province, the army said Tuesday.

The six individuals on board included the Commander XII Corps Lt Gen Sarfraz Ali, who was supervising the flood relief operations in Balochistan province which has been badly hit by the torrential rains. The wreckage of unfortunate helicopter which was on flood relief operations was found in Musa Goth, Windar, Lasbela. All six officers and soldiers including Lt Gen Sarfraz Ali died, said Major General Babar Iftikhar, Director General Inter-Services Public Relations - the media wing of Pakistan's armed forces.

He said the accident occurred due to bad weather as per initial investigations. The Pakistan Army Aviation helicopter was on flood relief operations in Lasbela, Balochistan when it lost contact with ATC Monday. Incidentally, General Sarfraz was one of the contenders interviewed by then prime minister Imran Khan for the post of director General Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in October last year, according to the Express Tribune newspaper. He had served as Pakistan's defence attaché in the United States. Earlier, Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa had briefed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif about the search operations for the helicopter during a telephonic conversation between the two.

WHY CHINESE INVESTMENT DRYING UP IN RUSSIA, PAK?

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Shanghai, August 2: New investment in Russia through China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) fell to zero in the first half of 2022, while Chinese outlays in Pakistan dropped by 56 per cent during the same period, the media reported.

According to the RFE/RL, these are the findings of a new report from the Green Finance and Development Center at Fudan University in Shanghai, which point to growing headwinds facing Chinese President Xi Jinping's signature foreign policy venture that he once dubbed "the project of the century".

Both Russia and Pakistan have been among the top beneficiaries of Chinese development spending through the BRI. Moscow signed deals worth about \$2 billion in 2021 alone and Islamabad hosts a \$62 billion collection of infrastructure and energy projects



## of the day quote

What we are always underlining (is) high taxation which is limiting (sales of) our cars, and therefore in the foreseeable future the size of the Indian market will stay small but the growth rate in terms of percentage is high

**STEPHAN WINKELMANN** | AUTOMOBILI  
LAMBORGHINI CHAIRMAN & CEO

The electronics component shortages are still limiting our production volumes. In this quarter (Q1), the company could not produce 51,000 vehicles

**AJAY SETH** | MARUTI SUZUKI INDIA CFO

Having completed all the major sub-systems in radar, electronic warfare, communications, avionics, Data Patterns is now focusing on developing complete systems with in-house design to address the huge market opportunities in the defence and aerospace segment

**SRINIVASAGOPALAN RANGARAJAN** | DATA PATTERNS CHAIRMAN



India, like many other countries, is not pitching its currency at a level exorbitantly. So the ways and which we want to strengthen... The RBI and the Ministry are fairly engaged in it

**NIRMALA SITHARAMAN** | FINANCE MINISTER

## INDIA'S EXPORTS DIP MARGINALLY IN JULY

India's exports dipped marginally by 0.76 per cent to USD 35.24 billion in July, though the trade deficit tripled to USD 31.02 billion during the month, according to official data revealed Tuesday. The imports in July went up to USD 66.26 billion from USD 46.15 billion in the corresponding month last fiscal.



# Banks write off loans worth ₹10L cr in 5 yrs

Abandoning diamantaire Mehul Choksi's company Gitanjali Gems owes banks a whopping ₹7,110 crore while Era Infra Engineering owes ₹5,879 crore and Concast Steel and Power Ltd ₹4,107 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Aug 2:** Banks have written off loans worth about Rs 10 lakh crore in the last five financial years, Parliament was informed Tuesday.

During 2021-22, the write-off amount came down to Rs 1,57,096 crore compared to Rs 2,02,781 crore in the previous year, Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat K Karad said in a written reply in Rajya Sabha.

In 2019-20, the write-off was worth Rs 2,34,170 crore, down from Rs 2,36,265 crore, the highest in five years recorded in 2018-19.

During 2017-18, the write-off by banks stood at Rs 1,61,328 crore, he said.

