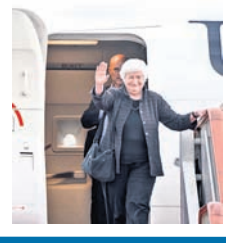
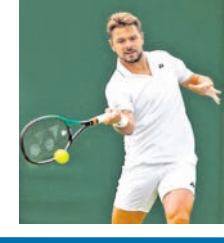




SHEHNAAZ'S HEARTBREAK
Actor Shehnaaz Gill says she has never betrayed anyone but she has always been the one to be dumped
LEISURE P2



YELLEN ARRIVES IN CHINA
US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen arrives in China for a visit which will focus on easing ties between the two countries
INTERNATIONAL P10



RENEWAL OF RIVALRY
Stan Wawrinka beats Tomas Etcheverry to set up a third round clash with Novak Djokovic at Wimbledon
SPORTS P12

SHORT TAKES

Minor boy killed in wall collapse

Mayubhanj: A minor boy was killed Thursday when the wall of a neighbour's house collapsed on him in Morada locality area of Mayurbhanj district. The deceased has been identified as Bhujia Marndi (14), son of Maisa Marndi. The deceased was playing when the wall collapsed on him and Bhujia breathed his last under the rubble. Locals attributed the collapse of the mud wall due to incessant rains for the last few days.

Ravenshaw tops Plus II cut-off list

Bhubaneswar: The Directorate of Higher Secondary Education (DHSE) Thursday released the first phase of cut-off marks in Arts, Commerce and Science streams for admission into several Higher Secondary schools in the state for the academic session 2023-24. Out of 4,48,287 students, 3,89,494 – 2,53,178 in Arts, 25,168 in Commerce and 1,21,023 in Science – were selected in the first list. Ravenshaw Higher Secondary School in Cuttack topped the list in all three streams with cut-off percentage of 91.67 per cent in Science, 79.20 per cent in Commerce and 80 per cent in Arts. The classes for various Plus II courses will commence August 1. The second selection merit list will be declared July 13. **P4**

OceanGate suspends all operations

Washington: The company which owned a submersible that fatally imploded on its way to explore the wreck of the Titanic said Thursday it has suspended all operations. OceanGate owned the Titan submersible that is believed to have imploded as it made its descent June 18 in the North Atlantic. The implosion killed all five people on board, including Stockton Rush, the submersible's pilot and the chief executive officer of the company. The company's website said Thursday that it has suspended all exploration and commercial operations till further notice. OceanGate is based in the US and 'OceanGate Expeditions', a related company that led the Titan's dives to the Titanic, is registered in the Bahamas. The US Coast Guard is investigating the implosion.



FIGHTING BACK: A Ukrainian soldier fires a howitzer gun towards Russian positions near the city of Bakhmut in Donetsk region, Thursday **REUTERS PHOTO**

Bhoi servitor injured during Bahuda, dies

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, July 6: The 72-year-old Bhoi servitor, who had sustained multiple injuries during the pulling of chariots on the occasion of Bahuda Jatra in Puri, died while undergoing treatment at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here, Thursday. The deceased has been identified as Nakula Bhoi (72). Nakula had sustained serious injuries on his face and head when a rope of Lord Balabhadra's Taladhwa chariot snapped near Market Square in the Holy City while it was being pulled by the devotees on the occasion of the return car festival of the Trinity. Nakula was initially admitted to the Puri district headquarters hospital (DHH) in a critical condition. Later, he was shifted to AIIMS-Bhubaneswar when his condition deteriorated. He succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment at the premier hospital here. A pall of gloom descended on the servitor fraternity after the news of the demise of Nakula spread. As per information available, internal bleeding led to the servitor's death. Doctors tried their best to save Nakula but he succumbed to his injuries. Sources said at least eight devotees were also taken ill during the pulling of chariots due to suffocation and stampede-like situation in Puri on the day. However, all recovered later. This apart, three persons were killed and four others were critically injured in separate mishaps during chariot pulling on Bahuda Jatra in Keonjhar and Koraput districts. While two persons died in Keonjhar after the chariot came in contact with a live electricity wire, one person was killed in Koraput in a similar mishap, sources said. Jugal Kishore Barik, 45, and Barun Giri, 50, died in Keonjhar, while Babula Nayak, 26, breathed his last during the return car festival in Koraput.

EOW busts online fraud gang

One arrested from Karnataka with sleuths hoping to apprehend the other gang members involved in scam worth more than ₹144 crore

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, July 6: Sleuths of the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Odisha police have arrested accused Krishnananda N from his native state Karnataka in connection with an online ponzi app scam. The accused has cheated people through the 'GETSO Earning app'. The EOW was able to crack the mobile app company after Dibyajyoti Kar, a resident of

Nayapalli in the state capital, lodged a complaint against the users, an EOW official said. This is the second such scam busted recently. The EOW had cracked down on several other ponzi companies and said that it had frozen ₹75 lakh in different bank accounts across India, officials had informed Wednesday. The EOW official informed that Dibyajyoti joined a WhatsApp group through a person identifying himself as manager of a

- More than 100 investors from Odisha duped by the GETSO app
- ₹26 crore found in the account of the accused
- EOW asks social media influencers not to promote unknown apps

high returns like six per cent daily on the amount apart from daily withdrawal facilities. Accordingly, the complainant created an account in the website of 'GETSO' and deposited an amount of ₹1.27 lakh with the company during the period from October 2022 to December, 2022. Subsequently, the GETSO WhatsApp group was closed and withdrawal requests were ignored by the company. Officials said that GETSO not only cheated

Dibyajyoti, but also thousands of other investors across India. He added that more than 100 people from Odisha had deposited money with the company and all have lost it. "The amount that has been lost is close to ₹144 crore," the official informed. EOW informed that the fraud company was being run by a large number of people spread across the country. Police are hoping that they will soon nab the others accused.

CHORUS GROWS AGAINST UCC

2 prominent Muslim bodies of India, the Jamiat and AIMPLB have already sent their letters to the Law Commission expressing their position against the Uniform Civil Code

AGENCIES
New Delhi, July 6: Voices against the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) continued to grow with various Muslim bodies protesting against it Thursday. They were joined by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin and Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, who said that such a code cannot be applicable for a diverse country like India. Prominent Muslim body Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind said Thursday that it has conveyed to the Law Commission that it is opposed to a uniform civil

code as it is 'against the religious freedom' guaranteed under the Constitution. In a statement, the Jamiat shared a summary of the objections that was sent by it to the 22nd Law Commission Wednesday in which the Muslim organisation said that the UCC is a part of a 'political conspiracy'. Jamiat president Maulana Arshad Madani said that this issue is not just related to Muslims but to all Indians. "It has been our position since the beginning that we have been practicing our religion freely

in this country... We will not compromise on our religious affairs and method of worship in any way, and we will take all possible measures to protect our religious rights within the scope of the law," Madani stated. Meanwhile the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) also strongly opposed the proposal for UCC. The AIMPLB said it will not allow any change in their personal laws citing that followers of Islam are bound by the injunctions 'as prescribed by the Islamic Law' which are 'non-negotiable'. Meanwhile, Stalin continued

his staunch opposition to the implementation of the UCC. He said the implementation of the UCC is only meant to target and 'wreak vengeance' on those opposed to the BJP-led Centre. Nobel Laureate Sen said the concept of UCC, though not a new one, is a 'difficult issue'. He also said the UCC surely has a link with advancing the idea of 'Hindu Rashtra'. "Hindu Rashtra is not the only way for progress. Hinduism is being misused," the Bharat Ratna awardee told reporters at his home in Santiniketan in West Bengal.

Justice Talapatra nominated next Orissa High Court CJ

POST NEWS NETWORK
New Delhi, July 6: The Supreme Court Collegium recommended Wednesday the appointment of Justice Subhasis Talapatra, the senior most judge in Tripura High Court, as Chief Justice (CJ) of Orissa High Court. The SC collegium headed by CJI, DY Chandrachud resolved to recommend that Justice Talapatra be appointed as the Chief Justice of the High Court of Orissa consequent upon retirement of Dr Justice S Muralidhar who will retire in August, a statement said Thursday. Justice Talapatra has been functioning, on transfer, in the



Orissa High Court since June 10 last year. He was elevated as a judge of the Gauhati High Court November 15, 2011. On establishment of a separate High Court for the state of Tripura in 2013, he opted for it as his parent high court.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I couldn't get admission but don't worry. Every week, a new university opens and I can keep applying

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	65785.64 ↑ 339.60
NIFTY	19497.30 ↑ 98.80
DOLLAR	81.98 ↑ ₹0.04
EURO	90.01 ↑ ₹0.57
GOLD	₹58,374 ↓ ₹99
SILVER	₹70,310 ↓ ₹1,047

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	32.9°C	33.8°C
MIN	25.5°C	25.0°C
Humidity	92%	87%
Rainfall	35.3mm	18.4mm

Forecast: Light to moderate rain

30 million, including celebs, sign up with 'Threads'

META'S NEW APP IS THE LATEST CHAPTER IN MUSK AND ZUCKERBERG RIVALRY - 2 BILLIONAIRES WHO HAVE EVEN OFFERED TO MEET EACH OTHER IN A CAGE MATCH

AGENCIES
London, July 6: Meta's new app 'Threads' has crossed over 30 million sign-ups in just 12 hours, according to CEO Mark Zuckerberg. The new app was unveiled Wednesday to rival Twitter, targeting users looking for an alternative to the social media platform owned – and frequently changed – by Elon Musk. 'Threads' is billed as a text-based version of Meta's photo-sharing app 'Instagram' which the company says provides 'a new, sep-

arate space for real-time updates and public conversations'. The app went live late Wednesday in Apple and Google Android app stores. There were some early glitches, including Zuckerberg's posts – or 'Threads' as they're dubbed – not loading in several places including the United Kingdom, India and Lebanon. But his replies to other users did appear. 'Threads' launched in more than 100 countries – including the US, Britain, Australia, Canada and Japan, has already drawn



celebrity users like chef Gordon Ramsay, pop star Shakira and actor Jack Black as well as accounts from Airbnb, Guinness World Records, Netflix, Vogue magazine and other media outlets.

- Threads will give users a 500-character count limit in comparison to the 280 that unverified Twitter users have
- Threads will require users to have an Instagram account giving the user access to Instagram's large existing userbase
- Users on Threads (including the unverified ones) will be able to post videos that are five minutes long

Zuckerberg said in some early replies on 'Threads' that he's focused on making the app 'a friendly place', which will 'ultimately be the key to its success'. "That's one reason why Twitter

never succeeded as much as I think it should have, and we want to do it differently," Zuckerberg wrote. 'Threads' could be a fresh headache for Musk, who ac-

leisure



TOM CRUISE WANTS TO CONTINUE MAKING M/FILMS INTO HIS 80S

Actor Tom Cruise, who recently turned 61, revealed his plans for the future of his acting career. Inspired by Harrison Ford, Cruise intends to keep making *Mission: Impossible* films until his 80s, reports *Deadline*.

KIM TEARFULLY ADDRESSES KANYE'S ANTI-SEMITISM

In the latest episode of *The Kardashians*, Kim was spotted shedding tears over her ex-husband Kanye West's anti-semitic comments. Kim expressed confusion and longing for the person she once loved, stating, "I'll do anything to get that person back," reports *Variety*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Today you will be perplexed by some inexplicable and fantastic event. Either that, or you may experience an unforeseen but favourable incident. It may not be earth-shaking, but it will definitely make you assess things. Besides, you could have difficulties meeting deadlines. However, Ganesh advises you to tell people about the importance of your work.

TAURUS

You have an easy carefree day ahead. There will be no woes or worries, says Ganesh. But to will be inclined to take up too many things at one time, more than you can handle. This may, in turn, get you stressed and uptight. You are advised to be practical and not to overdo things.

GEMINI

You will ponder over religious and social issues and discuss and debate the issue with your family members and make your opinions known to them. This apart, you will probably discuss on issues like law, education, social obligations, and culture with those close to you, says Ganesh.

CANCER

You may have to give more priority to your job. You will swiftly finish the task entrusted to you with concentration. Your zeal for work will be high. You will give so much importance to friends that you will go out of way to meet them.

LEO

Be it a job or business, you will face severe competition today. You will need to be extra cautious today. You will need to be more serious about whatever it is that you are doing. You will become more influential in your social circle or amongst your colleagues as a result, says Ganesh.

VIRGO

Today may prove to be a turning point for you. You will explore the opportunities to secure the money needed to make your future bright. Matters regarding relationships will be on the top of your priority list today.

LIBRA

Ganesh says your friend who is very influential will be lucky for you. You will be able to start a new joint venture business with out any obstacles. Your efficiency and hard work will be appreciated.

SCORPIO

You reveal your true avatar of being adventurous today, feels Ganesh. It's a favourable day for businessmen as they would make plans that would yield them huge profits. With your great communication and convincing power, you are going to impress your superiors today.

SAGITTARIUS

According to Ganesh, money is likely to slip-off your hand easily today. Try to wave off unnecessary expenditure. The entire day is spent managing funds, while the evening brings a lot of positive energy with it. You prefer to sit back and relax.

CAPRICORN

You may feel utterly disappointed as all of your hard-work and planning will go in vain. You will have difference of opinion with others and at times these differences may turn into heated arguments, predicts Ganesh. Such disharmonious environment will add to your anxiety, but don't lose hope. There is light at the end of the tunnel and you'll surely get through these turbulent times.

AQUARIUS

You have been turning a blind eye towards the pending work you are loaded with. But, today you will take up the challenge of getting done with the pile of work. You may clean your desk at work or room, make payments and purchases, and clear the mess.

PISCES

It is important to plan your finances in life, and you will devote your energies towards the same today. You might turn stingy with your money all of a sudden. An unexpected illness in the family will leave you worried. But it is likely to be a crisis which will blow over soon.

Mumbai: Actor Ranveer Singh has been officially confirmed as the lead in the highly anticipated film *Don 3*, directed by Farhan Akhtar. This news comes as Singh takes over the role previously portrayed by Shah Rukh Khan in the successful franchise. Fans are filled with excitement and anticipation to see Ranveer's interpretation of the character. This casting decision signifies a significant change for the project, intensifying the already high expectations surrounding the movie.

at an announcement regarding *Don 3* on Ranveer Singh's birthday. To keep the day free for the anticipated announcement, Singh strategically released the trailer for his upcoming film *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani* two days earlier. The announcement video, featuring Singh as the new Don, has been finalized and shown to industry insiders who were impressed by the concept and Singh's portrayal.



Ranveer replaces Shah Rukh as Don

The team has meticulously crafted the sound design, visuals, and overall ambience, aiming to generate buzz and excitement. While the exact announcement date for *Don 3* remains undecided, there are rumors that it might be revealed in August, depending on the success of *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani* at the box office. This strategy aims to capitalize on the triumph of Singh's current film and build momentum for the new announcement.



'I've always been betrayed in love'

Mumbai: Shehnaaz Gill has always been private about her relationships. Though she was said to be in a relationship with late Sidharth Shukla since

their days in *Bigg Boss 13*, they never confirmed it on a public platform. Shehnaaz recently opened up about experiencing heartbreak in her life.

When Shehnaaz was asked if she has ever been betrayed in love, she told an entertainment portal that she has never betrayed anyone but everybody has betrayed her and she has always been the one to be dumped.

She further said that when a person comes to know that their partner has a roving eye, then you take one step back. However, she added that she has become

stronger over the years. And now she believes if one has to leave then they can go to hell.

During the shooting of *Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan*, there were several reports that something was brewing between Shehnaaz and Raghav Juyal. However, both of them denied dating each other.

On the other hand, during the film's promotions, Salman Khan acknowledged Shehnaaz and Sidharth's bond and asked Shehnaaz to move on in life because staying single forever isn't an option.

Raj Kapoor revealed why he didn't marry Nargis

THE AWARA DIRECTOR PORTRAYED HIS EXACT FIRST MEET WITH NARGIS IN RISHI KAPOOR, DIMPLE KAPADIA STARRER BOBBY. THE WAY RISHI AND DIMPLE FIRST MEET IN BOBBY IS A REPLICA OF HOW RAJ MET NARGIS

Mumbai: Raj Kapoor is called the 'Showman' of the industry but the actor-director-producer also had many other aspects to his life and personality. His personal life was always spoken about in public and he was always surrounded with rumours of his relationship with many actresses.

But his relationship with Nargis was largely spoken about. In a documentary film made by Prasar Bharti after the success of *Ram Teri Ganga Mailli*, he spoke about his relationship with Nargis at length.

Kapoor, who worked with Nargis in 18 films, disclosed that he had met her when he was already married and had children and Nargis was just 16 at that time. He described her as 'Angelic'. Kapoor portrayed his

exact first meet with Nargis in Rishi Kapoor, Dimple Kapadia starrer *Bobby*. The way Rishi and Dimple first meet in *Bobby* is a replica of how Raj met Nargis.

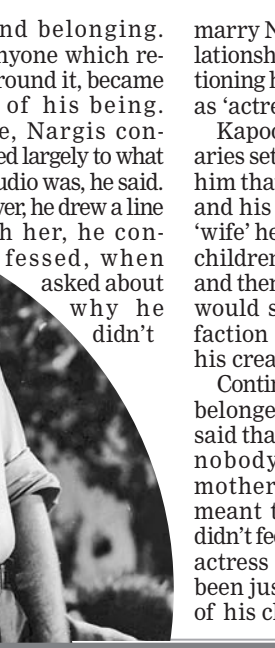
He further added that films for him meant a complete, dedicated devotion and belonging.

Hence, anyone which revolved around it, became a part of his being. Hence, Nargis contributed largely to what RK Studio was, he said. However, he drew a line with her, he confessed, when asked about why he didn't

marry Nargis. He explained his relationship quite well, without mentioning her name. He referred to her as 'actress'.

Kapoor always had his boundaries set as it was a straight fact for him that his wife is not his actress and his actress is not his wife. By 'wife' he meant, the 'mother of his children'. So, his home was there and then there was his actress who would share and have the satisfaction of having contributed to his creativity.

Continuing, he said that whatever belonged to them, they got it. He said that each one understood and nobody cheated anyone - The mother of his children wasn't meant to be his actress. So, she didn't feel cheated and similarly, the actress who came in his life has been just that and not the mother of his children.



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

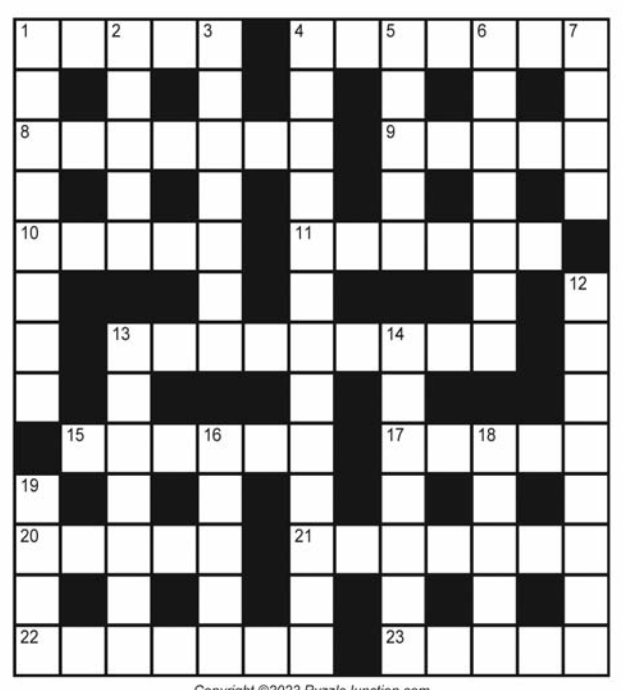


BREVITY



FUN post

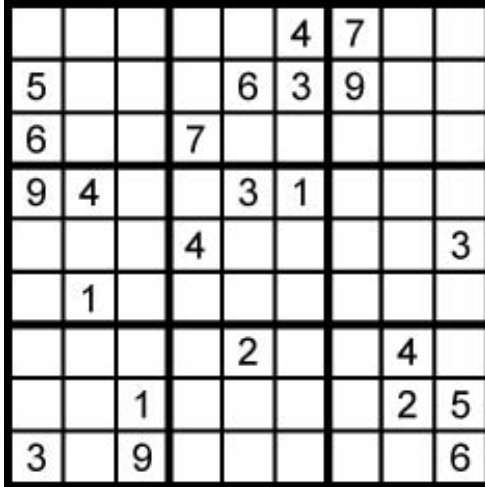
CROSSWORD



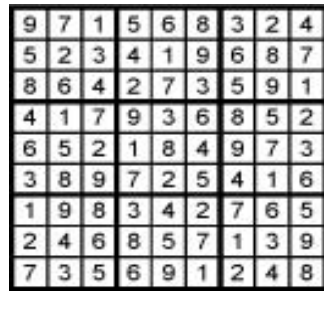
- Copyright ©2023 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Spiral shell
 - 4 Medium
 - 8 Drive back
 - 9 Puff (hog-nose snake)
 - 10 Embrocated
 - 11 Emcees' lines
 - 13 Chief port of Iceland
 - 15 Parade tossers
 - 17 Amulet
 - 20 ___ box
 - 21 Kind of rock
 - 22 Paved outdoor area
 - 23 Mount Logan locale
 - Down**
 - 1 Soft leather
 - 2 Sherpa's home
 - 3 Leisure time
 - 4 Happy ending? (6,7)
 - 5 Brewer's need
 - 6 Cod's little brother?
 - 7 Ill-fitting shoe problem
 - 12 Tortellini topping
 - 13 Nuclear power plant apparatus
 - 14 Hotel sign
 - 16 Alpha's opposite
 - 18 Aimee of *A Man and a Woman*
 - 19 Exclude

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

BURNING ISSUES

Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) state president Janardan Pati addressing the media at Shramik Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Thursday, about price rise and frequent power cuts across the state



I-T raids 20 places of DN Group on 2nd day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 6: Income Tax (I-T) officials conducted raids at 20 places linked to real estate major DN Group on allegations of tax evasion for the second day, Thursday.

While both the company and I-T department remained silent on the development, sources said that raids continued at the residences of the company's director, staff and office at IRC Village here and a substantial amount of cash of about ₹9 crore was reportedly seized from the house of a staffer at Unit 4.

The I-T sleuths Thursday took a staffer of DN Group from whose possession the cash was seized for further interrogation. The team also seized some important documents of the company during the search. Sources said that the I-T officials came across transactions of around ₹105 crore by the company.

"We have no information re-

I-T OFFICIALS CAME ACROSS TRANSACTIONS OF AROUND ₹105 CRORE BY THE COMPANY

THE TEAM SEIZED SOME IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS OF THE COMPANY DURING THE SEARCH

I-T SLEUTHS THURSDAY TOOK A STAFFER OF DN GROUP FROM WHOSE POSSESSION THE CASH WAS SEIZED FOR FURTHER INTERROGATION

garding the seizure made by the I-T department. The company will not react till completion of the raids," a DN Group official said when contacted by PTI.

DN Group deals with several housing projects, malls, hospitality and other sectors.

Meanwhile, the raids led to a political slugfest with the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Congress targeting the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. The DN Group chief

JP Nayak had accompanied the chief minister on his Japan tour earlier this year.

Senior Congress leader and MLA Santosh Singh Saluja alleged that many ruling party leaders have investments in the DN Group for which the company was getting protection. "People have the right to know whose money is invested in DN Group," Saluja said.

Alleging patronage of the Chief Minister's Office for the DN Group, BJP spokesperson Anil Biswal said that the company chief was attending meetings with senior officials. "Now, the CMO is Odisha is known as the corruption mobilisation office," Biswal told reporters.

However, a BJD MLA rejected the allegations made by opposition parties. "We have nothing to do with the DN Group. Let the law take its own course. The opposition should not drag CMO into all such matters," he said.



A STITCH IN TIME: A man repairs umbrellas at Ranihat Square in Cuttack, Thursday, as monsoon becomes active after a lull

OP PHOTO

Dengue stings: Inadequate fogging blamed

SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 6: With no respite from rising dengue cases in the Capital City, denizens have blamed inadequate preventive measures by the civic authorities for the uncontrolled vector-borne disease burden.

The situation could have been prevented if adequate fogging and spray of larvicide were ensured earlier in the month, claimed many of the residents here. Moreover, a plan to spray larvicide through drones has remained on paper only, they said, adding that only a demonstration was on display earlier.

"The civic administration should have been well prepared before the peak period of dengue - June to August. Although it is believed that weather is an important factor for dengue transmission, the awareness and action towards the cause of it should have been more intense," said a local on condition of anonymity. According to sources, IRC Village,



A drain in Badaga area of Bhubaneswar being cleaned

OP PHOTO



Salia Sahi and Old Town have become dengue hotspots.

A resident of Old Town area said, "Mosquito menace never stops here. I believe the action on curbing dengue should have been taken much before it started gripping the City. Open drains and lack of sanitation measures are responsible for breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Fogging machines were nowhere to be found. Fogging vans are employed twice a year which is too inadequate to tackle a situation

of this magnitude." Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) authorities, however, said they have taken measures like deployment of volunteers for destruction of stagnant water spots.

Additional district public health officer Antaryami Mishra said, "Sanitary staffers and field staffers of BMC are jointly working with ASHA karmis in spreading dengue awareness messages by making door-to-door visits."

Responding to the claims of inadequate fogging, a BMC official said, "The civic body is

BMC ROLLS UP SLEEVES

In a bid to curb spread of dengue, the BMC stepped up measures to enhance sanitation in the Capital city, Thursday.

Attending a meeting here, Thursday, BMC commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange asked the officials to intensify fogging and oil spraying activities besides ensuring regular trimming of grass and bushes as it would go a long way in curbing mosquito breeding. Highlighting the importance of community participation in ensuring cleanliness, the civic body commissioner said BMC will launch an extensive awareness campaign in schools.

now in the process of arranging new fogging machines to intensify the anti-dengue drive. Every waste which has a drop of water in it becomes a breeding spot. We cannot carry out any enforcement activity; all we can do is to convince people for a change in habits. They should be

"In order to prevent mosquito breeding, fogging operations will be conducted meticulously, leaving no sensitive areas unattended. In extreme cases, the use of mosquito larvae-eating fish will be considered," Kulange said. As the monsoon has set in, the BMC directed all agencies to prioritise thorough cleaning of drains.

SAFA app, BMC website, 1929 city call centre and social media platforms can be used for grievance redressal, he added.

Apart from BMC officials, Mayor, deputy mayor and other stakeholders took part in the meeting.

PNN

Be active on social media, Naveen tells youth leaders

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 6: Biju Janata Dal (BJD) president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday asked his party's youth wing leaders to remain active on social media and ensure that everybody is informed about the 'pro-people' initiatives of his government.

Addressing the state executive committee meeting of Biju Yuva Janata Dal (BYJD), the ruling party's youth wing, here, Patnaik said, "As you know, social media is a powerful medium these days. I expect you to remain active on social media and ensure that the pro-people initiatives of our government and party are communicated successfully."

The transformational journey of Odisha has been making headlines across the country and some of the initiatives of the state have also received global recognition. "So, all should reach out to the people with absolute conviction," the BJD supreme said.

"We have always been with the people in their good times, bad times and changing times. Whatever the situation might be, we have always engaged with the people all the time. There has always been a human face in our approach to our endeavours. That is our hallmark. That is our strength. We should always maintain this. Engage with the people with a focus on our development and welfare efforts," the Chief Minister told the youth leaders.

He also said youth have been playing a remarkable role in shaping the destinies of communities, countries and states. "Biju Babu always trusted the

Stating that Odisha has reached a certain level of development, the Chief Minister said if it has to become a developed state, youth power has to fire on all cylinders

youth of Odisha to play a key role in redefining the destiny of Odisha," Patnaik said.

BJD, which is inspired by the life and principles of Biju Babu, should always follow his footsteps, in this regard, he said, adding, "You know, when BJD took charge in 2000, where was Odisha and where has it reached now."

Odisha has seen a giant leap in food security, disaster management, finance management, poverty alleviation, women empowerment, sports, information technology, urban development, infrastructure development, tourism and industry along with socio-economic indicators. It is not possible without the contribution of the youth, Patnaik said.

Stating that now Odisha has reached a certain level of development, he said, "If it has to become a developed state, youth power has to fire on all cylinders. I have absolute trust in all of you that you will keep the state as a priority in all your actions, and work for its development."

According to a local political observer, the BJD chief has given this instruction to his youth leaders to counter principal opposition BJP, which is 'hyper active' on social media.

Agitating healthcare workers gherao min

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, July 6: Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) Minister Niranjan Pujari landed in a tight spot as agitating contractual workers of Acharya Harihar Post Graduate Institute of Cancer (AHPGIC) gheraoed him at the health facility for over 20 minutes to press for fulfilment of their demands, Thursday.

According to sources, the incident took place in the morning when the minister came out after attending the general body meeting at the state-run premier cancer care facility.

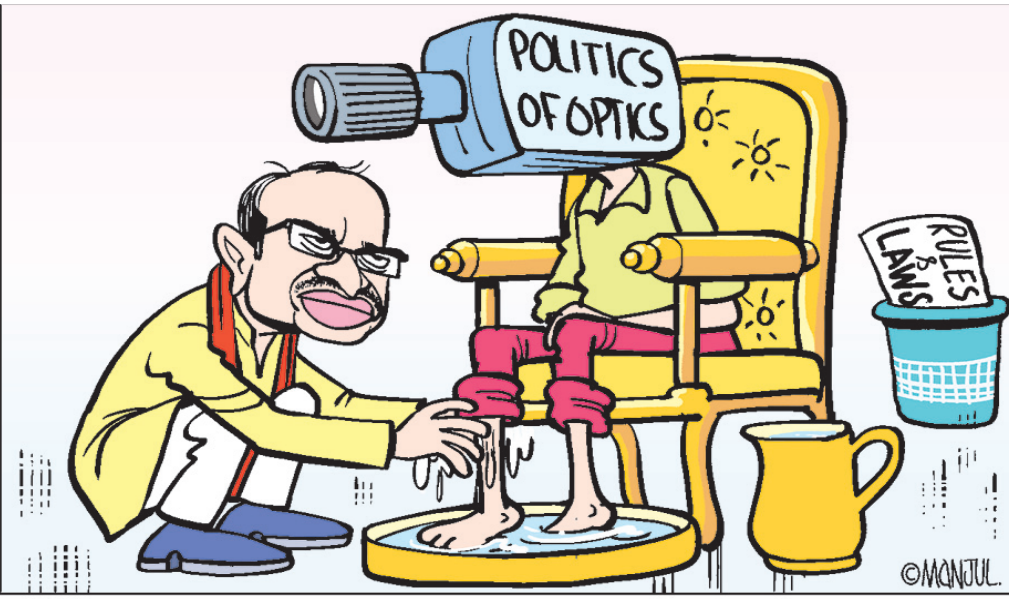
Meanwhile, contractual workers, who were agitating on the hos-

pital premises, gheraoed Pujari for over 20 minutes to press for fulfilment of their demands, including job regularisation.

However, the minister was cordoned out of the hospital premises by the police personnel.

According to the agitators, the government has announced that services of all the contractual workers have been regularised. "However, paramedical staff and nursing assistants of the hospital are still working on contractual basis. They have approached the authorities on multiple occasions for job regularisation. However, a precious little has been done so far," said an agitator.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Below 6-hr sleep cuts cognitive benefits of exercise: Lancet

Sleeping for less than six hours daily may cut down the protective effect of regular physical activity against cognitive decline, according to a study published in The Lancet Healthy Longevity journal.

Researchers from University College London (UCL) in the UK looked at cognitive function over 10 years in 8,958 people aged 50 and over in England.

They analysed how different combinations of sleep and physical activity habits might affect people's cognitive function over time.

The team found that people who were more physically active but had short sleeps - less than six hours on average - had

faster cognitive decline overall, meaning that after 10 years their cognitive function was equivalent to peers who did less physical activity.

"Our study suggests that getting sufficient sleep may be required for us to get the full cognitive benefits of physical activity," said study lead author Mikaela Bloomberg from UCL Institute of Epidemiology & Health Care.

"It shows how important it is to consider sleep and physical activity together when thinking about cognitive health," Bloomberg said.

Previous studies examining how sleep and physical activity might combine to affect cognitive

The World Health Organisation already identified physical activity as a way to maintain cognitive function, but interventions should also consider sleep habits to maximise long-term benefits for cognitive health

ANDREW STEPTOE | STUDY CO-AUTHOR FROM UCL INSTITUTE OF EPIDEMIOLOGY & HEALTH CARE

function have primarily been cross-sectional - only focusing on a snapshot in time.

The latest study found, in line with previous research, that sleeping between six and eight hours per night and higher levels of physical activity were linked to better cognitive function.

Those who were more physically active also had better cognitive function regardless of

how long they slept at the start of the study, the researchers said.

This changed over the 10-year period, with more physically active short sleepers (less than six hours) experiencing more rapid cognitive decline, they said.

According to the researchers, this rapid decline was true for those in their 50s and 60s in this group, but for older participants (aged 70 and over) the cognitive

benefits of exercise appeared to be maintained, despite short sleep.

"It is important to identify the factors that can protect cognitive function in middle and later life as they can serve to prolong our cognitively healthy years and, for some people, delay a dementia diagnosis," said study co-author Professor Andrew Steptoe from UCL Institute of Epidemiology & Health Care.

"The World Health Organisation already identified physical activity as a way to maintain cognitive function, but interventions should also consider sleep habits to maximise long-term benefits for cognitive health," Steptoe said.

The study participants were asked how long they slept on an average weeknight and were split into three sleep groups: short (less than six hours), optimal (six to eight hours) and long (greater than eight hours).

The researchers noted some limitations in the study, as they relied on participants self-reporting their sleep duration and physical activity.

The next steps may be to repeat the results in more diverse study populations, examine more cognitive domains and more domains of sleep quality, and use objective measures such as a wearable physical activity tracker, the researchers added.

Cop lands in Vig net

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 6: Vigilance sleuths Thursday claimed to have caught Sukinda sub-inspector (SI) of police Nirmal Senapati while receiving ₹10,000 as bribe for releasing a seized sand-laden truck.

Sukinda tehsildar Damayanti Sahu had seized the truck from the national highway near Sukinda. She handed over the vehicle to local police for safe custody. A case (124/2023) was registered and a probe was initiated. Police also arrested the truck's driver on the day.

Senapati reportedly demanded money from the truck's owner to release the vehicle. The Vigilance sleuths claimed to have nabbed the cop while receiving the money.

Ravenshaw tops in Plus II cut-off

A total of 4, 48,287 students had applied, out of which 3, 89,494 were selected in the 1st list including 2, 53,178 students in the Arts stream, 25,168 in Commerce stream and 1, 21,023 students in the Science stream



HSE Director Raghuram Iyer (Left) releasing the first selection cut-off list for Plus II admissions at office of the Directorate Secondary Education in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 6: The first selection cut-off list for Plus II admissions in the state was released Thursday. The students, who have applied for admission, can check the list on the official website www.samsodisha.gov.in.