In all, he said, bank loans to the tune of Rs 9,91,640 crore have been written off in the last five years-2017-18 to 2021-22.

He also said that "scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) and all



Indian financial institutions report certain credit information of all borrowers having aggregate credit exposure of Rs 5 crore and above to RBI under its Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC) database."

As per RBI, the CRILC data in respect of wilful defaulters is main-

tained from 2018-19 onwards, he said, adding total number of wilful defaulters in the last four years stood at 10,306.

The highest number of 2,840 wilful defaulters reported during 2020-21 was followed by 2,700 the next year.

The number of wilful defaulters

stood at 2,207 at the end of March 2019 that rose to 2,469 in 2019-20.

Sharing details of top 25 wilful defaulters at the end of March 2022, Karad said, Gitanjali Gems Ltd tops the list followed by Era Infra Engineering, Concast Steel and Power, REI Agro Ltd and ABG Shipyard Ltd.

Abandoning diamantaire Mehul Choksi's company Gitanjali Gems owes banks a whopping Rs 7,110 crore while Era Infra Engineering owes Rs 5,879 crore and Concast Steel and Power Ltd Rs 4,107 crore.

Besides, REI Agro Ltd and ABG Shipyard have defrauded banks of Rs 3,984 crore and Rs 3,708 crore, respectively.

Other wilful defaulters like Frost International Ltd owes Rs 3,108 crore, Winsome Diamonds and Jewellery Rs 2,671 crore, Rotomac Global Private Limited Rs 2,481 crore, Coastal Projects Ltd Rs 2,311 crore and Kudos Chemie Rs 2,082 crore.

# Over 450 items under ambit of mandatory quality certification

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 2:** Over 450 products like pressure cookers, laptops, and helmets are under the ambit of mandatory quality certification of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the Consumer Affairs Ministry said Tuesday.

It means that no person can manufacture, import, distribute, sell, hire, lease, store or sell these products without following Indian Standards and obtaining BIS certification.

Products that require mandatory certification are notified from time to time under the Quality Control Orders (QCO) by the BIS. The rules apply to both Indian and foreign makers.

Consumers must ensure that they purchase these products bearing ISI Mark, the ministry said in a statement.

For a number of products, the ministry said compliance to Indian Standards is made compulsory taking into cognizance various considerations, i.e. Public interest,



Pressure cookers, laptops, and helmets are under the ambit of mandatory quality certification of BIS

protection of human, animal or plant health, safety of environment, prevention of unfair trade practices and national security.

QCOs are issued by various ministries depending upon the product and product categories being regulated through the Order, after having stakeholder consultations.

# Govt eases imported coal blending norms for power producers

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 2:** The government has relaxed norms for blending of imported coal by power generation companies and allowed states and independent power producers to import the fuel as per requirements.

The government has left on states and Independent Power Producers (IPPs) as well as the coal ministry to decide the percentage of imported coal for blending purpose.

The move came after power ministry reviewed the coal stock in the country.

Earlier, the power ministry had directed state gencos (power generation companies) to import at least 10 per cent of their total coal requirement for blending purposes. States were advised to place import orders by May 31, 2022 so that

the delivery of 50 per cent quantity is ensured by June 30, 2022.

The ministry had also said that if orders for coal imports are not placed by May 31, 2022 and the imported fuel does not start arriving at power plants by June 15, the defaulter gencos will have to increase their imports to the extent of 15 per cent.

In its latest communication to state governments, the power ministry said, "It has been decided that now onwards, states/IPPs and ministry of coal may decide the blending percentage after assessing the availability of domestic coal supplies."

The coal stock position of state gencos now vary significantly. Several states have stocks more than 50 per cent of normative levels while others still have stocks near critical levels, the communication dated August 1, 2022 said.

# Sensex, Nifty marginally up amid geopolitical worries

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, August 2:** The benchmark BSE Sensex and Nifty closed marginally higher in a volatile session Tuesday as gains in power, auto and energy stocks helped the indices extend gains for a fifth straight day.

The 30-share BSE benchmark closed 20.86 points or 0.04 per cent higher at 58,136.36 with 16 of its constituents ending in the red. The index opened lower due to profit booking by investors after sharp gains in the four-day rally.

The barometer declined by 370 points to hit a low of 57,744.70 amid losses in global equities following worries over tensions between the US and China in afternoon trade. Stocks made a recovery due to buying in select banking, oil and gas, power, FMCG and auto stocks in the fog-end, with Sensex rebounding 583 points from the day's low to touch 58,328.41.

The broader NSE Nifty ended at 17,345.45, up 5.40 points or 0.03 per cent as 24 of its stocks advanced. It touched a high of 17,390.15 points and a low of 17,215.85 amid volatility.

Among Sensex constituents, IndusInd Bank rose the most by 2.59 per cent. Asian Paints, NTPC, Maruti, Hindustan Unilever, State Bank of India, Mahindra & Mahindra and Power Grid were among the major gainers.

However, Tech Mahindra, HDFC, Larsen & Toubro, Tata Steel and HDFC Bank were the biggest laggards.

"Global indicators did not favour



bulls, with most Asian and Western markets trading lower over concerns of rising geopolitical tension between the US and China. Additionally, economic data point to a decrease in demand, major markets throughout the world are trading with recessionary fears," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

The domestic market, however, has proven resilient thanks to increased demand in heavyweights and a strengthening Indian rupee underpinned by falling US treasury yields and FII buying, Nair added. "Markets eked out modest gains, but more importantly continued its winning streak for the 5th straight session on selective buying in banking, auto and power stocks."

"However, bulls looked tired today, as at one point Sensex was down more than 300 points, but managed to reverse the trend at close," said Shrikant Chouhan,

Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.50 per cent and smallcap index went up by 0.34 per cent.

Among the BSE sectoral indices, power jumped 2 per cent, followed by utilities (1.81 per cent), consumer discretionary goods & services (0.81 per cent), FMCG (0.65 per cent) and auto (0.62 per cent) among others.

However, realty declined 1.74 per cent, teck (0.54 per cent), IT (0.52 per cent) and telecom (0.34 per cent).

The rupee breached the 78 mark on Tuesday helped by FII inflows into equities and a fall in crude oil prices.

Foreign institutional investors remained net buyers in the capital markets as they bought shares worth Rs 2,320.61 crore Monday, as per exchange data.

# FMCG industry recovers on urban demand

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 2:** The country's FMCG industry reported a 10.9 per cent growth in terms of value in the June quarter, helped by a rise in consumption even though the rural markets remained sluggish in non-food segments, says a report.

Data analytics firm NielsenIQ on Tuesday said the overall consumption has revived as unit volume has increased on a sequential basis in the April-June quarter but on an annual basis, it had a negative growth of 0.7 per cent in the latest quarter under review.

In the April-June 2022 period, the urban markets revived with positive volume growth of 0.6 per cent but the rural markets reported a negative growth of 2.4 per cent.

"The industry also observes positive momentum in volume along with price-led growth. The volume growth which was -4.1 per cent in last quarter (January-March) has improved to some extent at -0.7 per cent in (April-June) 22," NielsenIQ said in its FMCG Quarterly snapshot report.

NielsenIQ Managing Director - India Satish Pillai told PTI that there has been a double-digit price growth in the last five quarters, owing to factors such as inflation



and other macro economic variables. "A tempering of these would help propel growth further in the last quarter. It is important to note that the consumption uptick has come from the unit growth as a predominant driver of FMCG for the quarter," he said.

The FMCG industry witnessed a growth of 10.9 per cent in terms of value in the June quarter; the report said.

According to him, the latest trend beats the last two quarters of consumption decline and highlights the onset of cautious optimism among consumers.

"Also, the consumption recovery and promising macro factors support NielsenIQ's forecast of double-digit growth for 2022," he added.

He noted that while urban markets have shown recovery of consumption, the rural markets are following closely.