The Directorate of Higher Secondary Education Thursday released the first phase of cut-off marks in Arts, Commerce and Science streams for admission into several higher secondary schools in Odisha for the academic session 2023-24.

According to officials, a total of 4, 48,287 students had applied, out of which 3, 89,494 were selected in the first list including 2, 53,178 students in the Arts stream, 25,168 in Commerce stream and 1, 21,023 students in

Ravenshaw Higher Secondary School in Cuttack topped the list in all three streams setting cut-off percentage of 91.67% in Science, 79.20% in Commerce and 80% in Arts

the Science stream.

Similarly, 7,779 students were selected for the Upashastri course in the first list while 5,220 candidates were selected for the vocational course.

This time Ravenshaw Higher Secondary School, Cuttack has topped the list in all three streams. It has set cut-off percentage of 91.67 per cent in

Science, 79.20 per cent in Commerce and 80 per cent in Arts.

In Science stream, Fakir Mohan (FM) College in Balasore is second in the list with 90 per cent cut-off mark followed by Buxi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar College (BJB) in Bhubaneswar with 89 per cent. Saraswati Vidya Mandir (SSVM) in Nilakantha Nagar is fourth in the list with 89 per cent and Udayanath (UN) College in Soro with 86.83 per cent is on the fifth spot.

In Commerce stream, Rourkela Government College is second in the list with 77.33 per cent cut-off mark. It is followed by BJB College in Bhubaneswar with 77.33 per cent and Jatiya Kabi Bira Kishor Das (JKBK) College in Cuttack with 72.20 per cent. Shailabala Women's College in Cuttack is on the fifth spot with the cut-off mark of 72.17 per cent.

In the Arts stream, Rourkela Government College is behind Ravenshaw College with 79 per cent cut-off mark. It is followed by DAV College in Titlagarh with 78.67 per cent and FM College Balasore with 78 per cent. Bhawanipatna College is in the fifth spot with 77.5 per cent cut-off mark.

The classes for various Plus II courses will be commenced August 1. The second selection merit list will be out July 13.

The students, who would not get shortlisted in first or second merit list, will now have more options to enroll in various courses through spot selection.



EVICTON DRIVE: An excavator deployed by BDA razing down unauthorised constructions in Patia area of Bhubaneswar, Thursday

OP PHOTO

'Ama Pokhari' scheme to revive ponds in cities

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 6: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday launched 'Ama Pokhari' scheme to revive ponds lying unused in the urban areas of the state.

Under the scheme, 2,000 large water bodies in 115 urban areas will be rejuvenated and its periphery will be renovated and beautified to make it a healthy space for the public to spend leisure time.

This will be done in partnership with Mission Shakti groups and educated young men and women. A better environment

will be created at a lower cost in a natural way.

Launching the project here, the Chief Minister said it will go a long way in rejuvenating the urban water bodies in a natural and sustainable manner to provide clean water and address scarcity.

He said that Mission Shakti mothers are the model of teamwork and they are doing a great job in villages and cities. He expressed his belief that the women SHGs will prove their mettle in the 'Ama Pokhari' scheme as well.

Patnaik said that ponds play an important role in our social



and cultural life. It is also related to health and the economy. He expressed hope that the rejuvenated ponds will become an integral part of urban life.

Stating that the restoration of degraded ponds is a laudable step, the Chief Minister said that its transformation would improve the quality of life in urban areas.

The Chief Minister praised the Municipal Corporations of Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Berhampur for the success of the pilot project of 'Ama Pokhari' scheme. He advised officials to speed up the program and complete it soon.

According to sources, 56 water bodies across all 30 districts of the state have been identified for rejuvenation in the initial phase.

FICCI committed to boost bilateral ties of India-Japan: Panda

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 6: FICCI hosted the 'Ganesh' group of Japanese MPs led by Yoshihide Suga, Former Prime Minister of Japan and Chairman of the Japan-India Association, who is on a four day visit to India.



Speaking on the occasion, Subhrakant Panda, President of FICCI, highlighted the strong bilateral ties between the two nations which is in the form of a strategic partnership. He also mentioned the opportunities available to businesses on both sides as Japan is known for its technology and quality while India is the fastest growing economy.

Suga highlighted the common strategic interests between Japan and India as well as the need to work together for the benefit of the world.

Others present on the occasion were Sushil Kumar Modi, MP and Chairman FICCI India-Japan Forum of Parliamentarians along with a bilateral group of Indian MPs which included Sujeet Kumar of Odisha.

₹1.55cr sanctioned for Bahanaga devtpt

₹1 crore has been earmarked for various developmental works at Bahanaga and nearby villages, including construction of five community centres and halls with toilet and cool drinking water facilities



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 6: Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Thursday sanctioned a fund of ₹1.55 crore (155 lakh) under the Members of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) Scheme for development of the Bahanaga region, site of the June 9 triple train accident that claimed the lives of 293 people.

Recently, Vaishnaw had met the first responders, locals, villagers and members of NGOs

during his visit to Balasore, Bahanaga Bazar and the accident site June 20 and 21.

The minister appreciated their efforts which saved the lives of many passengers. Local residents interacted with the minister requesting him their demands for the area. The minister, who had then promised them to fulfill their demands, sanctioned the money from the MPLAD fund.

Within two weeks two high-masts with floodlights have been installed in the area for proper

lighting and visibility. To improve the drainage system, new Hume pipes are being installed. "Trenching has already been done, materials are available at the site and work will be completed very soon," official sources said.

An amount of ₹1 crore has been earmarked for various developmental works at Bahanaga and nearby villages, including construction of five community centres and halls with toilet and cool drinking water facilities. There will also be children's parks and strengthening of the road from NH-16 to Level Crossing 95.

To fulfill his commitment, Vaishnaw has also sanctioned ₹35 lakh for advanced life support (ALS) ambulance for the Balasore District Headquarters Hospital. Moreover, ₹20 lakh has been sanctioned for one modular operation theatre (OPT) at Balasore Lions Eye Hospital.

Vaishnaw has placed emphasis on fast-tracked completion of all the developmental work.

AM/NS India, Festo sign MoU for higher education

POST NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad/ Bangalore, July 6: ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India), a joint venture between ArcelorMittal and Nippon Steel, two of the world's leading steelmakers, Thursday announced signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Festo India, one of the world's leading manufacturer and suppliers of automation technology and technical education.

The partnership will focus on development of the New Age Makers Institute of Technology (NAMTECH), an ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel education initiative, aimed at delivering excellent engineering and technical education, with special focus on manufacturing and sustainability. NAMTECH and Festo India will work in tandem on the design and delivery of technical



labs at the campus in Gandhinagar. They will also design and deliver short and long-term academic programmes.

Stephanie Werner-Dietz, group head of human resources at ArcelorMittal Global, said, "We are embracing the future by investing in the next generation with NAMTECH, leveraging the latest technology, innovative partnerships and advanced learn-

ing methods that will enable students to pave their own future."

Dilip Oommen, chief executive officer of AM/NS India, said, "This partnership reflects our ambition for NAMTECH to hit the ground running in its ability to offer the best technical learning resources for students seeking skills and expertise that will equip them for careers in Industry 4.0."

Sun's pull keeping Earth's rotation in check

Current 24-hour day on Earth might look like a 60-hour day were it not for solar-driven atmospheric tidal waves that for over a billion years, kept the moon's effect of slowing down Earth's rotation in check, astrophysicists have revealed.

These tides induced in the Earth's atmosphere by the Sun's gravity tend to speed up Earth's rotation, countering the slowing down effect produced by tides in the Earth's oceans caused by the moon's gravitational pull.

From approximately two billion years ago until 600 million years ago, these solar-driven tides had kept the Earth's rotational speed steady and the day's length at a constant 19.5 hours, the researchers at the University of Toronto, Canada, said.

The moon's gravitational pull continues to slow down our planet's rotation since it was first formed some 4.5 billion

years ago, slowly and steadily lengthening an Earth day's duration, which was less than 10 hours at the time the moon formed.

Today, it lengthens at an imperceptible rate of some 1.7 milliseconds every century.

For a larger part of the Earth's geological history, said to be about 4.5 billion years, the lunar tides have overpowered the solar tides by about ten times, resulting in slowing down rotation and extending days.

However, some two billion years ago, the solar tides were larger because the atmosphere was warmer and the time taken by them to travel the world, or their natural frequency, matched the length of the day, the researchers said in their study published in the journal Science Advances, drawing on geological evidence and using atmospheric research tools.

The atmosphere is known to



According to researchers, from approximately two billion years ago until 600 million years ago, the solar-driven tides had kept the Earth's rotational speed steady and the day's length at a constant 19.5 hours

The moon's gravitational pull continues to slow down the planet's rotation since it was first formed some 4.5 billion years ago, slowly and steadily lengthening an Earth day's duration

resonate or vibrate at a frequency, its natural frequency, determined by various factors, including temperature. That is, the solar

tidal waves travel through it at a velocity determined by its temperature.

Again, for the larger part of the

Earth's history, these tidal waves had been out-of-sync with the planet's rotational rate, creating smaller solar tides.

But during the billion-year period under study, starting two billion years ago, the tidal waves travelled around the world with a period of about 10 hours. Also at this time, Earth's day length, extended by the moon's pull, had become 20 hours.

When the atmosphere's natural frequency and the Earth's day length became even factors - 10 and 20 - the solar tides were reinforced and the Sun's gravitational pull was strengthened, enough to counter the moon's gravitational pull and, in turn, the lunar tides. The researchers also believe that rising temperatures due to global warming could move the atmosphere away from resonance, weakening solar tides relative to lunar tides, thereby resulting in longer Earth days.

Education fair in DPS Kalinga



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 6: Delhi Public School (DPS) Kalinga organised a career and education fair in collaboration with 'Student Outreach' Kolkata on the school premises Thursday.

The primary objective of hosting the 'Student Outreach Education Fair' was to offer career guidance and profile building opportunities for the Plus II students who are currently at a stage of exploring their interests and trace their future paths.

More than 20 universities including Ashoka University, BITS Law School, GD Goenka University, New Delhi and Vellore Institute of Technology participated in the Fair.

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BROWN SUGAR TRADE BOOMS IN NAYAGARH



of Nayagarh. Earlier, a packet of brown sugar used to be sold for ₹600 but its price has reduced to ₹300 with more youths getting addicted to the banned substance.

In this situation, the silence of the police and Excise personnel has proved favourable for the traders. The recent seizure 5.890 gram of brown sugar by Nayagarh Town police is a case in this point. The police personnel are claiming it to be a major seizure but it is only them who are to be blamed for mushrooming of the trade.

A trader requesting anonymity said that the business has seen a rise after the then SP of Khurda was transferred to the district. The new SP reduced the frequency of raids which only helped traders in Khurda and Nayagarh to carry on their business without any fear of police action. He said the volume of trade in the district is much more than that in Khurda district. The silence of police and Excise department has only favoured them.

A resident Sudam Swain said the illegal sale of the contraband has seen an exponential rise in Nayagarh district and resulted in a corresponding increase in crimes like dacoity, theft and robbery besides violence against women.

District excise superintendent Karuna Shankar Tiwari said that the raids against brown sugar trade will be stepped up while awareness drives are being undertaken to sensitise youths about the harms of brown sugar consumption. He assured that more raids will be undertaken in coming days.

ITAMATI BLOCK TURNS HUB FOR SALE OF THE CONTRABAND
REDUCED FREQUENCY OF RAIDS HELPING DRUG MAFIAS

Nayagarh, July 6: Brown sugar trade has seen a sharp rise in Nayagarh district with the police and Excise personnel failing to conduct raids in regular intervals, a report said Thursday. As a result, the district is fast turning into a major hub of the illegal narcotic substance.

Reports said that except one or two insignificant raids, police and Excise personnel have almost stopped conducting raids for the last one year. Absence of raids has only emboldened the miscreants to carry on with their business with impunity, which is only shattering the peace in many families and resulting in a surge in crimes like dacoity, loot and robbery.

The drug mafias are always one step ahead of police. They are even using women and children as shield to run their multi-crore business as well as to evade arrest.

The district has 14 police stations under its jurisdiction and the banned substance is available

in every lane, by-lane and sub-lane, near temples, community centres, vegetable stores, railways stations, roadside dhabas and eateries. Things have come to such a pass that the contraband is even sold covertly near police stations, outposts and the district excise office.

Itamati block in the district has turned into a hub of the illegal trade as small pouches packed with brown sugar are being dispatched for sale to different locations in the district. The contraband is transported from Khurda to Nayagarh via NH-57 connecting Bolangir with Khurda NH-57 via Baghamari-Khandapara road and Nua Jagannath Sadak. The peddlers have become so emboldened they are transporting the contraband on bikes and scooters and selling it in every nook and corner



RAIN FURY: Vehicles negotiating a waterlogged road following heavy rainfall in Daringbadi of Kandhamal district, Thursday. Incessant rainfall inundated the area as rainwater entered into houses and business establishments in the town triggering resentment among the residents

DALIT MINOR BEATEN TO DEATH

PNN & AGENCIES

Kendrapara, July 6: The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) Thursday issued notice to the Odisha Chief Secretary, DGP, the District Collector and Superintendent of Police of Bolangir for submitting an Action Taken Report (ATR) within a week over the death of a minor Dalit boy.

In a barbaric act, Gunanidhi Bag, a Scheduled Caste (SC) teen was beaten to death for taking bath in a village pond June 17, 2023.

The ghastly act occurred in Khaliapali village under Muribahal police station limits in Bolangir district.

Acting on a representation filed before the apex SC panel by

NCSC seeks ATR from state govt

civil rights lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy, the notice has been issued seeking reply within seven days.

Tripathy alleged that the brutality was committed over caste prejudices.

He also informed the Commission of another painful issue in 2013 wherein Sambalpur district Collector had to provide financial relief to a 40-year-old Dalit woman and her family.

The woman and her family faced brutal atrocities by their fellow villagers at Jayaghanta village under Dhama police station limits in Sambalpur district, September 6, 2012. The families still live in lurch.

Both the cases, the petitioner



stated, are heinous in nature and need immediate intervention of the Commission.

The inaction, negligence and failure of the officials including the police had posed a serious question of human rights, he said adding, it not only violates the provisions of the Constitution of India but also the

PHR Act, 1993 and the POA (SC ST) Act.

He requested the NCSC to direct the DGP, Secretary, Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of Odisha to investigate the case by CB-CID and take legal action against errant officials and culprits.

Tripathy also requested the Commission to compensate and rehabilitate the victims with assurance of the benefits under the social welfare schemes in both the cases.

Sand mafia attacks RI in Bolangir; held

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, July 6: A Revenue Inspector (RI) in Bolangir district was allegedly attacked by sand mafia during enforcement against loot of minor minerals Thursday.

The Revenue Inspector identified as Sushant Patel said that the incident occurred near Mushundi village under Salebhata outpost in the district when a joint enforcement squad were escorting three tractors loaded with stones and sand to a local police station for allegedly transporting minor minerals while paying royalty to the government.

As per the instruction of Agalpur Tehsildar Sushree Saroja Behera, the enforcement squad conducted the raid early morning Thursday and seized

two tractors loaded with stones. On their way to the police station, they caught another tractor loaded with sand. All the three tractors didn't have required documents to carry the minor minerals, said Patel.

Near Musundhi village, the sand laden tractor tried to flee from the place. When opposed, the tractor driver allegedly made an attempt to run over the squad official, he said.

The RI captured the entire incident in his mobile. The owner of the sand laden tractor attacked the RI from rear, snatched his mobile and put it on fire to destroy the evidence.

A case has been registered against the sand mafia Santosh Kumar Pradhan and he was arrested, said Tophan Bag, sub-divisional police officer (SDPO), Bolangir.



122 nesting sites of estuarine crocs spotted in Bhitarkanika

Bhitarkanika National Park is home to 70 per cent of the country's estuarine or saltwater crocodiles

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rajnagar, July 6: A total of 122 nesting sites of estuarine crocodiles were spotted by the Forest department personnel in the marshy wetlands of Bhitarkanika National Park under this block in Kendrapara district, officials said Thursday.

Moreover, 42 eggs were recovered from a nesting site near Thanapati which was hit by saline water ingress. Among the 122 nesting sites, 107 were detected in Kanika forest range, 12 in Rajnagar forest range, one in Gahirmatha forest range and two in Mahakalpara forest range under Rajnagar forest division.

Last year, 110 nesting sites were detected in Kanika forest range, nine in Rajnagar forest range, two in Gahirmatha forest range and one in Mahakalpara forest range.

The sighting of nesting sites has re-established Bhitarkanika as the largest habitat of these animals in Odisha, the divisional forest officer (DFO) of Rajnagar mangrove (wildlife) forest division, Sudarshan Gopinath Yadav said.



A crocodile breeding centre has been established at Dangamal in Bhitarkanika National Park to protect the population of estuarine crocodiles, ensure their growth and conduct research.

Bhitarkanika National Park is home to 70 per cent of the country's estuarine or saltwater crocodiles. Their conservation effort had started in 1975 and the population of the reptile in the national park has increased manifold from 96 in 1975 to 1,793 so far, he said.

Adequate conservation measures by the state Forest department have led to a systematic rise in the number of these reptiles over the years, forest officials said. Incidentally, Odisha is the lone state in the country where three crocodile species - salt-water, gharial and mugger - are found in-

habiting the river systems. Female crocodiles lay 50 to 60 eggs annually and the hatchlings usually emerge from the nests after 70 to 80 days of incubation period, crocodile researcher Sudhakar Kar said.

The female crocodiles guard the eggs from predators like jackals, wild dogs, fishing cats, vultures, water monitors, wild boars and other animals. They also cover their eggs with leaves to prevent the ingress of rainwater during the monsoon, he said.