"The decline in consumption from the last couple of quarters is arrested for foods in rural markets but it is yet to come back to a positive consumption growth for non-foods," he said.

According to the report, recovery in FMCG consumption in the latest April-June quarter is led by unit growth as consumers moved to smaller pack sizes and gramage reduction from manufacturers in key price packs.

"While the volume decline is driven by the drop in average pack size growth, unit growth has bounced back to 8.9 per cent

this quarter from 1.5 per cent in the previous quarter, which indicates that the consumers are buying smaller packs. However, they are buying more units," the report said.

In April-June 2022, small manufacturers, having a turnover of up to Rs 100 crore, showed positive volume growth after three quarters of being in the red.

"Small manufacturers are back on track with positive volume growth 1.8 per cent in Q2'22, from -8.5 per cent in Q1'22 primarily driven by Food (5.6 per cent in Q2'22 from -5.5 per cent in Q1'22)," it said.

Non-foods continue to show a negative volume growth though there was an uptick from the previous quarter. In the June quarter, there was a negative growth of 13.8 per cent while the same was at -20.4 per cent in the March quarter, the report said, adding that volume decline continued for medium and large manufacturers.

"The foods segment has seen a positive volume growth of 1.8 per cent in Q2'22 (April-June) and within this, impulse categories like chocolates, salty snacks have grown to rise to 15.1 per cent while non-foods continues to be negative," it said.

# Uber likely to sell 7.8% stake in Zomato

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, August 2:** Ride-hailing app Uber is selling off its entire holding in Indian food delivery company Zomato for at least USD 373 million (Rs 2,939 crore) through a block deal of shares, merchant banking sources said Tuesday.

The development comes on a day when the Zomato scrip witnessed a nearly 20 per cent surge to close at Rs 55.60 apiece on the BSE.

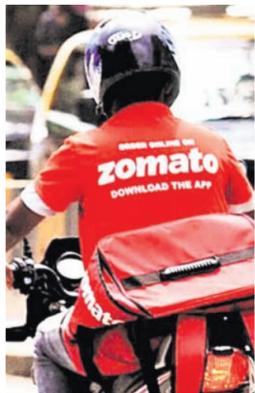
The sources said the offer price range for the deal to be carried out Wednesday will be between Rs 48-54 per share.

At the lower end of the band, which is a 13.6 per cent discount to Tuesday's close, the total money to be raised through the sale comes at Rs 2,939 crore (USD 373 million), the sources said.

BofA Securities is the sole book runner for the block deal.

The offer size represents 7.8 per cent of the overall outstanding shares for the company, which has had a volatile movement on the bourses since debuting last year.

When contacted, an Uber India spokesperson declined to share any details.



It can be noted that Uber picked up the stake in Zomato after the latter acquired its local food business Uber Eats in an all stock deal in 2020.

Later, Zomato listed on the bourses and the stock had been under selling pressure for the past few weeks till the news of halving of losses and business reorganization heightened buyers' interest in Tuesday's trade.

# GLORIOUS OUTING FOR EVES

INDIAN WOMEN'S FOURS TEAM SECURE HISTORIC GOLD MEDAL IN LAWN BOWLS AT CWG



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

scores 8-8 after the 10th end.

**Birmingham, August 2:** The Indian women's fours team of Lovely Choubey, Pinki, Naynamoni Saikia and Rupa Tirkey scripted history by winning the gold medal in lawn bowls at the Commonwealth Games 2022, here Tuesday. The Indian team beat South Africa 17-10 in the final to win gold at Victoria Park in Royal Leamington Spa.

It was an even start to the final, as India took the lead after the first end but South Africa went ahead after the second. Thereafter, in-form Indian surged ahead to an 8-2 lead by the seventh end. But, it could not score a single point over the next four ends as South Africa roared back into contention, levelling the

closer to two Indian bowls. The 14th end saw India open up a 15-10 lead as South Africa tried, and failed, to get closer to the jack or push any Indian bowls away. The distance between South Africa's closest bowl and India's farthest was barely a few centimetres but the Indian bowl was adjudged to be nearer to the jack, giving them three crucial points.