Every year, the national park remains shut from May 31 to July 31 to ensure disturbance-free nesting of crocodiles, the official said. A team led by range officer Manas Kumar Das and comprising forest personnel Hemant Panigrahi, Jashobant Behera participated in the (counting) drive.

After statue, decorative wall collapses

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, July 6: Close on the heels of paver block erosion and the statue of Major Dhyan Chand biting the dust, another embarrassment has appeared to haunt the administration. While the Steel City is yet to come to terms with the two incidents, a large portion of a decorative wall constructed in January here during the Hockey World Cup, has come crashing down.

Nearly 100-metre length of the wall, which stood just adjacent to the fallen statue, on the other side of the Dhyan Chand Square caved in. The wall was erected during the World Cup beautification drive and photographs of all the captains of the participating teams were painted on it along with other pictures.

On the back side of the wall, there is a patch of paddy fields. During monsoon, a huge quantity of rainwater is discharged through this



patch of land. The field remains swampy for nearly seven months after the monsoon gets over. A retired civil engineer said, "The whole wall was constructed without proper planning, which means, no one really bothered to take note of this fact of water discharge. The wall came down due to faulty planning and nothing else." Another person said, "The monetary loss may be very small but what

about the loss of the city's image? Who will compensate for that?"

Reacting to the entire incident, former BJP MLA candidate Nihar Ray said, "I am really feeling ashamed for the entire incident. We all praised the government for all the developmental activities which were undertaken. However, we also warned about the low quality of work and time and again raised the issue. But, no one listened to us. Now, just wait for more to happen." Labour minister Sarada Nayak said, "I have heard about it and I assure you that no one will be spared for this standard work."

Interestingly the administration has another explanation for the wall collapse. "We found the water needs to be discharged and we are planning to harvest rainwater as the rainwater gets discharged through that field and we are trying to reinforce that," said ADM, Commissioner and CEO of Smart City Limited Subhankar Mohapatra.

NOTICE

This is to inform all concerned that State Environment Impact Assessment Authority, Odisha, Vide SEIAA FILE No-430852/509-INFRA2/05-2023, dated 30.06.2023 has accorded environment clearance to M/S Kriday Realty Private Limited for the proposed expansion and modification of the residential complex at Plot No. 87/1263/1802& 87/1264, Mouza-Shankarpur, Khorda, Odisha-751019. Copy of environmental clearance is available with the office of "Odisha State Pollution Control Board" and may also be seen at website at <http://parivesh.nic.in>

M/s Kriday Realty Private Limited
87/1263/ 1802 & 87/1264,
Mouza - Shankarpur, Khorda
Odisha, PIN-751019.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
ST & SC DEVELOPMENT, MINORITIES & BACKWARD CLASSES WELFARE DEPARTMENT, ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR
INTEGRATED TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, RAIRANGPUR

e-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. 02/ITDA (RRP) 2023-24

No. 927/2023-ITDA, RRP Dated: 05.07.2023
No. CAD-1165: Bid documents consisting of works, Tender Value, Cost of Tender Paper, Bid Security, Time of Completion, Class of Contractors and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in Govt. Website i.e. www.tendersodisha.gov.in.

01. Name of the work	: Civil works as mentioned in DTCN
02. No. of Works	: 9 (Nine) Numbers only
03. Estimated Cost	: Rs. 5.00 Lakhs to Rs. 56.00 Lakhs
04. Period of Completion	: 4 (Four) Calendar Months to 9 (Nine) Calendar Months as per work category
05. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	: 07.07.2023 at 10.00 A.M. to 26.05.2023 05.30 hours
06. Last date for receipt of bids in the portal	: 26.07.2023 till 5.30 hours
07. Bid received Online shall be opened on	: 27.07.2023 at 11.00 hours onwards respectively
08. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Project Administrator, I.T.D.A., Rairangpur

Further details can be seen from the www.tendersodisha.gov.in.
Sd./ Project Administrator
I.T.D.A., Rairangpur

OIPR-26041/11/0003/2324

Bank of India
Zonal Office : Star House,
1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015

POSSESSION NOTICE
[Rule-8 (1)] of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules-2002

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of India under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the borrowers/co-applicants in the loan account given below to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice plus interest & expenses thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to borrowers/co-applicants and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described here-in below in exercise of the powers conferred on him / her under sub-section (4) of section 13 of the Act read with Rule-8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002. The borrowers/co-applicants in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property & any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Bank of India, Puri Branch for the amount stated below with interest thereon. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of the Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to them, to redeem the secured assets.

PURI BRANCH / Name & Address of the Borrower(s) / Co-Applicant(s)	Liabilities due as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession	Description of Immovable Property/ies
Borrower: Shri Krushna Chandra Mishra, Mahaveer Enclave, Maruti Nagar, Siddha Mahaveer, Puri-752002	₹28,17,823.37 + interest & expenses thereon	01.05.2023 / 05.07.2023	All that part and parcel of Land/Land & Building situated at Flat No.: 108, Type-F, First Floor, Measuring 545 sqft., Mouza: Siddhamahavir, Khata No.: 264/38, Plot No.: 237/829, Area: Ac.0.069dec., Khata No.: 264/40, Plot No.: 237/831, Area: Ac.0.069dec., in Total Area: Ac.0.207dec., Dist.: Puri, PS: Puri Town, PS No.-33, Municipality Holding No.-1459/3 (Flat), Bounded by- North: Open Space, South: Flat No. 107, East: Corridor, West: Open Space.
Borrower: Mrs. Binodini Parida, W/o- Mr. Sarbeswar Parida / Co-Applicant: Mr. Sarbeswar Parida, S/o- Basudev Parida, Both are at Tota Beherasahi, Puri-Konark Marine Drive Road, Puri-752002	₹12,99,760.64 + interest & expenses thereon	02.05.2023 / 05.07.2023	All that part and parcel of the Land/Land & Building situated at Tota Beherasahi, Puri-Konark Marine Drive Road, Mouza: Balukhanda, Khata No.: 521/3415, Plot No.: 1021/8165, Area: Ac.0.025dec., Status: Stithiban, KISSAM: Homestead, PS: Puri Sadar, Dist.: Puri, Odisha, Bounded by- North: Basti Plot No. 12, South: Basti Plot No. 21/A, Jhilimil Paikray, East: Ordinary Road 20 ft., West: Ordinary Road 20 ft.

Date: 06.07.2023
Place: Bhubaneswar

Authorized Officer,
Bank of India

FOCUS ODISHA

EVOLUTION OF COOPERATIVES



Strengthening cooperative banks and implementing necessary reforms will bring more people into the formal banking network and contribute to the overall development of the economy

The gradual British colonisation of Odisha left the coastal districts neglected, resulting in the catastrophic famine of 1866 that caused millions of deaths. Odisha's isolation from other regions due to a lack of communication infrastructure played a significant role. Exploitative economic policies by the British had a detrimental impact on agriculture and left peasants disillusioned. These circumstances set the stage for the genesis of cooperatives in Odisha, providing a collaborative platform for empowering and uplifting rural communities.



SN Tripathy

IN ODISHA, COOPERATIVE BANKS DISPENSE ABOUT 65% OF THE TOTAL CROP LOANS, IMPORTANTLY MORE THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF 17%.

The idea of agricultural banks was proposed by William Wedderburn in 1858 and later by Justice MG Ranade in 1881. In 1892, Frederick Nicholson investigated the possibility of land banks in Madras Presidency. Odisha emerged as a pioneering state in the cooperative movement, establishing the Cuttack Cooperative Store in 1898 under Utkal Gourab Madhusudan Das. Cooperative societies are democratically controlled enterprises that meet economic, social, and cultural needs. The Famine Commission of 1901 recommended rural agricultural banks, which led to their implementation in North Western Provinces and Oudh. The concept involved creating strong associations that provided group guarantees and lending benefits, focusing on development of poor farmers.

In 1904, the Cooperative Societies Bill was introduced in response to the challenges encountered by rural farmers, as highlighted by the Famine Commission. This marked the beginning of the cooperative movement in India, aiming to provide affordable credit and reduce dependence on money-lenders. In Odisha, cooperative credit institutions were established in 1903 to protect cultivators from exploitation. The cooperative movement gained momentum in 1950s by implementing Rural Credit Survey Committee recommendations. Cooperative credit societies

provided easy access to credit and expanded non-credit services like marketing facilities and technical guidance. The Cooperative Credit Societies Act of 1912 facilitated the development of credit cooperatives and non-credit activities, such as buying and sales unions and cooperatives for weavers and artisans. However, the outbreak of World War I in 1914 impacted cooperative growth due to adverse effects on export and crop prices.

During early 20th century, the growth of cooperatives faced challenges due to the banking crisis and World War I. The Maclagan Committee on Cooperation was appointed in 1914 to address these issues. It recommended a three-tier structure for cooperatives and emphasised training and member education. In subsequent years, the development of cooperatives gained momentum. The Reforms Act of 1919 transferred cooperation as a subject to the provinces, leading to enactment of the Bombay Cooperative Societies Act in 1925.

The Reserve Bank of India Act 1934 focused on rural development through cooperatives, and the World War II propelled growth of multi-purpose cooperatives. Despite economic depression of 1930s, Odisha retained a significant number of cooperatives when it became a separate province in 1936, leading to the Odisha Cooperative Land Mortgage Bank Act in 1938. In Indian context, coop-

eratives are formed by different groups to access goods and services without exploitation. They cover various sectors such as farming, consumer goods, financial services, marketing, housing, tribal cooperatives. According to NSSO, around 52% of agricultural households in India were estimated to be indebted. Approximately 60% of these loans were sourced from institutional channels, including the government, cooperative societies, and banks, while the remaining 40% came from non-institutional sources.

Cooperative credit institutions have played a crucial role in meeting the credit needs of rural India with their extensive network and comprehensive coverage. These institutions, primarily owned by farmers and rural artisans, provide both credit and services such as input supply, storage, and marketing of agricultural produce. In Odisha, cooperative banks dispense about 65% of the total crop loans, importantly more than the national average of 17%. Cooperatives have made significant progress in various sectors, ranging from credit and banking to production, distribution, housing, and industries. They have become an essential lifeline for millions, supporting financial inclusion, poverty reduction, and sustainable development.

To improve the efficiency of the financial system and cooperative credit institutions, measures such as simplifying external constraints, strengthening the economic base, facilitating entry of new institutions, exploring monetary policy instruments, and implementing prudential regulations are essential. Strengthening cooperative banks and implementing necessary reforms will bring more people into the formal banking network and contribute to the overall development of the economy.

The writer is former Professor of Economics, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune.

SPECTRUM DIPLOMACY

Why India downplayed SCO summit

The 23rd SCO summit took place Tuesday afternoon, lasting nearly three hours and culminating in a release of a joint declaration of some five thousand words. The summit was chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other leaders of member countries including Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif participated. New Delhi, the current chair of the group, did not give a clear explanation as to why the summit was being held digitally. On the contrary, India underlined that the online format, "in no way signifies, hits, insinuates the dilution of the objectives that we are trying to see of the SCO summit."



DK Giri

OBSERVERS SUGGEST THAT MODI WANTED TO AVOID THE OPTICS OF WELCOMING PUTIN AND XI TO THE CAPITAL FOR AN SCO SUMMIT

However, observers suggest that Modi, who has been busy consolidating India's ties with the US, including undertaking a state visit to Washington, wanted to avoid the optics of welcoming Putin and Xi to the capital for an SCO summit. It perhaps served well for Xi as well as the Chinese President is ramping up diplomatic ties with Europe, which

had nosedived after he had extended diplomatic and economic support to Putin in the wake of Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine. He would have liked to avoid meeting Putin on stage face-to-face which would have raised awkward questions.

The group adopted a declaration and two joint statements, one on cooperation countering "radicalisation leading to separatism, extremism and terrorism" and the second on cooperation in the field of digital transformation.

Modi suggested, after the inclusion of Iran into the SCO group, an increase in use of Iran's Chabahar Port for trade and other economic activities. Chabahar Port's geographic proximity to Afghanistan, India and INSTC gives it the potential to emerge as one of the most important commercial hubs.

During his address, Modi didn't miss out on hitting at Pakistan without naming it when he said: "some countries use cross-border terrorism and give safe haven to terrorists." And urged the SCO countries to condemn it. However, Sharif had his response

and warned against the use of terrorism as a "bat for diplomatic point-swearing" and spoke about terrorism as a "hydra-headed monster" to be fought with "full conviction" irrespective of its source. Obviously, Modi touched the raw nerve of Pakistan.

New Delhi also reiterated its opposition to Beijing's most ambitious project of Belt and Road Initiative. In July 2022, Pakistan and China, decided to invite interested third countries to join the CPEC but New Delhi opposed it. India said that the extension plan is "inherently illegal" and "unacceptable" as the project passes through the disputed PoK.

Russia and China have used SCO as a means to manage their own balance of power in Central Asia and promote their shared vision of countering the Western influence in the world. Putin put up a brave face as he said in reference to the war in Ukraine, "Russia was withstanding sanctions and provocations and is steadily developing." Moscow and Beijing view this group as an alternative to the Western-led blocs and a key instrument to push back against what they

see as a US-led world order.

Xi in a not so veiled attack on the United States and its allies, warned: "We must be highly vigilant against external forces inciting a new cold war in the region and creating a confrontation between camps, (and) resolutely opposed any country's interference in internal affairs and instigation of 'colour revolutions'." The last phrase was in reference to government-toppling political movements. Xi stressed "China would persist in the correct direction of economic globalisation, oppose protectionism, unilateral sanctions and extension of national security concepts. Achieving long term regional peace and shared security is our common responsibility."

However, SCO comprises member states with a tangled web of interests and allegiances which is quite difficult to navigate, in order to be able to work as a cohesive body to enhance common interests - regional security and cooperation.

The writer is Secretary General, Association for Democratic Socialism

Cronyism & Corruption

Imagine the following scenario. A political outsider wins a critical election by promising to root out corruption. Even if that is a sincere intention, upon assuming office, they will quickly realise that it is best to focus on the critics of the government and opposition political parties, since going after one's own allies will erode one's political base. Hence, an unintended consequence of this original plan is to plant the seeds of cronyism. Even while targeting corruption, by protecting friends and doling out favours to allies, the leader strengthens their hold on power, and the country slides toward authoritarianism. In the end, corruption, too, could end up rising rather than falling.

This story has been repeated numerous times in countries across the developed and developing world. Naturally, such a transition can have huge negative effects on political leaders' own countries. But in today's globalised world, the consequences of cronyism often extend beyond national borders.

Russia is a case in point. In his 20-plus years in power, as either president or prime minister, President Vladimir Putin has built a plutocratic regime characterised by a particularly pernicious form of crony capitalism. While his friends and close allies have captured the bulk of Russia's wealth creation over the past two decades, ordinary Russians are increasingly finding themselves in a stagnant, sclerotic economy.

One consequence of Russia's invasion of Ukraine is that Putin's corruption has morphed into a global problem that continues to reverberate across Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas. While the natural response is to blame the political leaders who have facilitated this trend, that is not particularly helpful. To eliminate cronyism, we must first improve our understanding of the mechanisms and incentive structures that propel leaders down this path of cronyism and greater corruption.

Indonesia's history provides an illustrative example of the dynamics that prompt political leaders to embrace cronyism. When the dictator Suharto rose to power following a US-backed anti-communist coup in the mid-1960s, he promised to put an end to the corruption of his predecessor, Sukarno. But Suharto's pro-Western, business-friendly "New Order" proved to be just as oligarchic and ruthless as the previous regime. Similarly, Putin targeted the oligarchs that prospered under his predecessor, Boris Yeltsin, but he ended up simply replacing many of them with his own cronies.

To understand the underlying process, suppose that these leaders were genuinely committed to combating entrenched corruption, as many political leaders who have come to power have been. Although severing the symbiotic relationship between business and political elites is undoubtedly complicated, a recent study by the University of Vienna economist Dmitriy Knyazev suggests several ways of doing so. For example, policymakers could impose fines on state officials who take bribes or reward citizens who report such crimes.

In countries rife with corruption, leaders have no shortage of potential suspects to investigate and prosecute. As I highlight in a recent paper, however, increased scrutiny may actually exacerbate the problem. The logic is simple. After coming to power on an anti-corruption platform, leaders realise that fighting corruption by going after everyone is to risk losing one's own supporters. Hence, unless the political leader is a person of exceptional moral fibre, the best way to fight corruption is to zealously target political rivals and their followers, while exempting allies and confidants. Corruption may indeed fall among political rivals, who are under extra scrutiny, but it will rise among allies and friends, who will soon sense that they are safe. Depending on the elasticities of corruption among the two groups, aggregate corruption and cronyism may end up higher.

To prevent such an outcome, the key requirement is for governments to set up independent institutions entrusted with reining in unlawful behaviour. Singapore's Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau, established in 1952, is a prime example of the benefits of empowering a government agency with the necessary autonomy to investigate and pursue cases in the public interest. Although Singapore's political system has major flaws of its own, it has achieved remarkable progress in combating corruption.

In today's interconnected world, however, it is not enough for each country to fight corruption within its own borders. Since cronyism and corruption in any country can have far-reaching economic consequences, the only way to address this challenge is through multilateralism. To be sure, many obstacles stand in the way of effectively combating corruption globally. Reaching an agreement on stringent international regulations would be a good starting point.

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

WISDOM CORNER

- Success usually comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it. HENRY DAVID THOREAU
- Every adversity, every failure, every heartache carries with it the seed of an equal or greater benefit. NAPOLEON HILL
- Be grateful for what you have and stop complaining - it bores everybody else, does you no good, and doesn't solve any problems. ZIG ZIGLAR

WORDSWORTH

Lock, stock and barrel
Could this perhaps have some connection with the film Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels? As that film title suggests, the expression originated with guns. The lock was the firing mechanism of early types of firearms, such as the firelock, flintlock, and matchlock. It's likely the name was given to the mechanism because it looked a bit like the primitive door locks of the period. The stock is the wooden handle of such a firearm. The complete weapon consisted just of the three parts of lock, stock and barrel, so the expression means "everything, the whole thing." Perhaps oddly, it came into use only in the early nineteenth century, when such weapons had been in use for nearly three hundred years (the flintlock musket had been introduced early in the seventeenth century). Perhaps it was a result of standardised industrial processes that had by then only recently been perfected. This might have crystallised the idea of a musket as a set of interchangeable parts rather than a device all of a piece. It was also true that the American War of Independence and the Napoleonic Wars saw more flintlock muskets in use than at any time before or since. The first reference in the Oxford English Dictionary is to a letter of Sir Walter Scott's of 1817: "She wants stock, lock, and barrel, to put her into repair."

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

In the soup

Sir, There is fresh trouble brewing for Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejaswini Yadav and his parents, Lalu Prasad Yadav and Rabri Devi, with the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) filing a second chargesheet against the trio in the land-for-jobs scam. Fourteen others, including some railway officials and intermediaries, have also been named in the chargesheet. We learn that when Lalu Prasad was the Union minister during the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government from 2004 to 2009, he allegedly provided railway jobs for land. Bihar's leading family has been in the headlines for all the wrong reasons.
NJ Ravi Chandrar, BANGALORE

Ecosystems in danger

Sir, Climate "tipping points," such as the loss of the Amazon rainforest or the collapse of the Greenland ice sheet, could come within a human lifetime, scientists have said. Earth's ecosystems may be careering toward collapse much sooner than scientists thought, a new study of our planet's warming climate has warned. According to the research, more than a fifth of the world's potentially catastrophic tipping points — such as the melting of the Arctic permafrost, the collapse of the Greenland ice sheet and the sudden transformation of the Amazon rainforest into savanna — could occur as soon as 2038. In climatology, a "tipping point" is the threshold beyond which a localised climate system, or "tipping element," irreversibly changes. For instance, if the Greenland ice sheet were to collapse, it would also reduce snowfall in the northern part of the island, making large parts of the sheet irretrievable. A new attempt to understand their inner workings, published June 22 in the journal Nature, has revealed that they may happen much sooner than we thought. "Over a fifth of ecosystems worldwide are in danger of collapsing," co-author Simon Willcock, professor of sustainability at Bangor University in the UK, said in a statement. "However, ongoing stresses and extreme events interact to accelerate rapid changes that may well be out of our control. Once these reach a tipping point, it's too late."
Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

LAND ALLOTMENT ROW

J&K govt rebuts Mufti's claims

MEHBOOBA MUFTI HAS ACCUSED THE LT GOVERNOR'S ADMINISTRATION OF IMPORTING SLUMS AND POVERTY UNDER THE PRETEXT OF PROVIDING HOUSING TO HOMELESS PEOPLE WHICH THE LATTER REFUTED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, July 6: No outsider was being allotted land in the Union Territory and there was no change in the law, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has said rebutting PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti allegation that the administration's move to provide houses to the homeless was a ruse to change the demography of the region.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Monday said the Jammu and Kashmir administration has started providing 150 square yard plots to landless families for the construction of their houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (PMAY).

"The rural development department has identified 1.83 lakh families who do not have their own houses. We are working on it. It is a step that will not only provide a house to them but transform their lives," he had said, claiming that plots to 2,711 landless families across the union territory have already been allotted.

At a press conference earlier Wednesday, Mehbooba, the former chief minister of J&K, accused the Lt Governor's administration of importing slums and poverty into the erstwhile state under the pretext of providing housing to homeless people. She called it an attempt to change the demography of the Union Territory.

"The LG made an announcement about giving land to 1.99 lakh landless people in JK.



Doubts and concerns have come to the fore as to who these landless people in Jammu and Kashmir are. According to the figures of the central government placed before Parliament, there are only 19,000 homeless families in Jammu and Kashmir," Mehbooba told reporters here.

Hours later, an official spokesman said, "The statement of Mufti that government is allotting land to two lakh odd persons is factually incorrect and all statements made by her are without having any understanding of the PMAY scheme and Revenue laws of the J-K which permit allotment of land to landless, for housing purposes."

"So, neither any change in the law has been made, nor any

outsider is being allotted land," he added.

The spokesman said PMAY (Grameen) phase-1 started April 1, 2016, in which 2,57,349 houseless cases were identified in J-K in SECC data 2011 and after due verification by Gram sabhas, 1,36,152 cases were sanctioned for J-K under the overall commitment of the prime minister for "Housing for all by 2022".

"Per unit assistance of Rs 1.30 lakhs is provided per house by the Government of India under the scheme. Minimum size of the house prescribed is 1 marla," he said in a statement.

The spokesman said the data of beneficiaries captured through Awas plus was utilised to fill the gaps between overall target and

eligible beneficiaries made available from SECC Permanent Wait List (PWL).

PMAY Phase-II (AWAS Plus) Grameen started from 2019 onwards based on survey of 2018-19, done pan India, in which 2.65 lakh houseless cases were recorded in J-K and only a target of 63,426 houses was given to J-K. These houses have been sanctioned in 2022 only, he added.

Survey is based on clear guidelines on the basis of the criteria which includes all houseless, those living in zero, one or two room kachha houses, multi-layered prioritisation as defined in section 4 of the scheme guidelines, he said.

The criteria also includes those houseless persons who do not



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MEHBOOBA MUFTI | FORMER CM, J&K

The statement of Mufti that government is allotting land to two lakh odd persons is factually incorrect and all statements made by her are without having any understanding of the PMAY scheme and Revenue laws of the J-K which permit allotment of land to landless, for housing purposes

MANOJ SINHA

| LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, J&K

have land or clear title of land or have that category of land where construction is not permitted, could not be sanctioned house, even if they are part of this PWL, the spokesman said.

IMPLEMENTATION OF UCC

Stalin hits out at Centre again

The proposed move is meant to target and "wreak vengeance" on those who oppose the saffron party, its ideology and its regime at the Centre, and cause hassles and grief to the people, Tamil Nadu CM said



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, July 6: DMK President and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin Thursday alleged that the proposed move to facilitate implementation of the Uniform Civil Code is only meant to target and "wreak vengeance" on those opposed to the BJP-led Centre.

Slamming the BJP-led Union government, Stalin said the saffron party did not come forward to fulfill its poll promises, had an "anti-people" attitude and imposed "religion" or "sanatana" on the people. It is an autocratic regime, he alleged.

Referring to the Uniform Civil Code proposal, he said the nation already had civil and criminal laws, and by scrapping personal laws, the Central government is now attempting to usher in the UCC.

The proposed move is meant to target and "wreak vengeance" on those who oppose the saffron party, its ideology and its regime at the Centre, and cause hassles and grief to the people, he

claimed. A government is, hence, needed at the Centre similar to the Dravidian model of government in Tamil Nadu, which has been continuously fulfilling its assurances to the people made ahead of the 2021 Assembly election, he added.

Stalin alleged that the BJP government at the Centre intimidated politicians opposed to it using the CBI, Income Tax Department and the Enforcement Directorate.

On June 29, Stalin had slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for pushing the UCC and alleged that the PM was thinking of winning the 2024 Lok Sabha polls by fanning communal sentiments and creating confusion in the country.

The chief minister, without naming Governor RN Ravi, hit out at him for "blabbering" on Vallalar (1823-1874). The background to the CM's taunt could be traced to Ravi hailing Vallalar last month as an "icon, the supreme star of Sanatana Dharma".

TN Guv should understand his position, not talk politics: Min



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, July 6: Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi should realise his gubernatorial position and refrain from doing politics, state Higher Education Minister K Ponnudi said Thursday.

He urged Ravi to take up any issue concerning higher education directly with him, as he is the Pro-Chancellor or the department head rather than rushing to the media.

Chief Minister MK Stalin's efforts were oriented towards ensuring a qualitative improvement in the education sector and he had even launched several initiatives like the 'Naam Mudhalvan' programme, but the Governor appeared to belittle the state's efforts, Ponnudi claimed.

"Many say the Governor is

talking politics. Even the BJP state president K Annamalai had said so. I hope the Governor would understand his position and act accordingly," the Minister told reporters here recalling Annamalai's comment Wednesday in Villupuram.

While speaking to reporters, the BJP chief opined that a Governor should not talk politics as it would set a wrong precedence. A Governor should discharge his duty as mandated by the Constitution, he had said.

Referring to a meeting of state university chancellor nominees, syndicate and senate members at the Raj Bhavan here July 4, the Minister claimed that it was an irony that Ravi who chose to hold such a meeting in his office has accused the state government of holding similar meetings at the Secretariat.

"The meetings of the syndicate, senate and governing members of universities were held at the state Secretariat, the power centre, only during the pandemic and in online mode during the Covid-19 imposed lockdown. On normal occasions, such meetings were conducted on university premises," Ponnudi said.

He accused the Governor of distributing degrees to graduates at the Raj Bhavan instead of visiting the university in Nagapattinam to award the degrees. It was unfair on the part of the Governor to say that the state government has not appointed the Search Committee to recommend a panel of Vice Chancellors for universities, he said.

"The process of identifying a panel of Vice Chancellors is getting delayed as the Governor has been insisting upon including a representative from the University Grants Commission in addition to the three members nominated to the Search Committee," the Minister claimed.

He urged the Governor to communicate with him as he is the Pro-Chancellor of state universities or the higher education department secretary on any issue and resolve it instead of issuing a statement in the media.



VENTING ANGER: Residents block a road during a protest against the installation of smart electricity meters at Gojwara in Srinagar

TN on alert as dengue cases increase

29 people are undergoing treatment for dengue fever in Coimbatore district

INDO ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, July 6: The Tamil Nadu health department is on alert amid rising dengue cases in Coimbatore.

In association with Coimbatore Municipal Corporation, the health department has commenced taking precautionary measures to arrest the spread of the disease as well as increasing vigil and care on the affected patients.

Sources in the Tamil Nadu health department told IANS



that 29 people are undergoing treatment for dengue fever in Coimbatore district.

A majority of cases that are being reported, according to Coimbatore Municipal Corporation officials, are from Ganapathi, Peelamedu and Chitti areas in Coimbatore.

The Southwest monsoon that gives good rains to Coimbatore

which is a bordering district to Palakkad district in Kerala has also not gained momentum.

The health department has hence taken precautionary measures keeping in mind the possibilities of a rise in contagious disease when the monsoon lashes with full fury.

The department has also constituted 12 mobile ambulance units with a doctor, a nurse and a lab technician in each unit to conduct fever screening camps.

People detected with mild fever will be provided treatment at the camp itself and moderate or severe fever cases will be referred to the nearby Public health centres or district hospital for further treatment.

12 'bound down' for disrespecting national anthem

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, July 6: Twelve people were "bound down" for not standing up during the national anthem played at a function here in June with Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha in attendance, police said Thursday.

Departmental action has also been initiated against the police music band for failing to ensure everyone stood up before the anthem was played, they said.

The 12 people were "bound down" under the CrPC sections 107 and 151 - the sections grant police the power to arrest or detain a person or ask him or her to sign a bond in anticipation of a crime.

According to officials, some people chose to not stand up during the closing ceremony of the 'Pedal for Peace' cycling event, organised by Jammu and Kashmir Police, June 25.

The J&K administration took a strong note of the "disrespect" to the national anthem and launched an inquiry into the alleged infraction, they said.

Sources from police had earlier said that 14 people were arrested for disrespecting the national anthem and a few policemen too suspended - a version later challenged in a tweet by Srinagar Police, which said it had only "bound down" 12 people under sections of Criminal Procedure Code, and not arrested them.

MAHAKALI TEMPLE INTRODUCES DRESS CODE

The move follows similar measures by several temples in Nagpur, the Radharani temple in Barsana and the Hanuman Dham in Shamli to maintain the sanctity of the shrines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, July 6: Jammu and Kashmir's renowned 'Bawe Wali Mata' temple management has introduced a dress code, urging visitors to dress "decently" and cover their heads and refrain from wearing shorts, miniskirts, ripped jeans and capri pants on the premises.

The dress code, a first-of-its-kind regulation in Jammu city,

was found posted as a notice near the entrance of the famous Kali temple located in the Bahu Fort area of Jammu.

The notice at the 'Bawe Wali Mata' temple requests visitors to dress "decently" and cover their heads before entering the temple premises while also prohibiting half-pants, bermuda shorts, miniskirts, night suits, ripped jeans and capri pants within the temple grounds.

According to the notice written in Hindi, the management aims to maintain the sanctity of the shrine and seeks the co-operation of devotees in adhering to the dress code.

Speaking to PTI about the move, head priest Mahant Bitta said, "It is not an order. It is an advisory. It is requested that all devotees visiting the temple follow certain discipline. People



have of late turned the temple into a picnic spot."

The priest emphasized the importance of following a proper and traditional dress code while entering the temple premises, saying visitors should wear re-

spectable attire and cover their heads as a sign of reverence.

The temple management has stationed several staff members at the gate to educate visitors about the dress

code. "We have kept head cloth and longis at the gate for visitors. Nobody is being forced to wear it," the head priest said.

Many devotees said they were happy with the dress code and commended temple authorities for the move.

Dhananjay Patil of Uttar Pradesh said devotees should religiously comply with the dress code and cover their heads when visiting the temple. "It is good for the revival of Hindu samskaras and I welcome it," he told PTI.

Manmeet Kour, another visitor, too welcomed the decision

The notice at the temple requests visitors to dress "decently" and cover their heads before entering the temple premises while also prohibiting half-pants, bermuda shorts, miniskirts, night suits, ripped jeans and capri pants within the temple grounds



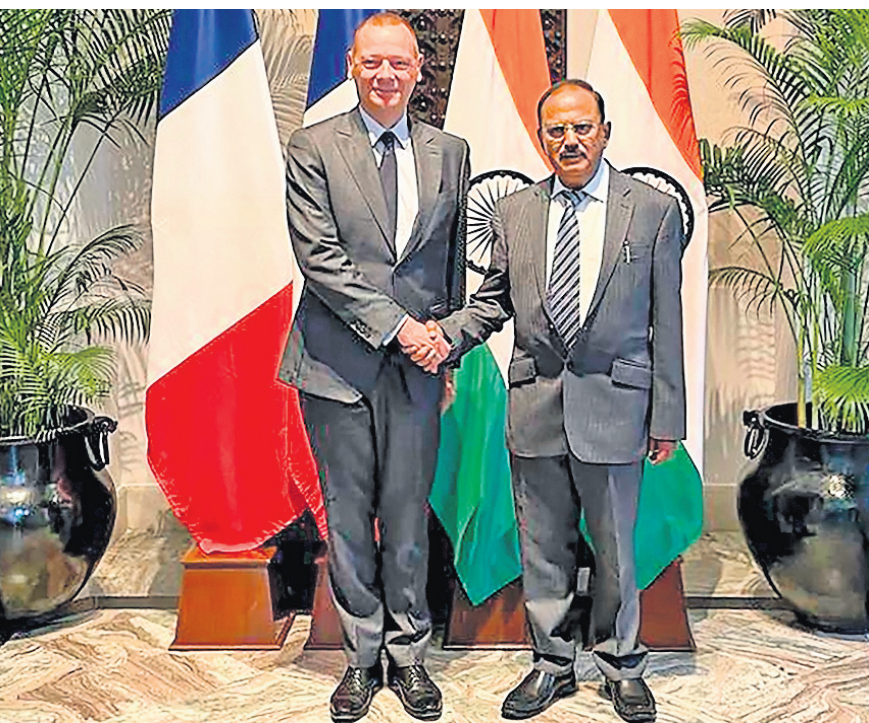
Trinamool Congress (TMC) supporters during a road show on the last day of the state Panchayat election campaigning at Ahmadpur in Birbhum district, West Bengal



Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama arrives for celebrations of his 88th birthday at the Tsuglagkhang complex in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh



Britain's King Charles III, left, and Queen Camilla view a crochet mailbox topper of a crown during a tour of the market square in Selkirk, in the Scottish Borders, as part of the first Holyrood Week since the King's coronation



National Security Advisor Ajit Doval held wide-ranging talks with French President's diplomatic advisor Emmanuel Bonne with a focus on Prime Minister Narendra Modi visit to Paris next week



A helicopter showers flowers on the Lord Shiva devotees or 'Kanwariyas' gathered at Har Ki Pauri Ghat to collect holy water from the Ganga river during 'Kanwar Yatra' in the holy month of 'Shravan' in Haridwar, Uttarakhand



A farmer on a bullock cart during rain in Nadia, West Bengal

AP/PTI PHOTOS



Youngsters do exercises for the Agniveer recruitment rally at Morhabadi ground in Ranchi, Jharkhand



of the day quote

Goa has been traditionally depending on Russia and UK for international footfalls. Looking at reports, we have realised countries like USA, South Korea and UAE are opening for outbound travel. This means we can expect tourists to come from these places

ROHAN KHAUNTE | GOA MINISTER

Before the state elections, we promised to plant two crore saplings. We planted 32 lakh in 2020-21, 35 lakh in 2021-2022, 50 lakh in 2022-23 and the target is 52 lakh in 2023-24

GOPAL RAI | DELHI ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

I dedicate this life that I have now to helping limitless sentient beings to the best of my ability, and until the end of space. I am determined to bring others as much benefit as I can

DALAI LAMA | TIBETAN SPIRITUAL LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Delhi court summons Gehlot

New Delhi: A Delhi court Thursday summoned Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in a criminal complaint filed by Union Minister Gajendra Singh Sekhawat seeking his prosecution for alleged defamation, saying the Congress leader made imputations "knowing and intending" to harm his reputation. The metropolitan magistrate directed Gehlot to appear before the court August 7 for allegedly defaming Sekhawat with his remarks on the alleged Sanjivani scam.