The 15th and final end saw India consistently get closer to the jack and when South Africa's final bowl missed the jack, it gave India two more points and confirmed a historic gold medal. On the other hand, it was South Africa's second consecutive silver medal in the women's fours at the CWG.

Earlier in the day, the India ver-

sus New Zealand rivalry, which began in the women's fours semi-final, added three more chapters at Birmingham 2022.

The trio of Pinki, Rupa Tirkey and Tania Choudhary beat New Zealand 15-11 in their first sectional match of the women's triples. However, the Kiwis got back in the women's pairs as the duo of Lovely Choubey and Naynamoni Saikia lost 18-9 in their first sectional match.

Mridul Borgohain also began his men's singles campaign with a 21-8 loss to New Zealand's Shannon McLroy in section D. The women's triples team will be in action against England later tonight while the men's fours team will play their first match in lawn bowls at CWG 2022.

# Men paddlers retain team gold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Birmingham, August 2:** Harmmeet Desai raised his game in the decisive singles as the Indian men's table tennis team retained its Commonwealth Games gold medal after a close fight against Singapore here Tuesday.

World No.121 Harmmeet outsmarted 133rd-ranked Zhe Yu Clarence Chew 11-8, 11-5, 11-6 in the third singles to ensure India's third gold men's team medal in CWG history. The gold was India's seventh since the sport's inception in Manchester 2002.

India were expected to beat Singapore but Clarence accounted for veteran Sharath Kamal in the first singles to level the match at 1-1. Harmmeet and Sathiyam had little difficulty in getting past Yong Izaak Que and Ye En Koen Pang in the

**“We have never won a CWG gold in this convincing manner. A big reason for that is that we have three players at the same level. It wasn't the case before 2018”**

SHARATH KAMAL

opening doubles. Sathiyam had given India a 2-1 lead with a 12-10, 7-11, 11-7, 11-4 victory over lower-ranked Pang. The stand-out performance came from India's third player, Harmmeet.

Sharath had struggled to contain Clarence but Harmmeet went on the offensive against the left-hander and ensured that he did not get room to go for his powerful forehand winners. Harmmeet's back-

hand was also on fire as he won majority of the long rallies.

In the first singles, Sharath went down 7-11, 14-12, 3-11, 9-11 against Clarence. Whenever, the Indian placed the ball deep on Clarence's forehand, the return was a winner. Two net chords helped Sharath in the second game but Clarence comfortably won the next two.

India had beaten a stronger opponent in Nigeria Monday with Sharath stunning World No.15 Aruna Quadri. But his loss against a much lower ranked opponent Tuesday showed rankings did not matter much in a multi sporting event.

India had won the team gold for the first in Melbourne 2006 before repeating the feat in Gold Coast four years ago. It was also Sharath's 10th medal in the Games history and he is set to add more with singles and doubles events to follow.



# Weightlifter Thakur settles for silver

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Birmingham, August 2:** Indian heavyweight lifter Vikas Thakur added yet another Commonwealth Games medal to his kitty, winning a silver in the men's 96kg here Tuesday.

The seasoned Thakur lifted a total of 346kg (155kg+191kg) to finish second and claim his third CWG medal across three editions. It was Thakur's second silver, having finished second in the 2014 Glasgow edition as well. In Gold Coast, he had returned with a bronze.

Samoa's Don Opeloge 381kg (171kg+210kg) bettered his 2018 silver by clinching gold with a record breaking performance. Fiji's Taniela Tuisuva Rainibogi walked away with the bronze with a total effort of 343kg (155kg+188kg).

Thakur, a five-time Commonwealth Championships medallist, had three clean lifts of



149kg, 153kg and 155kg to be in joint third-position after the snatch round.