Excise policy scam: Sisodia moves SC

New Delhi: Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Manish Sisodia Thursday moved the Supreme Court seeking bail in the CBI and ED cases related to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam. He has moved the apex court challenging the two orders of the Delhi High Court dismissing his bail petitions in these cases.

Two girls raped, one succumbs to injuries

Hailakandi (Assam): Two girls were allegedly raped and one of them succumbed to her injuries in Assam's Hailakandi district, police said Thursday. Two persons were arrested in connection with the crime, and a manhunt has been launched to nab the third suspect, a police officer said.

Kanhaiya appointed as NSUI incharge

New Delhi: Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge Thursday appointed youth leader Kanhaiya Kumar as incharge of the party's student wing. Congress said, "Congress President has approved the appointment of Kanhaiya Kumar as incharge of National Students Union of India (NSUI)." The decision to appoint Kanhaiya Kumar as the incharge of the NSUI comes as part of party's major reshuffling in the organisation ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Five dead in lightning strikes

Panna: Five men were killed and two people, including a woman, were injured Thursday in two lightning strikes in Panna and Tikamgarh districts of Madhya Pradesh's Bundelkhand region, police said.

Chandrayaan-3 mission to be launched July 14

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, July 6: The Indian Space Research Organisation announced Thursday that the Chandrayaan-3 mission is scheduled to be launched at 2.35 pm July 14, with the lander expected to soft-land on the surface of the Moon August 23 or 24. Chandrayaan-3 is a follow-on mission to Chandrayaan-2 to demonstrate end-to-end capability in safe landing and roving on the lunar surface.

The Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft, which will be launched by LVM3 (Launch Vehicle Mark-III) (earlier referred as GSLV Mk III), is a composite of three modules -- propulsion, lander, and rover (which is housed inside the lander). "LVM3-M4/Chandrayaan-3 Mission: The launch is now scheduled for July 14, 2023, at 2:35 pm IST from SDSC, Sriharikota", the national space agency headquartered here said in a tweet.

Secretary of the Department of Space and ISRO Chairman Somanath S told reporters that the space agency would attempt soft-landing of the lander August 23 August 24. ISRO officials noted that the mission life of the lander is one lunar day, which is equal to 14 Earth days. "The date (for soft-landing) is decided based on when there is sunrise on the Moon. While landing, sunlight must be there. There is sunlight on the Moon for 14-15 days and for the next 14-15 days there is no sunlight," they noted.

Govt calls all-party meet July 19

New Delhi: The government has called the customary all-party meeting July 19 ahead of Parliament's Monsoon session, official sources said Thursday. The session, which begins from July 20, is set to be stormy with the opposition expected to target the government over a host of issues, including the ethnic clashes in Manipur and the recent train accident in Odisha. The BJP and the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by it is also expected to meet before the session to finalise its strategy to take on the opposition and score political points ahead of some crucial state assembly polls. While the Congress and several regional parties have been in talks to join hands to take on the BJP, the ruling alliance is also working to bolster its ranks to meet the challenge. However, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) chief Sukhbir Singh Badal termed as media speculation the buzz in political circles that his party and the BJP might reunite ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Heavy rains lash parts of country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 6: Heavy rains lashed various parts of the country Thursday, prompting the weather department to issue a 'red'/'orange' alert in some states even as a woman was swept away in flood waters in Goa.

In the national capital, heavy showers in the morning caused waterlogging and traffic congestion in several areas, officials said.



Probe the work done by all states during the pandemic. Also, probe the so-called corruption in the BMC, but then also probe the PM CARES Fund because it was people's money and they should know how it was used

UDDHAV THACKERAY | SHIV SENA (UBT) PRESIDENT

COSTLY VEGETABLE

Consumers continue to see red due to pricier tomatoes as retail prices of the kitchen staple soared up to ₹162 per kg Thursday across the country due to tight supplies caused by rainfall in many parts



1996 LAJPAT NAGAR BLASTS

SC awards life sentence to 4

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 6: Nearly 27 years after 13 people were killed and 38 injured in a bomb explosion at a bustling Lajpat Nagar market here, the Supreme Court Thursday handed down life sentence to four convicts for the remainder of their lives without remission, saying they executed an "international conspiracy" to "destabilise" India by carrying out the blast.

The top court, which dwelt in detail on the severity of the offence, however, did not agree with the prosecution that the convicts be awarded the death penalty for snuffing out innocent lives in the blast on May 21, 1996.

The bench comprising Justices B R Gavi, Vikram Nath and Sanjay Karol, in its 190-page judgement, spared the four convicts -- Mohd Naushad, Mirza Nissar Hussain alias Naza, Mohd Ali Bhatt alias Killey and Javed Ahmed Khan -- the gallows on the ground of delay.

It said though the offence "falls within the category of rarest of rare cases", the delay of 27 years in all and 14 years in the trial court in deciding the case are the mitigating circumstances in favour of the convicts. The top court was very critical of the delay in trial against the convicts and said it compromised the "national interest".

Whether '82 or 92' will work more effectively, says Pawar

UNFAZED BY HIS PARTY'S SPLIT, PAWAR SAID THAT REBELS WILL HAVE TO PAY THE PRICE AFTER HE EXPELLED HIS TRUSTED AIDE PRAFUL PATEL AND NINE MLAs WHO JOINED THE GOVERNMENT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 6: Embattled Sharad Pawar Thursday asserted he is the president of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and will work more effectively whether at the age of 82 or 92.

Pawar chaired a meeting of the NCP Working Committee, which expressed faith in his leadership and endorsed his decision to expel Praful Patel, Ajit Pawar, Sunil Tatkar and eight other MLAs who joined the NDA ranks.

Senior NCP leader P C Chacko said 27 state units of the NCP endorsed the eight-point resolution passed by the Working Committee.

In a show of unity, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi met 82-



year-old Pawar at his residence and expressed full support to the NCP in its times of crisis after his nephew Ajit Pawar walked out with a large chunk of MLAs and joined the Shiv Sena-BJP government.

This was the first meeting of a national leader with Pawar after the rebellion in the NCP Sunday. Opposition leaders Sonia Gandhi, M K Stalin, Mamata Banerjee among others had made phone calls to Pawar and expressed solidarity.

"Question doesn't arise about stopping. Now, I will work more effectively, whether 82 or 92 it doesn't matter," Pawar told reporters here in response to ques-

tions about being ridiculed about his age by Ajit Pawar. "I am the president of NCP," he declared and added that the "truth will come out" on Ajit Pawar's claim of having majority. Pawar exuded confidence that the opposition parties will succeed in defeating the BJP-led central government in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

"The central government is using ED, CBI everywhere to weaken the opposition. It is fine. About 11 months are left of this government. Then we will face elections and the situation will change. Then our top priority will be to make appropriate changes," he said.

Pawar also expressed faith in the Election Commission, where the rival factions have staked claim to the NCP and its election symbol.

The Sharad Pawar-led group was banking on the Supreme Court verdict in the Shiv Sena symbol dispute, where it had stated that it was not appropriate to confine the EC to the 'singular test of legislative majority' in such matters.

The Ajit Pawar faction had declared him as the national president of the NCP and claimed support of over 40 MLAs, MLCs and MPs, while the Sharad Pawar-led group had filed a caveat with the Election Commission that its version should also be heard before taking a final decision.

Pawar dismissed suggestions that the NCP had diminished in strength after the rebellion.

Pawar also rejected questions raised by the Ajit Pawar faction on the legal validity of the Working Committee meeting.

Pawar said he was confident that there would be a change of government in Maharashtra in 2024.

NCP leaders in the national capital had put up banners and hoardings near Pawar's residence, expressing faith in his leadership and depicting Praful Patel as 'Kattappa' from the movie 'Baahubali'.

MANIPUR VIOLENCE CONTINUES

Woman shot dead in Imphal West

AGENCIES

Imphal, July 6: Violence continued in Manipur Thursday as unidentified gunmen shot dead a woman outside a school in Imphal West district, while intermittent gunfire was reported in Kangpokpi district, officials said.

The killing took place at Kwakeithel Mayai Koibi under Lamphel police station a day after classes 1 to 8 began in the state after two months because of the violence.

Officials said she had gone near the school on some work but was not connected with any educational institute.

Intermittent gunfire was heard in a village in Manipur's Kangpokpi district early Thursday, hours after security forces thwarted clashes when men armed with automatic weapons began to attack villagers, sources said. The incident took place around 3.40 pm on Wednesday near Phaileng village, they said.

Armed groups from nearby areas gathered in the area, escalating tensions, the sources said.

About 1,000-1,500 women blocked roads to prevent additional forces from reaching the area, they said. However, the situation was brought under control because of the deployment of Assam Rifles personnel in the area.

In Churachandpur, about 100

Behaviour of Modi bizarre: Congress

New Delhi: The Congress Thursday again attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his silence on violence in Manipur, terming his response to the situation in northeastern state "shockingly bizarre". "Meanwhile, the Prime Minister is visiting Chhattisgarh and UP tomorrow. Day after he will be in Telangana and Rajasthan. More photo-ops. More distorted facts. More insults aimed at the Opposition. More self-glorification," Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh said in a tweet.

km away, a large number of Kukis in a separate development staged a protest on Wednesday. The rally started at Public Ground and continued till the Tuibong Peace Ground.

Nearly 4,000 people participated in the rally, most in 'combat' dress with camouflage on their faces, sources said. No untoward incident was reported during the rally, which went on till 7 pm.

Meanwhile, following the killing of the woman in Imphal West district, a tribal organisation demanded imposition of President's Rule in the north-eastern state.

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) identified the woman as Donggaihching, a mentally ill person who lived on alms provided by locals.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan washes feet of Dashmat Rawat, Sidhi urination case victim, at CM House in Bhopal

RESERVATION FOR WOMEN IN PANCHAYATS

Apex court declines to entertain plea

There have been allegations that husbands or other male relatives of women members of panchayati raj institutions wielded real power after seats were reserved for women under the amended law

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 6: The Supreme Court Thursday refused to entertain a petition related to reservation of seats for women in panchayati raj institutions claiming a proxy process was being followed where men behind women were running the panchayats, and permitted the petitioner to make a representation to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

"We are not an executive authority," a bench comprising Justices S K Kaul and Sudhanshu Dhulia told the counsel for the petitioner, an Uttar Pradesh-based social start-up.

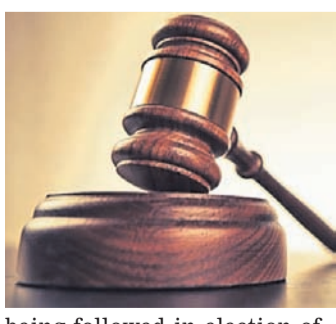
The petitioner's counsel told the bench the plea pertains to the Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992 which relates to representation of women at the grass roots level in rural self-government bodies.

The counsel said the legislature passed the law over 30 years ago but the executive has failed to implement it, and the apex court can direct formation of a committee to look into this issue.

"You say it is being done by proxy. Can we preclude women from contesting?" the bench observed, adding, "It is an evolutionary process".

In its order, the bench noted the petitioner seeks to flag the manner in which 50 per cent reservation accorded to women in Panchayati Raj institutions is working.

"It is not that the petition gives some solution to the problem flagged i.e. A proxy process



being followed in election of these Pradhans. It is her (counsel for petitioner) submission that actually the men behind the women are operating the Panchayats," the bench noted. "We did put to the counsel as to what can judicial interven-

tion do in this scenario as you cannot preclude a section of women merely because they are willing to lend their shoulders to this scenario. Her submission is that a committee be constituted to look into the problem. We believe this is not the function of this court," it said.

During the hearing, the top court asked the petitioner's counsel whether they have made a representation to any government department about it.

It said the petition does not contain or propose any solution to the issue raised in it.

"We feel that it is for the respondent-Ministry of Panchayati Raj to look into the grievance

raised by the petitioner as to whether there is a better mechanism to implement the object of women reservation," the bench said.

"Thus we permit the petitioner to make a representation to the respondent which should naturally look into the issue flagged by the petitioner-foundation. With the aforesaid observation, the petition stands disposed of," it said.

There have been allegations that husbands or other male relatives of women members of panchayati raj institutions wielded real power after seats were reserved for women under the amended law.

international

of the day quote

Part of the grain deal on Russian exports has not been fulfilled, which gives no grounds for extending the agreement at the moment

DMITRY PESKOV | PRESS SECRETARY OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare will visit China next week. His visit will inject new momentum into relations and deepen mutual political trust, expand pragmatic cooperation and strengthen people-to-people exchanges

WANG WENBIN | CHINA'S FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON

Safety of the staff at India's diplomatic mission in the country is paramount

JAMES CLEVERLY | UK FOREIGN SECRETARY

SHORT TAKES

Girl killed

London: An 8-year-old girl was killed Thursday when an SUV crashed into a private elementary school on a very narrow road in the Wimbledon district of southwest London, police said. The crash wasn't believed to be terrorism, and the driver was taken into custody. The girl died at the scene, Detective Chief Superintendent Clair Kelland said at a briefing near the site. "Our thoughts are with her family at this incredibly difficult time," said a visibly shaken Kelland, who is the Metropolitan Police force's local commander for southwest London.

Indian student buried alive in Aus

Melbourne: In a horrific act of vengeance, a 21-year-old Indian nursing student in Australia was abducted by her jilted ex-boyfriend from India, driven nearly 650 km and buried alive in South Australia state's remote Flinders Ranges, a court has heard. Jasmeen Kaur from Adelaide City was killed by Tariqot Singh in March 2021, a month after reporting him to the police for stalking. Kaur was abducted from her workplace March 5, 2021, and driven more than 400 miles (644 km) while bound with cable ties in the boot of a car Singh had borrowed from his flatmate, news.Com.Au portal and other websites reported Wednesday.

Russia expels Finnish diplomats

Moscow: Russia's Foreign Ministry Thursday announced the expelling of nine Finnish diplomats and shutting down of Finland's consulate in St Petersburg in retaliation for Finland expelling nine Russian diplomats last month. The ministry said in a lengthy statement that it summoned Finland's ambassador to Russia, Antti Helanterä, on Thursday, and relayed its "strong protest in connection with the confrontational anti-Russian policy pursued by the Finnish authorities."

Imran booked in six cases

Islamabad: Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan has been named in six cases, including three under the tough Anti-Terrorism Act, for the unprecedented attack on the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the army in Rawalpindi on May 9, a media report said Thursday. Supporters of Khan, also chief of the Pakistan-Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, breached the gates of the Pakistan Army's GHQ in Rawalpindi on May 9, dubbed as a "Black Day" by the powerful military.



More than two-third of the Afghan population now requires assistance

NANAIA MAHUTA | MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF NEW ZEALAND

BOOSTING TIES

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar attended a deck reception onboard INS Trishul along with President of Zanzibar Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi and said that the presence of the Indian frigate here is a statement of India's commitment to ensure peace and prosperity in the region



Wagner chief is in Russia: Belarus leader

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Minsk (Belarus), July 6: The mercenary leader who led a short-lived mutiny against the Kremlin in Russia and his Wagner troops are in their field camps, the President of Belarus said Thursday, raising new questions about the deal that ended the extraordinary challenge to President Vladimir Putin's rule. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's claim could not be independently verified, and the Kremlin refused to comment on Yevgeny Prigozhin's whereabouts. It was not clear if travelling to Russia would violate the deal, which allowed the Wagner chief to move to Belarus in exchange for ending the rebellion and a promise of amnesty for him and his troops.

Few details of the agreement brokered by Lukashenko have emerged. Last week, Lukashenko said the mercenary leader was in Belarus. Russian media later reported he was seen at his offices in St. Petersburg, a sign that the deal may have allowed him to finalise his affairs in Russia.

On Thursday, Lukashenko told international reporters that the mercenary leader was in St.



Last week, Lukashenko said the mercenary leader was in Belarus

Lukashenko told international reporters that the mercenary leader was in St. Petersburg and Wagner's troops were in their camps

Russian media later reported he was seen at his offices in St. Petersburg, a sign that the deal may have allowed him to finalise his affairs in Russia

Petersburg and Wagner's troops were in their camps. He did not specify the location of the camps, but Prigozhin's mercenaries fought alongside Russian forces in eastern Ukraine before their revolt and also have bases on the Russian territory.

Asked about where Prigozhin is, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov refused to comment, but reaffirmed that the deal that ended the mutiny envisaged his move to Belarus. Lukashenko said his government offered Wagner, a private military contractor that has sent troops around the world to fight for

Russia's interests, the use of Belarusian military camps but the company had not made a final decision.

He also said that Prigozhin has been given back the cash and weapons that were confiscated by Russian authorities. Russian online newspaper Fontanka posted videos and photos of Prigozhin's opulent mansion in Russia's second-largest city and some personal items.

It also published a collection of selfies that showed him posing in various wigs and foreign uniforms, an apparent reflection of Wagner's deployments

GAS LEAK KILLS 17 IN SOUTH AFRICA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Johannesburg, July 6: At least 17 people, including a one-year-old child, were killed and ten hospitalised following a toxic gas leak during an illegal gold extraction operation at an abandoned mine in South Africa, authorities said Thursday.