In the clean and jerk section, Thakur started off with a 187kg lift, which he executed perfectly. His second attempt was of 191kg, which

took some effort but the Punjab lifter was able to pull it off and celebrated it with a 'high-five' made popular by Indian cricketer Shikhar Dhawan.

With a silver assured, Thakur went for 198kg, a kilogram more

than his personal best, in his third attempt but was unsuccessful. But the event belonged to Opeloge, who smashed the Games record in snatch, clean and jerk and total lift. The 23-year-old Samoan celebrated his stellar show with a groovy dance at the end.

It was heartbreak for home favourite Cyrille Tchatchet who failed to register a single legal lift in clean and jerk.

**INDIA LOSE IN HOCKEY**

The Indian women's hockey team failed to impress in their first real test of the CWG, going down 1-3 to England in a Pool A match. England found an early goal through Giselle Ansley (3rd minute). Tess Howard made it 2-0 in the third quarter (40th), before Hannah Martin scored the team's third in the fourth and final quarter (53rd). With few seconds to go for the final hooter, India scored a consolation goal through Vandana Katariya (60th).

# Swimmers Page, Rawat in 1500m freestyle finals

**BIRMINGHAM:** Indian swimmers Advait Page and Kushagra Rawat qualified for the final of the men's 1500m freestyle after finishing fourth in their respective heats at the CWG here Tuesday.

Page was the better of the two Indian swimmers, clocking 15:39.25s in heat 1 while Rawat had a timing of 15:47.77s in heat 2. The top eight swimmers from the two heats made it to the final.

Earlier in the day, Srihari Nataraj bettered the best Indian time en route a third place finish in heat 2 but could not qualify for the final of the men's 200m backstroke event. Nataraj clocked 2:00.84s to be the first reserve in the event.

**MURALI, YAHIYA ADVANCE**

National record holder Murali Sreeshankar topped the men's long jump qualification round to storm into the finals along with Muhammad Anees Yahiya, who qualified as eighth best, at the CWG Tuesday.

The 23-year-old Sreeshankar was the lone athlete to breach the automatic qualification mark of 8m, with an opening round effort of 8.05m in Group A. He did not make any more attempts. Yahiya, on the other hand, finished third in Group B qualification round with a best jump of 7.68m.

**MANPREET IN FINALS**

Shot putter Manpreet Kaur also made it to the final as one of the nine athletes who could not breach the automatic qualification mark of 18m but one among the best 12 performers. The 32-year-old Kaur finished fourth in Group B qualification round and seventh overall with a best throw of 16.78m which she achieved in her third and final throw.

**DUTEE DISAPPOINTS**

Ace Odia sprinter Dutee Chand crashed out of the CWG after finishing 27th overall in the preliminary heat races. She clocked 11.55 seconds to finish fourth in heat No.5.

# CASH AWARD FOR HARJINDER



The Punjab government Tuesday announced a cash reward of Rs 40 lakh for weightlifter Harjinder Kaur after she claimed a bronze medal in the 71kg category at the ongoing CWG in Birmingham. A resident of Nabha in Patiala district, Harjinder totalled 212kgs (93 in snatch and 119 in clean and jerk) to finish on the podium Monday night.

# Indian athletes set Asian junior record



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Cali (Colombia), August 2:** The Indian mixed 4x400m relay team set an Asian junior record en route qualifying for the final at the World U-20 Athletics Championships here.

The Indian quartet of Barath Sridhar, Priya Mohan, Kapil and Rupal Chaudhary clocked 3 minutes and 19.62 seconds to win heat No.3 Monday. India finished second overall across the three heats behind the USA, who won heat No.2 with a championships record time of 3:18.65s. The final will be held Wednesday.

India had won a bronze in the mixed 4x400m relay in the last edition in Nairobi, Kenya in 2021,

where the event was introduced for the first time.

Rupal is the only new member of the quartet that had won bronze last year while Sridhar, Priya and Kapil were there in that team.

15-year-old Ashakiran Barla made it to the women 800m semi-finals as one of the four fastest runners outside the four automatic qualifiers each from the five heats. She clocked 2:09.01s to finish sixth in heat No.1.

Sanyam Sanjay finished 13th overall in shotput qualification round with a best effort of 18.36m and missed the final by just 0.01m. The other Indian shot putter, Sawan finished 15th with a best effort of 18.31m.

# McCoy spell sinks Men in Blue

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Baseterre (St Kitts), August 2:** Left-arm paceman Obed McCoy decimated a star-studded Indian batting line-up with sensational career-best figures of 6/17 as West Indies equalised the five-match series with a five-wicket victory in the second T20I here.

McCoy wreaked havoc in his two spells as India, after being put into bat, were bundled out for 138 in 19.4 overs Monday.

The target was never going to be a problem for the West Indies batters as opener Brandon King smashed 68 (52b, 8x4, 2x6), but the hosts stuttered during the back-end before Devon Thomas' unbeaten 31 (19b, 1x4, 2x6) sealed it in his team's favour.

It was Arshdeep Singh, who bowled a lethal yorker to castle the dangerous Rovman Powell and set it up nicely for Avesh Khan to defend 10 runs, but a no-ball off the first delivery derailed India's bid to pull off a heist.

Put into bat in a match that was pushed back by three hours due to late arrival of team kits, the Indians lost the momentum from the onset as skipper Rohit Sharma (0) was dismissed off the first delivery of the match.

Indian batters failed to put up any fight against the Windies bowlers and got out cheaply. Rishabh Pant (24, 12b, 1x4, 2x6) tried to counter, but



didn't last long. Hardik Pandya (31, 31b, 1x4, 2x6) and Ravindra Jadeja (27, 30b, 1x6) made useful contributions, adding 43 runs for the fifth wicket - the best on the day for India.

However, once the duo got out, one after the other, the Indian lower order, and even experienced Dinesh Karthik, couldn't do much as the visitors were bundled out for 138 with a couple of balls to spare. The last four Indian wickets fell for just 11 runs.

**Brief scores:** India 138 (Hardik Pandya 31; Obed McCoy 6/17) lost to West Indies 141/5 (Brandon King 68, Devon Thomas 31 n o; Ravindra Jadeja 1/16) by 5 wickets.

# Windies post 164/5

**BASETERRE:** Invited to bat, West Indies posted 164/5 against India Tuesday in their third T20I, which was delayed by one-and-a-half-hour due to late finish of the second match which was twice delayed because of luggage issues Monday. Opener Kyle Mayers (73, 50b, 8x4, 4x6) was the top scorer, while Rovman Powell (23), skipper Nicolas Pooran (22), Shimron Hetmyer (20) and Brandon King (20) made useful contributions. For India, Bhuvneshwar Kumar (2/35) bowled well having supports from Hardik Pandya (1/19) and Arshdeep Singh (1/33).

# INDIA U-20 SET UP TITLE DATE WITH BANGLADESH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, August 2:** A 10-man India booked a slot in the final of the SAFF U-20 Championship after defeating Maldives 1-0 in their last league match here Tuesday.

India won thanks to an 89th minute winner from its number nine, Gurkirat Singh, at the Kalinga Stadium here to set up Friday's summit clash with Bangladesh. In a previous match, Bangladesh U20 played out a 1-1 draw with Nepal U20.

Substitute Gurkirat made the difference between the two teams, banging it into the net just before

the final whistle. Parthiv Gogoi's grounder found a deflection, and Gurkirat's rasper bulged the net from inside the box.

For all their domination and penetration which saw chances fall their way in both halves, the Indian colts who had scored 8 in their last game against Nepal U20, stayed guilty of not being able to capitalise on the chances.

They even hit the crosspiece in the 67th minute. The Indian colts, however, suffered a jolt when striker Parthiv Gogoi, the highest scorer in the tournament so far was given marching orders in the 90th minute.



Indian players celebrate the goal against Maldives, Tuesday. PIC: BIKASH NAYAK