The incident occurred Wednesday evening near Boksburg city, east of Johannesburg, South African authorities confirmed. Gauteng provincial Premier Panyaza Lesufi told the media that the youngest person that died was a one-year-old child, and the rest were believed to be illegal miners working in a long-closed mine in the area.

The miners were reportedly using the highly toxic nitrate oxide gas to extract gold from soil dug out of the mine. He confirmed that the death toll rose to 17 after one of the 11 people initially hospitalised died. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa extended his condolences to the families of those killed.

He urged "investigators to get to the bottom of what may have caused this accident to avoid similar disasters in future," a statement by his office said. The survivors of the Boksburg gas leak were recovering well, Gauteng Health Minister

Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko told local media.

"The conditions of those who are inside, they are doing much better. At ward one, we have a baby of two months, but she is doing fine. She is self-breathing," she said. Lesufi, who rushed to the incident scene last night, deployed forensic experts to investigate reports that the gas had leaked from a cylinder, over-coming residents of an informal settlement nearby.

Helicopters were also used to comb the area in case the gas had spread further, but no other casualties were reported. Lesufi promised swift action against the illegal miners, who have been operating across the province in abandoned mines, often remaining underground for months on end.

A resident at the settlement, Mandla Marunda, escaped death when he ran away after smelling gas, which he said smelt like rotten eggs. Marunda said he started running when he saw people dropping down one by one. He admitted that he was too scared to return to the area until assured by police that it was safe to do so.

Marunda's friend George Mbulu said he grabbed a towel from a bucket of water outside his shack to cover his mouth and nose for protection as he escaped.

The incident occurred Wednesday evening near Boksburg city, east of Johannesburg, South African authorities confirmed

France to allow police to spy through phones

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Paris, July 6: French police should be able to spy on suspects by remotely activating the camera, microphone and GPS of their phones and other devices, lawmakers agreed late Wednesday.

Part of a wider justice reform bill, the spying provision has been attacked by the left and rights defenders as an authoritarian snoopers' charter, though Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti insists it would affect only "dozens of cases a year".

Covering laptops, cars and other connected objects as well as phones, the measure would allow geolocation of suspects in crimes punishable by at least five years' jail.

Devices could also be remotely activated to record sound and images of people suspected of terror offences, as well as delinquency and organised crime.

The provisions "raise serious concerns over infringements of fundamental liberties," digital rights group La Quadrature du Net wrote in a May statement.

It cited the "right to security, right to a private life and to private correspondence" and "the right to come and go freely", calling the proposal part of a "slide into heavy-handed security".

During debate on Wednesday, MPs in President Emmanuel Macron's camp inserted an amendment limiting the use of remote spying to "when justified by the nature and seriousness of the crime" and "for a strictly proportional duration".

Any use of the provision must be approved by a judge, while the total duration of the surveillance cannot exceed six months. And sensitive professions including doctors, journalists, lawyers, judges and MPs would not be legitimate targets.

Yellen begins China visit

REUTERS

Beijing, July 6: US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen arrived in the Chinese capital Thursday, beginning a four-day visit expected to focus on easing ties between the world's two largest economies, despite low expectations on both sides.

Yellen received a low-key welcome from a Chinese finance ministry official and the US envoy to China, Nicholas Burns, as she stepped off a government aircraft just after a rainstorm brought some relief to an otherwise sweltering Beijing.

Both sides are sceptical that Yellen's visit will be able to take much heat out of U.S.-China ties, however, with officials ac-



cepting that both countries have placed safeguarding national

security above economic ties. "Especially if there are things that we may disagree about, it's even more important that we are talking," said a US official travelling with Yellen, speaking on arrival in Beijing. "I don't think it's fruitless, I will say that definitively."

Yellen will address "unfair" practices by China, including recent punitive actions against U.S. firms and market access barriers, the official added. Friday she will meet China's Premier Li Qiang and former economy tsar Liu He, who is widely seen as a close confidant of President Xi Jinping. Chinese commentators cry hypocrisy over US concerns over the country's trade practices, however.



Tourists pack a barge on the Seine river in Paris

PTI PHOTO

Russian attack kills five, injures dozens

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lviv (Ukraine), July 6: Russia fired cruise missiles Thursday at a western Ukraine city far from the front line of the war, killing at least five people in an apartment building in what officials said was the heaviest attack on civilian areas of Lviv since the Kremlin's forces invaded the country last year.

Emergency crews with search dogs went through the rubble of the building after the nighttime attack destroyed the roof and the top two floors. At least 36 people were injured, according to authorities. The youngest of the five people who died was 21 years old and the oldest was 95, according to Maksym Kozytzkyi, the governor of Lviv province, said.

"This woman survived the Second World War but, unfortunately, she didn't survive" Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Kozytzkyi said. Debris and wrecked parked cars lined the street outside the building, which overlooks a small neighbourhood park with swings and other playground equipment.

The last victim was pulled from the wreckage hours after the attack, and seven survivors were rescued, the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs said. About 180 people received psychological support following the attack. Lviv Mayor Andriy Sadovyi said around 60 apartments and 50 cars in the area of strike were damaged.



Prachanda's remark on India stirs up storm in Nepal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, July 6: Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda's stunning remarks that an Indian businessman settled here "once made efforts" to make him the premier has stirred up a storm in the Himalayan Nation with the Opposition demanding his resignation.

Prachanda also said that Sardar Pritam Singh, a pioneer trucking entrepreneur in Nepal, played a special and historic role in enhancing Nepal-India relations. Prachanda made these remarks on Monday while addressing a function to launch the book, 'Roads to the Valley: The Legacy of Sardar Pritam

Singh in Nepal. "He (Singh) had once made efforts to make me the prime minister," Prachanda said.

"He travelled to Delhi several times and held multiple rounds of talks with political leaders in Kathmandu to make me the prime minister," the Prime Minister said. Prachanda also said that Singh has played a special and historic role in enhancing Nepal-India relations.

The remarks have stirred up a storm and drawn criticism from several quarters. The main Opposition party Communist Party of Nepal-(Unified Marxist-Leninist) (CPN-UML) disrupted the National Assembly meeting on Wednesday, demanding the



prime minister's resignation. The meeting has been postponed to 1 pm Thursday.

Chairman of CPN-UML, KP Sharma Oli talking to media persons Wednesday said that they want resignation from the Prime Minister, not a clarification. Demanding the prime

minister's resignation, former Prime Minister Oli said, "his remarks have given a blow to national independence, dignity, the Constitution and the parliament itself."

Similarly, the House of Representatives meeting has been postponed until 3 pm Friday, following the disruption by opposition parties—the UML, the Rashtriya Swatantra Party, and the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP)—over Prachanda's remarks.

The members of the main Opposition Committee CPN-UML and the RPP shouted slogans that "a Prime Minister appointed by New Delhi does not have the right to continue in the post".

Speaking in the lower house, UML lawmaker Raghujii Pant said, "The prime minister should resign on moral grounds. We don't need a prime minister appointed by Delhi." Not only the opposition, but the ruling parties have also expressed their dissatisfaction with Prachanda's statement.

"The prime minister's remarks are worthy of criticism. His remarks are wrong," said Bishwa Prakash Sharma talking to journalists after the House meeting on Wednesday.

This is not the first time Nepal's top leaders have courted controversy for their imprudent remarks over sensitive issues such as geopolitics, bilateral relations and other national issues.

of the day quote

Domestic coal production picked up in a big way in FY2022 and FY2023, when, in order to keep pace with the steep jump in domestic coal demand, it grew by 8.7 per cent and 14.8 per cent, respectively

JAYANTA ROY | SENIOR VP, ICRA

We talk about 100-104 unicorns and 1 lakh startups. The target is really one lakh unicorns and almost 10 to 20 lakh startups. That is a kind of opportunity that India techade really represents for young Indians

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR | MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND IT

Our recommendation is that we should begin decompression exercise starting 2023. Relevant FTAs will take time, targeted tariff reduction is the immediate solution

PANKAJ MOHINDROO | CHAIRMAN, ICMA

SHORT TAKES

Adani Green to raise \$1.5 billion

Mumbai: Adani Green Energy, controlled by billionaire Gautam Adani, said Thursday it approved raising Rs 123 billion (\$1.49 billion) through qualified institutional placement. The renewables company will use the funds to diversify its green energy supply in the country, Bloomberg had reported earlier in the day, citing sources familiar with the matter. The company plans to expand its green energy capacity by about 3 gigawatts this fiscal year, spending around Rs 140 billion (\$1.70 billion), its finance chief Phuntsok Wangyal had said in May.

Toyota hikes prices by 1%

New Delhi: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) Thursday said it has hiked the prices of its models by around 1 per cent in order to offset the impact of an increase in input cost. The company, which sells models like Innova Crysta and Fortuner, has realigned the prices of its models with effect from July 5, 2023, TKM said in a statement. The increase was necessitated to partially offset the rising input cost, it added. "As a customer-centric company, we remain committed to cater to the ever-evolving needs of the market and all efforts have been made to ensure that the impact of the cost increase passing on to our customers is minimal," it noted.



I will convey to His Excellency (PM Modi) the request we have received from the business leaders who are accompanying us this time and are keen to improve the environment for Japanese companies to do business in India

YOSHIIHIDE SUGA | FORMER PM, JAPAN

COAL OUTPUT SURGES DURING FY22-23

Coal production picked up in "a big way" during FY22 and FY23 resulting into improved availability and supply of the dry fuel, on account of various government initiatives towards the sector, Icra said. The production of Coal India grew by 12.1 per cent in FY23, it said, adding it was the fastest growth rate registered by the state-owned miner in the past few decades



Google accuses CCI of protecting Amazon

THE SEARCH ENGINE GIANT IS ARGUING IN SC AGAINST \$163MN PENALTY, SAYING IT DID NOT ABUSE ITS MARKET POSITION

REUTERS

New Delhi, July 6: Google has accused India's antitrust body of ordering changes to its business model "only to protect" rival Amazon, which complained about its struggles to develop a modified version of the Android system due to Google's restrictions, legal papers show.

Google has approached India's Supreme Court to quash the Competition Commission of India's (CCI) October order asking the company to make 10 changes to its business model after the CCI found it abused its dominant position in the market with its Android operating system, which powers 97% of India's smartphones.

Google's latest Supreme Court filing shows its deepening dis-



agreement with how the CCI conducted its Android investigation.

In an earlier December filing in a lower tribunal, Google said CCI officers had "copypasted" parts of a European ruling against the US firm in a similar case. CCI denied the accusation.

In the CCI's October order, which also fined Google \$163 million, the company was asked

- Google has challenged India's decision on market abuse
- Antitrust body wrongly backed Amazon arguments-Google
- Google says its Android market conduct not abusive
- Google earlier accused India body of copying parts of EU order

to allow modified versions of its Android operating system, called Android forks, to be liberally distributed without any licensing restrictions such as those related to pre-installation of Google apps.

Amazon told the CCI during the investigation that Google's restrictions hindered development of its Android fork called Fire OS, and Google said the watchdog unfairly relied on that

in passing its adverse decision against it, the company said in the June 26 Supreme Court filing. "Globally, FireOS failed commercially due to poor user experience. In India, the Fire Phone was not even launched," Google argued in its 1,004-page filing, which has not been made public but was reviewed by Reuters. "Thus, the Commission called Amazon's lack of attempt to compete in India a failure and attributed it to Google's agreements."

The CCI's directive was issued "only to protect Amazon-who complained that its attempts at creating a forked version of the Android did not work because of (Google's) restrictions."

In 2021, South Korea fined Google \$159 million for blocking customized versions of Android.

Google has been particularly concerned about India's Android decision as the directives were seen even more sweeping than those imposed in the European Commission's landmark 2018 ruling against the company's Android market abuse. Google has challenged both the South Korean and European orders.

In its October ruling, the CCI said its investigators found Google's contractual restrictions had "reduced the ability and incentive of device manufacturers to develop and sell" devices operating on Android forks, hurting consumer interests.

Amazon told Indian investigators the creation of Fire OS, as a forked Android, took "substantial resources", including thousands of employee hours, court papers show.

Jio likely to sign 5G gear deal with Nokia for \$1.7bn

REUTERS

Bangalore, July 6: Reliance Jio Infocomm is likely to sign a contract worth \$1.7 billion with Nokia this week to purchase 5G network equipment, the Economic Times reported Thursday, citing people aware of the matter.

The contract could be signed as early as Thursday in Helsinki, Finland, where Nokia is headquartered, the report added.

The telecom arm of Reliance Industries had chosen Nokia as a major supplier in October last year as Jio geared up to expand wireless services in India.



Jio snapped up airwaves worth \$11 billion in a 5G spectrum auction last August and had launched 5G services in several cities. It is also working with Alphabet's Google to launch a budget 5G smartphone.

The Economic Times said that HSBC, JP Morgan and Citigroup are among those backing Jio's 5G-related purchases, while European export credit agency Finnvera will be issuing guarantees to the lenders to extend offshore loans to Jio.

Swedish telecommunication company Ericsson had in October last year, announced a partnership with Jio to build a 5G standalone network in India. Earlier this week, Jio announced the launch of a 4G-feature phone in an attempt to reach those who have not yet migrated to smartphones, although analysts said the move was unlikely to disrupt the Indian telecom market.

Shares of Reliance, which has the heaviest weightage in the blue-chip Nifty 50, climbed as much as 2.3% after the report to be among the index's top gainers.

FAKE REGISTRATION GST Council set to tighten rules

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 6: In order to check fake registration, the GST Council is likely to reduce the time period to 30 days, from 45 days currently, for submission of PAN-linked bank account details of the person seeking registration with tax authorities.

The Council, in its meeting July 11, is likely to provide for mandatory physical verification of the business premises of "high risk" applicants before granting of GST registration.

Also, the GST Rules are likely to be amended to state that person whose business premises is being verified should not be present at the spot during the physical verification.

The changes proposed by the Law Committee, comprising officers from Centre and states, with a view to contain fake registration under Goods and Services Tax (GST), would be considered by the Union finance minister-chaired GST Council.

The central and state GST officers are currently undertaking a special drive to catch fake registration. During the drive so far, 17,000 GSTINs were found to be non-existent. Of this, 11,015 GSTINs have been suspended and 4,972 have been cancelled, while Rs 15,000 crore tax evasion have been detected.

Sources said in light of several cases of unscrupulous elements obtaining fake/bogus GST registration, it is desirable to strengthen the process of registration under GST by amending provisions of Central GST Rules, wherever required.

As per the existing GST Rules, a registered person is required to furnish details of PAN-linked bank account, which is in name of the registered person, within a period of 45 days from grant of registration or the date on which returns are due to be furnished, whichever is earlier.

FRESH PEAKS

SENSEX, NIFTY END AT NEW RECORD
CLOSING HIGHS ON UNABATED FOREIGN FUND INFLOWS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 6: Equity benchmark indices scaled fresh all-time closing highs Thursday, driven by unabated foreign fund inflows and buying in index major Reliance Industries.

Defying a weak trend in the global markets, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 339.60 points or 0.52 per cent to settle at its new all-time closing high of 65,785.64. During the day, the benchmark jumped 386.94 points or 0.59 per cent to hit its lifetime intra-day peak of 65,832.98.

The NSE Nifty rallied 98.80 points or 0.51 per cent to end at a new record high of 19,497.30. In intra-day, it advanced 113.7 points or 0.58 per cent to reach its all-time intra-day peak of 19,512.20.

From the Sensex pack, Mahindra & Mahindra emerged as the biggest gainer, climbing

Stocks at sweet spot



Foreign investors continue to provide unwavering support to the domestic market, helping to sustain the ongoing rally despite weak global cues

VNOD NAIR | HEAD OF RESEARCH, GEJIT FINANCIAL SERVICES

nearly 5 per cent. Power Grid, Tata Motors, Reliance Industries, NTPC, Axis Bank, Nestle, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Asian Paints and Wipro were among the other major gainers.

Maruti, HCL Technologies, Bajaj Finance, IndusInd Bank, Infosys and Tata Steel were among the laggards. In the broader market, the BSE midCap gauge climbed 0.79 per cent and

smallcap index advanced 0.67 per cent.

Among the indices, utilities rallied 2.44 per cent, realty jumped 2.17 per cent, oil & gas advanced 2 per cent, power climbed 1.96 per cent, energy (1.84 per cent), auto (1.20 per cent) and healthcare (1.05 per cent). IT emerged as the only laggard among the indices, falling marginally by 0.05 per cent.

Macroeconomic management stellar, says FinMin

Talking about the more-than-expected GDP estimate for 2022-23, the report said a strong final quarter performance pushed the GDP growth for the full year to 7.2%, higher than the 7% estimated in Feb

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 6: Stellar macroeconomic management in the midst of unprecedented global challenges has put India on a quicker recovery path than has been the case in other nations, the Finance Ministry said in a report Thursday.

Investments in supply-side in-

frastructure have raised the possibility of India enjoying sustained economic growth longer than it has been able to do in several decades. Monthly Economic Review for May and Annual Review of 2023 said.

India appears poised to sustain its growth in a more durable way than before, the report said, "nonetheless, it is no time to



rest on the laurels nor risk diluting the painstakingly and consciously achieved economic stability. If we are patient, the rising tide will lift all boats as it has begun to."

The report said that despite unprecedented global challenges in the last few years coming on

top of balance sheet troubles in Indian banking and non-financial corporate sectors, "macroeconomic management has been stellar. It contributed significantly to enhancing India's macroeconomic stability and set India on a quicker recovery path than has been the case in other nations."

Observing that a critical cog in the wheel of economic growth in FY23 was the disciplined fiscal stance of the central government, the report said, the year ended with a lower fiscal deficit (as per cent of GDP) com-

pared to the previous year. Yet, the government could cut duties and increase welfare spending to alleviate stress from inflation, it said, adding, the government could also maintain its enhanced provision for capital expenditure, which is now leading to the crowding-in of private investment.

The report highlighted that the Indian economy has carried the momentum from FY23 into the current fiscal year and high frequency indicators paint a healthy picture of the state of the economy.

Rice to get costlier as El Nino dampens supply

RICE IS A STAPLE FOR OVER 3 BILLION PEOPLE AND NEARLY 90% OF THE WATER-INTENSIVE CROP IS PRODUCED IN ASIA, WHERE THE EL NINO WEATHER PATTERN USUALLY BRINGS LOWER RAINFALL



were 56 million tonne in 2022, but low inventories mean any cut in shipments will fuel food prices driven up by Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year and erratic weather.

Yet even before the weather phenomenon can disrupt production, the global rice price index of the Food and Agriculture Organization hovers above an 11-year high.

That comes despite a forecast by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) for near-

record output in all top six global producers — Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam.

"The impact of El Nino is not restricted to any single country; it affects rice output in almost all producing countries," said Nitin Gupta, vice president of Olam India's rice business.

The price of Indian rice exports has jumped 9% to a five-year high, following a hike of 7% last month in the price the government pays farmers for

new-season common rice. Export prices in Thailand and Vietnam have risen to more than two-year highs since that incentive, aimed at luring the votes of farmers in key Indian state elections this year and a general election next year.

In recent months, the prices of sugar, meat and eggs have jumped to multi-year highs worldwide, after producers cut exports to rein in domestic costs.

Despite the forecast for a strong Asian crop, some global trading houses expect El Nino to crimp the output of all key rice producers.

"Rice prices have already been rising due to limited supplies," added Olam's Gupta. "If production decreases, there will be a rally in prices."

Global inventories of rice are set to drop to a six-year low of 170.2 million tonnes by the end of 2023/24, as stocks fall in top producers China and India, the

USDA says, after the rising demand of recent years.

PRICES COULD RISE BY A FIFTH
Prices could rise a fifth or more if yields drop sharply, as El Nino means the second rice crop in almost all Asian nations will be lower than normal, said a New Delhi-based grains dealer with a global trading house.

No 2 exporter Thailand has urged farmers to plant only one rice crop after May rainfall was 26% below normal.

In India, which plants its second crop in November, planting of summer-sown rice was down 26% from a year ago by Friday, as the monsoon brought 8% less rain than normal, government data show.

Weather in China, the top producer of the grain, has not been conducive for the early season crop but high stockpiles will balance supply and demand, said Rosa Wang, an analyst with Shanghai JC Intelligence.

Domestic auto retail sales rise 10% in June

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 6: Domestic automobile retail sales rose 10 per cent in June driven by sales growth across various segments, including passenger vehicles and two-wheelers, automobile dealers body FADA said Thursday.

Total retail sales last month rose to 18,63,868 units from 17,01,105 units in the year-ago period.

Passenger vehicle retail sales increased 5 per cent to 2,95,299 units as against 2,81,811 units in June 2022.

Similarly, two-wheeler sales climbed 7 per cent to 13,10,186 units last month as compared with 12,27,149 units in the same month last year.

Tractor retail sales jumped 45 per cent year-on-year to 98,660



units while there was a marginal rise in sales of commercial vehicles at 73,212 units from 72,894 units in June 2022.

FADA President Manish Raj Singhania said while there is a 10 per cent year-on-year growth, the auto retail sector has seen an 8 per cent month-on-month dip, indicating a short-term deceleration in sales.

"Despite some short-term contraction, India's growth narrative remains resilient. The month of June registered all-time highs for three-wheeler, passenger vehicle and tractor segments when compared to all the previous June months," he added.

Shivam Mavi hopes to build all-format career

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, July 6: Shivam Mavi grabbed six wickets to wreck a formidable West Zone batting unit and the pacer now wants to build on the performance to construct an all-format career for himself.

Mavi's 6/44 was instrumental in Central Zone bundling out West for 220 in the first innings of the Duleep Trophy semifinals at Alur grounds.

"I have been performing well with the red ball in the last three or four years.



Hopefully, I will get to play in Test matches. It is not like I want to play only in one format and I am working hard to be ready for all three formats," said Mavi.

The national selectors have entrusted Mavi with Central Zone captaincy in the domestic season opener. It was a huge vote of confidence for the 24-year-old from Madhya Pradesh, underlining his position as a prominent candidate in the waiting list.

"I feel very happy about it. The selectors have given me such a big responsibility. It is (captaincy) difficult for fast bowlers in India because fast bowlers get tired here because of the conditions.

"But here (Bangalore) the conditions are fine and we don't get tired that much. I have played in England and the weather is quite similar here. We get time to think as a captain," said Mavi.

Mavi handled the captaincy part well without affecting his bowling. Out of six wickets, three were Cheteshwar Pujara, Suryakumar Yadav and Sarfaraz Khan, breaking the West middle-order.

In fact, Mavi has now taken nine wickets from his last three innings. Simplicity, Mavi says, is the mantra of his success. "It does not matter to me who the batsman is. For me, it is all about bowling in the right areas and if I know if I can do that, I will get the wickets," explained Mavi.

However, Mavi had to wait three months or so to return to the field after playing the Ahmedabad T20I for India against New Zealand in February earlier this year.

Now, a busy domestic season awaits Mavi and he is aware that workload management is quite important for him to traverse the distance. "We have to upload our workload in the AMS monitoring system on match days. We wear that system and play. It helps us to know the extent of workload -- how many kilometers we covered and how many strides we took in a day etc. It is good for us," he said.

KOHLI'S PROBLEMS OUTSIDE OFF-STUMP CONTINUE, FOCUS ON JAISWAL'S BATTING SLOT AHEAD OF TEST DEBUT

India begin preparations



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bridgetown (Barbados), July 6: Virat Kohli's struggles outside the off-stump continued as he was once again snapped behind the stumps during an intra-squad practice game while Yashasvi Jaiswal made strong claims for a coveted Test cap ahead of the series opener against the West Indies.

Jaiswal's Test debut is a matter of time but what could be a subject of discussion is his usual batting slot which is opening or one down, a position that the seasoned Cheteshwar Pujara was forced to vacate after nearly three years of non-performance and an archaic style of Test match batting.

The Indian team included some local club cricketers along with their own 16 players for the two-day training-cum-practice game. The first Test begins July 12.

Kohli, whose problems against deliveries on the corridor of uncertainty, is well documented, saw veteran left-arm seamer Jaydev Unadkat exploit it early on his spell.

The left-armer's angle is an awkward one and Unadkat bowled one outside the off-stump, and India's No.1 batter, without any distinct footwork, fished at it to be caught by a local fielder stationed at first slip.

Kohli's dismissals in Test cricket have had a pattern and the canny Unadkat hit the right

line and length to get the prized scalp. The idea was match simulation keeping all the top order batters in one team while the other group was loaded with bowlers.

Most of the batters retired after playing around 50 to 75 balls with Jaiswal doing his cause no harm with a 54 off 76 balls before taking a break.

Jaiswal's batting slot With Pujara being axed, the 20-year-old Jaiswal was seen opening the batting with skipper Rohit Sharma. An on-drive off Mohammed Siraj and a rasping square cut off Unadkat had class written all over it. While Jaiswal got to play 76 balls, his skipper settled for 67 balls before retiring.

However, Jaiswal's promotion ahead of regular opener Shubman Gill is an indication that head coach Rahul Dravid and skipper Rohit are thinking of blood-ing the young Mumbai batter as an opener.

The long-term plan of the Indian team management could see them use

Shubman Gill as their No.3 batter and try out Jaiswal as an opener. It must be mentioned that Gill, who has been one of the most consistent batters in recent times, is actually a middle-order player, who preferred to play at No. 3 or 4 during his days as India U-19 and India A player.

In fact, it was under Dravid's coaching in the age-group and pathways (India A) team that Gill had batted in the middle-order. He has a double hundred (204) in an 'A' Test against the West Indies in 2019 in Tarouba. In that innings, he batted at No.5 (virtually No. 4) as Shahbaz Nadeem was sent in as night-watch-

man on the second evening. With Kohli taking his spot at No.4 and Ajinkya Rahane at No.5, along with Ravindra Jadeja at No.6 and KS Bharath at No.7, the batting order looks more or less sorted.

Bowling combination On a predominantly dry track at the Dominica, Ravichandran Ashwin is likely to be the second spinner while Shardul Thakur will be the third seamer and lower middle order enforcer. Shardul and Ashwin will take care of slot No.8 and 9 respectively.

While Siraj automatically selects himself as the leader of the pack, the choice for the second new ball bowler could be a tough one.

Besides rookie Mukesh Kumar's good form and incisive seam bowling, Navdeep Saini adds an extra yard of pace in the line-up, and Unadkat brings in the left-armer's angle and requisite variation in the attack. The only place which could be debated is this particular bowling slot where three players have their cases.



HI DISTRIBUTES EQUIPMENTS WORTH ₹8 CR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 6: In an initiative to promote the sport at the grassroots, Hockey India has distributed over 11,000 sticks, 3,300 balls and safety equipment worth Rs 8 crore to state associations, member units and academies across the country.

The initiative is a part of its 'Hockey India ka Abhiyan Har Ghar Ho Hockey Ki Pehchan' programme, which not only aims to develop the game at the grassroots but also encourage underprivileged children to take up the sport.

All state associations, member units and academies such as Roundglass Punjab Hockey Club, Dhyan Chand Hockey Academy, Republican Sports Club, Naval Tata Hockey Academy Jamshedpur, Him Academy and Mata Sahib Kaur Hockey Academy among others are the beneficiaries of the programme. The state and member units distributed the equipments in their respective districts.

Speaking about the initiative, HI president Dilip Tirkey said, "This drive aligns with our vision of building a strong foundation for hockey development in India."

Wawrinka sets up Djoko clash



REUTERS

London, July 6: Stan Wawrinka rolled back the years as the 38-year-old Swiss proved the old adage that class is permanent and form temporary by knocking out seeded Argentine Tomas Etcheverry Thursday to reach the third round at Wimbledon.

His career may be in its twilight but Wawrinka proved a notch above a man 15 years his junior to claim a 6-3, 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 victory on a sunny Court Three.

It was the first time Wawrinka has reached third round of a Grand Slam for three years and his reward is a box-office duel

with defending champion Novak Djokovic, the man he famously made cry after beating him in the 2015 French Open final.

The 88th-ranked Wawrinka, who has extended his career despite issues with his knees, had lost in the first or second round of his last six Grand Slam tournaments.

Wawrinka once turned the so-called big four -- Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Djokovic and Andy Murray -- into a big five by winning the 2014 Australian Open, the French Open a year later and the 2016 US Open, said on court after an impressive display against the 29th seed.

Wimbledon has never been Wawrinka's happiest hunting ground with only two quarter-finals runs and he finds himself in the third round for the first time since 2015.

Djokovic, bidding for a fifth consecutive Wimbledon title and a joint-record eighth in total, leads their career head-to-head 20-6, but they have never met on grass.

Berrettini advances Former Wimbledon runner-up Matteo Berrettini recovered from a slow start to his rain-affected tournament opener against fellow Italian Lorenzo Sonego to complete a 6-7(5-7), 6-3, 7-6(9-7), 6-3 victory Thursday.

Berrettini, who lost the 2021 final to Djokovic, has struggled with an abdominal issue this season and pulled out of the Queen's Club tournament after withdrawing from Monte Carlo, Madrid and the French Open to arrive at Wimbledon undercooked.

Svitolina sails through Former Wimbledon semifinalist Elina Svitolina continued her fine run in Grand Slams following her maternity break as the Ukrainian wildcard downed 28th seed Elise Mertens 6-1, 1-6, 6-1 Thursday to move into the third round. She will face American Sofia Kenin after the former major champion beat China's Wang Xinyu 6-4, 6-3.

Pogacar wins sixth stage, Vingegaard takes yellow jersey



REUTERS

Cauterets-Cambasque (France), July 6: Tadej Pogacar bounced back in vintage fashion to win the sixth stage of the Tour de France Thursday, gaining a psychological edge over Jonas Vingegaard even though the defending champion took the overall leader's yellow jersey.

The Slovenian, who lost ground to Vingegaard in Wednesday's first mountain stage, resisted his rival's attack in the Col du Tourmalet before going solo on the final climb to Cauterets-Cambasque and beating the Jumbo Visma rider by 24 seconds.

Pogacar attacked with 2.7km left, taking Vingegaard by surprise after the Dane's team had done everything to set him up for the win all day. Overall, Vingegaard leads Pogacar by 25 seconds and third-placed Hindley by one minute and 34 seconds.

3RD ASHES TEST

England struggle after bowling Australia out

REUTERS

Leeds, July 6: On another sensational day of Ashes action, with the pendulum swinging this way and that, England finished day one of the pivotal third Test on 68/3 after bowling Australia out for 263 at Headingley.

A superb century from forgotten man Mitchell Marsh (118, 118b, 17x4, 4x6) Thursday dragged Australia back into the contest after the tourists had been struggling on 85/4, before a blistering spell of bowling from Mark Wood (5/34) had the crowd off their seats.

Taking the final six Australian wickets for 23 runs, England looked to be in the ascendancy in a match they have to win to prevent the tourists retaining the Ashes with two games to spare. The visitors were 240/4 before losing centurion Marsh as umpires called for tea. After resumption, Aussies could add only 23 runs before being bowled out.

However, the dismissals of both openers Zak Crawley (33) and Ben Duckett (2), along with new No.3 Harry Brook (2), before the close of play ensured it was difficult to call who had the advantage after an action-packed encounter.

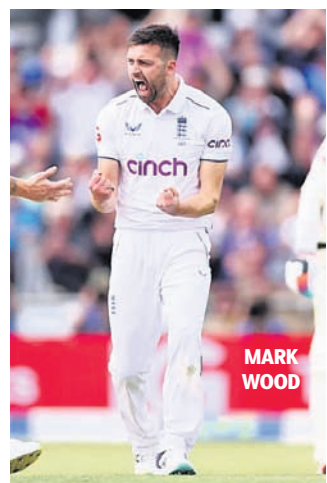
MATCH TIMING
3rd Ashes Test (Day 2)
Time: 3:30 pm
Telecast: Sony Sports Network

Joe Root (19 batting) and Jonny Bairstow (1 batting) were at the crease at the end of play. Pat Cummins (2/28) dismissed Duckett and Brook, while March (1/9) got rid of Crawley.

Earlier, all-rounder Marsh took advantage of England's sloppy catching to smash a brutal century and change the game. Marsh, making his first appearance in almost four years as an injury replacement, nicked Chris Woakes (3/73) to slip with just 12 to his name. Had Root taken the regulation chance just after lunch, Australia would have been in trouble on 98/5, but Marsh made him pay in full.

Marsh batted with unfettered aggression after his reprieve. He was ably supported by Travis Head (39) as the duo added 155 runs for the fifth wicket.

BRIEF SCORES
Australia 263 (Mitchell Marsh 118, Travis Head 39; Mark Wood 5/34, Chris Woakes 3/73, Stuart Broad 2/58); England 68/3 (Zak Crawley 33; Pat Cummins 2/28, Mitchell Marsh 1/9). Match to continue.



Mirabai to miss CWC, Jeremy "weeded out" of camp

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 6: Recovering from a thigh injury she suffered about a month-and-a-half ago, Olympic medalist Mirabai Chanu is now "95 per cent fit" but will not compete at the Commonwealth Championships (CWC) at home next week, Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWLFF) President Sahdev Yadav said Thursday.

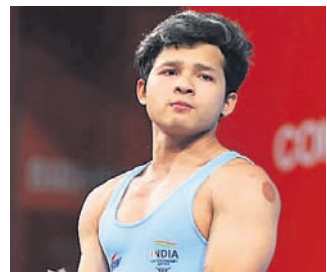
The Tokyo Olympics silver medalist, who is currently in St Louis, USA for a 65-day camp under Dr Aron Horschig, will, however, compete at the World Championships and Asian Games.

"Mirabai had a little injury, she is undergoing rehab in St Louis



for that. She is 95 per cent fit now and training well," Yadav told reporters Thursday. "About a month-and-a-half ago, Mirabai had complained of a problem in her thigh. So we immediately made preparations to send her to the US," he added.

The IWLFF is gearing up to host the Commonwealth Senior, Junior



and Youth C'ships in Greater Noida from July 12 and the Asian Youth and Junior C'ships at the same venue from July 28.

"We have to keep her (Mirabai) protected till the Paris Olympics. She has to reduce weight to make the 49kg cut before competitions. And to do it so frequently will not be good for her, thus she will

not be competing in the CWC," Yadav said.

The World Championships are scheduled from September 4 in Riyadh and the Asian Games will begin less than 20 days later in Hangzhou, September 23.

While the Asian Games are not a qualifying event for the 2024 Paris Olympics, an Asiad medal is the only silverware that the Manipuri hasn't won.

On the other hand, under the 2024 Olympic qualification rule, a lifter has to compulsorily compete in the 2023 World Championships and the 2024 World Cup. Thus missing the Worlds is not an option for the 28-year-old. Jeremy removed from camp

Commonwealth Games champion Jeremy Lalrinnunga has been "weeded out" of the national camp after the weightlifter refused to go to the US for rehab for his back injury and also missed the trials for the Asian Games and World C'ships.

"When Jeremy got hurt the first thing we told him was to go to St Louis. We also spoke to TOPS for it but he refused to go," Yadav said.

"He is a talented kid but did not give trials for World Championships and Asian Games. So, we weeded him out of the camp. He needs to perform to get back in. There have been little disciplinary issues with him as well."